



# CECCOT VOLUNTEER PROJECT 2009



## Travel Information

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Primary contacts:

Ashley Bassett, at field station starting 15 June 2009

In US: 206-218-9569 (until 15 June 2009)

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Ursula Valdez

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#### Emergency support contacts:

In US:

Daniel Froehlich

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In Peru:

Beto Valdez (Ursula's brother, good in English)

Urb. Santa Monica J.C. Mariategui C-6, Cusco, Peru

Phone: (51)-990-83200

Cell phone: (51)-84-496-31871

#### US embassy in Lima:

Avenida La Encalada cuadra 17 s/n (=“Sin numero” no number)

Surco Lima 33, Peru

Tel: (51-1)434-3000

Fax: (51-1)618-2397

Office hours: Monday- Friday 8 am-5pm

<http://lima.usembassy.gov/>

#### Destination: Centro de Educacion, Ciencia y Conservacion Tambopata (CECCOT)

City: Puerto Maldonado

Physical address: Km 9.5 Carretera Tambopata Bajo, Tambopata, Madre de Dios

No telephone, use Ashley's email above for contact, checked 1-2 times per week

Field Station Conditions: rustic, in line with our low-impact philosophy: essentially no electricity, composting toilets, solar showers, drinking water from town, etc. CECCOT is a young organization; our goals are more targeted on developing programming than luxury-upgrading to our facilities. Volunteer flexibility will likely be necessary and will certainly be highly appreciated!

## **TRAVEL TO CECCOT**

### **Travel information:**

#### **International Flight:**

From the US, all flights to Peru arrive in Lima, the capital. Prices for International flights to Lima from the US are very variable, currently about \$500 from Miami, \$650 from Los Angeles, and \$900 from Seattle. LanPeru is a preferred carrier for many travelers. Most US flights to Lima arrive in the evening; domestic flights to Puerto Maldonado (and other destinations) typically don't leave after the international flights get in. We recommend staying at a hotel overnight; we prefer transferring to Miraflores for the Lima overnight (some people stay in the airport—be very careful with your luggage—or at hotels near the airport, typically not as nice as in Miraflores).

#### **Domestic Flight:**

Flights from Lima to Puerto Maldonado leave during the day. Again, LanPeru has provided reliable service for us in the past. If you know your travel dates, CECCOT can arrange your domestic flights; we will add the fare to your station fee.

#### **In Puerto Maldonado:**

CECCOT lies 9.5km outside of town and is reachable by moto-taxi. You should arrange your arrival in Puerto Maldonado with the volunteer coordinator at CECCOT well in advance, by email, so that a mototaxi pickup can be arranged for you and so that the station is prepared with supplies.

### **Lodging suggestions in Lima:**

#### **1. Casa de Huéspedes Porta**

Porta 686

Miraflores, Lima

Peru

Telephone (+51)1-242 0505

Tollfree in US: 877-838 2236 (Reservations)

Email: [info@hostalporta.com](mailto:info@hostalporta.com)

#### **2. Posada Casa Azul**

Address: San Fernando 494 Miraflores, Lima

Telephone: (+51) 445-3776

[www.posadacasazul.com](http://www.posadacasazul.com)

### **Preparing to fly:**

Fill out and return the liability release form to us by mail (address above) or email. Please send complete payment payable to CECCOT/Ursula Valdez at the US address above at least two weeks before your arrival at CECCOT. Leave copies of your travel documents and itinerary to someone staying behind in the US and bring another set to keep with you in a separate place once in Peru.

We have prepared a luggage tag that will help identify your luggage faster while in transit. It is in an additional Word document. You can print it in color and fold it in two and get it laminated at a copy shop (one for each piece of luggage). Then cut it to size and punch a hole through it and tie it to your luggage.

### **Documentation for entering Peru:**

US citizens entering Peru do not need a special visa, just a valid passport and a travel card distributed by the airline on the inbound international flight. Entry visas for tourists valid for 90 days are standard upon

entering the country. If you are not a US citizen, please verify whether this information applies to your nationality with the Peruvian consulate/embassy in your country of citizenship.

### **Arriving in Lima**

When you arrive in Lima, you will first go through “Migracion” to have your passport stamped which serves as your tourist visa. Double-check the travel dates for your visa to avoid potential problems later. Then you will pick up your bags and go through customs. ATMs in the baggage claim area are available and reliable for accessing Peruvian cash from your bank account (see next).

### **Money, safety, airport etiquette, etc.**

The best approach is to use an ATM card to access your bank account for any needed cash. ATMs are available in all main cities, including the baggage claim area of the Lima airport and in Puerto Maldonado (Visa is the most widely accepted). Be sure you have Peruvian cash to pay for transportation to your hotel once you exit the airport in Lima. Many businesses accept VISA cards but only in big cities; once you are in smaller towns these services are reduced. We advise checking at exchange rates prior to your trip and to make appropriate adjustments to your budget.

In general, Peru is considered safe. However, like anywhere, there is an ever-present risk of theft, mainly in Lima. Travelers are most easily targeted during their initial arrival or during transit periods, when exhaustion lowers alertness, baggage is difficult to manage, and surroundings are unfamiliar. Be prepared before you arrive! Financial instruments and critical documents should be carried in a money belt or neck pouch tucked under your clothing, **not** in a pocket or an accessible outside pocket of a baggage item. Electronics should be inside your bags before you exit the baggage claim area at the Lima airport.

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP**

### **Climate in Puerto Maldonado:**

Dry (drier) season is from May to October, but remember, this is the rainforest! It can rain anytime. Wet season starts in November and continues through late March. Bring rain gear; sturdy umbrellas are actually great when not working. Days are mostly hot with lots of humidity, though early morning can be a little chilly. Occasionally there can be “frijes” (cold fronts) that can be cold with night-time temperatures in the 50’s, especially in June-September, so bring something warm (like a fleece jacket), just in case (see below).

### **Health**

Travelers to the Amazon are often concerned with health risks. That’s not a bad idea! There are a number of diseases unfamiliar to North Americans, but some preparation and awareness can help you to manage those risks effectively. Here is a short primer.

#### *Immunizations*

##### **Required:**

Yellow fever (one shot – lasts for 10 years). **THIS IS A REQUIREMENT** for entering the Peruvian Amazon.

##### **Recommended:**

tetanus-diphtheria (each booster lasts 10 years and is recommended whether or not you travel!)

polio booster (each booster lasts 10 years)

typhoid (injection or oral, lasts 3-5 years)

Make sure that you have the little yellow WHO booklet where all immunizations are duly stamped (ask your doctor). Health insurance policies may cover immunizations, so check on this before proceeding.

Note that yellow fever immunizations are virtually free in Peru, obtainable at most public health clinics. Since it is a live vaccine, you must have received the shot 10 days to two weeks before arriving in the Amazon in order to develop the antibodies that protect against infection with the disease. It can also elicit painful headaches in some people. While they rarely check, if you cannot show proof of immunization on arrival at the Puerto Maldonado airport, they will give you the shot there. We strongly recommend getting this shot prior to arrival in the Amazon.

The risk of typhoid and Hepatitis A are extremely low to non-existent in the area of the field station; if you intend to travel elsewhere in Peru or other places in South America, then we recommend them.

### *Diseases*

#### *Malaria*

There are two options here, depending on your approach to risk management. The first is to not take anything, since the risk of contracting malaria at the center is extremely low. The second is to take malaria prophylaxis medications. There is no immunization available. Recommendations for the appropriate prophylaxis vary; most common are a combination of Chloroquine and Paludrine, Mefloquine (Lariam), or Malarone. Most doctors in the US recommend Mefloquine, though it can have severe side effects. If you are worried about malaria, you should discuss it with your doctor. If you plan to travel to malaria-prone areas in Peru or other places in S. America, then you might think about bringing prophylaxis.

#### *Leishmaniasis and Dengue*

While these diseases have been reported for the region of Madre de Dios, they are associated with higher densities of human settlements. At CECCOT and its surroundings, there have not been any cases reported in the 10+ years that the Campoys have been living there. So far, we have not observed the sand flies responsible for transmitting Leishmaniasis during any of our visits in CECCOT. It is wise though, to be proactive at preventing any possibility of infection by making sure you cover your skin early in the morning and later in the day when the sand flies are active. Always cover your bed conscientiously with the mosquito net that is provided at CECCOT.

### *Prescription drugs & medication*

We will have a basic first-aid kit with us and access to decent medical care at Puerto Maldonado (9 km away). However, you should bring a small supply of first-aid materials according to your special needs. We recommend pain relievers, antiseptics, antihistamines, hydrocortisone cream, band-Aids, etc. If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to insect stings (e.g. bee, wasp), you should bring an anaphylaxis kit (Anakit) or epipen. You should bring a sufficient supply of any prescription medication you may need (be sure to leave these in their original bottle with the prescription handy in case you are asked at customs).

### *Medical insurance*

Please be sure that you have medical insurance while traveling in Peru. If your current insurance doesn't cover such costs as emergency medical evacuation, then you should consider supplementing with a separate travel policy, which can now be obtained online.

## WHAT TO PACK

### **Documents to remember:**

Passport

Airline ticket or e-ticket print-out

Money, ATM card, credit card

Immunization booklet

Note: It's a good idea to have photocopies of all your important documents (passport, airline ticket, etc.) in case the originals get lost or stolen. Keep this material separate from the original documents. In general when traveling, a laminated color copy of the personal data in your passport cut to the size of a credit card is a good way to keep your passport info handy without exposing your passport to theft or confiscation. Keeping all of these documents in a waterproof envelope or zip-loc bag is advisable.

### **Clothes:** definitely pack lightly!

*For the field –*

T-shirts (3-4)

Light long-sleeved shirts for bug protection while working during the day (3-4)

(we recommend wearing long-sleeve shirts in the evening too, when flies and mosquitoes are most active, to minimize your exposure to the off-chance risk of contracting a nasty tropical disease, although the risks for leishmaniasis, dengue or malaria in the area are exceedingly low)

Fleece jacket for occasional temperature drops

Durable long cotton pants or quick-dry (the best!) (2-pairs)

Several pairs of thick socks (for protection against biting ants)

Bandannas

River lovers should bring a bathing suit for swimming in the Tambopata River (esp during the dry season)

Laundry services are available in Puerto, so you won't have to hand wash your clothes in the Tambopata☺.

We do not recommend Capilene clothes for field work since it has a tendency to take on odors that are impossible to get rid of in areas with high humidity! They may be suitable for cooler nights. A pack-towel or a sarong (which dry super quick and are lightweight) work great to ensure that you always have a dry piece of cloth on hand. During the day and indoors you may want to wear shorts and t-shirts, but if you are wandering around be aware that chiggers are present. Chiggers are tiny mites that can cause skin irritations and horrible itching in some people. They do not transmit any diseases but they can cause discomfort.

Bring your own sheets and towels; these can be purchased at the local market in Puerto Maldonado.

*Weather gear –* rain jacket (preferably breathable), poncho (especially useful for boat rides and carrying while in the field); collapsible but sturdy umbrella (sounds a bit strange, but very useful when waiting out a downpour).

*Footwear –* lightweight hiking boots (we normally wear Goretex boots or rubber boots on the trails); rubber knee-high boots which you can buy in Puerto Maldonado very cheap (unless you need >11 men's size). Also bring camp **and** town shoes (e.g. sandals/flip-flops and sneakers).

### ***Suggested Personal Equipment:***

*Essential –*

Binoculars, great not just for bird lovers

Headlamp and spare flashlight (bring extra bulbs)

Rechargeable batteries (we will have a small supply of solar chargers for AA size batteries. If you have special requirements bring your own spare or already charged batteries). There is no electricity at the center, but we may be able to send a charger or two to town and get some extra batteries charged that way. Electricity in Peru is 220V.

Daypack

Reusable water bottle (2 liter capacity advisable)

A small Tupper ware for a sandwich or snacks and cloth napkin (marked for personal identification)

Ziploc freezer bags in various sizes, to keep your gear dry and free of mold

Personal cloth napkin

Pocket knife

Hand-sanitizer lotion (e.g., Purell)

Biodegradable toiletries (shampoo, conditioning, soap, toothpaste) Dr. Bronner's is a great choice.

Watch (with alarm)

Insect repellent (minimize the use of high concentration of DEET if possible. Good alternatives are Natrapel. Lemon Eucalyptus, etc.)

Sunscreen, sunglasses, sun hat and rain hat

Extra eyewear if applicable (with your prescriptions and lens solutions; many brands are unavailable in Puerto Maldonado).

Dry bag (useful for cameras and water-sensitive equipment if caught in the rain while hiking or traveling by boat)

### **Miscellaneous, not essential but useful....**

Sewing kit

Camera and extra memory cards

Desiccant (reusable silica-gel or Drierite; try photo or hobby stores)

Hand lens (for looking close up at cool insects, plants, etc.)

Field guides if you're interested in Peruvian wildlife

Spanish dictionary/phrasebook

Notebooks, journal

Pencils, pens, etc.

Reading material

Note: Puerto Maldonado (9km away) is a city that has many items available for purchase; you may choose to purchase items there instead of packing them all in with you (they will be cheaper too). For example: rubber boots (unless your feet are larger than men's size 11), tupperware, utensils, fabric, some medicines, and others).

### **Don't bring:**

Recreational drugs

Leather items: our experience shows that many leather items (knife sheaths, binocular pouches, wallets, etc.) tend to succumb to mold infestations in the humid climate at CECCOT

Extra packaging and disposable items: Puerto Maldonado has a poor waste management system and much trash ends up in the river. By minimizing the trash we bring to the Amazon, we can minimize our contribution to local pollution.

### **Donations**

Because CECCOT is a young organization certain materials are in short supply. If you have room in your bags we are always in need of materials for students that will be helping CECCOT during and after we leave, suggested materials include bird identification guides, field books, pens, sun hats, rain ponchos,

binoculars, rechargeable batteries, flashlights, mosquito nets, etc. Additionally, while we are working to raise money for gardening tools, any donations are appreciated. If you're interested in contributing with gardening supplies, including gloves, small shovels, clippers, etc., they will definitely be put to good use.

CECCOT is building a library of field guides and reading materials; your contributions are welcome. Duplicates can be used at the local schools.

### **Conservation Policy**

We make every effort to minimize the impact on the environment caused by any of the activities conducted at CECCOT. This is a matter of our organizational policies as well as our own personal choices. While we compost all the organic matter we generate, we want to minimize the amount of solid waste. Unfortunately, Puerto Maldonado does not have recycling facilities.

To assist CECCOT with this goal, we ask you to consider re-usability and sustainability as you make your packing decisions. Bring only the essentials and plan to return with everything you bring, including packaging, plastic containers, plastic bags, even items billed as disposable, such as non-biodegradable hand wipes. The issues are always larger than meets the eye. In this case, the Puerto Maldonado landfill is overflowing and poorly contained. As in many parts of the world, much of that garbage ends up in the rivers. We encourage your support in these efforts and hope also to raise awareness of how much impact we all have in our daily life that we often don't even notice or take for granted.

To promote these efforts, we included on the packing list refillable water bottles, cloth napkins, and a reusable container for packing lunches, snacks and other food. We will have safe drinking water available in large-capacity containers for refills at all times. If you prefer not to take your containers back to the US, we will be happy to add them to CECCOT's inventory for future programs!

Thanks for being part of CECCOT; we look forward to working with you!

Ashley Bassett, Ursula Valdez and Daniel Froehlich  
Spring 2009