

Field assistant needed! Sea Lion Project Galápagos

We are looking for **two field assistants** to join the upcoming field season of the **Sea Lion Project Galápagos**, a long-term research project on Galápagos sea lions (*Zalophus wollebaeki*) conducted by the research group of **Prof. Oliver Krüger** at the Department of Animal Behaviour, Bielefeld University, Germany.

<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/fakultaeten/biologie/forschung/arbeitsgruppen/behaviour/research/galapagos-sea-lion/>

Fieldwork will take place from **end of October to middle of December 2026** on **Caamaño**, a small islet (300m diameter) near Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos. The project has studied the Caamaño population since 2003, with most animals individually marked. The field season will contribute to long-term research on **population dynamics, life history, social behaviour, personality, and foraging strategies**. Work includes daily census rounds, behavioural observations, behavioural response tests, captures and handling of sea lions for tagging and growth assessment, biologging deployments and recoveries, and sample collection. Fieldwork is physically and mentally demanding and requires walking and climbing over difficult volcanic terrain, working in strong sun and close to the ocean, handling wild animals, and collecting high-quality data under challenging conditions.



Caamaño is isolated and has **no facilities**. The field team will live on the island for 6-7 weeks in tents, share all camp duties, and work under truly primitive conditions. There are no sanitary facilities, fresh water is limited to drinking and cooking, and food is simple. Visits to other islands during the field season is not possible. Applicants must be physically fit, mentally resilient, reliable, and able to work closely in a small team of four colleagues continuously for weeks.

The positions are suitable for students or early-career researchers with a background in biology, animal behaviour, behavioural ecology, population ecology, evolutionary biology, marine biology, or related fields. Previous experience with sea lions is not required, but experience with fieldwork, camping, behavioural observations, biologging, or handling wild animals is a strong advantage. Good spoken and written English is required; Spanish skills are highly desirable.

The positions are **unpaid**, but project-related expenses during the field season will be covered, including travel to the Galápagos Islands, accommodation while in town before and after the field season, and food while on Caamaño. Field assistants are responsible for their own personal field clothes, equipment, and private expenses.

We also welcome applications from candidates interested in developing a **future PhD project** within the Sea Lion Project Galápagos. PhD funding cannot be guaranteed at this stage. However, suitable and interested candidates who successfully complete the field season will receive support in developing a PhD proposal and applying for funding. Applicants interested only in the field assistant position are equally welcome.

To apply, please send a single PDF including (I) a short letter of motivation, (II) your CV including relevant fieldwork or animal-handling experience, and (III) contact details of one or two referees.

Please send applications or informal inquiries to:

Dr. Jonas Schwarz
jonasschwarz@uni-bielefeld.de

Review of applications will begin on 13th of July until positions are filled. We particularly encourage applications from Ecuadorian nationals and from candidates with strong field experience, motivation, and the ability to work responsibly under remote and challenging conditions.