Ecology of Bird Loss REU: The role of birds in forest regeneration on the Mariana Islands

Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Rota

Description: The Ecology of Bird Loss project (http://faculty.washington.edu/tewksjj/ebl) examines the effect of bird loss on forests through changes in seed dispersal and food web dynamics. Current research projects focus on the Mariana Islands and compare forests on Guam, where forest birds are functionally extinct due to predation by the invasive brown treesnake, to forests on three of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian and Rota), where native avifauna populations are still intact. This summer the EBL project will sponsor two REU students to examine the impacts of the loss of seed dispersers on regeneration of secondary forest on Guam, by comparing seed rain along the native/non-native forest boundaries on Guam to similar boundaries on nearby islands with birds (Saipan, Tinian and Rota). REU students will also participate in general research activities undertaken by the Ecology of Bird Loss project.

Requirements: The successful applicants must be able to pay attention to detail, work well individually and as part of a group, and be flexible (i.e. willing to move to another island at a moment's notice). Research in the Mariana Islands involves working in high heat and humidity, walking over rough terrain sometimes carrying heavy and awkward loads (i.e. rolls of chicken wire, flats of seedlings), and tolerating the tedious, and at times monotonous, work necessary for all scientific endeavors. If a candidate is allergic to bees, he/she must carry a bee sting kit and be trained in its use, as the chances of getting stung are high. Relevant field experience is desired, but not required. Eligible candidates must be current sophomores and juniors; exceptionally well-qualified freshmen may be considered. Candidates must be US citizens with a valid US driver's license. Women, minority students, and students from small colleges are encouraged to apply.

Payment and benefits: Successful applicants will receive a round-trip ticket from their place of residence to Guam, housing on all islands and transportation to and from field sites. In addition, a modest stipend (approx. $400-$500 per week) and all costs associated with the research will be covered by the project.

Duration: Applicants must be able to start between May 25th and June 15th and be available for 12 weeks. Applicants should note their availability in their application.

To apply: Candidates should email a resume, cover letter, unofficial college transcript, and two letters of reference to hooshiar@uw.edu. Applications are due on March 10, 2010. Please contact Eliza Hooshiar (hooshiar@uw.edu) if you have any questions related to the position.

Eliza Hooshiar
Crew Leader – Ecology of Bird Loss Project