



## TEMPORAL FEEDING PATTERNS OF ALOUATTA PALLIATA AT LA SELVA BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH STATION, COSTA RICA.

### A Reflection

**Sydney N. Cahoon (Melissa Seaboch Ph.d)**  
**Department of Anthropology in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

In 2017 I had the opportunity to go down to Costa Rica for 2 and a half weeks to collect data at La Selva Biological Station with the field school run out of Salt Lake Community College, led by Dr. Melissa Seaboch. The next summer, two of my best friends and another friend who we had made the year prior went down for two months as independent researchers. And when I say that the cumulative time I spent in Costa Rica were some of the best moments and memories I have on this earth, I mean it. There is something about being in nature, and having the opportunity to witness the complexity of the rainforest that changes you. In 2018 I spent most of my mornings waking up before the sunrise in order to collect early morning feeding data, and typically heading off solo into the dark forest. In the 45 minutes to dawn there is an eerie quiet of the forest and you cannot see more than 5 feet in front of your face. There were several times where I startled a peccary (best way to describe a peccary is that they are large furry pigs that smell like an onion body odor sandwich) and they in turn scared me. This happened on more than one occasion, and it always resulted in me laughing at myself. One time I even collected data on a sleeping howler monkey just before sunrise for almost an hour before I realized that it was in fact a knot in a tree, and not a howler. The nights were hot and the days were hotter. You were only ever dry if you decided to spend some time in the GIS computer lab since it was one of the only locations that had air conditioning, and a dehumidifier for the computers. I was pooped on twice from 15-25 feet above, I fell down 8 times in one morning on a trail, and got bit by spiders, mosquitos, and flies. At the same time I made friends with some of the guides and were able to raft on some of the most beautiful waterways, saw cotton ball bats, and was taken back to the home of a guide named Alberth where he made us iced hot chocolate and we ate cookies and listened to the rain. Research is never straight forward, and it is hardly ever easy. But research is what I love and what I hope to continue to do. I hope if you ever get the chance to conduct field research you do it because despite the scares, the scars, and the tears, it was worth it.