



## **Blue-throated Macaw Volunteer Program**

### **Barba Azul Nature Reserve**

Armonía's Barba Azul Nature Reserve is protecting the Endangered Beni savanna ecosystem and the Critically Endangered endemic Blue-throated Macaw. Between 400 and 450 individuals are left in the wild, of which up to 155 forage at Barba Azul, making this reserve population the stronghold for the species. This hyper-seasonal savanna eco-region is characterized by 8 months of flooding followed by a severe dry period. Not only is it important for the Blue-throated Macaw, but Barba Azul also provides refuge for many other threatened birds, mammals and plants. More than 319 birds and 30 large/medium sized mammals find home in Barba Azul.



**Reserva  
Barba  
Azul**

### **Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve**

Armonía's second Blue-throated Macaw Reserve is called the Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve, protecting the most important breeding grounds for this endemic and Critically Endangered bird. Also located in the hyper-seasonal savanna eco-region, it is more forested than the Barba Azul Nature Reserve but as important for the Macaws. Here, Armonía is running a successful Blue-throated Macaw nestbox program since 2005 that resulted in more than 80 fledged chicks. Laney Rickman is home to at least 210 birds and 20 large/medium sized mammals.



**RESERVA  
LANEY  
RICKMAN**



## Who we are: Asociación Armonía

Asociación Armonía is the leading non-profit bird conservation NGO of Bolivia, whose mission is to protect the most threatened Avifauna through education, improved livelihood, scientific research and reserve creation.

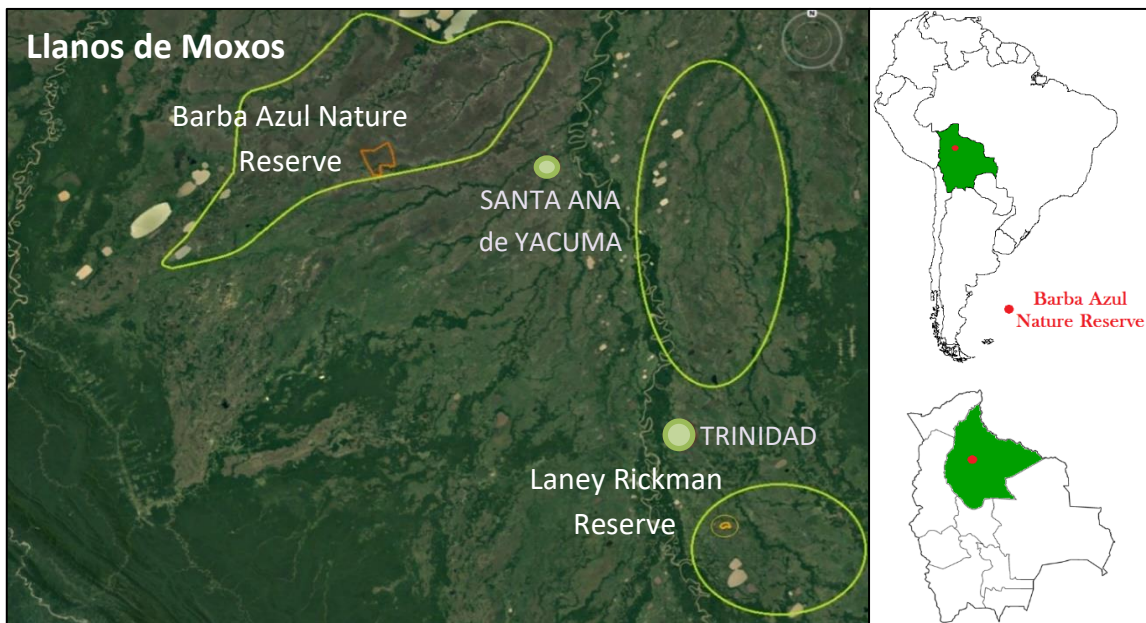
Armonía works on multiple conservation programs all over Bolivia that combines environmental protection with improved livelihood. Through land protection, more than 11,681 ha of Endangered ecosystems with their interdependent animal and plant life have been safeguarded. Check out the Armonía website for further information on our projects:

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

## Location

Barba Azul Nature Reserve: 11,000 ha

Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve: 681 ha



The Barba Azul Nature Reserve is located in the north of the Llanos de Moxos in the Beni Department, 75 kilometers west of Santa Ana de Yacuma. The Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve is located 55 km south of the Beni Department capital, Trinidad. Armonía protect vital Blue-throated Macaw habitat in 2 isolated subpopulations (estimated Blue-throated Macaw subpopulation range indicated in light green circles).



## Highlights of Barba Azul Nature Reserve

During the dry season from March until the end of October, Blue-throated Macaws can be seen in high numbers at Barba Azul Nature Reserve. Groups between 30 and 70 can regularly be seen mixed with the more common and abundant Blue-and-yellow Macaw. Mixed flocks of hundreds of Macaws can be observed flying to their roosting sites in the late afternoon.

The reserve is home to 319 bird species ([Ebird.org/hotspot/L1133586](http://Ebird.org/hotspot/L1133586)), with the record of 179 birds seen in a single day (September). The tall grasses of the reserve protect rare savanna species, like the Cock-tailed Tyrant, Sharp-tailed Tyrant and Black-masked Finch, as well as abundant populations of the Near Threatened Orinoco Goose, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Greater Rhea.

The reserve is also a safe haven for Jaguars, Pumas, Maned Wolves, Ocelots, Giant Anteaters and Black Howler Monkeys to name just a few of the impressive mammal species that are found here. Mornings at Barba Azul are usually highlighted with the incredible wake-up calls from the Black Howler Monkeys, making it a true wild experience.



Puma (*Puma concolor*): Asociación Armonía

## Highlights of Laney Rickman Reserve

During the rainy season from November until the end of May, Blue-throated Macaws breed in the Laney Rickman Reserve, using Armonía's artificial nestboxes. Around 10 pairs breed in the reserve and many other species can be observed up close in their nests. Weekly monitoring of the nestboxes provide crucial information on the Blue-throated Macaw breeding biology.

The reserve is home to 210 bird species with highlights like Red-shouldered Macaw, Velvet-fronted Grackle (Beni endemic subspecies), Blue-throated Piping-guan and Red-billed Scythebill (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L7103144>).

Laney Rickman Reserve protects habitat for many mammal species like the Giant Anteater, Ocelot, Black and Red Howler Monkey, Night Monkeys and the largest rodent in the world, the Capybara.



Breeding Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis*): Marton Hardy



## Activities

### Barba Azul Nature Reserve

- Helping park rangers with general reserve maintenance
- Field data gathering on all types of biodiversity
- Weekly Blue-throated Macaw monitoring
- Wildlife camera trap data analysis
- Reforestation and tree planting activities
- Improving hiking trails and signage
- Training horses for guided trips
- All types of handyman/woman activities

### Laney Rickman Blue-throated Macaw Reserve

- Blue -throated Macaw nestbox monitoring
- Monitoring Blue-throated Macaw roosting sites
- Helping park rangers with general reserve maintenance
- Field data gathering on all types of biodiversity
- Nest box camera trap data analysis
- Creating birdwatching hiking trails
- Environmental education activities
- All types of handyman/woman activities



Glasgow University research team in Barba Azul: Tjalle Boorsma

## Accommodation: Barba Azul

### Biological station

The Biological station is your comfort in the wild heart of the Beni savannas. The station has the capacity of 8 people in 4 shared bedrooms with 2 shared bathrooms. There is also your own kitchen shared by visiting volunteers and researchers.



## Accommodation: Laney Rickman

### Camping

Laney Rickman Reserve brings you back to basic, sleeping under the incredible Beni Skies. As there is not light pollution, the experience sleeping under the stars stands on its own. Bring your own tent and sleeping equipment. There are several roofed locations where you can pitch your tent. There is a shared bathroom and a rustic dining area where you will dine with the field team.



## Volunteering package and additional costs

Beside your active physical contribution, your financial contribution is vital to the program sustainability, ensuring long-term conservation to prevent the extinction of the Blue-throated Macaw. The volunteer fee for visiting both Armonía Reserve depends on the time of staying. A minimum stay of 15 days is required.

Volunteer Fee: Costs/day in USD*	
1 to 30 days (1 month)	\$30
31 to 60 days (2 months)	\$25
61 days or more (2 months or more)	\$20

\*Prices do not include transportation nor food. Accommodation outside the reserves, transportation and food has to be covered by the volunteers.

### Arrival

Most international flights arrive in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. We recommend two nights in Santa Cruz to acclimatize, extend tourism visa and visiting the Asociación Armonía office for registration, payments and logistical planning.

### Transportation to Trinidad

From Santa Cruz you can take the bus (\$20 USD one-way) or plane (\$50 USD one-way) to Trinidad.

### Transportation from Trinidad to Barba Azul Nature Reserve

Barba Azul Nature Reserve is best reached by air. First take a local air charters from Trinidad to Santa Ana de Yacuma (\$50 USD one-way) followed by an express flight to Barba Azul (\$260 USD one-way). Coordinate with Armonía for sharing flights.

### Transportation from Trinidad to Laney Rickman Reserve

Laney Rickman Reserve is reached over land and can be coordinated with Armonía (approximately \$75 USD one-way).



### Food

Food has to be purchased either in Trinidad or in Santa Ana de Yacuma with the assistance from Armonía staff members. Estimate an approximate \$10 USD/day for food.



## Requirements and work schedule

### In the office

- Yellow fever vaccination (requested to enter Bolivia)
- 3-month tourism VISA
- Travel insurance
- Payment of volunteer fee in cash at Armonía office before entering the reserves
- Bring your own laptop

### In the field

- Motivated, responsible and independent hard-worker
- Good physical condition as you find yourself in a humid, buggy and hot environment



- Interested in nature and conservation
- Between 18 and 50 years of age
- Comfortable to withstand harsh environmental conditions in remote locations
- Have a team spirit
- Basic Spanish is not required but makes it easy to communicate with local staff
- Bring your own field equipment (clothing, rubber boots, binoculars, camera, GPS, etc.)
- Provide Armonía a report on your research and results
- **Share with Armonía photos and videos for supporting the promotion of conservation**

### Work Schedule

- Monday to Saturday (6 hours daily)
- Free on Sundays



## **Weather conditions**

The wet season is from November until May (flooding can continue until July). During this period the savanna habitat will be flooded and you can expect rain at least once every two days. This is also part of the southern summer and day temperatures can reach 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit). The dry season is from May until November with average day temperatures 28-30 Celsius (82-86 Fahrenheit), but during this period 2-3-day cold fronts can reach the reserve unpredictably, bringing the temperature down to 12-18 Celsius.

## **For your information**

You will be in a hot tropical climate where you can expect many bugs and critters like mosquitos, ticks, spiders and chiggers. This is to warn you as some people can react strongly and even be allergic to insect bites. There are no tick vector diseases in Beni like lymes disease.

Make sure you bring repellent and anti-histamines to be prepared for sudden and unexpected physical reactions. It is also advisable to wear long trousers and long sleeves to prevent extensive bites. Rubber boots (or insecticide sprayed socks) can prevent most problems with ticks and chiggers.

Hiking in savanna and cerrado habitat can be difficult as there is little shade to protect you from the sun. Make sure you come well prepared with sunscreen, wide brimmed hat and other measures to protect you from the heat.



## How to apply

### Beforehand

1. Please fill in and send us the volunteer questionnaire
2. Please provide us with a 1-page CV
3. Please provide us with a 1-page letter of introduction
4. Send this information to Laura Velarde  
**reservations@armonia-bo.org**
5. When you agree to the requirements and costs involved, the Blue-throated Macaw program supervisor will contact you to plan for a Skype video call

### After verbal agreement

6. Please send us a digital copy of your passport, your travel insurance and VISA
7. Make the payment in Armonía office in Santa Cruz de la Sierra before traveling
8. Plan final logistics with supervisor
9. Safe travels and enjoy this amazing once in a lifetime experience

**Thank you for your interest in volunteering for conservation**

## Contact details

Send you information to the main Asociación Armonía office in Santa Cruz de la Sierra through e-mail.

E-mail: **reservations@armonia-bo.org**  
Tel: +591 -3 -3568808 (Armonía office)



