

Vervet Monkey Foundation Volunteer Information Pack

Updated: January 2023



You can make

a real difference to the lives of vervet monkeys

**USE YOUR TIME
USE YOUR SKILLS
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
VOLUNTEER.**

info@vervet.za.org - www.vervet.za.org

Your guide to Volunteering



Armstrong (aka Army Ant) gazes up at a volunteer in the Baby Care Centre



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2. - Introductory Letter

VERVET MONKEY FOUNDATION**PostNet # 416,****PRIVATE BAG X4019****TZANEEN LIMPOPO PROVINCE****SOUTH AFRICA 0850***Hono Lou (volunteer)*

“This was the month I ventured solo to end up at the most beautiful sanctuary I will never forget. Being part of a team, a family who is so passionate and cares so much for vervet monkeys is beyond my wildest dreams.”

Dear Potential Volunteer,

Would you like to experience living in the African bush rehabilitating the indigenous vervet monkey?

The Vervet Monkey Foundation operates 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). We currently 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. We are situated close to the Kruger National Park, Blyde River Canyon (the third largest Canyon in the World) and other amazing places.

No previous experience is necessary, just caring and dedication. We welcome volunteers over the age of 18. This is an ideal project for anyone who has 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.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

The VMF Team

3. - Volunteer commitment - An introduction to volunteering

On Arrival to the VMF

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.

You should be prepared for often challenging and hard work, based around a shift rota with other volunteers. A typical work day is 8-9 hours per day depending on the time of year as well as some overnight shifts with the babies in the orphan season.

You will have 1.5 days off each week that you may use to go into Tzaneen town to purchase supplies or relax at the nearby lodge & spa.

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.

DEDICATION

A number of volunteers now work at the Foundation after deciding to stay on to further support the monkeys in our care.

As long-term volunteers, they help by co-ordinating daily tasks and are at hand to offer assistance and experience to new volunteers.



The Volunteer Community

“ I loved working and living with up to 20 other people.
I made fantastic friendships during my time volunteering. ”

Lorna, 22, London UK

“ Spending time to earn the trust and affection of these remarkable animals is worth every effort. ”

Aubrey, 28, California, US

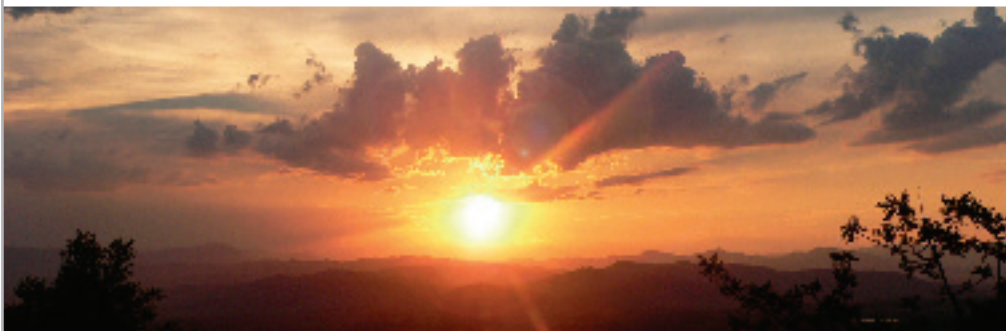
4. - Work and activities - Life as a volunteer

Life as a Volunteer

Work and activities

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! 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, taking videos & photos for social media & youtube
- 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, taking videos for youtube and social media
- Assisting with education outreach programs
- Participating in fundraising, newsletters, we can also use graphic design skills



“

An experience of a lifetime!

”

Hilary, 22, US

The sun sets over the distant hills surrounding the Foundation. Temperatures in Tzaneen range with highs of 25-35°C year round

The Night Sky



“ Magic ”

“

Laura, 23, Birmingham UK

Sitting around an open fire in The Village watching shooting stars is simply unbeatable ”

The night skies of South Africa shine bright at the Foundation. Far away from city lights, the constellation Orion and the Milky Way can be clearly seen.

Hands On Experience

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!

You will be helping to rehabilitate vervet monkeys into viable troops for release into protected reserves, integrating them back into their natural environment.



UNDERSTANDING

Volunteers often grow attached to individuals they have rehabilitated and enjoy returning to see them grown up with their new monkey family.

A deep understanding of the monkeys welfare, conservation and their similar human emotions bonds volunteers to their world.

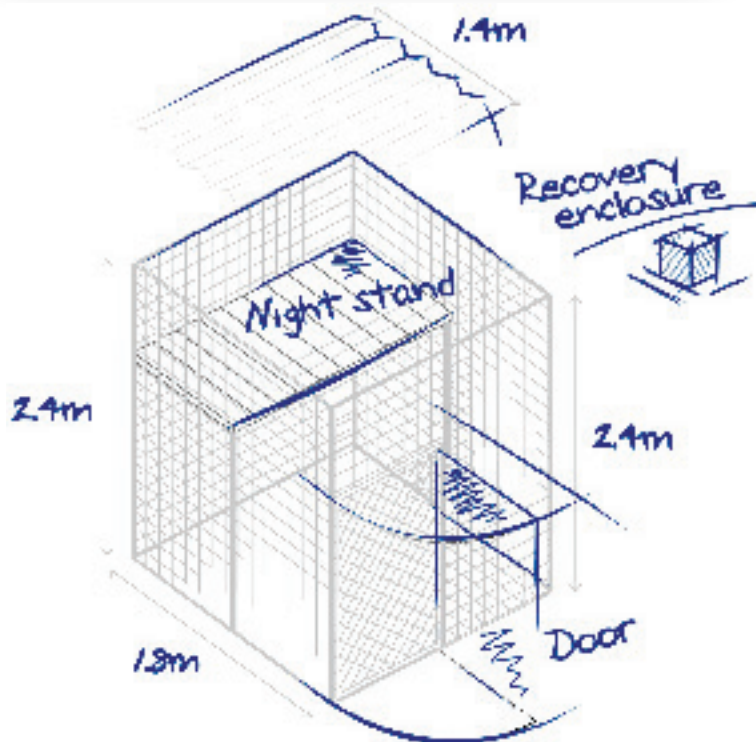
“

Alasdair, 23, Manchester UK

It's fascinating to work with such an emotional, intelligent and complex primate.”

6. - Work and activities - Just what will I be doing at the Foundation?

Work and activities



Construction

DEVELOPMENT

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.

Volunteers have helped build, fund and create the following facilities and enclosures...

Skunkey Enclosure

Built in 2003

Goliath Enclosure

Built in 2005

Sick Bay

Completed April 2007

Camelot Enclosure

Completed July 2009

Skrow Enclosure

Revamped August 2009

Quarantine

Completed 2009

Sickbay Rebuild

Completed 2021

Groomingdale's

Completed 2022

Without such dedication and hard work from volunteers, the above would remain a dream.

VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENTS



7. - Work and activities - Just what will I be doing at the Foundation?

Work and activities

Daily Activities Main Feed + Monitoring

MAIN FEED

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.

“ Jax Woolterton, 23, Kent UK

Monitoring is an essential job and one that I took great pleasure in doing. The monkeys depend on you to spot injuries or sickness”

8. - Work and activities - Just what will I be doing at the Foundation?

Work and activities

Fundraising and
Website development

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.

Become involved. Join the team. Get active.

Touring and days off

Volunteers get 1.5 days off per week; 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.



“ Kruger was truly amazing!
We even spotted a Cheetah! ”

Travelling to the VMF

All our volunteers book their travel from the airport to the sanctuary through Travelbuggz which is the safest and easiest way to get to the sanctuary. Sandy who runs Travelbuggz is Dave Du Toit's (VMF Founder) sister who runs Travelbuggz so you can be assured she has your best interest and safety in mind at low cost. She will safely organise a meet and greet at the airport, organise your shuttle and transport you from the airport to the shuttle stop. Travelbuggz do also offer overnight accommodation in their family home if needed (approx 15mins from airport). Sandy will happily organise vegan food or other dietary requests if she knows in advance. Please contact Sandy once your flight is booked so your shuttle can be reserved well in advance (ideally min of 3 weeks in advance), there may also be other volunteers travelling the same day as you. Please do not go to Johannesburg bus station due to safety reasons.

There is another shuttle that runs later in the day on specific days that Travelbuggz can organise for you if needed.

Travelbuggz: Sandy Van Zyl sandy@travelbuggz.co.za +27 82 908 7125

Transfer to VMF:

One of the VMF team will pick you up upon arrival in Tzaneen and transport you back to the sanctuary approx 25 mins away where you will be greeted by the Volunteer Co-ordinator or introduced to your first point of contact and shown to your 'home' for the duration of your volunteer stay.

Please contact josie@vervet.za.org to inform her the date of your arrival when you have confirmed your travel arrangements.

We look forward to welcoming you :-)

You will need to fly to Johannesburg

RECOMMENDED OVERNIGHT

Travelbuggz (Edenvale) Sandy Van Zyl
sandy@travelbuggz.co.za
Tel: +27 (0)82 908 7125

Costs and Contributions

Supporting our work

The work at our centre can be very challenging and requires on-the-job training so we prefer to have volunteers for a minimum period of 4 weeks and are happy to have long term volunteers and offer a discount depending on length of stay. Please enquire regarding 2 or 3 week stays.

Your fees go toward food, accomodation and much needed financial support for the monkeys and the Sanctuary.

2 to 4 WEEKS: (ZAR) R 16750 (approx. \$980, €900, £790)

EXTRA WEEKS: (ZAR) R 4190 (approx. \$245, €225, £45)

We offer discounts for 3 month and 6 month stays, you can check the exact amount in your currency by visiting www.xe.com. Please enquire about our longer internships.

BANK DEPOSIT

Please deposit your contributions to the VMF account below:

Vervet Monkey Foundation

First National Bank / First Rand Bank

Account No: 62352498333

Branch Code: 250655

Swift Code: FIRNZAJJ

Tzaneen Branch

Telephone Number: 015-3071278

Physical Address: 3 First Place Bank

City Mezzanine Floor CNR Jeppe and

Simmonds Street JOHANNESBURG

2000

Credit Card paygenius:

<https://www.paygenius.co.za/pay/vervetmonkeyfoundation>

Internet Use

.....
The Foundation has broadband wireless internet. You may use the internet for free.

Cellphone Coverage

.....
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.

Other expenses

.....
Bring sufficient money and an ATM card for snacks, beverages, meals out, and touring days.



Health, Vaccinations, Insurance



HEALTH

As a volunteer you need to confirm that you have travel medical insurance prior to arrival, and you must provide us with a copy of your medical arrangements.

The local towns of Tzaneen and Letaba both have clinics and hospitals. We have a refrigerator if you need to keep medicines such as insulin cool during your stay at the Foundation.

VACCINATIONS

We recommend talking to a travel doctor.

If you are sick whilst here, you will not be allowed to work with monkeys for a period of time until recovered.

MALARIA

The Foundation is based in the northerly Limpopo Province of South Africa. Anti-malarials are usually only required when visiting malaria areas such as Kruger between October - May. We recommend that you bring insect repellent or buy a natural one from our gift shop and wear long sleeves in evenings.

“

I asked my travel doctor for advice on travelling to South Africa - She administered my vaccinations that same day.

Alan, 22, London UK

”

INSURANCE

We require confirmation of your travel / medical insurance policy prior to your arrival.

Due to the nature of your work, handling the monkeys can result in the occasional scratch or “nip” as they are still wild animals. Ensure you have an up to date anti-tetanus shot.

Always be alert when travelling to and from the Foundation.

12. - Health, vaccinations, insurance and recommended project kit

Things you'll need to bring

Recommended Project Kit

On occasions, you may be lucky enough to spend a weekend afternoon at waterfalls or relax at a nearby lodge and spa. Don't forget your swim wear and a towel. You can also download your digital photos at the Foundation and upload your videos for our youtube series.

KIT TO BRING (not to worry, anything you forget can be purchased locally!)

- Sleeping bag and sleeping bag liner or other bedding
- Torch/flashlight or headlight and small battery or rechargeable camping light for cabin
- Your own adaptor for charging equipment (3 rounded pin or 2 round pin system), powerbank is v useful
- Toiletries & towel, bottle for drinking water
- Driving licence (for hiring vehicles)
- Old clothes you don't mind getting dirty or torn, lots of old T-shirts, shorts, long pants
- Separate set of clothes for evening use or travelling
- Lightweight long sleeved clothes (to protect you from the strong sun)
- Work gloves and hiking boots (not essential)
- Sunscreen, after sun, insect repellent (chemical free ones can be bought in the on site gift shop)
- Malaria tablets (if visiting malaria areas such as kruger) & mosquito net
- Pyjamas, nightwear / swimwear
- Flip-flops / sandals
- Trainers / sneakers
- Alarm clock / watch
- Sunhat, sunglasses, waterproof jacket, glasses or contact lenses if needed
- Co-ordinator's telephone number in case of delays etc 0027 82 725 9432
- Digital camera with computer cables for downloading images & uploading videos
- First aid kit (antibiotic ointment, anti-diarrhoea tablets, re hydration drinks, headache tablets, hand sanitizer, wet wipes)
- Optional- if you have room, we are always in need of bunny drinking water bottles, pens or e-mail us for our latest wish list. We sell cruelty free toiletries that can be worn in with the monkeys in our on site shop

DON'T FORGET...

Other items to consider are emergency contact numbers and photocopies of all important documents (such as passport, flight tickets, driver's licence, and insurance documents).

Don't forget to bring spending money. You may use ATMs across South Africa and in the local town of Tzaneen, all of which accept major credit and debit cards (remember your pin#). You may also wish to bring your mobile phone and charger (handy if delays etc).

The Village facilities



CABIN 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.

Hot Bush Showers



PRIVATE CABINS

We also have a couple of private accommodations available for an additional fee per week. These cabins have solar powered electricity and mostly wifi, you also get the luxury of having it to yourself.

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.

14. - History, Climate and Visa requirements - Warm winters, humid summers

History, Climate and Visa Requirements

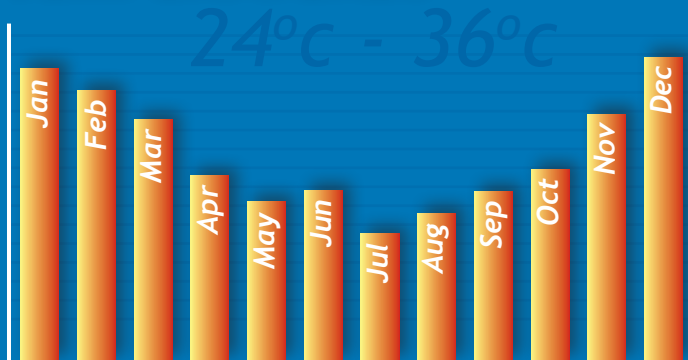
In 1964, the now famous ANC party leader, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Robben Island, off the coast of Cape Town for his lead in a campaign of civil disobedience regarding the apartheid ruling in South Africa.

In the years to follow, Nelson Mandela went on to become **president**, transforming South Africa into the country it is today and a member of the Commonwealth once again. Welcome to a country full of history, diverse cultures and vibrant people.

“We are free, to be free.”

Nelson Mandela

TEMPERATURES



www.home-affairs.gov.za

Visa requirements depend on your nationality and the length of stay in South Africa. You can visit the South African embassy to check if you are eligible for the free 90 day tourist VISA.

On entering South Africa you will be presented with a free VISA for 90 days if eligible. When stating your purpose of visit, please respond “Tourist”. Even though you are volunteering, there can be complications if you state otherwise due to the misunderstanding that you may be entering the country to be paid money for your time volunteering.

South Africa is a land full of history, diverse cultures, vibrant people, fascinating wildlife and breathtaking landscapes

Warm winters, Humid summers

South Africa

Further Information

Please feel free to contact us for more information about becoming a Vervet Direct volunteer:

Email: Josie Humble (VMF Co-Director)

josie@vervet.za.org with approx dates you would like to start or other volunteering enquiries.

General info: info@vervet.za.org

For all enquiries about our projects, how to become involved, sponsorship etc.

Tel: +27 (0)83 4545 381 Dave Du Toit (Co-Director & Founder)

Tel: +27 (0)78 1954 215 Josie Humble (Co-Director / Rehabilitator)

Fax: +27 (0)86 511 3426



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.

Reg # 020-694-NPO

For more information on the Vervet Monkey Foundation, volunteering and our latest campaigns and programmes please visit our website, listed below:

www.vervet.za.org

Our homepage...

- Vervet monkey information
- Volunteering, internships, voluntary staff opportunities & more

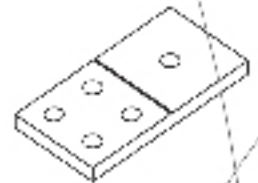
Read about our rehabilitation programme, integrating rehabilitated vervet monkeys into a natural environment.

We look forward to seeing you

On behalf of the Vervet Monkey Foundation, we look forward to meeting you as a Vervet Direct volunteer.

We hope that your experiences, helping to rehabilitate vervet monkeys under the African sun, remain with you always.

The VMF Team



Your experience doesn't have to end in South Africa, you can read about all the latest news on our social media pages, watch the weekly youtube episodes & live-streams after returning home. You may wish to get involved with some events or fundraising in your country.

You can also choose to virtually adopt or name a monkey or write an article about your visit.

Many volunteers make lifelong friends at the VMF and return year after year to help the monkeys.

South Africa is a land full of culture, vibrant people and ancient



Vervet Direct Volunteering



Volunteering directly means 100% of your contribution benefits the Vervet Monkey Foundation.

However, we do also have a number of volunteer organisations that promote our programme for which we are thankful to.

