

AFRICAN INSIGHT

EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE



AFRICAN INSIGHT ACADEMY: ZULULAND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER



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This unique one month conservation volunteering program is based on the Somkhanda Game Reserve in the province of KwaZulu Natal. The Zululand Wildlife & Conservation Experience offer participants a unique opportunity to learn about practical and challenging fieldwork in the African bush.

This project is not for those who are looking for a holiday experience where they will be entertained but it is for those who have a real passion for learning about the bush and conservation or are considering a career in conservation or wildlife tourism.

Somkhanda Game Reserve:

The Gumbi Tribe who lost their land over the years of Apartheid and have successfully won an ancestral land claim over a large area of prime Zululand Bushveld, including ownership of a conservation area of 12 000 hectares which is ideal habitat for white and black rhino. The game reserve is a proclaimed national park and was identified by the Wildlands Conservation Trust (WCT), WWF and the state wildlife authority KZN Wildlife as being suitable habitat for the introduction of a founder population of the rare and endangered black rhino.

African Insight in partnership with WCT and the Gumbi community manage the tourism game reserve. African Insight is responsible for the development and management of tourism over the entire reserve with the objective of developing a range of wildlife experiences that add to financial sustainability of the reserve as well as aiding in the collection of vital scientific data of the fauna and flora.

Rhino (both black and white) and illusive leopards (and soon buffalo) are the only members of the Big 5 on the reserve but it has a comprehensive range of all the common animals that historically occurred in this region, including hyena and wild dog. This unique situation affords the opportunity for volunteers to get involved in the reserve's wildlife and environmental management and monitoring programs.

Activities:

Volunteers are mentored and managed by a dedicated and highly experienced management team and resident interns. They are regarded as team members and not as tourists and are expected to also respond as such – taking seriously their tasks and duties at all times.

The specific program depends on the time of the year and involves volunteers in a variety of research, management, community and monitoring projects associated with a wide range of activities on the reserve. All research / monitoring data collected will contribute to the ongoing management decision making of the reserve's wildlife population. Ongoing programmes include:

Rhino monitoring techniques – Due to the significance of the species rhino monitoring is an ongoing project on the reserve with many of the animals having been fitted with radio tracking devices. Volunteers provide valuable independent field data on specific rhino which assists the full time monitors, allowing them to focus on others. Information gathered from rhinos includes: general health, associations with other animals and offspring, movement, home range plotting, feeding preferences etc. This is dependant on the needs of the full time monitors.

Camera Trap Surveying – Volunteers under experienced supervision manage this programme entirely; checking camera traps, changing batteries, downloading data and sorting through photographs. The objective of the camera trap survey method is to monitor a variety of species and known individual animals to assess their physical condition, the presence of calves and associations between individuals, with a focus on the more elusive black rhino and leopard.

Game Population Monitoring – Estimating animal numbers is extremely important in determining numerous management interventions on a game reserve. Volunteers will assist in collecting population data using scientific methods.



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Some other activities you might be involved in are:

- Wildlife Monitoring Techniques
- Bush craft skills – i.e. Field guiding skills
- 4 x4 driving
- Game capture (seasonal)
- Various research data collecting
- Road and track maintenance
- Working with guests
- Water management for game
- Firearms handling (optional)
- Community cattle dipping
- Alien plant control
- Fence maintenance

Working Days and Hours:

A full 9 hour day is expected from volunteers which can vary from day to day depending on the day's task and what surprises come up. Volunteers get 2 days off per week and depending on what might be planned these days can be used to join our monthly group outings. Days off can be accumulated and taken together.

Optional Weekend Excursions:

At least once a month volunteers and interns in camp have the opportunity to participate in a 2 or 3 night excursion off the reserve to other tourist attractions in the region. The cost for these is for own account and can be arranged on arrival.

Conditions:

It is important that volunteers of this project understand the importance of the following:

- To be enthusiastic and independent
- To show respect towards the people and culture of the local community.
- To show flexibility towards responsibilities, tasks and activities.
- This is not a relaxing holiday but an experience where hard work is expected.

Other Interns and Volunteers:

You will most likely be working with both local and international interns and volunteers.

Accommodation:

During your stay you will be living in safari tents right in the bush. Sharing accommodation is provided. The camp supplied with running water, communal showers and toilets. Bedding and towels are provided and laundry facilities are available.

Connectivity:

There is only one service provider that offers coverage on the reserve, however it generally has excellent connectivity. We keep a stock of a local SIM card for mobiles. We have a number of internet dongles for use of volunteers and interns into which you can insert your sim card to connect to internet.

Costs:

- Euro 1,185.00
- USD 1,325.00
- GBP 995.00
- ZAR 14,800.00

Included in the fees:

- Pick up upon arrival at Durban International airport
- Bush Camp Accommodation . Ablutions & outdoor Showers
- Professional rangers to supervise you
- Use of laundry facilities

Excluded from the fees:

- Meals (Self Catering- Group participation)
- Other personal expenses
- Insurances
- Flights

Starting Dates

The reserve is remote and therefore volunteer arrivals and departures are coordinated to save on transport costs. Arrival is at Durban International airport and the transfer to Somkhanda Game Reserve leaves at 10h00. Transport is provided to departing volunteers (free only on the scheduled dates) back to Durban International Airport and will drop volunteers off at 15h00.

2016

11 January - 05 February
08 February - 04 March
07 March - 01 April
04 April - 29 April
02 May - 27 May
30 May - 24 June
27 June - 22 July
25 July - 19 August
22 August - 16 September
19 September - 14 October
17 October - 11 November
14 November - 09 December
12 December - 06 January 2017

2017

09 January - 03 February
06 February - 03 March
06 March - 31 March
03 April - 28 April
01 May - 26 May
29 May - 23 June
26 June - 21 July
24 July - 18 August
21 August - 15 September
18 September - 13 October
16 October - 10 November
13 November - 08 December
11 December - 05 January 2018

