

SEARCH:  go  
CVM home > news > Medicine Abroad: Honduras  
☒ College ☐ Cornell ☐ People

## International Veterinary Medicine Abroad: Honduras



It was 10 days of opportunities: to explore a different culture; to sharpen their creative problem-solving skills; to practice their clinical skills; and to protect the ecosystem upon which we all depend.

"Wildlife is part of a delicate system hanging in the balance," said Tamika Lewis DVM '09, who was a member of the first group of students to participate in the International Veterinary Medicine Abroad program. "The system is inherently fragile, and it is tested every day by decisions people make. Animals, humans, and nature are all connected, and veterinarians are instrumental in ensuring the system thrives."

Lewis was one of seven students from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University to travel to Honduras in January 2009 with the goal of helping local animal caretakers improve the quality of life for captive native wildlife. Care can be difficult, Lewis explained, in this developing nation where resources are scarce and the desire to help the animals is overwhelming.

Accompanied by Drs. Jamie Morrissey and Marisa Bezjian, senior lecturer of exotic and wildlife medicine and zoological medicine resident, respectively, the students consulted with the owners of Macaw Mountain, Copan Ruins, and Rancho San Luis. They gave a spider monkey a vasectomy, transported a jaguar to a more suitable habitat, learned how to properly restrain caiman, treated lacerations on a boa constrictor, examined dozens of scarlet macaws, and recommended numerous diet and enrichment opportunities for animals as diverse as a box turtle and tropical fish.

"At Cornell's Hospital, the exotics service is an elective rotation," said Lewis. "As such, we may not have the opportunity to work with a high volume of different species of birds or other exotic animals during our clinical rotations. Practicing veterinary medicine in a tropical country gave us the opportunity to add depth to our portfolio of cases."