



# CONSERVATION

AUSTRALIA, KENYA, MALAYSIA, PERU, SOUTH AFRICA, SRI LANKA, ZIMBABWE

**As leading specialists in the world of voluntary conservation projects, Travellers helps to protect and preserve endangered species around the world.**

**With the help of our compassionate volunteers, Travellers makes a difference to the happiness and well-being of individual creatures, and there is so much you can do to help!**

**Worthwhile and satisfying conservation projects are available in most of our destinations.**

**You don't need any qualifications and you can be any age between 17 and 70+.**

**Play a meaningful role in helping to preserve threatened and endangered species.**

## CONSERVATION MATTERS - GET INVOLVED and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

With a growing number of vital conservation projects ongoing throughout the world, Travellers takes an active interest in helping to protect and preserve endangered species.

With the help of our volunteers, it is possible to make a difference to the happiness and well-being of individual creatures and to take positive steps towards the conservation of our planet and its endangered species. If you care about animals and nature, there is so much you can do to help! You don't need any qualifications or previous experience. Anything you may need to learn, we will teach you in your induction.

Everyone is welcome on our conservation projects, the more hands the better!

### There are many ways you can help.

Your work might involve making a hammock for a monkey in captivity or sitting in a night watch tree-house observing the behaviour of the elusive leopard. It may involve collecting data in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon or walking the African plains with baby lion cubs in order to prepare them for eventual release into the wild.

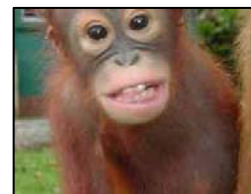
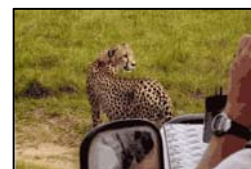
Work duties do vary considerably depending on day to day requirements of the projects, the seasons and weather conditions, and migration patterns. You need to be adaptable and flexible to work in conservation. The choice of projects you can help on is vast and generally falls into the following categories:

- Hands-on work in rehabilitation of endangered species.
- Conservation courses, such as survival skills of the bush.
- Conducting vital conservation research.
- Marine based conservation
- Tourism/Education

Other aspects of the work you may be involved in are likely to include the following: interaction & play, field research, safaris, washing, feeding, preparing food, observation, night watches, enrichment, cleaning, monitoring, observing, recording data, releases into the wild, diving, trekking, darting, learning, educating, photographing, building, painting - and much more depending on the requirements of the project at the time of your placement..

## CONSERVATION MATTERS... NOW!

According to the IUCN, **'15,589 species of animals and plants are threatened with extinction and many ecosystems – wetlands, forests – are being degraded and destroyed...'**



Travellers placements enable first-hand education and experience of conservation issues on the front line. Creating an awareness of conservation issues around the world and facilitating individual contribution is of critical importance. Get involved!

*Please note, there is a separate document listing our many varied opportunities in **South Africa**. If you'd like to be sent a copy, please let us know and we'll get one to you immediately.*



## AUSTRALIA WILDLIFE CENTRE

You will be working at a Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre on the outskirts of Perth, aimed at caring for injured, orphaned, displaced or sick animals. You will work with many native species, to assist in their rehabilitation and eventual release, as well as educating the local community about the need to conserve and protect local wildlife.

As an NGO the centre is run entirely by volunteers. Wildlife brought to centre is examined in the hospital and appropriate care is administered including medication, crop feeding, physiotherapy and veterinary surgery. Quality care is provided with the ultimate goal of returning the animal to its native habitat. Approximately 60% of admissions are successfully nursed back to good health and released into their natural habitats. The centres recognition of Australia's native species and the need to ensure their continued survival has led them to develop several breeding programmes for species on the edge of extinction.



**Your work:** Volunteers run the centre seeing to all the daily needs of the animals and overseeing the operation of the centre. Specific tasks include nursing and feeding sick and injured birds and animals, cleaning and maintenance, administration and public education. Other duties include the rehabilitation of sick, injured, orphaned and displaced wildlife. This means giving care to the animals at the same time as promoting independence to ensure they become ready for release back into the wild. You may also help with the endangered species captive breeding program and educating the community. You will assist with weighing and preparing food, feeding the animals, cleaning enclosures and the hospital, acting as a general assistant in the hospital and recording information

## BRUNEI CORAL REEF

You will need to be a qualified PADI diver to advanced open Water level to do this project, although we can arrange for you to take these courses on your arrival in Brunei. This coral reef survey is run by the University to map the coral diversity of the reefs in the southern part of the South China Sea near the Brunei coast. Despite oil drilling and coastal development these corals are among the least threatened in the region. However, illegal fishing is increasing. About 21% of Brunei's coral reefs are at risk from human activities. These reefs are also the home for a variety of attractive and unique soft corals. Amongst other things, the surrounding waters are home to three turtle species.

There are several islands just off the coast which are unexplored by tourists - some are free from inhabitants altogether and have clear, white sandy beaches and an abundance of wildlife. Your work: Assist on field trips, collect and/or photograph specimens, identify specimens, record research date and update survey, prepare specimens for display. You will spend days out diving on the boat followed up by days in the laboratory surveying data.

## SURVIVAL COURSE

Have you ever wondered how you would make do in an episode of 'LOST'? If you enjoy the outdoors and want to learn how to cope in the jungle join us for a survival and bushcraft course in the forests of Borneo. You'll travel through the hills and valleys of the Brunei rainforest along streams and rivers and camp by waterfalls or on hill tops with splendid views over the forest. This skills based course takes place in the same area used by the British Army for training for the SAS, Royal Marines and other units operating in tropical areas.

We want you to feel at home in the forest and that means learning from indigenous people as well as more conventional methods. It is not about physical endurance but mental attitude and only reasonable health and average fitness are needed. Learn how to travel effectively and lightly with a minimum of equipment (while learning how to survive with almost none!). You will live and travel with indigenous instructors in the forest improvising shelters, water collection and cooking utensils, carrying equipment, traps and snares. You will forage in the forest and fish in the rivers to supplement meals and make fires without matches to cook those meals.

On completion you will receive certificates in Basic and Advanced Jungle Survival and Bushcraft. Imagine; alfresco air-conditioned bedrooms and dining, the ambiance of open fire cooking, natural mineral water at every meal. Most food is

supplied, but we aim to have at least one meal of jungle tucker. You will even have showering and bathing facilities nearby courtesy of the waterfall pools. You need an independent and adventurous spirit to take part in this course.

## RAINFOREST PROJECT

Work on a research project in the Brunei Rainforest and learn about conservation in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The lowland rainforest that surrounds the lake is a very important ecosystem. It contains thousands of different animal and plant species. Scientists believe that more plants and animals could be discovered here with further research. This is an ideal project for those looking to gain research experience in a tropical environment. The ongoing surveys are:

- Mammals
- Birds
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Insects
- Plants (800+ known species)
- Plant phenology (Phenology is the study of the annual cycles of plants and animals and how they respond to seasonal changes in their environment. In botany phenology refers to the timing of flower emergence, sequence of bloom, fruiting, and leaf drop)

## KENYA

### VETERINARY WORK EXPERIENCE

You should either be planning to study a veterinary or animal related subject, or have some qualification or past experience. Your duties will be fairly varied with a mixture of research work and veterinary work. As a volunteer, you and the team will have access to the most remote areas of Africa's premier game reserves, where there are generally huge herds of elephant, buffalo, plains-game, lion and leopard. You will be helping to protect and conserve Africa's wildlife sanctuaries and you may experience situations that will leave you literally breathless!

**Your work:** When an animal is sick or injured, the vet can be called at any time to go anywhere and you'll accompany the vet wherever possible. Other work elements could include: Elephant translocation, surveying and routine checks on sick animals, elective disease scanning, rescuing orphaned and abandoned young animals that are in distress, patrols to assess the general health of the wildlife, hive mortality inspections, written reports for the veterinary team and helping to update and improve the new database. You will be given on-the-job training, although initiative is also necessary.

## BORNEO, MALAYSIA

### ORANG UTAN PROJECT



The Wildlife Reserve contains the Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre. Here, more than 4500 hectares of jungle has been designated for these gentle, shy and charming creatures. The Rehabilitation Centre rescues abandoned, injured or orphaned Orang-Utans, as well as liberating animals from captivity. Once it has rescued an animal, it treats its injuries and nurses it back to full fitness and health. Often the animals, particularly any orphaned babies, have to be taught how to fend for themselves and survive in the Wild. Once it's been taught how to climb and forage for food, it is usually released into the surrounding forest. For a while the animals often come back to the Centre to get 'free meals' until such time as it is totally at home in the forest. Soon after this they are re-released deep into the jungle.

**Your work:** Specific duties may vary depending on what is required at the time. During your placement at Sepilok it is likely that you will;

Learn about Orang-Utan Husbandry Management by working in both the Indoor and Outdoor Nursery.

Learn about Orang-Utan Paediatric and Veterinary Care.

Conduct a Field Survey on the Orang-Utan population in Sepilok reserve.

Conduct a Nocturnal Animal survey.

Conduct an extended Orang-Utan and Nocturnal Animal Survey in areas deeper into the forest reserve (may involve camping in the jungle).

This project also includes a 9 day period at the Nature Interpretation Centre of the Rasa Ria where you will assist in caring for 6 baby orang-utans, amongst other animals.

## PERU

### AMAZON RAINFOREST CONSERVATION

This project takes place right inside the emerald Amazon Rainforests of Peru! The centre in which you will work is a large conservation area located in the South Eastern corner of Peru.



There is a rich diversity of different ecosystems in this location. Projects undertaken here fall under three main areas; conservation, sustainability and education.

Volunteers benefit from onsite training and also actively assist in environmental monitoring at multiple locations. As you stay longer, you will take on increasing levels of data collection and project management responsibilities. Ongoing projects include: Frog House, Mammal Monitoring, Macaw, Parrot & Parakeet monitoring, Ecology Club. You will be involved in the following activities:

- Scientific monitoring & surveillance
- Data collection and interpretation
- Collection of sample species
- Construction & building of project related facilities (i.e. hides and observation posts).

The purpose of the work is to monitor and better understand rainforest biodiversity with a view to providing sustainable solutions and improved rainforest conservation. *"When I arrived, all the volunteers were working on their own projects and they took great pride in showing me what they were doing. They all felt their efforts were benefiting the local community."*

Volunteers that enroll in the Amazon Project for two months + participate in a 4day/3night expedition to an indigenous community including either white water rafting or a visit to natural hot springs.

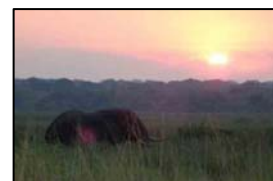
## SOUTH AFRICA

**Please note that we are constantly adding new and worthwhile projects in South Africa. Please check our website for the latest, up-to-date information, or contact us if you'd like to do something that you don't see listed below ... the chances are that we have a project that is just up your street! (And if not, we can probably set one up for you.)**

Travellers has been sending volunteers to South Africa for over 10 years and we have excellent links with some of the country's leading conservation Organisations and projects.

These projects are very close to our hearts, and all are carefully chosen to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship for both project and volunteer. A donation from every single volunteer's placement fee goes towards a conservation Trust set up by the founder of Travellers. You could work in several different areas of the country:

- Cape – South Africa's sunny Southern Coast is home to glistening sandy beaches, the world-famous scenic Garden Route and a host of activities from skydiving to shark diving!
- Cape Town – With the dramatic and spiritual Table Mountain as a backdrop, Cape Town is one of the world's most attractive and exciting, yet relaxed cities.
- KwaZuluNatal (KZN) – A province on the north-east coast of South Africa, this area is famous for its subtropical surf beaches, mesmerising savannah and Zulu cultural heartland.
- Limpopo – South Africa's northernmost province, Limpopo's landscape changes from mountain splendour to winding rivers and is home to some amazing wildlife and cultural heritage sites.



You will be amazed by the beauty and diversity of the South African landscape and staggered by its huge wealth of wildlife. From dining on delicious traditional food under the African stars to adrenaline-rushing adventures, South Africa is also never short of things to do! Despite all this however, it's claimed that the country's greatest asset is its people – their friendliness and hospitality will stay with you for life!



The nature of conservation means that work on these projects can vary depending on what work is available at the time of your placement. These projects are best suited to volunteers with enthusiasm, an open mind and a flexible approach... we'll look after everything else!

Below is an outline of Travellers conservation placements in South Africa. More detailed information on each project is available on request – please let us know!

*"I cannot begin to tell you what a privilege it was to be on this placement... [Travellers staff] made sure that we had opportunities for all the experiences that make this part of KwaZulu-Natal special, things that are rare, precious, & never to be forgotten." – Christine Barratt (conservation volunteer October 2005)*



## DOLPHINS & WHALES MARINE CONSERVATION PROJECT

Experience first-hand the unique affinity that humans share with these intelligent and beautiful creatures. Observe wild bottlenose and humpback dolphins, brydes, minke, humpback and southern right whales and Cape fur seals in their natural habitat! Based in the Plettenberg Bay area in Cape, world-famous for its pristine beaches, turquoise waters and diverse marine mammal fauna, this project is a fantastic opportunity for volunteers to learn about or expand their knowledge of marine conservation.

You'll be accompanying researchers on boat trips to collect data on the animals' migration patterns, social groups and habits. Your help is also needed to help deal with the public and, once you have received adequate training, to assist on tourist boat trips and share your newly acquired knowledge!

There will also be an element of sea-going kayaking involved. Although this project does not involve diving, if you would like to take a PADI diving course or a small skipper certificate during your placement, this can be arranged easily.

## AGCA AFRICAN WILDLIFE COURSE - DISCOVER CONSERVATION!

Gain an internationally recognised qualification which could help you find paid employment in the highly competitive conservation sector

Experience the glorious African bush first-hand

Learn about conservation and wildlife management through experience



On this intensive 8-week course you'll observe all the greatest wonders of African wildlife in its natural habitat, gaining an internationally recognised certificate from the African Global Conservation Academy on completion of the course. The course takes place in the African bush 8 km outside Alicedale and was developed to educate people worldwide on the importance of conservation and how to manage wildlife in its natural environment.

There is an element of classroom theory to this course, but its main appeal lies in the practical application of this theory out in the field, where you'll cover everything from species identification to camping and trail skills and ecosystem management and maintenance. This course is a huge learning curve and a huge amount of fun!

*"We have managed to get close to a lot of animals including lions, hippos, giraffes, crazy wildebeest, etc... Every night we are surprised as to how beautiful the stars are – there's no light pollution out here. This is definitely the best way to experience the bush!" – AGCA Student, April 2005*

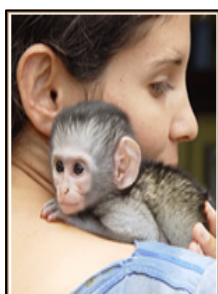
## AD WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Rewarding, hands-on work with orphaned and injured animals, set in a beautiful Game Reserve on South Africa's Sunshine Coast! This sanctuary is home to a plethora of wild and domestic animal species including wild cats, crocodiles, impala, kudu and other buck species, marmoset monkeys, emus and wallabies, some giraffe and zebra and some 150 different species of birds. This is very much a hands-on project where volunteers assist the staff in hand-rearing, feeding and looking after the wildlife, as well as many other chores in the Sanctuary, such as maintaining the incredible enclosures and aviaries.



Most of the animals here were taken in because they had been badly injured, abused or orphaned. Some are 'unwanted pets'. 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. Volunteers love the family atmosphere created by the lovely owners here as much as they enjoy working with the animals!

*"This was the best thing that I have ever done in my whole life. The animals were fantastic you couldn't help but bond with them... and I now have friends and family all over the globe!" – Klara Holewa (African Dawn, June 2005)*



## KZN CROW – THE WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PROJECT

The Centre is situated KwaZulu-Natal. It is a wildlife hospital that cares for the injured and orphaned wild animals and birds and the only centre of its kind in the Province.

Crow is deeply committed to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of orphaned and injured wildlife, and believes in action and education with regard to the protection of all natural resources. The Centre is considered to be one of the leading rehabilitation Centers in South Africa. Any wild animal that has been injured, rescued or abandoned is admitted free of charge. Almost 90% of animals admitted have sustained injuries due to human negligence. It takes time and dedication to rehabilitate these animals and to prepare them to be re-introduced in their natural environment.

Some animals' injuries are so severe that they cannot be rehabilitated and therefore become permanent residents at the centre. As a charity organisation there are always more mouths to feed than hands to feed them, so every helping hand is greatly appreciated. Volunteer duties and responsibilities are linked with level of experience so there is something for everyone, from feeds to assisting nurses in the clinic, to grounds work and the building of suitable enclosures, to assisting in rescues and releases.

There are approximately 300 - 400 animals under the Centre's care.

## BIG 5 GAME RESERVES

Experience what it's like to live the life of a Game Ranger amongst the wild animals of the African bush! Help to conserve and protect the BIG 5: Elephant, Leopard, Lion, Rhino and Buffalo and other species. If you love the Great Outdoors, don't mind getting your hands dirty and want to get away from it all, this project is for you - a true African conservation experience!

Different projects specialise in different species. For example, Lions and Elephants in Tembe, Leopards in Pidwa, etc... just let us know your preferences!

You'll travel many miles aboard safari vehicles and on foot to collect valuable research data, and have the chance to observe a huge range of wildlife in the sublime surroundings of the bush. On occasion you'll also have the chance to sleep out and discover the thrill of a night beneath the African stars!



The work will depend on which Game Reserve you are allocated to but generally will involve elements of the following:

- Collecting valuable information and assisting with monitoring of different species of plants and animals
- Trapping, photographing and releasing small mammals
- Observing and recording species of birds over particular intervals during the day
- Monitoring and recording the types of feeding done by various types of animals
- Mapping elephant and other game paths
- If you have any experience of working with snakes, you could also collect (and subsequently release), photograph, identify and prepare for housing snakes and reptiles
- You may be involved in baiting, darting and collaring a wild animal – surely one of the most exhilarating wildlife experiences you could hope for!

*"A wonderful experience in every aspect... living right next door to elephants, lions, giraffes and leopards! I have learned so much in general and about conservation, that there is so much more to it than just saving one animal or one species - there is a whole system that has to be preserved." – Marie-Luise Klotz (Pidwa, March 2006)*

## GREAT WHITE SHARK PROJECT

The Great White Shark is the greatest predatory force of the seas, a glorious, complex and precious species deserving of great respect. Yet over 100, 000, 000 sharks are killed each year by humans (mainly through fishing). Conservation and education about this beautiful and often misunderstood creature is therefore vital to its survival as a species.

On this project Travellers volunteers have the unique opportunity to work with a world leading organisation – the White Shark Project (WSP) - focussing on Great White Shark diving, viewing, filming, conservation and education.

You'll receive a great deal of training on this project to educate you to a level of competence of a Field Assistant, learning ways to identify the sharks and study their behaviour. You'll accompany the team on shark-spotting boat trips and cage dives, and participate in assisting the WSP and the CEES (The SA Great White Conservation, Education and Exploration Society) with various duties and responsibilities, including helping to educate tourists, locals and children on the Great White. An amazing opportunity not to be missed.



## WILDERNESS PROJECT

Peace, tranquility, nature... if this sounds like paradise to you then you will love The Wilderness National Park. Lying between the Indian Ocean and the Outeniqua Mountains, the Park is a haven for animal and plant life and nature enthusiasts alike. But have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes to help maintain a beautiful natural environment such as this?

Because of its stunning scenery and recreational attractions, the Park is a very popular place for tourists and school groups wishing to learn about the environment. Volunteers are required here to help the Rangers in all aspects of running and maintenance of the Park – from maintaining waterways and helping the Wardens in all aspects of their day-to-day work, to educating tourists and school-trips about the importance of the environment. There is also safe swimming in the river to cool off at the end of your work day!

This is an all-round placement and would not suit people looking for specific conservation experience or who want to work regularly with flora and fauna.

## KIRSTENBOSCH BOTANICAL GARDENS

A must for lovers of the plant world, these 828Ha Botanical Gardens set on the slopes of Table Mountain are an earthly paradise and home to one of the world's most famous reserves of indigenous flora. Witness the natural wonders of the Namaqualand daisies, the blue water lilies, waterblommejies and pink crinums surrounding the pond, the Protea garden, Fragrance Garden, Garden Pharmacy... a uniquely rich and breathtakingly beautiful environment.



You'll work with respected Horticultural experts and you learn a tremendous amount from planting to propagating, to collecting samples, to plant identification and medicinal and sustainable uses of plants. You may also be invited to join plant collection trips to different parts of the country, where possible.

## 1 WEEK BUSH SURVIVAL COURSE



Learn practical survival skills and gain an insight into the secret world of the bush! Taught by fully qualified expert field specialists, this course covers areas such as camping skills, fauna and flora, forest conservation, medicinal plants, astronomy and orientation.

Camping out in a tranquil and enchanting area of the bush near Alicedale, you'll take part in a Wilderness Hike and sleep out under the stars, go on a game drive on a Private Game Reserve and a visit to the Born Free Big Cat Sanctuary. You'll leave with many new skills and lasting memories!

## MULTI-MARINE PROJECT

Here you'll have the opportunity to work with sharks, whales, penguins, tourism, research and community development. You'll be taught, guided and lectured by very skilled field teams.

On one of the main research sites, Dyer Island, many other wildlife species can be viewed from the boat. It is the breeding ground for Jackass Penguins, Cape Cormorants and Gannets, whilst Geyser Rock opposite, is a breeding mecca for Cape Fur Seals and currently home to approximately 20 000 seals. In season Whales and an occasional Dolphin can be spotted. This is a perfect habitat for the Great White

Weather permitting you'll go out to sea frequently. At sea, you'll get involved as much as possible with all aspects of sea work. Much emphasis will be placed on observing behaviour and the interactions of marine species around the boat. You'll record your observations onto datasheets, including data such as sex, size, markings and behaviour. During the summer time (November to February), you will also be involved in Tourist trips and dives.

## SRI LANKA

### PINAWALA ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE



Run by the Sri Lanka Government, Pinawala Elephant Orphanage is home to around 80 elephants, from new born to very old! The elephants here have all been rescued from the wild, whether they are orphaned, abandoned or injured. It's a must-do stop on any tourists list and, quite frankly, usually an island visitor's highlight.

There are about 80 originally orphaned or injured elephants living at the orphanage and the institute is well known and respected as the largest breeding base for Asian elephants.

**Your work:** Many of the elephants here are not tame and the majority of your work would be cleaning rather than hands-on with the elephants, although you will probably have the opportunity to do some hands-on work. Part of your duties will include some supervised bathing of the elephants in the river, which takes place daily, and washing the tame elephants in the river, possibly feeding any young elephants (subject to mahouts discretion) and mucking out (there is a lot of this!)

Be aware that this is **not** a conservation project as much as an *experience* with the elephants for you. It is however an incredible experience that will stay with you a lifetime.

## COLOMBO ZOO

Much of the routine work will involve cleaning out the cages and other general zoo keeper duties possibly including washing and feeding the animals. The rest of your time will be spent on enrichment programs. Enrichment programs aim to provide an interesting, stimulating environment in which the animals can display as much of their natural behaviours as possible. This may prevent them becoming bored, despondent, withdrawn, unhappy and even crazy.

**Your work:** These projects will be up to you to find and implement. Ideas could include the much needed reconstruction of damaged, small or inappropriate enclosures and the implementation of enrichment programmes designed to stimulate the animals in captivity by enabling them to use resources they would need in the wild such as finding food, exercise and play. The effect you have on the animals at Colombo zoo during your placement will be directly related to how much initiative, imagination and enthusiasm you put into this part of the project – but the possible rewards are limitless! Your objectives are to provide a better life for the animals in captivity. Many suggestions of suitable enrichment projects are offered by Travellers pre-departure.



## ELEPHANT AND LEOPARD CONSERVATION

This is an exciting new conservation project located in the Wasgamuwa National Park, in the heart of Sri Lanka! This project aims to 'Save Elephants by Helping People' and you'll work alongside local people in order to preserve Sri Lanka's elephant and leopard population and to reduce human/elephant conflict. Your work may involve collecting data on species number and density to determine habitat occupancy, conducting damage surveys and fence monitoring around the park. This is an exciting new project which gives you the opportunity to

contribute to vital conservation goals in Sri Lanka!

## COSTAL AND MARINE CONSERVATION

A unique community project located at the mouth of the Kirindi Oya river in beautiful Southern Sri Lanka. This project is based in a close-knit coastal village, where the local people are working to conserve marine and land resources. You can be a part of helping them to reach their goal and really become a part of Sri Lankan life within a small community! You'll live with a local family and your work here might involve turtle monitoring, English teaching, surveys on dolphin/whales, elephants, socio-economic and resource use, birds, biodiversity and/or archaeological/historical sites.

## ZIMBABWE

### LION BREEDING PROJECT + VICTORIA FALLS

250,000 lions used to roam the African continent – latest estimates are that between 12,000 and 15,000 remain. The end objective of the lion project, along with the Gweru Park programme, is the reintroduction of captive-bred lions into the wild. This breeding and rehabilitation project is a World First and is supported by the world's leading ecologists in this field. We invite you to walk and work with African Lions, to be involved in the projects in-depth research and data-collection activities, as well as to work on the world's only programme for the eventual release of lions back into the wild...



**Your work:** Spending time with the lions in the wild each day is an essential part of the cub's upbringing. If the cubs are to be released into the wild it is important that they spend time out in a natural environment. They need to adapt to it, learn from it, understand, observe, feel and smell the wild. Join the team of professional guides and other dedicated volunteers at Masuwe, gain a deeper understanding of the King of Beasts and assist us in gathering vital information that will facilitate their eventual release back into the wild.

### BLACK RHINO PROJECT

This is a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) endorsed programme for the conservancy of the Midlands black rhino. Located in the heart of Zimbabwe Midlands, 17 properties have combined to form a wildlife sanctuary area. Teams of researchers and conservationists undertake to gather essential information on the rhino population through monitoring, tracking and data collection. The black rhino populations in Africa suffered dramatic declines throughout the 1970s and 1980s as a result of poaching to supply the illegal trade in rhino horn. **Your work:** Volunteers work in groups of 2 or 3 with an experienced tracker/field guide to gather information and make necessary observations.

*'This project is vitally important to the survival of these majestic animals. Without government funding, volunteers play a very important role, but believe me when you stand 10 meters away from a black rhino all that is forgotten. I was privileged to get the chance to work with some amazingly dedicated people and I won't hesitate to tell others how amazing this project is'.(ex-volunteer)*

### HWANGE NATIONAL PARK WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

This project is situated in the beautiful, unfenced Hwange National Park and its surrounding area – 200km from the magnificent Victoria Falls. You will assist with gathering data required to assess game management needs as well as to assist with the ongoing problems incurred by poachers. Once an animal leaves the Park boundary they are likely to be poached and hunted by the local community. Efforts are needed to ensure that this is kept to a minimum and snare and border patrols often find many injured animals that are in need of help. As a volunteer you and the team will have access to the most remote areas of one of Africa's premier game reserves and its surrounding areas, where there are

huge herds of elephant, buffalo, plains-game, lion and leopard. You will be helping to protect and conserve one of Africa's few remaining wildlife sanctuaries.

**Your work:** The wildlife team you will work with is licensed and authorized to chemically immobilize (dart) wild animals both inside and outside the Park. If there is a reported sighting of a snared or injured animal therefore, this may mean you will have the opportunity to observe or assist with these practical wildlife immobilization exercises. Other duties might include: snare collection, removal of snares from animals, wildlife population counts, spoor transect/ boundary patrol, road maintenance, anti poaching.

## SOME FEEDBACK

**Raising Lynx Kittens** by Victoria Richman

When I first arrived at African Dawn I was sat in the lounge, 'Days of our Lives' on in the background and handed a Lynx kitten. It was one of the most surreal moments of my life. I looked down at the kitten, only born the evening before it still had it's umbilical cord attached, it could fit in the palm of my hand. I was glad there was someone else there as clueless of the situation as I was.

There were four kittens in all. Over the next few days as I settled in so did they. We weren't supposed to name them as they were very young and it was unsure if they would survive but we gave them temporary names. One was named Holey as he'd been rescued from the jaws of his Dad and now had a hole in his head as a memento. The others were named Greedy, Stubborn and rather unimaginatively Number Four. The volunteers took care of them, which involved bottle-feeding them every three hours.

It was one of the best moments when the kitten would suckle hungrily; you were filled with a sense of achievement and not a little bit of maternal instinct. It could also be the most frustrating feeling in the world when the kitten would stubbornly refuse to take the bottle, especially if you were on night feed and doing it at three o' clock in the morning. In the wild, after they had been fed, their mothers would lick their stomachs to get them to urinate and excrete. That job also fell to the volunteers, we had to gently rub their stomachs with a tissue, not a pleasant part of the job but my expectations of hands on animal care had not been let down.

Everything was worthwhile when they had all been fed and curled up on the crook of your arm and fall asleep.

Three days after I arrived another eagerly expected litter were born. There were three kittens named Big, Medium and Small. Comparing them to first litter it was immediately apparent that the they had been premature and sickly. The three new ones were already bigger and darker than their elder cousins. So, although we were very happy that the new kittens were born they threw into stark contrast how weak the other four were. Unfortunately our fears were realised when within a few days of each other both Greedy and Stubborn died. They were weak and there was nothing we could have done, but we were all saddened nonetheless.

Despite our disappointment we focused on taking care of the other kittens. After a week they had all opened their eyes, which I was shocked to see were a vivid blue. Big had only managed to open one. It was rather disconcerting to have him watch you with his one eye, luckily the other one opened soon after. The kittens were growing very quickly, coming back from weekends off it was amazing to see how much bigger they were.

One weekend we were dressed up ready to go, cleaner than we had been for a week, when we remembered that we had to feed the Lynx kittens before we left. Usually we would get covered in milk and worse when we fed them, so desperate times called for desperate measures. Anyone who had looked in at that point would have found it very funny to see a group of very made up girls covered in towels and sheets, each feeding a lynx kitten.

By about three weeks old all the kittens were a lot stronger and healthier and we all felt fairly positive about them surviving. But our hopes were cruelly let down. Holey, who had been doing so well, died. This was the biggest blow as he'd been so weak at the beginning but he had been getting stronger and feeding well, we thought he was going to be the success story. He died from damage to the intestines, probably sustained from when his father got hold of him.

I started to see what a hard line of work this was, Percy the owner of the sanctuary, took in as many injured or orphaned animals as he could and worked his hardest to get them better. But you can put all your energy into trying to save an animal and sometimes there is nothing you can do, it's so sad and frustrating. What makes it worthwhile are the lucky cases when animals do survive and live out a happy life at the sanctuary.

The other kittens were becoming very energetic, it was important that we played with them as they needed exercise. Needless to say playing with Lynx kittens was a job that everyone wanted, there was always a rush of people to do it. Often, we would have them out in the evenings in the lounge with us while we watched television.

They were starting to develop their own personalities; Number Four was very inquisitive. She would explore as far as she could or just sit on your lap and watch everything with wide blue eyes. Big was a gentle giant and the only boy. Medium was most definitely the boss, she could be extremely bad tempered when feeding and the most violent when playing. However, she sometimes threw you off guard by being incredibly sweet. Not as sweet as Small though whose eyes still seemed much too big for her face and was the gentlest and most timid.



When they reached a month old it was time for me to leave African Dawn. My time there was amazing and the Lynx kittens were an integral part it. It was an incredible experience to hand rear Lynx kittens from birth and to have been part of their first few weeks of life.

It came time to say goodbye and I have to admit I shed a tear. I looked at the fearless little balls of energy, running around and clambering all over me, and I compared them to the tiny creature I had held in the palm of my hand when I first arrived. I thought how incredibly lucky I was that I was there for that transformation.

## The next step

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