

ANTI POACHING AND BUSH SKILLS PROGRAM ALBIZIA CAMP – HLUHLUWE

BACKGROUND

Poaching is a major problem wherever there is a conservation area with game species.

There are two distinct categories of poacher. Firstly the most common is the protein or subsistence poacher who comes in to set snares or to bring in his hunting dogs, and who generally targets the smaller game species such as antelope and other smaller mammal species.

The dead animal ends up in the bushmeat trade, which is an underground trade and a huge problem as it is very difficult to police once the animals have been hunted.

Secondly you get the commercial poachers which are run by organised crime syndicates that target the big money product such as Rhino Horn, Ivory, Abalone and Lion parts generally to supply the massive demand in Asia.

Our programs are focused more around the first category but we certainly get involved in the commercial side of things when the need arises.

Set on a 1200 Acre conservancy, Albizia Camp provides us with the ideal base to do the induction and training phase of the program and then get into the field with our anti-poaching and research teams.

Please be aware that anti-poaching as such is more often than not very tedious, hard and uncomfortable work in pretty extreme weather conditions with very little action generally. It is certainly not glamorous and not action-packed as most people seem to think.

ACCOMMODATION

We base our participants at Umkhumbi Lodge in a self contained dorm room or one of our visitor chalets.

Participants are responsible for doing their own laundry (facilities are provided) and keeping the house clean and tidy.

Participants will have access to all facilities at the lodge like the pool, bar and restaurant.

All participants are expected to cook and eat together in the main unit near reception. A weekly roster is drawn up and easy to follow recipes are provided to help those who need them. A weekly shopping list is compiled according to the planned menus. Please note that our volunteer fees covers 3 basic meals a day. You will be expected to purchase any luxury food items yourself. The restaurant will be available should you not feel like cooking.

The lodge has internet which is available for the volunteers to use, however, the wireless booster does not reach the volunteer house. There is a seated area at the office where participants can access the internet.

CLOTHING

We strongly recommend that you bring old, light and comfortable clothes to wear during your stay. Bear in mind that the activities are quite physical and will be done outdoors so be sure to bring a lightweight raincoat and sunblock with you just in case. Closed, comfortable shoes are a must!

Please note that participants are required to look neat and presentable at the main lodge during their stay.

We will provide appropriate clothing and equipment for the actual patrol work. Your own boots are recommended as you will be covering a fair amount of distance on foot.

COST AND IMPORTANT INFO

The cost of participating in our volunteer programme is dependent on what you decide to do and is worked on a per person, per day rate. This covers your 3 basic meals per day as well as all accommodation costs and volunteering training and supervision.

The optional modules on the program below will be an additional cost per module.

This will include a game drive into Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve and a day trip to St Lucia Estuary for a boat cruise and a drive through the Eastern Shores part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

WHAT TO PACK:

Please remember that you will be spending the majority of your time outdoors and Hluhluwe has a hot and humid climate and in summer temperatures can be up 45 degrees. It does get cooler during the winter months so a fleece or a warm jacket for your outdoor work will be needed.

Also remember to pack neutral colors as we will be working in an area with big game.

We recommend that in addition to your normal clothing, you bring the following with you:

- Walking shoes (trainers will be fine!)
- Warm Jacket/Raincoat
- Day Bag - small rucksack
- Sunhat/Sun cream (at least factor 30 in the summer months)
- Alarm Clock (especially if you're not an early riser)
- Towels (bath/beach)
- Adapter plugs (3 round pin)
- Toiletries/shower shoes
- Padlock (lockers are provided in the volunteer house for valuables)
- You do not need bedding, it is provided for you. A sleeping bag is optional. If bringing your own bedding, the volunteer house has single size beds only.
- A smart/casual outfit and shoes for any special occasions or event
- A pair of gardening gloves
- Camera, binoculars (optional)
- Books, games, cards (optional)
- Personal Discmans, iPods, laptop etc

PLEASE DON'T FORGET:

- Passport & visas where applicable
- Air tickets
- Travel insurance
- Cash & credit cards
- International driver's license (if you will be renting a car during your stay) – please note that the old pink British license is not valid in South Africa

- Baggage – advisable to use a rucksack;
- Pocket money

INOCULATIONS AND MEDICATION:

Rabies and tetanus inoculations may be required, but please check this with your local doctor and take his/her advice. Speak to your travel clinic with regards to malaria prophylaxis – Durban is not in a malaria area but you might like to travel to other areas in the province that are. It is also recommended that you bring a small first aid kit with your regular medication and general items you might require while away from home – speak to your pharmacist about suggestions.

PLEASE NOTE:

Mobile phones do operate with full reception and it is recommended that you bring one with you. SIM cards are cheap and readily available. You will need to ensure your phone is unlocked to be able to use this. Please speak to your mobile service provider about their policies and charges for setting up international phone services during your stay with us.

PROGRAM

PHASE 1: TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

This phase will be spent in the field with your qualified experienced facilitators. We will cover all the modules below and any other incidents that may occur in this training phase.

- Game tracking skills and bush skills
- Mammal, bird, tree, vegetation and insect identification and behaviour studies - edible/poisonous spec
- Snakes - identification, location and behaviour studies - species identification, basic handling and first aid
- Anti-poaching unit patrolling and radio procedures
- Surveillance, ambush procedures and layout
- Poacher tracking and anti tracking skills and exercise
- Camouflage and concealment
- Hand to hand combat training ***
 - Weapons handling - pistol, rifle, assault rifles ***
 - Bush craft skills/ fire, water, food, cooking and tool use
 - Animal postmortem/ skinning, dissection and anatomy study ***
 - Hunting, snaring and trapping. Shot selection, site selection and techniques explained
 - Navigation skills by day and night
- Safety procedures and basic survival skills in a contact situation.

***** OPTIONAL**

PHASE 2: PRACTICAL

- Day and night patrolling with our anti poaching teams
- Perimeter patrols, Manning observation points, transect snare searches
- Participate in research projects telemetry work tracking the various animals we have collared
- Participate in the day to day reserve and game management.
- Species lists, behaviour studies.
- Reporting of unusual sightings and incidents in log book
- Motion Camera traps deployment and data follow ups