

PARQUE NACIONAL MARINO BALLENA



Volunteer Program

Description

Marino Ballena National Park is named after the Humpback Whales that migrate here each year to mate before returning to the frigid waters to the north. The park protects the largest coral reef on the Pacific side of Costa Rica and the Ballena Islands, where humpback whales can be seen with their young between December and April and in September and October.

Playas Uvita and *Ballena* are relatively unvisited stretches of white and golden sand. The largest coral reef on the Pacific Coast of Central America forms a

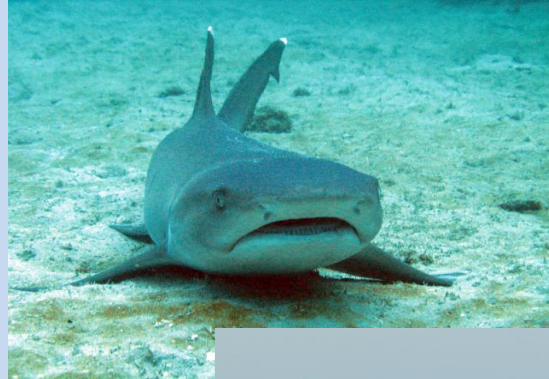
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crescent necklace with the three small islands known as *Las Tres Hermanas* (three sisters) and *Ballena* Island as the center piece. Olive Ridley and Hawksbill turtles can be seen laying their eggs on night visit to the beach between May and November.

We work with national and international volunteers to preserve Marino Ballena National Park. Join us!



Location

The National Park is about 120 miles (190 km) southwest of San José on the Pacific coast. The park stretches from the southern end of Playa Hermosa to the northern end of Playa Piñuela and about 9 miles (15 km) seaward. The nearest town is Uvita, 4 km away.



How to get there

Travel to the area is easy and can be done in a number of different ways. Public transportation in Costa Rica is quite inexpensive and you can get almost everywhere by bus. When you are sure where you are going we will give you the bus schedule and the final tips to get to your host park.

General Tasks

The most important requirements for this volunteer program are:

Hard working skills, ecologically sensitive, willing to learn about new cultures and the most important one: enthusiasm.

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In most of the projects there will be a volunteer coordinator in charge to assign the jobs but you are welcome to help anytime you consider is needed. We appreciate creativity.

- ◆ Maintenance and reconstruction of the Trails
- ◆ General infrastructure maintenance
- ◆ Tourist attention
- ◆ Control Walks



Accommodation

The volunteers will be placed in the park ranger's house. Electricity is available.

Food

It will be provided at the National Park. The food is Costa Rican typical food so you will be eating a lot of rice and beans and they are mainly served with some type of meat and sometimes you can enjoy tropical fruits. If you are vegetarian or have any special dietary restrictions let us know. In most of the cases there is a cook in charge of the meal preparation but if not you may have the chance to learn how to prepare Costa Rican food.

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Free time

You can choose your free day; you can leave early morning and be back before dusk.

What to bring

- * High quality Rain gear (it can really rain in the tropics).
- * Good quality shoes for walking (in turtle projects walks can be very long) and sandals
- * Flashlight and batteries (headlamps are a very good idea as well as rechargeable batteries).
- * Alarm clock (battery powered) and a wristwatch.
- * Swimsuit
- * First-aid kit (if you have special medication let us know, anti itch cream is a

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good idea tropical ,mosquitoes can be vicious)

- * Insect repellent.
- * Towel (fast drying ones are ideal).
- * Waterproof Sunscreen (bring a lot, sun rays are very strong).
- * Sunglasses.
- * Camera and film (water proof can be a good idea for baby turtles in the water)
- * Journal (it will be an unforgettable experience)
- * Light clothing (it dries fast)
- * Bring a jacket it can get a little chilly
- * Rubber boots (is not compulsory)
- * Mosquito net and bed linen (sleeping bag is an option as well)
- * Personal hygiene items
- * Snacks (you will be provided with 3 meals per day)
- * Entrainment things like: books, music, guitar, paints, cards, jenga are nice to socialize
- * Pocket Spanish dictionary (may be useful)



Recommendations

Please keep your belongings in order, maintain your personal hygiene (due to tropical weather conditions it is highly recommended to shower everyday), do not seat at the table without a shirt and keep good manners. Every National Park has

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specific behavior rules so please follow them. It is prohibited to drink alcohol and to use illegal drugs.



Association of Volunteers for Service in Protected Areas

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