

SANTA CRUZ PUMA PROJECT

Organization/Agency: UCSC Environmental Studies Department
Supervisor/Sponsor Anna Nisi
Supervisor Title: Supervisor
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Number of interns needed: ~10 on-campus interns and up to 6 off-campus, all 2-units
Needed for quarters: Fall, winter, spring
Keep on file for one year



About the Santa Cruz Puma Project:

We have studied mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains since 2008. Our goals are to understand how mountain lions survive in an area that is highly impacted by people, develop new research technologies, and educate the public. As an intern, you can gain resume-building experience conducting cutting-edge research with large carnivores. We need interns who are proactive, independent, self-motivated, and communicate clearly. We offer two types of internships, an on-campus internship and an off-campus (field) internship. Please read the following descriptions carefully, select which internship you'd like to apply for, and then follow the relevant instructions for the application process.

Off-campus internship description:

Off-campus interns accompany experienced project personnel in the field to investigate GPS locations where pumas may have made kills, check trail camera stations. These interns must 1) dedicate one full day at a time on a regular day each week, 2) be in good physical condition to hike canyons off-trail through brush, 3) exhibit the ability to make common-sense choices, and 4) tolerate poison oak, ticks, and other field hazards.

To apply for the off-campus:

Send an email to scpp.internship@gmail.com with "off-campus internship" somewhere in the subject line. Include:

1. What day of the week you would like to work
2. Resume
3. Brief cover letter, stating why you are interested in participating, what you hope to get out of this experience, and outlining relevant previous experience and skills

If you seem like a good fit for the off-campus internship, we will send you a field questionnaire that asks you questions about previous experience and comfort level around things you may encounter during the course of puma fieldwork. After returning the questionnaire, we may set up a field half-day for you to join a field technician for a half day of fieldwork to ensure that the internship will be a good fit for you.

On-campus internship description:

On-campus interns will primarily be processing photo data from a large-scale grid of motion-activated trail cameras from the Santa Cruz Mountains. Motion-activated cameras are important tools in the field of wildlife biology, and they capture information about the entire wildlife community (including pumas, bobcats, foxes, deer, birds, and small mammals in our area) as well as human activity, as many of our camera traps are on human-use trails. These cameras are on human-use hiking trails, fire roads, and deer trails, which means that they will capture pumas and other mesocarnivores alongside smaller animals and humans. Interns will tag photos from these motion-triggered cameras using the program Adobe Bridge. Photo tagging entails adding information about the contents of a photo (i.e., what species is in it) to the

photo's metadata. Interns will view photos in Adobe Bridge, identify species present in each photo, and add appropriate tags to each photo given its species ID. Students will also have the opportunity to do a shorter project working with puma spatial data in Google Earth.

Photo tagging can be very exciting, especially when you get a photo of a puma or other elusive species that you don't often get to see in person, and it can be a fun way to learn more about the natural history of the area and can help you build skills in data management and processing, which are relevant to the field of wildlife biology and science generally. However, it can also be rather tedious in cases where there are thousands of photos of squirrels, mice, or hikers. Successful puma project interns must be willing to work with repetitive data and must be very attentive to detail, even when the contents of photos are slightly less than exciting.

Time commitment is 60 hours over the course of the quarter, and up to 12 of those can be spent in the field if you are interested in fieldwork as well. However, we cannot necessarily guarantee 12 hours to all on-campus interns.

To apply for the on-campus:

Send an email to scpp.internship@gmail.com with "on-campus internship" included somewhere in the subject line.

Include in your email :

1. Confirm that you've read the internship description on this page
2. Your resume
3. A brief cover letter, stating why you are interested in participating and what you hope to get out of this experience