

# African Lion Rehabilitation Project Antelope Park - Zimbabwe



*At African Impact, we see ourselves as the on-the-ground AFRICAN SPECIALISTS in volunteering. Founded in 2004, we have so far hosted over 6000 volunteers on our exciting Conservation and Community Volunteer Projects in Africa.*

*We are also immensely proud to have been nominated as Finalists for the following Responsible Tourism Awards in 2009: The **World Travel Awards**; The **British Youth Travel Awards** and the prestigious South African **Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards**. In 2010 we were once again nominated for a World Travel Award and were proud **Winners of an Africa-wide Imvelo Responsible Tourism Award**. An accolade awarded in 2009 to Sir Richard Branson's Ulusaba Eco-Lodge in South Africa. In 2011 so far we are nominated for a World Travel Award and are entrants once again in the Imvelo Awards, British Youth Travel Awards and Virgin Responsible Tourism Award.*

*Our head office is in Cape Town, South Africa, with supporting operations offices in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia. We are determined to make a difference in the amazing communities and conservation areas in which we work. And so can you...*



## African Impact

PHYSICAL ADDRESS 6 Carlton Close, Noordhoek, 7985, Cape Town, South Africa.

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*"I never want to leave. Everyone is so friendly and everything is so relaxed and down to earth. The rest of the world could learn a lot from the people here. I think the project is fantastic and with money and time allowing I would definitely come back. I have had the chance to do things I would never have done otherwise and I have learnt a lot about Lion Conservation. If I had any negative experiences they are so far outweighed by the positive ones that I don't remember them!"*

*Samantha Fox, January 2009.*

**Location:** Antelope Park (Private Game Farm), 10km from Gweru town centre, in the heart of the Zimbabwe Midlands.

**Age limit:** Minimum 17 years, maximum decided on potential participants' health

**Required experience:** No specific prior experience is required for this project but an interest in and passion for wildlife and conservation is important

Project Highlights:

- Walk alongside lions as part of the pride and enjoy the exhilaration of being part of a hunt as the young cubs learn to stalk their prey;
- Work on the world's leading programme for the release of lions back into the wild;
- Experience the African bush in a very special way on this private reserve. Explore the savannah grasslands either on horseback or whilst riding on African Elephants;
- Bottle feed and help take care of younger lion cubs, should there be any in camp at the time;
- Undertake important research on the behaviour of the African Lion;
- Assist with numerous activities related to the care of these majestic beasts;
- Swim on the back of an African elephant (seasonal)
- Assist staff at our local orphanage to care for the many children in their care;
- Immerse yourself in local Zimbabwean culture;
- Take advantage of optional trips to see more of Zimbabwe's spectacular wildlife areas including the enormous Hwange National Park, and the chance to walk with rhino at Matopos National Park;
- Option to travel to enjoy the many adventure activities available from white water rafting on the mighty Zambezi River; bungee jumping from the Victoria Falls Bridge or taking to the air for a helicopter flight over the Falls giving a bird's eye view of this natural wonder;
- Make friends for life with the other international volunteers on the programme.

## **African Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Programme**

**In 1975 over 200,000 lions used to roam the African continent. Estimates from 2002 put the number of lions between 23,000 and 39,000, representing an 80 – 90% decline in less than 30 years.**



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The IUCN states that *“the causes of this reduction are not well understood, are unlikely to have ceased, and may not be reversible”*.

Lions are listed as Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II and are regarded as ‘vulnerable’ by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List [Version 3.1 2001].

***“There is probably no other species whose distribution range has shrunk over historical times to the extent shown by the lion” (Smithers, 1983)***

African Impact has partnered with ALERT, the African Lion & Environmental Research Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the African lion. ALERT supports the Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program, founded at Antelope Park in Zimbabwe, which is seeking to provide solutions to the problem of rapidly decreasing lion populations by releasing into appropriate National Parks and reserves the wild borne offspring from rehabilitated captive bred lions, using a unique four stage program.

The program is a multi-faceted one as ALERT believes that for the lion to survive in viable numbers then its programs must also consider the environment within which it can thrive as well as the communities that live alongside it. As such the program incorporates the Conservation Centre for Wild Africa (CCWA) and the ALERT Communities Trust (ACT) to ensure that habitat is protected, that research is conducted to provide a basis for sound conservation management plans to be developed and that those communities bordering the conservation area are involved every step of the way to foster support for wildlife conservation.

All elements of the project are carried out in partnership with appropriate national and local authorities and we work alongside partner organizations to ensure that cross program cooperation is maximized.

Commercial enterprises are encouraged to develop around all programs to provide long-term financial security to the projects, and here in Livingstone we work very closely with Lion Encounter Zambia which operates stage one of the rehabilitation programme. Tourists are given the opportunity to join the lions on their daily walks through the wild and experience our programme first-hand. The additional funding raised by these walks goes back into the project to further our conservation and community development aims.

The highest standard of care for the lions whilst in captivity is paramount, and as such the program is linked to PAAZAB, which provides an ethical code for us to abide by in good animal husbandry techniques.

Further detailed information regarding ALERT and the lion release program can be found by visiting [www.lionalert.org](http://www.lionalert.org) where a number of PDF documents are available to download providing a step by step guide to the project in full.

**Your daily tasks may include:**

**Lion Walks.** Spending time with the lions in the wild each day is an essential part of the cubs upbringing. If the cubs are to be successfully released it is important that they spend time out in a natural environment. They need to adapt to it, learn from it, understand, observe, feel and smell the wild.



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Since the start of this intensive lion walking programme, we have noted a marked increase in the lions' awareness of their natural surroundings, as well as an improvement in their hunting skills. The larger cubs are now able to take down smaller game species whilst out on walks, and these abilities are being enhanced each day whilst under the supervision of volunteers. These are invaluable discoveries, which have earned us further support for our world first endeavours.

Alongside the walks you will be involved in the care of the animals which overnight in enclosures. They need feeding, cleaning, and occasionally will need veterinary care to ensure that they are kept in the best of health.

Join our team of professional guides and other dedicated volunteers, gain a deeper understanding of the King of Beasts and assist us in gathering vital information that will facilitate their eventual release back into the wild.

**Research.** As part of the program we conduct a number of research activities to better understand lion behaviour and ecology. The lion walks offer unique opportunities to observe lions close up in their natural environment with the data collected assisting us to make the best decisions for the animal's welfare and eventual release. Volunteers will assist our research technician in gathering and analyzing this vital data. The research studies being undertaken whilst on your placement will vary depending on the needs of the project at the time but may include looking at hunting development, character traits, spoor sizes or mane growth. You will receive all the training you need in order to ensure that you are able to provide valuable input to this program regardless of previous experience.

**Elephant.** You will also have the opportunity to spend time with our orphaned African Elephants and their trainers. The elephants at Antelope Park were saved from certain death during a severe drought that ravaged Zimbabwe's South Eastern Lowveld in 1991 and 1992.

The elephants play an important role in the Antelope Park's activities schedule. You may be asked to assist in the daily duties with the elephants.

**Free Roaming Wildlife.** The few remaining areas of wildlife sanctuary in Zimbabwe are extremely precious and must at all costs be protected. Part of your project will involve assistance with the wildlife management scheme such as finding and removing snares ('snare sweeps') within the game park and checking for holes or fence cuttings on the boundary fence ('Boundary Patrols') and repairing them. These activities are usually conducted on foot, within the Park and accompanied by one of our trained guides.

You may also be asked to assist in any other duties at the game park such as:

cleaning the lion enclosures; preparing meat for the lions; building and painting new lion enclosures; cutting and collecting firewood; daily schooling and exercising of horses; basic repairs and maintenance; fire brakes; any other wildlife or camp related activities that involve the assistance and development of the lion programme.

There is also an opportunity to visit children at a local orphanage and interact with them. They love to have the care and attention shown to them that they so richly deserve.



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### A day in the life of a Antelope Park volunteer...

Every day is different as animals rarely operate to our schedule. We ask that you remain flexible, but here is an example of a typical day on the project, as a guideline only:

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 6:00am           | Bottle feed the cubs in camp from 3 weeks to 5 months old (If there are cubs at the time).   |
| 6:30am – 8:00am  | Meet the guide and their clients and join them for a lion walk, taking cubs from 7 months to 18 months out into the bush. If there are no clients then volunteers and staff will be involved in taking the lions out for their walks. Observe and take data notes as the cubs practice their hunting skills. Or possibly spend the morning training the elephants and going on a ride. |
| 8:30am – 9:30am  | Breakfast  |
| 9:30am - 12:30pm | You could be involved in various duties including enclosure cleaning, cub walking, boundary patrols or meat preparation, snare sweeping, bush walks, enclosure maintenance.  |
| 12:30pm – 2:00pm | Lunch  |
| 2:15pm - 4:00pm  | Your afternoon duties could include include cub sitting, horse rides, cub descriptions, elephant herding, or more enclosure cleaning and maintenance if needed.  |
| 4.00pm – 5.30pm  | Take the cubs out into the ‘bush’ again for their afternoon walks.   |
| 6.45pm           | Briefing by your volunteer coordinator about the following days activities. The volunteers socialize at dinner at 7.00pm and around the cosy camp fire pit under the stars. On some nights we take out the larger cubs for a night hunt and watch as they stalk, chase and catch prey – a vital stage in their development and training for release.                                   |

### Project Support:

Throughout your placement you will have the support and guidance of our experienced project managers. They are part of our greater African Impact support team, which will provide you with competent 24-hour field support and assistance.



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**Project Accommodation:**

- You will be staying in comfortable twin or quad room thatched accommodation at the main reserve camp
- Other facilities include swimming pool and internet access which is sometimes only sporadically available due to our remote location
- Volunteers have separate clean shower & toilet facilities to the rest of the camp which are located adjacent to the sleeping area
- Your room will be cleaned daily by the housekeeping staff, and free use of the laundry service is available to all volunteers
- All your meals, unless you happen to take a packed breakfast into the park on a long lion walk, will be served at the main camp.

Please note that accommodation upgrades are available to those who wish to have a more ‘comfortable’ volunteer experience. Pricing available on request. Please contact your destination manager, Lesley Bredenkamp for further details: [lesley@africanimpact.com](mailto:lesley@africanimpact.com)

**Getting there: We will meet you at the airport!**

Your options are as follows:

- Fly in to Bulawayo from Johannesburg, possible overnight Bulawayo at our volunteer lodge, and transfer by 2 hour journey to Gweru either with an Antelope Park representative or on the City Link Bus the following morning. In some very rare cases, you may be required to spend 2 nights at the lodge
- Fly in to Harare (Zimbabwe’s capital), overnight at our volunteer lodge, and then transfer by 4 hour journey with either an Antelope Park representative or on the City Link Bus the following morning. In some very rare cases you may be required to spend 2 nights at the lodge.
- There is a chance that whichever airport you arrive at you will be met directly at the airport by staff from Antelope Park and transferred directly to the park without the need for an overnight stay. It just depends on transfer availability. We organise all volunteer pick-ups, overnight accommodation at respective volunteer lodges (Bulawayo or Harare), and transfers to your programme of choice as part of your fee.

**The Fine Print...**

2011/2012	GBP	USD	EUR
2 weeks	GBP 1210	US\$ 2175	EUR 1575
3 weeks	GBP 1695	US\$ 3050	EUR 2195
4 weeks	GBP 2195	US\$ 3950	EUR 2855

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### **Project Cost Includes:**

- Project Fee: this entails financing that goes directly back into the project that you are involved with. This project fee facilitates funding for items such as food for lions and elephants, management and maintenance of lion enclosures, and the development of the lion breeding and rehabilitation programme.
- All transfers to and from and overnights in Bulawayo or Harare International Airports upon your arrival and departure, if required.
- Assistance in your projects and comprehensive orientation by various trained guides and staff during your stay.
- Any wildlife education talks that take place during your stay and that you might wish to partake in
- Full board and lodging which includes 3 meals a day at our Safari Camp dining area.
- Unlimited tea, coffee and juice throughout the day.
- Weekly laundry service during your stay.
- The service of a cleaner to attend to your room each day.

### **Project Cost Excludes:**

- All items of a personal nature, such as curios, gifts, clothing (work and other).
- Return flights to Harare or Bulawayo International Airports.
- Email and telephone calls made during your placement (charged out at cost).
- Any excursions over and above your planned itinerary in Zimbabwe e.g. visit to the Victoria Falls.
- Personal insurance cover for the duration of your placement, which is expected to include cover for repatriation.
- Cokes, beers, chocolate and other food items not included in your meals

### **Project Orientation:**

On arrival at the Antelope Park project, the following orientation will take place:

- You will receive your volunteer's manual which includes information that will help with your integration into the project, as well as give you further tips for your involvement at the Antelope Park programme
- Introduction to all senior project staff and heads of department
- Familiarization of the work areas – including rivers, internal roads and tracks and some of the wildlife species
- Introduction to the lions and cub enclosures
- Briefing on how to complete data capture forms and enter data into the computer systems
- Further information on the lion breeding programme and our ultimate objective of free releasing lions into the wild
- Familiarization with all duties you will be involved in

*We look forward to welcoming you for a unique, rewarding and unforgettable experience!*



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### Project Travel Highlights...

Travel Highlights: During your stay at Antelope Park you will have the opportunity to enjoy an excursion to some of the other spectacular spots that Zimbabwe has to offer. Day trips are offered to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins as well as Granite Ridge and once a month a trip to the Victoria Falls is organised for those volunteers who are interested. These trips are also a great time for volunteers to interact and get to know each other better. The expedition such as the one outlined below (to Victoria Falls) will cost you approximately US\$475 (this includes National Parks fees, transport, meals – although not in Victoria Falls – and accommodation).

- Day 1: Leave after breakfast from Antelope Park for Miombo Safari Lodge (Hwange National Park); the largest national park in Zimbabwe, and the same size as Belgium! You will get the opportunity to go on a game drive in Big 5 territory where you could get up close and personal with a herd of elephant, buffalo, a pride of lion and many more.
- Day 2-4: Leave after breakfast from Miombo for Victoria Falls, adrenalin capital of Africa! You have the option to bungee jump, white water raft, visit the Falls, gorge swing across the Batoka Gorge below the Falls or just enjoy the great social atmosphere at this tourist hot-spot! Dinner at the amazing “Boma” Restaurant is included whilst at the Falls.
- Day 5: Depart early morning from Victoria Falls to return to Antelope Park

*Please note: This trip only operates with sufficient volunteer interest and is only available to volunteers joining the project for a minimum of 3 weeks.*

### Our Preferred Travel Insurance Partners :

Visit <http://www.mindthegapyear.com/> for a great deal on reliable Insurance!



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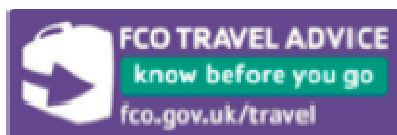
- For news and updates on all of our projects please join us at African Impact's official main page:  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/African-Impact-Official-Page/140942759303157#!/pages/African-Impact-Official-Page/140942759303157>
- Follow us on Twitter - Want to hear what is happening at the projects in real time Follow us on Twitter @  
[http://twitter.com/#!/African\\_Impact](http://twitter.com/#!/African_Impact)



We are proud to let you know that African Impact were recently announced as the **WINNERS** of the South African **Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards 2010** in the Best Social Involvement category.

This is a huge honour for us, and enormous thanks must go to all our past volunteers and project teams who have supported our work here in Africa and have helped make this possible! More information on these Africa-wide awards is available on our website: <http://www.africanimpact.com/news-article/african-impact-win-responsible-tourism-award-2010!/20101112>

**Sir Richard Branson's prestigious private game reserve Ulusaba, here in South Africa, was the winner of this category last year, so that's the level of competition for these awards!**



### Our Partners

**[The Happy Africa Foundation www.happyafricafoundation.org](http://www.happyafricafoundation.org)**

African Impact is proud to have been instrumental in the establishment of The Happy Africa Foundation in 2007 and continues to be one of the Foundations major supporters. UK Registered Charity Number: 1123529.

The mission of The Happy Africa Foundation is to empower the African people through the support of community and conservation based initiatives that operate at grass roots level.

We are proudly affiliated to the UK-based **Know Before You Go** campaign that promotes education and knowledge-sharing amongst travellers.

African Impact is delighted to have been nominated as a **2009 World Travel Awards Finalist** and see this as exciting recognition of our position as African specialists in Volunteering, with over 5 years experience in sharing Africa with travellers who have a passion for making a difference.



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