



Wildlife Ranger Course

Course Description



This exciting course offers volunteers an experience of a lifetime with a packed 28-day program that will allow you to fully immerse yourself in the African wilderness.

A typical day on the course will see you rising early, usually before sunrise, enjoying hot coffee and biscuits while you listen to the bush waking up and then leaving the camp for an outing into the wilderness. The outings are extremely flexible and are determined by the unpredictability of what is found during the outing in combination with the subjects that have to be covered.

You could find yourself on a game drive following up on the roar of a lion heard during the night, or on a walk following fresh elephant tracks, learning how to track the animal and finding it, or it could be a game drive to a waterhole where animals come to drink.

Students return to camp in the late morning for a hearty brunch, which is followed by a lecture on the subject of the day. Study and rest time is then followed by afternoon tea and another outing into the wilderness until sunset, if walking or until well after dark if on a game drive.

Afternoon outings could include night drives looking for nocturnal animals such as owls, bushbabies and leopards, or it could be a walk looking for and learning how to identify interesting birds. It could be time spent studying the night skies or even time for students to test their 4x4 driving skills.

It is then back to camp for dinner, stories around the campfire, discussing the day's experiences and wondering about tomorrow's adventures.

During your course you will cover a wide range of subjects including Animal behaviour, Mammals, Birds, Fish, Reptiles, Amphibians, Insects, Plants, Animal tracks & tracking, Approaching Dangerous Game, Setting up a Bush Camp, Bush Skills & Survival, Radio procedures, Weather & Climate, Geology, Astronomy, Basic Ecology and Conservation Management. You will also enjoy additional activities including Basic 4x4 Driving, Sleepouts in the bush and Basic Rifle Handling.

The course also covers Eco-Tourism related subjects which include Field Guiding as a Profession, Ecotourism & Guiding, Attributes, Skills & Duties of a Field Guide, Planning of Game Drives & Walks, Creating Photographic Opportunities for Guests, Presentation Skills and Working in the Industry.



Course Description – continued...



Established in 1993 with a mission to raise the standard of guiding in Africa, this training centre was one of the first organisations to conduct formal training programs for game rangers. For more than a decade they have been taking people of all ages and backgrounds into the best of the African Wilderness to teach them about the web of life in wild places. The course is designed to build empathy with, and an understanding of, one of the planet's last great natural resources. Students gain a greater appreciation of the deeper meaning of conservation in our lives and knowledge of what it really takes to become a game ranger.

The course philosophy maintains that nobody can truly experience Africa's wild places without actually spending time in the wild. That is why each course is conducted from our simple bush camps in the middle of a stunning wilderness landscape, with elephant, rhino, lion, leopard and a vast array of other wildlife as neighbours. Our students eat, sleep and breathe the wild African bush!

Students that have attended the course have returned to the 'real world' with a different outlook on life. Some have taken this new outlook into their day-to-day lives and others, inspired by their time with us, have completely changed their lives and careers.

The following table lists all the subjects covered during your course:

<i>Welcome and Introduction</i>	<i>The game drive vehicle</i>
<i>Ecotourism and Guiding</i>	<i>Spotlighting</i>
<i>Field guiding as a profession</i>	<i>Basic 4x4 driving</i>
<i>Attributes, skills and duties of a field guide</i>	<i>Planning of game drives and walks</i>
<i>Bush navigation and orientation</i>	<i>Radio procedures</i>
<i>Ecology</i>	<i>Reptiles</i>
<i>Geology</i>	<i>Amphibians</i>
<i>Soils</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>
<i>Weather</i>	<i>Anticipating animal behaviour</i>
<i>Plant communities</i>	<i>Career opportunities</i>
<i>Plant identification and uses</i>	<i>Identification and ecology of invertebrates</i>
<i>Grasses</i>	<i>Bush habitat management principles</i>
<i>Presentation skills</i>	<i>Creating photographic opportunities for guests</i>
<i>Animal tracks and tracking</i>	<i>Communication and facilitation skills</i>
<i>Bird identification and behaviour</i>	<i>Dealing with guests</i>
<i>Animal behaviour</i>	<i>Sustainable development and the wise use of natural</i>
<i>Approaching dangerous game</i>	<i>Ecotourism and local communities</i>
<i>Setting up a bush camp</i>	<i>Taxonomy</i>
<i>Sleep out in the bush</i>	<i>Working in the industry</i>
<i>Bush skills and survival</i>	<i>Testing and evaluations</i>
<i>Dangerous game / Basic rifle handling</i>	<i>Using binoculars</i>



Who can apply?

This course is open to all international students aged 17 years or older on arrival.

You must be able to understand and speak English to a good standard as the course is conducted in English. If you would like to include the Off-Road Driving element of the course, please bring along either a Photo-ID type licence (in English), or an International Driver's licence.

If you would like to take home a course certificate, you will need to complete 3 written tests, 2 practical evaluations and 2 oral presentations during the course. If you do not want to do these tests, you will receive a certificate of attendance instead.

Optional: If you are considering a guiding career in South Africa, or would like to join more advanced courses in future, you also have the option of registering with FGASA (Field Guide Association of South Africa) at www.fgasa.org.za before joining the course. Once you have registered, you will need to email your FGASA membership number to us. This will allow you to take the FGASA Level 1 Theory Exam towards the end of the course – If you pass this, an assessor will then conduct a Practical Assessment with you. The FGASA web site details the latest costs for this option – at time of going to print, these include the following fees - R170 FGASA Registration Fee; R275 FGASA Annual Membership Fee; R170 FGASA Level 1 Exam Fee; R150 Exam Moderation Fee.

How long can I stay?

Each course is 4-weeks long and these are scheduled throughout the year; please see our web site for available course dates.

If you wish to stay in South Africa for longer than 90 days, be sure to check out the FAQ section of our web site for information on obtaining Visa's or extending your 90-day Visitor's Permit.

Where is the course camp and how do I get there?

The camp is situated on the banks of the Karongwe River in a 9 000 hectare (22239 acre) game reserve, to the south-west of the Kruger National Park.

Getting there...

You should aim to arrive in Johannesburg on Tuesday, the day before your chosen course start date.

- We will arrange for someone to meet you at Johannesburg Airport and escort you to your overnight accommodation.
- The following morning (Wednesday) we will put you a minibus for your 5 hour journey to Karongwe. This will also be a great opportunity to get to know your fellow students.

If you are adding the optional Cape Town Week...

You should aim to arrive in Johannesburg about a week before your chosen course start date.

- We will arrange short in-country return flights to get you to Cape Town and back – the cost of these flights are included with your Cape Town Week.
- When you arrive in Cape Town, a member of the AVIVA team will be there to welcome you at the airport and escort you to AVIVA House. After your week in Cape Town, we will fly you to Johannesburg to join your course.

Food and accommodation facilities...



The camp is situated on the banks of the Karongwe River in a 9 000 hectare (22239 acre) game reserve, to the south-west of the Kruger National Park. Accommodation is in walk-in safari style tents with shared bathroom facilities. Students sleep on beds and bedding is supplied.

The camp is a good place for viewing leopard, lion and cheetah as well as elephant and white rhino.

As the camp itself is unfenced, we often have four-legged guests in the camp. Hyena make nightly patrols of the camp and are often seen by students who choose to make one of the viewing decks their home for the duration of the course. Elephant, cheetah and lion have also made appearances on occasion.

A cook and an assistant keep the students fed and the camp clean, so allowing students to focus on the learning experience. Vegetarian diets can also be catered for.

There are no power points in the tents, though we do have a generator in the camp that can be used to charge batteries for a few hours each day, so please be sure to bring along all the necessary charging adaptors.

There is a paraffin lamp for each tent but they are not bright, so it is a good idea to bring good torches with you – e.g. a head-torch for reading and walking around at night, and a more powerful torch for searching the bush for signs of life!

Cell phone reception is poor so you may struggle to get connected at times if you need to call home. We will provide you with an emergency contact number to pass on to family and friends should they need to get hold of you.

There is no Internet access, though you could bring a laptop and connect through your cell phone – bearing in mind that cell phone reception may not be available at all times!

A laundry service is available at a cost of only R150 for the entire course. If you want to take advantage of this you can arrange this with the support team on arrival.

Weather...

The Kruger area is a summer rainfall area. The summer months are hot and often balmy. Winters are warm and mild during the day, but can be cold in the mornings and evenings. The temperatures below show average maximum and minimum temperatures for Kruger Park (Celsius).

Spring (Sep-Nov)		Summer (Dec-Feb)		Autumn (Mar-May)		Winter (Jun-Aug)	
Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
35	16	40	20	29	15	26	9

Health...

Although no compulsory inoculations are required for travel to South Africa, we do advise that you ensure your Polio and Tetanus vaccinations are in date prior to arrival. Please note: a Rabies vaccination is not required.

You must also ensure that you have adequate medical/travel insurance for the duration of your stay in South Africa, see the FAQ page on our web site for more details.

Consult your doctor before joining the course if you are pregnant or on medication.

As the camp is in a medium risk malaria area, you may wish to take precaution against this. Please contact your medical care provider for recommendations. The majority of permanent residents in this area do not take medication, preferring to cover up in the evenings and early morning or by using mosquito repellent spray.

Packing for your trip...

Winter mornings and evenings can be very cold so it's a good idea to bring scarves, beanies, gloves and fleeces too!

Medium weight, well broken-in ankle height hiking boots are recommended. Gaiters for your ankles are also a good idea as they will keep sharp grass seeds and gravel out of your socks and boots. Some of the tough heavy soled sandals now available can be more comfortable in wet weather.

Lightweight, drab coloured (not white) clothing is suitable for summer and winter. Shorts are useful, partly because they are cooler than long trousers, and also because they are more comfortable in wet weather when walking through wet grass.

Hand Baggage: (Normal limit 5-7kg depending on airline)

Passport
Visa (if required)
Tickets
Insurance Policy
Mobile Phone (although reception is poor at the camp)
AVIVA Contact Numbers (these will be included with the travel instructions we send to you)
Wallet/Purse
Approx R1000-R2000 in cash for spending money at the camp (no ATMs in the bush!)
ATM & Credit Cards (Don't forget your PIN's) – These cannot be used at the camp
Photo ID Driving Licence (if you would like to include the off-road driving element of the course)
Toiletries/Make-up
Medicine (if required)
Book/Magazine for the flight
Camera, Film/Card, Batteries & Charging Adaptor
Binoculars – highly recommended
iPod / mp3 player/earphones & Charging Adaptor (Radios and CD-players are not allowed!)
UV Filter Sunglasses
Student ID Card (if you are travelling via Cape Town, student discounts are available on a variety of attractions there)

Suitcase: (Normal limit 20-64kg depending on airline)

Sleeping bag and small pillow (for the sleep-out)
Pens/pencils and small notebooks
Neutral coloured clothing – See notes above
Sweater
Jacket – Preferably windproof/waterproof
Comfortable walking shoes or boots – See notes above
Sandals for around the camp
Sun hat with a wide brim to protect head and neck
Underwear
Rucksack/daypack
Sunscreen / Mosquito repellent
Electric Razor & Charging Adaptor
Washing Gear, soap etc
Toothbrush & Paste
Towels
A lightweight LED torch or head torch is AN ESSENTIAL (with extra batteries)
Water bottle
Any reference / field guidebooks you may have.
Any snacks / cigarettes etc as there are no shops in the area! We do sell beers, cold drinks and chocolates at the camp.

'Cape Town Week' accommodation...



If you are adding the optional Cape Town Week, you will spend the week in one of our volunteer lodges, which both provide a safe, secure home from home for volunteers who are working at local projects or taking time-out from projects further afield to explore Cape Town and the Western Cape.

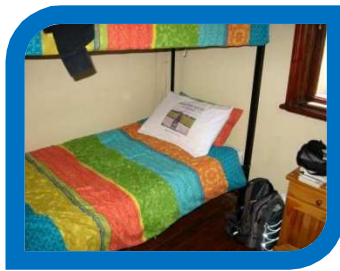
We have two volunteer lodges in Cape Town, one in the suburb of Observatory, and the other close to AVIVA Head Office in the suburb of Table View.

Both lodges are close to main bus routes and good value taxi services are available for access to the centre of Cape Town and the rest of the Western Cape.

Close by you will find a wide range of shops and restaurants.

Each house is comfortably furnished with all the facilities you might expect to help make your stay as enjoyable as possible.

- A full-time Volunteer Coordinator (Mon-Fri 8am-5pm), who is also available for emergencies during evenings, weekends and Public Holidays.
- Separate Male and Female dormitory accommodation - spacious with good quality mattresses, bedding and linen provided.
- Full kitchen facilities - Oven, fridges, microwave, toaster, kettle and everything you need for preparing great South African food!
- A selection of cereals, yoghurts, milk, bread, margarine, tea, coffee, sugar etc are provided for you to create your own breakfast every day.
- A telephone for incoming calls.
- Comfortable lounge with a Hi-Fi, Satellite TV and DVD.
- A lockable cupboard for your valuables and groceries.
- Showers and toilet facilities.
- Premises are cleaned and inspected daily (Mon-Fri)
- A private garden for entertainment/relaxation complete with breakfast tables, a built in braai (A South African style bbq) and at the Table View House, a large pool.
- Both AVIVA Houses are Wi-Fi Hotspots and each has a computer for you to access the Internet. We will set up a Hotspot account for you before you arrive – this will enable you to purchase Internet credits at a cost of 45 cents per Megabyte using your credit card (minimum R30 purchase). This is much cheaper, and more convenient than going to a local Internet cafe!
- Extra storage cupboards for luggage and personal items.
- Each AVIVA House is safe and secure with electrical fencing and a magnetic lock on the entrance gate.
- You will be issued with a coded magnet key to allow you to come and go 24 hours a day.

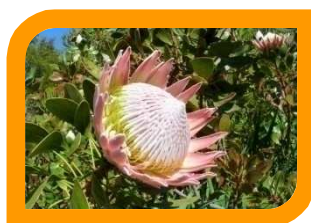


Your Wildlife Ranger Course includes...

- Johannesburg Airport collection and drop-off.
- Overnight accommodation in Johannesburg before joining your Course
- Return flights between Johannesburg and Hoedspruit.
- Return transfers between Hoedspruit and the camp.
- A welcome brief and introduction with a member of the on-site team.
- Accommodation for the duration of your stay.
- All your meals during your course.
- All bedding and course related materials.
- All course lectures, practicals, game drives, bush walks etc.
- A certificate of attendance. (A pass certificate will be issued to students who pass their exams)

If you would like to spend some time with us in Cape Town, you have the option of adding a special 'Cape Town Week' to your stay. Everything below is included with the Cape Town Week:

- Return flights between Cape Town and Johannesburg to join your course.
- Cape Town Airport collection and drop-off.
- 7 nights' accommodation at AVIVA House in Cape Town with self-service breakfasts.
- A full-day Peninsula Tour which includes lunch, visits to Hout Bay, Chapman's Peak Drive, Cape Point, Simon's Town, Boulders Beach Penguin Colony and much more. An incredible day rich with history and some of the world's most beautiful scenery.
- A half-day Cultural Tour, a fascinating introduction to South Africa's recent political history before and after Apartheid, includes highlights of Khayelitsha, South Africa's second largest township after Soweto.
- A full-day tour to the beautiful mountains of the Cape Winelands including the Paarl, Franschoek and Stellenbosch regions. Chocolate, Cheese & Wine tastings and lunch are included.
- Our booking service for all attractions and events.
- Advice and support from our experienced team during your stay.



Continued on next page...

How do I book a place on this course?

1 You can make an application using any of the following methods...

- ✓ Apply online using the simple booking form on our web site - www.aviva-sa.com/booking.php
- ✓ Email your requirements to - info@aviva-sa.com
- ✓ Call one of our friendly team during office hours on +27 (0) 21 557 4312
- ✓ Fax your requirements to +27 (0)86 634 2063
- ✓ Chat to us online directly from our web site!

2 We will reply to your application by the next working day...

When you book a placement, we will send you a login username and password which will allow you to access your personalised **MyTrip™** page on our web site. With **MyTrip™** you will be able to:

- ✓ View and check your full itinerary, which includes recommended arrival and departure dates.
- ✓ View useful information relevant to your trip.
- ✓ Approve your quote & make secure payments on line.
- ✓ Update your personal information and travel details (when you have them!).
- ✓ Get useful advice about qualifying for discounts, fundraising and much more...

3 Pay your deposit...

- ✓ When you are happy with everything, you can secure your placement by paying your deposit.
- ✓ The rest of your course fee only needs to reach us 8 weeks or more before you arrive in South Africa.
- ✓ Many volunteers take advantage of this time to raise funds towards their trip with our complimentary Fundraising Pack (available on request to confirmed volunteers).

4 Contact us at any time for help and advice...

- ✓ We guarantee you a prompt response to your enquiries. Our friendly, professional team in Cape Town have a wealth of experience and are on hand to assist you with all aspects of your journey.

Some useful notes about your trip...

- If, when booking your international flights, you find that you can get a cheaper flight that arrives earlier, or leaves later than the dates we recommend, we can arrange extra accommodation for you to match your flight dates. This is often worthwhile, as the cost of extra accommodation can be far outweighed by savings on your flight ticket.
- Please don't worry about what time your flight arrives in South Africa as we can arrange your airport transfer for any time of day. We also monitor expected landing times for inbound flights, so if your flight is early or delayed, we will still be there to welcome you.
- During your stay, we provide all accommodation, airport transfers and course transfers so you won't need to worry about finding your way around a new country.