

Experiencing NATURE in so. Chile

Learning while experiencing nature was a recurrent theme for the UW-Madison Botany 575 class that visited southern Chile, Jan. 7-18, 2014.

Before the trip, students said: "my knowledge of South America in general is quite limited." "I don't know much about the biodiversity of southern Chile. "I know practically nothing about the plant life and ecology specific to Patagonia;" "I have not had the good fortune to study abroad, so I am extremely excited to take in as much as I can." "I can't wait to learn more."



At the end of the trip, 10 undergraduates, their 2 professors (Graham and Zedler), a UW lichen specialist, and 2 Chilean guides were all smiling because their experiences were..... "eye-opening"; "absolutely amazing to see these places in person." "extremely diverse in landscapes and ecosystems" "This trip gave me a cool perspective on convergence and divergence" (of nature in N. & S. America).

During spring 2014, the class will analyze and interpret observations of...

(1) miniature moss & lichen "forests" on tree trunks in Tierra del Fuego, and...



(2) patterns of plant diversity at the edges of wetlands and woodlands within Patagonia.



We grew concerned about...

"issues faced in Chile, whether invasive/exotic species, wildfires, disturbances of other kinds, or the impact of climate change."



We were inspired about...

"the importance of maintaining this reservoir of both biotic and cultural wealth,"



The trip was integral to...

"a widening world view, building character, challenging one to grow and hone their critical thinking skills, being able to apply oneself to foreign/unfamiliar situations"

"This trip changed not only my outlook on the biodiversity and conservation in Chile, but also my outlook on interpreting environmental observations...in another

country." It left me "with a better understanding of the scientific process, the role of observation and discovery, and of forming new ideas and generating questions."



"I'm so jealous that you got to see that orchid in flower! It's *Chloraea magellanica*. Gorgeous!!" --Dr. Ken Cameron, Orchid Expert & Director, WI Herbarium

In summary, students said it was...

"Success"; "awesome"; "great experience"
"I feel so grateful for this opportunity"

Our Patagonina guide said: "This visit...

gave me new ideas of potential research studies that would help to preserve and restore the park."

Thank you, Ricardo Rozzi, Patricia Arancibia, Jaime Jimenez, Kelly Moses, Nicolas Galleguillos, and other hosts for sharing your country's spectacular scenic beauty and biota. You made this trip an exciting and memorable learning experience.

Trippers: Linda Graham, Joy Zedler, Marie Trest, Zac Alexander, Axel Adams, Leah Dittberner, Martin Feehan, Karen Hill, Rachel Keuler, Hannah Lee, Andy Muench, Nat Shay & Alyssa Studer Photos by Feehan, Graham, Trest, Zedler