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KRUGER TO COAST WILDLIFE FIELD STUDY PROJECT

South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique



Project Web link <http://www.alloutafrica.com/volunteers/project.php?id=34>

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Fast Facts

Location:	Lubombo Conservancy, Swaziland; Kruger Park, South Africa; Tofo, Mozambique
Duration & price:	4 weeks all inclusive package U\$3,460
Deposit:	U\$346
Accommodation:	Shared backpacker lodge dorms in central Swaziland and in Mozambique, Dome tents in the field; flush toilets and hot showers at all locations
Meals:	All meals included, participants help cook
Dates:	Arrive 1 st Monday of every month
Age Limit:	Between 18 and 65 years old
How to book:	visit link above, click "book now" and complete the form

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OVERVIEW

Project overview

Join as a student on the Kruger to Coast Field Study Project to explore Kruger Park, assist with current research on threatened birds, mammals and reptiles in Swaziland and snorkel with whale sharks in Mozambique.

Although savannas are well represented in African conservation areas, they are undergoing extensive changes as a result of human influence through land management and climate change. Well known for large charismatic game such as elephants, rhinos and lions, there are a variety of smaller species that are threatened and equally important to the proper functioning of the savanna ecosystem. Raptors (birds of prey) for example are at the top of the food chain and thus, suffer the cumulative effects of savannas becoming degraded, yet they can roam huge distances (beyond park boundaries) and therefore are exposed to a variety of threats. Bats and reptiles are very poorly known and understood in southern Africa yet they play a key role in the ecosystem. Although this project involves being based in areas containing big game, your field research activities will be focused on threatened birds, bats, and reptiles, particularly their reproduction and movements. By better understanding these species, we can effectively manage and conserve them.



As a student on this project you will get to explore Kruger National Park, then gain practical experience on a hands-on wildlife field research program and then investigate the marine life of Mozambique. All Out Africa runs this project and the field research is in partnership with Swaziland's game reserves and national parks, namely Hlane Royal National Park, Mlawula Nature Reserve, and Mbuluzi Game Reserve.

Raptor Study – June through December

Raptors, which include eagles, hawks and vultures, are large predatory birds that have witnessed major population declines across much of Africa. This project aims to contribute to the conservation ecology of these birds in Swaziland. Activities include searching for nests, monitoring nesting success, tagging chicks, and capturing and tagging adults. Much of the current focus is on vultures and Marabou Storks which, due to their particular lifestyle, are considered "honorary" raptors.

Bat Study – January through June

Bats are possibly the least-known mammalian group in southern Africa. New species are still being described every year, and large information gaps still exist regarding their

distribution and ecology. This project aims to increase knowledge of the ecology of these creatures. Activities include capturing and banding bats at long-term monitoring sites, recording their calls using bat detectors, and radio-tracking individuals to determine movement patterns.

Reptile Study – Throughout the Year

This project aims to increase knowledge of reptilian diversity and distribution in Swaziland. Snakes, lizards and tortoises are searched for in a variety of habitats. All encountered reptiles are photographed. These photographs form the basis of the atlas, from which the various species can be identified. The data are entered into an electronic database which is in the process of being made available online. Tortoises are captured and marked to improve knowledge of their activity, survival and movement patterns.

This field study and travel experience will allow you to see some of the best that southern Africa has to offer in terms of wildlife, culture and beaches. It takes you through South Africa and the renowned conservation area of Kruger Park, Swaziland where you will do your field based research and then Mozambique where you spend time exploring the marine life of the diving hotspot, Tofo. You likely to experience close encounters with big game (e.g. elephant & lion), working with small mammals, birds and reptiles while living as a researcher in a nature reserve, to snorkeling with whale sharks in Mozambique. Along the way you will be doing a mix of traveling and getting involved in some really worthwhile hands-on field research.



Student role

By participating in the Kruger to Coast Field Study Project, in addition to visiting some of the regions most exciting wildlife areas and learning through a field study program you will help conduct and fund wildlife research and monitoring with other students under the guidance of the All Out Africa co-ordinators. You will engage in walking and driving through game reserves to locate and monitor nests and roosts of threatened birds (vultures, storks) and bats breeding in north-eastern Swaziland. You may help erect nets and harp traps to capture bats and birds, and record habitat and environmental variables associated with the collection of the above information. You may gain hands-on experience of handling wildlife and using tracking equipment. Being based in Hlane Royal National Park, you are sure to have regular big game sightings and enjoy game drives into areas with lions, elephants, rhinos, and many other animals all while contributing to an important long-term project.



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What's included

- All accommodation throughout your programme
- All meals
- Orientation upon arrival
- Transport on arrival and departure, between project sites and for project needs
- Full support and daily guidance from the project coordinator and assistant co-ordinator
- Project equipment
- Project activities listed on the itinerary including National Park entry fees
- Backup support from All Out Africa's head office and administrative staff

What's not included

- Personal travel insurance for the duration of your placement
- All flights
- All items of a personal nature, such as curios, gifts, clothing (work and other)
- Telephone, internet, extra food and drinks, weekend activities
- Visas
- Any excursions over and above your planned itinerary

Dates & costs

Kruger to Coast Field Study Project - 4 weeks U\$3,460

The arrival date is the first Monday of the month:

2009: 3-Aug, 7-Sep, 5-Oct, 2-Nov, 7-Dec,

2010: 4-Jan, 1-Feb, 1-Mar, 5-Apr, 3-May, 7-Jun, 5-Jul, 2-Aug, 6-Sep, 4-Oct, 1-Nov, 6-Dec

Booking process

Booking a place on the project is a simple 3 step process:

- 1) make a booking request by either visiting the project webpage <http://www.alloutafrica.com/volunteers/project.php?id=34> selecting "book now" then completing the online booking form, or emailing bookings@alloutafrica.com requesting a booking form, complete this and submit it to the same address.
- 2) Depending on availability, your booking application will then be accepted and you will be sent a deposit invoice which you should pay by bank transfer or by manual credit card payment.
- 3) Upon receipt of the deposit, your booking will be confirmed and you will be assisted to make the necessary arrangements to start your project.

THE PROJECT

Project activities

The project starts with a 5 day educational tour of Kruger National Park. Kruger National Park is probably Africa's most famous conservation area. Spanning nearly 20,000 km it covers a vast array of habitats and associated wildlife. It has an aura of ancient times and offers some of the best opportunities in the world to view Africa's big game. You will have the opportunity to walk guided through the bush on foot and take part in a night drive to look for nocturnal wildlife whilst learning about the conservation management of the park.



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The next phase of the project involves two weeks of field based wildlife research. The wildlife field work involves joining All Out Africa's ecologists in the collection of field data, while living in an African nature reserve and gaining hands-on training and experience. The research may involve weighing, measuring, tagging and banding young birds (especially raptors), bats and reptiles (snakes and tortoises) to monitor their condition and enable the study of their population dynamics and dispersal. It also may involve fitting radio-transmitters to track the animals to determine their home range, distribution, and movements. Lectures will be structured around the field work and each student will choose their own research project depending on the time of year and the Project Co-ordinator's guidance in matching you with an appropriate project. Though no specific fitness requirements need to be met, these projects often involve a lot of walking through the bush both on and off paths on fairly flat terrain.



The Project ends with a 7 day marine conservation tour of Mozambique. Mozambique is an Old Portuguese colony and having emerged recently from a civil war, it is now booming as a beach destination. Tofo is a laid-back beach village in southern Mozambique and offers some of the best opportunities in the world to swim with Whalesharks. With diverse coral reefs, whales, and nesting turtles Tofo is a marine paradise close to the historical port of Inhambane. You'll take a whale shark safari to snorkel with the oceans biggest fish and if you have a diving license will have the opportunity of exploring the coral reefs and possibly diving with manta rays and sharks! You will also spend a day kayaking out to one of the local islands.



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Itinerary

Day 1-2

Arrival on the first Monday of the month at Manzini International airport in Swaziland. Orientation and detailed briefing of the project itinerary by All Out Africa co-ordinator. Overnight at a backpacker lodge (usually Lidwala Backpacker Lodge).

Day 3-7 Conservation tour, Kruger National Park, South Africa

We venture on a five day tour into the heart of Kruger Park including 4 nights camping in the park and unlimited game drives exploring the vast conservation area with the expert guidance of our wildlife guides. Previous groups have had great sightings of lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo, leopard, wild dog and a variety of other of Kruger's specialties.

Day 8-22 – Field research in the Lubombo Conservancy, Swaziland

This project involves research and hands on conservation action to investigate the ecology of savanna species in northeastern Swaziland to help in the conservation efforts currently underway. This project tries to identify which species can be used as general indicators for the health of the savanna ecosystems. Threatened birds and bats are the focus of this project in particular due to their reproduction and movement. Rhino and elephant are also monitored to identify activity patterns and changes in social structure. Tortoises movements and activity are monitored and threatened plants (some found nowhere else in the world) may also be surveyed to monitor reproductive success and survival.



Day 23-27 Marine conservation tour, Tofo, Mozambique

We venture on a seven day tour to Tofo beach to experience the marine life of Mozambique. We spend six nights staying in reed cabannas on the beach and our guides will introduce you to Mozambique beach life and the marine life of the ocean. A beach party or two is par for the course and some chill time on the beach is guaranteed.

Day 28

Transfer back to Swaziland. Overnight at a backpacker lodge (usually Lidwala Backpacker Lodge) and prepare for departure home on the following Monday.



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Orientation

Your orientation will start with a presentation by the project co-ordinator to prepare you for your project. You will then be shown around Mbabane, Swaziland's capital. Once in the field you will have an orientation of the living area and overview of project activities. Any necessary training on the use of equipment will be provided at that time.

A day in the life of a participant

Although day to day activities vary on the Kruger to Coast Field Study Project a typical day in the life of a participant on the Project might be:

- 07:00 – wake up and have breakfast
- 07:30 – Drive 15min through Hlane Royal National Park to the location of the marabou stork nesting colony. Walk through the bush in search of marabou stork nests. Help GPS nests and weigh and measure the chicks.
- 12:00 – Lunch
- Thereafter - relax time or a discussion/lecture or various potential afternoon or evening field research activities.

Since reptiles and most birds are active during the day and bats are active at night, project work will either be completed in the morning or evening. There is usually free time in the middle of the day. Daytime field work begins between 07:00-08:00 and evening field work ends between 21:00-23:00. Usually not more than 6 hours per day are likely to be spent on field work related activities.



Project staff

The following are the on-site project staff who would work with you on a day to day basis:

Prof Ara Monadjem – Research Director, All Out Africa

A Professor of zoology from Swaziland with interests in ecology, vertebrate field biology, biodiversity surveys, bat systematics, conservation and education.

Elaine Franklin – Field Study Project Co-ordinator, All Out Africa

A conservation biologist from the USA with an MSc degree and background in birds and habitat restoration.



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Mduduzi Ngwenya – Field Study Project Assistant, All Out Africa

A Swazi with several years of experience on wildlife field research projects, a great internal compass, and amazing tree climbing abilities.

For a list of other support staff, see <http://www.alloutafrica.com/about/team.php>

Contact Details:

ALL OUT Office: +268-416-8010

After Hours Phone: +268-631-6767

Kim Roques: +268-602-3640

Elaine Franklin: +258- 680-6902

DESTINATION

Country fact file

Swaziland

Swaziland is the smallest country in the entire southern hemisphere, but also one of the most interesting where you can be guaranteed some fun and adventure. Swaziland is a microcosm of Africa with strong traditions, vibrant cultural festivals and friendly laidback people. Despite its stable history and peaceful reputation, Swaziland has one of the world's highest HIV infection rates and an unemployment rate of about 50%. It is a country of scenic beauty and huge possibility being strategically located between South Africa and Mozambique and having a relatively well developed infrastructure. Swaziland has an expansive system of reserves and national parks for a country so small, and you can be treated to excellent close encounters with black and white rhino and elephant in some of these areas. Aside from the wildlife, travelers can go horse riding, trekking, mountain biking and whitewater rafting amongst magnificent mountain scenery, stay in rural communities and become completely immersed in Swazi culture.



Location	Southern Africa, between Mozambique and South Africa
Area	17,363 sq km
Border Countries	Mozambique, South Africa
Climate	Varies from tropical to near temperate
Terrain	Mountainous in the west transitioning to low-lying savannah plains in the east.
Highest Point	Emlembe 1,862 m
Natural Hazards	Drought
Environmental Issues	Limited supplies of potable water; wildlife populations being depleted because of excessive hunting; overgrazing; soil degradation; soil erosion
Population	1,123,605 (July 2002)
Ethnic Groups	African 97%, European 2%, Asian 1%
Religions	Zionist (a blend of Christianity and indigenous ancestral worship) 40%, Roman Catholic 20%, Muslim 10%, Anglican, Bahai, Methodist, Mormon, Jewish and other 30%
Languages	English (official, government business conducted in English), siSwati (official)
Type of Government	Monarchy; independent member of Commonwealth
Capital	Mbabane
Independence Day	6 September 1968 (from UK)
Chief of State/ Head of Government	<i>Chief of State:</i> King MSWATI III (since 25 April 1986) <i>Head of Government:</i> Prime Minister Sibusiso Barnabas DLAMINI



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Currency lilangeni (SZL)
Time GMT +2

Did you know?

Swaziland is one of the only remaining African monarchies
Swaziland accounts for 14% of the recorded plant life in South Africa
Swaziland is smaller than Israel
Nearly 3/4ths of Swazis work in agriculture

Useful Numbers & Web Addresses

International dialing code: +268
Police tel: 999
Ambulance tel: 999
Embassy in UK: 20 Buckingham Street, London SW1E 6LB. Tel (020) 7630 6611
www.lidwala.co.sz
www.welcometoswaziland.com
www.visitswazi.com
www.lubomboconservancy.org

Project setting

The main setting for this project is the 60,000 ha Lubombo Conservancy of north eastern Swaziland which contains lion, rhino, elephant, leopard, giraffe and a whole host of other big game. Working within this area, you will be joining the staff and researchers of All Out Africa to assist with a variety of research and conservation activities. Our research camp is a mobile camp which we move around the conservancy according to the research needs at the time but is usually based at Ndlovu camp in Hlane Royal National Park. This area of Swaziland is particularly rich in threatened species, and forms part of the Maputaland centre of endemism (one of the global "hotspots" of floral and faunal species richness and endemism). The other settings include Kruger National Park, where we base ourselves at one of our preferred designated camp sites and Tofo beach in Mozambique, where we base ourselves at a beach lodge within easy reach of the activities.

Accommodation & meals

Our accommodation between excursions is at the Lidwala Backpacker Lodge in the Ezulwini Valley. The All Out Africa office is situated here as well. It is conveniently located on the main Ezulwini road less than 2km from most of the area's main facilities and attractions, such as craft markets, shopping centres, hotels, and restaurants. Volunteers on social projects stay here so conservation volunteers intermingle with them when not in the field.



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In the field, volunteers and staff camp at Hlane Royal National Park in dome tents with foam mattresses and pillows, all provided. You will need to bring a sleeping bag of appropriate warmth for the season. Flush toilets and hot showers are on-site, however, there is no electricity. Lanterns are provided in the bathrooms and at the All Out Africa campsite. A headlight or torch is still very useful to bring.

The camp kitchen consists of a gas powered stove, small gas powered refrigerator, pots, pans, and cutlery. Generally breakfast is cereals and toast, lunch is sandwiches and dinner is a cooked meal. Cooking is shared between volunteers and staff on a rotational basis.

Getting there & departing

If you are travelling from abroad it is usually easiest to fly into the region and usually the cheapest is to fly into Johannesburg in South Africa. From there you can either take a connecting flight to Manzini international airport in Swaziland (takes about 1 hour) using Swazi Airlink (a branch of South African Airways) or take a bus to Swaziland (takes all day but is cheaper) using the Baz bus.

Flying into Swaziland:

You will be given an 'International Arrival/Departure form' on your flight – please fill this in on the plane before landing (it is sensible to make sure you have a pen on the flight with you). When you are filling in the Arrival/Departure form please remember that volunteering with All Out counts as 'tourism' for immigration purposes. This is because you have raised your own funds to join the project as an experience.

Occasionally your luggage may get delayed *en route* although this is not very common. In such cases your bags will usually arrive on the next flight (or two) so it is wise to bring with you, in your hand luggage, one spare change of clothes and a wash bag. It never hurts to be too prepared!

When you arrive at Manzini International Airport, your first stop will be at the Immigrations Desk where you will have to hand them your passport and your Arrival/Departure form that you would have filled out on your flight. Your passport is stamped/endorsed by the Immigration Officer and he/she will issue you with a visa. Please ask for a 1 month visa for Swaziland – this can be extended later.



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You will then enter the baggage reclaim area to collect your luggage. Once you have your luggage make your way to the exit (signposted in English). There you will be met by one of our staff (holding a sign and usually wearing a T-shirt with the All Out logo) and brought to the All Out Office for your orientation. Also, for your destination details please write down All Out Africa and if asked for postal address please put:

Box 153
Lobamba
Swaziland

If for some reason your flight is delayed, please let Nikki Johnston (All Out booking officer) know on the following cell phone number +268-6068550 or alternatively Elaine Franklin (All Out Conservation Project Co-ordinator) cell phone number +268-6806902 or alternatively Christy Fellner (All Out Projects Co-ordinator) cell phone number +268-6908792.

Traveling by bus to Swaziland:

If you prefer to travel by bus from Johannesburg to Swaziland we recommend that you use the Baz Bus as a relatively affordable and convenient way of traveling. It does take a whole day though, so is a much longer option than flying. You can arrange your own ticket www.bazbus.com or we can arrange a ticket for you. The Baz Bus leaves Johannesburg for Swaziland on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and will collect you from almost any backpacker hostel in Johannesburg (around 8am) and drop you at the doorstep of Lidwala Backpacker Lodge (at around 6pm).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Free time

You have the option of taking part in various weekend activities including

- white water rafting
- mountain biking
- game viewing
- adventure caving
- hiking
- horse riding
- quad biking
- swimming
- golf
- tennis
- squash
- fishing

If you are interested in any of these activities let us know and we can let you know the availability and costs. These activities are optional and extra, though as a participant we would assist you with arranging these where possible.

Swaziland has so much variety to offer and all the main activities are based relatively close to the volunteer base. Please remember that should you decide to use



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accommodation or do activities other than what is provided as part of this itinerary, you will be responsible for covering the costs thereby incurred.



Check list

In addition to your everyday clothing, it is recommended that you include the following:

General

- Sleeping bag (suitable for the season in which you are travelling – Summer (September – April) / Winter (May - August))
- Sleeping bag liner: for hot nights or as an extra layer to your sleeping bag
- Small torch (head torch is preferable)
- Toiletries (you can easily buy toiletries on arrival)
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (a range of factors)
- Hat
- Camera and accessories
- Water bottle
- Day pack
- Mobile phone with roaming (or buy local network SIM on arrival)
- Pocket knife
- Binoculars

Clothing

- Outdoor cotton clothes for warm days and cold night (winter)
- Fleece or jumper
- Clothes for Project work
- Hiking boots or trainers
- Casual clothes for the weekends
- Swimwear
- Light waterproof jacket (rainy season Nov – April)



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First Aid Kit

- Mosquito repellent
- Anti-malarial tablets (if you plan to travel to Malaria areas)
- First Aid Kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Personal medication
- If you suffer from seasickness bring tablets for the ocean safari.

Note: Please pack as lightly and compactly as possible as space and weight is limited. Ideally you should not have more than 22kg of luggage and should be able to fit everything into a 60 litre backpack plus one small day pack. It is easy to buy toiletries once you have arrived in Swaziland and this can reduce the amount of weight you have to travel with.

Medical

This area is a malaria area. Please consult your doctor for advice about whether to take preventatives and what to take.



Currency: Emalangeni and Rands
MasterCard & ATM card is sufficient

Visa: 30 days tourist visa on entry – 60 day extension possible in-country.

Latest news

Please visit our website to find the latest news pertaining to your project: www.alloutafrica.com
Or join us on face book at the following link:
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=2369142750&ref=ts>

Ratings and feedback

This is how some of our past participants on this project felt about their experience:



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Georgina - United Kingdom, [Swazi & Kruger Conservation](#)

I had a great time, the people are friendly, the scenery beautiful and I'll never forget handling a vulture and the call of a hyena at night.

Lucy Garner - SA,SD,MOZ, [Kruger to Coast](#)

Quite simply the experience of a lifetime! I've made some brilliant friends here and I have so many awesome memories to take away.

Ginny Jones - SA,SD,MOZ, [Kruger to Coast](#)

Swaziland is an amazingly diverse country. My All Out experience is one I will treasure! A fantastic introduction to Africa. I will definitely be back. Thank you all.

For more feedback visit <http://www.alloutafrica.com/about/testimonials.php>

