



## EC VOLUNTEER

# African Elephant Encounter



### ABOUT

*In 2009, it was found that there was a serious lack of research done on captive elephants in South Africa, particularly with respect to their welfare and breeding, within their own unique environments. With this in mind, the project established the first elephant research unit dedicated to captive elephants - The African Elephant Research Unit, also known as AERU.*

*This research unit is a non-profit trust, with the following objectives:*

- *To conduct and facilitate research studies of the elephants based at the Knysna Elephant*
- *To work with parks and other captive elephant operations in South Africa*
- *To promote ethical and non-harmful research of captive elephants in South Africa*
- *To guide management of captive elephant operations through science*
- *To provide information relevant to wild elephants to improve their protection and conservation*
- *To carry out our mission, which is: conservation through education*



### WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The elephant herd you will be working closely with comprises of five females (aged 7 – 25), two adult males (aged 22 and 14) and two young males (aged 8).

Usually volunteers work a 5-day week with weekends off. Occasionally you may be asked to help over the weekend and some evenings.

In conjunction with the other activities, volunteers are asked to assist Dr. Debbie Young (Director of AERU) collect research data from the elephants at including the following:

- Monitoring of behaviour - following and observing elephants in the field, recording behaviours such as grazing, drinking, playing, dusting and walking
- Recording social interactions between elephants - how they relate to, and communicate with each other using their trunks and bodies
- Night-time observations of elephant behaviour
- Observing and recording interactions between elephants and tourists
- Studies of feeding behaviour and plants eaten by the elephants
- Collection of dung for physiological analysis
- You will have the opportunity to get involved in many more different activities during your stay.
- We also work closely with five other elephant facilities. Depending on the length of your stay, you may have the opportunity to visit and/or work at some of them.



## WHAT TO WEAR?

You will be supplied with two Elephant Park t-shirts that you must wear during your working hours and you must be presentable at all times. AERU will supply you with a branded jacket for use during your stay. These can be purchased or must be returned on departure. You will need to supply your own trousers/shorts. These need to be hard-wearing and neutral colours (khaki, browns and greens). Dark blue jeans are also suitable. Shorts must be no shorter than mid-thigh. Open toed shoes are not appropriate when out in the field with the elephants. Hiking boots/trainers are most appropriate for while you are working.



## ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

- Volunteers live in the AERU bunkhouse. There are five rooms, each with their own shower and toilet. The rooms have two to three beds, so you may or may not have to share, depending on the number of volunteers at the time.
- AERU has also added additional accommodation facilities. This is an annex at the owner's house and is a short walk away from the bunkhouse. There are 4 rooms with 2 to 3 beds each and with their own shower and toilet. The annex also has its own kitchen and living area.
- Bedding is provided.
- The AERU offices and library are in the bunkhouse. The library has a small lounge with a TV and DVD player for volunteers to enjoy on their off days. The offices open onto a wooden deck and braai area which overlooks the dam and park.
- Volunteers who stay four weeks or longer get to spend a night in our luxury 'Elephant Lodge' located above the elephant boma. This five-star accommodation where you get to 'sleep with the elephants' is the only place in the world that offers you this type of experience!
- Meals are not included. There is a fully equipped kitchen area (stove, fridge, freezer, kettle, microwave & toaster) and you are responsible for buying and cooking your own food. Weekly shopping trips are organised for you to buy supplies. There is a restaurant at the park, which is open between 08:30 and 17:00 every day.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This is an animal-based project working with elephants in Knysna.

Being a premier tourist destination, it is essential that volunteers are always neatly presented and can be identified as part of the team.



## MINIMUM AGE 18



## MINIMUM LEVEL OF ENGLISH REQUIRED

**INTERMEDIATE to UPPER INTERMEDIATE:** a strong understanding of English at a conversational level is required



## SKILLS/PERSONALITY TRAITS REQUIRED:

Volunteers are required to be dedicated, hard-working, mature and motivated. You should be in good health and reasonably physically fit, as you will be out in the fields following the elephants. Specific wildlife experience is not a necessity. Veterinary students, biology students and animal lovers will benefit greatly from this project.



## APPLICATION

Complete the application form





## ARRIVAL

### AT GEORGE AIRPORT ON INTAKE DATE

- Airport pickups are between 12pm and 3pm on intake dates - volunteers who arrive earlier will need to wait till 12pm.
- If volunteers arrive after 3pm or have missed their flight it is their responsibility to be in contact with AERU management in order for them to arrange alternative taxi transport.
- Volunteers will be responsible for the cost of the taxi transfer and will need to have the cash available to pay the driver on pick up.

### DEPARTURE ON MONDAYS

- Airport transfers for departures will be Mondays, leaving the park at 10h00, which means that all flights must be booked from 13h00 onwards, as check-in is 1 hour prior to departure and the airport is 95km from the park.
- If flight departure times are before 13h00 it is your responsibility to arrange alternative transport or ask AERU management for assistance. You will be responsible for the cost of the taxi transfer to the airport in this case.

### STARTING/INTAKE DATES 2020:

3 weeks +						1 week					
13 Jan	03 Feb	24 Feb	16 Mar	06 April	27 April	06 Jan	26 Jan	06 Feb	08 Mar	29 Mar	19 April
18 May	08 June	29 June	20 July	10 Aug	31 Aug	10 May	31 May	21 June	12 July	02 Aug	23 Aug
21 Sept	12 Oct	02 Nov	23 Nov	14 Dec		13 Sep	04 Oct	25 Oct	15 Nov	06 Dec	27 Dec



## WHICH TRANSFERS ARE INCLUDED?

Arrival & departure transfer from George Airport



## WHAT TO BRING?

A waterproof jacket or poncho is always a good idea whatever time of year you are planning to visit the park, as the weather can be very unpredictable. It is a good idea to bring lots of extra socks, as you will be doing a lot of walking.

### OTHER ITEMS YOU WILL NEED

- Alarm clock
- South African plug adaptors
- Pens
- Towels
- Camera
- Torch / flashlight
- Good pair of walking boots/trainers
- Gumboots / rubber boots are recommended (especially in winter when it can be very cold and wet!)
- Clothes of neutral colours
- Warm tops / fleeces or jacket (waterproof trousers may come in handy in wet weather. Night temperatures can drop to 0°C)
- Clothing for layering is always good as it often warms up during the day.
- Small rucksack for out in the field
- Water bottle
- Insect repellent (during the summer months: November – March)
- Sun cream (SPF 30 or more)
- Sun hat / cap
- 1 pair of rubber gloves (for picking up dung samples)
- 1 pair of working gloves (the gardening 'leather' type - for cleaning out elephant pens and bringing branches in for the elephants)
- There is a token operated laundry facility which has washing machines and tumble dryers. Volunteers receive one free wash load per week, and additional tokens can be purchased at a cost of approximately €3.00 per wash and €4.00 per dry



### OTHER USEFUL ITEMS YOU MAY WISH TO BRING

- Swimming costume (we have some of the most beautiful beaches in the world on our doorstep, which you can visit over the weekends)
- Books, games, movies, music, etc. for the evenings
- Binoculars, personal first aid kit, laptop

You will be able to purchase AERU branded t-shirts, fleeces and beanies, which you can use as part of your uniform in the field. Then take them home with you and help spread the AERU message.



### VACCINATIONS

Consult your local doctor/travel clinic.



### WHERE IS THE PROJECT BASED?

- Country: South Africa,
- Region: Located between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay



### WORKING?

- Minimum duration: 2 weeks
- Maximum duration: 12 weeks
- Daily hours: working hours will be discussed but you will be busy for 5 days a week
- The project is open all year round



### COSTS?

1 weeks	€	790.00
3 weeks	€	1,680.00
4 weeks	€	2,160.00
6 weeks	€	2,370.00
8 weeks	€	3,080.00
extra week	€	315.00



### PROBATION?

All volunteers are subject to a two-week probation period.



### SICK DAYS?

The project must be notified by 08:00 if you are going to be absent due to illness.



## WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- Project placement and all correspondence with the project
- Arrival & departure transfer at the project (scheduled dates)
- Arrival orientation
- Accommodation and basic bedding at the project
- Weekly shuttle for supplies
- Wifi
- A South-African braai evening
- A branded coffee cup/travel mug
- 2 branded T-shirts to wear during work hours
- An AERU branded jacket which must be returned on departure
- Elephant lodge night if you stay for 4 weeks or longer
- Support services from both the project and EC Cape Town
- 24/7 assistance on EC Cape Town's emergency phone for the duration of your stay



## WHAT IS EXCLUDED?

- Visa application fees
- Travel insurance (available at €15 per week if booked with EC)
- Flights
- Meals
- Towels
- Spending money
- All other local transport requirements
- Excursions



## TERMS AND CONDITIONS?

- *Standard EC Terms and Conditions apply.*
- *In addition, please note the following Project Booking and Cancellation Policy:*
  - *25% cancellation fee if cancelled 8 weeks prior to arrival*
  - *50% cancellation fee if cancelled 30 days prior to arrival*
  - *100% cancellation fee if cancelled 14 days prior to arrival*
  - *50% payment on confirmation of booking and balance payable 30 days prior to arrival*

