

GAME RESERVES CONSERVATION EXPEDITION

The Zululand Wildlife Conservation Expedition is completely unique, as you will get involved with some of the most exciting, endangered and priority species conservation work in the heartbeat of Africa.

You'll work across different reserves, each unique in their own way.

You'll work with a professional team (who are supported by WWF amongst others) and you'll work with endangered species like the Cheetah, African Wild Dog and Black Rhino, and priority species with a high ecological impact like Elephant, Lion, Rhino, Leopard and Buffalo.



So if you want to experience genuine conservation work and find out what Africa is really about, then this Expedition is for you.

► SUMMARY FACTFILE

Start Dates	All year round – Every 2 nd Monday of Each month!
Duration	Minimum stay 2 weeks and up to 12 weeks, subject to visa requirements
Requirements	No qualifications needed, just a love of animals, a big heart and a desire to contribute to their conservation
Price	From £1,395 / US\$2,095 for 2 weeks, ranging to £4,895 / US\$7,345 for 12 weeks. Full Price List and other Currencies
What's included	► Accommodation ► Food ► Meeting you at the Airport and return airport transfer ► Transfer to your project ► Full pre-departure support ► Local in-country team support and backup ► 24-hr emergency support ► Two free T-shirts
What's not included	Flights, Insurance, Transport to and from your project.
Who can do this Project?	All our projects are open to all nationalities. Unless otherwise stated, you need to be aged between 17 and 70+

PROJECT OVERVIEW

If you want exciting and rewarding conservation work, you'll love this placement. The work is varied and fascinating and makes a major contribution to the conservation of African wildlife. You'll work on one, two, three or all four 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 definitely 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. If you join for 2 weeks = you'll experience 1 reserve. 4 weeks = experience 2 reserves. 6 weeks = 3 reserves. 8 weeks = all 4 reserves. If you come for 4 or 6 weeks you can choose which reserves to join."

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN FROM DOING THIS PROJECT:

An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into Africa and into Zulu culture.

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

New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.

An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.

And best of all ... **an unforgettable experience!**

WORK CONTENT:

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

Tracking and locating endangered and priority wildlife via radio or satellite telemetry equipment

Map sightings using GPS equipment

Photographing and creating identity kits of individual animals

Studying the animals and recording behavioural and feeding patterns for research purposes

Completing large scale game counts

Activities that occur regularly are:

Radio collaring of animals

Relocation, re-introduction of endangered species

Notching (identity marking) of animals like rhino and elephant

Setting up camera traps at watering holes and game trails

Scouting for and releasing animals from poachers snares

Night tracking excursions

Bird capturing and ringing

Alien plant control



"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

WHY IS THE WORK IMPORTANT?

Wildlife monitoring is essential for keeping 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.

WHERE ARE THE RESERVES YOU'LL BE WORKING ON?

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 –

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Thanda Private Game Reserve

Thanda Private Game Reserve, in the heart of Zululand, is situated in an area exceptionally rich in fauna and flora, boasting not only the "Magnificent Seven" (Lion, Buffalo, Elephant, Rhino, Leopard, African Wild Dog and Cheetah), but also over 400 bird species. Over the past few years a number of indigenous keystone species, including African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Lion, Elephant, Buffalo and White Rhino have been reintroduced to this Reserve. Wildlife ACT initiated their monitoring efforts to help assess the progress of these reintroduced species with a focus on the African Wild Dog, Cheetah and Black Rhino, as well getting a handle on the resident Leopard and Hyaena populations' demographics, as well as how these species along with Lion and Buffalo impact on the endangered species.



At the end of 2009, Thanda was expanded by 14,000 ha through the incorporation of the Mduna Royal Reserve. This expansion allowed for the introduction of the Black Rhino and facilitated the establishment of the Thanda Research Centre. This initiative, which is a collaboration between several organisations with a collective vision and commitment to reintroduce vast tracts of lands into wilderness whilst stocking the land with animal species that once grazed uninhibited at the turn of the century, has been long in the making although only now made possible. The partners include: Thanda Foundation Trust; Space for Elephant Foundation; WWF and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife through the Endangered Black Rhino reintroduction programme; Wildlands Conservation Trust who are involved with the Mduna Royal Reserve Project; and Wildlife ACT who have partnering with Thanda on the monitoring programmes.

As on all the reserve projects, a maximum of four volunteer team members are taken on at any given time and each volunteer will have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to this project while gaining invaluable experience in the field.

The current focus on Thanda is the monitoring of the African Wild Dog, Black Rhino, Cheetah, Vulture and Spotted Hyaena.

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 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

Situated in Northern Zululand, and adjoining the Mozambique border, Tembe National Elephant Park is most widely known for having over 200 of the world's largest Elephants, which are also the last remaining indigenous herd in KwaZulu-Natal. Tembe is also 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! Tembe's beautiful sand forest stretching through most of the Reserve hosts over 340 bird species, making it a delight for bird lovers.



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The area now known as Tembe Elephant Park is real wild country. 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.

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

Hluhwe-Imfolozi Park

Set in the heart of Zululand, and established in 1895, Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP) is one of the oldest Game Reserves in Africa. Part of the land was the exclusive hunting preserve of the Zulu king Shaka, who protected the area by proclaiming 'conservation' laws through his ownership of the land.

In 1895 the Hluhluwe Valley Reserve and the Imfolozi Junction Reserve were proclaimed as Game Sanctuaries. More than a hundred years later, the proclamation of the Corridor Game Reserve between the two Reserves led to the re-naming of the three Reserves as Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park. The Park covers some 96 000 hectares and contains an immense diversity of fauna and flora. Hluhluwe, the northern section, is characterised by hilly topography, and is noted for its wide variety of both bird and animal life. Imfolozi, the southern component of the park, is the larger section which has a large Wilderness area where no roads or permanent human habitation is permitted.

This Reserve was the home of the now famous 'Operation Rhino' in the 1950's and 60's. In 1962 the decision was taken by the Natal Parks Board (now renamed Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife) to remove a number of Southern White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simium*) from Imfolozi Game Reserve which was then the last remaining habitat of the species on the continent. In the first 10 years of this programme, more than 100 of these Rhino were caught and sent to Game Reserves, Parks and Zoos throughout the world resulting in the reestablishment of the species throughout the continent.

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is also famed for its Wilderness Trails which originated in iMfolozi in the 1950s and its renowned Game Capture unit recently upgraded into the Centenary Capture Centre, a bench mark for animal capture and sustainable utilization throughout Africa.

Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park is home to a rich diversity of wildlife, including the "Big 5" as well as African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Hyaena, Jackal, Hippopotamus, and various antelope species including Waterbuck, common and mountain Reedbuck, Nyala, Kudu, Bushbuck, Steenbok, Duiker and Impala.

The main focus on HiP includes the monitoring of the Wild Dogs, as well as a new and extensive camera trapping survey of Cheetah and Leopard.

"I had "the experience of a lifetime" I really enjoyed my stay in Mkuze as well as in Thanda and can't wait to do it again. It was great to stay at two different camps and experience the differences between a private game reserve and a government run one. I definitely learned a lot about the differences, advantages and disadvantages of both kinds of management. Also, it gave me the opportunity to work with different people and see different environments. I really can't choose a highlight! The leopard capture was definitely an awesome experience, as well as the hyena. To see the Wild dog pack hunt and kill was amazing. Tracking and finding the cheetahs might seem like a boring routine in comparison, but I wouldn't have wanted to miss a single sighting - it's always different and always an great feeling to finally spot them..." Julia

As with all Conservation projects, your work will depend on what is required at the time your project takes place. Conservation projects are frequently governed by uncontrollable factors, such as the weather, season habits of species, conservation priorities and logistics in operating research projects in a remote area. From time to time the focus of projects are adjusted depending on the results achieved through the research and small adaptations in program activities may take place. Visiting specialists and researchers often add value to existing programs and your project may interact with other research activities when possible.

Accommodation during your stay

Each volunteer camp is situated within the Reserves on which we work in a farm house or wood cabin. The accommodation is basic but comfortable, with electricity, running warm water and flushing toilet. A bed, mattress, pillows and bedding are provided for each volunteer, but 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.

An outside seating and dining area is provided, as well as a barbecue area



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where you can sit by the fire under the stars. (With the absence of artificial light, stargazing at the Reserves is phenomenal!)

Project start dates -

2010	2011	2012
22 November	3, 17 or 31 January	2, 16 or 30 January
6 December	14 or 28 February	13 or 27 February
	14 or 28 March	12 or 26 March
	11 or 25 April	9 or 23 April
	9 or 23 May	7 or 21 May
	6 or 20 June	4 or 18 June
	4 or 18 July	2, 16 or 30 July
	1, 15 or 29 August	13 or 27 August
	12 or 26 September	10 or 24 September
	10 or 24 October	8 or 22 October
	7 or 21 November	5 or 19 November
	5 December	3 December

"My overall experience was amazing! a great hands on experience and also a great confidence booster. I was allowed me to see a side of conservation that one can not 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

HOW TO BOOK:

Please complete a [booking form](#) online or you can send a postal booking from our free brochure. When we receive this, we'll telephone you to discuss the details and then start the exciting process of planning your trip!

We do hope you'll join us and are confident that you'll find this an incredible experience. Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions - we'll be happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

You may also be interested in other courses with Travellers, or do other projects in Argentina – please visit our [website](#) for details of all our projects. In fact you can choose from over 300 projects in 19 countries!

Make a Difference – Get Involved!



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