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**Research Opportunity – Orange-throated Tanager Conservation**

**Summary**

Nature and Culture International seeks a wildlife biologist to collect and analyze field data about the population status and habitat usage of the Orange-throated Tanager (*Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron;* a globally-threatened species) found locally in the Nangaritza Valley in southeastern Ecuador.

**Description of organization**

Nature and Culture International (<www.natureandculture.org>) is a conservation NGO that protects biologically diverse ecosystems in Latin America by working in concert with local people. We were founded in the southern Ecuadorian city of Loja in 1997 and have since expanded into six countries: Ecuador, Perú, México, Colombia, Bolivia, and Brazil. In our twenty-plus years of existence, we have helped protect 5.6 million hectares of some of the world´s most biodiverse and endangered ecosystems.

**Local Context**

The Nangaritza Valley is dominated by sandstone table-mountains similar in character to those of the Guiana Plateau. This unique geology contributes to the remarkable levels of plant endemism found here. Nangaritza is also one of the last forested corridors between the Andean ecosystems to the west and the ecosystems of the Cordillera del Condor and Amazon bottomland forests to the east.

NCI has worked locally in the Nangaritza Valley for five years, assisting both indigenous Shuar and mestizo communities secure tenure for their lands, then enrolling those lands into a conservation incentives program called SocioBosque. With support from funders such as World Land Trust, NCI has purchased 1500 hectares in Nangaritza Valley to create the Maycú Nature Reserve. This reserve includes all of the tanager´s known and estimated range in Ecuador, about 1300 hectares of habitat.

**Research Questions**

*Note: We expect to narrow and refine these research questions and objectives in collaboration with the researcher(s).*

* What is the estimated population and population structure of the Orange-throated Tanager within Ecuador? Is the population increasing, stable, or decreasing?
* What are the factors affecting the population? If the population is declining, what can be done about it?
* What kind of habitat does the tanager prefer, i.e. what tree species does it feed on?
* Hence, in local reforestation projects, which species would be most beneficial to the tanager?

**Research objectives**

* Conduct a census of Orange-throated Tanager (*Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron)* in the Nangaritza Valley. Focus would be within NCI´s Maycú Reserve, but we´re also interested if the tanager´s range in Ecuador is more extensive than currently thought.
* Assess the status of the local population (Structure, basic demographics, stability)
* Assess reproduction and habitat usage
* Assess the potential human impact on population
* Develop management recommendations to address key threats to the long-term conservation of the species

**Location**

Nangaritza Valley, Nangaritza Cantón, Zamora Chinchipe Province, Ecuador.

**Requirements**

* Strong background in wildlife census techniques and population ecology
* Self-motivated and resourceful
* Able to work with little supervision and in strenuous field conditions
* At least intermediate Spanish

**Timing**

No special timing is required.

**Contact**

Please contact Matt Clark(mclark@naturalezaycultura.org) with questions.