

Shark Project



Overview

Location	Closest town: Gansbaai (about 3km away), Kleinbaai, South Africa.
Duration	From 2 - 12 weeks.
Dates	This project does not operate on the 25 th of December and the 1 st of January, but volunteers can still stay at the volunteer centre.
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum age: 18 (participants older than 50 need to have a doctor's note to state they're medically fit).• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.• Special skills: You must be physically fit and able to swim.
Your impact	 <p>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.</p>
Documents required	Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance; medical conditions need to be accompanied by a doctor's note.
Day of arrival	Monday.
Day of departure	Monday.



Highlights

- Work on eco-tourism vessels with leaders in the industry, assisting tourists and educating them about conservation.
- Dive with great white sharks and see them in their natural habitat.
- Experience the Marine Big 5 wildlife: sharks, whales, dolphins, penguins and seals.
- Learn about shark behaviour, biology and ocean conservation.
- Learn to scuba dive (additional costs apply).
- Take part in amazing tours and excursions outside of the project.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

Project information

The project is focused on shark-cage diving, whale watching and boat-based eco-marine tourism. It is based in Kleinbaai, a small harbour town, part of Gansbaai in the Western Cape of South Africa. This area is known as the best place in the world to see Great White sharks in their natural habitat and it is also a hot spot for the breeding and mating waters of the Southern Right whale. The project works closely with a number of conservation bodies to address conservation challenges and improve living conditions for local communities and to raise awareness about wildlife conservation.

The project offers you an incredible opportunity to experience a wide range of South African marine wildlife: sharks, whales, dolphins, penguins and seals. You will learn about shark behaviour, biology and ocean conservation, fin-ID studies, great white shark wound healing, great white tagging and trapping, and water sampling. You will have informative presentations and you will take part in exciting community projects too, i.e. beach clean ups, education, etc.

The project allows you access to a diverse area of learning and gives you holistic insight into the challenges and opportunities involved in eco-tourism and ocean conservation at the tip of Africa.

Programme details

On the first day you can look forward to:

- An informal introduction from the volunteer co-ordinator.
- Meeting staff, crew and fellow volunteers.
- Getting to know the surroundings - the office, the accommodation and also shops so that you can stock up on supplies.
- Being given a volunteer T-shirt, a cap and a jacket.
- Completing indemnities and forms.

The first trip begins with a briefing from the team marine biologist. The launch times will be given the previous day and can vary from 07:00 to 13:00, depending on tides and weather conditions. You arrive at the anchoring spot after 20 to 25 minutes, the anchor is lowered, the cage goes into the water and a scent trial is made. Then we settle down, final preparations are made for the dive and the rest of the trip is spent assisting and educating tourists, looking out for sharks, diving and enjoying!

Please note that the project cannot take participants who have certain physical limitations (e.g. blindness, being wheelchair bound or severe motion sickness).



Your role

Duties on the boat:

- Report for duty 1 ½ hours before boat is scheduled to launch.
- Clean and dry the boat in the morning and afternoon (before trips and after).
- Check equipment for diving - chum, bait, food, coats, etc.
- Assist in laying and retrieving of the anchor and cage.
- Assisting in dive operation (you will get the chance to dive yourself).
- Education and care of clients and client interaction.
- Constant and vigilant shark spotting and bait watching.
- Clean wetsuits and put them away.
- Storeroom duties - needs to be kept clean daily.
- Assist crew and skipper.
- One trip usually takes a total of 6 working hours, two trips about 8 working hours.

You will receive details of your trips each evening for the next day. You are expected to go on the boat at least for 15 days out of 30 days (min. 15 trips and max. 30 trips, weather permitting). For any time off or sickness you need to contact the volunteer coordinator immediately. The project team tries to get you out to sea every possible day, so please stay in touch with your coordinator if this is too much for you.

Other activities at the Shark Project could include:

- Beach clean up.
- Fishing line bin construction, erection and maintenance.
- Shark egg collection and identification.
- Delivering alien invasive wood to the local community to use for fuel as cooking and heating.
- Getting involved in the project's conservation efforts.

The project runs 7 days a week as they are completely dependent on the weather. If the weather does not allow the boat to go out to the sea, then you will be taken on one of the following excursions: Hermanus (shopping, wine tours), Betty's Bay (penguin colony), Cape Agulhas (meeting of the two oceans).

It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the weather and the season. Everything at the programme is dependent on the weather. If there are no sea days, lectures, excursions or conservation work will be arranged. The final job description can therefore vary from the above substantially.

Getting to and from the project



The Shark Project is based in Kleinbaai, in the Western Cape of South Africa. You need to arrive at Cape Town International Airport.

For students who do this project WITH a language course

You need to arrive on a Sunday. You will be collected by our driver and taken to your accommodation. After your English language course, you need to change your accommodation before you start volunteering at the Shark Project on a Monday. The project has its own accommodation facilities - you will be collected from your Good Hope Studies accommodation on Monday morning. This could be as early as 05:00.

For students who do this project WITHOUT a language course

You need to arrive no later than on Sunday as the project starts on Monday so you will spend one night in Cape Town at your own expense. You will be collected from your accommodation in Cape Town on Monday morning and taken to the project. This could be as early as 05:00.

Recommended backpackers:

Sunflower Stop, 179 Main Road, Green Point

The Backpack, 74 New Church Street

Ashanti Lodge, 23 Antrim Road, Green Point

The project ends on a Monday. If your flight leaves AFTER 19:00, the project will organise a transfer from the project to the airport. If the flight leaves BEFORE 19:00, the project will organise a transfer from the project to a backpacker's in Cape Town the day before your flight. You need to stay one night at your own expense and organise your own transfer to the airport the next day.

Accommodation

You will be accommodated at the International Marine Volunteer Centre, which is located in Kleinbaai directly at the project. This lodge is equipped with 4 chalets that accommodate between 4 and 6 people per chalet (twin shared rooms). Each chalet has a bathroom (with toilet, shower and basin), kitchen and living area as well as daily living essentials. There is a manager on site for after hour emergencies. There is also a very spacious living area in the main hall with a pool table, a cash bar, communal indoor braai and



kitchen area that can be used. The lodge has a big, safe swimming pool, a garden, a dartboard, a football table, a table tennis table and an activity hall. Walking or cycling to the office is safe and easy and will only take between 10 and 15min (1.4km). Minibuses are available to transport you to and from the hub of activities.

Your laundry gets taken to the Laundromat weekly, which costs about ZAR 15 per kg.

Key things about the lodge:

- Expect to share.
- Fully furnished.
- Satellite TV with a variety of channels.
- DVD player.
- Free WiFi (remember to bring laptop or phones).
- Emergency numbers are in the house.
- Sheets are provided and washed regularly once a week.
- Towels are not available.
- Property is maintained regularly.
- Hot water bottles and extra blankets are provided for the colder months. There is no heating inside the buildings.
- Bicycles for personal use.
- Keep your personal belongings safe (there are safes in each cottage).
- The water is safe to drink.

Meals

Breakfast is provided on a help-yourself basis (tea, coffee, eggs, bacon/vegetarian sausage, bread, cereals and milk). A light lunch will be provided aboard the vessels (sandwich, fruit and crisps). Should you be doing other activities you may be responsible for your own lunch. Dinner is at your own expense.

A vegetarian option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements. Any dietary needs need to be specified.

Free time

After your work you can spend some time together and relax, read, watch movies/documentaries, play pool and games, go out for dinner, enjoy the local pubs, etc.

In your free time you can either decide to do optional activities or simply stay at the lodge and relax. You can do quad biking, horse riding, wine tasting, hiking, and more.

Local transport

The project has a volunteer bus that is used on a daily basis for transporting volunteers to the project, selected activities and for food shopping (2-3 times per week). There is a small shop next to the office where daily supplies can be purchased if you need to. There are also some bicycles available for your personal use.

For any excursions/activities outside of the programme (i.e. safari, bungee jumping, horse riding, quad biking, etc.) you have the option to either hire a car or contact the local taxi driver – but this is at your own expense.



What to bring

Items you will need are:

- Seasick tablets
- Sun hat / Sun block
- Bathing suit
- Polarised sunglasses
- Warm clothes for evening/winter (people often don't realise South Africa gets cold in the winter!)
- Old clothes and shoes for working on the boat
- Other clothes for time off
- Towel
- Camera / Underwater camera
- 3-point South African adaptor

Diving equipment is provided by the project but if you prefer to use your own mask or suit, you are welcome to bring this along. If you need anything else it can be bought at local supermarkets in South Africa.

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 Compcare, 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.

The project is situated in a malaria free area so no drugs are required.



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.

What's included / not included

Included:

- Project placement
- Transfer on arrival from your accommodation in Cape Town and a departure transfer to Cape Town airport
- Accommodation (shared room, breakfast, lunch only when on the boat).
- A donation to the Dyer Island Conservation Trust if you stay for 4 weeks
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Welcome pack (2 T-shirts, a cap, hire of a jacket)
- Presentations and related activities
- Trips on the boat (weather permitting)
- Programme materials
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Transfer to day trips on no-sea days
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number

Not included:

- First night's accommodation at backpackers in Cape Town and possibly last night if flight leaves before 19:00
- Lunch (if not at sea) and dinner (self-catering)
- Local transport
- Spending extra money
- Towels

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.