

CONSERVATION: THE GREAT WHITE SHARK PROJECT, NEAR CAPE TOWN

Come face to face with the Great White Shark! You'll work in an organisation dedicated to the exploration and conservation of Sharks and the preservation of their environment. Your work will help to gather accurate data on the white sharks to assist in management programmes for the ensured survival of the species. Your work will also help efforts to change negative public attitude towards sharks through awareness and education.

This project is a rare opportunity to view the Great White Shark in its natural environment, either from a boat or an underwater cage. The organisation is also committed to community development and up-liftment. They are deeply involved in the social, economic and environmental needs of the surrounding communities.

Thank you for your interest on volunteering in 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 knowing that our work is contributing to marine conservation.
- 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 Africa and the many diverse cultures in South Africa! And best of all ... an unforgettable experience!

SUMMARY

Prices: From £1,095 excluding flights.

Please see Full Price List Online.

Duration: From 2 weeks to 6 months or longer, subject to visa requirements

Start Dates: All year round on the 1st and 15th of each month. (Closed from the 15th of December until the 15th of January). You will need to arrive the day before (30th/31st or 14th) in Cape Town and stay at a lodge (included).

Requirements: No qualifications needed. Minimum age 17.

What's Included:

- ► Arranging your Programme,
- ► Payment Protection insurance
- ► Accommodation with light meals*
- ► Certificate of Completion
- ► Meeting you at the nearest airport
- ▶24-hr emergency support.

- ► Full pre-departure support and assistance,
- ► First night's accommodation in Cape Town
- ► Transport to and from your project
- ▶ Transfer to your accommodation
- ► In-country team support and backup

What Not Included: Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visas (if a visa is required), Evening meals*, and Return transfer to airport.

* See "Food" section in the accommodation heading below

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WORK CONTENT

The Shark Conservation organisation you'll work with is dedicated to the exploration and conservation of the world's greatest predator, the Great White Shark, and its environment. The project works with predominately eco-tourists, volunteers and local enthusiasts to gather data on Great White Sharks, correct negative misconceptions about sharks, and stop the needless slaughter of over 100 million sharks annually. Current programs involve eco-tourism, public education, environmental advocacy as well as various social up-liftment programmes.

The organisation is a world leading organisation focusing on

the Great White Shark. Founded in 1989 purely as a research centre, it has grown and broadened its reach by establishing a commercial arm and funding a non-profit organisation. The boat trips runs out of Kleinbaai, which is just outside of Gansbaai, South Africa – a seaside village located approximately two hours southeast of Cape Town on the Atlantic Ocean coast. The shark trips primarily take place off Dyer and Geyser Islands, about 6 nautical miles (11 km) or a 20 minute boat trip offshore. This is the location during the winter season (usually April till August).

Your work with them will help to gather accurate data on the white sharks to assist in management programmes for the ensured survival of the species. Your work will also help in their efforts to change negative public attitude towards sharks through awareness and education.

Your Training:

When you arrive, you'll be given a lot of training before starting your actual work. You will receive an induction upon arrival. You will also receive a boat induction and a garage induction where the chum oil is kept. Your first trip on the shark boat you will be taken out as a client to show you how the process operates. You will be working with project staff to assist in their research and fight against the encroaching possible extinction of the Great White.





You'll receive training in White Shark biology, research, behaviour, conservation, changing attitudes, shark attacks, basic seamanship, underwater filming, still photography and shark tourism.

Part of the training will be in the form of slides, lectures and videos. They will take place in the afternoons when you return from sea, or on off-sea days.

Weather permitting you will go to sea frequently. If the weather is good the shark boat goes out a maximum of three times a day but on average twice. At sea, you'll get involved as much as possible with all aspects of sea work. This will be focused on working with the sharks from above and below the water. Much emphasis will be

placed on observing behaviour and the interactions of sharks around the boat. You will be taught how to get in and out of the cage and how to remain secure and safe in the cage. Participants in the cages will record observations of the White Sharks. This will include sex, size, markings and behaviour.

Identification of shark individuals needs to be captured on paper and then logged onto a software program so that it can be sent to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry's and Fisheries. You'll also be taught the basics of how to set the camera up, how to use it underwater and how to obtain the best images.

This training is designed to educate you to a level of competence of a field assistant. During the training, you will be evaluated on how you handle teamwork, take your own initiatives, take interest in the work and activities, and show interest in learning.

Community work:

You may participate in assisting with various duties and responsibilities, including helping to educate locals and children on the Great White. You could also be involved with beach clean-ups, school talks and fundraising for a local shark conservancy Not-for-profit (NPO) organisation.

On a Tuesday afternoon a swop shop is also run for the local community between 2 and 4 pm which you can be involved in. The school children collect rubbish and litter from the streets and in their homes. They earn points for these recyclable materials which they 'spend' in the shop on much-needed school stationery or clothes. This project promotes recycling, environmental awareness, and self-reliance, and helps to provide for some of the basic needs of the children. The volunteers and staff involved find it an enriching experience that helps bridge the gap between different cultures and communities. You will be expected to help at the Swop Shop – if you want to bring a contribution, it will be greatly appreciated.

If you have a specific interest, like for example fundraising or community involvement, they will do what they can to get you involved you in those areas.

A TYPICAL DAY:

The first boat trip usually goes out at 7:00am. The tourists arrive from Cape Town around 6:00am for a breakfast at the Lodge. Volunteers get up around 6:00am to help with preparing the equipment (wet suits, masks, etc.) for the day. You'll have breakfast and be ready to welcome the guests at 6:30am.

You'll walk the guests a short 5 minute walk to the launch site. Once on the boat, you'll help the crew in any way you can. This includes getting the boat anchored, helping the guests get kitted out for their cage dive, help with the chumming, and anything else that crops up. The 3.6 meter cage takes 6 people at any given time and you will be able to go into it too.

Once anchored at the dive site, the project makes use of a specially designed, secure, six man steel cage, which floats on the



surface, with divers no more than 1 m below the surface. Volunteers will be taught how to get in and out of the cage and how to remain secure and safe in the cage. Cage divers are responsible for recording observations on the Great Whites, including sex, size, markings and behaviour. Diving takes place on a rotational basis on good diving days. The duration of each dive depends on the diver, the number of eco-tourists and the activity of the sharks, but could be up to half an hour per dive.

When the boat trip is over, you'll wash the boat down and pack all the kit up to take back to the lodge. The equipment needs to be washed and hung to dry for the next day. If it is busy there might be a second boat trip (and even possibly a third!) so all the above is repeated. If not, you have the rest of the day off. This daily routine takes place 7 days a week. If it's a quiet day, you may have the opportunity to go on the Whale Watching boat (if there is space) for no charge.

Skills learned from the Project:

You'll learn many new skills (depending on your previous experience) - everything to do with running a boat and keeping it in a good working order. You'll also learn ways to identify the sharks and study their behaviour. A lot of researchers use the boat trips to collect data, so speaking to them will teach you a lot as well.

You'll also be taught basic seamanship skills and how to crew and assist on the boat when out at sea. Tasks include chumming, wet-suit and cage diving preparation, client well-being and cage and anchor set up.

Volunteers will be taught how to collect data in the field on free-swimming white sharks. At sea, you'll be focused on working with the sharks from above and below the water, observing behaviour and the interactions of sharks around the boat. You will be educated in an informal environment, learning about the behaviour of the great whites, their history and the urgent need for research. Volunteers will also be taught how to input the data into our database.

Research:

Volunteers help the project staff to fill in data sheets for the sharks they spot day to day. There is no scientific research carried out by the project itself. It is a tourist operation, but their sightings are sent back to Cape Town to the researchers and this information is used by them. Wednesdays are data capturing days. Great White sharks are identified by marks, scars, dorsal fins, sex and size and satellite and acoustic tags are also looked out for.

Volunteer duties

Please note these duties may change from day to day and you will always be working in conjunction with a qualified crew member of the placement:

- Boat check before trip
- Ensure cleanliness of boat
- Make sure equipment for diving, chumming, bait, food etc. are on boat
- Assist with anchoring
- Assist with securing the cage
- Education of clients and general interaction with them
- Assist clients as needed
- Preparing and distributing wet-suits for clients
- Chumming
- Data recording
- Data capturing
- Writing for the blog
- Constant and vigilant shark spotting
- Point out sharks to crew, clients and fellow volunteers
- Clean boat post-trip
- Clean and put wet-suits away
- Tuesdays assist at our recycle Swop Shop

Volunteer Requirements:

You should be hard working, have a genuine interest in the sharks and be up for mucking in at all times. We don't recommend it for anyone with a 'shark curiosity' as we feel you may get bored very quickly. The day-to-day routine doesn't change, the real thrill is seeing the sharks. If you aren't passionate about the creatures, the novelty could

wear thin quite quickly. There isn't much to do outside of work hours, so you must be able to amuse yourself - the crew does go for drinks sometimes and our volunteers are invited along, but they all have families to go home to and it's an early start, so no big parties.

Positive aspects of this project are the sharks (obviously!) and an active outdoor lifestyle in a stunning environment. Generally, our volunteers can go on the boat everyday - if there is room, and subject to weather conditions. You'll usually be able to dive in the cage as many times as you like as well, again depending on tourist numbers and weather conditions. There is generally space on the boats most days, a full boat is not a daily occurrence.

Please note you do not have to be a diver to join the volunteer programme, all diving in the cage is a simple breath hold method.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION:

Sharks are intelligent and vulnerable, deserving of sympathy and respect. Education helps people to lose the Jaws phenomenon and gain the realisation that sharks are a complex and precious species, living in the water – just doing their best to survive.

Travellers' partners with a world leading marine organisation focusing on the Great White Shark. Founded in 1989 purely as a research centre, it now collects information which is passed on to and used by other research organisations. Since 1989 it has grown and broadened its services to include an excellent film department, diving and viewing centre and a separate conservation and educational department. "Everything we do we aim to do in harmony with nature and the environment we are working in."

The dedicated **Shark Team** has been conducting population dynamics and behavioural research since 1991 and was responsible for having the Great White declared as a protected and endangered species in South Africa.

Contrary to popular opinion, shark attacks

are rare, with only 20 to 30 fatal attacks each year worldwide. The media hype of these attacks plus movies have engendered a fear which has been exploited and then marketed at the expense of the well-being of the shark species. Sharks' natural feeding areas are seal colonies.

The organisation undertakes much cage diving with sharks. This was originally thought of as a bad idea, as it was believed that by baiting humans in cages, sharks would associate humans as food, through the process of conditioning. However, our partner organisation disputes this as sharks are highly nomadic animals, their territory ranging over vast areas, even across continents. Research shows that a shark would never stay in one place long enough to become conditioned.







"I love being out at sea (now that I have my sea legs!) And every day is so exciting, especially when we get really interesting sharks...The amount I have learnt since I got here is unbelievable! Not only more about the sharks, but also about working out at sea, which I knew nothing about 2 weeks ago"

Stephanie Edwards

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION:

You'll live in a cosy brick house in Kleinbaai. It is very comfortable, quiet and walking distance from the harbour. The house has a dorm room and two double rooms, one bathroom, a nice kitchen, a lounge area and an outside patio for those hot evenings. With a comfortable seating area, satellite television and video for entertainment, you will be very relaxed in your new home and shark briefings will take place here from time to time too in the lecturer room. There is also free wifi and a computer to use for the internet.

You will be taken into Gansbaai twice a week on a Monday and Thursday for shopping, laundromat and anything else you may need.

Couples, friends or families volunteering together who wish private accommodation may reserve a double room for an additional cost per month.

FOOD:

While food is not provided on this project, you will get a light breakfast which is comprised of toasts, cereals, tea and coffee. Food is also provided on the boat which is usually fruit, sandwiches and soft drinks.

You'll need to take additional funds with you to cover the cost of your main evening meals and the local supermarket stocks a variety of food and there are kitchen facilities in the house for cooking.

At the time of writing this, a very loose guide of how much you're likely to need is R1000 (eating sensibly cheaply) to R1500 (on which you should be eating fairly well). R1000 would equal roughly £52/\$80US. Obviously, if you eat out in restaurants, it will cost more.

EXCURSIONS:

During whale season there will be the possibility of a whale watching trip - this is at an extra cost to yourself. Traditional South African cooking evenings – either a potijie or a braai (bbq) this will be included in your programme, so you will just need to provide your own drinks.

A walk along the shoreline to investigate the marine life and search for shark and ray egg cases.

For those SCUBA qualified there are dives that they can arrange for you locally in the kelp forests with the possibility of observing the smaller shark species. There are also other scuba dives available with other shark species (not great whites) that they can help arrange for you during your stay.

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
- ✓ Full pre-departure support
- ✓ Meeting you at the airport
- ✓ Transport to the placement site
- ✓ Local in-country team support and backup
- √ 24hr emergency helpline

- ✓ UK administration
- Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations)
- ✓ Project Research/Site Inspection
- ✓ Staff Training/Equipment
- ✓ Donations to worthwhile project

"Travellers is an amazing organization that offers life changing experiences to people of all ages, I will highly recommend it to everyone, and I will be planning another volunteer experience for myself as well as for my sons. Thank you so much for the experience of a life time!"

Deanne Peterson

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 DYER ISLAND

Much of the fieldwork will take place around **Dyer Island**, which is also known as "Shark Alley"! Dyer Island (larger island) is the breeding ground of African Penguins, Cape Cormorants and Gannets, while Geyser Rock (smaller island) is a breeding Mecca for Cape Fur Seals and currently home to approx. 60 000 seals. In season, whales and dolphins may also be spotted.

The bay is a magnet for Great White Sharks due to this breeding colony of seals, their favourite prey, and is a wonderful area for cage diving as there are reefs, islands and huge kelp beds which all provide protection from the open sea swell and wind. Please note that the cage diving location is subject to change depending on the weather conditions and location of the sharks. Kleinbaai is renowned for its sharks – and not its night life!

The name of the island originated from an African American, Samson Dyer, who went to live on the island in the 19th century. He collected "guano" (bird droppings), and made a living from supplying it to farmers on the mainland as fertilizer. The boats that transported the guano from the island are today in the Maritime Museum at the Waterfront in Cape Town.

Finding the Great White Shark is a skill, involving years of practice - the water temperature, depth, visibility, swell height, current and wind direction are all major factors. Great White Sharks are surface feeders, so volunteers will be spellbound when seeing the Great White lift its head right out of the water to investigate, and sometimes breach completely. Divers will get to experience Great Whites from the safety of cages, while non-divers have a great opportunity to view the sharks from the safety of the boat, where exhilarating photographs and video footage may be captured at close range. There may be an opportunity to catch a glimpse of dolphins as well as magnificent southern right whales coming up from Antarctica to breed from May to November. These expeditions are more than just thrill-seeking adventures, they are educational experiences.

On Arrival, your Introduction to the Country:

When you arrive in Cape Town, you will be welcomed by a member of our South African staff who will take you to your accommodation. You'll spend your first night at a backpacker lodge and be collected early (3-5am!) the following morning by the shark project.

On arrival at the project you will receive a full induction into the programme and meet the team you will be working with on land and out at sea. Trips out to sea on the commercial shark vessel is weather dependent. They aim for a minimum of 15 trips out to sea if you are on the 4 week programme. One of these trips will be an exclusive – just yourselves and the crew out on the boat.

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 also get a boat induction and a garage induction which is where the chum oil and equipment is kept.

ABOUT THE GREAT WHITE SHARK

ABOUT THE GREAT WHITE SHARK

South Africa has long been known for its abundance of Great White Sharks, making it a prime area to observe these magnificent creatures. The Great White Shark, which can grow up to seven meters (23 feet) in length and 4 tons in weight, is now a protected species in South Africa. Owing to massive negative media publicity over the years, sharks have become one of the most maligned, misunderstood, even hated species on our fragile planet. They have been pursued, hunted and indiscriminately slaughtered, to the point where many species are endangered. Unsustainable fishing practices, dorsal fin poaching and environmental degradation compounded by a relatively slow Great White breeding cycle are all factors contributing to the potential demise of this amazing creature.



Sharks are intelligent and vulnerable, deserving of sympathy and respect. Education helps people to lose the Jaws phenomenon and gain the realisation that sharks are a complex and precious species, living in the water – just doing their best to survive.

100,000,000 sharks are killed each year by humans, usually through fishing. They are, as a result, on a collision course with extinction. Great White Sharks are the last wild predator on earth that we cannot tame; from that point of view alone it deserves our respect and attention.

How could our oceans be the same without the glorious Great White beneath its surface?

Great White Sharks are very stable animals, displaying stable and predictable behaviour. They do not like to fight with or bite one another. They are highly intelligent animals, able to learn quickly and to remember. This is all new and contradictory evidence in the field and it is apparent that the Shark Team are just scratching the surface now.

Finding the Great White, or letting them find you, is a skill, involving years of practice, the water temperature, depth, visibility, swell height, current and wind direction are all major factors. Once the site is found, the bait is prepared and the team awaits the shark, respecting it as a free animal. A recent tagging project was very successful allowing a number of Great Whites to be tracked.

Possible Extinction:

Considering the incredible number of between 150 - 200 million sharks destroyed each year, there is a potential threat of extinction to these species. Most sharks are slow growing, have late maturation and low fecundity and this is the shark's downfall. They cannot replace their stocks to keep up with human exploitation, such as say, sardines can.

Let's look at the Great White Shark. The Great White Shark female takes approximately 15 years to become sexually mature, and the male about 8 years. At these ages the female will be around five meters long and the male around four meters long. The Great White Sharks' fecundity is low, so the female may possibly only give birth to several litters of pups in a lifetime and these litters are relatively small, ranging from about seven to eleven pups in a litter.

So due to the shark's inability to reproduce quickly, stock replacement is not occurring and subsequently the populations of the world are fast diminishing. In fact, they are being wiped out far quicker than most people realise, with many species critically endangered and some species literally on the brink of extinction.

The Great White Shark is now protected in South Africa, California, South Australia and Tasmania, and although this is only one of almost 400 species of shark, its protection is a step in the right direction.

The Great White is a key stone species on this planet and its protection, subsequent media attention and high public profile allows us to use it as a battering ram to push for the protection of other shark species

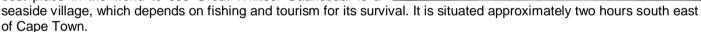
THINGS TO DO IN SOUTH AFRICA

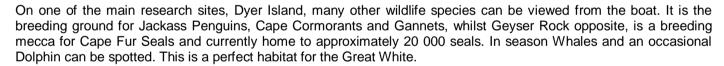
LOCATION, EXPLORING AND SIGHTSEEING:

The best advice you'll get from us is to try to see some of the country while you're in South Africa. It's big (huge!) and each different region is exciting and very, very beautiful. Cape Town is probably the most beautiful city in the world (I can say that, I grew up there :-) KwaZulu-Natal comes a very close second, albeit very different. Knysna is where South Africans go on holiday, which gives you some idea of how lovely the region is.

LOCATION:

The program runs out of Gaansbaai, South Africa. Fieldwork will take place around Dyer Island and possibly other shark locations. Dyer Island (known as Shark Alley!) is possibly the best place in the world to see Great Whites. Gaansbaai is a





One of the exciting aspects of this project is that you may be fortunate enough to spot all the 'Marine Big 5':

- Shark The Great White
- Whale Southern Right, Humpback and Brydes'
- Penguin African
- Seal Cape Fur
- Dolphin Bottlenose, Common and Humpback

ACTIVITIES IN CAPE TOWN

Adrenaline Activities - Enjoy exciting and "real" adventures with an adrenaline twist!

- Abseiling
- Sandboarding
- Deep-sea Angling
- 'Kloofing' (insanely jumping off very high cliffs into pools of water!)
- Paragliding
- Helicopter flips
- Bungee jumping (just up the coast)
-and a LOT, LOT more!!!!
- Township Tours A visit to one of the many townships surrounding the city is an experience that will open your eyes to the way in which the biggest portion of Cape Town's population are living. Take a township tour of Langa, the oldest township in South Africa or Khayelitsha, the second largest township in South Africa.





Two Oceans Aquarium - Located in the V&A Waterfront, the Two Oceans Aquarium has lots of display tanks, interactive experiences, a touch pool and the highly popular predators' tank.

- ❖ Cape Winelands Wine lover or not, a visit to the Cape Wine lands is an absolute must as the region is one of breath taking beauty and majestic mountain backdrops. Rolling vineyards and quaint Cape Dutch homesteads ... as well as some of the country's best wines.
- * Relaxing drives: Drives are a very popular leisure activity in South Africa, because the roads are generally wide, in good condition, relatively empty and a pleasure to drive on. People often go for drives on a Sunday afternoon to a favourite hotel or restaurant for afternoon tea and scones, or to the top of a pass just to look at the view, or to a national park to watch the baboons there's always a good reason to go for a drive!

HOW TO BOOK

TWO EASY WAYS ...

Complete a booking form online.

Telephone 01903 502595 (UK) or 1-603-574-4935 (USA)



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!

<u>www.travellersworldwide.com</u> <u>www.travelersworldwide.org</u>