

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This program is split between Brackenhurst, an eco-campus in Limuru, and the Pardamat Conservation Area in Maasai Mara. The course acquaints students with some of the threats to wildlife and biodiversity in East Africa while exposing them to certain local communities that are paving the way to important solutions.

Global climate change phenomena, population growth, and increasing human-wildlife conflict are some of the challenges and threats to wildlife populations we are facing all over the world. These necessitate a re-examination of how we can help protect and preserve some of the world's most important and diverse ecosystems. This program importantly probes students' pragmatic problem solving and field-based skills. In turn and in line with EDU Africa's Transformative Learning philosophy, the program will encourage and facilitate students' holistic growth (in fields of intercultural competence, professional development, global citizenship, personal growth, and intellectual growth) during their time abroad.

PROGRAM COSTS

USD5 105

(inclusive of room, board, tuition and scheduled activities)

Optional single supplement at Brackenhurst available



ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION IN KENYA

2-29 JULY 2023

LOCATIONS

Brackenhurst is approximately 40 kilometers north of Nairobi and is set in a safe and peaceful environment among the rolling hills of Limuru, an area famous for its tea fields. Students will be accommodated on-site at Brackenhurst Learning Center. Brackenhurst is home to one of the largest collections of indigenous plant species in East Africa, with over 1 000 tree and shrub species, many of which are endangered or thought to be extinct within their original distribution zones. It's also an ideal base from which students can explore the surrounding Kenyan wetlands.

The **Maasai Mara** conservancies were established under the rationale of conserving the environment and its wildlife alongside a mandate to protect, empower, and improve the livelihood of the local Maasai communities. These conservancies provide an ideal location to study ecology, human influences on the savanna, and community-based conservation in East Africa.

In the Maasai Mara, students will be accommodated at the newly-developed educational and research hub in the Pardamat Conservation Area - The Wildlife Tourism College of the Maasai Mara. Most of the fieldwork will be based within Pardamat, a dynamic dual-use conservation area, with occasional visits to a neighboring conservancy as well as the renowned Maasai Mara National Reserve.

PRE-REQUISITES

A background in environmental science, conservation biology, agroecology, horticulture, development studies, wildlife studies, or related subjects is ideal (entering level 200 and above). Participants need to be culturally aware and open-minded to thrive in this program. All lectures and tutorials are conducted in English; hence a good command of the English language is essential.

KEY STUDY TOPICS

- Forestry and agroforestry
- Ecological restoration and monitoring techniques
- Indigenous vegetation and biodiversity
- Ethnobotany, traditional knowledge systems, and their uses for conservation
- Tree nursery management (species identification/propagation)
- Wetlands health and ecosystems services
- Community-based conservation versus state protection
- Wildlife monitoring/research practices (including transect game counts, camera trap grid design/maintenance, and mammal identification techniques)
- Human-wildlife conflict
- Nomadic pastoralism, rotational grazing, and grassland management

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this program, students should be able to:

- Contextualize their knowledge of historical and current threats to tropical wetlands, forests, and African savanna ecosystems
- Demonstrate an understanding of key terms, theories, and concepts related to East African wetlands, forest, and savanna ecologies
- Hone professional skills by demonstrating the use of appropriate evaluative techniques in wetland plant and animal investigation
- Develop cross-cultural understanding through studying the impact of culture and context on conservation in East Africa
- Demonstrate critical insights into community-based conservation, incentivizing conservation, and restoring damaged ecosystems
- Reflect on personal growth, challenges, and experiences during their time abroad through dedicated journal and reflection practices

EVALUATION

- Research Proposal
- Research Presentations
- Module Quizzes

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Walking long distances (i.e., 5km) over rough and muddy terrain during fieldwork
- Exposure to sun and wind during fieldwork
- Living in a setting without a consistent internet connection for the duration of the program
- Managing dietary needs with limited available options in some locations

FACULTY LEADERS



PROF STEWART THOMPSON

Stewart Thompson is a Professor of Biodiversity Conservation and has led the Spatial Ecology and Land-use Unit in Biological and Medical Sciences

at Oxford Brookes University for over 25 years. He has a particular interest in how threatened species use landscapes in response to policy and management initiatives. Much of his current work surrounds understanding herbivore population changes and movement patterns in protected areas. In the last decade, he worked on projects in the Maasai Mara as he investigated herbivore responses to the creation of wildlife conservancies and assessed aspects of eco-tourism impacts on wildlife.



DR SHARON KAHARA

Dr Sharon Kahara is an Assistant Professor in the Biology and Environmental Science Department at the University of New Haven,

Connecticut in the United States of America. Her home country is Kenya. She holds a Ph.D. from South Dakota State University and specializes in wetland ecosystem functioning in natural and modified landscapes, as well as wetland wildlife use. Her past research activities include evaluating the impacts of urbanization on aquatic systems in developing countries and investigating the effects of climate and human activities on wetland ecosystem service delivery.



APPLICATION DEADLINE: 15 MAY 2023
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