



# Monteverde, Costa Rica

## John Jackson

**Program:** CIEE Summer Tropical Ecology and Conservation - Summer 2019

**Majors:** Biology & Youth Education

### Earning the Research Experience Badge:



As part of the program, I did an independent research project on a colorful little bird known as the Long-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*). It has a remarkable mating display which involves two males working together. I was interested in doing an experiment where

I simulated another pair of birds to see their response. This project had me partner with the Children's Eternal Rainforest and Santuario Ecológico in the Monteverde area.

After two weeks of trials, I unfortunately, had limited data. My results ended up backing up previous results. I made some mistakes in my experimental data, so I really wasn't testing anything new. However, I think this was a valuable experience, as I learned a lot about setting up an experiment, and running one. I also had to write a paper on my project, which was really the first time I wrote a scientific paper. This was one of the main reasons I wanted to do this program in particular. I also was interviewed by an intern at the Children's Eternal Rainforest about my project and the birds. This was really cool as it added to the whole experience of doing the research. At the end of the program, there was a symposium and everyone on the program presented their results in a short talk. I have watched many at the labs I have volunteered at on campus, which was fun to take what I have learned from them and apply to my own project.



### Transferable Skills:



I have been able to apply skills I learned abroad back at home. I have already had to write a scientific paper for another class, which put my experience writing while abroad to use. During my learning abroad I also got exposed to many different ideas and concepts. This has made me think more critically, and this has had some impact on my lifestyle with an eye towards conservation and sustainability. It was really cool to live among Costa Ricans for several months and see both the cultural differences, but also the innumerable similarities. I think this experience, in which I learned so much and got out of my comfort zone, will have a wonderful impact on my future.

**"Through learning biology and conservation concepts in the tropics and then doing an independent research project, this program has made me a better biologist and researcher. I felt connected to the local community and the natural world while abroad. This amazing experience will be instrumental in guiding my future goals and choices."**