



# DISCOVER CONSERVATION! THE AFRICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COURSE 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.

## THE COURSE

**This is an incredible course for anyone with a passion for nature. Practical Fieldwork and classroom theory on Game Reserves and all aspects of conservation management, this course offers a tremendous learning curve and lifetime appreciation of African Wildlife.**

This intensive 8 week course offers an exceptional opportunity to learn and experience how to conserve African Wildlife. You'll learn many practical conservation skills that are indispensable for anyone considering following a career in conservation or for anyone who would appreciate a deeper understanding of our planet and the way everything interacts with one another.

Conscientious management and conservation of our wildlife and environment is vital. Without these components, life would simply not be able to sustain itself. Accurate insight and knowledge of conservation and wildlife is key to protecting our planet. **This course is open to everybody and no qualifications or experience is required.** 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. The course covers many different areas of conservation and wildlife management, including:

- South Africa and African cultures
- Conservation
- Plants
- Animals
- Animal behaviour
- Interactions and interrelationships in nature
- Camping and Trails
- Orientation skills
- Mammal, bird, insect, reptile and plant identification
- Spoor identification and tracking skills
- Wildlife research, data collection and scientific methodology
- Animal diseases
- Game reserve establishment and maintenance



You will generally work week days although there may be occasional weekend work. Days usually start around 8am, finishing between 5pm/6pm although every day is very different and this will vary. The work can be quite physical at times, with hiking for up to around 3 hours, daily walks and some overnight trails. You need to be reasonably fit and healthy before you go. You will certainly come back that way!

The course is structured and well organised, although there is also a high element of flexibility as the course evolves with each new group of volunteers.

**There is no such thing as a typical day on this course as every day is so diverse and there is such a wide range of activities covered over the 8 weeks. Below is an example of one likely day in the life but times and activities will vary for each course...**

#### A DAY IN THE LIFE

- **7:15am** - Up, shower, eat breakfast
- **8am** - Briefing on the days activities, equipment check
- **8:30am** - leave for reserve, checking game on route, and also learning and being tested on fauna and flora.
- **9am** - start work monitoring game movements, evaluating the type and quality of vegetation.
- **12pm** - lunchtime in the bush!
- **1:30pm** - anti erosion work, taking out alien bush, brush packing run off zones.
- **3pm** - start trip home game spotting along the way.
- **4pm** – Home! Discussions on the day and what was learnt and chat about details of tomorrow.
- **6:30pm** – Dinner Time (and well deserved) then play board games or relax before you choose to sleep (The staff on the ground will recommend a suitable bed time depending on the next day's activities).

The schedule is rarely the same from course to course. The educational content is the same and you will be going on nature walks most days. Activities on top of that could be anything from game drives, visits to the local taxidermy, guest lecturers, overnight trails... and more.

#### YOUR ACCOMMODATION

It is BEAUTIFUL! Accommodation will vary, depending on the activities and also on other circumstances on the ground, but will likely be as follows for periods during the course.



Summer accommodation above.

Depending on the time of year will depend on the accommodation, throughout summer months you will be camping out in the bush in tented accommodation, but these are no ordinary 2-man pup-tents. They are large and fairly luxurious, with proper beds and small verandas out front where you can sit in the evening and look out at the beautiful views.

You'll share a tent with 1 to 3 other people and there is a shower and ablutions block on the site, as well as a kitchen.

The camp is situated in a small valley with ridges on either side. There is a crystal stream running through and the site is very African and beautiful. It is very rustic with a mixture of tents and thatched stone buildings for the lecture room, kitchen and a shower block. Electricity is run on solar powering.



In the winter months (June, July and August) you will be staying in the Olive House (see pictures below) it looks Shamwari game reserve of the accommodation etc from the loft rooms of Summer camp.



old and it was built in 1820s. is about 3-400 meters to the South and you may see Cheetah, buffalo on some days. It is 1.3 km South

The camp is located on given over to wildlife.

an olive farm, part of which is This means that you could be

woken up in the morning to the sounds of cattle lowing, or you could stroll around and see buck and other smaller wildlife roaming in the bushes close to your camp. This truly is a wildlife experience of Africa's greatest.

**Food:** All meals will be provided. These will usually consist of light breakfast, lunch/packed lunch and supper is the main meal. Food will usually be typical Western food. During practical outings, packed meals will be provided.

You will have access to the kitchen while in the camp so that you can make yourself hot drinks and snacks to enjoy whilst sitting back watching the sun go down!



**Laundry:** There is a laundry service in the village which will cost you about R24 a week, but some people choose to do their washing in the basin on site.

**Activities:** Given that this is a camp site, there are no city-type amenities like TV, etc., but there are facilities in Alicedale (about 14km away), such as Internet, swimming pool, café, shops, etc.

**Communication:** There is no land-line in the camp site but you will have limited access to email facilities. Cell phone communication is normally available but while you're in camp, you will need to climb to the top of the ridge in order to get reception.

**Location:** The location of the campsite is close to the rapidly-developing small town of Alicedale, in the Eastern Cape. Alicedale is 90 km (approx 70 miles) from Port Elizabeth and 20 km from the university town of Grahamstown. Shamwari Game Reserve is fairly close by, as is Burchills and Bushman Sands.

### **COURSE DATES - 2007**

- 8 January – 3 March**
- 5 March – 28 April**
- 30 April – 23 June**
- 2 July – 25 August**
- 27 August – 20 October**
- 22 October – 15 December**

## **FEEDBACK**

**NAME:** Debbie Allen  
**AGE:**18  
**PLACEMENT:** Discover conservation  
**COUNTRY:** South Africa, Eastern Cape



### **What experience do you feel you are gaining?**

I have gained lots of experience about what to do in an emergency situation. We have done the bush survival course already. On this course we were taught how to build a shelter, make fire, make a snare for food and also what to do if someone is injured or bitten by a snake. I have also gained experience in travelling, which is new to me. Staying in the hostels whilst travelling is a great idea, you get to meet loads of interesting people that can recommend excellent places to visit. They are very safe and clean and cheap too!

### What is the best thing about your placement?

There are a few things I would say are great about this placement. Firstly the people you meet, other students at Esingeni as well as the Shamwari students down the road and the Dutch ones in Alicedale. They are all very friendly and interesting people that I always seem to have lots in common with.

Secondly the knowledge I have gained from Wayne he seems to be able to answer absolutely anything you ask him and explains it well. The trips to different game reserves are brilliant, I knew we would see lots of different animals here but I also thought I'd be disappointed by not seeing them all, which is not the case. The only animal I want to see and haven't yet is the porcupine.

### Would you recommend this placement to anyone else?

I would definitely recommend this placement

### What type of person do you think this placement would suit?

I think to fully enjoy this placement you have to have an interest in animals and nature. As that's all it is about.

Also to people that are not easily homesick. It has taken me 5 weeks to fully overcome mine and I think I would have enjoyed it more (if possible) if I didn't think of home.

### Was there anything that you weren't told before you went away that you think future volunteers should know?

No

### Can you describe a typical day? (e.g Start time, morning duties, lunch hours, afternoon duties, any other duties.... )

I don't think there is a typical day here as it varies a lot but it goes a bit like this

9 leave for nature walk

11 rest and look at the animals around

1 lunch

2 briefing for afternoon

2 10 a short interesting lecture e.g. on reptiles 3.30 look for reptiles around the house 4.30 look up what we found

5 dinner



## MARCH/APRIL CONSERVATION COURSE REPORT

### By the volunteers

Eight weeks have gone past so quickly. We've learnt and seen so much. From being able to identify poisonous spiders (many of which live in our tents!) to having our land rover stuck in a hole near 2 male lions. Not to put anyone off! It's actually really cool!

In our first week we went to Addo Elephant Park and saw close to a hundred elephants including a 2-day-old baby with its mother. That sounds good, which it definitely was, but since then things have gotten even better. We have managed to get close to a lot of animals including lions, hippos, giraffes, crazy wildebeest, etc, etc.

Two of our best sightings have been of cheetahs. In Amakhala Game Reserve, there is a mother with three cubs who we were tracking using radio telemetry and we managed to get about 2 metres away from them. They weren't bothered much so we got to spend a lot of time watching the babies climb over their mother. We also saw a male cheetah in Bushman Sands and managed to get quite close to him but he was very uncooperative when it came to taking photos! He wouldn't look at us at all!

In Amakhala, we also had the privilege of being charged by a herd of elephants! A bit scary being in an open-topped land rover and not having anywhere to go! But it was all OK – our ranger charged back at them with the land rover and they dispersed, trying to look brave at the same time!

Seeing the darting of a male lion was a once in a lifetime experience. One of our group got to sit with the vet in the buggy while the darting took place, thereby getting to see it all up close. The rest of us were allowed near once the lion was tranquilized and were allowed to help the vet with his



tests. The lion was big! He had to be moved which was a struggle because he was so heavy-it took about 5 people to pick him up. Getting up close was amazing – he had the hugest paws and it was surprising how rough his coat was!

We were also involved in darting an elephant, with the same vet that we did the lion with. The teenage elephant (14 years old but 4 tonnes) had damaged his eye probably from a thorn whilst feeding. We were responsible for monitoring his heart rate and breathing while he was under the anaesthetic. We also held open the elephant's eye while the vet was stitching it and had to give the elephant an anti-biotic injection – which is quite hard when an elephant's skin can be up to 4cm thick!

Doing FGASA has been interesting. When we first came out we were daunted by the task before us – learning all the names and facts about everything – but with a lot of encouragement from our guides, Wayne and Bongani, we are actually quite knowledgeable now. Did you know that the common guarri tree can be used as a toothbrush (just in case you forget yours!) and that giraffes can't vocalise to communicate but mostly through body language? It is good learning about things in lectures and then being able to see them in the field afterwards. We were very lucky to stumble across a chameleon whilst doing alien plant clearing just hours after our lecture on reptiles. So much fun to play with! This delightful little reptile has the ability of looking in opposite directions at the same time and changes colour within a few minutes to blend in with its new environment to avoid predation.

Staying in camp has its ups and downs but we wouldn't trade it for the world. Brushing your teeth by starlight, after a hard day's work, cannot be beaten! Every night we are surprised as to how beautiful the stars are – there's no light pollution out here. Especially after a hot day, a swim in the dam with our resident Cape Clawless Otter is a big bonus. You never know what you'll see on a walk either – there are warthogs, lots of different types of antelope, birds, snakes, lizards, frogs and crabs! We also have a leopard somewhere, but he is very shy. This is definitely the best way to experience the bush!



**To read more reports from this wonderful course please go to our website at <http://www.travellersworldwide.com/08a-south-africa/feedback>**

**Please note that this course is now also available for two or four weeks but you will not have the opportunity to take any of the exams.**

#### **THE NEXT STEP**

**If you would like to join us on one of our exciting projects then please fill in either an online application form at our website ([www.travellersworldwide.com](http://www.travellersworldwide.com)) or one that is attached to our brochure. Once you have booked and confirmed your place we will send you detailed pack information regarding your placement and country.**

**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](mailto:info@travellersworldwide.com)**



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