

African Horizon



Overview

Location Thornhill (between Port Elizabeth and Jeffrey's Bay), South Africa.

Duration From 2 weeks.

Dates All year round.

- Requirements**
- Minimum age: 17.
 - You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.
 - Special skills: A reasonable level of fitness.

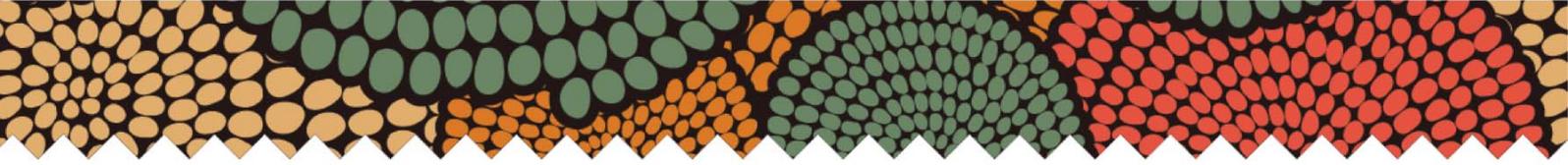
Your impact 🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️🖐️

The impact of your volunteer work depends on the nature of the project. In addition, it may also depend on whether the project offers a full volunteering experience or a combination of volunteering and tourism. For details, please see the description of the project and what's included in the project fees.

Documents required Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance, if under 18: letter of parental consent.

Day of arrival Monday.

Day of departure Monday.



Highlights

- Work and live up close with a large variety of South Africa's birds and wildlife.
- Explore a game reserve where giraffe, zebra and other buck species run free.
- Make a difference to animals' lives.
- Experience as much hands on contact as possible.
- World's top surfing mecca Jeffrey's Bay is only 30 minutes away.
- Take part in amazing tours and excursions outside of the project.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

Project information

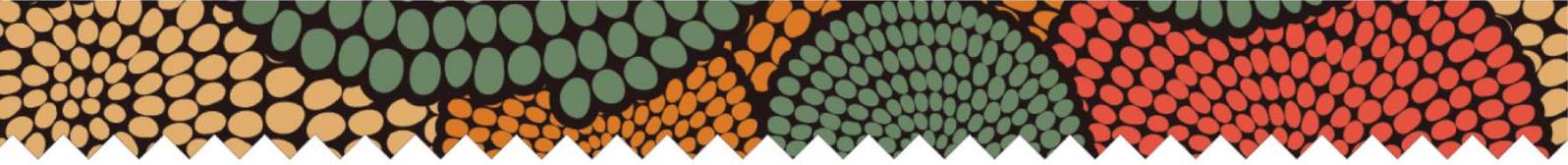
The sanctuary boasts the most incredible animal enclosures and aviaries in which it houses the many species brought there by the public. Nearly all the baby animals in the sanctuary are orphans that have been rescued from elsewhere and brought to the sanctuary for safety and, where possible, will be released back into their natural habitat in the wild.

The sanctuary has grown steadily since it opened to the public in 1992. Since then many more animals and birds have been taken in and the sanctuary is now home to a large number of animals and over 300 species of birds. Most birds and animals are brought to the sanctuary by members of the public or referred from local veterinary practices. These have usually been injured or orphaned. They can range from small birds to larger animals such as bush pigs and buck. Many of the parrots at the sanctuary are unwanted pets which are brought in and integrated into the aviaries with other birds of the same species. Some animals not indigenous to South Africa have come from zoos and other wildlife parks throughout the country. These include Emu, Wallabies and Marmoset Monkeys.

A large portion of the work involves working with the birdlife; the majority of the birds are indigenous to South Africa, including the Knysna Loerie, Black Eagles, the endangered Blue and Crowned Cranes and many types of Hawks and Owls. There are also many different parrot species including Macaws, Patagonians, Amazons, and Lorikeets. Animals at the park include buck species such as Blue Duikers and Grysbok, Cheetahs, Servals, Lynx, Squirrels, Marmoset monkeys, Squirrel Monkeys, Wallabies, a Porcupine and even a Crocodile!

The centre is primarily a sanctuary and the majority of animals and birds that come in are either infants or seriously injured adults. They are cared for by the volunteers and live out the rest of their lives at the sanctuary. However, those that are able to survive in the wild are nursed back to health and released back into their natural habitat.

The sanctuary also runs a very successful endangered animal breeding programme which includes Cheetahs, Servals, Blue Duiker and Blue Cranes. Over the past couple of years, numerous Serval kittens have been born at the sanctuary. A pair of breeding cheetahs is now enjoying retirement at the centre but the sanctuary is also home to younger cheetahs as well.



Programme details

This project assists the Bird and Animal Sanctuary between Port Elizabeth and Jeffrey's Bay with the daily care and funding to feed and care for stranded and injured animals. This project has a true need for volunteers to support with time and funding. There are usually baby animals in the spring and summer months (September – April).

Your role

The usual day-to-day duties involve preparing food for the animals and birds and feeding them twice daily. This can take up to 1 hour in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon. Volunteers are 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 the project staff encourages you to have as much hands on contact as possible. You will have free access to the young Serval cats and kittens but for obvious reason the contact with some of the larger, more dangerous animals, including the Crocodile and Cheetahs, is limited – although you will help to clean and maintain the cheetah enclosures and most volunteers get to go in and spend some supervised time with them. There is also a clinic where new injured or young animals are kept. You will help to feed and look after these animals daily. Duties include the following:

- Food preparation for all the animals and birds. You'll learn which animals eat what food, how to prepare it and how much to give them.
- Hand rearing of orphaned wildlife (this can be seasonal and is not guaranteed), including birds. Nearly all the baby animals in the sanctuary are orphans that have been rescued from elsewhere and brought to the sanctuary for safety and, where possible, to be released back into their natural habitat in the wild. These birds and animals need lots of care and attention.
- Mucking out (cleaning) and tidying enclosures, and, when necessary, helping to expand existing enclosures or constructing new ones.
- General clearing of the park to eliminate alien vegetation, for example. This makes a more "user-friendly" and safer environment for the free-roaming animals (and is in line with government policy of limiting alien vegetation wherever possible).
- Also checking for and clearing any rubbish on the property because litter can cause serious injuries to the animals.
- Bush clearing.
- Helping to look after the sanctuary's cattle - dipping, moving etc.
- Assisting the small permanent staff with any project or maintenance work (i.e. painting fences, repairing etc.) that may be needed while you're there.

Volunteers work 5 days with 2 days off each week (not necessarily the weekends). It can be hard work. It can be dirty. It can be smelly. But that's all part of the fun!

It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer, the time of the year and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.

Getting to and from the project



The African Horizon Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary is based in the heart of a valley, only a short distance away from the hustle and bustle of Port Elizabeth and Jeffrey's Bay.

You need to arrive at Port Elizabeth Airport or at Jeffrey's Bay Bus Station where you will be collected by the volunteer staff. Transport is provided on both your arrival and departure during office hours from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 17:00 – Mondays are preferred.

Accommodation

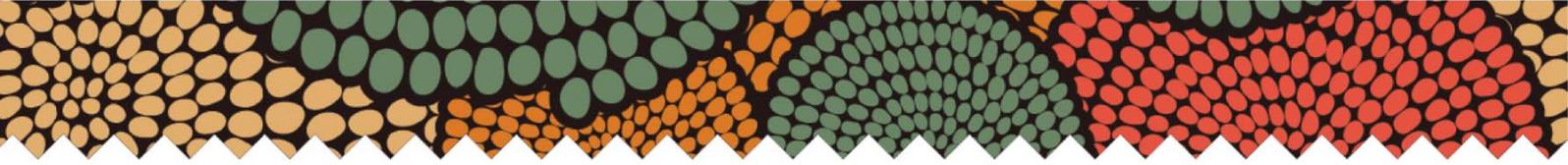
Your accommodation is a 5-minute walk away from the project. You live in a backpacker-style accommodation with rooms ranging from single to an 8-sleeper dorm, but usually 2 or 3 volunteers share a room. For all volunteers there are 2 bathrooms to share, with a total of 4 toilets and 6 showers. The lodge has a TV lounge (DSTV, DVD) and is equipped with a small kitchen area with a fridge, kettle and microwave. Outside there is a fire pit where you can make bonfires in the evenings. A small laundry room is available where hand washing of clothes can be done. For R35 per load you can also use the washing machine. Sheets, a pillow and a duvet/blanket will be provided; however, you must bring your own sleeping bag which is necessary especially in the winter months.

There is no WiFi available, only in Jeffrey's Bay. But you are able to purchase a dongle for your laptop if you want personal Internet at your accommodation. A public payphone is available and accepts both coins and international calling cards. You can also easily buy a South African SIM card to access Internet through your cell phone. The volunteer staff will assist you in getting a local SIM card at the airport on your arrival.

Meals

Three meals a day are provided. Breakfast includes cereals, toast, fruits, etc. At lunch sandwiches, wraps, beans/eggs on toast, soup, noodles, etc. are available. For dinner you will be provided with a fully cooked meal, or a braai will be prepared (this could happen frequently). All meals are eaten together at the restaurant area.

A vegetarian option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements (vegans, dairy-free/gluten-free, etc.). Occasionally, for certain dietary requests, volunteers may have to bring some things with them as certain items, for example gluten-free bread, are hard to get in South Africa.



Free time

Usually you finish your work between 16:00 and 17:00. Dinner is at 18:00 and normally volunteers spend the free time before dinner showering and getting changed. After dinner you can spend some time together in the restaurant and then go back down to the lodge where volunteers often make a bonfire, watch TV or go to bed with a book. Due to the busy work day, volunteers go to bed pretty early around 21:00 and 22:00.

The project is situated 30 minutes from the surfing mecca of Jeffrey's Bay which is a popular weekend destination for volunteers with several surf shops, bars and restaurants and the opportunity to have a surfing lesson or take a horse riding trip along the beach. Other popular weekend trips include Storms River which is home to the world's highest bungy jump and a canopy tour through Tsitsikamma National Park, and Plettenburg Bay, which boasts excellent sky diving as well as a monkey park, Birds of Eden and the Elephant Sanctuary where visitors can walk with elephants and also ride an elephant. You can also enjoy the sea safari - whale watching and the most popular trip - the day Safari to Addo National park and Scotia game reserve. The project can assist you in organising and booking activities as well as local transport on your off days to enjoy the surrounding areas and visit tourist hot spots.

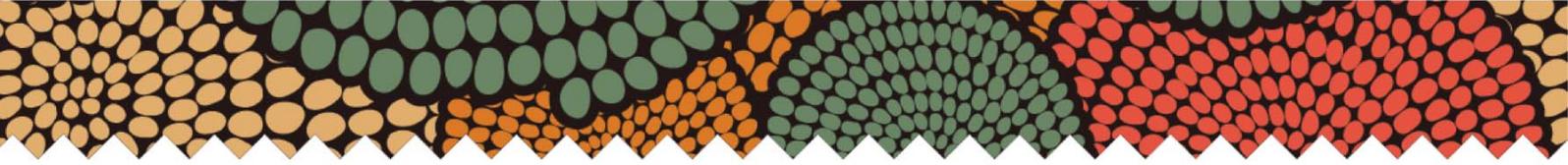
Local transport

Transport must be organised at your own expense, either using taxis or hiring cars. There are a few local taxi companies (mainly Sunshine Express) as well as car rental services situated in Jeffrey's Bay and Port Elizabeth.

What to bring

Items you will need are:

- Walking shoes/boots or trainers for working/game farm
- Other shoes
- Working clothes for getting dirty
- T-shirts/vests
- Jumpers/fleece tops
- Shorts/trousers
- Warm clothes for evening/winter (people often don't realise South Africa gets cold in the winter!)
- Other clothes for time off
- Waterproof jacket (trousers optional)
- Swimwear
- Towel
- Torch
- Alarm clock
- Water bottle (optional)
- Sun hat and suntan lotion
- Insect repellent
- Sleeping bag (winter months April - Sept) not necessary during summer months
- Personal toiletries
- Personal medications
- Small first aid kit
- Hand sanitizer (optional)
- Camera
- Cell phone (optional)
- Personal entertainment - Books/MP3 (optional)
- 3-point South African adaptor



While there is no specific uniform, volunteers are asked to wear sensible clothing, e.g. long shorts and closed shoes. Hot pants, string bikinis and flip-flops are not suitable for work.

Medical insurance

It is required that you take out medical insurance before travelling to South Africa. For stays exceeding 90 days, it is compulsory to take out a South African medical insurance. We recommend NetworX from Compicare, which is specifically designed for people who visit South Africa for 3 to 12 months. You will receive an information leaflet and an application form together with your confirmation of booking.

Health

No vaccinations are required except for travellers going to the north-eastern areas of South Africa, where anti-malaria precautions are recommended. Clients should consult their doctor for recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:

Africa: Angola, Burundi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zaire.

South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water during your first few days in South Africa.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in South Africa.

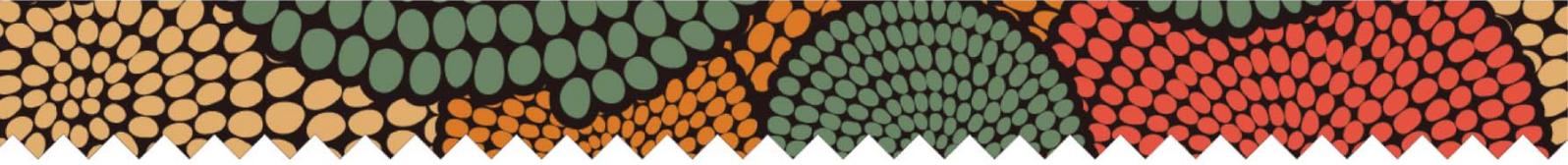
Safety

While all safety precautions are followed, you are still working with wild animals and must be aware at all times and follow the safety guidelines. The project is situated in a malaria-free area so no drugs are required.

What's included / not included

Included:

- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (Port Elizabeth Airport or Jeffrey's Bay Bus Station)
- Accommodation (dorm-style room, breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Monthly site visits by our coordinator
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number



Not included:

- Local transport
- Weekend excursions
- Towels
- WiFi

Visa

You can volunteer in South Africa on a visitor's visa for up to 90 days.

Nationals from certain countries (e.g. Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, France, Netherlands, Spain) will receive their visa when entering South Africa. Other nationals need to apply for a visitor's visa at a South African Embassy in their home country before travelling.

If you come to South Africa on a visitor's visa, you can extend once by another 90 days.

If you plan to come for more than 90 days, you need to apply for a visa at a South African Embassy in your home country. This visa is restricted to registered NGO's and therefore not available for this project.

For the latest information contact the South African Embassy or Good Hope Volunteers.