

# **BIOL 100 BRAZILIAN ECOSYSTEMS**

## **Austin College January term 2007**

### **Information Sheet**

This trip will explore 3 threatened ecosystems in Brazil: the Atlantic Rainforest, the Cerrado (Grasslands), and the Amazon Rainforest. Emphasis will be made on how factors such as climate, geology and soil, and evolutionary history interact to determine the location and functioning of these ecosystems. Discussion will include how global climate change and changes in land use may alter these ecosystems. The class will focus on how to develop sustainable ways for people to coexist with these ecosystems. A bilingual Brazilian biologist will be with us throughout the trip to describe the biological diversity and Brazilian culture.

### **ITINERARY**

#### **VALE DO RIO RIBEIRA (Ribeira River Valley) – 7 days**

**Main Ecosystem:** Atlantic Rainforest and mangroves. The tropical rainforest has abundant vegetation and is famous among birdwatchers. By the seaside we can see animals associated with the mangrove and the estuary.

**General information:** Located in the south of São Paulo State, the remoteness of this region allowed for the preservation of both the traditional culture and the rainforest. The high biodiversity is due to the unique mixture of mangrove estuaries with tropical rainforest. We will visit the largest continuous preserved area of the remaining 7% of Atlantic Rainforest. During this part of the trip we will sleep in very simple accommodations run by the traditional people of Cardoso Island.

#### **JALAPÃO SAFARI – 7 days**

**Main Ecosystem:** Cerrado or Grassland/Savanna.

**General Information:** This region, in the heart of Brazil, is a place where nature is still practically untouched. The streams form beautiful waterfalls on their way to the Tocantins river valley, and provide living conditions for the diverse fauna and flora. Activities will include hiking, jeep trips, visiting spectacular sand dunes, and swimming in the rivers and waterfalls. Accommodations will be in tents with inflatable mattresses.

#### **AMAZÔNIA (MANAUS-RIO TAPAJÓS-BELÉM) – 6 days**

**Main Ecosystem:** Amazon Rainforest – the size of the trees, the rich biodiversity, and the multitude of the animals living in the canopy is amazing in the largest tropical rainforest in the world.

**General Information:** A day each will be spent in Manaus & Belém to visit research institutes associated with the rainforest. We will travel by boat down the Rio Tapajós. In Santarém, we will hear about the efforts of “Projeto Saúde e Alegria”, a non governmental organization that deals with health issues and sustainable development alternatives in the Amazon. The trip will include hikes in the rain forest, interactions with traditional people, and accommodations at the Amazon Ecopark Jungle Lodge, including an overnight stay in the jungle, sleeping in hammocks.

Cost of trip: \$4570 – this includes international & Brazilian airfare, lodging, meals, and entrance admissions.

Class Organized by Keith Kisselle. An interview is required before registration. Good physical condition will make the trip more enjoyable.

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