

Namib Wilderness Experience



Overview

Location	Helmeringhausen, Karas District (Windhoek is 7h away), Namibia.
Duration	From 2 weeks.
Dates	All year-round.
Capacity	Max. 12 volunteers at one time
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum age: 18.• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.• Special skills: You should have a love for nature, be physically fit and a good eye for beautiful photography.
Your impact	♥♥♥♥♥
Documents required	Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance, (all travellers to Namibia are required to have a valid passport).
Day of arrival	Friday
Day of departure	Sunday



Highlights

- Help with environmental rehabilitation and landscape conservation in a unique desert setting.
- Enjoy a combination of many fun-filled activities, such as climbing sand dunes, dune boarding or swimming in natural pools
- See lots of desert-adapted wildlife – sightings are guaranteed.
- Enjoy night drives and sleep-outs.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

Project information

The Namib Wilderness Experience Project is located in Namibia's south bordering the Namib Naukluft Park. Red sand dunes, vast open grass plains and imposing mountain ranges make up the serene surroundings of the area. Home to an array of desert-adapted wildlife, the region encompasses 352 km² of desert scenery where volunteers will get involved in vital conservation activities and enjoying the beautiful surrounding. Educational presentations about animals and nature will be provided by the project.

Programme details

Herbivores of all sizes are an integral part of African ecosystems.

In the vast Namib Desert, it is critical to understanding local ungulate population dynamics and migrations to ensure a sufficient water supply. At the same time, ungulate populations need to be assessed against the available vegetation to avoid damage to the ecosystem, for example, from overgrazing.

The volunteers will participate in regular game counts on either horseback or by car to assist in these monitoring efforts. The project has historically been home to large herds of migratory and desert-adapted oryx (gemsbok) and springbok but also contains less known species such as the greater kudu or klipspringer. Ostrich populations will also be counted.

Questions to answer include, for example:

- how wildlife utilises this semi-arid landscape on a seasonal basis, and
- how this correlates with predator populations.

During the early resource identification stage and continuous monitoring of wildlife populations, the project relies on "additional eyes" in the form of motion-triggered camera traps. Because the cameras record data 24/7 every day of the year, they often "observe" wildlife that humans overlook. Moreover, the cameras are non-selective and therefore capture information on all wildlife that pass in front of them, whether carnivores, herbivores, birds, or others. This helps the researchers assess which species are present and where they are most active, especially for usually cryptic animals or entirely nocturnal animals.

The cameras are non-invasive and sometimes record interesting behavioural data that we would otherwise have no access to.

Volunteers will help set cameras in the field (for example, at water points, cheetah marking trees, caves etc.), maintain them (refresh batteries and memory cards) but also go through the abundance of images to assess and structure the data recorded.



Your role

Volunteers may be involved in environment rehabilitation and landscape conservation. Make sure to always take a camera and lots of water with you as it gets very hot in the desert.

Possible tasks could include:

- Maintaining camera traps & sorting through camera trap images and collection
- Maintenance and security on the reserve
- Game counts
- Night drives and sleep-outs
- Educational hiking
- Research
- Environmental rehabilitation, including wire braiding and general fence work
- Forest conservation revegetation project and learning about the desert

A possible working schedule could be:

Sunday to Friday:

- 07:00 - 08:00 Breakfast and morning meeting
- 08:00 Hands-on work and activities
- 13:00 - 14:30 Lunch and afternoon meeting
- 14:30 Hands-on work and activities
- 17:00 End
- 18:00 Dinner

Example of a weekly schedule:

- Saturday:** Arrival, Orientation /evaluations, departure/ free time
- Sunday:** AM: Hike (looking for tracks, territorial markings and educational activity)
PM: Downtime & CT sorting
Evening: free time
- Monday:** AM: Game count - south
PM: Fence rolling
Evening: Movie night (sleepout in summer and autumn)
- Tuesday:** AM: Hike (climb a mountain)
PM: CT sorting & wire branding
Evening: Cocktail night (might be on another night)
- Wednesday:** AM: Game count - north
PM: Fence rolling/branding/installation
Evening: Potje night - bush braai (BBQ) in summer, autumn and spring
- Thursday:** AM: Hike (going to a valley)
PM: Presentations/ Queens Canopy
Evening: Sundowner/Sandboarding

Friday: AM: Sunrise breakfast & car wash
PM: free time & Boere sport
Evening: Baai (BBQ)

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.

Project location



The Namib Wilderness Experience is located in a desert area south of the Naukluft National Park in the Karas District of Namibia, approximately 7h away from Windhoek.

In all likelihood, everything will be very different to what you are used to at home. During the first few days, you may find it very difficult to adapt to the new situation; you might even feel homesick. It is important to give yourself time to get used to the new challenges you may face. Within the first week, you will come to find it much easier and will soon be won over by the landscape and the people.

Getting to and from the project

You need to arrive at Hosea Kutako International Airport in Windhoek, Namibia, where you will be collected by a project member and transferred to the Wildlife Conservation Project for your first night.

Arrival

Please arrive on Friday. Transfers to the Namib Wilderness Experience take place on Saturdays only.

Departure

On your return, you will be transferred back to the Wildlife Conservation Project on Saturday where you will spend your final night. From there, you will be transferred to the Windhoek International Airport to catch your flight on Sunday.

Please take into consideration that the transfer to the Namib Wilderness Experience takes about 7 hours.



Accommodation

The volunteer accommodation is in a 5-bedroomed farmhouse. Volunteers stay in shared bedrooms of 2 – 4 persons of the same gender. All bedrooms have an en-suite bathroom that is shared by the volunteers staying in that room.

The volunteer house also has an inviting swimming pool which is always popular in free time.

Electricity:

The plugs used in Namibia, like those in South Africa, have three large round pins and you will need to bring an adaptor in order to charge electronic items such as phones and camera batteries. You need to be sensible when using electricity as it is much more of a luxury in Africa. You should also be prepared for power cuts, as these are common, and you will need to be flexible about charging your items. You should bring spare batteries.

Internet:

WiFi is not available in the farmhouse but there is some cell phone reception with 3G.

Laundry:

Free laundry service is provided.

Meals

Three full meals are served daily.

The project also adapts to special dietary requirements and you would need to clarify this with your enrolment.

Free time

Volunteers usually get the Friday afternoons and Saturdays off.

During free-time, sundowners amidst the beauty of the Namib Desert and sandboarding are definite highlights. Friday nights are usually braai & dance nights and are perfect for a further fun times with your fellow volunteers.

More fun activities available:

- Sundowners
- Cocktail night
- Blowcarting (If there is wind)
- Dune boarding
- Sunrise breakfast
- Boeresport
- Horse riding (If available)
- Sleep-outs
- Photography lessons (If interested)

Some of these activities may have an additional cost, to be paid on-site.



Local transport

Transport during the project working hours is taken care of, additional transfer comes at an extra cost.

What to bring

Please note that a **compulsory uniform** will need to be worn by all volunteers participating in the project. The following parts of the uniform need to be brought from home:

- Spare trousers or knee length shorts (khaki, olive green or denim)
- Closed, sturdy footwear

Please find further information regarding the uniform under the “What to wear” headline.

Other clothing you need to bring will depend on the time of year you visit.

May to September is the winter period and can be **very** cold at night and in the early mornings and daytime temperatures can vary. A sleeping bag is recommended! Please make sure to bring warm cloths, sturdy shoes that will not get wet, gloves, and a beanie. All clothes should ideally be in neutral colours for when you'll be visiting the reserve.

October to April is the summer period and the rainy season is from November to February. At this time, it is generally hot during the day, but it can rain and become chilly in the evenings so do pack a jumper or fleece and a waterproof jacket.

Please note that Namibian culture is somewhat conservative; please bare this in mind when packing. Certain clothing is not permitted, and these items include hot pants and cropped tops.

Personal Admin

- Passport including your visa, insurance certificates and personal documentation (photocopies of all these documents should be left in your home country).
- Spending money (bring Namibian Dollars or SA Rand; there is a cash machine at the sanctuary and card payments are also accepted).
- Proof of vaccinations (please contact us to find out which vaccinations you need).
- Secure, waterproof bag for documents and money: sealable plastic bags will do.

General

The project is aiming to 'Go Green' and we hope to reduce the amount of waste, plastic and packaging as much as possible. We, therefore, ask that you keep this in mind when packing. Please see items below listed as 'Go Green' where we believe you can actively help. Please also keep in mind that we request that any plastic bottles and packaging that you bring with you, should also be taken back with you.

- Toiletries 'Go Green' (biodegradable products, shampoo and soap bars)
- Face mask for COVID-19 protection as this might not be available for purchase
- Sleeping bag: useful for winter months, possible overnight sleep-outs in the field or if you plan to travel outside of your project
- Silk or cotton lining (optional): ideal for hot nights or as an extra layer to your sleeping bag
- Sunglasses (high UV protection)
- Sun cream (high factor needed)
- Torch and batteries (preferably a head torch)
- Alarm clock/watch
- Camera/batteries/film or memory card

- Water bottle - at least 75cl 'Go Green'
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Cloth laundry bag 'Go Green'– this is for laundry to hand in for cleaning
- Cloth shopping bags 'Go Green'– for use if you go into Windhoek for shopping
- Mobile phone set for roaming (local SIM cards are available at the airport or the sanctuary)
- Swimming towel
- Sewing kit and pocketknife for general use (not in hand luggage!)
- Plug adaptor (3 large round pins)
- Padlock (although safes are sometimes provided, the easiest way to store anything of value is to put this in your suitcase and lock it with a padlock)
- The evenings can be quiet so bring books, cards, board games, etc.

Clothing

- Adequate cover for cool mornings and evenings (e.g. gloves and beanie)
- Sun hat/bandana
- Gardening gloves to protect your hands
- Casual clothes for day trips to Windhoek and for weekend activities
- Flip flops/sandals for the evenings/free time
- Underwear for at least seven days
- Pyjamas/nightwear
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm clothes for winter and early mornings (it gets very cold when the sun goes down)

Medical Kit

- Hand sanitizer and wet wipes
- Personal first aid kit
- Re-hydration salts and Imodium or similar product
- Personal medication e.g. prescription drugs/inhalers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Lip balm with sun protection
- Sanitary products if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (please bring non-DEET mosquito repellent since DEET is not environmentally friendly)
- Ear plugs – you may be sharing a room with 1 or 2 people

Your commitment

Please be aware that in applying for a volunteer project, you are making a firm commitment to the project. Our projects depend on the volunteers. It is necessary that you take this commitment seriously.

Some projects will appoint specific responsibilities to you; others are less structured and require the volunteers to use their initiative. If you prefer the one type over the other, please ask us for the most appropriate project for your preference.

Your daily presence is required and working hours are to be followed strictly. Not fulfilling your obligation can result in your dismissal from the project.



Cell phone use during working hours

We kindly ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during work hours as this will distract you from doing the work at hand. Due to strict privacy laws, taking photographs of people, particularly children, is in most cases prohibited.

Volunteers who would like to take photographs of their projects are free to communicate this directly to their project supervisors for guidance and instruction.

What to wear

It is compulsory to wear a volunteer uniform during your working hours. It is expected that all volunteers follow this policy and be accountable for their appearance. A volunteer may be required to change their clothing if found to not meet the required dress code. The uniform consists of the following:

- The mandatory uniform will be provided on the day of arrival. The uniform consists of 1x T-shirt and 1x zip-off trousers
- Trousers or knee length shorts – khaki, olive green or denim (to be brought from home)
- Closed, sturdy footwear

Uniformity of all

The supervisors in Namibia would like to ensure that all those working at the project sites, staff and volunteers alike, look professional at all times. It is expected that all volunteers follow this policy and be accountable for their appearance. This new policy is geared to improving security and aims to strengthen the Namibian projects responsibility of providing a safe working environment for volunteers and staff members alike.

Any volunteers found inappropriately dressed will be given a written warning and asked to leave the project if the written warning is ignored.

Insurance

Travel insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out full personal insurance cover.

This should include protection against theft and against loss of fees, should the whole or part of a programme or activity or accommodation not be attended.

Medical insurance

You are required to take out medical insurance before travelling.

You must ensure that you are covered from the day of departure in your home country to the day of arrival back in your home country. The minimum coverage must be US\$ 100.000 and, as part of the enrolment process, you will need to email us a copy of your insurance policy documentation.



Health

In general, no vaccinations are required for travellers going to Namibia. Please note that for this project a rabies and tetanus vaccination is highly recommended. Clients should consult their doctor for any other recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:

Africa: Angola, Burundi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.

South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

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 Namibia.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in Namibia.

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. We recommend that you make contact with your local vaccination services. The vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine and polio vaccine. In addition, we recommend Hepatitis A, typhoid and rabies. You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so this vaccine is recommended if you might get a tattoo or piercing.

Please contact us at Good Hope Volunteers should you have any questions about this.

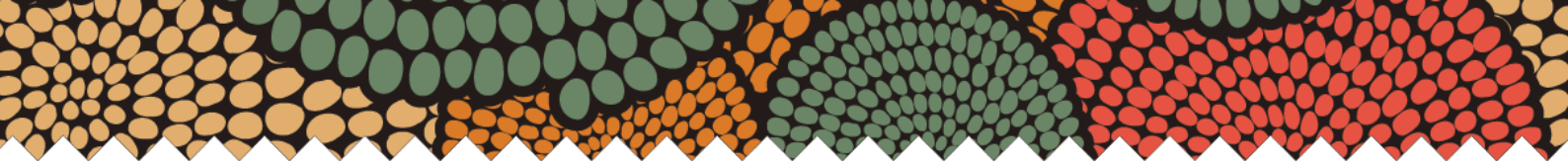
Safety

While all safety precautions are followed, you are still working with animals and must be aware of this at all times and follow the safety guidelines.

What's included / not included

Included:

- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (Hosea Kutako International Airport in Windhoek)
- Accommodation (shared bedroom, full-board, laundry)
- Towels
- The **mandatory uniform** consists of 1x T-shirt and 1x zip-off trousers
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number



Not included:

- Wi-Fi/Telephone calls
- All items of a personal nature
- Excursions
- Flights & medical insurance

Visa

From 24 August 2019 onwards, all volunteers joining the Namib Wilderness Experience can enter Namibia on a Tourist Visa, valid for 90 days. They will receive the visa at the airport when entering the country. All visitors require a passport for entry into Namibia, which must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the intended stay in the country and have sufficient pages for entry and exit stamps. All visitors must also have a valid return ticket.

Extensions for a further three months are available from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Windhoek, and the on-site team can assist if a visa needs to be extended.