

AFRICAN WILDLIFE ENCOUNTER PROGRAMME



VOLUNTEERING
FACTSHEET



ABOUT

The project is situated in a picturesque valley between Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) and Jeffreys Bay, in the malaria-free Eastern Cape. It started out as a family interest in rehabilitating orphaned animals and birds, and over the years grew into a larger operation. The sanctuary has grown steadily since it opened to the public in 1992. Since then, several more animals and birds have been taken in and the sanctuary is now home to many animals and over 300 species of birds. Most birds and animals are either brought to the sanctuary by members of the public, referred by local veterinary practices or were once people's pets. They have usually been injured or orphaned and can range from small birds to larger animals such as bush pigs and buck.

Other animals at the park include several buck species, servals, caracals, squirrels, genets, meerkats and crocodiles. Birdlife includes several birds indigenous to South Africa, including the Knysna loerie, blue cranes and many other types of hawks, owls and parrots.

The centre is primarily an animal sanctuary and most animals and birds that come to us are infants. Those that are seriously injured are cared for by our volunteers and live out the rest of their lives at the sanctuary. However, those that can survive on their own are nursed back to health and released into the wild. In 2015, the project finished building a separate rehabilitation unit with eight rehab cages and some larger flight cages for the new residents. These cages give them a chance to adapt to living outside again, while learning to spread their wings, before being moved into the larger aviaries, if they cannot be released into the wild.

The project also runs an endangered animal breeding scheme and has blue duiker, crowned cranes and blue cranes in this programme. There are currently three which are hand-reared.

FIND YOUR VOICE



WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Volunteers work for five days, with two days off each week. The sanctuary day typically starts at 7am and ends after 5pm. There is a 6am start once or twice per week to prepare food for the animals and birds.

The usual day-to-day duties involve preparing the feed for the animals and birds, then feeding them twice daily. This can take up to two hours in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. You will be required to maintain and clean out enclosures regularly and be aware of any problems that arise, either with the animals themselves, their enclosures or their access to food and water. Most of the long-term resident animals are friendly and you may experience hands-on contact with these.

The project also includes a 1000-hectare game farm which is home to zebra, giraffe, kudu, nyala, bushbuck and many more animal species. There are also many varieties of birds - too many to mention! This requires regular maintenance in the way of checking fences for holes and disabling and removing poachers' traps.

The park is regularly changing, so new enclosures often have to be constructed and existing ones adapted to meet the needs of new inhabitants. You may be involved in both the building of these enclosures and creating the correct habitat for the animals.

It is important to note that this description serves as an example. The daily tasks may vary depending on the time of year, what jobs need completing and the number of volunteers that are on site. Please come with an open mind about your daily activities.

WHAT TO WEAR?

- Walking shoes/boots or trainers for working outdoors
- Working clothes that you don't mind getting dirty



ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Volunteers live on-site in a lodge situated on the game reserve, a 5-minute walk from the sanctuary. There is a TV lounge with a DVD player for volunteers to use. The rooms are usually twin or 3 sleepers with the biggest dormitory room sleeping 4 people. You are usually accommodated with volunteers of the same sex and of similar ages/length of stays. The accommodation is basic, although there is hot water and electricity. Beds are provided with a sheet, pillow and summer duvet, but you are advised to bring a sleeping bag - a must for the cold nights through the winter months (May – September). There is also accommodation for older volunteers or couples requiring a bit more privacy. There is no Wi-Fi, so we recommend buying a South African SIM card on arrival and then purchasing prepaid credit and data for all your communication needs. We recommend MTN for the best network coverage and this can be purchased at the sanctuary.

Meals are included and consist of:

- **Breakfast** – cereals and toast with various spreads
- **Lunch** – sandwiches, wraps, salads, soups, etc.
- **Dinner** – cooked meals (e.g. roasts, pasta, curries, braai (BBQ), lasagne, etc.)
- We cater for vegetarians
- Vegans need to purchase their own milk substitute

Please note: There is a zero-alcohol policy at the sanctuary, however beer may be purchased with dinner.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The project is situated 30 minutes from the surfing mecca of Jeffreys Bay, which is a popular off-day destination for volunteers. There are several surf shops, bars and restaurants, and the opportunity to take a surfing lesson or a horse-riding trip along the beach. Other popular trips include Bloukrans River Bridge, which is home to the world's highest bungee jump, and blackwater tubing in Tsitsikamma Forest. The nearby town of Plettenberg Bay has excellent sky diving, as well as other animal sanctuaries for monkeys, big cats and elephants.

There are loads of other activities, such as swimming with seals and a fantastic day safari which the managers help you to organise on your days off. You might simply like to spend your off days relaxing around at the sanctuary, watching a movie or taking a walk on the game farm.

Please be aware that nowhere is accessible without a taxi and, when you need one, management at the sanctuary will arrange one for you.

MINIMUM AGE

- 16

MINIMUM LEVEL OF ENGLISH REQUIRED

- INTERMEDIATE to UPPER INTERMEDIATE:
a strong understanding of English at a conversational level is required



SKILLS/PERSONALITY TRAITS REQUIRED:

- Genuine love for and interest in all animals, especially birds
- Patience, tolerance and respect towards others
- A fun and light attitude
- Agility and energy to engage in physical work
- Willingness to work with and clean animal enclosures
- Not easily stressed
- Enjoys working as part of a team

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Complete the application form

ARRIVAL

- Arrival at Port Elizabeth International Airport
- Monday is the arrival day
- Arrive between 09h00 and 17h00
(There will be an extra charge of R650 for arrivals outside of the standard arrival time)

WHICH TRANSFERS ARE INCLUDED?

An arrival and departure transfer is included for transfers which fall during the standard transfer times. For transfers outside of the standard times, there is an additional charge. The departure transfer can take place at any time.



WHAT TO BRING?

- Walking shoes/boots or trainers for working outdoors
- Other shoes/ flip flops, etc.
- Clothes: Working clothes that will get dirty, e.g. T-shirts/vests, jumpers/fleece tops, shorts, trousers, etc.
- Warm clothes for evenings and the winter (South Africa gets cold in the winter!)
- Casual clothes for leisure time
- Waterproof jacket (trousers optional). It can get very wet!
- Swimwear
- Towel
- Torch
- Alarm clock
- Water bottle (optional)
- Sun hat and suntan lotion
- Insect repellent
- Sleeping bag (warm one for winter months April – September. Not necessary during summer months)
- Personal toiletries
- Personal medication
- Small first aid kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Camera
- Cell phone
- Personal entertainment - books/music/movies, etc. (optional)
- South African 3-pin adaptor

Please remember to check the weather for the time of year you will be arriving. Although the summers are long and warm, it can get cold and wet during the autumn/winter months. There is no central heating in your accommodation (or in South Africa in general).

VACCINATIONS

- Consult your local doctor/travel clinic.
- The project is in a malaria-free area.

WHERE IS THE PROJECT BASED?

- **Country:** South Africa
- **Region:** Thornhill, just outside Jeffreys Bay

WORKING DAY AND HOURS?

- **Minimum duration:** 2 weeks
- **Maximum duration:** no maximum, but most volunteers spend 1-2 months at the project
- **Daily hours:** Hours will be discussed at the project. Typically 6am or 7am to 5pm.
- Volunteers work 5 days per week, with 2 days off each week
- Open all year around



COSTS?

- Placement fee: **€400** (non-refundable) | Price per week: **€365**

PROBATION?

- All volunteers are subject to a two-week probation period.

SICK DAYS?

- The project must be notified by 07h00 if you are going to be absent due to illness.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- Project placement and all correspondence with the project
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Arrival orientation
- Accommodation and basic bedding at the project
- Meals at the project
- Support services from both the project and EC Cape Town
- 24/7 assistance on EC Cape Town's emergency phone for the duration of your stay

WHAT IS EXCLUDED?

- Visa application fees
- Medical insurance (available at €20 per week if booked with EC)
- Flights
- Spending money
- Extra bedding during winter months (bring a sleeping bag)
- Local transport
- Wi-Fi
- Laundry, but this can be done on-site for a fee

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Standard EC Terms and Conditions apply.
- In addition, please note the following Project Booking and Cancellation Policy:
 - ✧ 25% cancellation fee if cancelled 3 or more weeks prior to arrival
 - ✧ 50% cancellation fee if cancelled 2 weeks prior to arrival
 - ✧ 100% cancellation fee if cancelled 1 week prior to arrival
 - ✧ 50% payment on confirmation of booking and balance payable 30 days prior to arrival