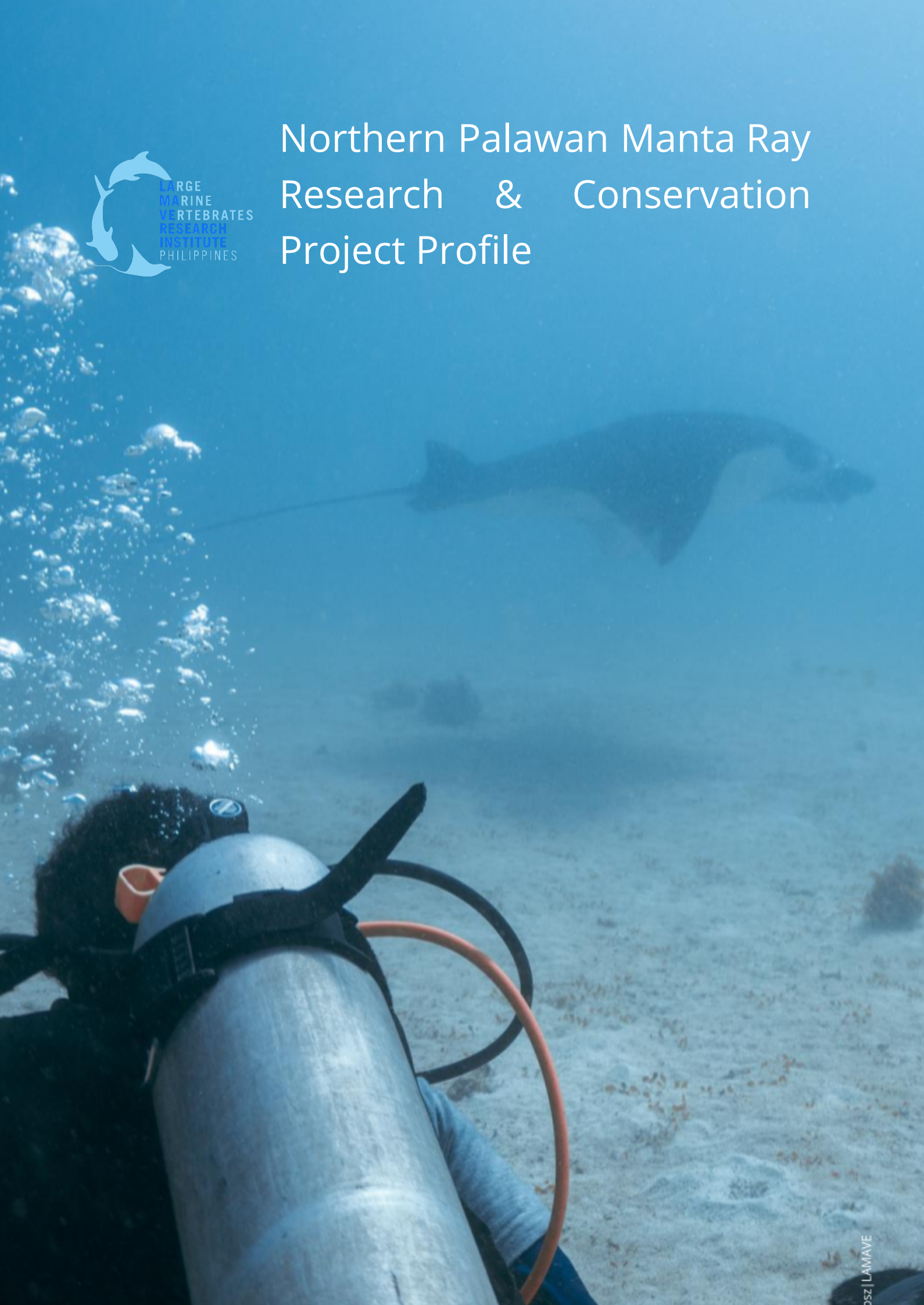


Northern Palawan Manta Ray Research & Conservation Project Profile



Project:	Northern Palawan Manta Ray Research and Conservation Project
Location:	Northern Palawan
Minimum stay:	2 months
Placement Contribution:	1,150 USD per month
Survey Season:	Year-round
Project Type:	Research, Scuba Diving, Exploration (2-3 diving days/week)
Key requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PADI Advanced Open Water Diver or equivalent ● Able to work long hours at sea ● At least 21 years old ● Positive attitude, attention to detail, contributive member of a small team ● Must have your own dive computer & surface marker buoy (SMB)



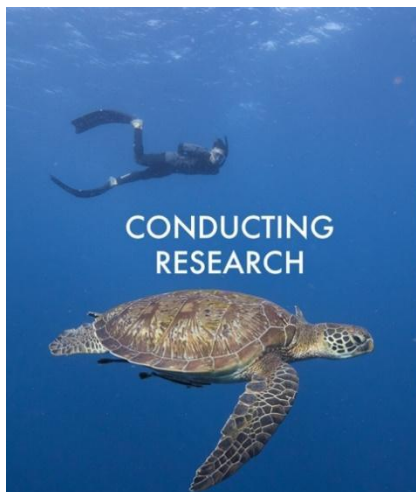
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About LAMAVE

Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines (“LAMAVE Research Institute”) is a Filipino non-profit organization dedicated to the research and conservation of marine megafauna and the marine environment in the Philippines. We focus our efforts on charismatic marine megafauna, using them as an umbrella species to protect the wider marine environment.

A key aspect of our work is to identify hotspots and quantify populations of species including whale sharks, turtles, and manta rays. Using photo-identification we are building national catalogues for these species and identifying key habitats within the country. We complement this work with the use of technology, such as satellite and acoustic tags, to help determine key habitat sites, home ranges, and migratory corridors of marine species. The results are shared with governments and stakeholders to work together, minimize impacts and develop tools for conservation management, such as creating or zoning marine protected areas or advising policy. [You can read more about our conservation impacts, here.](#)

There are three key components to our work



Applying research-based solutions to conservation challenges



Ensuring a legacy through the transfer of skills for long-term impact on the ground



Securing a future for marine megafauna by advancing the knowledge of the people that can protect them

Why the Philippines?

The Philippines is located in the center of the Coral Triangle, the 'global center of marine biodiversity', an area that is home to thousands of marine species, including large marine megafauna. Over 200 species of sharks and rays, 26 species of whales and dolphins, 5 species of turtles, and the dugong are all found within Philippine waters. However, many of these species are now listed as threatened or endangered due to a degradation of their natural environment, unregulated fishing practices, incidental capture, and pollution.

SCIENCE-BASED RESEARCH

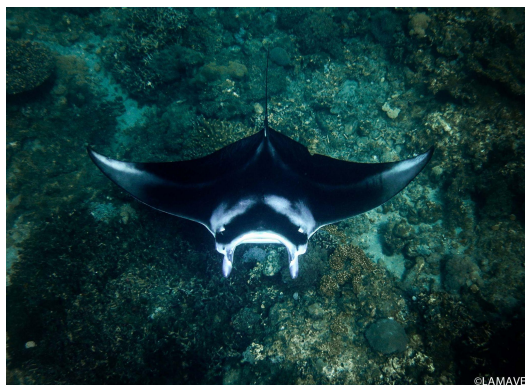
All LAMAVE research sites are based in the Philippines and, to date, the team has worked in ten different provinces including: Palawan, Bohol, Cebu, Southern Leyte, Negros Oriental, Davao Oriental, Misamis Oriental, Surigao del Norte, Sorsogon and Mindoro Occidental. We currently have eight active field sites studying whale sharks, rays, turtles, dolphins and sharks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

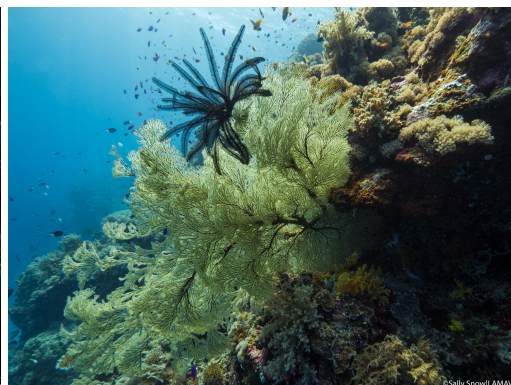
We firmly believe in engaging the public through community outreach programs to raise awareness for marine conservation. Working closely with local governments, communities, businesses and tourists we adopt an integrated approach combining research and education to protect the unique biodiversity of the Philippine seas.

FACILITATING THE NEEDS OF NATIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Active engagement and involvement with local stakeholders is crucial if we hope to provide the necessary changes to maintain and improve marine ecosystems.



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About the Project

The Northern Palawan Manta Ray Conservation Project aims to deepen our understanding of the manta ray population at a recently-discovered cleaning station and its socioeconomic value for fishers and tourism stakeholders. This information will be used to establish a community-led, science-based marine protected area (MPA).

This cleaning station is one of only three confirmed manta ray cleaning stations in the Philippines. Meaningful research to advise protected area planning and management is both critical and time-sensitive, as the cleaning station is located less than an hour's drive or sails away from dozens of dive shops in a nearby tourist town. Without effective research-based management recommendations in place, the currently-unprotected manta ray cleaning station is vulnerable to anthropogenic threats, including unregulated tourism, illegal fishing, and habitat destruction.

This project also aims to investigate unconfirmed reports of other manta ray aggregation sites near the cleaning station. These exploratory surveys will lay the groundwork for future conservation efforts of additional manta ray habitats, enabling protection across their local range.

Why do we need you?

Volunteers are a fundamental part of LAMAVE. Many of our projects rely on the hard work and dedication of volunteers from the Philippines and around the world. Volunteers collect data contributing to LAMAVE's research outputs, including scientific publications, policy, and education.



What do you learn?

By the end of your time here, you will be knowledgeable in manta ray research and conservation, sustainable tourism, underwater survey techniques, tropical marine ecosystem ecology, community-based marine protected area management, and manta ray biology and ecology.

You will also learn how to comfortably dive in various conditions, set up and deploy a Remote Underwater Video System (RUVS) survey, identify individual manta rays, process citizen science, understand different manta ray behaviors, and more!

Working Life

The team will work a 6-day week, with one day off a week. Days off are on a rotation schedule.

An average day starts between 8-9 am and work is generally finished by 5 pm, or once tasks are complete. Weather dependent, you will be in the water 2-3 days and on land 3-4 days a week.

Volunteers must be strong swimmers, competent SCUBA divers, and familiar with MS Office (especially Excel).



An example of a typical day

TIME	In-water day activity	On-land day activities
07:00	breakfast	breakfast
08:00	call time at dive shop	personal time
09:00	diving	data processing
10:00	diving	data processing
11:00	diving	data processing
12:00	diving	data processing
13:00	lunch	lunch
14:00	post-dive duties	data processing
15:00	post-dive duties	team activities
16:00	post-dive duties	team activities
17:00	end of day	end of day

Volunteer Requirements

Please ensure that you meet the following criteria:

- At least 21 years old
- Minimum commitment of 2 months
- PADI Advanced Open Water Diver or equivalent
- Have your own diving equipment (BCD, Regulators, dive computer- see full list below)
- Proficiency in English & information technology
- Strong swimming/snorkeling skills
- Physically fit enough to spend several hours a day on a boat and/or in the water, sometimes in rough conditions and current
- Ability to live closely with a small community and respect their culture
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Able to be flexible, for working in a remote area has a lot of unpredictability
- Comfortable living in a shared home and in a remote setting with extremely basic amenities
- Strong work ethic with a willingness to work long and sometimes irregular hours if necessary
- A degree in marine science, zoology, environmental sciences, or related subjects are preferred
- Strong interest in marine biology, research, and conservation

Equipment REQUIRED	Recommended general packing List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Laptop (essential for work) • USB or Hard drive that can carry more than 300gb of data • BCD and Regulator • Scuba Mask and Snorkel • Fins and Booties • Dive computer • SMB • Scuba wetsuit OR • Leggings and a long sleeve rashguard/knee-length board shorts + long sleeve rashguard • Hat & Sunglasses (polarized if possible) • Long (smart/jeans) trousers (for formal occasions) • Lightweight, long-sleeved tops and trousers recommended to protect against biting insects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towels • Small dry bag/ziplock bag for electricals • Casual clothing • Swimwear • Waterproof camera (for days off) • Insect repellent • Bandana • Rechargeable headlamp • Rechargeable fan • Ladies using tampons are encouraged to bring extra from home as they are less accessible here in the Philippines. If you are looking for a travel and environment-friendly alternative, many of our team recommend menstrual cups — it's worth trying this at home first

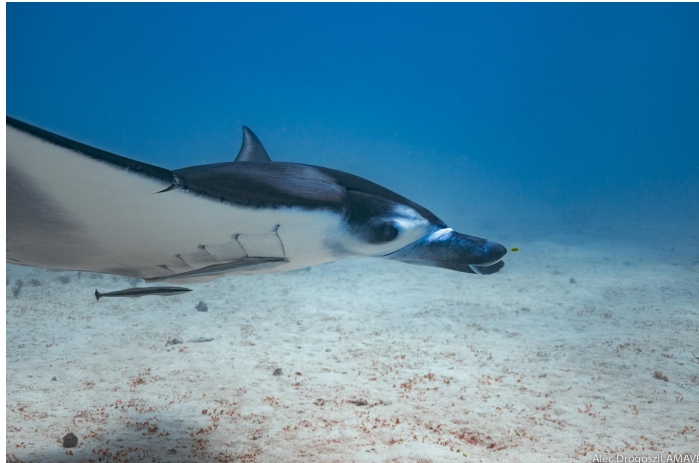
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Torch - the site has limited access to electricity
- Travel adapter
- Dry bag
- Small backpack
- Phone that is capable of running *WhatsApp*
- Rain coat
- Reef safe sunscreen

We strongly recommend to bring all required gear from home rather than trying to purchase here

Donation

Many of our actions to protect marine ecosystems in Southeast Asia rely on core funding. Research grants and independent funding support key initiatives and our team is continually fundraising. Volunteer donations play an incredibly important role in supporting LAMAVE's conservation outputs and are central in enabling the long-term activity of our research sites. To join the team, we request a contribution of USD 2300.00 for a two-month placement. This donation supports the long-term running of the project site and your place within the team during your stay.

Volunteers are central to our operation and we appreciate the financial commitment and hard work you put into the organization and its conservation goals. We look forward to having you join us in the field.



What's Included During Your Placement?

Accommodation

The project house is a communal, shared living space. All team members are required to stay at the project house throughout their stay, except in the case of a mandatory quarantine — this is for health and safety and teamwork purposes.

There is a kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms, a communal space, and an outside area for relaxing. Beds are within shared bedrooms and each volunteer will be given space for their items. There are generally 2-4 volunteers, a Project Leader, and a Research Assistant living in the house. The project houses use fans and not air conditioning. Amenities are basic but comfortable and the house has the character of a research base. All volunteers are expected to share the daily chores (i.e. shopping, cooking, washing dishes, filling up the water tank, locking up at night, etc.). Electricity is limited and restricted to certain hours of the day.

The project house is located in the municipality of El Nido, Northern Palawan, and is one of the more remote villages. Access to luxury goods, ATMs, and international food/ingredients is limited, with the closest town to these amenities being El Nido (45 - 60 minutes away).

There is Wi-Fi in the house. However, the signal is very weak and is also dependent on electricity availability. Internet access is available with a personal SIM card. We advise volunteers to purchase a local **Globe** SIM card, which can be used to obtain cheap internet deals. This is the only cellular network available in the area. Cell phone load cards are available in many nearby stores and range from PHP 100 to PHP 500. We highly recommend you bring or purchase a smartphone, as many of our project communications take place over WhatsApp.

Meals

You'll be provided with three meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Food and cooking are communal, so volunteers must provide their food intolerances, strict preferences, and allergies in their application. The majority of the time, the food we serve is vegan/vegetarian and is sourced within the local community. Ingredients are often limited but the cooking creativity of the team often makes up for this! Meat is available once a week or when those want it during special occasions such as team BBQ. Snacks and luxury items are not included.

Research Activities

Transport costs associated with the project's research activities will be covered. For example, transport to and from the field jump-off point and the project house, in-field boat-based surveys work, and other logistics associated with educational activities, training, community events, etc. You will be provided with a LAMAVE uniform and you

will use project equipment such as project underwater cameras and GPS devices during your placement.

What's Not Included In Your Placement?

Travel to the Project Site

You are expected to organize and cover the cost of travel to the project site.

The site is located on the island of Palawan in the Philippines. The easiest way to travel is from Manila by air and then by van once in Palawan. There are flights from Manila to Puerto Princesa City (~8 hours away from the site) and El Nido (~1 hour from the site). Make sure to check the flight departure schedules beforehand.

More information on travel within Palawan and to the project site will be provided to you once you are accepted as a volunteer.

Personal Diving Equipment

We recommend purchasing all or at least the majority of your gear before arriving in the Philippines. There is also the option to rent gear from the dive shops for PHP 500 a day. However, we strongly recommend that you bring your own.

Insurance and Medical Care

All volunteers are required to have medical insurance. The study sites for the projects are often in remote areas. All medical services in the Philippines need to be paid for by individual volunteers. Costs vary from PHP 50 for a consultation at the local hospital to PHP 8000 for a full CTI scan in most hospitals. Volunteers who contract a contagious disease, that may put other volunteers and staff at risk, may be asked to depart from the project study site for health reasons until appropriate health clearance.

Visas

On entering the country most visitors are allowed to stay in the country for 30 days without applying for a visa, but please check the terms for your nationality. Before the 30 days are over you must travel to an Immigration office to renew your visa. The first renewal lasts for 29 days and costs approximately PHP 3300. If you plan to stay in the country after this visa date, you will need to renew again and will be required to purchase an i-card (a tourist identity card) with your visa. This will cost approximately PHP 6000 for the i-card and a 1-month extension. *Please note this information was correct as of the 31st of August 2018 and may be subject to change. For more information regarding visas, visit <https://immigration.gov.ph/>.

Other Important Information

Vaccinations

No vaccinations (including the COVID-19 vaccine) are required to enter the Philippines (as of Oct 2023). However, we recommend that you check the current information on your country-specific pages and any national foreign travel advice to check for any updates or country-specific requirements.

We also recommend that you check with a travel doctor regarding vaccinations and any other personal health concerns before arriving in the Philippines.

For your safety LAMAVE strongly recommends that you have the following vaccinations:

- Rabies - Rabid dogs are found in the Philippines. Field sites are remote and located in rural areas. Stray dogs are common across the country.
- Tetanus - Tetanus is caused by a toxin released from Clostridium tetani and occurs worldwide. Tetanus bacteria are present in soil and manure and may be introduced through open wounds such as a puncture wound, burn, or scratch. Field sites are often in remote, rural areas.

Dengue Fever & Chikungunya

Dengue Fever

Dengue is a viral infection spread by mosquitoes. It's widespread in many parts of the world and does exist in the Philippines. In most people, the infection is mild and passes in about a week without causing any lasting problems, but in rare cases, it can be very serious and potentially life-threatening. There have been known cases of Dengue fever in the Philippines. There's no specific treatment or widely available vaccine for dengue, so it's important to try to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes when visiting an area where the infection is found. All volunteers must pack long-sleeve clothes and pajamas to be worn on placement and apply mosquito repellent. You must take responsibility for your well-being.

Chikungunya Virus

It is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms of chikungunya are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Most people feel better within a week. In some people, the joint pain may persist for months. There are no vaccines or medicines that prevent chikungunya. It is important to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes when visiting an area where the infection is found. All volunteers must pack long-sleeved clothes and pajamas to be worn on placement and apply mosquito repellent. You must take responsibility for your well-being.

For more information on vaccinations and disease read the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention link:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/philippines>

Food Intolerance & Allergies

Project accommodation, food, and cooking are communal and thus it is essential that you specify any food intolerance, strict preferences, or allergies in your application cover letter. Some food intolerances and allergies are impossible to control and accommodate in the project environment and for your safety you must give full disclosure in your application. Please note that many of our projects are unable to support strict vegan diets, this is due to the remoteness and the limited range of food in some of our sites, making it impossible to have a healthy balanced vegan diet.

Days off

Each team member will be given a dedicated day off each week to relax or travel. Days off can be spent taking in the many wonders and the unique culture of the Philippines.

Extended Holidays

As a volunteer you are contracted to assist LAMAVE for a minimum of 2 months, therefore should you wish to have time to explore the Philippines further (which we strongly advise you do!) please plan time before or after your stay with us, as during the two months placement we do not allow volunteers to take additional days off.

Professionalism

LAMAVE's research would not be possible without local and national government permission, community support, funders, and collaborators. Behaving professionally both in and out of the water is essential. LAMAVE has an important role to play and every team member, from staff to volunteers, is expected to work hard and act professionally.

Dress Code

On duty, you should wear your LAMAVE t-shirt, which you will be provided with. This is your uniform. Volunteers continue to represent LAMAVE, even after work is finished, therefore, we enforce a dress code that is consistent and inoffensive to the local community and culture.

Shorts must be at least mid-thigh in length. Shorts that reach just above the knee are preferred. Hot pants and very short shorts are forbidden. T-shirts and long-sleeve shirts are recommended. Spaghetti straps and slinky tops that reveal undergarments (see photos) are forbidden.



www.lamave.org

Grounds for Dismissal

Volunteers may be asked to leave the project if they display inappropriate behavior or attitude that disrupts work and the living environment, or portrays a negative image of the organization. Grounds for dismissal can also be as a result of the release of sensitive information to media/social media platforms. Dismissal is at the Project Leader's discretion. The use of drugs during the placement is prohibited and will result in immediate dismissal.



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How to Apply?

Fill in the application form on our website: <http://www.lamave.org/volunteer>

For more information, you can visit <http://www.lamave.org/volunteer-faqs> or email us at volunteer@lamave.org

We look forward to having you join the #LAMAVEfamily



THANK YOU | DAGHANG SALAMAT | MARAMING
SALAMAT