



Travellers Worldwide is a leading International Provider of
Volunteering Programmes, Work Experience Internships
and Cultural Courses Abroad

SRI LANKA



ELEPHANT AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN WASGAMUWA NATIONAL PARK

Help conserve the Elephants and other wildlife in Wasgamuwa National Park. The main aim of this project is to **"save elephants, other biodiversity and their habitats by helping people"**. If you want to go back to the very basics, in a stunningly beautiful part of the world, helping local people and the local wildlife this project is perfect for you.

You'll do work that is really valued and that makes a significant difference to people's lives. And the location is breath taking! The activities on this project are diverse - one moment you could be observing elephants overnight in a tree-house, and the next you could be helping to reduce human-elephant conflict within the national park.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering on this Project. Below is a description of what you can do and expect. You can volunteer whether you're taking a gap year, on a career break, retired, or on a holiday with a purpose. No matter what your age or experience, we look forward to welcoming you to the team!

WHAT DO YOU GET?

SELF-DEVELOPMENT:

- New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.
- The enormous satisfaction of helping conserve elephants and wildlife and knowing that you made a difference.
- An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Your safety is our top priority. We risk-assess all destination countries, projects, accommodation and more to ensure that they are stable and safe.
- We have experienced local staff with 24/7 back-up and support who are there to assist you and look after you, starting with an in-depth induction on your arrival.

AN ADVENTURE!

- An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into Asia and the fascinating culture of Sri Lanka! And best of all ... **an unforgettable experience.**

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TravelQuest Ltd t/a Travellers, registered in England & Wales, Registered Office: 7 Mulberry Close, Ferring, West Sussex, BN12 5HY, Reg. No. 3072191, VAT Registration: 786540201

Prices: From **£1,395** for 2 weeks and **£300** for each additional week, excluding flights.

Please see Full [Price List Online](#).

SUMMARY

Duration: From 2 weeks up to 3 months, subject to visa restrictions.

Start Dates: All year round. Projects start on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. You should arrive in Sri Lanka on the Sunday before your chosen start date.

Requirements: No qualifications or experience required, but you will need to be reasonably fit as you will walk or cycle up to 10-15 km each day over rugged terrain – in the heat this can be very tiring! Minimum age 18.

What's Included:

- ▶ Arranging your Programme,
- ▶ Payment Protection insurance
- ▶ Certificate of Completion
- ▶ Meeting you at Colombo airport
- ▶ 24-hr emergency support.
- ▶ Transport to and from your project
- ▶ Full pre-departure support and assistance,
- ▶ Accommodation
- ▶ Transfer to your on-site accommodation
- ▶ Local in-country team support and backup
- ▶ Food

What Not Included: Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visas (if a visa is required), Sunday and Saturday night accommodation in Colombo, Return transfer to airport.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WORK CONTENT:

The work you can get involved in is diverse and fascinating. It also covers a broad range of elements and activities. You'll be conducting all the work yourself, but will, of course, have the supervision and guidance of either the project researcher or his assistant.

You'll also monitor the 'lealer' electric fence. This fence greatly reduces the human-elephant conflict in the area as it protects the locals' farmland, which is their livelihood. The elephants are kept out by the electric fences and are in turn, protected themselves (as they are not ruining the local populations livelihood, the locals have no reason to attack and hurt the elephants.)

The project has a broad scope and volunteers will help out in any of the research projects and operational needs summarized below to accomplish the objectives of the Society. Not all these activities will be available at one time – you'll likely be involved in several, or a selection, depending on the needs of the conservation society we work with. Below is a list of the current activities, but some of these can change depending on what is required at the you're there and on other factors, such as the weather:



ELEPHANT RESEARCH

- Tank (where the elephants bathe) monitoring
- Trail transects (a hike to identify if elephants have been in the area) on the trails that range from 5-10 kilometres on undulating to steep terrain.
- Road transects outside (buffer zone) of the national park.
- Park ID - identification of elephants within the park
- Fence monitoring - in both Pussellayaya and Weheragalagama
- Observations of elephants from tree hut and at tanks.

GIS RESEARCH

- Identification of trails which predators / prey species use
- Biodiversity mapping
- HEC mapping
- Analysis of GIS data from all other research projects

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND AGRO/SOCIAL FORESTRY RESEARCH

- Village Headman (GND) Surveys
- HEC (Human-Elephant Conflict) assessment surveys
- Project Orange Elephant (alternative crops project that is providing locals with oranges to farm as well as their usual crops. Elephants do not eat citrus fruits, so even if the farmland was destroyed by elephants the livelihood of the locals would not be ruined as they still have the oranges to sell.



FARMING & AGRICULTURE

- Data on farming operations (such as number of eggs produced, milk production, health issues, paddy/fruit production)

OPERATIONS AND BASIC HOUSEKEEPING

- Cleaning and maintenance of vehicles, bicycles and other equipment
- Clearing / Cleaning of field bases and equipment
- Packing / Storing and Stock taking of all equipment before departure of groups of volunteers / at least every two months.
- The work is vigorous and also mentally challenging at times, due to the warm and humid climatic conditions (especially in summer) - but it is extremely satisfying and rewarding! There can be a lot of physical activity involved in the project, you may be walking up to 10 kilometres a day and / or cycling up to 15 kilometres a day!

PROJECT START AND FINISH DATES

The project starts on the first and third Monday of each month throughout the year. You should arrive at Colombo Airport on the Sunday before your chosen start date. You'll be picked up at the airport and taken to your accommodation for the night. Please note your accommodation for this night is not included in the project cost and you will have to arrange this yourself (we can assist you with this). The following morning you'll be picked up by the Wasgamuwa team bright and early (around 6am) and taken to your project.

For your first night in Colombo, the project recommends the Hotel Shalimar, a 3 star hotel with reasonable pricing roughly 20 km from Colombo International Airport. It offers air-conditioned rooms with free Wi-Fi, 24-hour front desk, a restaurant and bar. If you wish to find your own accommodation, please note you will have to make your own way to the Fort Railway Station in Colombo by a 6 am on the Monday.

Return transfers from Wasgamuwa to Kandy are arranged on Saturdays. You will need to make your own arrangements from Kandy to Colombo and we advise spending the night in Colombo then flying out on Sunday or continue on with your travels.

REQUIREMENTS: CAN YOU DO THIS PROJECT?

- You don't need any qualifications to participate in this project.
- You will need to be reasonably fit as you will walk or cycle up to 10-15 km each day over rugged terrain – in the heat this can be very tiring!
- Minimum age 18.
- Please bear in mind that this project is suitable for those people who enjoy reading and solitude as there is nothing to do in the evenings except socialise with the other volunteers!
- BUT, if you want to gain an excellent cultural experience that is worthwhile and gives you much, much more than you'd get as a mere tourist, then this is an excellent placement.

Interesting [interview](#) with innovative thinkers in Sri Lanka today who are working towards creating a balance between human development and elephant survival with untraditional methods and sensitive thinking.

WHAT THE PROJECT GAINS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEERING:

"The volunteer program is an integral component of the sustainable initiatives we are implementing in Sri Lanka. There has been a completely new economic development at the local level just based on the volunteer program. You can observe this in the growth and development of so many of the local stakeholders who are directly and indirectly benefiting from the program. Even for the Wasgamuwa National Park we provide their biggest revenue. We hope to initiate a study just to assess the economic impact of the volunteer program at Wasgamuwa." **Ravi Corea, President and Founder.**

“I am unable to find the words to praise the whole experience highly enough!! It was everything that I expected and far more. Everything was perfect. Every day we experienced something new, and I cannot speak too highly of all the staff at the orphanage,. Whatever we wanted to do, they arranged!! ”

Bill Ray

“I learnt so much about the elephants, the work the orphanage does and the Sri Lankan lifestyle. It really makes you appreciate what you have.”

Sarah Molkenthin

ACCOMMODATION

You'll live in a remote village called Pussellayaya on the outskirts of the National Park, located around 7 hours east of Colombo. The community is mostly dependant on paddy farming for its livelihood and as such the way of life here is very simple - you'll need to be prepared to 'get back to basics' and to live like the villagers.

The Wasgamuwa house is very basic indeed! The makeup of the house is the first thing you notice. You really do feel like you are in the wilderness! The house is very open to the outdoors, but don't worry - the makeup of the house is perfectly sufficient and the openness keeps the house cool during the hot spells of the day and dry during the storm.

The accommodation is in gender-based shared dormitory style rooms, bunk bed style and the rooms are sectioned off for privacy. The number of occupants will depend on the room you are assigned to, but it can range from 8 to 16 volunteers. There are two communal social areas. The house has three Western-style bathrooms with flush toilets, showers and sinks and there are separate shared bathrooms for men and women.

Electric fans, mosquito nets, pillows and clean bed-sheets are provided, but please remember to bring your own towel. All meals are prepared for visitors to the field house; clothes can be hand-washed in tubs.

There is also Wi-Fi at the accommodation.

It's also possible that you may stay in a another field site near to the Wasgamuwa National Park, depending on the number of volunteers on the project and your activities and research - this would usually only be for a limited time.

Food:

Your food will be freshly cooked by the house caretaker and his wife. Neither of them speak very much English but a smile goes a long way! They are both lovely and love looking after you! The food is basic but delicious! The food usually consists of vegetarian curries, which are made milder than they would for themselves – but there is still a kick to them! There is also a shop about 5 minutes away from the field house, where you can stock up on snacks and cold drinks for your sugar fix! There is a fridge in the house, which can be used to store all your food.

Transport:

Transport will be in the form of a jeep, bicycle or by foot. Getting around means that bicycles are essential as the main form of transport.

Buses run from the region to Kandy, Dambulla and Colombo – taking approximately 5 to 9 hours. Buses run more frequently to Hettipola, which is the nearest town, located about 45 minutes away from the site. There are two 3-star hotels about 10-15 minutes bike ride away, one serving excellent Chinese food and the other having a nice pool and bar for some very welcome chilled drinks after a hot days work!



Please bear in mind that Wasgamuwa is remote and the house is open to nature. This project should only be undertaken by people who like solitude, wildlife and living in jungle-like surroundings, and are able to live with minimal creature comforts. You are welcome to bring your Laptop with you as the field house has electricity and quite good wireless Internet connectivity. You'll be able to stay in contact with your friends and family.

WHY TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE?

- Over 20 years' experience of sending thousands of participants overseas, plus the largest variety of flexible projects that are value for money!
- Accredited projects helps appeal to future employers
- Excellent support! And 24/7 emergency helpline for you and your family
- Your own dedicated Project Co-ordinator to answer all questions before, during and after your trip of a lifetime!
- Detailed information on your project and country and suggestions, safety guide, tips and checklists, via our EXTRANET, available from anywhere, 24/7.
- Free pick up from the nearest airport.

HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By joining a Travellers Program you enable us to keep donating money to worthwhile projects around the world; from clothing and feeding school children, building playgrounds or funding vital conservation research - your participation makes these donations possible.

Donations to **Bridge The Gap Foundation**. This Foundation was set up by us to donate directly to particularly worthwhile and necessary projects for children and animals around the world, and partners with other NGO's to raise match-funding for worthy projects.

The price of this project is a reflection of the following costs:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Accommodation and Food | ✓ UK administration |
| ✓ Full pre-departure support | ✓ Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations) |
| ✓ Meeting you at the airport | ✓ Project Research/Site Inspection |
| ✓ Transport to the placement site | ✓ Staff Training/Equipment |
| ✓ Local in-country team support and backup | ✓ Donations to worthwhile project |
| ✓ 24hr emergency helpline | |

"I just wanted to let you know, that I had the time of my life in Sri Lanka. It was FANTASTIC, I wish the entire experience had never had to end. I would just like to say thank you to your team of organisers for organising the spectacular trip."

Rajni Kanda

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Got any questions? Please email us: info@travellersworldwide.com

Once you have applied for a placement, we'll contact you and send you our Welcome Pack. You'll also receive Log-on details and password for our Volunteer Extranet where you'll have access to all the documentation and information which we've put together to facilitate preparations for your adventure! Your Project Co-ordinator for your country will liaise with you throughout the arrangements process, as well as while you're on your placement and on your return home.

The documents you'll have access to also include a Country Fact file, Safety Guide and any manuals that may assist you on your particular programme (for example, Teaching Guide, Sports Manuals, Enrichment Suggestions for Animal Care, etc.).

We do all we can to make your stay one that you'll never forget. As with all our destinations, the culture and heritage is different to what you're used to ... which, although one of the most exciting aspects of travelling, should be borne in

mind. Self-reliance and independence are highly appreciated in all our destinations and will help you to make the most of this wonderful opportunity! This is a truly awesome, elegant and beautiful country.

ABOUT WASGAMUWA NATIONAL PARK:

The location is amazing, with breathtaking scenery and wildlife set in the remote hinterland of the island, given the accolade – by natives – as the most beautiful part of Sri Lanka. This placement is ideal if you enjoy wildlife and the outdoors - there is plenty to keep you occupied in this beautiful region. The surrounding jungles and villages can be explored easily by foot or bike and trips to other parks in the region can be arranged.

This beautiful and untamed region is full of photo opportunities - outstanding rivers, lakes and wildlife that make for a photographer's paradise. There is no other entertainment, thus you'll enjoy serenity and spending time alone.

The Maduru Oya National Park, which is about an hour away by jeep, is renowned for its Elephant population and Elephant sightings during an organised safari are very common - the amount of wildlife in this area of Sri Lanka is just incredible! This is a remote area with very basic facilities but will give you a true Sri Lankan experience.

This project is run by one of Sri Lanka's top Conservation Societies and is enormously beneficial to the local people and environment. They have won the United Nations Development Programme's prestigious Equator Prize. The Award honours community-based projects that represent outstanding efforts to reduce poverty through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.



On Arrival, your Introduction to the Country:

When you arrive you will be welcomed by a member of staff who will take you to your accommodation and introduce you to everyone. During your first few days you'll be given an induction so that you can learn about the country and its culture, as well as other useful information, like how to use the transport system, banks, safety issues, tipping, and lots more.

You will have weekends free and this will also allow some time for travelling and sightseeing.

PROJECT GOALS

The first project in Wasgamuwa, a village in the Central Province over a decade ago, was the "Saving Elephants by Helping People" (SEHP) project, which fence elephants OUT of villages rather than IN reserves, using solar powered electric fencing. Long-term goals for this region are:

- To generate a list of the plant and animal species of the region.
- Human & economic development - so that some of these villagers can participate in the field & ecotourism projects as well take the message of conservation to other communities.
- Field research - using suitably trained local people with the guidance of scientists and conservation experts

This project still remains the most successful participatory HEC resolution programme in Sri Lanka today. The communities are still working together to maintain their fences. Unfortunately, due to the security situation in Sri Lanka, the number of international volunteers has declined drastically, so sadly the main field research site at Wasgamuwa operates on a skeleton staff. The locally trained Field Scouts have continued to collect data on the fences, HEC, and socio economic issues.

Through this important research it was discovered that elephant raids have reduced by 100% in some areas, and approximately 7 hours per day of farmers time has been saved, and Rs.5, 500 (approx. \$50) per annum saved from not having to purchase paraphernalia to chase away crop raising elephants, as well as saving thousands of rupees previously spent on repairs to property damaged by elephants.

The Project is also keen to continue the good work in the area by carrying out the Habitat Enrichment Project (HEP), as an additional means of deterring elephants and alleviating poverty, by planting citrus and other crops varieties that are known to be not preferred by elephants.

SHORT TERM (STAGE 1):

Delivering 3-4 month intensive courses in spoken English. These will mostly be to young people in the villages surrounding our project site close to Wasgamuwa National Park. The English training will include some outdoor

classroom activities and inculcation of natural history and nature conservation values. To foster this SLWCS will provide some training by local wildlife experts and you will then dispense this knowledge in their classes.

The villagers are aware that they will benefit from their participating in that they will increase their knowledge and skills. As a result of our volunteers' teaching, the villagers will also be the recruitment base for the Wildlife Conservation Society's field researcher positions and in the future they will have opportunities to increase their incomes by working as nature guides (see Stage 2)

Additionally some of the locals who attend the classes will be used by some of our volunteers in the morning to visit surrounding villages and conduct intensive qualitative and quantitative socioeconomic evaluations. Volunteers may also provide intensive English reading and writing skills to interested individuals in the mornings. These efforts will support the Society's goal of human development, which will lead to the added potential for economic development.

LONG TERM (STAGE 2):

In too many cases, environmental fieldwork and data collecting is carried out by non-locals (and to a great extent non-nationals) who spend some time in the area, get their data and leave. Generally the locals do not benefit from such exercises except in providing labour for carrying equipment and guiding. To rectify this, a Village Field Scouts Programme is being initiated and all the villagers will be invited to participate in the classes conducted by Travellers volunteers. Our volunteers will teach basic spoken English, combined with natural history of local fauna and flora.

For Stage 2, Travellers Worldwide volunteers with a background in Biological Sciences and fieldwork experience will conduct an intensive 2-month course in general fieldwork techniques and use of field equipment. The villagers will also be taught some basic data analysis and computer skills.

At the end of the 2-month session a test will be held to select the most promising candidates for the Field Scouts Programme. They will be selected on the basis of their knowledge and ability to work in the jungle and for their skills at reading, writing and operating field equipment. These selected individuals will undergo further training under the guidance of Travellers biological science graduate volunteers and Sri Lankan experts on how to collect data in the field.

This programme is ongoing and provides a real opportunity to make a real difference to the local community and to individual Sri Lankans.

THINGS TO DO IN SRI LANKA

About the Local Wasgamuwa Area:

There is a lot to do and see if you enjoy wildlife and the outdoors. The **Maduru Oya National Park** is also about an hour away by car. This park is renowned for its wild elephant population. The surrounding jungles and villages can be explored easily by foot or bike. Sri Lanka's longest **river** is about 20 minutes away and **tubing** (travelling a few kilometres down it in an inner-tube) is safe and great fun - except during the rainy season!

Sigiriya, Polannaruwa, Nuwera Eliya, Dambulla and Kalkudah Beach are all about 3-4 hours bus ride away.

To cool off, you can hire a van and go to the **Knuckles Range** which, at 5,000 feet, is much cooler! It is about 70 minutes away with beautiful areas to hike and plenty of cool streams to bathe in. The temperature drops to a comfortable 20-28 degrees at this altitude. The Field staff at the project will be able to help you plan any trips you want to take. They have a wealth of knowledge on the local area and Sri Lanka in general.

The rest of Sri Lanka is a tropical paradise offering something to suit every type of visitor. Sri Lanka is often referred to as a 'Teardrop in the Ocean' - a beautiful island with a mystical past and history awaiting exploration.

The tea plantations are a must, the lace making, monuments and architectural splendours, etc., but the most appealing is the Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawala. **Not to be missed! It's an emotive sight that you'll never forget!**

SRI LANKA'S FANTASTIC BEACHES!

Sri Lanka has miles and miles of amazing beaches. Some of our favourites are:

MIRISSA: Perhaps a contender for the most beautiful beach in the world. Long, deserted and hot. You know you have got away from it all as you sit and watch the sunset over this horizon...The snorkelling is also incredible here.

NEGOMBO: To the north of Colombo lies Negombo, a bustling fishing town with golden beaches and a pallet of colour provided by sails and boats against the deep blue of the ocean.

UNAWATUNA: A sleepy peaceful cove with deep still water and a temple overlooking the bay from the protecting cliffs.

HIKKADUWA: A long stretch of beach with plenty of hostels, restaurants and some nice bars, not forgetting the impromptu beach parties held on the beach front bars blaring Bob Marley, Eric Clapton, Led Zeplin and many other classics! Sri Lanka is a conservative island brimming with culture and Hikkaduwa offers an exciting opportunity to holiday for the odd celebratory weekend! You can also body board and even surf on this beach.

ARUGAM BAY: This tiny fishing village is Sri Lanka's newest hot spot and hosts the best surfing and an easy going happy party atmosphere. With its wide sweeping beach in front of the village and year round gorgeous swimming it is no surprise that this bay has developed into a low budget travellers haunt.

ADRENALIN JAUNTS:

White Water Rafting: Sri Lanka's boulder stream rivers are the ideal setting for white water rafting. This is the best way to see the stunning environment what this region has to offer. Many tours are available and many begin with days of action, rafting the white waters. This high adventure is suitable for fish time 'go for it' rafters and experts alike. .

Rock Climbing and Mountaineering: Mountaineering is an adventure sport that requires skills and levels of fitness that few other adventure sports can match. The mountain ranges in Sri Lanka offer breath taking, enthralling, climbing routes.

Hiking and Trekking: There's no better way to explore the natural scenic beauty of this island with diverse climatic zones. Trekking is an excellent way to explore a country, people, their traditions and beliefs. Paths and campsites have been set up to give nature lovers the experience of a lifetime. All possible steps are taken to ensure local community benefit and nature conservation in keeping with all international camping guidelines.

Canoeing & Kayaking: This relatively new sport is rated as the most adventurous of all adventure sports. It involves descending a stream as it drops over waterfalls and boulders

Climate:

The driest and best seasons are from December to March on the west and south coasts and in the hill country, and from May to September on the east coast. December to March is also the time when most foreign tourists come, the majority of them escaping the European winter.

HOW TO BOOK

TWO EASY WAYS ...

Complete a [booking form](#) online.

Telephone
01903 502595 (UK)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN OUR PROGRAMME!

We hope you'll join us!

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We're happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

www.travellersworldwide.com