

@wildlifecampus

---



# Volunteering in South Africa



## Module # 1 - Introduction

**Component # 1** - Introduction to Volunteering in South Africa

**Component # 2** - Be prepared

## Module # 2 - South Africa and its environment

**Component # 1** - South Africa Overview

**Component # 2** - First aid, health and safety tips

**Component # 3** - Environmental sensitivity

**Component # 4** - The Southern night skies

## Module # 3 - South African wildlife

**Component # 1** - Wildlife and nature conservation overview

**Component # 2** - Dangerous wildlife

**Component # 3** - Dangerous sea life

**Component # 4** - Lions

**Component # 5** - Leopards

**Component # 6** - African elephants

**Component # 7** - African buffalo

**Component # 8** - Black and white rhinoceros

**Component # 9** - African antelope

**Component # 10** - Giraffes, warthogs and zebras

## Module # 4 - Insights and conclusion

**Component # 1** - An insight into poaching and anti-poaching

**Component # 2** - An insight into game capture operations

**Component # 3** - An insight into wildlife rehabilitation

**Component # 4** - Conclusion

@wildlifecampus

---

# Module 1 Component 1



**Introduction to  
Volunteering  
in South Africa**

## Disclaimer

This course is a **general guide** to volunteering in South Africa. The advice, recommendations, protocols, suggestions, and instructions should only be treated as guidance.

This course covers subjects such as approaching dangerous wildlife and animal capture. **Regarding animal capture, only a veterinarian may anaesthetise or tranquilise an animal, and veterinarians are the only end-users of scheduled substances used for anaesthetising animals.** The darting of animals, including free-ranging game animals, **may only be performed by a qualified veterinarian.**

**The aim of the course is to educate volunteers on as many subjects as possible,** including the complexities of poaching, animal rehabilitation and animal capture and translocation. However, the tasks of advanced wildlife management must be left to experienced professionals at all times.

**WildlifeCampus** takes **no responsibility** for how you may utilise the information contained within this course and any consequences thereof.



## Introduction to Volunteering in Africa

Embarking on a volunteering excursion in Africa can be a life-changing experience. It is an opportunity for you to fully immerse yourself in a wide range of cultures, actively contribute to significant conservation projects that make a real difference, and leave a lasting positive impact on communities that are in need of support.

**There are various types of volunteer programmes. Some examples are:**

- **Community development**
- **Education**
- **Healthcare**
- **Sports**
- **Wildlife conservation**
- **Wildlife rehabilitation**



While much of the information in this course can be applied to **all aspects of volunteering and travel in South Africa**, we will mainly focus on **wildlife conservation** and **rehabilitation-based volunteering**.

## The benefits of volunteering:

- **Unlock new skills** and gain invaluable work experience.
- **Cultivates** meaningful new connections.
- **Elevates** physical and mental well-being.
- Makes a **meaningful impact** on the community.
- **Boosts** self-assurance and self-belief.
- **Fosters** a strong sense of community connection.
- **Creates** positive and lasting change.
- **Demonstrates** unwavering commitment.



## Where to start

Right! You have decided you are doing this. Now, where to start? In the words of Julie Andrews, "let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start..."

### Know what you want

Start by deciding where you want to go and what type of programme you want to join.

### Ask yourself questions like:

- What part/s of the country do I want to go to?
- Do I want to be inland, along the coastal areas or both?
- How long do I want to go for?
- What VISA or paperwork is involved?
- What does travel insurance cost?
- What is my budget?
- What are my expectations from taking this trip?
- Do I want to go alone, with a friend/partner or group?
- Do I want to be surrounded by many people or join a smaller group?
- What are the safety guidelines?
- Do I want to work with animals in reserves and parks?
- Do I want to work within communities?
- Do I want to train and work at a wildlife rehabilitation centre?
- Do I want to spend my time training/learning/earning certificates, or am I just looking to enjoy an experience?
- Do I want to bring skills to a programme?
- Do I want to take back skills from a programme to use at work or build a career?

## Do your research

Once you know where you want to go and what you want to do, start researching volunteer organisations that offer the activities you want to do in the country. It is very important to do your research properly.

**Important note:** Only book experiences through legitimate and reputable volunteer organisations.

## Know what to expect

To thrive in South Africa, a country of great diversity, it is important to embrace and adapt to the local way of life. Extensive research into your chosen destination's history, traditions, customs, and contemporary issues is crucial for a successful and fulfilling experience.



We will explore this in greater detail later in the course.

## Know and understand everything before you commit

Before you commit to a volunteer programme, it is important to **carefully review and understand all the details**. Ensure you understand everything, including safety guidelines, required vaccinations, information on diseases such as malaria, travel insurance, duration of stay, accommodation and meal options, support services, transportation upon arrival, during your stay, departure, and any other associated costs. Gain a clear understanding of the programme requirements and expectations and whether any qualifications or certifications are needed.

If you have any medical issues, ensure the volunteer organisation knows about them. You must also ensure that you pack any necessary medications, etc.



## Start your preparations

Now that you know where you are headed, what you will be doing and when, it is time to get your ducks in a row. Most reputable volunteer organisations will assist you with safety requirements, travel insurance, booking airline tickets, etc.

With everything in order, you are just about ready to go. Or are you?

## Start learning

As mentioned earlier, it is important to research the country before visiting. Start by understanding the rules and regulations of the volunteer organisation and the laws of South Africa.

It is important to know laws around working with children, taking photos and where you are allowed to go or not, for example. Again, a reputable volunteer organisation should provide you with all this information.



**Always respect the rules and regulations when on a volunteer excursion.** They are in place for a reason; to keep you and those around you safe. You will be briefed and told everything you need to know when you arrive at your destination. Make sure you listen and understand everything. If you do not understand something at any point, do not be afraid to ask questions.