



IRES Wildlife Conservation Training Program in the Caribbean

Read carefully this 2-page form and send a signed PDF version to jkiszka@fiu.edu and gannd@fiu.edu along with the rest of the requested materials by **November 10th, 2025, at 11:59pm**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Please refrain from inquiring about your application until the dates outlined in [our website](#).

Program summary:

The research goal of this program is to investigate the status of endangered and charismatic terrestrial and marine species of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the threats driving their density and distribution. Students can choose to participate in one of two projects: Parrot Conservation or Cetacean Conservation.

Parrot research and conservation project: SVG has a rich biodiversity of terrestrial species that inhabit the island's tropical forests. Among them is the vulnerable and endemic St. Vincent Amazon (*Amazona guildingii*), a species of national importance to SVG. This charismatic parrot with multicolored plumage has decreased significantly as a result of habitat loss, poaching, disease and trapping for the cage-bird trade. However, there's limited information on the impact that these threats. The goal of this project is to assess the relative abundance and distribution of *A. guildingii*, investigate the main drivers of its decline, and identify the most effective mitigation strategies that could contribute to population growth. Students involved in this project will do foot surveys of parrot habitat, collecting data on detection cue (visual or auditory), activity (perched, flying, feeding, nesting), and when possible, number of individuals. They will also support the team in doing forest vegetation plots to characterize parrot habitat, and in-person interviews to assess the relationship between people, forests and parrots. This project will help develop local capacity to monitor parrots on-island and will contribute to informing conservation management strategies of SVG national bird.

Cetacean research and conservation project: More than 20 species of whales and dolphins (cetaceans) occur off St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and several of them are hunted for local consumption. However, the most common cetacean species in SVG is one of the rarest cetacean species around the globe: the dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia sima*). Data from a previous IRES program in SVG highlighted the existence of a globally important area for dwarf sperm whales off St. Vincent, where encounter rates are significantly higher than in any other known place around the globe. We will collect photo-identification on these animals to estimate their movements and abundance and use acoustic and drone technologies to investigate the behavior and health of this species. We will also collect a range of data from all species encountered. We will spend a significant amount of time Our research will help inform conservation management and help develop local capacity to monitor cetaceans.



Eligibility

- Potential students must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or permanent residents of the United States
- Undergraduates and graduates scheduled to graduate in Fall 2026 or later are welcome to apply
- Applicants must attend the entire 1-year program, including all Spring and Fall classes
- Applicants should have completed at least two semesters of coursework in environment-related topics.

Applicant information (please type in):

Name:

Address:

City:

Zip code:

Email:

University:

Study level: Undergraduate ____ Masters ____ PhD ____

Major:

Year in Study:

Current GPA:

Career Goal:

Project of Interest: Parrot program: ____ Cetacean program: ____

Applicant Signature

Date