



Anglia Ruskin University



Amazon Wildlife Rescue & Conservation Programme

Programmes in Ecuador 2025

Introduction

ABOUT KAYA RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We are a responsible travel organization that specializes in providing meaningful and ethical international experiences for individuals and groups.

Our mission is to promote sustainable social, environmental and economic development, empower communities and cultivate educated, compassionate global citizens through responsible travel. We do this by offering a wide range of academic and community engagement programmes in varying environments across 28 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

WHY KAYA?

We are recognized leaders in ethical travel with expertise in developing countries. We provide hands-on experiences that deliver cultural immersion, positive impact on local communities and activities relevant to your goals – allowing you to travel and grow as responsible, educated, global citizens.

At Kaya, we pride ourselves on delivering only what is best for our participants and host communities. We work closely with everyone involved to ensure mutual benefit and meaningful cross-cultural exchange.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

Kaya is committed to creating safe and transformative spaces for all who seek to engage in cross-cultural experiences abroad. We support all participants by providing additional resources when needed in areas of mental health and medical or physical needs, those in the LGBTQ+ community or any marginalized community, and travelers with concerns around their identities abroad.

Our experiential programmes may expose our participants to difficult topics such as societal and racial inequities, cultural differences, environmental concerns, economic disparities, and community trauma. We provide support in order to facilitate productive dialogues between diverse perspectives and cultures. We believe these dialogues are essential for personal and community growth.



"Traveling as a volunteer you can contribute by working on local problems, while as a tourist you are just a spectator."

Matteo Bertoletti



Cost Overview and Inclusions

ECUADOR

COSTS

2 weeks £1,398 per person

Extra week £201



INCLUDED

- Accommodation for the duration of your programme
- 3 meals Monday to Friday + breakfast on Saturday
- Local on-site project supervisor
- Local on-site support available 24/7 in case of emergency
- Transfers from/to airport
- Transfer from Quito to the project site
- Welcome Orientation
- Excursion and entrance fees for Quito's historical centre



NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to Quito, Ecuador
- Travel insurance (with ARU)
- Meals on Saturday & Sunday
- Transfer from the project site to Quito
- Recommended and/or required vaccinations and medicines
- Visas (not required for UK Citizens if staying less than 180 days)
- Police background check
- Tips and gratuities
- Personal expenses, such as snacks, souvenirs, laundry, free time activities, transportation outside of itinerary & baggage fees



Summer 2026 Programme Start Dates:

- 08 May 2026
- 05 June 2026
- 03 July 2026
- 31 July 2026

Programmes end on Saturdays

Programme Information:

Amazon Wildlife Rescue & Conservation

LOCATION

Puyo, Pastaza

Puyo, the capital city of Pastaza province, is situated in the heart of Ecuador's Amazon region, renowned for its megadiverse environment that hosts an extraordinary variety of flora and fauna. The city offers the opportunity to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest and explore its rich biodiversity.

Currently, Pastaza is the only province in Ecuador home to seven legally recognized ethnic groups, each preserving distinctive aspects of their cultures: the Quichua, Achuar, Shuar, Huaorani, Sapara (UNESCO World Prize), Shiwiar, and Andwa.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation in the Ecuadorian Amazon

For over 15 years, this project has been at the forefront of addressing the critical issue of wildlife trafficking in Ecuador. The illegal trade of native species remains a significant problem, with animals often captured to be sold as exotic pets or smuggled to other parts of the world. In response, this initiative works to rescue and rehabilitate animals that have been confiscated by the environmental police. These creatures, once destined for the black market, are given a second chance at life in their natural habitat.

Participants play a key role in supporting the project's mission. Tasks may include assisting in the rehabilitation of rescued animals, preparing them for reintegration into the wild, maintaining their living spaces, and helping to raise awareness about the importance of conservation. Participants will also contribute to community outreach efforts aimed at educating locals and visitors about the significance of protecting Ecuador's rich biodiversity.

Wildlife Conservation and Care

After being rescued from illegal trafficking, each animal undergoes a thorough evaluation to determine whether it can be safely released back into the wild. Unfortunately, many of these creatures are unable to return to their natural habitats due to having lived as pets for extended periods or because they suffer from social, physical, or biological challenges. For those unable to be reintroduced into the wild, the project provides a safe and nurturing environment designed to mimic their natural habitats as closely as possible.



Areas of Work

Students will work across these areas as needed. No Spanish language is required unless specified (but if you learn a few words before you go - your efforts are always well received!)

Veterinary Care and Quarantine

The veterinary team plays a crucial role in the success of this project, ensuring the well-being of rescued wildlife as they arrive at the center. Each animal is thoroughly evaluated by the veterinary staff to assess its health condition after being confiscated by environmental authorities. Upon arrival, all animals enter a mandatory quarantine period, during which a series of tests are conducted to diagnose their health status and determine the necessary treatments.

The length of the quarantine varies depending on the species, the availability of enclosures, and the results of the medical exams, but each animal remains in quarantine for a minimum of 20 days. During this time, the veterinary team works closely to monitor their progress and prepare them for the next steps in their rehabilitation journey.

Animal Behavior and Enrichment

Understanding animal behavior is essential for wildlife care at the center, particularly for animals that cannot be returned to their natural habitat. This area of focus involves creating interactions and activities to engage the animals' cognitive abilities, ensuring they remain mentally and emotionally stimulated. The team provides specialized training to promote positive behavioral responses, improving the animals' well-being and facilitating friendly handling during veterinary checks and feeding routines.

For animals under long-term care, these enrichment programmes are vital for enhancing their quality of life, promoting natural behaviors, and helping them adapt to their environment within the center.

Environmental Education and Ecotourism

This aspect of the project is fundamental to its development, especially given the importance of tourism in the province of Pastaza. The initiative aims to create spaces for recreation while also educating visitors about the significance of environmental conservation. By learning about the protection of local flora and fauna, visitors gain a deeper understanding of the natural world and the urgent need to safeguard it.

The ultimate goal is to raise awareness among both visitors and future generations, inspiring a shift in attitudes toward environmental stewardship and fostering a greater commitment to protecting the region's biodiversity.



Additional Information

ECUADOR

ACCOMMODATION

The cabins are designed to accommodate up to eight individuals of the same gender, fostering a communal living experience that encourages interaction and bonding among volunteers. Each cabin features independent beds and designated storage for personal belongings, creating a humble, rustic environment that harmonizes with the natural surroundings of the Amazon rainforest.

Shared bathrooms and showers are conveniently located in a nearby cabin. Additionally, common areas provide spaces for volunteers to socialize, read, or simply enjoy the beauty of the natural landscape.

LOCAL FOOD

At the project, meals are usually tailored to the preferences of volunteers from the UK and USA, as most participants are from these areas. However, it's essential to remember that everyone is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of communal areas. Furthermore, meals are served at specific times from Monday to Friday, while weekend meal times may vary depending on the number of people at the center.

Meals are typically accompanied by beverages such as coffee or tea for breakfast, and fruit juices or tea for lunch and dinner.

Here is an example of what a typical work-week of meals might look like:

	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI
Breakfast	coffee with toast, scrambled egg or fruit				
Lunch	French fries with meat	Meat with rice and salad	Pasta with vegetables	Rice with tuna fish and salad	Chicken nuggets with french fries
Dinner	Pasta with vegetables	Chicken with sautéed vegetables	Meat with rice and salad	Meat with rice and salad	Hot dogs or hamburger

Most dietary requirements can be accommodated, but due to availability Halal and Kosher diets will need to take vegetarian options .

COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY

In many areas of the world, accessibility remains limited. Infrastructure such as ramps or elevators may be limited. With the current itinerary, participants should expect to navigate varied terrain, use stairs, and walk for long stretches. Kaya can provide information, recommendations and the necessary quotes for accommodations wherever possible.



Packing information

ECUADOR

ESSENTIALS

Clothing

- Lightweight, breathable long-sleeved shirts and pants (for protection against insects and the sun)
- Comfortable, quick-dry t-shirts and shorts
- A light rain jacket or poncho
- Sturdy, waterproof hiking boots or shoes
- Sandals or flip-flops for relaxing
- Socks (preferably moisture-wicking)
- Hat and sunglasses (for sun protection)
- Swimwear (for rivers or streams)

Health & Safety

- Insect repellent (with DEET or a natural alternative)
- Sunscreen (high SPF)
- Reusable water bottle (staying hydrated is key in the humid climate)
- Personal first-aid kit (including any prescription medications)
- Hand sanitizer
- Basic toiletries (biodegradable soap/shampoo recommended)

Work-Specific Items

- Notebook and pens (for taking notes on health practices)

Miscellaneous:

- Headlamp or flashlight (with extra batteries)
- Portable charger or solar charger
- Small daypack and reusable shopping bag (for excursions)
- Earplugs (for night new noises of the jungle)

NON ESSENTIALS (but useful)

Comfort Items:

- Lightweight travel towel
- Pillowcase or small travel pillow
- Books or e-reader (for downtime)
- Camera (to capture memories, be respectful when taking photos)
- Snacks from home (if you're particular about comfort food)

Cultural Engagement:

- Spanish phrasebook or language learning app (knowing basic Spanish or local phrases can enhance your experience)
- Journal (to document your experiences)

Gifts or Donations (Optional):

- Health or hygiene items (such as soap, toothbrushes, or vitamins)
- Educational materials for kids at the communities
- Small tokens from your home country (for cultural exchange)

For the Climate:

- Waterproof dry bags (for keeping electronics and valuables safe in the humid environment)
- Bandanas or buffs (for extra sun protection or to wipe away sweat)



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responsible travel

The Kaya Staff



Heilwig Jones

Founder and Director

Heilwig (known as "H") founded Kaya in 2009, combining her experience as an international student at UC Denver and her work in international development. A leading voice in the field on issues of ethics and best practices in service programming, H is passionate about cultural immersion and equity in community experiential initiatives.



Diana Balarezo

Ecuador's Site Director

Diana joined the team in 2013, bringing a wealth of experience from her master's degree in Social and Environmental Studies and her time as an international student in the US and Spain. At Kaya, she integrates her passion for teaching, research, and sustainable development with her deep love for her country, striving to share its beauty and culture with others.



Javier Remache

Programme Advisor

Javier works with applicants to help identify the best programme fit for their skills and interests.

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emerson





For more information on the programme content, please contact Kaya advisors on info@kayaresponsibletravel.com. For information on available funding support, please contact the ARU Global Opportunities team on go@aru.ac.uk.

www.KayaVolunteer.com