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SOUTH AFRICA



WILDLIFE AND GAME RESERVE CONSERVATION EXPEDITION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Get involved with some of the most exciting, endangered and priority species conservation work in the heart of Africa. You'll work across different Game Reserves, each unique in their own way.

You'll work with a professional team (who are supported by WWF amongst others), with **Cheetah, African Wild Dog and Black Rhino**, as well as priority species like **Elephant, Lion, Rhino, Leopard and Buffalo**.

Experience genuine conservation work in up to 5 different game reserves in the region, depending on the length of your stay.

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.
- You'll learn a lot about genuine conservation of African Wildlife from experts in their field.
- 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!**

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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 **£1,595** 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, starting on every second Monday (see the [starting dates schedule](#) below).

Requirements: No qualifications needed, just a big heart and a love of animals and their conservation. Minimum age 17.

What's Included:

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

What Not Included: Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visas (if a visa is required)

SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WORK CONTENT

Work on one, two, three or all of the Game Reserves, depending on how long your placement is for. You'll gain a wealth of conservation knowledge and experience working under qualified conservation experts and on location out in the bush on a daily basis. You'll experience Africa in a way that no mere tourist can!

You can join the expedition for a minimum of 2 weeks: For every 2 weeks spent on this expedition, you will experience a different game reserve.

- 2 weeks = you'll experience 1 reserve.
- 4 weeks = experience 2 reserves.
- 6 weeks = 3 reserves.
- 8 weeks = 4 reserves.
- 10 weeks and above = all the reserves.

The experience you'll gain on this project is varied and fascinating. You'll be the Monitor's right hand, assisting with all aspects of their conservation activities. As one of only 4 team members, you form an agile and efficient team, working out in the bush every day:

- Daily tracking and locating of Priority Species wildlife from an open 4x4 vehicle, via radio telemetry.
- Mapping the sightings using GPS equipment. You will be taught how to use the equipment.
- Observing animal behaviour (e.g. Wild Dog pack dynamics) for research purposes.
- Photographing and creating identity kits for any reintroduced/relocated animals.
- Periodically setting up camera traps at watering holes and game trails.
- Assisting with ongoing game counts.

A typical day would look something like this:

Rise with sun and head out (seated on the back of the open 4x4 tracking vehicle) to locate the Endangered Species animals that the wildlife monitor has earmarked for the morning, using radio telemetry equipment that receives radio signal from the collars which are fitted onto the Priority Species animals.

You will usually be back by late morning to prepare some lunch and have a little time to relax, read, have a nap or watch the abundant bird and animal life which occurs around the camp.

You head out again on the vehicle between 2-3pm to follow up on those animals which were not located in the morning, such as Elephant and Rhino.



You should be back in camp shortly after sunset, to start preparing supper and sit around the fire listening to the sounds of the bush and discussing the day's events. Usually you will be in bed early, but on some nights volunteers may go out to track species like the Hyaena, which are active at night.

At least once a week you will have an afternoon or day set aside for administrative work: (data capture and analysis). Appropriate supervision and instruction will be provided for all elements of your practical experience.

Activities that you could participate in, that occur when the need arises, are:

- Radio collaring of animals.
- Notching (identity marking) of animals such as Rhino.
- Night-time tracking excursions – for example Hyaenas.
- Relocation or re-introduction of Endangered Species.
- Assisting with feeding and data recording of animals being held in temporary bomas prior to release
- Vulture counts and nest surveys.
- Bird ringing & alien plant control.



Please note: Activities such as collaring, relocation/ reintroduction, identity marking, snare removal, tranquilisation for treatment, etc., happens throughout the year, strictly as the need arises. While the project does plan and follow basic schedules, the nature of the work being done here dictates that the animals and their environment are our first priority, and therefore our schedules do occasionally have to be altered due to unforeseen circumstances or incidents, as we have little control over the dynamics of wild animals and their environment.

There is always a lot going on here and you will have the opportunity to be a part of a professional conservation team, make a real difference and contribute towards important conservation work and research in Africa!

PROJECT START DATES

START DATES FOR 2015 ARE:

- 6 or 20 July
- 3, 17 or 31 August
- 14 or 28 September
- 12 or 26 October
- 9 or 23 November
- 7 December

START DATES FOR 2016 ARE:

- 4 or 18 January
- 01, 15 or 29 February
- 14 or 28 March
- 11 or 25 April
- 09 or 23 May
- 06 or 20 June
- 04 or 18 July
- 01, 15 or 29 August
- 12 or 26 September
- 10 or 24 October
- 07 or 21 November
- 05 December

Please Note: The project holds 2 staff meetings per year on the following dates:

Monday 13th & Tuesday 14th July

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd November.

While the monitors are attending the staff meetings, volunteers will be required to spend these 2 nights away from the monitoring project, together with the other volunteers from all the other monitoring projects. Further information provided on request.

WHY IS THE WORK IMPORTANT?

It is important to keep track of animal movement patterns, habitat utilisation, population demographics and importantly, snaring and poaching incidents of endangered wildlife species. This valuable information, which our team members help gather, has numerous management applications, including the planning of successful introduction and removal strategies of endangered and priority wildlife species as well as supplying information to local conservation authorities, including Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the WWF, the Black Rhino Range Expansion Project and the KZN Wild Dog Management Group.

"My overall experience was amazing! A great hands on experience and also a great confidence booster. I was allowed to see a side of conservation that one cannot get from being a tourist in South Africa or a volunteer on other projects. The knowledge given by the management/field team was very valuable and again a great insight into conservation. I can honestly say everything was a highlight, but seeing the Rhino capture was very special."

Peter Holland

"I loved every minute of it and wish I could be back now. The monitors passed on so much information to us while driving through the bush. My highlight was seeing the wild dog pups for the first time after looking for them for just over two weeks. Also helping to ID them by looking through photos taken of each of the pups. I didn't just feel like a tourist, by completing daily tasks I felt I was contributing to the programme."

Steph Ronson

ACCOMMODATION

ACCOMMODATION:

Each volunteer camp is situated within the Reserves on which we work. The accommodation camp is basic but comfortable, with electricity, running warm water and flushing toilet. A bed, mattress, pillows and bedding are provided for each volunteer, but we ask that you please bring your own towels. Please be aware that you may have to share a room with another volunteer during your stay.

There is a separate shared toilet/shower and kitchen, as well as an outside seating and dining area, and a barbecue area where you can sit by the fire under the stars. (With the absence of artificial light, stargazing at the Reserves is phenomenal!)

Some camps are partly fenced but some are not, so you can expect visits from Baboons, Monkeys, Antelope, Bushbabies, Elephant and Hyaena on occasion. For this reason please remember it is very important to always use torches when moving around the accommodation at night, and to never leave the immediate camp area on foot when it is dark! It is also important to note that no-one is allowed to walk around within the Reserves on their own (example leave the accommodation camp for a walk) unless they are accompanied by a ranger who is qualified to deal with dangerous game on foot.



The camp has a communal kitchen where everybody joins in to prepare their meals. Everything you need is provided including an oven, stovetop, microwave, solar cooker, and of course a fire, to cook on. Most of the time volunteers take turns preparing meals, or one person becomes the "chef" and the others help with chopping, peeling and cleaning. Basic food items are provided for within our food budget, enough for 3 healthy meals a day, including fruit. As far as possible, the project tries to be environmentally friendly, for example we do not buy tinned tuna, and we try to use game venison instead of commercially produced beef where possible. We do provide for vegetarians; please make us aware of your needs before you arrive. Drinking water at the accommodation is of a good quality, but you are welcome to purchase bottled water at your own expense.

Please note: The distance between the reserves and any town/city is substantial, and fuel costs are high, so any driving to town for supplies is limited to the 2-week cycle when volunteers arrive/depart or are transferred from one reserve to another. Your wildlife monitor will have done grocery shopping to provide the basic foods for the camp. When you arrive in Richards Bay, the transport service that collects you will make a very brief (15 minute) stop at a supermarket for you to stock up on any snacks or luxury items you may want during your stay.

Volunteers all help with general camp cleanliness and maintenance. This is a very important part of bush life, as an untidy / dirty room or kitchen is an invitation for all sorts of creatures to invade it! Some camps have washing machines to wash clothes, but if not, a tub with laundry detergent is provided for hand-washing your clothes.

*The accommodation at the iMfolozi camp is basic, isolated and reliant on a generator for electricity. At times the power supply can be somewhat unreliable, so please ensure that you have enough spare batteries to rely on in case you cannot recharge there as often as you would like.



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

"I elected to travel alone to South Africa to volunteer and assist with animal conservation on Thanda Private Game Reserve. Travellers answered all my questions, handled all the arrangements and made recommendations pertinent to my project. My experience exceeded my expectations and I can't wait to return!"

Leesa Madsen

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.

WORKING ACROSS THE FIVE RESERVES:

Unlike other projects, The Zululand Conservation Expedition is not focused on only 1 reserve, but stretched across 5 of most famous reserves in Southern Africa. Depending on how long you stay with us, you will get the opportunity to experience the work done on all these reserves.

On Arrival, your Introduction to the Country:

When you arrive you will be welcomed by a member of our South African 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.

TRAVEL:

Getting Here

The easiest way is for you to book your international flight through any airline of your choice, arriving in Johannesburg (O.R. Tambo International Airport), and then book a connecting domestic flight from Johannesburg to Richards Bay (our closest airport).

We'll discuss your flight arrangements with you when we arrange your placement, but you should book the flight arriving in Richards Bay at **14.30 pm** on the Monday of your arrival, and the departing flight leaving Richards Bay at **15.05 pm** on the Monday of your departure.

If you are struggling to find flights that work for our arrival schedule, you can do what some of our other volunteers do and arrive in Richards Bay the night before instead – we can recommend some Bed & Breakfast accommodations that will collect you from the airport when you arrive, and then we can arrange for our transport service to collect you from the accommodation in Richards Bay on the Monday morning. Please let me know if you would like us to recommend some overnight accommodation options.

When you arrive at Richards Bay airport, you will be collected by a project team member, or an organised responsible transfer company with a sign. All arriving volunteers will be transported by the transport company to a central meeting point, where you will be met by your wildlife monitor, who will then take you the remaining distance into the Reserve, on the monitoring vehicle. On the Monday of your departure you will be transported back to Richards Bay airport to catch your departing flight home..

ABOUT THE RESERVES

ABOUT THE FIVE RESERVES:

Unlike other projects, The Zululand Conservation Expedition is not focused on only 1 reserve, but stretched across 4 of most famous reserves in Southern Africa. Depending on how long you stay with us, you will get the opportunity to experience the work done on all these reserves. The Zululand ecosystem is among the most productive wild lands on the planet, with wildlife as diverse as its landscape.

The reserves you can work on are one or all of the following:

Somkhanda Game Reserve

Somkhanda Game Reserve is a community-owned game reserve managed by "Wildlands Conservation Trust", in partnership with the Gumbi community. Somkhanda is the first community-owned reserve to be proclaimed under the Protected Areas Management Act, meaning that this community has committed their land to biodiversity conservation for the foreseeable future.

Somkhanda is supported by the WWF "Black Rhino Range Expansion Project", and has a healthy population of both Black Rhinos and White Rhinos, that the project funds help to monitor. Besides breathtaking scenery and pristine bushveld, a number of naturally-occurring game species can be found on Somkhanda, such as Nyala, Impala, Wildebeest, Zebra and Kudu, as well as some rarer species such as Leopard, brown and spotted Hyaena, Aardvark, Honey Badger and Caracal.

The Wildlands Conservation Trust has assisted with re-introducing a number of different species into the reserve to boost game numbers. African Wild Dogs were introduced to the reserve in 2014 to fulfil the conservation objective of saving endangered species, and reintroducing natural predation into the system. Planned future introductions include Buffalo, Cheetah and eventually, Elephants.

Somkhanda has a critical need to ensure daily sightings of the Wild Dog pack. The pressing need to track this particular pack of Wild Dogs is due to the fact that Somkhanda Game Reserve suffers from an influx of poachers from local rural communities, who consistently trespass onto the reserve to set snares with the intention of catching bush meat (mostly antelope). Tragically, these snares have a large unintended by-catch, which includes any unsuspecting animal that walks into the snares – including Rhino, Elephant, and very often the Wild Dogs since they cover such large distances daily in search of food.

For this reason it is absolutely vital that the monitoring team devotes the majority of their time to locating the Wild Dog pack each morning and evening, to ensure that all the dogs are accounted for and unharmed. This does involve early starts to the day, and getting back late to camp in the evening, but is a crucial part of the work we are doing!

SOMKHANDA RESEARCH CAMP ACCOMMODATION: Somkhanda volunteers are housed in a large house within the reserve, and the camp offers twin rooms, an indoor bathroom and toilet, a large kitchen and a braai (barbecue) area. The water is good for drinking, and the house has electricity and hot water. Due to limited cellphone (mobile) signal in the area, the "Cell-C" mobile network receives the best signal.

The main focus on Somkhanda is to assist with the daily monitoring of African Wild Dog and Rhinos, as well as general biological monitoring of other priority species (Hyaenas, Leopards) and the compilation of species lists.

Mkhuze Game Reserve

A place of great beauty and high contrasts, Mkhuze is renowned for its astonishing diversity of natural habitats, from the eastern slopes of the Ubombo Mountains along its north western boundary, to broad stretches of acacia savannah, swamps, a variety of woodlands and riverine forests as well as a rare type of sand forest. The Mkhuze River, with a beautiful stretch of fig forest along its banks, curves along the Reserve's northern and eastern borders.

The Mkhuze Game Reserve constitutes the north western spur of the recently declared World Heritage Site: the Isimangaliso Wetland Park. The Reserve offers an abundance of wildlife including Endangered species such as Black Rhino, Cheetah, African Wild Dog and Suni. Other animals to be found in the Reserve include White Rhino, Elephant, Buffalo, Giraffe, Leopard, Nyala, Blue Wildebeest, Hyaena, Warthog, Zebra, Kudu and other smaller antelope. Mkhuze has no Lions on the Reserve. Mkhuze is also famous for its rich birdlife and attracts ornithologists from all over the world.

Two beautiful pans, Nhlonhlela and Nsumo, which lie in the north and east respectively, support large communities of Hippos, Crocodiles, Pinkbacked and White Pelicans, as well as a diversity of storks, ducks, geese and other water birds which gather in spring. Nsumo Pan is host to one of only two major Pinkbacked Pelican breeding colonies in southern Africa.

The main focus on Mkhuze is the monitoring of the African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Elephant herds and Vultures.



Tembe Elephant Park

Tembe is comprised of 30,000 hectares – the land was historically owned by the Tembe tribe, the ancestral custodians of the area. Nkosi (Chief) Mzimba Tembe donated the land for the formation of this Game Reserve, and it is now 50% co-owned and managed by the Tembe tribe, while its precious bio-diversity is managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife; the KwaZulu-Natal conservation service.

Although Tembe has no Cheetah on the Reserve, it is home to a rich diversity of other wildlife - including the "Big 5" (Lion, Leopard, Black and White Rhino, Buffalo and Elephant), Hippo and various antelope species, from the majestic Giraffe which stand at 5 metres tall, down to one of the smallest antelope in Africa - the Suni, at only 35 centimetres high! The area now known as Tembe Elephant Park is real wild country.



The park is situated within the sand-veld ecological zone and consists mainly of closed woodland and secondary thicket formation. The zone falls within a transition area between tropical and sub-tropical forms and therefore is home to a great diversity of vegetation as well as over 340 bird species, making it a delight for bird lovers.

The main focus on Tembe is the monitoring of the Lion, African Wild Dog and Elephant populations.

Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (established in 1895), is one of the oldest Game Reserves in Africa. It is very large (960 km² / 96,000 ha) and contains an immense diversity of fauna and flora. Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park was originally three separate reserves that joined under its current title in 1989, and since then they have been managed as one park. The two sections are not separated by fences and they are still managed as one natural system, however due to the size of the protected area, logistically it is divided into two Management Sections.

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is home to a rich diversity of wildlife, including the "Big 5" (Black and White Rhinoceros, Elephant, Buffalo, Lion and Leopard), as well as species such as African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Hyaena, Jackal, Blue Wildebeest, Giraffe, Zebra, Nile Crocodile, Hippopotamus, Bushpig, Warthog, Mongoose, Chacma Baboons, Vervet Monkeys, as well as various antelope species including Waterbuck, Kudu, Nyala, Impala, common and mountain Reedbuck, Bushbuck, Duiker, Steenbok and Suni, and a variety of Tortoises, Terrapins, Snakes and Lizards. The park is also a prime birding destination, with over 320 recorded bird species.

Due to the vast size of the reserve, we have 2 projects situated within the 2 separate management sections of Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (one in the northern "Hluhluwe Section" and one in the southern "iMfolozi Section").

Hluhluwe Section

The northern section of the park (known as the Hluhluwe section) has hilly topography where altitudes range from 80 to 540 m above sea level. The high ridges support coastal scarp forests in a well watered region with valley bushveld at lower levels. The accommodation at the research camp in Hluhluwe is in the form of rooms each with 2 single beds. You may therefore have to share with one other volunteer of the same gender, for these 2 weeks.

This camp also houses some other research staff and visiting staff members for the park, (although their rooms are separate from our volunteers). This does provide the opportunity for socialising and interesting discussions with these other researchers in the evenings.

The main focus in the Hluhluwe Section of the park is an extensive Cheetah population survey using remote camera traps, and includes the monitoring of the African Wild Dogs.

iMfolozi Section

The topography in the southern iMfolozi section ranges from the lowlands of the Black and White iMfolozi River beds, to steep hilly country which includes some wide and deep valleys. Habitats in this area are primarily grasslands, which extend into Acacia savannah and woodlands. iMfolozi was the home of the now famous "Operation Rhino" in the 1950's and 60's, which resulted in the saving of the Southern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simium*) from extinction. iMfolozi is also famed for its Wilderness Trails which originated in iMfolozi in the 1950's, and the Park's renowned Game Capture unit.

The accommodation at the research camp in iMfolozi is in the form of rooms, with 2 single beds and with 3 single beds. You may therefore have to share with another volunteer of the same gender, for these 2 weeks.

*Just a note: the accommodation at the iMfolozi camp is basic, isolated and reliant on a generator for electricity. At times the power supply can be somewhat unreliable, so please ensure that you have enough spare batteries to rely on in case you cannot recharge there as often as you would like. This will be a time for you to truly "switch off" and enjoy the bush! It is a very beautiful location, with numerous sightings; a truly special place.

The main focus in the iMfolozi Section of the park is a new animal track/spoor identification project, as well as the monitoring of the African Wild Dogs

ZULULAND RHINO RESERVE

Zululand Rhino Reserve (ZRR) lies within the Msunduzi valley in northern Zululand, in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The area falls under the Mkuze Valley Lowveld vegetation type, varying from open Savanna thornveld, bushveld to riverine woodland, characterized by Acacia's and Marula tree species. The reserve has over 70 Mammal species and an exceptional diversity of birdlife.

The Zululand Rhino Reserve was established in 2004 and comprises of 17 landowners who have dropped their internal fences to create a big 5, endangered species reserve. The WWF Black Rhino Range Expansion Project was the conduit for the formation of the reserve. The Reserve was chosen as a release site for the WWF Black Rhino Range Expansion Project and in 2005 a founder population of black rhino were released into their new home. In 2009 the reserve was proclaimed as a Nature Reserve under the Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 acknowledging the reserve as a site of biodiversity importance that makes essential contributions to the conservation of species and habitats and is an important system that provides ecosystem services.



Volunteers are housed in a large, beautiful and secluded house within the reserve, and the camp offers twin rooms, a large kitchen and a lovely patio dining area.

The main focus on Zululand Rhino Reserve is monitoring of the Cheetah, Elephant and Rhino, as well as some population surveys, conducted via remote camera traps.

ANIMALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

AFRICAN ELEPHANT

The African Elephant is the world's largest land animal, and a male can reach 3.3 metres in height and 60 metric tons in weight. This powerful creature used to live anywhere south of the Sahara that water and trees occurred. Since the massive decline in numbers during the 1970s and 1980s from ivory poaching, the Elephant has become less widespread. Elephants roamed the Karoo in large herds up to the late 1700s.

WHITE RHINO

The White Rhinoceros or Square-lipped rhinoceros is one of the five species of rhinoceros that still exists. Behind the elephant, it is probably the most massive remaining land animal in the world, along with the Hippopotamus, which are of comparable size. It is well known for its wide mouth used for grazing and for being the most social of all rhino species. The White Rhino is the most common of all rhinos.

BLACK RHINO

It is the mouth-shape and size of the Black Rhino, and not its skin colour, that distinguish it from the White Rhino. The Black Rhino is smaller, with the male weighing 1000 - 1350 kg. It has a pointed, beak-like upper lip, which it uses as a grasping tool - unlike the square mouth of the White Rhino. The distinctive horns (the collection of which has been the main reason for the Rhino's threatened status) are used for breaking branches and digging up mineral earth.

AFRICAN BUFFALO

The African Buffalo differs dramatically from the American Buffalo, which is actually a Bison, but was erroneously referred to as Buffalo by early American settlers with limited scientific knowledge. The African Buffalo is similar in shape to a bulky cow, with sparse hair. Adult males are black to charcoal grey whilst the females and young have a reddish tinge. Both sexes have horns that flare sideways and down before curving up to the tips. The African Buffalo is an unselective grazer that eats leaves and grasses, favouring areas with shady trees and ready water supplies.

CHEETAH

The fastest moving land-based hunter in the world, the Cheetah's lithe grace and speed are legendary. Its almost uniform buff colouring with black spots is broken only by distinctive dark tear-shaped markings on the face, and by the black bands and white tip of its tail. It lives on open grassland and savannah woodland, extending into arid areas. The Cheetah preys on small to medium antelope and will take smaller mammals when available. Hunting takes place during the day, and usually involves a high-speed chase.

WILD DOGS

Wild dog's are an interesting species in that no two individuals have the same pattern of coat. Individuals can easily be recognized on the basis of their differing coat patterns. The coat is an irregular pattern of black, yellow, and white. Adults typically weigh between 17-36 kilograms. Wild Dogs are pack hunters. Their main prey varies among populations, but always focuses on medium sized ungulates such as impala. A few packs, however, will also include much larger animals, such as zebras, in their prey.

LEOPARD

The Leopard is Africa's largest spotted cat, with the average mass of a fully grown male being around 60kg. The female is considerably lighter at an average 32kg. Leopards generally have a golden coat, with brown to black spots on the head, legs and tail, and larger 'rosettes' on the main body. It has a wider distribution than any of the other large cats due to its ability to live anywhere - from rocky hills and mountain ranges to forests and semi-desert areas. Predominantly solitary, this animal hunts by stalking and pouncing rather than using a Cheetah-style chase.

HYENA

Hyenas have a distinctly bear-like gait due to their front legs being longer than their back legs. Hyenas have powerful carnassial teeth adapted for cutting flesh and crushing premolars for crushing bone. Hyenas are highly intelligent animals. One indication of hyena intelligence is that they will move their kills closer to each other to protect them from scavengers another indication is their strategic hunting methods.

SUNI

Suni are around 12-17 inches high at the shoulder and weigh 10-12 pounds. They are usually reddish brown, darker on their back than their sides and legs. The belly, chin, throat and insides of legs are white. The nostrils are prominent red, and there are black rings around the eyes and above the hooves. Males have horns 3-5 inches long, that are ridged most of their length and curve backwards close to their heads. Females do not have horns. Suni can make weak barking and whistling sounds. Suni feed on leaves, fungi, fruits and flowers, and need almost no free water. They are shy, most active at night, and sleep during the day in a shady, sheltered area.

GIRAFFE

The giraffe is the tallest of all land-living animals. Males can be 4.8 to 5.5 meters (16 to 18 feet) tall and weigh up to 1,360 kilograms (3,000 pounds). Giraffes can inhabit savannas, grasslands, or open woodlands. They prefer areas enriched with Acacia growth. They often drink, and as a result, they can spend long periods of time in dry, arid areas. When searching for more food they will venture into areas with denser foliage.

HIPPOPOTAMUS

Hippos are very large, barrel-shaped animals with short legs. The skin is naked and predominantly greyish-brown, with a yellowish-pink tinge at the throat, belly and inside some skin folds. It lives in open stretches of permanent water or riverine pools with gently sloping sandbanks that are convenient resting places. It typically grazes on grass during night and rests in or near the water during the day.

SPRINGBOK

Yes, this is the one that South Africa's national rugby team is named after - however, its 'kit' is somewhat different in style and hue... The four-legged Springbok has dark-brown stripes on its flanks behind a white body. Found in dry grasslands, it grazes on the leaves and sprouts of Karoo bushes, including those of several pungent herbs that grow in the area. It is believed that in the late 1770s herds of up to 30 000 Springbok roamed these plains.

KUDU

A narrow white stripe down the back to the flanks together with a white bar across the face at eye-level make the Kudu easy to spot. It also has particularly large ears. The male is a brown-grey colour while the female has a cinnamon tinge, however only males have horns, and these rise from the top of the head in wide spirals. Found in savannah woodland, including rocky areas and slopes, the Kudu browses on a wide range of plants, with the Acacia species being particular favourites. Records from 1875 confirm the presence of Kudu in the Klein Karoo.

BIRDWATCHING

For the avid birdwatcher, Mkhuze Game Reserve is home to 420 species. Due to the unobtrusiveness of Mkhuze Game Reserve, the birds are at ease, affording one with good viewing.

STARGAZING

With the absence of artificial light, the stargazing at the Reserve is phenomenal and amongst the best in Southern Africa. The prominent Orion's Belt, also known as the three Kings, forms part of the Constellation of Orion, the tragic lover and great hunter who in turn is hunting Taurus, the bull. Orion's faithful hound, Canis Major, guards the hare, Lepus lying slain at Orion's feet. The navigational Southern Cross displays its magnificent facets such as the incandescent Jewel Box, the Coal Sack and its two pointers, Alpha Centauri and Beta Centauri. Depending on the time of year, Venus, the Goddess of love will greet you at dawn or dusk, while Sirius, the brightest star in our heavens keeps a constant vigil. The Lord of the Rings Saturn, the God of War Mars and the Sky God Uranus are some of the planets that can be viewed with the naked eye, depending on the time of year.



THINGS TO DO IN SOUTH AFRICA

LOCATION:

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.

EXPLORING AND SIGHTSEEING:

KwaZulu Natal is renowned for its Game Reserves and traditional Zulu Culture : The attractions in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) range from vibrant cities to the gorgeous Land of a Thousand Hills, from tranquil beaches to outstanding Game Parks and Nature Reserves. These are just some of the sites you shouldn't miss:

- Big Five Game Reserves (elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino - and lots more, of course) and Travellers volunteers are able to work in many of them, including Tembe and Mkhuze.
- Beautiful St Lucia Wetlands with its Crocodile Centre and Wetlands
- Numerous nature parks,
- Fantastic beaches for swimming and diving. The beaches are truly golden.
- Lively Durban where South Africans go to have fun,
- The San Art Park for a collection of astounding rock paintings,
- ... And much, much more!

Durban (Tekweni in Zulu) is the ancestral home of the Nguni people. Africa's bewitching seaside playground in the sun with radiant golden sands and lush sub-tropical greenery. The city has balmy weather all year round, making it a perfect holiday paradise. Durban International Airport is only a 10 minute drive from the City. Sophisticated and cosmopolitan, Durban Metro after dark buzzes with elegant lounges, funky taverns and cosy inns, distinctive local theatre and live music, and trendy clubs, pubs and discos. This is nightlife in a modern, authentic African metropolis!



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