



CONSERVATION INTERNSHIP

Bird Program · Breeding Center

Macaw Recovery Network

1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The Conservation Internship of the Macaw Recovery Network Association (MRN) offers young professionals an immersive four-month experience, designed under the principle of learning by doing. It is a 100% hands-on experience that combines field training with direct participation in the Bird Program, specifically at our Breeding Center.

Throughout the internship, participants not only gain technical knowledge but also develop real skills by actively engaging in conservation projects that generate a tangible impact on the protection and recovery of macaw populations. In particular, they contribute to the conservation efforts for the Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*), a species listed as critically endangered.

The Conservation Internship has the following specific objectives:

1. Contribute to the conservation efforts for the Great Green Macaw (*Ara ambiguus*) and the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) through active participation in the activities carried out at the Breeding Center.
2. Develop practical competencies in veterinary medicine, psittacine management, and animal welfare through direct participation in the procedures, protocols, and daily activities of the Breeding Center.
3. Apply scientific monitoring methodologies to record, analyze, and interpret information related to the behavior, ecology, and reproductive biology of the Great Green Macaw, using tools and technologies employed in conservation programs.
4. Actively participate in ex situ conservation processes and in preparing individuals for reintroduction, including environmental enrichment activities, pre-release training, translocation, and the technical-administrative management associated with the movement of psittacines.
5. Strengthen participants' professional competencies through a practical, interdisciplinary experience that fosters critical thinking, teamwork, and a commitment to biodiversity conservation.

2. INTERNSHIP STRUCTURE

DURATION

4 months

PARTICIPANTS

Max. 6 spots

3. HANDS-ON LEARNING EXPERIENCES AT THE BREEDING CENTER

The Conservation Internship is designed under the principle of learning by doing, so learning takes place primarily through active participation in the daily activities of the Bird Program, specifically at MRN's Breeding Center.

During the four months of the internship, participants will gain hands-on experience by integrating into the technical team's daily work, developing competencies in the following areas:

- 1. Veterinary medicine and psittacine management:** participation in veterinary procedures, management protocols, animal welfare, biosecurity, and daily care of macaws under human care.
- 2. Translocation and movement processes:** learning the technical, legal, and administrative procedures related to the transfer of psittacines, as well as the biological criteria that support these processes.
- 3. Ecology and reproductive biology:** participation in activities related to monitoring the reproductive cycle, reproductive behavior, and ecological aspects of the Great Green Macaw.
- 4. Behavioral monitoring and data management:** standardized recording and analysis of bird behavior using technological tools such as ZooMonitor and other platforms used to support conservation decision-making.
- 5. Pre-release training:** participation in the design and implementation of environmental enrichment activities and preparation exercises that foster the natural behaviors needed for the future reintroduction of individuals into the wild.

As a complement to the hands-on experience, the program may include technical talks, specialized demonstrations, and knowledge-sharing sessions led by MRN professionals or external guests, subject to availability.

The learning experiences include

- Direct participation in operational activities
- Mentoring and learning alongside the technical staff
- Hands-on demonstrations and explanations in the field or aviaries
- Occasional discussion and learning sessions with specialists

Examples of hands-on activities the intern may carry out

- Preparing diets for the birds
- Daily feeding and assistance with aviary cleaning
- Setting up enrichment (perches, foliage, toys)
- Assisting with pre-release training processes
- Handling and transferring birds between aviaries
- Recording and managing program data

BREEDING CENTER, GUANACASTE — BIRD PROGRAM**4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

By the end of the Conservation Internship, participants are expected to have developed the technical and practical competencies needed to work in psittacine conservation programs, demonstrating their ability to:

1. Apply good practices in psittacine management, animal welfare, and biosecurity at a breeding center for endangered species.
2. Safely and responsibly participate in preventive veterinary medicine procedures, daily management, and monitoring of individuals under human care.
3. Record, analyze, and interpret information related to the behavior, ecology, and reproductive biology of macaws, using standardized methodologies and technological tools employed in conservation programs.
4. Understand and collaborate in the technical, legal, and administrative processes associated with the movement, translocation, and reintroduction of psittacines.
5. Design and implement environmental enrichment activities and pre-release training aimed at developing the natural behaviors individuals need to survive in the wild.
6. Develop teamwork, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and adaptability skills suited to the working environments of conservation projects.
7. Understand the overall functioning of an ex situ conservation program and its role within the recovery strategies for endangered species.
8. Strengthen their ethical and professional commitment to biodiversity conservation and the responsible management of psittacines.
9. Gain demonstrable hands-on experience that strengthens their professional profile and facilitates their entry into projects, organizations, and institutions dedicated to biodiversity conservation.

5. INTERN PROFILE

1. Students or graduates in biology, veterinary medicine, natural resource management, environmental education, or related fields.
2. Demonstrated interest in biodiversity conservation, ideally with prior (though not required) experience in wildlife handling, volunteering, or similar internships.
3. Commitment to four months of participation and willingness to work under rustic field conditions.
4. Good physical condition and general health to perform field work, bird handling, and transfers within the Breeding Center.
5. Ability to work as part of a team, communicate effectively, and adapt to demanding, changing work environments.
6. Attention to detail and discipline in rigorously following technical protocols, biosecurity measures, and data recording.



MRN Team — Wild Macaw Reserve, Islita, Costa Rica

6. LOGISTICS

MRN provides housing to all interns with basic services (electricity, drinking water and Wi-Fi, equipped kitchens, laundry area) and technical support throughout the internship.

Islita (Breeding Center)

Shared accommodations for interns, with kitchens and common areas.

Candidates can view the accommodations at the following link: [Photo gallery — Islita](#)



7. GENERAL CONDITIONS

MRN GUARANTEES

- Basic, safe, and adequate living conditions for all interns.

THE INTERN COVERS

- International transportation
- Medical insurance
- Personal expenses
- Food

FINAL NOTE

Once a candidate is accepted into the Conservation Internship, MRN's Human Resources Manager will send them the steps to follow to formalize their enrollment in the program.