



## SHIMONGWE WILDLIFE VETERINARY EXPERIENCE PROJECT CLOSE UP

For those living and working as a wildlife vet, this isn't just a job, it's a vocation, a way of life that they are dedicated to; treating, healing and substantially managing the wildlife that they love in a country they love.

### CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Veterinary work is essential to the preservation and protection of rare and endangered species endemic to Africa. The value of this project is heightened by the local community awareness scheme and disease control methods.

### CORE ACTIVITIES

We currently work with 4 different vets who each have a different set up:

**Shimongwe Lowveld:** Based in Hoedspruit. This vet offers clinic work experience in addition to field work and accepts two volunteers at a time. The vet is highly regarded in South Africa and as such works on many high profile cases with considerable liability risks. For this reason, volunteer involvement is often restricted to a more observational role, nevertheless providing a fantastic opportunity to learn first-hand from a highly experienced vet.

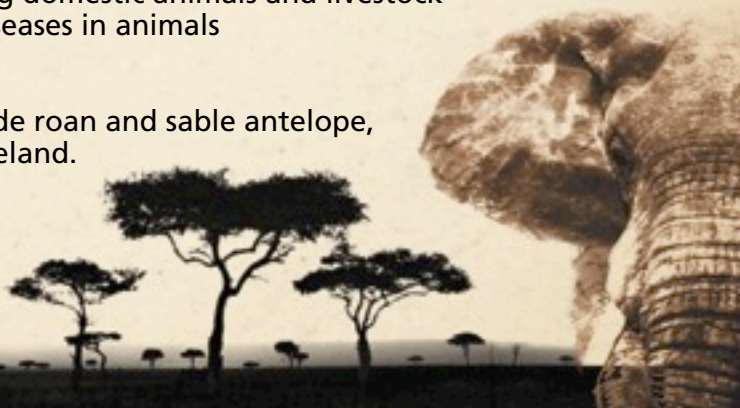
**Shimongwe Limpopo:** Based in Ellisras (Lephalale). This vet offers clinic work experience in addition to field work and takes up to 4 volunteers. He is based in the Limpopo Province and does a lot of capture-related work on the many private game reserves in the region.

**Shimongwe Greater Kruger:** Based in Hoedspruit. This vet is the vet for Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre and works 100% in the field. He takes up to 2 volunteers at once and is most suitable for advanced vet students as he prefers volunteers to assist him in a very hands-on manner. He specialises on breeding disease free buffalo and roan and sable antelopes, but also works with a wide range of other species.

**Shimongwe Bundox:** Based in Hoedspruit. This vet is the resident vet of a successful game capture team and takes up to 6 volunteers. Working 100% in the field you will join the activities of the vet alongside the specialist capture team and general capture team learning about conservation medicine and immobilisation. This vet often works on rhino, buffalo, nyala, sable and roan antelope.

### Depending on the wildlife vet you are placed with, veterinary work may include:

- Game capture and immobilising animals. By law only a registered vet can use the high schedule drugs to immobilise animals. You will however learn about the drugs involved and the darting techniques, and will administer low schedule drugs.
- Disease control and blood sampling
- Animal translocation
- Medical work on injured or sick animals, including domestic animals and livestock
- Diagnosing and treating various conditions or diseases in animals
- Assisting with hand rearing of rhino calves
- Community veterinary service for local tribesmen
- Animals that the vets frequently work with include roan and sable antelope, buffalo, giraffe, lion, elephant, rhino, nyala and eland.





## SKILLS GAINED

Administration of low schedule drugs, mammal identification, physical capture, animal care, disease testing, veterinary work guidelines and practices in South Africa.

## WILDLIFE EXPERIENCE

Much of the wildlife veterinary work is related to game capture and relocation, giving you the opportunity to travel to different parts of the country and working on several reserves. All of the vets work with a wide variety of species, frequently including buffalo, rhino, predators and antelopes.

*"I got to work with such a wide variety of animals and got loads of hands on experience. I also learnt so much that will no doubt be valuable at vet school."*

**Kirsty Giles**

*"I worked with the big 5, wrestled sable and had an awesome time."*

**Bethany Vlaming**

## FACILITIES:

### Accommodation:

**Shimongwe Lowveld:** Accommodation is a shared thatched house in Alloway Farm. The land covers 160 acres where warthogs, jackal and small animals live. The home is shared with six dogs and two cats.

**Shimongwe Limpopo:** Based in a fully furnished annex within in the grounds of the home of Alfie and Jackie (the vet's parents-in-law). The annex has a kitchen and living area, shared bathroom and bedrooms. Volunteers can use the family swimming pool.

**Shimongwe Greater Kruger:** Accommodation is at either Little Bush or Moholoholo Mountain View; situated at the foot of the Drakensberg mountains and home to many African species including rhino and giraffe.

**Shimongwe Bundox:** Accommodation is a shared house situated in a beautiful wildlife estate where African animals roam. The house consists of an open plan lounge and kitchen, shared bedrooms with en-suite toilets and an outside fire pit where you can relax in the evenings and enjoy an African braai.





### **Meal Arrangements:**

**Shimongwe Lowveld:** Breakfast is a choice of cereal, toast, fruit and yoghurt. On the weekend volunteers can enjoy a full cooked breakfast. A packed lunch is required during the day or volunteers can buy their lunch from a cafe close to the clinic. A vegetarian and meat dish is provided for dinner every night.

**Shimongwe Limpopo:** Groceries for breakfast and lunch are available for you to prepare yourself. Dinner is cooked by Alfie and Jackie and served in the family home.

**Shimongwe Greater Kruger:** All meals are catered for at either Little Bush or Mountain View Lodge.

**Shimongwe Bundox:** Groceries are provided and volunteers prepare all meals and clean up after themselves. A packed lunch will need to be prepared each day for work in the field. Meals are often in the form of an African braai and eaten under the stars.

**Working hours:** Time off is hugely variable and depends on the vet's schedule. Due to the nature of veterinary work it can be unpredictable resulting in quieter times during the week. Unfortunately we can not guarantee that you will have wildlife veterinary work every day.

**Contact with home:** SA time is GMT +2 hours. There is easy internet access in internet cafes in Hoedspruit for volunteers at Shimongwe Lowveld and Shimongwe Greater Kruger. Email access is limited to town trips for volunteers at Shimongwe Limpopo.

**Transfers** to the vets from Johannesburg airport takes approximately 5-6 hours, broken up with a lunch.

## **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 on site. The co-ordinator, being a veterinarian, has some medical and first-aid background.

**Medical:** Doctors and hospital in nearest town.

**Project Insurance:** Students will be required to sign an indemnity form.





## **IS THIS PROJECT RIGHT FOR ME?**

While the Shimongwe Wildlife Veterinary Experience is open to anyone with a keen interest in wildlife veterinary work, the project is a great opportunity especially for current veterinary medicine students looking for practical experience, high school or undergraduate students preparing to apply for veterinary school or already qualified vets, vet techs and vet nurses looking to extend their knowledge of working with exotic wildlife. The vets will expect you to act in a professional manner at all times, and in turn you can expect to learn a lot from them! If you are planning to use your placement to fulfill university requirements for extramural studies, you are welcome to do so and we will be happy to assist you with any necessary paperwork, provided you advise us of this in advance. You have to be realistic about what you can achieve within the limited time of a placement though, and we can never guarantee a set number of hours of practical work per week, due to the reactive nature of wildlife veterinary work.

## **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.

### **When can I join?**

Shimongwe Lowveld & Shimongwe Greater Kruger: Mid-January to end November  
Shimongwe Limpopo & Shimongwe Bundox: March - late September

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

