

Dr. Stephanie Spehar

Dr. Stephanie Spehar is a physical anthropologist whose area specialization is primate socioecology or how ecology and the environment have shaped primate social systems, behavior and communication. A second major research interest is primate conservation, especially the effect of habitat alteration, fragmentation and hunting on primate communities. To address these issues, Dr. Spehar's research utilizes long-term behavioral and ecological fieldwork and she has working in East Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

Dr. Spehar's dissertation research examined the social and reproductive function of long-distance vocalization in white-bellied spider monkeys (*Ateles belzebuth*) in Yasuni National Park, Ecuador. She continues to be involved in collaborative research on communication and social interaction in spider monkeys and other Atelinae primates in Ecuador. She is currently involved in collaborative research in Indonesia, geared towards understanding the effects of hunting and logging on primate communities at sties in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. She also conducts work in Nicaragua, where she is collaborating with an NGO, Paso Pacifico, to establish protected areas for primates and initiate a long-term study of the behavior, ecology and population genetic structure of spider and howler monkeys living in forest fragments.

In addition to primate socioecology and conservation, Dr. Spehar is interested in the evolution of language and human behavior ecology. She teaches Introduction to Anthropology and Physical Anthropology and is developing course on Primate Behavior, Ecology and the Evolution of Language.