



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 13th, 2026, 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 (SVG), 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: St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a rich biodiversity of terrestrial species that inhabit the island's tropical and montane cloud forests. Among them is the vulnerable and endemic St. Vincent Amazon (*Amazona guildingii*), a species of national importance to SVG. Its numbers have declined under habitat loss, poaching, disease, and trapping for the cage-bird trade, and the effect of each threat on population dynamics remains poorly quantified. Working alongside Forestry staff and NGO partners, interns help build local capacity to monitor parrot populations and apply the results to conservation management. Interns assist in collecting field evidence needed to assess island-wide distribution, seasonal habitat use, and foraging behavior, to identify drivers of population change, and to evaluate mitigation strategies that can support population growth and long-term conservation. We focus on three research activities (1) habitat and population surveys recording parrot behavior and estimating the number of individuals, (2) habitat mapping using remote sensing and combined with passive acoustic monitoring, model seasonal habitat use, and (3) conduct in-person interviews on the relationships among people, forests, and parrots.

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. 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
- Undergraduate and graduate students scheduled to graduate in Fall 2027 or later are welcome to apply
- Applicants must attend the entire 1-year program, including all Spring and Fall classes (Spring in-person 16-hour Workshop at FIU, Fall remote course of 16 class hours)
- 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