



PHINDA WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECT CLOSE UP

Home to a dazzling variety of wildlife, this project offers a true insight into life as a researcher in the field.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

How does this project make a difference?

Regular and dedicated research allows Phinda to become a partner to essential conservation initiatives worldwide such as the release of black rhino into the reserve.

How do I, the volunteer, make a difference?

The reserve management rely on volunteers to support the research taking place at Phinda to ensure inter- and intra-species populations are balanced and animal management is optimal within the reserve.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Joining an experienced research team you will be involved in the following research components:

White rhino monitoring: Over 100 rhino traverse the reserve since an initial reintroduction of only a handful. By studying ear-notched individuals you will assist in developing a detailed population database and recording sex, age, territorial information and movements.

Big cat and predator research: The Phinda project closely monitors its predator populations. Depending on the current research agenda you can get involved in the following:

- Cheetah monitoring, identifying territories and movements through markings on the cheetahs' eyes and tails.
- Join the active leopard research project, tracking, darting and collaring individuals for data collection.
- Record movements and sightings of two lion prides and assist with lion contraception initiatives.

Elephant population monitoring

- Assist with behavioral studies to determine the effect of an elephant contraceptive programme to control numbers (an ethical alternative to culling).

Small mammal survey: Recently introduced and radio- collared servals have moved out of the reserve. You will assist with setting traps and a mark and re-capture programme to determine why.

SKILLS GAINED

Tracking (including the use of telemetry equipment), animal identification and behavioral studies.





WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE

Few reserves in Africa have the biodiversity that the Phinda Game Reserve offers. This vast tract of bush, riverine area and rare sand forest is home to Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino), cheetah, giraffe, hyena, wildebeest, buffalo, antelope and 415 bird species to name a few.

"There was so many amazing encounters at Phinda but there are a few that really stand out... I finally got to see a black rhino... witness a spotted hyena darted and released and nine lions be tested for TB." **Chris Barrass**

LOCATION

Sandwiched between the warm Indian Ocean, St Lucia Lake and the Lebombo mountains, Phinda Game Reserve encompasses an impressive 23,000 hectares (56 800 acres) of prime wilderness land in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.



FACILITIES

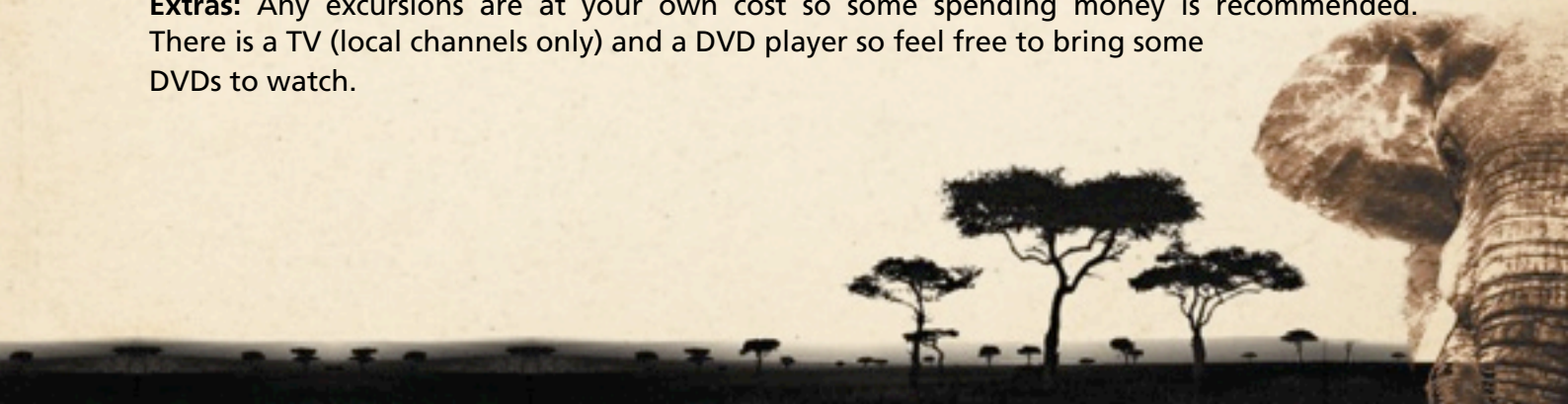
Accommodation: A rustic farmhouse on the reserve is set aside for the volunteers and assistant project coordinator. At times, a student research group and Ph.D students may also live at the house. Running water and electricity can occasionally be intermittent due to the remoteness of the reserve.

Meal arrangements: You will be provided with a weekly food kitty to do your own shopping and cooking on a rotational basis with the other volunteers. The house is equipped with a fridge, freezer, stove, oven and microwave.

Nearest town: Hluhluwe, South Africa

Working hours: You will generally work 6 days a week, with Sundays free, when you might have the option of going to the beach. The daily schedule varies heavily depending on the research objectives at the time.

Extras: Any excursions are at your own cost so some spending money is recommended. There is a TV (local channels only) and a DVD player so feel free to bring some DVDs to watch.





Contact with home: Volunteers can buy phone credit for the house phone and use this to contact home. Internet facilities are available at the nearest lodge.

Transfers: Depending on logistics, transfers are by domestic flight from Johannesburg to Richard's Bay, followed by a road transfer to Phinda (approx. 1 1/2 hours). Occasionally the entire transfer is done by vehicle. The drive from Johannesburg takes approximately 8 hours, broken up with a lunch break.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Airport: We meet all our volunteers personally at Johannesburg airport directly off the plane.

Road Safety: All drivers have Public Driving Permits and only new, air conditioned vehicles are used for transfers.

First aid & emergency: First Aid Kit and qualified first-aiders on site.

Medical: Doctors and Hospital in Hluhluwe

Reserve Insurance: Students will be required to sign an Indemnity form.

IS THIS PROJECT RIGHT FOR ME?

You do not need any previous experience to join this project, but you should have a keen interest in learning about wildlife and research techniques. The volunteer house has the basic comforts of running water and electricity, but the supply of both can be a bit temperamental. This is not a physically strenuous project but depending on the day's programme you can expect some early morning starts. If you love to observe wildlife and are keen to see a wide variety of species, Phinda is a superb project for you.

BOOKING INFORMATION

What's Included? Return international flights from London Heathrow (optional), transfers, food and accommodation, 24 hour support from our ground manager, ACE T-Shirt, financial contributions to the project

What's not included? Travel insurance, spending money, optional excursions and activities.

When can I join? This project runs all year round, with a break over Christmas and New Year.

How can I join? You can apply online at www.conservationafrica.net/apply or simply fill out an application form in one of our brochures and post it back to us.

