



## SONDELA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1. Important Things To Remember:

- Passport
- Visa (if required)
- Flight Tickets
- Insurance Policies – *Medical Travel Insurance Compulsory*
- Contact Numbers
- Wallet/Purse
- Approx R500 in cash for initial spending money
- Credit Cards – ATM available – don't forget your pin
- Photo ID Driving License (if you plan to hire a car at any time)
- Toiletries/Make-up/Razor
- Medicines (if required)
- Book/Magazine
- UV Filter Sunglasses
- Suitcase: (Normal limit 20-64kg depending on airline)
- Walking boots – Sturdy and reaching around the ankles - compulsory for working in the field
- Sandals – sturdy ones, not flip-flops
- Socks – comfortable for hiking
- Hat – preferably wide-brimmed



- Long trousers x 2, Shorts x 3
- Long sleeved shirt x 2 & Short sleeved shirts x 2
- T-shirt x 4 – at least 2 for dirty work!
- Fleece or light jacket
- Beach-shorts/Bikini
- Underwear
- Sleeping Bag
- Towels (1 x small, 1 x large)
- Gardening/working gloves
- Small day bag/backpack
- Lunch / Tupperware / Airtight box / Water bottle
- Sunscreen and after sun
- Torch & rechargeable batteries – a head torch is very useful

**The following items are optional:**

- Lightweight waterproof
- Insect repellent
- Handkerchief/bandannas
- Penknife
- Sarong
- Camera, Film/Card, Batteries
- Binoculars – a decent pair is a good investment
- Small magnifying glass – for botanical and entomology work
- Hiking sticks – provide good support on rocky terrain
- Compass/GPS



## 2. House Rules

- Be polite to your fellow volunteers.
- Take into account that there are different cultures to be considered.
- Remember that not all people, political ideas and outlooks are the same as yours.
- Remember that according to the smoking law in South Africa, all buildings are non-smoking areas.
- Remember to wear closed shoes at night, just to be on the safe side.
- Be considerate towards your fellow volunteers if you listen to music - not everybody's taste in music is the same. No noise after 22:00.
- The neatness of your room is your responsibility - a housekeeper will change the linen and clean the room but the rest is your responsibility.
- All general House Rules for Sondela Nature Reserve also apply.

## 3. Examples of Previous Projects undertaken by Volunteers

- **Project on Porcupines, their Habitat and Behaviour:**  
Study the area that the porcupines live in and note the number of holes that they use. Check the proximity of the holes to one another. Watch the dens at night and study the activity and habits of the porcupines. Note the times that they are most active.  
**Duration: 1 Week**
- **Project on the Tick Control Methods used at Sondela:**  
Move through all the different areas on Sondela and see the different methods of tick control. Keep close count on the number of animals that use that specific area, breaking them down into the different species. Write down your thoughts on the effectiveness of these areas. Make recommendations if you think there are better ways of controlling ticks.  
**Duration: 1 Week**
- **Project on the Feeding Habits of Nyalas at the Chalets:**  
  
Observe the Nyalas carefully in the mornings and in the evenings. Identify the number of males and females. See where they start and where they finish. See if they follow the same routine each day. Go back in the afternoons and see if they follow the same pattern. Make a note of all the food taken by them, what they like and what they dislike. Write recommendations on what we can do to prevent the Nyalas from being given the wrong types of food.  
**Duration: 1 Week**



- **Project on the Different Trees at Sondela and the animals that use them:**  
One of the guides will lead you to find all the different areas that we have on the Nature Reserve. Make careful notes on what tree types are in what areas. Make careful notes on the animals that utilize the trees and what they use them for.  
**Duration: 1 week**
  - **Project on the Difference in Behavior of Red Hartebeest in Captivity and in the Wild:**  
Study Lulu at the Wildlife Centre. Make descriptive notes on her daytime behaviour and nighttime behaviour. Move out into the Nature Reserve. Make sure that you study the Red Hartebeest intensively and make proper comparative notes. Make recommendations on how we can improve Lulu's daily routine to make sure that she can be released back into the wild.  
**Duration: 1 week**
- 4. Volunteer Activities are varied and can include:**
- **Basic Horse Care**  
On this activity we will teach you how to exercise, handle and groom the horses as well as clean the stables. Some of the activities that you will do include:
    - Grooming
    - Diseases
    - Stable Management
  - **Basic Cattle Care**  
Experience for a day, what it feels like to have a cattle farm. Learn about the diseases that can affect cattle and how to do pest control. Some of the activities that you will do include:
    - Care
    - Diseases
    - Management in the field
  - **Amphibians**  
Discover some slimy creatures and learn some of the interesting facts and myths surrounding them. Some of the activities that you will do include:
    - Catching amphibians
    - Identification of amphibia
    - General Knowledge



- **Basic Tracking**

We will teach you how to track and what to look for when tracking. Some of the activities that you will do include:

- Track ID
- Different areas
- Ageing of tracks
- Tracking of injured animals

- **Basic Astronomy**

The African night skies will take your breath away! You will learn about:

- Stargazing
- Constellations
- Milky way
- Moon phases

- **Basic Survival**

You've seen the Reality Shows, now learn for yourself how to survive with almost nothing, by using:

- Survival techniques
- Fire making skills
- Traps
- Water

- **Basic Reptiles**

How do reptiles differ? Look and learn as we teach you these characteristics as well as the different types of snake venom. Please Note: we will not teach you how to handle any snakes, as they are very dangerous:

- Snakes
- Lizards
- Venom and poison
- Crocodiles
- Dangers

- **Basic Trees**

Learn some of the cultural beliefs, which trees can you use for food and which for medicine:

- Common species
- Uses
- ID of trees



- **Basic Grasses**

Learn which grasses are edible for humans and which are good for animals:

- Common species
- Uses
- ID of grasses

- **Basic Birds**

Interesting facts on birds and some of the myths surrounding them:

- Common species
- ID of birds
- Interesting facts

- **Basic Mammals**

Why do Blesbok shake their heads? Some interesting facts on some interesting mammals:

- Common species
- ID of mammals
- Mammal Behaviour

- **Anti-poaching**

We will show you how to track these guys, how they make their snares and how they are hidden:

- Human Tracking
- Snares
- Fence walking
- Anti-tracking

- **Basic Insects**

What is the difference between insects and spiders?

- Common species
- Catching
- ID of insects

- **Basic Ecology**

Everything in nature has a certain purpose. We take a look at:

- Life cycles
- Nutrients cycle
- What is an ecosystem
- Trophic pyramid



- **Scorpions**

We will show how to catch them, identify them and be able to tell which ones are dangerous:

- Common species
- Venom
- ID of species

## 5. Some Popular Excursions Available in the Area

- De Wildt Shingwedzi Cheetah & Wild Dog Sanctuary  
[www.dewildt.org.za](http://www.dewildt.org.za)
- Zebula – Lions, Tiger Walk, Cheetah Run  
[www.zebula.co.za](http://www.zebula.co.za)
- Aventura Warmbaths – Water slides, Spa, Heated Pools  
[www.foreverwarmbaths.co.za](http://www.foreverwarmbaths.co.za)
- Thaba Kwena – Crocodiles Farm  
See [www.golimpopo.com](http://www.golimpopo.com)
- Mabalingwe – Big 5  
[www.mabalingwe.co.za](http://www.mabalingwe.co.za)
- Nylsvley Nature Reserve – Protected wetlands and bird sanctuary  
[www.nylsvley.co.za](http://www.nylsvley.co.za)
- Monte Casino – Entertainment and Bird Gardens  
[www.montecasino.co.za](http://www.montecasino.co.za)
- Pretoria Zoological Gardens – Zoo  
[www.zoo.ac.za](http://www.zoo.ac.za)
- Sun City – World famous resort and entertainment centre  
[www.suncity.co.za](http://www.suncity.co.za)
- Limpopo Information  
[www.golimpopo.co.za](http://www.golimpopo.co.za)