Tropical Forest Ecology Field Research Internship – Guam & the Northern Mariana Islands

Description of project: The Ecology of Bird Loss project examines the effect of bird loss on forest systems through changes in seed dispersal and food web dynamics. The intern will help to conduct research comparing 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. For more information on the project, visit http://faculty.washington.edu/tewksjj/ebl

Duties of the interns: The intern will travel between the islands to set-up and maintain a variety of experiments. The intern may work independently or as part of a small team. Specific duties may include: checking seed traps, sorting through bags of leaves and seeds, mapping and identifying trees (including seedlings), caring for plants in a greenhouse setting, planting seedlings, collecting seeds from fruiting trees, building bird exclosures, collecting and identifying insects, and surveying spiders. Field crews work 8-10 hours a day, 5-6 days a week.

Requirements: The successful applicant 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 (e.g. sorting through leaves and seeds). Successful applicants must learn how to identify trees (including seedlings) quickly and accurately. 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. The intern must be a US citizen with a valid US driver's license.

Payment and benefits: Interns will receive valuable research experience in the field of conservation biology and field ecology – a great way to both determine whether graduate school in the life sciences is for you and to gain the necessary experience for a competitive application to graduate school. Successful applicants will also receive a round-trip ticket from any major airport in the US to Guam, housing on all islands, transportation to and from field sites and a monthly stipend of $500. Interns may also be able to receive research credit towards an undergraduate degree.

Duration: Interns must be able to commit to at least nine months in the islands starting March-May 2010. Applicants should indicate preferred start dates and duration in the cover letter.
To apply: Candidates should email a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references to hooshiar@uw.edu. Applications must be received by February 22, 2010. Please contact Eliza Hooshiar (hooshiar@uw.edu) if you have any questions related to the internship.

Eliza Hooshiar
Crew Leader - Ecology of Bird Loss Project
hooshiar@uw.edu
http://faculty.washington.edu/tewksjj/ebl