



The Vervet Monkey Foundation

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The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a certified non-profit organisation and volunteer project.





Introduction

The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a registered non-profit charity established in 1993 dedicated to rehabilitating and providing sanctuary for orphaned, injured and abused vervet monkeys. Operating the largest centre for vervets in the world. In 2006 we became a member of PASA (Pan African Sanctuaries Alliance) and we are also the first sanctuary within Africa to be accredited by GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries).

You will be helping to rehabilitate vervet monkeys into viable troops for release into protected reserves, integrating them back into their natural environment. They care for over 500 monkeys and we take in many orphans each year. You may be involved with hand-rearing orphans (in baby season) and be lucky enough to see them with their foster mums, watching them become real monkeys. Outside of orphan season is a great time to experience the troop dynamics, juvenile and adult integrations. In addition, you will help the monkeys further by general Husbandry, feeding, building new enclosures, observations and maintaining the upkeep of the foundation. Longer term volunteers may become involved with integrations of monkeys into social groups which is very rewarding and a lot can be learned about their behaviour.

You will sleep in a wooden cabin and eat delicious vegan (cruelty free) meals prepared by our cook. We are situated close to the Kruger National Park, Blyde River Canyon (the third largest Canyon in the world) and other amazing places.



Accommodation

You will sleep in a wooden cabin, usually with one other volunteer. We provide a mattress, table, pillow and sheets but please ensure you bring a sleeping bag or top bedding. There is no electricity in the village as the foundation tries to be as environmentally friendly as possible and runs on solar power. Accessories can be charged at the cottage.

You may wish to bring a small battery powered or re-chargeable camping light to light up your cabin at night for reading etc. The volunteer village houses a warm, gas-heated shower, eco-toilet (composting toilet), washing sink and a campfire, which is great for an evening under the stars or a traditional braai (South African barbecue!).

Laundry services are provided free of charge Mon - Fri. You can bring your own detergent for extra hand washing of small items.

We also have a couple of private accommodations. Private cabins available for an additional fee per week. These cabins have solar powered electricity, you get the luxury of having it to yourself and your cabin is cleaned weekly. Bedding and mosquito nets are provided in the private cabins so no need to bring with you. The showers and sink are conveniently located nearby.

The Foundation has broadband wireless internet. You may use the internet for free. All cellphone networks are available at the foundation although it is recommended that you get your phone unblocked to be able to use local sim cards for cheaper rates.



Activities

Volunteers are the life blood of the Foundation's development. You will be involved in constructing new enclosures and facilities, often painting, wire twisting, knot tying, digging, fastening or even pouring cement. Each new enclosure or facility enables the Foundation to do more for the monkeys in our care.

On arrival all volunteers will have to sign an indemnity form indicating that you accept and understand that you are working with wild animals and that your presence and all activities you undertake at the centre are done so at your own risk. Volunteers will be expected to be on call at all times, including weekends. You should be prepared for often challenging and hard work, based around a shift rota with other volunteers. A typical work day is 8 hours per day depending on the time of year.

You will be presented with a day off each week that you may use to travel to the local town of Tzaneen to purchase supplies or to relax. Volunteering can be an altogether rewarding experience, working together with like minded individuals. You will be able to see first hand how your actions are benefiting the vervet monkey and the people striving to protect this indigenous primate of Africa.

During the baby season (Nov – Feb) there is a possibility volunteers will work with baby monkeys, nearly all orphaned and traumatised. We introduce them to monkey foster mothers ensuring each baby is stabilised, healthy and able to drink from a bottle when handling them.

During the juvenile season (Mar – Oct), you may be able to see juniors being integrated into a troop within our rehabilitation programme or participate in other integrations. Baby rehabilitation involves volunteers handling or observing the babies in their outdoor area, mixing up bottles of milk, preparing foods and administering medicine if required. You will feed and monitor them throughout the day, constantly checking their progress. Be aware these babies will defecate and urinate on you quite happily - this is unavoidable so old clothes are recommended. You must remember the vervet monkeys are wild animals so expect a few 'nips' whilst they play!

Each "Main Feed" involves the daily preparation and distribution of food to all of the monkeys in the sanctuary. As a volunteer your duty would be to prepare the food bowls. You will cut, wash and share out the fruit and vegetables equally before distributing the food bowls to the vervets. Seed pods and fruits are also picked from our indigenous trees and grasses collected on a regular basis.

Each and every day, volunteers and staff prepare bowls of food to feed over 500 vervets in our rehabilitation programme. The food bowls consist of fruit, vegetables, seeds, nuts and leaves, bought from local suppliers and distributors in the Letaba area. Monitoring This is a crucial and important job as you will monitor and observe each monkey within the sanctuary, checking for any injuries, stress or sickness - reporting information back to staff to ensure the vervets are in the best of health. This task is done on alternate days throwing out seeds or sprouts to the troops so you can see them at a closer distance to check for signs of ill health. A fundraising project that simply requires your enthusiasm or skill can become a reality. We also promote a vegan lifestyle and are involved with educating people how they can help the environment. Volunteers are invited to develop new and exciting fundraising initiatives, backed by the Foundation's long term volunteers and staff. We are always looking for new innovative ways to raise funds to support our work.

If you have any specific skills or interest we are happy to try and utilize them during your stay. No matter what you do, you can expect that it is hot, dirty and hands on.

- Collecting, chopping and delivering food for monkeys
- Cooking at weekends for volunteers
- Hands-on care-giving of baby monkeys (Nov-Feb approx), helping in our sickbay
- Observations of orphans with their foster mums and adult integrations
- Cleaning monkey cages, washing feed bowls & plates and cleaning blankets
- Assisting with introductions and rehabilitation of new monkeys
- Assisting with monitoring the health of monkeys and giving food supplements
- Clearing vegetation for fire breaks, looking after the volunteer village
- Assisting with education outreach programs
- Participating in fundraising, newsletters, we can also use graphic design skills





Additional Excursions

we provide a lift into Tzaneen to purchase supplies, swim in the nearby lodge pool, spa or relax over a cup of rooibos tea in the mall. Volunteers here for 4 weeks are also invited to take one touring day per week to visit local sights. You may wish to hire a car with some friends you meet here or book with Travelbuggz for guided tours. Popular tours include the world famous Kruger National Park, only 1 hour from here. Blyde River Canyon, God's Window, stunning waterfalls and of course, wildlife viewing.

Please note; that any and all excursions are at your own extra cost which is payable directly to the project.



Project Dates & Cost

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

This project is suitable for persons over the age of 18, who have ever dreamed of working with monkeys. Be prepared to work hard under the African sun with this intelligent and indigenous primate of Africa - The vervet monkey.

Volunteers need to be in good health with a moderate level of fitness. You will not need any prior experience as we will teach you everything you need to know – just come with enthusiasm and an interest in conservation!

PROGRAM DATES

The Vervet Monkey Foundation is open all year round. Arrivals and departures to the project are on Sundays & Mondays only and requires a minimum stay of 4 weeks.

PROJECT FEES

Whilst admission onto the projects requires a minimum 4 weeks stay, you can stay as long as you like or can afford.

<u>Duration</u>	<u>Price</u>
4 weeks (28 days)	R 19,950
5 weeks (35 days)	R 24,519
6 weeks (42 days)	R 29,087
7 weeks (49 days)	R 33,655
8 weeks (56 days)	R 38,224

For stays over 8 weeks please contact us for a quotation as additional discounts will be given.

Prices are shown in South African Rand. For your local currency conversion rates check out

www.xe.com

*Please note that any bank charges for payments will be for your account.

**A 30% non-refundable deposit is payable to confirm your booking and full payment is due no later than 42 days prior to your arrival. You are welcome to make one full payment should you wish to do so, however your booking can not be confirmed until minimum payment has been received.

***Any payments made via PayPal will incur an additional 1.5% Service fee.

PRICE INCLUDES

- o All Accommodation whilst on the project.
- o Wi-Fi (Where applicable)
- o 3 meals per day at your project.
- o Transport within the program.
- o All Project activities as described.
- o All project services as described.

PRICE EXCLUDES

- o All Flights and/or transfers other than those described above.
- o All drinks such as Alcohol and soft drinks (Safe drinking water is provided)
- o All personal snacks and any other luxury items you can't live without.
- o Social events.
- o Eating out (any meals at restaurants is at your own cost)
- o Any Excursions offered by the project
- o Extra activities on excursions

For an additional fee of R700/night, Scales Volunteers can provide overnight accommodation in Johannesburg between flights on your arrival or return from your including a return airport shuttle to transport you between the airport and your accommodation.

Should you prefer assistance in making travel arrangements from OR Tambo airport to the project, Scales Volunteers can also provide you with a road transfer for only R1,680 return. (Please note this shuttle service has set scheduled departure times)

To cover any additional expenses, such as personal/luxury items, cost of excursions or for meals when eating out, we would suggest that you consider having access to approximately R500 per week of your stay. ATMs are readily available throughout Hoedspruit and accept all major credit cards. Please consult your bank regarding charges and it is also advised that you notify them that you will be travelling abroad.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Luxury Safari Break

If at the end of your Volunteer Program, you would like to treat yourself to a little bit of luxury at an affordable price contact us for more information about the Luxury Lodge options close to your project.





Weather & Climate

During the Summer months (September to March) it can get extremely hot and humid. Average temperatures for summer are 18c to 45c. At times it has been known to reach temperatures as high as 50c, but this is very rare. Make sure to bring plenty of high factor sun cream, a hat and insect repellent.

During the Winter months (April to August) it is mostly warm during in the day, but the temperature drops as the sun goes down, make the evenings, night-time and first light very cold. Average temperatures for winter vary between 5c at night and up to 25c during the day. Sunscreen is still recommended during winter months. The insects tend to disappear during the colder months, but it is still a good idea to bring some insect repellent just in case.

If you would like to research more about the weather you can expect during the specific time of your trip, then we recommend that you check out wunderground.com as they give access to extensive historical weather data for almost all chosen locations.

As with any natural events, we are unable to guarantee that the weather you encounter will be as described, this is merely an indication to help advise you on what to expect and what weather to pack for.



Travel Information

HOW TO GET THERE

You will need to fly to OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg as this is the closest international airport to the project. There are regular international flights into Johannesburg's OR Tambo Airport and if you require assistance with selecting a flight, please do not hesitate to ask and we might be able to assist you, however Scales Volunteers do not offer flights as part of our packages.

From there you will need to get a road transfer to the project which is in Tzaneen. We would like to recommend that you use TavelBuggz to assist you with this part of the journey, should you not wish for Scales Volunteers to organise it for you.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the passport and visa requirements for entry into South Africa. Ensure that your Passport is Valid for your trip and for a minimum of 6 months after your return.

Please check with your nearest South African High Commission or the relevant South African Diplomatic website for the country in which you reside for more information regarding your specific visa requirements.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that you meet the COVID-19 requirements for entry into South Africa and any other country you might be passing through.

MEDICAL & PERSONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Prior to travelling, you should visit your Doctor/Healthcare Professional to obtain advice on immunization and general health requirements. The Greater Kruger National Park is generally a low to medium risk malaria area, but you should consult your Doctor/Healthcare Professional about the appropriate prophylactics. Ensure that you declare any medical information we should be aware of on your booking form including any allergies and/or dietary requirements.

**You will need to have a test for tuberculosis before working with monkeys.
A sputum test can be done on arrival for R100.**

If you fall ill whilst on the project, you will not be allowed to work with monkeys for a period until recovered for their safety. In the local town, is a private hospital and doctor surgery. They do except international travellers, but you will need to arrange your travel insurance at home prior to your stay. When arranging this please make sure that you are covered to work with animals as this is not generally automatically included.

INSURANCE

It is very important that you take out adequate travel insurance for your trip to cover such events as cancellation due to illness, accident or injury, personal accident and personal liability, loss of or damage to baggage. Scales Volunteers or Scales Conservation Fund will not be responsible or liable if you fail to take adequate or no insurance cover at all. You will be required to submit a copy of your insurance policy / certificate with your travel information prior to departure.

CURRENCY

South African Rand. As the project is situated in the middle of the bush it is very hard to change currency, so we recommend that you exchange any cash prior to arrival. We also recommend the use of bank/travel cards over cash for security purposes. All shops accept Visa and Mastercard, as well as other well-known providers. However please ensure to contact your bank to notify them of your travel plans before you leave your country of origin to avoid your card being flagged as fraudulently used and subsequently blocked. We highly recommend travel cards as you can lock in your currency and do not charge withdrawals. Again, these should be arranged prior to departure.

SAFETY

The project is based in a safe community, and you won't have to worry whilst you are at your project, however we do want to give you some basic guidelines in order to ensure you have the best experience during your stay.

- Don't accept lifts from strangers
- Don't leave valuable things on display
- You will be in a wildlife area so beware of snakes, scorpions, and centipedes.
- Don't approach any animals that are in the wild as they are unpredictable.
- Follow project rules at all times. Always follow direction and requests from the Project Staff, they are looking out for your safety.
- Don't be shy to ask questions!



What to Pack

The suggested packing list below should help you with deciding what to pack. If you are unsure about any items or have any questions, then please ask. We are here to help!

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- Original and certified copy of your passport
- All tickets and receipts for travel.
- Certified copy of any prescription medicines (Original only if necessary for re-fill)
- Original and certified copy of any Medical or Insurance Cards
- Original and certified copy of your Drivers Licence (If necessary)
- Copy of your Travel Insurance
- Copy of your Travel Itinerary

CLOTHING

- Hat / Cap
- Sunglasses
- Warm Jacket / Fleece
- Waterproof Jacket
- Clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, including
 - Durable and neutral-coloured shirts / t-shirts / Vests
 - Durable and neutral coloured long sleeve shirts (seasonal, but also useful for covering yourself from the sun)
 - Durable and neutral-coloured shorts
 - Durable and neutral-coloured trousers
- Socks & Underwear

- Comfortable Walking Boots
- Sandals / flip flips
- Trainers
- Gloves & Beanie (Seasonal)
- Swimwear
- Appropriate Sleeping Clothes (Accommodation is shared)
- A couple of smart outfits for town trips or trips out to the local restaurants.

TOILETRIES

- Shampoo / Conditioner
- Soap
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Hairbrush / comb
- Bath Towel
- Personal Toiletries – Razor, deodorant, sanitary products etc

GENERAL

- Water Bottle (Minimum 2 litre)
- Torch / Head Torch
- Day Pack
- Camera (Including batteries/charger and spare memory cards)
- Personal First aid kit (Plasters, Antiseptic, Prescription Medicine etc)
- Sunscreen (Factor 50)
- Laptop or iPad
- Insect repellent
- Travel adaptor Plug

RECOMMENDED

- Binoculars
- Reading material
- Power bank
- Positive attitude
- Mosquito Net

We recommend acquiring a local mobile SIM Card from one of SA's "pre-paid" options (Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, Telkom and Virgin), which are inexpensive and can be used to keep in contact with project staff, our office, friends and family or anyone else you might need to contact during your stay.

If you still have space left in your bag, please contact us to find out if there is anything that you can bring out for your project, such as supplies or donations that are waiting for transport.

**WE ARE LOOKING
FORWARD TO HELPING
YOU PLAN YOUR NEW
ADVENTURE!**

