

# IPBio Amazon Volunteer & Internship Program





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# About IPBio

**IPBio – Biodiversity Research Institute is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that develops and supports projects in environmental education and scientific research on biodiversity, ecology as well as on the behavior of species of fauna and flora of Brazilian ecosystems.**

IPBio's long term goal is to create a national network of 5 research centers in every major biome of Brazil. IPBio already has a total of 3 reserves in the Atlantic Forest, Amazon and Cerrado but hopes to purchase and set up research centers in the Pantanal and Caatinga soon. The creation of this national reserve and research center network can provide useful opportunities for research, conservation projects and economic development in the area of sustainable tourism.

The Betary Reserve was the first IPBio research center created in Iporanga (São Paulo) in 2004. This reserve was accredited as an "advanced outpost" of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO in 2009. The primary focus of research is bioluminescence fungi and insects and amphibians but there are various other projects that occur. We have had scientific publication in the worlds most renowned and prestigious journal such as Science and Nature – Scientific Reports. Moreover, we have a release center called FreeWildlifeBrazil Celine which has worked primarily with birds captured from the illegal trade of wildlife but has also helped release howler monkeys, anteaters and oncollas.

We are now in the process of constructing two new centers. However, our research and education programs in these new biomes have already begun.



Instituto de Pesquisas  
da Biodiversidade



**IPBio**

Reserva Tamanduá



**IPBio**

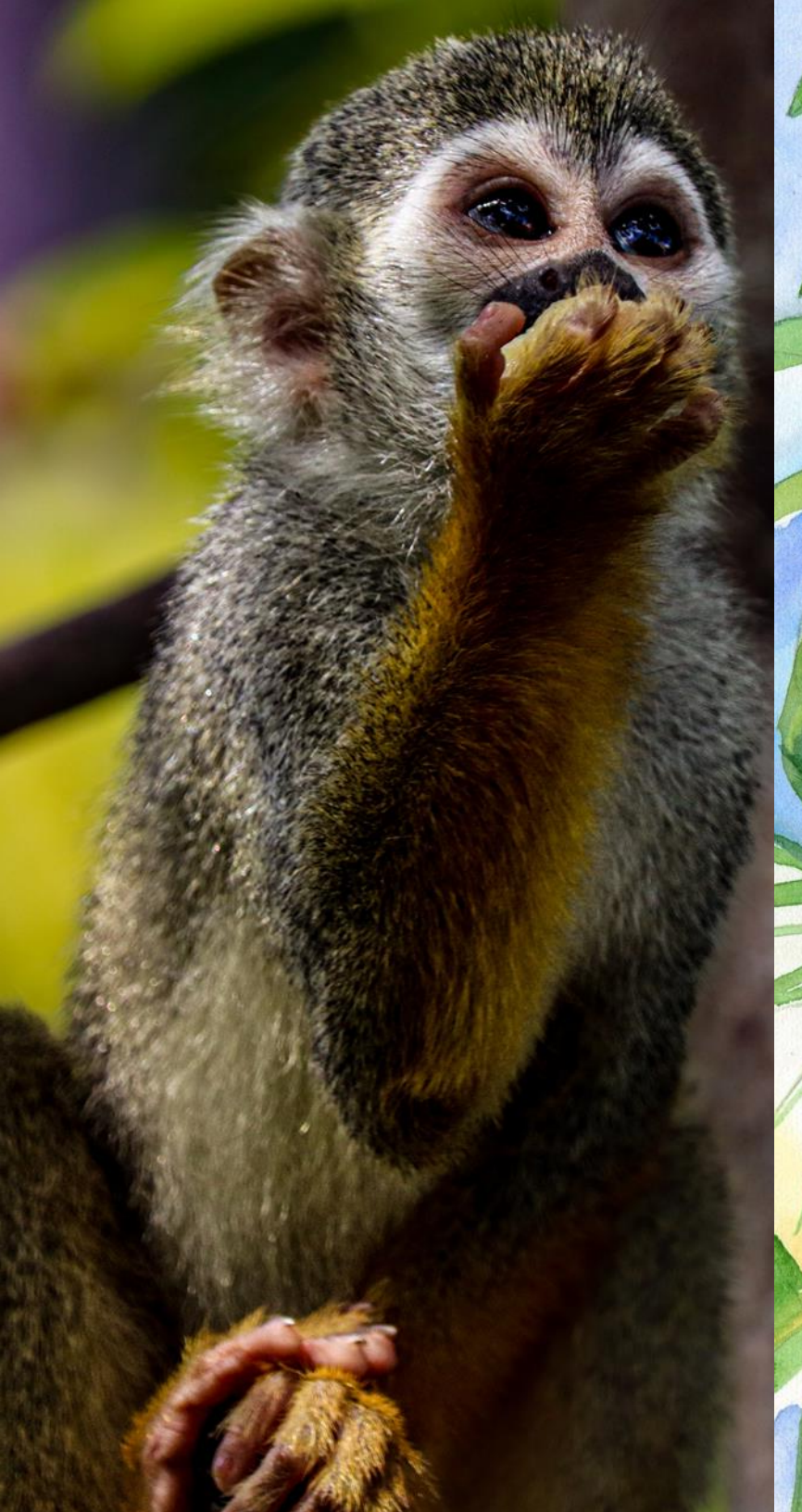
Reserva Betary



**IPBio**

Reserva Jutuarana





# The Amazon Rainforest

Not only is the Amazon River by far the world's largest river by volume but the Amazon is also the world's largest rainforest. The Amazon is estimated to have 16,000 tree species and 390 billion individual trees. Nearly two-thirds of the Amazon rainforest is found in Brazil.

The Amazon is one of Earth's last refuges for jaguars, harpy eagles, and pink river dolphins, and it is home to sloths, black spider monkeys, and poison dart frogs. It contains one in 10 known species on Earth. Moreover, there is a high level of endemic species, meaning they can only be found in the Amazon so if the Amazon is destroyed then the species disappear in the wild completely.

## Endemic species:

- 30,000 plant species
- 3,000 species of fish
- 384 species of amphibians
- 550 species of reptiles
- 950 species of birds
- 350 species of mammals and
- 57 species of primates

## Santarém and Alter do Chão

Right in front of the city of Santarém, two of the most beautiful rivers in Brazil meet. The enormous Tapajós River and famous Amazon River run along different paths in the state of Pará until they come together in a beautiful dispute, where it is possible to see the clear difference in the waters of each one of them. The muddy waters of the Amazon join the deep blue hue of the Tapajós in a stunning setting. Alter do Chão sits on top of the largest aquifer, reservoir of groundwater, in terms of volume of water in the world and is one of the main freshwater reserves in Brazil and in the world, whose sustainability needs to be duly guaranteed. It is estimated its supply of water could supply the entire world population for about 250 years.

Only 31km away from the airport of Santarém you can find the small bohemian beach town of Alter do Chão known for its beautiful beaches. Until the 18th century, the village was mostly inhabited by the Borari Indians and this genetic and cultural legacy is still apparent to this day. The town of Alter do Chão was only formally founded on the 6th of March 1626 by a Portuguese man named Pedro Teixeira.

# Biodiversity Research Assistant

IPBio conducts weekly repetitive inventories to collect robust data on long term trends essential for understanding wildlife patterns and monitoring the effects of climate change over years. These activities are done in a group with all the volunteers/interns together so you will participate in all the research activities, not just one. However, some activities are more focused on during certain periods, which are not standard as dependent on climatic conditions which vary year to year and projects may change over time. This is a field role and is for applicants who like to be outside and enjoy physical activity.



# Forest Inventory and Flora Survery

- Aim:
  - Identify species of trees in our region.
  - Measure their growth rates and understand the impact of ecological conditions surrounding.
  - Develop phenological calendar to help reforestation project.
  - Use data to reforest with key species.
- Method & Activities
  - Tag trees of interest to monitor.
  - Measuring tree in a standardize scientifically valid manner.
  - Using flowers, fruits, and seeds to identify species.
  - Catalogue data using photographs or collecting specimen samples
  - When needed, we work with a local partner for reforestation projects



# Bird Inventory

- Aim
  - Identify species of bird of the region.
  - Understand their geographic distribution and ecological conditions.
  - Understand the fluctuation of presence and abundance over time
  - Create e-Book of bird of the Amazon
- Method and Activities
  - Visit selected sites with a large range of ecological characteristics (some activities on a boat and some hiking).
  - Collect footage of birds found in the field which characterization of micro-biome.
  - Identify species and catalogue videos for specialist to check in the future



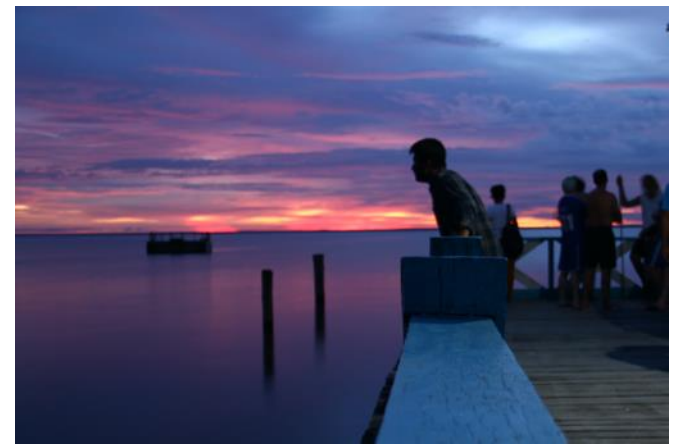
# Fish Inventory

- Aim:
  - Identify species of fish in the region
  - Understand the fluctuation of presence and abundance over time
  - Search for new species
  - Understand their geographic distribution and ecological conditions.
  - Create e-Book
- Method and Activities
  - Visit selected sites with a large range of ecological characteristics (some activities by a boat and some hiking).
  - Use different methods for fishing (coves, nets and others)
  - Categorize the water habitat



# Mushroom Inventory

- Aim:
  - Identify species of mushrooms in the region
  - Understand the fluctuation of presence and abundance over time
  - Search for new species
  - Find species of interest, edible or glowing
  - Understand their geographic distribution and ecological conditions.
  - Create e-Book
- Method and Activities
  - Two separate methods are used for this project.
  - The first is active search which means people will look all around the area (in hope for new species).
  - The second is by transect, areas will be selected to monitor over time the variations.



# Search for Bioluminescent and Fluorescent Organism

IPBio conducts weekly night searches for nocturnal species and those of interest.

- Aim:
  - Search for species of frogs (glowing or not)
  - Search for bioluminescent or fluorescent mushrooms
  - Find species of scorpions (that glow under UV light)
- Method and Activity
  - Flash light, UV lights and Red Lights are taken to the site depending on the current focus as each has its benefits.
  - Volunteers/interns stay in a group and walk in the forest at night in search for species.
  - When an organism of interest is found, we characterize the location and take a photo in the field
  - If possible, samples are collected for further identification (except scorpions of course).

## Variable Projects

**Mammal Inventory using Cameratraps:** IPBio has cameratraps set out on our reserve which take photographs or videos when activated by movement or heat sensors. Participants are tasked with watching the footage, organizing the photos of mammals and identifying the species. We can then understand diversity, distribution and seasonality of these species. This activity is done when it is too rainy to conduct a certain project due to weather conditions or if a participant works outside the field activities times.

**Arthropod Inventory:** during the period of June to the end of July, we do less Fish Inventory activities due to the high water level, and therefore we use this period to collect some preliminary data of the arthropods, such as insects and arachnids and more, that occur in the region.



# Reserve Maintenance & Reforestation & Seedling Nursery & Environmental Clean Up

All of these activities are generally half day:

- Reserve Maintenance: cleaning and clearing trails for research activities and removing exotic species
- Collection of Leaves for Reforestation: there is nothing better than old decomposing leaves as organic matter for plant along with the tree we plant
- Seedling Nursery: our seeds collected from our tree inventory and those collected by partners and developed in a seed nursery until they are resilient enough to be replanted.
- Reforestation of Island and other key spots: the “Ilha do Amor” is the post card of Alter do Chão and what attracts tourist, however, it is sinking due to deforestation. The trees that were once on the beach, kept the structure of the island sturdy but without it, the island has been sinking. We have permission of the environmental authorities and local government to reforest the island and other strategic locations with native seedlings
- Environmental Clean Up: IPBio provide environmental services to the local community and government and environmental services so we occasionally do beach clean ups of litter and other missions. We aim to phase this out over time as we have seen the emergence of local community groups taking out lead and conducting beach cleans up independently. We do not like to preach, we prefer to show by example!





## Photography & Videography Role

We use cameras for research on wildlife and as a result our biologists developed a passion for photography and filmmaking. Our interest in the interplay of photography, research and education lead to the creation of OBBIO – Observatory for Biodiversity, which captures footage aimed at producing eBooks, documentaries, and educational videos. We have even sold footage to Discovery Channel.


We rely on volunteers/interns to come with their own equipment and to already have experience in photography/video-editing, this is not a training program.

Moreover, this is a creative endeavor and nature is spontaneous, photographers will focus on getting holistic photos about our projects as well as shots of wildlife. As a result, photographers and videographers often accompany biodiversity research assistants in their field research activities as that is where most of the action occurs. We hope you are also interested participating in the research.

We have specific photo and videos we want produced but are also open to natural photographs as well as your own shots, scripts, directorial concepts, and ideas.



# IPBio – Amazon Reserva Jutuarana Team



**Sergio Pompéia, Founder and President of IPBio:** Agronomist degree from São Paulo University (USP), 1980. MSc and PhD in Botany and Plant Ecology from USP's Bioscience Institute. Founder and President of the Biodiversity Research Institute – IPBio. Director – President of CPEA – Consultancy, Planning and Environmental Studies since 2000, is the founder and editor of Editora Neotropica, where he edited more than 10 titles in the areas of biodiversity and history of Brazil. Sergio combines his skills as a published scientist, successful multi-business owning entrepreneur and conservationist to protect Brazilian nature and wildlife.




**Imran Viroomal, Manager of IPBio:** Originally Indian, born in Spain, lived in the UK for 9 years, in Portugal for another 9, then moved to Canada to study Economics and Politics at McGill University. After working in a wide range of NGO's related to environmental conservation in South America, he set up his own volunteer program at IPBio – Betary Reserve at the age of 22. To this day it remains one of the highest rated volunteer programs in the world. In 2017, he became the youngest board member of FreeWildlifeBrazil Celine, an NGO dedicated to the release of native fauna back into nature. In 2018, Imran became the Chief Communication Officer of IPBio. By 2019, without ever formally studying biology at university, Imran and his work at IPBio was published in various scientific articles ranging from research related to amphibians to bioacoustics and to, most famously, an article published in Nature – Scientific Reports, one of the most prestigious scientific journals, for the discovery and description of a newly found species of larva that emitted blue bioluminescence. In 2020, Imran moved to Alter do Chão in the Amazon to lead the creation of IPBio's new reserve and research center.



**Marleen Duindam, Head Coordinator/Biologist:** Marleen is from the Netherlands where she received a degree in Applied Biology from HAS University. In 2016 she came as an intern to IPBio – Reserva Betary and conducted a study related to mammal feeding patterns on the reserve. Her hard work and dedication made IPBio offer her a job as the biology field coordinator of the volunteer program. Her role was to conduct over 20 different research projects and coordinated the activities of the up-to 13 volunteers giving her great team management and leadership skills. In 2020, Marleen moved to the Amazon reserve of IPBio to become the head biologist, commencing preliminary research activities before the completion of the creation of the new research center. As a published biologist, she brings a wealth of educational experience and having lived in Brazil for over 7 years she has a strong grasp of Brazilian nature and wildlife.



**Martha Diaz, Field Biologist/Volunteer and Intern Coordinator:** Martha is from the USA and Mexico and most recently studied at Oregon State University receiving a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources with a concentration in Fish and Wildlife Conservation. Martha also has a Bachelor degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology as well as a Masters in Forensic Psychology. Martha was a US army special agent for 5 years. In 2024, Martha volunteered with IPBio for 3 months and her leadership and field biology skills made her a perfect candidate to return and become a IPBio staff member.



**Pascal Vanderhaegen, Reforestation and Fish Inventory Coordinator:** Pascal is a French expert in ornamental fish of the Amazon who worked in aquariums in Paris and studied reproduction and disease of fish in captivity. He came to the Amazon over 20 years ago but never left and staying in Alter do Chão and integrated into the local community. In 2020 Pascal was asked by the local environmental government agency to be responsible for reforestation on the island. In 2023, he and his reforestation project were incorporated into IPBio and he became an member of the IPBio team.

# Details of Program

## Requirements

- I. You must be over 18 years of age.
- II. You must be able to speak English at an intermediate or high level. Portuguese not a requirement but of course useful!
- III. Level of Fitness – this program has a decent amount of hiking and physical activity.
- IV. Ability to do basic swimming for fish inventory (even if with live vest), willingness to get on boats for research and lack of fear of walking in the dark as one activity is nocturnal. If you don't feel comfortable with one of these, you can still participate in the program but be aware you will have to sit out these certain activities.

IPBio does not ask for any formal educational requirements from participants, however, we have limited space in the program so we will not be able to accommodate everyone who applies therefore we require candidates to submit their CV and conduct a short interview for the selection process. IPBio takes conservation and our work seriously and therefore we want serious applicants who want to learn and use their time on this project to truly expand their horizons. Of course, we have a lot of fun also!

## Application, Selection and Acceptance Process

- I. Email us at [imran@ipbio.org.br](mailto:imran@ipbio.org.br) with your CV/resume and a short email expressing your interests.
- II. We will respond to your email with our "IPBio Interest Form" and the volunteer package.
- III. Once we have read your application, we will get back to you to organize an interview over video call.
- IV. If we accept your placement at IPBio, we will then wait until your payment is made to confirm your position.
- V. The last step is for you to send us a copy of your travel and medical insurance (preferably a month before your arrival).

## Date of Program

IPBio Amazon Program is only open from 1<sup>st</sup> of June to the 15<sup>th</sup> of December due to local weather conditions which do not permit projects to be conducted all year long. Remember here in the Amazon the water level can change up to 8 meters so it is completely impossible to do certain projects when the water is high as areas become flooded, fish disperse and various other limiting factors.

## Length of Stay of Volunteers/Interns and Maximum Capacity

The length of stay of the volunteers/interns is a minimum of 4 weeks but participants can stay as long as their visas allow them to if they wish. Of course, as you get better at the research activities the longer you stay, we tend to select longer stays with higher frequency.

## Difference between Volunteers and Interns

Our program is for both volunteers and interns and we treat our applicants the same in practice with the same costs and projects available. If there is a difference, it will be decided by your university or institution. For example, many interns require paperwork signed, supervisors assigned, reports to be written by the students, and evaluations completed by our staff. IPBio can provide this on request.

## Travel and Medical Insurance

IPBio requires applicants to have health and travel insurance. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they get proper insurance coverage and understand their policy if they need to make a claim. Remember this is for you! Though IPBio takes all possible steps to ensure the safety of our guests, we are in an area with a lot of wildlife and therefore there are associated risks. IPBio does not have a medical expert on staff, however, there is free Brazilian health care even for foreigners. In case of a medical emergency we will take the applicant to the nearest emergency post which is stocked with anti-venom and other emergency equipment. There are companies specialized in short term travel insurance like World Nomads: <https://www.worldnomads.com>

## Visas

As the consulate will only answer its own citizens emails, it is fundamentally up to you to get the correct information. Applicants are **responsible for checking their own nations visa requirements and for organizing their own visa**. The good news you are allowed to volunteer/intern on a tourist visa as long as you don't overstay that visa. For most countries in Europe and South/Central America you will not need to get a visa but will instead simply receive a visitors pass for 90 days stamped in your passport but please check for your specific country by asking the consulate. If you plan to stay over 90 days you will need to ask your consulate if you can extend your visa. As of October 2023, citizen of the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan will need a visa again unfortunately due to a recent policy change.

## Vaccinations

Please ensure you have all the necessary vaccinations prior to your arrival in Brazil, which are the following:

- I. COVID (if still required)
- II. Hepatitis A & B
- III. Tetanus
- IV. Typhoid IV. Diphtheria
- V. Polio
- VI. Yellow Fever
- VII. Rabies

It is fully the participants responsibility to check updated requirements and ensure they are met. Vaccinations are a personal responsibility, so much so that even the Brazilian government does not check on arrival. They are not IPBio requirements, they are simply recommendations by the Brazilian government to visitors. The list on the IPBio package are the same recommendations that the government provides and it is up to every participant to do how they see fit. This is for your own safety so we extremely recommend getting them all!

Make sure to get your vaccinations well in advance of your date of arrival as some vaccinations take time to take effect! Yellow fever shots must be taken 10 days in advance at least and many other shots can even take months to take full effect as they require multiple vaccinations. Please consult a medical expert. Dengue and malaria are not official requirements as we have low rates in our region but please consult a medical expert for suggestions.

## What To Bring

### Clothes

- Hiking Boots (ankle support)
- Shoes for the water (or rubber boots)
- Sandals/Flip Flops
- Rain Coat
- Swim Wear
- T-shirts (long and short sleeve)
- Light Hiking Pants
- Shorts



### Equipment

- Phone (with roaming as can't buy sim here or e-sim)
- Laptop (not required but good to have)
- Beach Towels
- Socket Adaptor for plug points
- Mosquito Repellent and Sunscreen
- Camera with zoom function (this will help a lot if you have a good one)
- Flashlight
- Books or Movies for Free Time
- Backpack (preferably water proof)



### Documents

- Passport and Visa
- Credit/Debit Card (let bank know you will be travelling)
- Medical and Travel Insurance Printed Out
- ATM in town, but good to come with about 800 Brazilian "reais" in cash
- Proof of Vaccinations Printed

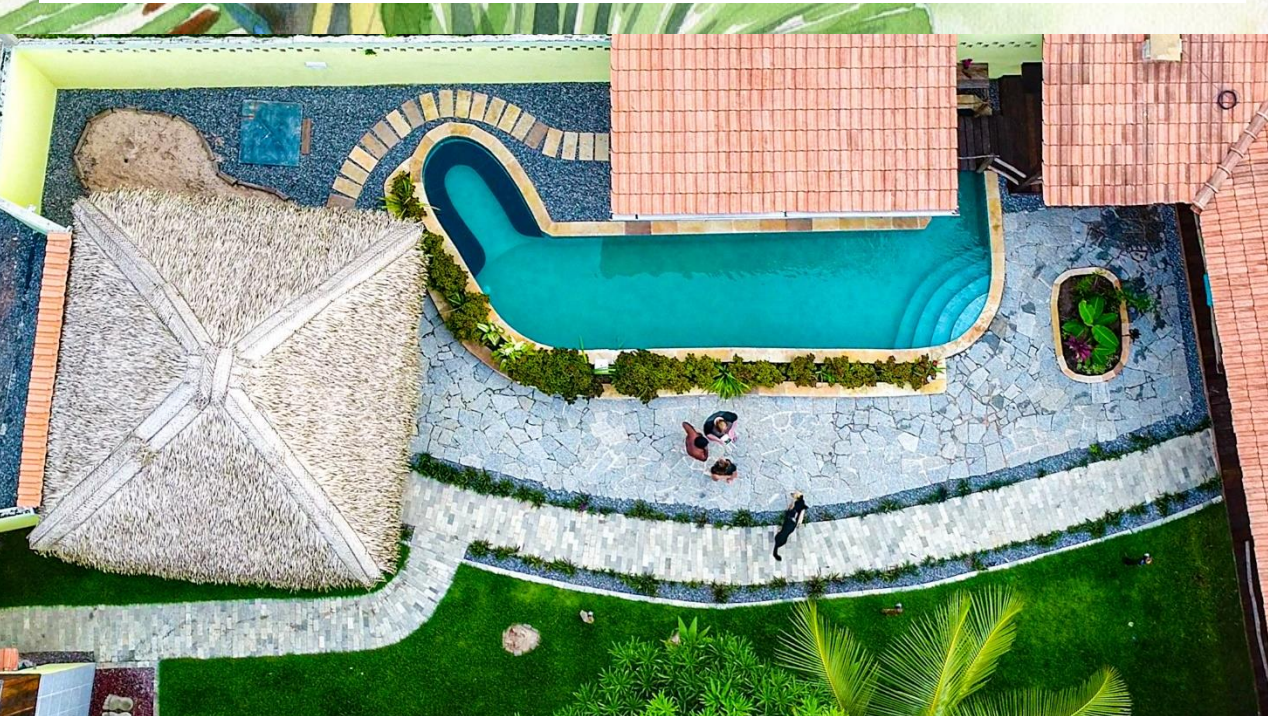


## IPBio House: Casa da Lagartixa or Gecko House

Participants will stay at the Casa da Lagartixa, a shared guest house, situated 3km from Alter do Chão which accommodates 8 people in two rooms so they are **SHARED ROOMS** and can be mixed gender depending on the group. In each room, there is a king-sized bed, a bunk bed and a single bed so a total of 4 people per room. Both rooms are air conditioned. The property has three bathrooms and two with hot showers. Room distribution and bed allocation is decided by IPBio for the most comfort for the whole group. The house is equipped with a washing machine and has a fully equipped kitchen where participants can cook. Moreover, there is a swimming pool at the house and an amazing poolside BBQ.

Participants are fully responsible for maintaining the house clean on a regular basis, however, we do provide a cleaner once a week to clean public areas like bathrooms and will provide fresh bed linen. However, it is the participant's responsibility to purchase cleaning materials such as toilet paper, dish soap and more as well as maintain and clean the house; we take this very seriously. Participants generally work from 7.30am to 12:00 (due to the heat in the Amazon passing this time becomes risky). Participants then generally have lunch at the house and if needed (depending on project) we might need some time after lunch to ID species or organize field footage. We also have one night activity per week.

Shops can be found in the town of Alter do Chão 3km away from the house, which you can walk to or get a taxi, IPBio offers airport pick-up (not drop off, but we can help you book a taxi), transport to research sites but social activities and shopping will be done by the participants themselves.



# Cost of the Volunteer/Intern Program

Participants at IPBio are required to pay 1400 reais per week (please check up-to-date exchange rate in your currency) **for the specific dates agreed upon**. This fee covers the coordinators, airport pick-up (not drop off, we can help book a taxi), accommodation, internet access and project costs. A participant only confirms their placement once their payment is made and it is only valid for the specific dates agreed upon. Once a participant makes their payment there is **no refund and no ability to change dates agreed upon** if they decide to cancel for whatever reason. We will provide you with specific payment details via paypal by email.

Participants are also responsible for paying for any extra costs such as travel costs, food, visa costs, tourism etc. The currency in Brazil is the Real. There is a ATM machine which accepts Visa Credit/Debit cards but we highly suggest you bring cash, around 800 reais is a good start. Most things can be paid by card directly, but tourism and taxis are all done in cash. Check with your bank to see if your cards will work in Brazil and tell your credit card company that you will be traveling overseas. There is no currency exchange in Santarem or Alter do Chão so please convert money prior to coming or at an International Airport. Participants are responsible for purchasing products for the house such as garbage bags, cleaning products and toilet supplies. Participants are also responsible for buying their own food and cooking for themselves. On average a participant spends 600-1800 reais a month on total although of course this varies on your lifestyle choices. These covers living costs such as food, drinks, transportation and house supplies. On the high end of 1800 reais you would be going out for dinner regularly and doing various weekend activities, but this is up to each participant hence we put a price range.



## Safety

- I. Alter do Chão: is a bohemian touristy beach town with very hippie vibes and low crime rates. Moreover, as it brings tourists from around the world there is a strong police presence in town to even protect pick-pocketing. As it is a small-town which survives off tourism, the locals know each other and are welcoming to foreigners.
- II. Wildlife: we are in the middle of well-preserved forest so we are lucky enough to be in the midst of abundant wildlife. Obviously, the wildlife comes with certain precautions we must take. We have snakes, scorpions, sting rays and spiders, some of which are venomous. We do provide training and orientation about dangerous animals. Moreover, simple steps such as always wearing shoes and emptying them out before use will significantly reduce the chance of a bite but there is always the chance so you will be asked to sign a liability waiver on arrival confirming you are aware of the risks. Also, wasp, ant and tick bites are common so be prepared! But don't worry because, firstly, it is very uncommon to even see these dangerous animals. Second, since IPBio opened no one has ever been bitten by anything venomous (excludes wasps and ants of course) on any of our reserves. Lastly, there is anti-venom in the emergency post in ever town.
- III. Common Sense: Always keep your wits about you and err on the side of caution. For example, our rivers have strong current in certain areas so do not swim in these locations. Moreover, there are rocks so diving is forbidden.
- IV. We provide pick-up from the airport and during the planned activities our applicants are always accompanied by our coordinators.



# How to Get Here

First things first, add the IPBio – Amazon Reserva Jutuarana Manager, Imran Viroomal, right now on whatsapp: +5593991703119 ... I am waiting.. ok now send him a message with your name and the month and year of the expedition you are interested in. Now we have your contact so we can stay in touch throughout your travels. Now you can let us know if there are any delays or ask us any questions you may have. Make sure you have a phone with roaming or international plan as you **won't be able to buy a Brazilian sim card** here. The other option is a e-sim but depends on if possible as only some phones are compatible.

You must fly into STM Santarém Airport - Maestro Wilson Fonseca (on Praça Eduardo Gomes, sometimes this name appears). Although the flights are quite long and can often have many layovers, the good news is we have airport pick-up so we will be outside with a vehicle waiting for you to take you to the IPBio house.

## Flights Restrictions:

- Arrival must be on Wednesday between 8:00am and 18:00pm, unless we specifically agree on different dates/times. One of the coordinators will pick you up, give you a free lift into town on your first day to do shopping and show you the house.
- Departure must be on a Tuesday at any time (many flights leave early in the morning, there is no issue if you need to book a crazy time!). Airport drop-off is not included but we can help you book a taxi, not the coordinator, to drop you off.
- Keep in mind, airport pick-up will only occur for agreed upon dates/times, if you book a different date/time you will need to pay for a normal taxi.
- Please reach out to us before booking at [imran@ipbio.org.br](mailto:imran@ipbio.org.br) or +5593991703119 on WhatsApp and once your flight is booked send us your flight details with times and flight numbers, so we can track for delays

Common national layovers are in Belém, Manaus, Brasília and it may be the case that you need to do multiple layovers in Brazil as Santarém is a small airport in the middle of the Amazon. But, once you get here the trip is over and we will personally pick you up from the airport.



**IPBio**

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## **Tourism in the Region**

*\*Not included in the program, we will direct you to a tourism agency*



**Ilha do Amor:** the postcard of Alter do Chão is the Ilha do Amor, love island, beach. Nestled between the Lago Verde and Tapajos river emerges a small island where locals set up palm huts which make wonderful food and drinks. Nothing can be more relaxing. Canoe and (in the dry season can walk across).

**Morro Piraoca:** if you are feeling more adventurous hike up the mountain to see a stunning 360 degree view of the region. Although the hike is relatively short, it is an intensely steep hike so only go if prepared and in good health. However, if you do make it up, the view will take your breathe away.

**Curimbo:** is a movement that began in 2010 to value the richness of Amazonian music, in particular Santarena. On Thursday, near the centre on Alter do Chão after 10 pm you can pay a small fee to enter and listen to this wonderful music and see the Amazonian dances where, generally, the women dress is colour long skirts with lots of bracelets, necklaces and flowers in their hair and move their hips to invite someone to dance. Men are also known to clap to ask for permission to dance.

**Canal do Jari:** If you want to see wildlife then this is the trip to do. There is a trail or canoe trip (depending on the season you visit) where it is common to see squirrel monkeys and sloths. In addition, you might get lucky and see owls or the very well camouflaged potoo bird and even might catch a glimpse of a boa constrictor if you are lucky! Moreover, throughout the tour, many species of birds and iguanas can be seen. You will also visit the famous Amazonian water lily, known as Victoria Amazonica, which can grow up to 2.5 meters in diameter. There is also a lady who discovered its edible quality and offers a unique culinary experience.

**Flona:** Although the hike is long, it is not steep and the rewards are enormous. At the top, you get to see the gigantic amazonian Sumaúma tree, also known as the kapok tree, which can grow up to 65 meters tall and its roots mean that it can take 26 people holding hands to get around the base of the tree.

**Ponta do Cururu:** Usually included in other tours but can be done independently also, ponta do cururu is the perfect place to see sunset. In the dry period, the beach extends far out so you can relax on a thin strip of sand and watch the red and purple sun go down.

**Lago Verde:** Great place to visit especially in the wet season when the forest becomes flooded so you canoe through the tree canopy. Visit Restaurante Caranazal as it has great food and a wonderful ambiance.

**Viewpoint (Mirante) of Santarém:** near the boardwalk of Santarém, an elevated view point was constructed which allows you to properly see the encounter of the two distinct coloured rivers of the Amazon and the Tapajos. Marvel at the sheer quantity of water.

**Ponta de Pedras and Pindobal:** for a gorgeous beach day, good seafood and a caipirinha.

**Arapuins:** is known for its never-ending stunning beaches in the summer dry period. You can also visit the community of Coroca which preserve a turtles and bees.

**Fish Market:** a large structure on the boardwalk of Santarém was constructed as a fish market. Many birds hover around to pick up leftovers and pink river dolphins swim just off the side which you can see during the rainy season when the water is high. You can even ask one of the local kids for a couple of reais to chuck some fish into the water so they appear. Then observe the diversity of fish found in the Amazon and buy a couple to try cooking them yourself. For beginner cooks, we recommend the fillet of pirarucu or if you want to grill a whole fish get tucunare or tambaqui.

**ZOONAMA:** is a zoo and rehabilitation center which is in partnership with UNAMA university. You can visit the zoo and also enter their rehabilitation zone for manatees which once cured or old enough are returned to the river next to a community which monitors them for a period until they final go back into the wild.

