



# Of Mountains and Marmots: Climate Change in the French Alps 2013



## DEAR EARTHWATCHER,

Welcome to the marmot expedition!

Assessing the impact of climate change on Alpine marmots is crucial, because climate change is very acute in high-elevation ecosystems and many warning signs have been documented over the last 10 years for Alpine plant and animal species. Alpine areas and species are among the first victims of climate change and can provide clues about the consequences of climate change for our environment and its biodiversity.

We have worked on the marmot population in the breathtaking La Grande Sassière Nature Reserve for more than 20 years. We have identified almost all the marmots in the family groups that we have monitored, and have recorded the events of their life. In addition, we collect climate data and carefully monitor their burrows to understand the environmental conditions the marmots endure. These valuable data offer a unique opportunity to investigate the ecological and evolutionary consequences of climate change for a social mammal, to gain insight into the future impacts of climate change on Alpine species, and to help design measures to protect them.

Our enthusiastic and passionate group of young researchers is looking forward to meeting you and to making you part of this unique and exciting experience. We all hope that you will find your time with the project interesting, rewarding, and fun.

Yours sincerely,

Aurélie Cohas

Earthwatch scientist

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# General Information

## Of Mountains and Marmots



**Earthwatch Scientists:** Dr. Aurélie Cohas, Prof. Dominique Allainé, Dr. Christophe Bonenfant

**Research Site:** La Grande Sassiére Nature Reserve, France

### Expedition Dates:

- Team 1:** May 19 – June 1, 2013
  - Team 1a:** May 19 – May 25, 2013
  - Team 1b:** May 26 – June 1, 2013
- Team 2:** June 2 – June 15, 2013
  - Team 2a:** June 2 – June 8, 2013
  - Team 2b:** June 9 – June 15, 2013
- Team 3:** June 16 – June 29, 2013
  - Team 3a:** June 16 – June 22, 2013
  - Team 3b:** June 23 – June 29, 2013
- Team 4:** June 30 – July 13, 2013
  - Team 4a:** June 30 – July 6, 2013
  - Team 4b:** July 7 – July 13, 2013

**Rendezvous and departure information is available in the print version of the briefing only.**



## TRIP PLANNER

### TO DO IMMEDIATELY

- ☐ Book an appointment with a doctor; you'll need him or her to sign the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form.
- ☐ Make sure you understand and agree to Earthwatch policies and participant responsibilities (see pg. 28).

### 90 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- ☐ **Complete and return your volunteer forms. Below are the specific forms required for this expedition:**

- ▶ **Earthwatch Participation Form for Adults**
- ▶ **Travel Form**

European volunteers can download forms on:  
[www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerforms](http://www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerforms)

U.S./North American volunteers can download forms at: [www.earthwatch.org/volunteerforms](http://www.earthwatch.org/volunteerforms)

Australian volunteers can download forms on:  
[www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/volunteer\\_forms/](http://www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/volunteer_forms/)

Japanese volunteers can download forms on:  
[www.earthwatch.jp/getinvolved/condition/formdownload-i.html](http://www.earthwatch.jp/getinvolved/condition/formdownload-i.html)

**Note:** If you have signed up for an expedition within 90 days before the start date, you must return your fully completed volunteer forms as soon as possible.

- ☐ Pay any outstanding balance for your expedition.
- ☐ Book travel arrangements (see the Travel Planning section, pg. 14, for details).

- ☐ If you plan to purchase additional travel insurance, note that some policies require purchase when your expedition is booked (see the Insurance section, pg. 24, for more information).
- ☐ If traveling internationally, make sure your passport is current and obtain a visa for your destination country, if necessary (see the Passports and Visas section, pg. 19, for more details).
- ☐ Make sure you have all the necessary immunizations for your project site (see the Health Information section, pg. 24).
- ☐ Bring your level of fitness up to the standards required (see the Project Conditions section, pg. 20).

### 60 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- ☐ Review the Expedition Packing Checklist (pg. 4) to make sure you have all the clothing, personal supplies, and equipment needed.

### 30 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- ☐ Leave the Earthwatch 24-hour helpline number with a friend or relative (see the inside back cover).
- ☐ **Residents of the EU:** Apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) (see the Insurance section, pg. 24)
- ☐ Leave copies of your passport, visa, and airline tickets with a friend or relative.
- ☐ Confirm your travel arrangements.

**Read this expedition briefing thoroughly.** It provides the most accurate information available at the time of your Earthwatch scientist's project planning, and will likely answer any questions you have about the project. However, please also keep in mind that research requires improvisation, and you may need to be flexible. Research plans evolve in response to new findings, as well as to unpredictable factors such as weather, equipment failure, and travel challenges. To enjoy your expedition to the fullest, remember to expect the unexpected, be tolerant of repetitive tasks, and try to find humor in difficult situations. If there are any major changes in the research plan or field logistics, Earthwatch will make every effort to keep you well informed before you go into the field.







## EXPEDITION PACKING CHECKLIST

### REQUIRED ITEMS

#### GENERAL

- ☐ This expedition briefing
- ☐ Photocopies of your passport, flight itinerary, and credit cards in case the originals are lost or stolen; the copies should be packed separately from the original documents
- ☐ Copy of EHIC Card if traveling from another EU country (see the Insurance section, pg. 24)
- ☐ Passport and/or visa (if necessary)
- ☐ Certification of immunization (if necessary)
- ☐ Documentation for travel by minors (if necessary) (see Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age, pg. 19)

#### CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR FOR FIELDWORK

Please note: all field wear must be dark gray, brown, green, or other dark, neutral colors so as not to scare the marmots. Please avoid bright colors like yellow, pink, red, or orange.

- ☐ Earthwatch T-shirt
- ☐ High-quality sunglasses
- ☐ Well worn-in and comfortable hiking boots with ankle support

- ☐ Lightweight, quick-drying, long-sleeved shirts and pants/trousers
- ☐ Wide-brimmed hat for sun protection
- ☐ Warm hat
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Set of warm clothes
- ☐ Windproof jacket with hood
- ☐ Warm wool or synthetic fleece sweatshirt or sweater/jumper
- ☐ Rainproof poncho or jacket
- ☐ Rainproof pants/trousers
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Thermal underwear
- ☐ Walking poles

#### CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR FOR LEISURE

- ☐ At least one set of clothing to keep clean for end of expedition
- ☐ Slippers with soles that grip to wear within the accommodations
- ☐ Pajamas





### FIELD SUPPLIES

- ☐ Backpack for daily use (to carry clipboards, GPS equipment, sunscreen, fleece, water, camera, etc.)
- ☐ One or two water bottles able to hold a minimum of two liters
- ☐ Drybag or plastic sealable bags (good for protecting equipment like cameras from dust, humidity, and water)
- ☐ Sunscreen lotion with SPF 30 or higher

### BEDDING AND BATHING

**Note:** The lodge will provide a duvet and pillow. For sheets and pillowcase, you must pay a charge of 15 euros to cover cleaning costs. Alternatively, you can bring your own standard bed sheets, pillowcase, and sleeping bag. Towels are not supplied.

- ☐ Bath towel

### PERSONAL SUPPLIES

- ☐ Personal toiletries (biodegradable soaps and shampoos are encouraged)
- ☐ Antibacterial wipes or lotion (good for cleaning hands while in the field)
- ☐ Personal first-aid kit (e.g., anti-diarrhea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.) and medications
- ☐ Moisturizing lotion lip balm
- ☐ Lip balm

### MISCELLANEOUS

- ☐ Spending money
- ☐ Camera, film or memory card, extra camera battery

### OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ☐ Swimming towel
- ☐ Bathing suit
- ☐ Binoculars—strongly recommended (8 x 30 or larger are good for wildlife viewing)
- ☐ Work gloves
- ☐ Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries and bulb
- ☐ Books, games, journal, art supplies, etc. for recreational time and travel
- ☐ Earplugs for light sleepers
- ☐ Travel guide
- ☐ Field guide (we have some field guides you can borrow at the study site)
- ☐ French phrase book
- ☐ Blank CD or USB drive for sharing digital photographs at the end of the expedition

**Note:** Required and optional items lists are accurate to the best of Earthwatch's knowledge at the time of publication.

# The Research

## Of Mountains and Marmots



### THE STORY

The Alpine marmot (*Marmota marmota*) is an emblematic species of the French Alps, easy to observe and to study. It is a keystone species—one that plays a critical role in maintaining ecosystem balance—that fosters Alpine plant diversity and serves as the principal source of food for Alpine predators like the golden eagle, red fox, and lammergeier or bearded vulture (a rare species that is now recolonizing parts of the Alps).

We know that this species is critical to the health of its environment—and we also know that climate has a huge impact on the breeding success and survival rates of wild animals. Climate can strongly affect whether a species thrives or becomes extinct. Therefore, it's critical to understand how animal populations respond to continuing climate change. This need is even more urgent for the marmots we study, not just because they are so important to the natural world of the French Alps, but also because Alpine regions are especially fragile in the face

of global climate change. By investigating this key Alpine species, we hope to learn more about how the ecosystem in general, and all living species, could respond to the changes in climate that we now face.

### RESEARCH AIMS

Our research focuses on the demography of the group of Alpine marmots we study. Demography involves knowing how behavior, survival, breeding success, and population growth are affected by the interplay of extrinsic factors, such as characteristics of the environment a species lives in, and intrinsic factors, such as the sex and age of individuals.

We have three major research goals:

- To assess the effects of climate on marmot behavior, breeding success, emigration, survival, and, ultimately, population growth;
- To determine how group structure (group size and the age and sex of the individuals in it) impacts marmot reproductive success, survival, and population growth;
- To investigate whether directional trends in climate change (e.g., decreasing snowfall, increasing temperature) over the past 20 years have had measurable effects on marmot populations on three different scales—individual, social group, and population—and to use this information to predict future trends.

Since 1990 we have focused our research on one population of marmots, consisting of about 1,300 individuals belonging to 24 family groups. We've collected a wealth of data on (among other things) their reproductive success, survival, and social structure. We started to explore how climatic factors affect marmots' reproductive success and survival, and we are now focusing on understanding whether and how social factors can mitigate or amplify the impact of environmental changes on marmot demography. We further focus on the mechanisms of animal responses to climate change. We already have found clues that point to a critical role of energy expenditure during hibernation. By understanding the factors that shape reproductive success and survival as well as the underlying mechanisms, we can help find effective ways to manage and conserve Alpine marmots as the climate continues to change.





## HOW YOU WILL HELP

As a volunteer, you'll help with many of our research tasks. We record copious data on marmot behavior, collect biological samples (blood, feces, hair, odorants, etc.) from individuals, and monitor family composition (age, sex, number of individuals, and interactions between individuals). This trove of information, combined with data on temperature, rain, snow cover, seasonal vegetation cover, and plant diversity, makes it possible for us to relate climate to marmot group composition and demography.

You'll assist with the following:

**Capturing marmots.** You'll collect dandelions for bait, set up and check traps, record biometric measurements of captured individuals, and label biological samples.

**Making behavioral observations of family groups.** This task involves recording the number, age, and sex of individual marmots; searching for marmot pups and recording their emergence date and litter size; and recording and filming marmot behavior. We look for antagonistic behavior (confrontations and fights), affiliative behavior (grooming and huddling), vigilance behavior (alarm responses), and

territorial behavior (marking territory and fighting).

**Monitoring the marmot colony.** You'll help to map burrows and territory boundaries.

**Monitoring the Alpine community.** You won't spend all your time with marmots; you'll also help record the abundance, distribution, and phenology (periodic phenomena, such as flowering, fruiting, and leaf emergence, in relation to climatic conditions) of endemic plant species.

**Working with data.** This is a key part of any well-run field research program. You'll help us record data in the field; process, organize, store, and index biological samples; and enter the data in our database.

**Community outreach.** You'll help communicate our activities to tourists while in the field and during evening events; support our partnership with the schools of the Tarentaise valley; and help share our marmot research through our website.

Although you will get close to many marmots, you won't directly handle them. You'll help experienced field staffers to process data and to transport the marmots from traps to the research tent where we gather data.



# Your Destination

## About the French Alps

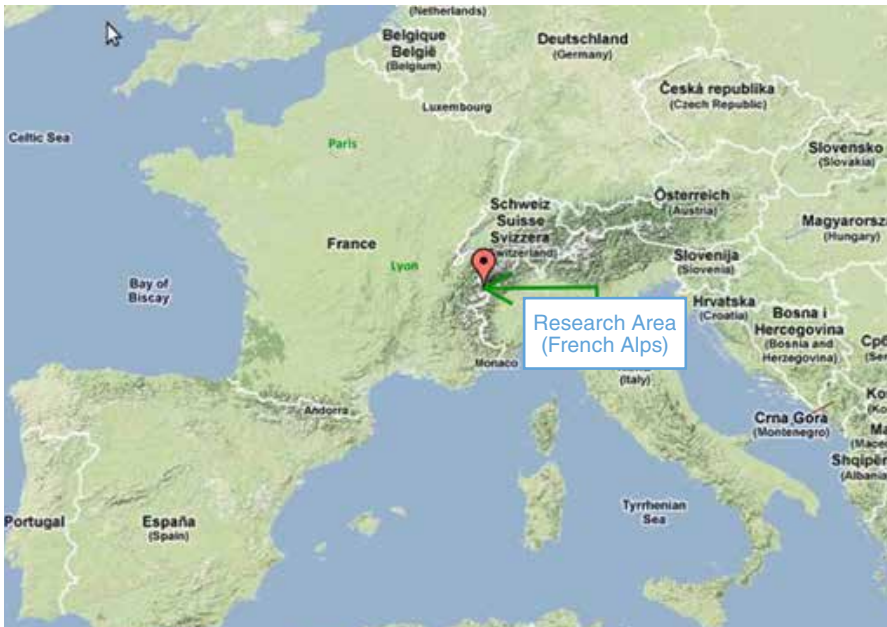


You'll spend most of your time in La Grande Sassière Nature Reserve, the home of some of the greatest plant biodiversity in France. Many animal species also flourish here; you're likely to see ibex, chamois, foxes, hares, voles, and maybe even the elusive roe deer. Some of the many bird species spotted in the area include bearded vultures, golden eagles, rufous-tailed rock thrushes, black grouses, and wall creepers. You'll also encounter beautiful scenery in the reserve: every day you'll work in a gently sloping meadow along a small river, surrounded by stunning mountains dotted with glaciers, lakes, and pastures.

In the valleys are small villages that depend mainly on tourism for income. The area has many sporting activities. Within a 30-minute drive of the accommodations, you can visit Val D'Isère, a ski resort. You can also hike in the mountains, join guided nature walks with national park







rangers, and visit the farm of l'Adroit to learn how French cheese is made.

Those joining us on the two-week teams will have a full day to explore these or other recreational activities. We'll suggest several options for hiking and cultural activities, or you can choose to simply relax. We will provide details and contact information for each option. Some are free, but others require additional transport or guide fees, which you will be responsible for. Although project staff members can't transport you to regional attractions, we can help arrange transport for you. Some options may be unavailable due to weather conditions or timing.

If you wish to plan activities that are not among the options we offer, you will have to do so on your own. Project staff will probably not participate in these activities. Please see a guidebook or visit <http://hiver.lesarcs.com/bourg-saint-maurice> or <http://www.tignes.net/en> for more local tourism information. You can also find a map of the project area and locations at [www.facebook.com/thealpinemarmotproject/app\\_168151469879028](http://www.facebook.com/thealpinemarmotproject/app_168151469879028).



A number of extreme sports also offered in the area. We recommend that you do not participate in these during the expedition. Should you wish to do so, it will be at your own risk, and should be done after the expedition is over.



# Daily Life in the Field

## Plans and Policies

The field team leader will give you a safety talk the morning of your arrival and a detailed on-site briefing on the field objectives and tasks in the afternoon. You will thus have the afternoon to get used to the territory of the marmots, their boundaries, and the techniques of observing marmot behavior and capturing them.

Each evening the team leader will give a short briefing on the specific objectives of the next day and assign the volunteers to the different tasks to be done. A staff member will work with you to ensure the quality of the data collected. Since we are experienced at training people who are new to field research, you should be fully up to speed within one or two days. As an Earthwatcher, you'll become a full member of our highly motivated, hard-working team. Throughout the expedition, you'll hear informal lectures on the impact of climate change on wildlife, and you'll have the chance to peruse guidebooks of Alpine fauna and flora.

**Driving policy:** If you have driven yourself to the project, you may not drive your own vehicle to, from, or for project activities, including for transporting project equipment. You may choose to use your own vehicle



during recreational time, but be aware that all driving during recreational time is at your own risk. Earthwatch discourages you from transporting other participants during recreational time. Riding in another participant's vehicle is also done at your own risk; riding in other participants' vehicles is not covered under their insurance policy for the expedition.

### EARTHWATCH RECREATIONAL TIME POLICY

Project staff will generally accompany participants from the rendezvous to the end of the expedition. For recreational days, when no research activities are scheduled, Earthwatch scientists will offer either a team activity or a range of recreational activities that comply with Earthwatch standards. Participants may also remain at project accommodations. Those who pursue other options must sign a release form.

If there is a period of time during a regular research day when no research activities are scheduled, adult participants may leave the project site on their own; they will have to sign out first. Unless contacted for help, project staff will not search for a participant unless he or she fails to appear the following morning or for the next scheduled research activity.

Earthwatch will assess the general risks of adult participants leaving the project site, but cannot guarantee participant safety or an awareness of all issues. In some cases, due to local conditions, adult participants may have to stay at the project site during recreational time, which will be clearly communicated on site.



## ITINERARY AND DAILY SCHEDULE

Weather and research needs can lead to changes in the daily schedule. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

### Day 1

Time of Day	Activity
8:30 a.m.	Rendezvous in Bourg Saint Maurice
9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Arrive at the accommodations and settle in
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Safety briefing and introduction
Noon – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch in the field with the research team
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Tour of the field site
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Scientific introduction and field task presentation
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Free time
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Cooking
8:00 p.m.	Dinner
9:00 p.m.	Free time

### Days 2-6

The following is an approximate schedule, and it is likely to fluctuate seasonally. For example, as we approach and enter the summer season, research will begin earlier (7:30 a.m.) and end earlier (12:00 noon).

Time of Day	Activity
6:45 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.	Leave for the field
8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Fieldwork (baiting traps, capturing, observation, experiments, vegetation monitoring)
12:30 p.m.	Return from the field
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Lab work (sample processing, data entry, and communication)
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Free time
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Cooking
8:00 p.m.	Dinner
9:00 p.m.	Free time

### Day 7

Participants on one-week teams will depart accommodations at 7:30 a.m. and arrive at Bourg Saint Maurice in time for 8:41 a.m. trains

Those staying for two weeks will have a recreational day. See Your Destination (pg. 8) for more details on the available activities.

### CONTINUED ITINERARY: TWO-WEEK TEAMS ONLY

Days 8-13 will follow a similar schedule as described above under Days 2 to 6.

**Day 14:** Depart accommodations at 7:30 a.m.; arrive at Bourg Saint Maurice in time for 8:41 a.m. trains.



# Accommodations and Food

## About Your Home in the Field

You'll stay in a beautiful Alpine chalet at 2,110 meters (6,923 feet) above sea level overlooking Tignes Lake in Tignes, one of the most famous and highest-altitude ski resorts in the Alps. You'll share these comfortable accommodations with the research staff.

### SLEEPING

You'll share a room with twin beds with one other volunteer. Couples can be accommodated, and single rooms may also be available upon request.

The chalet provides bed linens (for an extra cost of 15 euros) but not towels. You also have the option to bring your own bed linen. There is no cleaning service, so volunteers must be responsible for keeping their rooms and the common space tidy.

### BATHROOM FACILITIES

Two people of the same sex will share each en suite bathroom. Conventional showers and toilets are available, as is hot water. To save water, we ask that you limit your showers to three minutes per day.

### ELECTRICITY

Electricity is available at all times. French sockets and adaptors are required. If you are coming from a country with 110-volt electricity, please note that French electricity is 220 volts and you will require a converter as well as an adaptor.

### INTERNET AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

Free wireless Internet is available at the accommodations. There will be four computers primarily for project use, which are available for personal use only after all scientific work has been completed. You may bring your own laptop; if you bring expensive equipment, please ensure that it is covered under your own personal insurance or Earthwatch insurance. Earthwatch insurance has a maximum coverage of £750 per item and an aggregate valuables limit of £750.

### FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

The chalet has a wonderful sun deck, an open living area with a fireplace, and a dining area. All facilities are new and in very good condition. A balcony leading off from the dining area overlooks the town, and hiking trails begin



about five meters from the chalet door.

The chalet has no washing machine, but washing machines and dryers are available within a 10-minute walk from the chalet for around 5 euros. It can take some time for clothes to dry when hung on the line. To conserve water, please bring enough clothing so that you won't have to make use of the washing machine unless absolutely necessary.







## DISTANCE TO FIELD SITE

Each day, you will be driven up a steep and winding road to the research site, approximately 30 minutes from your accommodations. If you know that you suffer from carsickness, we recommend that you bring medication: the road is very winding and has made people carsick before. Once at the research site, the terrain is fairly even and easily accessible.

## SERVICES AND RESTAURANTS IN WALKING DISTANCE

You can walk to shops, restaurants, or other amenities, although their business hours and days can be highly unpredictable. To foster teamwork, you must eat all meals at the chalet, except on recreational days when you may choose to eat in a local restaurant. We also ask that you not head out of the chalet after dinner so that you can use the time to bond with team members and rest up for the next day's research activities. You will have a chance to visit the village in your free time.

## SMOKING

Smoking is not allowed in the chalet or anywhere at the research site. Volunteers will be able to smoke outside the chalet during lunch breaks and in the evening.

## FOOD

Cooking is an important, convivial part of French culture, so you will take turns preparing meals with the help of a field assistant. We emphasize buying organic foods, and

you'll enjoy a range of delicious, locally sourced products including cheese, polenta, fondue, and raclette (a regional dish of melted cheese over bread or potatoes).

We will eat most meals together at a long table in the dining area on a self-serve basis. You'll usually have a full lunch back at the chalet, but on some days you may share a picnic lunch at the field site with the researchers. Drinking water, tea, coffee, and snacks will be provided throughout the day. Most dietary needs can be accommodated, but please speak to our expedition staff should you have any specific requirements.

Below are examples of the foods you might expect in the field, depending on availability. This list provides a general idea of food types, but please be flexible.

**Breakfast:** Bread, biscuits, jam, honey, cereals, fruits, yogurt, cheese, tea, coffee, chocolate, fruit juice, milk

**Lunch:** A simple meal with a starter (e.g., soup, salad), main dish (e.g., pasta), and dessert (e.g., fruit, yogurt)

**Dinner:** Also includes a starter, main dish (e.g., quiche, gratin), and dessert (e.g., fruit, yogurt, sometimes homemade cake or dessert)

**Snacks:** Biscuits/cookies, bread, ham, saucisson (French salami), cheese

**Beverages:** Tea, coffee, juice. No carbonated drinks provided.

**Water:** Tap water is drinkable in France. You can refill your water bottles directly from the tap at the accommodations. Water from a spigot is available at the field site, but it should not be drunk unless boiled.

**Alcohol:** Students supporting the research and living with Earthwatchers may not consume any alcohol. To respect this rule, we have a no-alcohol policy both in the field and at the accommodations. During free time, you're free to visit restaurants and bars in the local villages.

## SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Please alert Earthwatch to any special dietary requirements (e.g., diabetes, lactose intolerance, nut or other food allergies, vegetarian or vegan diets) as soon as possible, and note them in the space provided on your volunteer forms. This project can cater for vegetarian diets easily, as well as vegan, gluten-free, and lactose-free diets.

# Travel Planning

## Rendezvous and Departure Information

The rendezvous and departure information for this project has been removed from this web version of the expedition briefing. It is only available in the printed version of the briefing. Please do not make any travel arrangements to join an expedition without having full and up-to-date travel information from Earthwatch. Full rendezvous details, including places and times are available from Earthwatch upon request prior to registration for an expedition. Please use the “Contact Us” button on the top right-hand corner of the website to get in touch with an Earthwatch representative, who will be very happy to help you.



# Travel Tips

## Suggestions for the Road

### LUGGAGE

**Lost and delayed luggage:** If your luggage goes astray, please have it sent to:

Chalet Atlas

Quartier de Crouze

73320 Tignes le Lac

**General considerations:** Do not bring more luggage than you can carry and handle on your own. If traveling by air and checking your luggage, we advise you to pack an extra set of field clothing and personal essentials in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is lost or delayed. Many airlines have strict baggage policies. Please check with your airline(s) on baggage weight limits, liquid restrictions, fees for checked baggage, etc.

The minibus we will use for travel to and from the train station has a small trunk, so avoid bringing too much luggage. A 60-liter (16-gallon) backpack should hold everything you need for the expedition.

**Transferring luggage:** If you will be taking an international flight that has one or more connections within the country of your destination, you must collect any checked bags at the airport where you first arrive in the destination country. After proceeding through customs, you will have to recheck your luggage before flying on to your final destination.

### MONEY MATTERS

**Local currency:** Euro.

**Personal funds:** You should bring spending money to use during travel and for recreational activities. ATMs are widely available at the airport and close to Bourg St Maurice rail station, as well as in Tignes. You may also change money at the airport. We recommend that you bring around 100 euros with you and a credit or debit card; most businesses in France accept credit cards (although not always American Express).



### YOUR DESTINATION

**Language:** French is the official language of the country. All scientists speak English, and the project will be conducted in English.

**Time zone:** Central European Time (CET) +0100 GMT/UTC. For time worldwide with GMT/UTC, see [www.worldtimeserver.com](http://www.worldtimeserver.com).

**Telephone dialing codes:** When calling France from another country, dial the country's international dialing code, followed by (33) and the number. When calling within France, omit the (33) and dial (0). When calling another country from France, dial (00), followed by the other country's country code and the number. PLEASE NOTE: you should check with your cell phone provider to obtain any carrier-specific dialing codes you may need; many providers have dialing procedures that may differ in whole or in part from these directions. For additional information, see [www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm](http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm).





## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

### Will You Need a Passport?

Most volunteers traveling from outside France will require a passport valid for at least six months beyond the dates of travel.

### Will You Need a Visa?

Citizens of the U.S., Canada, the EU, Australia, and Japan **DO NOT** need tourist visas for entry. Citizens of other countries should check with their travel agent or a visa agency for specific visa and entry requirements.

### Information for Volunteers Requiring Visas ONLY

#### Type of visa to get: TOURIST

The purpose of your visit is for vacation, holiday or travel. Immigration officials do not always understand the concept of a “working vacation” or “volunteering.” Words such as “working,” “volunteering,” “research,” or “scientific expedition” can raise questions concerning the country’s foreign labor laws and about official scientific research permits and credentials, etc., to which volunteers will not be equipped to respond on their own. All required research permits for the project are in place and have been approved by the proper authorities.

**Where to get a visa:** Contact the nearest French embassy or consulate to find out how to apply. Please note that this process can take weeks or even months. We strongly recommend using a visa agency, which can both expedite and simplify the process.

### Suggested Agencies

**In the U.S.:** Travisa; 212-613-2223; [www.travisa.com](http://www.travisa.com)

**In Europe:** CIBT, Inc. (U.K.); [www.info@uk.cibt.com](mailto:www.info@uk.cibt.com); [www.uk.cibt.com](http://www.uk.cibt.com)

**In Australia:** Ask your travel agency if it can send your visa application on your behalf.

**Required information:** You will need to send your passport (valid for at least six months beyond your stay), a visa application and immigration form, two to four passport-size photos, and payment to the embassy or visa agency (if applicable). Please be sure that your

passport is valid for at least six months beyond your stay.

**Contact information:** You may be required to list the following contact information on your visa application and immigration form:

**This information is available in the print version of the briefing only. Contact Earthwatch for assistance.**

**Cost of a visa:** Generally between US\$40 and \$100, but varies from country to country and can cost up to US\$180. A visa agency will charge an additional fee.

### Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have procedures at entry and exit points to protect minors. Thus, if a minor will be traveling with only one guardian or alone, he or she may need a notarized letter from all legal guardians stating that the minor may travel unaccompanied or in the presence of a single guardian. If necessary, this letter must give an explanation for why only one parent or someone other than a parent is signing the letter. For example, if one parent is deceased, only one parent has legal guardianship, or people other than the parents are legal guardians, the letter should state that. Airlines may also have documentation requirements for unaccompanied minors, e.g. a birth certificate or a notarized letter like the one described above.

**Important:** Requirements of specific countries and airlines vary and change frequently. You must keep informed of the requirements on your own to avoid problems at immigration. If the minor is refused entry into a country or onto a flight because of lack of documentation, there is nothing Earthwatch can do to help.



# Project Conditions

## The Field Environment

Please show this section to a doctor when he/she is completing the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form. Be sure to discuss vaccination requirements with the doctor well in advance of your departure date. See the Health Information section (pg. 24) for vaccination information.

### To the doctor:

This patient has volunteered to join a field research team that has specific physical demands of which you and the patient should be aware. We need your accurate evaluation of this patient's ability to meet the conditions detailed below in order to care for his or her health and safety, and to assess that he or she can participate fully and effectively.

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

Your expedition will take place in a typical Alpine ecosystem: a valley of rocky meadows surrounded by high mountains with year-round snow and glaciers, with a climate characterized by high daily variation. Snow can still be present in May and can even fall in July, although it would probably melt completely before midday. Mornings and evenings can get very cold—with frost appearing even in summer—and days very hot. Generally the weather is good, and it is unlikely that we will have multiple days of rain. However, weather can vary dramatically.

The climate is very dry, so we recommend you bring moisturizer.

### WORKING AT ALTITUDE

Although the accommodations (2,110 meters) and the research site (2,340 meters) are not at exceptionally high altitudes, you may need several days to adjust. Even people who are very fit at sea level can find themselves struggling as they walk at higher altitudes. Take the first few days slowly (project staff will provide activities that require less exertion at the beginning of the expedition), and report any illness (headache, lethargy, appetite loss, nausea, etc.) to staff immediately.

Also remain well hydrated. The sun is strong at these altitudes, so a high-factor sun cream and protective clothing (wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, long sleeves) are essential. If you have any condition that might be affected by increased sun exposure or if you are sensitive to heat, please consult a physician. Be aware that many common prescription medications can increase your sensitivity to sun and heat.

Illnesses that may be aggravated by altitude include sickle cell anemia and chronic heart and lung diseases. Those with asthma or other breathing problems may experience altitude-related discomfort and may wish to consult with their doctors in advance.

### CONDITIONS

#### Temperature Range:

May: 6°C – 21°C (42°F – 70°F)

June: 8°C – 24°C (46°F – 76°F)

July: 8°C – 30°C (46°F – 86°F)

**Altitude:** Field site: 2,340 meters (7,677 feet)

Accommodations: 2,110 meters (7,000 feet)

**Precipitation:** 90 millimeters (3.5 inches) per month





## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All participants must be able to:

- ☐ Follow verbal and/or visual instructions independently or with the assistance of a companion.
- ☐ Enjoy being outdoors all day (six to seven hours) and maintain a good attitude in all types of weather and in the potential presence of wild animals and insects.
- ☐ Be comfortable using the natural environment as a toilet facility while in the field, as no toilet structure is available.
- ☐ Tolerate varying temperatures between an average of 6 – 8°C (42 – 46°F) in the mornings and 20 – 30°C (68 – 86°F) at midday. Altitude makes the effect of the sun much stronger; be prepared for this.
- ☐ Hike for between 2 and 10 kilometers (1.2 and 6.2 miles) a day at high altitude (2,340 meters/7,677 feet). Generally volunteers will be following a broad, flat mountain path, but you will need to leave this and cross rocky, uneven mountain Alpine meadows to check marmot traps. The distance traveled each day will be split between approximately three trap-checking sessions, and may require a rapid pace to access marmots and remove them from traps.
- ☐ Get low enough to the ground to set traps and remove marmots from traps, up to five times per day.
- ☐ Cross small streams and sometimes rivers to reach research areas. Bridges are used where possible, but some wading may be required at safe crossing points.
- ☐ Carry up to six kilograms (13.2 pounds) over one kilometer (0.6 mile) on sometimes steep slopes, while carrying traps and captured marmots.
- ☐ Comfortably remain in one location for periods of up to four hours a day (never for longer than two hours in a row) to quietly observe and count marmots.
- ☐ Get themselves up into and down out of a vehicle and ride, seated with seatbelt fastened, for about half an hour a day, and up to one hour on arrival and departure days, over generally smooth but winding roads.
- ☐ Climb stairs to reach and move around the accommodations.





## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Hazard Type	Associated Risks and Precautions
Transportation	We will travel in a car or minibus on mountain roads; there no special risks beyond normal driving hazards. Drivers will drive slowly on the smaller roads and in poor weather conditions and will have mountain-driving experience. Seatbelts must be worn at all times. Fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, and mobile phones will always be carried. You may find that the winding roads cause carsickness even if you are not normally prone to it; please come prepared for this with appropriate remedies. Also, while in the car keep looking out in front of the vehicle to maintain a view of the road, which helps adjust your body to the motion. Keeping well hydrated and eating prior to departure also helps. Project staff will drive slowly and will stop should you require fresh air.
Walking/Hiking/ Climbing	There is a risk of sprains or strains from walking on uneven ground. Wear supportive hiking boots and be cautious. We also strongly recommend the use of walking poles for those with weak ankles or joints.
Plants	Stinging nettles are present. Staff members will point these out so that you can avoid them. You'll be working in grassland with potentially high pollen count; those with allergies should bring the appropriate medication and inform Earthwatch and project staff of their condition and where their medication is kept.
Animals	Vipers live in the area. To limit the risk of bites, wear supportive hiking boots and never put your hands anywhere where you can't see them, especially in rocky areas. Staff members will brief you fully on how to manage this risk.
Climate/Weather	The weather can get very hot around midday. Heatstroke and dehydration are risks, especially since you'll spend a good deal of time outdoors. We advise you to take at least two liters of water into the field at all times and to make sure to stay hydrated (see also recommendations under Working at Altitude, pg. 20). On the other hand, early mornings and late afternoon can be very cold and windy. You must bring clothing that can be layered, a wool hat, gloves, and a warm, windproof jacket. It can rain or snow at any time of the year and thunderstorms are not uncommon, so it's also wise to carry light waterproof gear. Fieldwork will cease or not commence if the weather is very poor, e.g., constant heavy rain. The weather can change rapidly in the mountains, and all volunteers and staff must keep a close watch for changes.
Altitude	See Working at Altitude, pg. 20.
Accommodations	Take care at the accommodations when climbing stairs, and wear slippers with a good grip while inside to avoid slipping (boots must be removed on entering the chalet). When walking around at night, please use a torch (flashlight). The accommodations are in a wooden chalet, so the risk of fire is present. Staff will brief you on what to do in case of fire. The chimney must not be used without a guard. The cooker uses a gas cylinder that must be switched off when not in use and checked at night. There are roads with low traffic close to the chalet. Project staff will brief you about the roads on arrival.
Research Shelter/Field Research Site	We use tents for shelter and cooking during the day, and will brief you on how to avoid fires in the tents; follow instructions closely. The research site has no toilet facilities, and we will instruct you on appropriate bathroom spots and how to dispose of toilet paper. Parts of the research site are enclosed by electric fences; do not approach them. A chalet is currently being renovated at the research site; please avoid it there is any construction work going on there during your visit.

Hazard Type	Associated Risks and Precautions
River Crossing	We may need to cross small streams that can rise rapidly due to snowmelt or heavy rains. Staff members will watch the weather closely and end fieldwork for the day should conditions deteriorate. A dammed reservoir managed by an energy company feeds the site's main river. The company may release water at any time, leading to heightened water levels. Because of the unpredictability of water release, volunteers are not permitted to cross this river. There are also shallow streams that need to be crossed to reach some of the research areas. We will use bridges where possible and not cross if the water is above knee height or running very fast, or if heavy rain is falling. These streams are fed by snowmelt and often rise in the afternoon after a hot day. Project staff members will brief you on safe river crossing techniques and locations.
Project Tasks	You will not handle the study animals, but being scratched or bitten is still a possibility due to proximity to the marmots. Marmots in this area transmit no known diseases, and infection due to bites can be prevented with basic safety precautions. Volunteers should wear gloves when appropriate. Please be sure your vaccinations are up to date and see the Health Information section (pg. 24) for vaccination recommendations and other advice. Always follow project staff instructions regarding all field tasks. Volunteers with allergies to animal fur should consult their physician and ensure they bring appropriate medications with them. They must also inform Earthwatch and project staff of their condition and inform staff where their medications are kept.
Swimming	You may swim only during recreational time at the local municipal pool (lifeguards are present). Those wishing to swim must have a basic level of swimming ability.
Personal Security	The project is in a rural area with a very low security risk. However, if and when you travel through larger cities, keep a close watch over valuables. Do not flaunt personal belongings and do not leave valuables on display in the accommodations or project vehicles.
Distance from Medical Care	Doctors and basic medical services are located in Tignes and Val d'Isère (20 minutes drive), The nearest fully equipped hospital is one hour by vehicle from the project site. If you have a chronic condition that might require immediate medical care (e.g., heart conditions, kidney problems, severe asthma, etc.), you should seriously reconsider participation in this expedition. If you are pregnant, you should talk with your physician prior to considering this expedition.



# Safety

## Health Information

### ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS

All volunteers should have the following up-to-date immunizations: DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus), polio, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), and varicella (if you have not already had chicken pox). Please be sure your tetanus shot is current.

Medical decisions are the responsibility of each volunteer and his or her doctor, and the following are recommendations only. Earthwatch can only provide details regarding suggested vaccinations, and we are not a medical organization.

### PROJECT VACCINATIONS

**REQUIRED:** If traveling from countries or region where **yellow fever** is endemic, you must have a certificate of vaccination.

**RECOMMENDED FOR HEALTH REASONS:** Hepatitis A and B

### ADVICE REGARDING DISEASES

Traveler's diarrhea affects many international travelers. Please see the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or the World Health Organization ([www.who.int/](http://www.who.int/)) websites for more information on these conditions and how to prevent them. As you will be assisting to prepare food, please ensure that you follow good hygiene practices and always wash your hands before cooking, after fieldwork, and before eating.

Tap water is safe to drink in France, but the water from streams and the water fountains found throughout the Alps should be avoided.

A note on vaccinations and treatment:

- **Measles:** The virus has been seeing a comeback in westernized countries in recent years. Several outbreaks have occurred in France in 2011 and 2012. Please ensure your routine vaccinations are up to date prior to traveling.

### EMERGENCIES IN THE FIELD

In case of minor injuries or diseases, the Earthwatch scientists will call the nearest doctor to visit the site (in France doctors spend about half of their time driving to visit patients). It is also possible that the Earthwatch scientists will drive the participant to the nearest doctor's office. Earthwatch scientists will be able to go to the pharmacy to buy medicine if recommended by the doctor.

In case of an emergency, participants will be transported by ambulance, helicopter, or project vehicle to the nearest hospital. If a volunteer needs to leave early for emergency purposes, the project team can assist with transportation.

**Physician, nurse, or EMT on staff:** Project staff members are not medical professionals.

**Staff certified in safety training:** Aurélie Cohas and Mariona Ferrandiz-Rovira are certified in first aid and CPR.

**Nearest hospital and clinic:**

Hôpital Bourg Saint Maurice  
139 rue Nantet

73700 BOURG SAINT MAURICE

Telephone: +33 (0) 4 79 41 79 79

Distance: 60 minutes by car.

### INSURANCE

Insurance and emergency medical assistance are included in the contribution you pay to Earthwatch. The insurance covers your travel medical risks, including medical expenses and emergency medical evacuation, while you are traveling. It also provides trip cancellation insurance and baggage and personal money insurance. It doesn't provide personal liability insurance. This coverage is valid in the country of your Earthwatch expedition and during travel to and from your expedition. (**Note:** For U.S. volunteers, the coverage is valid only when the expedition is over 100 miles from your place of residence. For Australian volunteers, the coverage is limited if the expedition is less than 50 kilometers from your place of residence).







This insurance policy is secondary to your existing health insurance policy (e.g., NHS in the U.K., Medicare in Australia).

Because of different governing laws in each country, policies are specific to each regional Earthwatch office. Please check with your sign up office about your insurance coverage.

If you signed up through [Earthwatch U.K.](#) or [Earthwatch Japan](#), visit [www.earthwatch.org/europe/insuranceinfo](http://www.earthwatch.org/europe/insuranceinfo).

If you signed up through [Earthwatch U.S.](#), visit [www.earthwatch.org/insurance](http://www.earthwatch.org/insurance).

If you signed up in the [U.K.](#), [U.S.](#), or [Japan](#): If you have additional vacation time before and/or after your Earthwatch expedition that forms part of your overall time away from your place of residence, this additional vacation time is not covered under this policy.

If you signed up through [Earthwatch Australia](#), visit [www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/insurance/](http://www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/insurance/) or contact Earthwatch Australia.

Please refer any queries regarding Earthwatch's policy to Earthwatch's Operations Department at +1-978 450-1222 or [insurance@earthwatch.org](mailto:insurance@earthwatch.org).

**Residents of the EU:** You may also wish to apply for a European Health Insurance Card, which can simplify the process of receiving health care while traveling within the European Union. See <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=509&langId=en> or [www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do](http://www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do) (for UK residents) for more information.

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND EVACUATION ASSISTANCE

Emergency medical and evacuation assistance from CEGA Medical and Henderson Risk, 24-hour international services, are also included in your contribution. Please see the contact information in the Medical and Security Assistance Helpline Numbers section on the inside back cover.

You can also contact CEGA for non-emergency information, such as advice on visas and vaccine requirements. The CEGA Non-Emergency Medical and Travel Advice helpline is +44 (0) 20 3059 8770.



# Project Staff

## Your Resources in the Field



Earthwatch scientist [Dr. Aurélie Cohas](#) is an assistant professor at the Laboratory of Biometry and Evolutionary Biology at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 in France, where she earned her Ph.D. in evolutionary ecology. Aurélie's key research interests are the behavioral ecology of social mammals, with a primary goal of understanding how animal behavior can influence animal performance, such as survival and reproductive success. [All Teams](#).



Earthwatch scientist [Dominique Allainé](#) is a professor at the Laboratory of Biometry and Evolutionary Biology at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1. He initiated the marmot project in La Sassièrre Nature Reserve almost 20 years ago. Today he has less time to get out into the field because his university duties keep him desk-bound, but he hopes to visit the project during the field season. [Schedule is to be determined](#).



Earthwatch scientist Dr. Christophe Bonenfant, a CNRS researcher at the Laboratory of Biometry and Evolutionary Biology at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, primarily studies roe deer, but he also assists Aurélie with her work on the marmots. Much of his summer will be spent doing fieldwork elsewhere; however, he hopes to be able to join the teams for a short period. [Schedule is to be determined](#).



[Marion Tafani](#) is the field team leader. She earned her Ph.D. at the Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 on the impact of climate change on Alpine species, with a special focus on the Alpine marmot. She has participated in monitoring the La Sassièrre Alpine marmot population since 2009. She is especially interested in linking science and local knowledge, and has previously worked on farmland bird ecology and community-based projects on sustainable development and forestry. [All Teams](#).



[Mariona Ferrandiz-Rovira](#) is a behavioral ecologist working on a Ph.D. at the Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, where she has carried out research on sperm competition in mammals and studied the role of mate choice in maintaining and promoting genetic diversity in a natural population of Alpine marmots. She has worked in environmental education, and has a good knowledge of nature in the field. She has also worked as a technician in paleontological excavations and continues her collaboration with paleontologists in her spare time. [All Teams](#).



[V rane Berger](#) is a Ph.D. student at the Laboratory of Biometry and Evolutionary Biology at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1. She studies the influence of sociality (life in groups) on senescence. Taking into account sociality is a pioneering approach to analyzing the process of senescence. Since 2009, she has participated in monitoring the Alpine marmot population. She is involved in several eco-volunteer programs in France as well as abroad. [All Teams](#).



[Cindy Canale](#) is a postdoctoral student at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies in the Population Ecology and Biodemography Research Group (University of Zurich). Cindy has a broad experience in academic research with expertise in physiological and behavioural ecology, evolutionary physiology, and population dynamics. Cindy holds a Ph.D. in physiological ecology, for which she studied mouse lemurs' adaptive responses to climate change. [All Teams](#).



# Recommended Reading

## Your Resources at Home

### RESOURCES

#### BOOKS

- Barash, David P. 1989. *Marmots: Social Behavior and Ecology*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ozgul A., D.Z. Childs, M.K. Oli, K.B. Armitage, D.T. Blumstein, L.E. Olson, S. Tuljapurkar, and S. Coulson. 2010. Coupled dynamics of body mass and population growth in response to environmental change. *Nature* 466: 482-485. [www.nature.com/news/2010/100721/full/news.2010.366.html](http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100721/full/news.2010.366.html).

#### ARTICLE

- Farand E., D. Allainé, and J. Coulon J. 2002. Variation in survival rates of the monogamous Alpine marmot (*Marmota marmota*): effects of sex, age, year and climate factors. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 80: 342-349.

**Note:** You may access all publications from the project website, <http://thealpinemarmotproject.wordpress.com>.

#### PROJECT-RELATED WEBSITE

- <http://thealpinemarmotproject.wordpress.com>
- [www.facebook.com/pages/The-Alpine-Marmot-Project/152263534897809](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Alpine-Marmot-Project/152263534897809)

#### EARTHWATCH'S VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Please see Earthwatch's Volunteer Resources pages for additional information on:

- Travel agencies with whom Earthwatch volunteers can get preferential rates
- Recommended kit and clothing providers
- Recommended travel booksellers

Volunteers who sign up through our U.S. office, visit: [www.earthwatch.org/volunteerresources](http://www.earthwatch.org/volunteerresources)

Volunteers who sign up through our U.K. office, visit: [www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerresources](http://www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerresources)

**Social media:** Find Earthwatch on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Earthwatch](https://www.facebook.com/Earthwatch), follow us on Twitter at @earthwatch\_org, and see videos of many Earthwatch expeditions on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/earthwatchinstitute](http://www.youtube.com/earthwatchinstitute). If you're on Twitter, use the hashtag "#globaltweet" when in the field with Earthwatch to help literally put your work on the map of worldwide volunteering efforts. We also invite you to use the Facebook and TurnTo plug-in features right on our website's expedition pages to connect with other volunteers and staff.





# Participant Rights and Responsibilities



This document contains important information concerning Earthwatch Institute policies and participant rights and responsibilities for inclusion in an Earthwatch expedition. Please read this document thoroughly and sign the Liability Release section of your Earthwatch Participation Form to indicate that you understand and accept the risks inherent to your expedition and the policies, rights, and responsibilities enumerated in this document. You will not be permitted to participate in an expedition until Earthwatch has received the signed release form.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

It is permissible to share photos, videos, and stories of your expedition with family, friends, local media, and in a public forum. Sharing your new perspectives and experiences is welcomed and encouraged.

However, please recognize that all information, data, and images shared or gathered in the course of your expedition's field work become the intellectual property of the Earthwatch scientist. Co-opting or plagiarism of data, images, or information gathered during an expedition for use in a scientific thesis, master's, or PhD work, or for profit or for the academic or business use of a third party

without the permission of the Earthwatch scientist is strictly prohibited. Please be aware that data gathered during the interviewing of local people become the intellectual property of the Earthwatch scientist. Earthwatch scientists have the right to place additional restrictions on your ability to share data or certain research-related images.

Conversely, an Earthwatch scientist may give written permission to use data and images for academic or profitable activity. Please be sure to ask what is acceptable to the Earthwatch scientist.

Fellows or scholarship recipients are sometimes required to submit a written report reflecting what they have learned on a project, sometimes as a step toward developing a curriculum. Earthwatch scientists have the right but not the obligation to review and edit materials involving information gathered on one of their expeditions.

## DISCRIMINATION

Earthwatch does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law and respects participants' right to privacy. However, you must be aware that local laws in countries in which Earthwatch operates may not be antidiscriminatory and that the possibility exists that local residents may not have an awareness of preferred practice regarding discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated on Earthwatch teams. Disruptive behavior or verbal, physical, or any other type of abuse or harassment will also not be tolerated. Violation of Earthwatch's nondiscrimination policy is grounds for expulsion from the program without a refund.

## INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Earthwatch scientists, their staff, their colleagues, and their associates are prohibited from becoming romantically involved with participants during the entire duration of the period that the team is in the field. Romantic relationships that may otherwise seem permissible may eventually create an unpleasant or unproductive work environment and are therefore prohibited for the duration of an Earthwatch project.





## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Please recognize that the relationship that exists between Earthwatch scientists and staff and participants is analogous to the student-teacher relationship. Therefore, please be aware of the following policies.

Sexual harassment of participants by the Earthwatch scientist or Earthwatch staff is prohibited. Likewise, sexual harassment of other participants, Earthwatch field staff, or local people by participants is also prohibited.

Sexual harassment infringes on an individual's right to an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones of conduct either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not mean occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature.

Sexual harassment refers to conduct which is offensive, which harms morale, or which interferes with the effectiveness of Earthwatch expedition teams; such

conduct is prohibited. Lewd or vulgar remarks, suggestive comments, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings, pressure for dates or sexual favors, and unacceptable physical contact or exposure are examples of what can constitute harassment. No one should be touched in areas that would be covered by a bathing suit. It is important to realize that what may not be offensive to you may be offensive to participants, the local population, or Earthwatch field staff.

Any individual who feels subjected to sexual harassment or has any knowledge of such behavior should report it at once to the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff member. The Earthwatch scientist or Field Team Leader will notify Earthwatch when an accusation of sexual harassment or abuse is made or when such conduct is witnessed.

All reports of sexual harassment will be handled with discretion and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any participant who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment will be removed from the expedition at his or her own expense. If a minor is involved in allegations of sexual harassment, his or her parents or guardians will be contacted.

## DRUGS

Laws on drug use in most countries are severe and may impose lengthy prison terms or the death penalty. The manufacture, possession, use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs or other illegal substances while on an Earthwatch expedition is strictly prohibited. Prescription drugs may only be purchased and used by the individual indicated on the prescription in keeping with their intended use guidelines.

## ALCOHOL

Local statutes, customs, practices, ordinances, and regulations with regard to the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol are applicable to all participants and project staff on Earthwatch expeditions. Participants and project staff on Earthwatch expeditions must comply with the law of the country in which a project is located regarding the minimum age required to consume alcohol. In addition, restriction on the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol may be set by the Earthwatch







scientist. Any restrictions on the consumption of alcohol should be clearly outlined by the project staff in the on-site briefing to participants at the start of the project and in the expedition briefing.

Consumption or possession of alcohol or smoking is not permitted on any Earthwatch Teen Team, regardless of local law.

Excessive consumption of alcohol by staff or participants is not acceptable on any Earthwatch project. Intoxication can jeopardize personal safety, in addition to the safety of the team. It can also cause delay and hinder response in the event of a crisis or emergency situation.

Earthwatch staff and the Earthwatch scientist have the discretion to remove individuals from the project who consume alcohol in a time and manner that endanger the safety and/or productivity of the expedition.

## MINORS

Earthwatch considers participants less than eighteen (18) years of age to be minors. Minors are not permitted to participate on any of Earthwatch's standard teams unless

accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, in which case the minimum age is fifteen (15). Guardians accompanying minors on standard teams must be 21 years of age or over. Minors on standard teams do not receive additional guidance or supervision from Earthwatch beyond what is offered to the adult participants. The total number of minors on standard teams may be limited on a project by project basis; this will be noted in the expedition briefing. A maximum of two minors may accompany each parent or guardian on a standard or Family Team. Earthwatch has developed teams specifically for 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds ("Teen Teams") as well as teams specifically for families ("Family Teams") with children as young as 10 years. These teams focus on the same research activities and have the same expectations as our regular teams, but with more facilitation and support. Exceptions for some projects may be made at the discretion of Earthwatch and the Earthwatch scientist. Due to a more in-depth screening process for certain programs that select candidates based on school year rather than age, there may be 18-year-olds fielding on the same team as 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds. Please be aware that some Earthwatch projects do not allow participation by minors in any circumstance.



## PARTICIPANTS AND DRIVING

Participants are not allowed to drive project vehicles (including motorcycles or all terrain vehicles) or aircraft during an expedition. In select circumstances, participants may be able to drive boats under the direct supervision by project staff. These circumstances are predetermined by project staff in collaboration with Earthwatch. Participants must respect the restrictions for boat driving in place for each project.

If a project environment is such that participants can drive their own vehicles to the rendezvous, those who have driven themselves to the project may not drive their own vehicles to, from, or for project activities, including the transport of project equipment after arriving at the site.

Participants who have driven themselves to the project may choose to utilize their own vehicles during recreational time, but project staff will brief them on any driving restrictions. All driving during recreational time is done at your own risk.

Please be advised that the only exception to the above driving restrictions is emergency situations.

Riding in other participants' vehicles is not covered under the participants' insurance policy for the expedition.

Riding in another participant's vehicle is done at a participant's own risk.

## IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

In the event of emergencies, judgments must be made by Earthwatch field staff and participants. While Earthwatch makes an effort to ensure that qualified people make the most informed decisions possible, occasionally first aid may be administered and other immediate steps taken by expedition participants who are not licensed medical providers.

Each Earthwatch expedition has safety protocols and emergency procedures in place. Earthwatch encourages team members (the field staff and participants) to exercise their best judgment with regard to their own safety and the safety of other team members. Other participants may perform "Good Samaritan" actions, or actions taken to assist fellow participants during emergency situations in the field. However, Earthwatch does not encourage or expect you to jeopardize your own safety or that of others in attempting to rescue or assist your fellow team members.

## RIGHT OF REFUSAL

Earthwatch reserves the right to refuse an applicant's participation in an Earthwatch project at any time and to terminate any work being done by a participant and require the participant to vacate the project site if

the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff member in his or her absolute discretion considers it appropriate. In this event, the participant (and his or her parents or guardians, if appropriate) will be responsible for arranging and paying for any accommodation, travel, or other arrangements which may be necessary following the termination of a participant's involvement in a project, for whatever reason, and will not be eligible for a refund.

Earthwatch may not refuse an applicant's participation in a project for discriminatory reasons (race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law). However, an application may be denied in the interest of team compatibility or due to logistical limitations. Earthwatch will make reasonable efforts to accommodate participants with disabilities, and the organization endeavors to find appropriate expeditions for those participants who have physical limitations. Refusal of an applicant is an unusual event and is generally done either because of an applicant's failure to meet the essential eligibility requirements of a particular project or in the interest of team compatibility. In the event that an applicant is refused participation for health reasons, Earthwatch will refund in full any deposit or payment made toward the expedition.

Earthwatch scientists have the right to refuse special requests, such as visits by media (film, photography, or print), special groups, or teams (students, donors, etc.), if they conflict with Earthwatch scientist schedules, safety, research objectives, or general performance of the team.

Any participant found in violation of any of the policies described in this document ("Participant Rights and Responsibilities") is subject to removal from the team at his or her own expense. By signing the Liability Release section of your Earthwatch Participation Form, you are indicating that you have read and understand the policies in this document. Removal of a participant from a team is at the discretion of the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff. In addition, Earthwatch will support the right of the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff to send a participant away from a project once in the field should his or her behavior compromise the safety, research objectives, or general performance of the team, or if the participant has violated a stated policy. In the event that a minor is dismissed from a project, Earthwatch will contact the participant's parents or guardians prior to his or her dismissal. Should a participant be removed from a team, he or she is responsible for any and all costs associated with departure from the team and will receive neither refund of the minimum contribution for the expedition nor any expenses incurred by participation on the expedition.

(November 2012)



# Communications

## Contact Information

### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The scientific staff stays in contact using walkie-talkies and mobile phones. Volunteers will be trained in their use.

In case of emergency, the field team leader and another staff member will be available at all times via mobile phone.

A landline phone, mail, and a fax machine are available at the national park office. (These will only be used in case of emergency.)

The 24-hour helpline number at Earthwatch in the U.K. is +44 (0) 7900-895-752. You may also call the U.S. helpline at +1 (978) 461-0081-752 (see the opposite page for calling instructions).

### PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

While you may bring mobile phones, reception quality at the field site varies greatly. Some operators work better than others (we recommend Orange mobile service and strongly discourage Bouygues). If you have trouble getting through on a call, you may have better results sending a text message instead. Purchasing prepaid SIM cards is possible in large cities, but harder around the field area. We recommend you purchase them at the airport. However, most volunteers should be able to send and receive calls and/or text messages from their overseas SIM cards.

The mail is slow, so please instruct friends and family NOT to send you mail. Mail will not be forwarded once the team has ended. There are postboxes in both Tignes and Val d'Isère if you wish to send mail home.

Internet access will be available at the accommodations, but the computers there are dedicated to inputting research data, and you them for personal communication only when all research tasks are complete.

Personal communication with outsiders is not always possible while participating in an expedition. Earthwatch encourages volunteers to minimize outgoing calls and immerse themselves in the experience; likewise, family and friends should restrict calls to urgent messages only.

### VOLUNTEER CONTACT INFO

#### Phone:

At the time of publication, the project cell phone number was not available. Earthwatch will inform participants of this number before their expeditions begin.



# Message from Earthwatch

## DEAR EARTHWATCHER,

Thank you for joining this expedition! We greatly appreciate your decision to contribute to hands-on environmental science and conservation.

As an Earthwatch volunteer, you have the opportunity to create positive change. And while you're out in the field working toward that change, we are committed to caring for your safety. Although risk is an inherent part of the environments in which we work, we've been providing volunteer field experiences with careful risk management and diligent planning for over 40 years. You're in good hands.

We hope this expedition will inspire you to get more involved in conservation and sustainable development priorities—not just out in the field, but also when you return home. We encourage you to share your experiences with others, and to transfer your skills and enthusiasm to environmental conservation efforts in your workplace, community, and home.

If you have questions as you prepare for your expedition, contact your Earthwatch office. Thank you for your support, and enjoy your expedition!

Sincerely,



Larry Mason

President and CEO

## Earthwatch's 24-Hour Helpline

If you need help at any time, call Earthwatch's 24-hour on-call duty officer in the U.K.:

**+44 (0) 7900-895-752**

If you reach voicemail, state that you have an emergency communication and leave a clear message with the name of the field program, your name, the location from which you are calling, and, if possible, a phone number where you can be reached. An Earthwatch staff person will respond to your call within one hour.

You may also call Earthwatch in the U.S.:

**+1 (978) 461-0081**

After business hours, leave your message with our live answering service who will contact an Earthwatch staff person who will respond to your call.

## Medical and Security Assistance Helpline Numbers

(For assistance while in the field)

When calling any of the helplines, please mention Earthwatch and policy reference number 560020011200.

CEGA Emergency Medical & Travel Assistance:

**+44 (0)20 3059 8770**

You may call this number collect or reverse charges if necessary in a medical emergency.

Henderson Risk Security Assistance and Advice:

**+44 (0)20 3059 8772**

[axisenquiries@hendersonrisk.com](mailto:axisenquiries@hendersonrisk.com)







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[www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)

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Toll-Free: 1-800-776-0188  
Fax: 1-978-461-2332

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