

Surf and Help Camp - Marine Biology and Wildlife Conservation on the Pacific Coast of Ecuador



We are looking for enthusiastic, committed volunteers to work in one of South America's favorite surfing locations! **"Surf and Help"** is a volunteer opportunity conducted by and for surfers, people that want to learn to surf and for anyone who wants to help preserve nature and the ocean's unique beauty. Join us, help protect our beaches, and keep our ocean clean; help bring our ocean reefs back to life and save endangered giant sea turtles from extinction.

Learn everything about surf, Ecuadorian life and the precious marine wildlife of the Pacific coast!

INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

On a typical day, you'll work on the project in the morning. In the afternoon, you'll practice your Spanish or learn a new trick or two riding the waves from winners of South American surfing competitions. In the evening, you might lounge around the barbecue at camp. Afterwards, maybe head out to the campfire on the beach where you'll gaze in wonder at the sunset's ever dazzling, ever changing play of color, directly over the sea. Feast your eyes on it! A fellow Surf and Volunteer team member's comment sums it up: "We live and love surfing. We make a living, above all, doing the things we love, and the ocean is an integral part of it. That's why we say: **'El surf con objeto (surfing with a purpose)!**' Unfortunately, with increased tourism, keeping the ocean intact is getting more and more difficult. That's why we've teamed up, not only to surf together, but also to work collaboratively to help preserve our grand piece of paradise; its unique beauty and wonder never cease to amaze us." **If you share the same mindset, come join us!**



Problem:

PLASTIC! We're treating the oceans like a trash bin: around 80 percent of marine litter originates on land, and most of that is plastic. Plastic that pollutes our oceans and waterways has severe impacts on our environment. When plastics enter the ocean they breakdown into small pieces, making them dangerous for even microscopic forms of marine life. Hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, whales, and other marine mammals, and more than 1 million seabirds die each year from ocean pollution because they are eating marine plastic pollution and dying from choking, intestinal blockage and starvation. Marine plastic pollution has impacted at least 267 species worldwide, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species and 43% of all marine mammal species.



“We love surfing and we live surfing. Above all things we live from the things we love and the sea is a part of this. Unfortunately it gets harder and harder to keep the sea intact due to the increasing tourism. So we got together to surf but also to help save this little paradise. Its unique nature and beauty fascinates us every day anew. If you think so as well then come and join us at the camp!



Solutions:

1. Marine wildlife rescue and environment conservation

We rescue animals from the beach and care for them until they can be released into the ocean again (if possible). We also create campaigns to educate the locals and tourists about our precious marine environment at the equator.

2. Local economical support and micro financing to make this project sustainable.

One of our project's goals is to promote the work of native inhabitants from less trendy, backwater regions. We want to do this by helping them sell their handcrafted items at local tourist hot spots.

On the one hand, something needs to be done – even if it seems small – to help locals make a better living. On the other hand, a small percentage of the profits would also allow us to work – simultaneously and long term – on our nature and wildlife conservation projects as well as continue to conduct educational initiatives.

80% of the proceeds will go to the native population and 20% will help support the marine and nature work.

3. Addressing the root of the problem: AVOIDING PLASTIC!

The main objective, however, is to try and regulate the amount of plastic feeding into our oceans. We hope we can soon start with an initiative that convinces local shop, bar and restaurant owners not to hand out disposable plastic cups and bags but use reusable materials instead.

We need to microfinance this initiative with approximately 1000 reusable bottles/cups that will be given out against a small deposit. We also need to invest into local marketing, i.e. flyers, brochures etc. Every donation counts. Support us and help this goal come true! The less plastic goes into the ocean, the less animals we have to rescue or beaches we have to clean!



Objectives:

This project aims to:

- Rehabilitate marine life that has been affected by pollution so that they can be reintroduced back into their natural habitats and survive.
- Help local residents learn about the impacts of marine plastic pollutions and ways they can help to reduce this terrible problem.

- Help the local community improve their economic situation.
- Create a bond between the environment and the community.
- Microfinance initiatives to protect the environment.
- Protect seabirds, sea turtles, whales, and all other marine life from extinction so wildlife can continue to flourish and its splendor can be enjoyed by all.
- Provide an inspiring, educational and enjoyable opportunity for you so you learn about, protect and enjoy interaction with some of the most wonderful marine life in the world.

Please support us and have amazing fun at the same time!

Volunteer Responsibilities

During the mornings you'll work with your volunteer group. The following are some areas of the project that you may assist with

- Assist the Ecuadorian Ministry for the Environment with the locating, rescuing, and relocating of stranded or injured marine wildlife.
- Make observations of the sea turtle breeding area and check their nests for eggs.
- Construct and place wooden boxes to help protect baby sea turtles.
- Feed animals at the local aquarium, clean/repair their tanks.
- Occasionally assist with the medical treatment of the animals.
- Help design books, fliers and posters for kids, in order to help them learn to appreciate how unique and special their environment on the equator is.
- Co-organize (and maybe conduct) workshops for children and adults related to the topic of protecting nature and the environment.
- Assist with beach conservation events, build and place signs, construct containers for plastic to be recycled.
- Assist with monitoring tasks by filing reports for NGO Taxi.
- Maintain a diary of your time with the project (photos and blog).

The exact tasks you will be asked to carry out will depend on the current needs and priorities of the project as determined by the camp manager and NGO Taxi management. The tasks stated here are therefore examples of some of the possible types of activities you will be asked to do.

Working hours:

As a volunteer, you'll work on your project 30 hours per week. If you so desire, you are welcome to work more.



LOCATION

Your work will take place right on the equator, on Ecuador's Pacific coast, a favorite travel destination for surfers and divers. On weekends, instead of getting a buzz on with mosquitos, mix it up and get it on with a couple of mojitos – a favorite local rum concoction! Then, rise and shine well-rested. Hop out of bed in our volunteer dorm or your personal bamboo hut, right onto your board... because our Surf and Help Camp is located just a stones throw from the beach!



However, with this project, you're not bound to one location. Together with other surfers, you can take off and explore pristine coves and bays, idyllic aldeñas and fincas (villages and farms) – all located nearby. Grab a mountain bike and explore the area at your own pace or in a group. Your project leader, an experienced marine biologist, can teach you all about Ecuador's tropical climate, its history and the unique characteristics of the flora and fauna on South America's west coast. With this project, you're guaranteed to learn to appreciate what makes the precious sea and all forms of life, in and around it, so special.



TRANSPORTATION

The 3-hour group journey from the airport in Guayaquil (or transport from airport by car and bus) to the camp location at the beginning of the project is included in the program fee. In case you want to arrive earlier and need an individual pickup we can arrange that at additional cost. When you work at the rescue and conservation station you will be commuting every day by public bus from your camp to your project site. Public bus fares to this project site are included.

ACCOMODATION AND FOOD

Meals are NOT included on this project. However, all camp participants can use the self-catering kitchen facilities at campsite. You can go shopping in town, store your groceries in the fridge, and either cook on your own if you have special dietary requirements, or cook together with the other camp participants (which certainly is much more fun!).

Alternatively, you can go to restaurants nearby, where you can eat cheaply – avoiding the exorbitant prices tourists pay. Our Surf and Help team will tell you exactly where to go. You will stay in shared dorm rooms, and the camp is equipped as follows:

- Swimming pool.
- Jacuzzi.
- Laundry service.
- Garden.
- Gym in town (cost not included).
- Language school nearby. Optional: You can also book your language course in the capital, Quito.
- Communal area with TV and DVD.
- Free Wifi.



PREREQUISITES

Professional requirements:

You don't need to have any special technical expertise, only sincere personal commitment and a love for the ocean and nature are required. For the surfing lessons, of course, you need to be physically fit, and able to swim. It goes without saying that whatever kinds of project-related expertise you may bring to the table will be gladly received and put to good use.

This volunteer opportunity has been running for a few years, but roles sometimes change or need to be re-structured. This project supports and encourages teamwork along with a great deal of flexibility, autonomy and initiative. If you are open and ready for it, you'll learn how to deal with various aspects of daily life and be able to adapt to different fields of activity.

Generally, you should be ready to respond to changes and be able to deal with the unexpected for any work in South America.

Language requirements:

Since your deployment takes place on the coast of Ecuador and is a tourist area with all the associated infrastructure, you'll be able to make yourself understood in English in the town, by and large. However, very little English is spoken at the project site. Thus, the ability to speak English and basic Spanish, which you can obtain at the start of camp, is required.

Note: your camp fees already include a free 20-hour intensive Spanish course that will help you prepare for the task at hand and provide you with specific terminology and vocabulary that you'll need. However, this course is an advanced course, which is why you have to speak Spanish at least at conversational level, in order to make an impact at the project site. Please ask us and we can get you in contact with one of the local Spanish schools we work with.

You can also go online at home and complete a NGO Taxi Spanish course. You can then continue learning Spanish on the project under group or private instruction. NGO Taxi offers the opportunity to do some language preparation courses before arrival using Spanish instructional videos or online group seminars.

Special Intensive Spanish Courses: If you already speak Spanish you can combine this project with a special intensive Spanish course (group lessons or private instruction, e.g. university preparation courses) prior to camp start. If you want to take advantage of this opportunity to improve your Spanish simply let us know when you contact us. Alternatively, you can start a basic Spanish course via online videos, Skype or by taking part in a virtual classroom. We are happy to provide you with all the information about your options.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SPECIALS****Minimum age:**

18

Camp Dates for 2018

- September Camp 2 includes FREE whale watching boat excursion!
- December Camp includes FREE Christmas party & FREE New Year's buffet and fireworks on the beach – ¡en el bañador por supuesto (in your bathing suit, of course)!

Length of Stay:

3 weeks (extra weeks possible).

Immunizations: It is essential to be up-to-date with immunizations before you arrive at your project. This includes, among others: **yellow fever (certified), tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria, hepatitis A and B, and rabies.** You'll receive exact information pertaining to immunizations needed in Ecuador, as well as your personal preliminary documentation, following your successful application with us.

You can inquire in advance concerning immunization requirements by consulting medical authorities in your country of origin, e.g. in the US, check with the Centers for Disease Control and Protection <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ecuador>.

Please make sure that you have up-to-date vaccinations for all of these diseases. NGO Taxi cannot be held responsible for the provision of vaccinations for their volunteers. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure that they have followed up-to-date medical advice.



Specials:

PADI-certified Diving Course: If you always wanted to go diving and observe giant sea turtles live, you can also obtain your PADI-certified diving license nearby!

Surf and Help Challenge: A surf competition for all levels and a competition on tasks within your area of commitment (minimum of participants 15 people). Do you want to surf and volunteer with your own friends?

Included Services

- Lodging: in the volunteers' dorm at camp (or, for a surcharge, in a bamboo bungalow).
- Usage of all facilities (incl: a swimming pool, jacuzzi, DVD and TV, WiFi etc.).
- Group pickup and transport from airport. Individual transportation can be arranged at an extra charge in case you want to arrive and be pickup up at an earlier date (extra nights or weeks apply at your own cost, e.g. if you want to book a language course with accommodation that precedes our camp start dates).
- Pre-arrival pack.
- Welcome dinner (BBQ).
- Complementary t-shirt.
- FREE 20 hour Spanish course.
- FREE 1 week surf course! included! Take a course with pros, taught by pros (for beginners, intermediate and experts).

- FREE whale watching excursion (only during 2nd September's camp).
- FREE Christmas party and New Year's buffet (only during December's camp).
- Surf and Help Challenge: A surf competition for all levels and a competition on tasks within your area of commitment (only if a minimum of 15 people has been reached).
- Comprehensive NGO Taxi Support Packet (see section Additional Information).
- 24 hour support.

Comprehensive NGO Taxi Support Packet:

- NGO Taxi Pre-Arrival Packet.
- NGO Taxi online Drive Box for your personal use.
- Cultural orientation, along with help obtaining the expertise you'll need for the project.
- Project assistance provided by the NGO Taxi team and management.
- Onsite support through your local coordinator.
- NGO Taxi Post-Departure Packet.
- NGO Taxi Alumni Group.



Excluded services:

- International flight/ national flights.
- Food (self-catering in the camp's kitchen).
- Additional language courses
- Personal spending.
- Dive course.
- Additional diving excursions can be booked either on-site during your camp or in the Galapagos Islands afterwards at reduced rates (up to 30-40%). Only available for NGO Taxi participants.
- Any additional items not listed in the 'Included Services' list.

If you want to continue your program in the Galapagos Islands please contact us. Extra costs for the Galapagos Islands:

- National flight to the Galapagos Islands (approx. 500 USD).
- Entrance fee to the Galapagos Islands (100 USD).
- Immigration card (10 USD).
- Board and lodging.
- Personal spending.

For this project you can apply alone, but you're also more than welcome to invite your friends. Sometimes you will find that you are one of only one or two international volunteers at the project, whereas at other times there may be large groups, so be prepared for variety in your experience and the people you will meet and work with. Of course, you will always be supported by our local team. If you want to volunteer with a friend tell us who you want to volunteer with and we will arrange everything for you! You will get a 10% discount from us!

In conjunction with **NGO Taxi – Surf and Help Camps**, you're also welcome to get involved in any of our other projects in Colombia, Ecuador or Peru. Combining projects is possible with all of our projects. For our administrative time and expense, an additional flat fee of 150 EUR is charged per project combination. Following completion, you'll receive a **50% refund**.



FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

Ecuador – Mainland

The Pacific coast of Ecuador offers a wide range of things to do during your free time. Compared to neighboring countries, Ecuador, geographically speaking, is relatively small. Therefore, after you've completed your camp work, excursions to somewhat "more distant" destinations are very easy to pull off and in a minimal amount of time.

Locally, you'll have the opportunity to go on the following excursions and participate in the following activities:

- Well, surfing..!
- Surfing in Ecuador's surfing mecca or at one of the beaches nearby. Take a course or improve yourself if you already surf, practice and explore the coast!
- Learning to dive and being amazed by those two thirds that cover our planet underwater – a world you will never forget or want to miss anymore!
- Booking an additional Spanish course and enhance your language skills.
- Staying fit and flexible for life and practicing yoga with us.
- Observing the giants of the ocean and accompanying us on a whale watching trip.
- Going parasailing.

- Lifting some weights at the local Fitness studio.
- Enjoying the fresh sea breeze whilst horseback riding on the beach.
- Renting a mountain bike and exploring the mangroves and villages nearby.
- Going canyoning in waterfalls.
- Taking a short trip to the “center of the earth” (La mitad del Mundo) on the equator.
- Climbing a volcano!
- Or trying to survive 4 days in the Amazon jungle.



Ecuador – The Galapagos Islands

Of course, the Galapagos Islands are a great place to explore and do many activities as well:

- Scuba diving on the Galapagos! Certainly something not everyone can get to experience – one of the world’s most famous dive spots and home to Charles Darwin’s discoveries!
- Going snorkelling.
- Relaxing whilst hiking around the island.
- Going mountain biking.
- Jumping on horseback again.
- Grabbing a kayak and exploring the crystal clear waters around the islands.
- Swimming with giant sea turtles.
- Going island hopping*.
- Or just watching the archipelago’s precious and distinct wildlife and flora, e.g. giant tortoises, sea turtles, rare birds, blue footed boobies, pelicans, sea lions, marine iguanas, sharks, gigantic rays and many, many more.

*You can go island hopping at the weekends. Just take one of the small speed boats and enjoy the neighboring islands, marvel at their unique natural wonders and the diversity between them, and discover the islands’ many tourist attractions!

Due to its remoteness far out into the Pacific Ocean and protected wildlife, the Galapagos is considered one of the best and most breathtaking scuba dive spots on our planet. If you haven’t started diving yet you will surely have an unforgettable time underwater there!

This is an extremely unique chance to explore a vibrant world that only exists underwater and in the Galapagos. Ask us and we put you in contact with our dive schools!

Prices

NEW: You can now book your arrivals whenever it suits you best!
(Choose any Sunday as your personal camp start date)

3 Weeks stay: **1249,00 EUR** (each additional week: **399€**)

OR

SAVE 150 EUR

and join our

official camp start dates 2018 (see below):

3 Weeks stay: **only 1099,00 EUR** (each additional week: **359€**)



Included Services

- Lodging: in the volunteers' dorm at camp (or, for a surcharge, in a bamboo bungalow).
- Usage of all facilities (incl. a swimming pool, jacuzzi, DVD and TV, WiFi etc.).
- Group pickup or transport from airport by car and bus.
- Pre-arrival pack.
- Welcome dinner (BBQ).
- Complementary t-shirt.
- FREE 20 hour Spanish course.
- FREE 1 week surf course included! Take a course with pros, taught by pros (for beginners, intermediate and experts).
- FREE whale watching excursion (only during September's camp).
- FREE Christmas party (only during December's camp).
- FREE New Year's Eve Dinner (only during December's camp).
- Surf and Help Challenge: A surf competition for all levels and a competition on tasks within your area of commitment (only if a minimum of 15 people has been reached).
- Comprehensive NGO Taxi Support Packet (see section **Additional Information**).
- On-site support through your volunteer coordinator.
- 24 hour support.

DATES 2018

Spring Time

Sunday, March 25 – April 15

Summer

Sunday, July 8 – 29

Sunday, July 29 – August 19

Sunday, August 19 – Sept 09

Autumn

Sunday, Sept 30 – October 21

Winter and NYE

Saturday, December 01 – 22

Christmas and New Year's Special

Saturday, December 22, 2018 – January 02, 2019

-> **BOOK 11 DAYS extra for only 499,00 EUR !!**

