

RESEARCHER GUIDE

Amazon Conservation/Conservación Amazónica–ACCA are non-profit NGOs whose principal objective is conserving the biodiversity of the Amazon basin. We promote scientific research oriented toward better understanding of biological diversity, ecosystems, and sustainable management of natural resources. We have three biological stations located on an altitudinal gradient in the western Amazon within the buffer zone of Manu National Park. Our biological stations are: Los Amigos Biological Station, in the Amazon lowlands; Villa Carmen Biological Station, in the foothills of the Andes; and Wayqecha Cloud Forest Biological Station, in the cloud forest. Each station is surrounded by pristine forests of high conservation and biological value, making them ideal places to carry out studies on a grand geographic scale.

Wayqecha Cloud Forest Biological Station is located at an altitude of 2,900 meters above sea level. The ecosystem that surrounds the station is unique to the upper cloud forest, on the edge of the Andes highlands. The station is surrounded by cloud forest, scrub forest, and grasslands. Within the biological station, the slopes vary from 8° to more than 75° in the ravines. Wayqecha has an average annual precipitation of 1,700 mm, most of which occurs between October and April. The average annual temperature is 12.5°C, with nighttime lows of 5°C and daytime highs that don't exceed 20°C.

Villa Carmen Biological Station is located in the lower basin of the Piñipiñi River, close to where it meets the Pilcopata River, between the foothills of the Andes and the beginning of the Amazon lowlands. The station sits at an altitude of 550 meters above sea level and is surrounded by a reserve that extends to 3,066 hectares. Indigenous Andean and Amazonian communities live adjacent to the station. The climate of Villa Carmen is hot and rainy, with an average annual temperature of 22°C and average annual precipitation of 4,000 mm. During the winter (May-September) the region is affected by cold fronts accompanied by dry periods and extreme temperatures as low as 10°C.

Los Amigos Biological Station, established in the Amazon plains of the Madre de Dios region, is managed jointly with the Los Amigos Conservation Concession (LACC). LACC comprises 145,965 hectares of primary forest that connect Manu National Park to the Tambopata National Reserve, forming a large natural corridor. It also borders the Madre de Dios Territorial Reserve, which protects indigenous people in voluntary isolation (PIACI, by the Spanish acronym) from the Mashco Piro community. Los Amigos Biological Station sits on a high terrace close to the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Los Amigos Rivers and contains the three principal terrestrial habitats of Madre de Dios: lowland forest, floodplains, and wetlands. The climate of Los Amigos is typical of the Amazon lowlands: hot and humid. The average annual temperature is 25°C and the average annual precipitation is 2550 mm. The winter (May- September) is marked by droughts and cold fronts with temperatures below 10°C and periods of up to three weeks without rain.

This guide is intended to make it easier for researchers to navigate the biological stations' administrative procedures and guidelines before, during, and after their stay. All arrangements related to research should be directed to the Science Director and respective station science director (see page 2), and questions about accommodations, conditions at the station, reservations, and general transportation should be directed to reservas@conservacionamazonica.org. Administrative issues should be addressed to the administrators at the biological stations.

SUPPORT STAFF:

Main point of contact

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PRE-FIELDWORK PLANNING

1. **Approval of Research Proposal:** before beginning your research, your research proposal must be approved by the Science Director of the biological station where you wish to study, as well as by Conservación Amazónica–ACCA’s Science Committee. Send your research proposal to the Science Director. The research proposal must be drafted according to the **Research Proposal Form** and you should also send the following documents:

- a) **CV** of the head researcher and of co-researchers
- b) **Letter:** issued by the director of the head researcher’s institution or by a well-known researcher (in the case of new researchers only)

The approval of your research proposal will be granted based on the quality of your proposal, the degree to which it complements the station’s research priorities, and the availability of space at the biological station during the dates you propose.

2. **Permits:** researchers wishing to conduct research at our biological stations or nearby areas must obtain all permits stipulated by Peruvian law. After your research proposal is accepted by Conservación Amazónica–ACCA’s Science Committee, you must send a digital copy of granted permits or documentation from the Peruvian government indicating that the permit is pending to the Science Director at the station where fieldwork will be carried out. Please also send a copy to Conservación Amazónica–ACCA’s Science Director. Submission of this information must be completed before entering the station or work area.

For more information about required permits and how Conservación Amazónica–ACCA can help you apply for them, see the document **Assistance in Obtaining Permits**, and/or consult directly with the Science Director at the biological station where you will carry out your fieldwork.

Visit the webpages for SERFOR (<http://serfor.gob.pe/portal/index.php/transparencia-serfor>) and SERNANP (<http://www.sernanp.gob.pe/>) for more information on the administrative processes for obtaining research permits within Manu National Park and its buffer zone.

In the case of research that involves collecting hydrobiological specimens, researchers must obtain permits from PRODUCE (<http://www.produce.gob.pe/>).

3. **Researcher Registry:** before arriving at the station, the head researcher should fill out the Researcher Registry, including the names of all researchers and their field assistants, and send it to the Science Director.
4. **Capture of Vertebrates:** for research that involves the capture and manipulation of vertebrates, the researcher should fill out and attach the Capture Plan. Before beginning the captures, this plan must be approved by the Science Director as well as by our Science Committee

Any vertebrates that perish unintentionally (those that aren't included on the capture list within the Research Permit) as a consequence of the trap or the manipulation of individuals should be reported to the Science Director as quickly as possible. You must also develop a future action plan to avoid accidental death of a greater number of specimens. The Science Director, in consultation with the Science Committee, has the power to cancel Capture Plans according to his/her assessment. In the case that you wish to use the perished specimen for scientific ends, you must legally regulate the collection of the aforementioned individual(s).

5. **Equipment and Tools:** it is worth noting that equipment and electronic or other instruments that come from abroad are subject to importation taxes, which can be very expensive. We recommend consulting with the Peruvian embassy in your country of origin to avoid problems with customs upon your arrival. The biological station can provide some tools and other research equipment, with the approval of the Science Director or the Station Administrator; please consult with them regarding the availability of equipment at the research stations.
6. **Health and Safety:** the researcher's equipment must include a first aid kit. Before your entrance to one of the biological stations, we ask that you sign the Liability Release Form, which must be scanned and sent by email prior to your arrival at the station (this is a mandatory step). Conservación Amazónica-ACCA will do everything within its power to respond to emergencies; however, Conservación Amazónica-ACCA is not legally responsible for the health and/or safety of researchers or their assistants during fieldwork or at any other point of their stay in Peru. Conservación Amazónica-ACCA does not provide medicine or medical services to visitors. The cost of an evacuation for a medical emergency is very high and would be paid completely by the head researcher and/or the patient.

In the case of research where the area of work implies the possibility of contact with PIACI, as is the case with the Los Amigos Conservation Concession and Villa Carmen Biological Station, investigators must have the following vaccines: Influenza, Yellow Fever, Hepatitis B, Measles, Diphtheria, and Tetanus. Additionally, if your research proposal includes the manipulation of vertebrates, it will be necessary to get a vaccine for Rabies. We will ask that you provide a copy of your vaccination card. We will also ask you to develop a contingency plan to avoid accidental contact with PIACI.

For fieldwork at Los Amigos and Villa Carmen, it is highly advised that you wear appropriate clothing and insect repellent to avoid accidents and the contraction of diseases. Anyone with a medical condition that may endanger their health or the health of station staff and/or that requires treatment at a health center must leave the station and may not return until they have completed their treatment.

7. **Reservations:** once your research proposal has been approved by the Science Director, the researcher will need to get in contact with our reservation staff at reservas@conservacionamazonica.org in order to establish the dates of your stay at the station and the respective payment process.

- 8. Transportation:** Conservación Amazónica–ACCA’s vehicles can only be rented depending on their availability. Researchers typically use public transportation to arrive to the stations. Each biological station has its own characteristics with respect to access and modes of transportation. We suggest that you get in touch with the Science Director at the station where you will carry your research before your trip.

Los Amigos Biological Station: in order to arrive at Los Amigos, there are public transportation services every day. It takes about 6 hours to arrive at the station. You will need to leave early (6:00 am) from Puerto Maldonado and drive to the town of Laberinto. In Laberinto, go to the port and take a water taxi (they only leave once a day, at 7 am), which will drop you at the station. Be sure to mention that your destination is Los Amigos Biological Station.

Wayqecha and Villa Carmen Biological Stations: in order to arrive at both stations from Cusco, you must travel on the Cusco – Pilcopata highway, also known as Manu Road. There are vans that leave twice daily (one around 11 am and the other around 4 pm) from the control post in San Jerónimo. This service costs S/. 35 per person. You should reserve seats in advance with Ms. Celia at 984990613. The time of the trip from Cusco to Wayqecha is around 4 or 5 hours (40 minutes from the city of Paucartambo), and it typically takes between 6 and 7 hours to arrive at Villa Carmen.

DURING YOUR STAY AT THE STATION

- 1. Periodic reports:** you will need to turn in Periodic Reports throughout your fieldwork reporting on your research progress to the Science Director. The Science Director will establish the frequency of these reports depending on the duration of your research.
- 2. Project addenda:** if you discover that your research at the station leads to activities not originally described in your research application or in the permit requested from SERFOR, please consult with the Science Director. In some cases, you will be asked to submit in writing an addendum to your original work plan describing your new research plans.
- 3. Impact management:** within the stations and surrounding area, you should take precautions to limit your impact on vegetation, wildlife and other research projects. If your work requires that you delimit areas, mark trees, or construct platforms or other semi-permanent elements in the forest, please inform the Science Director, indicating where the impacts will be located, including their coordinates and how long they'll remain there.

Cutting trees or shrubs in the station or surrounding area is prohibited. Under no circumstances should you cut the bark of a tree for use as a marker. If you need to use nails in the trees (for example, in botanical studies), you should only use ALUMINUM NAILS.

If you use marking tape, please write your initials and the date on the tape (for example: AM May 2014). Tape without this information will be removed. All material should be discarded at the end of your project. Projects that involve manipulation, experimentation or extensive impacts will be restricted to designated areas.

4. Trails: if you come across a trail that needs clearing, please inform the Science Director or Station Administrator. If you wish to propose a new permanent trail, please inform the Science Director before making it yourself. The use of machetes is prohibited without the explicit permission of the Science Director or Administrator.

When you leave for the field, please indicate on the “Trail Use” board what route you will be following during the day and at what time you expect to return. We recommend that when you leave the facilities you carry water, a flashlight (with batteries), a first-aid kit, a compass, a raincoat, and a trail map.

5. Fauna: hunting and fishing are not permitted in the Station or surrounding area. Caring for abandoned or hurt animals and/or transporting them to the station are also not permitted. Researchers should inform the Science Director if they notice an animal acting abnormally.

6. Meals: if you wish to have lunch before the established time, please advise the Chef the night before. If you need a box lunch, let the Chef know 24 hours ahead of time and give the Chef a plastic Tupperware in which to pack it. If you have special dietary restrictions or any allergies, please let the kitchen staff know ahead of time. Meal hours are as follows:

Los Amigos: - Breakfast : from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m.
 - Lunch : from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Dinner : from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Wayqecha: - Breakfast : from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
 - Lunch : from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Dinner : from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Villa Carmen: - Breakfast : from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
 - Lunch : from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 - Dinner : from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

7. Water: tap water at the stations is not potable: it is fit to shower and brush your teeth with, but not to drink. For drinking water, you will find a water dispenser in the dining area.

8. Electricity: the electricity at the biological stations is 220 volts (V). Villa Carmen has electricity 24 hours a day from a public utility. At Los Amigos and Wayqecha, the energy comes from a fuel generator; this means that you are sharing a limited quantity of energy with other people. Please be efficient and considerate, and conserve energy by making sure the lights are turned off when you leave your room or go to sleep. Please also make sure equipment is unplugged when it is not in use.

Using electric motors outside of the generator's operating schedule is prohibited. Power outages may occur while the generator is lit; we recommend you have a flashlight within reach. If there is a problem with the energy system, notify the Administration of Station Maintenance staff. Do not attempt to solve the problem yourself. You are responsible for bringing your own 220 to 110 V adapter.

At Los Amigos: the electricity in the laboratories is supplied by a photovoltaic system during the day. At Monitoring Center 1 (MC1) and Los Amigos Biological Station, a gas generator supplies electricity from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. If you need to charge equipment, please do so in the evening while the generator is on.

At Wayqecha: the generator's schedule is from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. We ask that you make use of these hours to charge computers and rechargeable batteries. Occasionally, at the request of the researchers, this service can be extended given prior notification of the administration or maintenance staff. There is an additional cost to extend generator hours, which can be paid at our office in Cusco.

9. Internet: having internet access in remote areas such as the biological stations is a privilege. Our internet speed is not like a city's, so we ask you to avoid overloading the internet; do not try to watch videos or stream music, as this saturates the connection for all of us. Do not leave your computers, tablets or smartphones connected to the internet, or to electricity, if you are not using them. Please contact the Administrative Staff or the Science Director for the password and proper configuration for your electronic equipment.

At Los Amigos: internet access is available from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., but can be interrupted repeatedly if energy from the photovoltaic systems is exhausted.

At Wayqecha: internet access at the station is powered by solar panels and is available 24 hours a day. However, internet speed depends on each panel's charge during the day. Consequently, on cloudy days, internet capacity will be lower.

At Villa Carmen: internet access at the station is available 24 hours a day, but the speed depends on the time of use and weather conditions.

10. Cabins: dormitories and cabins should be completely quiet from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. If you would like to listen to music, please use headphones.

11. Bedding and personal hygiene: researchers and assistants should supply their own towels. Bedsheets will be changed every two weeks.

12. Support for station staff: if you are not busy when the shipment of food arrives at the station, please help unload and move the supplies. Likewise, if station staff require some specific support, researchers and assistants will be asked for their collaboration. Work becomes easier when we all cooperate.

13. Storage: if you would like to store materials or supplies, you can do so in the research warehouse at the station as long as you coordinate with the Science Director. For each cubic meter of space, you will pay \$300 USD for each six-month period of storage. The station will be responsible for proper care of your materials, but they should be correctly labeled with your name. Additionally, you should record in the warehouse notebook the materials you are leaving, their description, entry date, pick-up date, and your contact information.

14. Solid Waste: please be efficient in your consumption and try not to generate large quantities of solid waste. Avoid bringing foodstuffs to the station, as there will be food available. If you need to buy something, avoid buying products in plastic bottles or plastic bags; try to buy products in glass bottles, aluminum cans, or paper bags. If you need batteries for your equipment, you should use rechargeable batteries.

It is your responsibility to take your solid waste out of the biological station and to the cities, which have appropriate solid waste management (Cusco and Puerto Maldonado). If it isn't possible to bring used batteries with you, please dispose of them in the recycling container in the dining area, not the regular trash.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY NOTES

1. The facilities at the biological station are highly flammable; each cabin has a fire extinguisher. Smoking and lighting candles are both completely prohibited inside the cabins. In case of a fire, leave the area immediately and notify Station staff.
2. Using machetes in the forest is prohibited; the cloud forest grows slowly and vegetation takes a long time to recover. Moreover, machete accidents are common and can be very serious.
3. Wear shoes or boots after it gets dark, not sandals.
4. Alcohol consumption is not allowed at the stations and it is strictly forbidden to enter the station grounds with any type of illegal drug.

CODE OF ETHICS

1. Institutional Property: the biological stations are private property belonging to Conservación Amazónica-ACCA. It is the researcher's responsibility to consider the following:

- Use the institutional resources in an efficient and appropriate way, and only for the development and execution of your project.
- Protect Conservación Amazónica-ACCA's resources and facilities and preserve them from improper use that could result in economic damage or deterioration.

2. Oversight and Monitoring of Research Projects: researchers are required to comply with the rules and regulations of the institution, with offices and staff responsible for enforcing those rules, as well as any third-party designated by Conservación Amazónica-ACCA for this purpose. Failure to fulfill this duty, providing misrepresentations, or anything else that leads to erroneous conclusions or simply concealing information can lead to penalization, including any type of civil or penal action that the institution sees fit.

UPON THE COMPLETION OF YOUR RESEARCH

1. Data: all researchers should complete a Final Project Report. Conservación Amazónica-ACCA is extremely interested in studies carried out in the area and the information they collect; the information is very important for the conservation of the Amazon. Help us build the libraries at our

biological stations by sending your reports, publications, photographs, maps, PowerPoint presentations, and other results! You could even produce a research panel for our common spaces or for the Environmental Interpretation Center (at Wayqecha). If you are interested in producing a field guide, please contact the Science Director.

Do not forget that SERFOR requires the submission of reports and publications soon after the expiration of your permit. Please send a copy of these to the Science Director, as well.

2. Monitoring: Conservación Amazónica-ACCA is in the process of designing simple and cost-effective protocols for a long-term monitoring program. If you have ideas related to monitoring your area of study, please pass them on to the Science Director.

3. Lectures: please contact the Science Director if you are interested in giving talks about your research at local schools, universities, or other training or education centers. Otherwise, researchers will be asked to support Conservación Amazónica-ACCA's Environmental Education Program by participating in lectures or exhibitions about their work.

4. Excursions: if you or your research assistants would like to temporarily leave the station, please notify reservations, the Administrator, and the Science Director of your departure and return dates several days ahead of time.

5. Scientific publications: we would appreciate if you would cite the Conservación Amazónica-ACCA biological station(s) at which your research was carried out in your future publications. Similarly, please send us a copy of your publication and/or a summary and its electronic location.