Big 5 Rehabilitation

PROJECT INFORMATION
This is a program designed for volunteers interested in having a truly African experience while making a difference to the local wildlife and environment.

The game reserve’s education and rehabilitation center is home to various different species of predators. Designed in such a way that it maintains a natural look, the rehabilitation center gives the endangered predators that much needed connection with the wild although they are living in a cordoned-off zone. The predators that have found a home at the center include Lions, Bengal Tigers, Cheetahs and White Lions.

The Rehabilitation Center aims to contribute to the conservation of endangered species and the rehabilitation of injured, abused, orphaned and poisoned wildlife. The game reserve team are a group of dedicated conservationists committed to the preservation of wildlife.

PROGRAM DETAILS
A game reserve is a very dynamic environment and you will have the possibility to work in different areas. You will be working on a Big 5 game reserve where the Big 5 are all in their natural environment and free-roaming. The project tries to give you as much hands on interaction as is safely possible with ‘the wild’ Big 5. You will, however, get a chance to interact with some of the Big 5 in the rehabilitation center as well as the elephant sanctuary, depending on the time of the year.

For all activities, the project has specific outdoor and indoor coordinators. Indoor coordinators are responsible for items such as accommodation, transfers, orientation, excursions, meals, laundry and any other related issues. Outdoor coordinators will be working with you on a day-to-day basis for all your daily activities. They are specially trained in their field and any questions on wildlife and fauna & flora can be directed to them. If you are not comfortable or have any problems, please do not hesitate to approach your coordinators.

YOUR ROLE
You will work from Monday to Friday (07.30 – 16.30).

Your day is broken up into three parts:

07.30 – 09.30 Activities
10.00 – 13.00 Activities
14.00 – 16.30 Activities
The activities for this program vary on a day-to-day basis and are dependent on weather and other factors, meaning that the itinerary can be changed at any time. There is an itinerary of all the activities scheduled for each week. It is designed in such a way that volunteers are divided into groups of up to 10 volunteers per group, depending on the number of volunteers. Each group will have an outdoor volunteer coordinator as a leader and mentor. The groups will be engaged in different daily activities but will all do the same type and number of activities by the end of the week. In some cases, all the groups might do the same activity at the same time depending on the type of activity e.g. game capturing.

Duties include the following but are not limited to:

- Removal of alien vegetation in and around the reserve.
- Lion tracking and monitoring.
- School feeding schemes (please speak to the volunteer coordinator if you would like to participate as this is voluntary and on a first-come-first-serve basis).
- Maintaining wildlife structures.
- Tree planting and landscaping.
- Game drives.
- Predator interaction and care.
- Elephant sanctuary work.
- Fauna and flora work in the nursery.
- Wilderness trail walks and patrols.
- Fence patrol.
- Game counts.
- Game captures.

It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer, the time of the year and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.

**GETTING TO AND FROM THE PROJECT**

The Big 5 Rehabilitation project is situated in the Eastern Cape of South Africa approximately 85 km out of Port Elizabeth towards Grahamstown.
You need to arrive at Port Elizabeth Airport where you will be collected by the volunteer project staff.

There are scheduled arrivals and departures that normally run as follows:

- Sundays – Port Elizabeth to Project (Departs 16.00) / Project to Port Elizabeth (Departs 18.00)
- Mondays – Port Elizabeth to Project (Departs 16.00)
- Saturdays – Project to Port Elizabeth (Departs 09.00)

It may happen that on your arrival you have to wait for other volunteers arriving later due to the scheduled transfer. The same might happen with your return transfers. All volunteers will depart at the same time and this will be determined by the times of the earliest flight. If your flight is departing early next morning, you will be taken to a lodge in town where you can spend the night and be fresh for your flight the next morning. If you are not comfortable with leaving on the scheduled transfer, please note a transfer can be organized for you at an extra cost and depending on availability.

Should you be departing on Monday or later, you will have the choice of going in for the weekend excursion and staying over in Port Elizabeth on the Sunday night, or spending your last weekend on the project and returning to Port Elizabeth on Sunday afternoon to spend the night there.

Please note that if you are not arriving by plane on your day of arrival, you are required to make arrangements to meet the team at the following address no later than 15.00: Al Beit Lodge 49, Admiralty Way, Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth, Tel: +27 41 583 6415, Email: reservations@al-beitlodge.co.za. Should you not be there when the vehicles depart, you can make your own transport arrangements from Port Elizabeth to the project at your own expense.

On arrival, you will receive a volunteer handbook including some general information that will be useful during your stay in South Africa.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT**

You will be housed in either Kubs Quarters or Mafusa Camp dorms. Transport to and from the project is arranged. The dorms are single-sex rooms and therefore no boys are allowed in the girls’ dorms and no girls in boys' dorms. In cases where volunteers want to stay as a couple, this can be arranged at an extra cost and also depends on the availability of rooms, unless arrangements were made prior to arrival. Bedding will be provided; you must bring your own towels. You will be provided with laundry services on a Tuesday and Thursday and will be allocated one of these two days. In one of your bed drawers you will find a plastic laundry bag; if you cannot find it, please advise the indoor coordinator. All laundry will be charged at a nominal fee per load and laundry should be handed to your indoor coordinator before 07.30. No laundry will be taken after 07.30. You will get your laundry back the following day and the project accepts no responsibility for any losses or damages to these items.

Internet facilities are available at the Pollards Inn Hotel business center between 09.00-10.00, 13.00-14.00 and 19.00-20.00. The hotel receptionist will assist you with the computer and there will be a nominal charge for this service. The internet service varies from day to day due to the service provider (the only one in SA) and your patience in this regard would be appreciated.

There are public telephones available for use at the reserve. Telephone cards can be obtained from the local shop or when you go out for excursions on weekends in town. From time to time, however, the lines in the area are down due to robust elephants pushing down the poles on neighboring properties.

**MEALS**

Three meals a day are provided. Breakfast includes cereals, bread, butter, jam, tea, coffee and cheese, sometimes eggs, sausages or baked beans are served, and sometimes a combination of the above. For lunch and dinner there is a wide variety ranging from burgers, chicken and chips, vegetarian dishes, potato casserole and so on (so you definitely won’t go hungry!).

Breakfast: 09.30 – 10.00
Lunch: 13.00 – 14.00
Supper: 18.00 – 19.00

Please note that all meals are served at the Mafusa dining area, and no cooking is allowed in any of the kitchen/kitchenette areas. Selected meals can be served at the 5-star hotel by the invitation of the CEO only, and in such cases you are asked that you adhere to the dress code of the hotel, which is casual and respectable.

A vegetarian option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements (vegans, dairy-free/gluten-free, etc.).
FREE TIME

On weekends, you have the possibility to go out for excursions between Saturday and Sunday. The excursions will either be to Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, or any other nearby destination. On these excursions, please note that the project will only provide you with accommodation and transport to and from your destination. Accommodation will be in dorms.

For those participating in the organized Garden Route tours, the weekend excursion is not included as you will be going to Port Elizabeth at the start of your Garden Route portion.

The project also offers Addo Elephant National Park excursions through a partner – the project will assist you with these arrangements. Since these excursions are done by an agent, you need to pay for your accommodation, activities and meals which will form part of your excursion package. If you are interested in this excursion, you should confirm by the Tuesday afternoon.

Other excursion packages are also available on request. You are also free to organize your own excursion, at your own cost. Please note that should you do so, you will need to sign out at reception and make your own transport or accommodation arrangements. You are also free to stay behind over the weekends to relax and unwind at the project – you are allowed to use the project’s various facilities such as swimming pool, sporting facilities and the entertainment room.

On Sundays when coming back from weekend excursions, please adhere to the pick up times. If you are not there when the vehicles depart, you will need to make your own transport arrangements from town back to the project for your own account.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Transport is available to take you into town for purchases as well as on selected outings during your free time (please see above). Any other transport can be arranged at your own expense.

WHAT TO BRING

You will each get a T-shirt and a cap as part of your uniform. Items you will need are:

- Walking shoes/boots or trainers for working/game farm
- Working clothes for getting dirty
- Warm clothes for evening/winter
- Towels
- Flashlight
- 3-point South African adaptor
- Any other personal items

While there is no specific uniform, volunteers are asked to wear sensible clothing, e.g. long shorts and closed shoes. Hot pants, string bikinis and flip-flops are not suitable for work.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All InterExchange Working Abroad participants are required to possess accident and sickness insurance with coverage for the duration of their program.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water during your first few days in South Africa.

While all safety precautions are followed, please note that you are working out in the wild where there are many insects and life forms. It is important for you to do a daily bodily check to ensure that you have not brought any of these creatures home with you. Please alert the staff (coordinators or front office staff) should you feel the need to be medically examined or require first aid attention. Please note that while we are aware of that certain people come with pre-existing medical conditions, we are not a medical center and therefore advise you to ensure that you have enough medical supplies and that you advise your coordinator if you have a condition in case of emergencies. The project is situated in a malaria-free area so no drugs are required.
WHAT’S INCLUDED/NOT INCLUDED

Included:

- Project placement.
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (Port Elizabeth Airport).
- Accommodation (dorm-style rooms, breakfast, lunch and dinner).
- Good Hope Studies welcome pack.
- A cap & a T-shirt.
- Daily transport to and from the project.
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering.
- Optional weekend excursions (transport & accommodation).
- Certificate on request.
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number.

Not included:

- Any other transport.
- Any other excursions.
- Towels & Laundry.
- Internet access.
- Any items of a personal nature.

VISA

U.S. citizens can volunteer in South Africa on a visitor’s visa for up to 90 days. We will provide you with a letter of invitation to volunteer, which you should present upon entry.

If you are in South Africa on a visitor’s visa you can extend once by another 90 days.

If you are planning to come for more than 90 days, you need to apply for a visa at a South African Embassy in your home country. This visa is restricted to registered NGO’s and therefore not available for this project.

For the latest information contact the South African Embassy.