



CONSERVATION: WILDERNESS NAT. PARK SOUTH AFRICA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



South Africa has everything ...

- ◆ Sun, sparkling warm and clear oceans, and the most beautiful golden beaches you will ever see ... stretching for miles.
- ◆ Mountain climbing, biking and hiking
- ◆ The *Garden Route*, world famous and sheer paradise!
- ◆ Outstanding Game Reserves where you can see wild animals in their natural habitat, and by contrast symmetric vineyards stretching to infinity
- ◆ Sharks, whales and dolphins, and the amusing Cape Fur Seals.
- ◆ Elegant restaurants, barbecues and beach parties
- ◆ And FRUIT everywhere!

But most of all, South Africans are the friendliest and most hospitable people in the world - without a doubt! If you're invited to dinner ... don't eat for a week beforehand because you'll be overfed, especially if it's a barbecue. Wine is cheap and good. The salads are to die for. And - of course - the fruit! From the exotic to the commonplace, it's everywhere.

WILDERNESS NATIONAL PARK

In the Wilderness National Park (known by everyone as "**The Wilderness**"), the landscape of lakes, forests and seashore is one of the finest in the country and ranks up there with the best in the world. The lakes harbour large numbers of a wide variety of waterbirds, and the evergreen temperate forest is home to the Knysna loerie.

The wilderness comprises five rivers, four lakes, two estuaries and 28 km of Southern Cape coastline. There is easy access to many of the country's most beautiful beaches and nature parks and you will find an abundance of flamboyant flora and fascinating fauna.

The beach at Wilderness, the Touw River lagoon and the lakes provide ideal opportunities for bathing, rowing, fishing and boating, as well as water skiing on Island Lake and Swartvlei. Various nature trails traverse the lakes, the beach and the indigenous forest and a 1 km boardwalk alongside the Touw River offers an ideal opportunity for birdwatching.

All these facilities make it a very popular destination for tourists from around the country and around the world, most of whom come for the peace and tranquility associated with "getting back to nature". You'll be a part of this community, but you'll have the unique opportunity to see it "from the inside", living and working behind the scenes to maintain the National Park's natural environment.



YOUR WORK

Work on this placement can vary, depending on time of year and when your placement takes place. Not all work will necessarily be conservation orientated.

The environment of the Wilderness makes it an ideal educational location for the 60+ schools that go there on day-out fields trips, and your work may include helping to educate these children on aspects of environmental care. To do this you will take them on nature hikes on the mountain and various other areas of the Wilderness, telling them about the different species of plants and animals as you go. You may also be able to take them out on the river in canoes, again giving them advice on good conservation habits and why it is important to look after our natural surroundings.



Some of the work and activities you may take part in includes:

- As mentioned above, the Wilderness plays host to groups of children from over 60 schools who come to the Park on field trips to learn about the environment. Some of your work will include planning, structuring and implementing the children's day out, making it an interesting and exciting learning experience for them.
- On these days, you will take the children out in Indian-type canoes on the waterways, telling them about the marine life and flora that they encounter.
- Other aspects of their field trip will include guiding the children on walks and hikes, with the help of the Park Rangers, and again telling them about the different species of flora along the way.
- You will also help the Rangers in the maintenance of waterways, wetlands and beaches, as well as repairing and maintaining the tourist accommodation.
- Help will also be required with administration as well as with other aspects of the many facilities on site.
- Observing and helping the Rangers combat illegal fishing, whether accidental or through poaching, and the effects that it has on the Nature Park habitats.
- You would also help to ensure that the waterways and trails remain free of litter and alien vegetation along the shoreline and on public picnic sites.
- And generally helping the Wardens in their day-to-day work and in educating the public on the importance of protecting the environment.
- Volunteers with **general handyman skills** can helpfully assist in a variety of ways and such help is always welcome and appreciated.



8.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN DUTIES AT WILDERNESS NATIONAL PARK

Nature of Work Undertaken	Description/Further Details	Frequency
Alien Plant Removal	There are several invasive alien plant species that require regular removal from park property eg black myrtle. Plants are physically removed with occasional herbicide use.	Normally 1-2 days per week
Patrols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking condition of park property • Law Enforcement (checking fishing and boating permits) • Noting any dead or injured animals and taking appropriate action 	Mainly at weekends (you may be required to work 2-3 weekends in a 3 month period)
Waste removal	Emptying park bins	Weekly
Fence erection	Maintenance and replacement of existing fences around dune systems to encourage rehabilitation. Also around park boundaries and dwellings	Ad hoc
Water level monitoring	Required to prevent flooding of properties (present before the area was declared a national park)	Weekly

Other miscellaneous tasks undertaken may include sea-horse rescue in the lagoons after breaching of the river mouths into the ocean, visiting local festivals and assisting with school visits to the park.

The work at the Wilderness would suit a practically minded person who enjoys working outdoors and has a love of the natural environment. Basic DIY skills are advantageous. You need to be a good team-player who doesn't mind getting your 'hands dirty'. Would not suit somebody looking for specific conservation experience or those expecting to work regularly with flora/fauna.

Areas of local interest:

- Oudtshoorn (approx 1 hour drive) – Cango Caves; ostrich ranches; cheetah sanctuary
- Tsitsikamma (approx 1½ hour drive) – national park; storms river adventures; bungee jumping
- Knysna (approx 30 min drive) – diving school; famous for oysters; good tourist facilities
- George (approx 15 min drive) – shopping
- Cape Town (approx 4½ hour drive) – definitely worth the effort

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation will depend on what is available at the time of your placement. You could stay on-site or in a house in Rondvlei, which is about 20 or 25 km from the Wilderness. This accommodation is remote and previous volunteers have hired a car for periods of time in order to enable them to get into town to socialize and generally to have their independence.

Transport to and from the Wilderness Park will be provided daily. You may have a room to yourself or you may share with other volunteers. **Food is not provided in this placement so you will need to fend and cook for yourself; however, you will be given a budget, i.e. money for pay for supplies.** You will have regular opportunities to shop for food to replenish your stocks and you can experiment with the different South African brands and types of food that are available.

Quality of food in South Africa is extremely high and very varied and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the wide range of choice on the shelves.

THE NEXT STEP

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I do hope you join us and please do call or email if you have any questions at all about this or any of our other projects – 01903 502595 or email info@travellersworldwide.com

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