



**A GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING AT ALBIZIA CAMP AND WILDLIFE  
RELEASE SITE**

**In partnership with CROW**  
**Centre for Rehabilitation of Wildlife**



# VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

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## Albizia Camp - Hluhluwe

Albizia Camp offers the volunteers that have been active at the CROW facility in Durban the ideal opportunity of seeing the full circle of the rehabilitation process from admission to release.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Situated on a 1200 Acre conservancy in Hluhluwe; Northern Zululand we offer the perfect base for rewilding and releasing rehabilitated wildlife.

As a satellite station of CROW in Durban we always have animals that need care and releases are ongoing. Science forms a large part of what we do up here as well. We try and track and monitor key species that have been released to gather data that will assist in future releases to ensure we get it right.

Run by a small, yet highly dedicated and experienced team of staff and local and international volunteers, CROW assists over 3000 injured, orphaned and displaced animals every year. From mongoose, genets and monkeys to raptors, reptiles and antelope, CROW represents a second chance at a free, safe and sustainable life for all wild animals in distress.

CROW is a registered non-profit organisation in South Africa and relies solely on the support and goodwill of the public both locally and internationally to ensure the doors to its centre remain open.



As a proud member of the IWRC (International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council), CROW strives to raise awareness and improve the quality of wildlife rehabilitation in South Africa and to uphold the code of ethics adopted by fellow professional wildlife rehabilitation practitioners around the world.

## VISION

CROW's vision is to be an independent, pioneering force in the rehabilitation and conservation of orphaned and injured wildlife, while promoting the preservation of their natural habitat.

## MISSION STATEMENT

CROW is committed to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and orphaned wildlife and believes in action and education with regards to the protection of all natural resources.

## VALUES

As a reputable and professional wildlife rehabilitation centre, CROW strives to uphold the following values in all areas of the organisation's work:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Compassion
- Commitment

## HISTORY

With many years experience in conservation and wildlife management in Northern KZN we have over the years managed to create biospheres combining small properties and dropping fences to create conservancies.

With the hub being Umkhumbi Lodge [www.umkhumbilodge.co.za](http://www.umkhumbilodge.co.za) we have established a base from where we can operate as a satellite site for CROW – Durban. From here we have easy access to all the conservation areas in Northern KZN as well as our own conservancies.

## SPECIES AT CROW

CROW is registered to work with ALL species of wildlife indigenous to KwaZulu-Natal. We have a large selection of animals under our care, ranging from primates and mammals to reptiles and antelope. With an average of over 300 admissions per month, CROW is one of the busiest centres of its kind in South Africa.

*"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."*

**PLEASE NOTE:**

As a wildlife rehabilitation centre, CROW strives to release all its animal patients back into the wild as soon as they have made a full recovery. Therefore it is imperative that the conditions at our centre mimic their natural environment as closely as possible and contact with humans is kept to that which is strictly necessary for medical treatment of that animal. This means staff and volunteers are not permitted at any time to stroke, pet and/or “play” with the CROW’s wildlife patients. This is not only important for your own safety, but to also ensure we give all wildlife patients the best chance of a successful return to their natural habitat in the wild.

**TRAVEL INFORMATION**

As you would have been part of CROW’s program already we will provide transport to and from the Durban facility up to Zululand.

**VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT DURATION**

The minimum length of stay on CROW’s volunteer programme is two weeks (due to training requirements). There is no maximum time limit as long as there is accommodation available for your requested duration.

**PEAK PERIOD**

Volunteers are needed at CROW throughout the year. Peak period for us is our Spring and Summer months (September – March) when we are inundated with babies and also undertake the majority of our releases. However, please bear in mind that this is also our hottest and most humid time of the year!



*“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.”*

**VOLUNTEER AGE RANGE**

CROW’s Volunteer Programme has a minimum age limit of 18. While there is no upper age limit, more mature volunteers must be fit and healthy and able to carry out the physical tasks our volunteers assist us with on a daily basis.

**QUALIFICATION AND SKILLS**

No specific skills or previous experience are required for volunteers. However, volunteers need to be dedicated and hard working. Caring for wild animals is a physically demanding task.

## **LANGUAGE**

The staff at CROW predominantly speak English.

## **VOLUNTEER WORK**

5 Clinic volunteers assist CROW staff with the day to day running of the centre. Main activities include feeding and caring for the animals, ensuring their enclosures are cleaned on a daily basis and helping the team with general maintenance around the grounds.

Daily enrichment and stimulation programmes for the animal patients is also a crucial activity volunteers assist us with. Those volunteers that are willing and able are also given the opportunity to assist staff on wildlife rescues and releases, wherever possible.

Daily monitoring of some of the key species that have been released in the field. This will entail going out with the telemetry equipment and recording the data once the animals have been found.

Alien plant clearing and general reserve management tasks. This could be anything from fixing a fence that has been flattened by a Hippo to doing snare patrols and chopping out alien plants.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Each day starts with a cup of coffee and a team meeting to lay out the plan for the day ahead as well as individual task allocation.

## A Typical Day in the Life of a Volunteer here

Please note that the below is just provided to give you a general idea. **Every day at CROW will be different! We have to do captures, releases, snake call outs which could happen any time of the day or night.**

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07H00	•Volunteers report for duty
07H00 - 07H15	•Morning meeting with staff and volunteers to plan the day ahead
07H15 - 09H00	•Morning feeding & cleaning Session (Preparing food for all animals and assisting Clinic Nurses with feeding the animals and cleaning out their enclosures) Assisting with rescues and releases as needed.
09H00 - 12H00	•Field work. Monitoring of key species that have been fitted with telemetry transmitters •Alien plant clearing and bush rehabilitation. •Check camera traps, pit traps and compile species checklists.
10H30- 12H00	•Volunteers assist with daily animal enrichment activities such as gathering natural greens, berries and bugs to supplement animals' diets & making a variety of natural treats and stimulating "toys" for the animals from natural materials. Assisting with rescues and releases as needed.
12H00 - 13H00	•Volunteer Lunch Hour
13H00 - 17H00	
Afternoon feeding & cleaning session (Preparing food for all animals and assisting Clinic Nurses with feeding the animals and cleaning out enclosures) Assisting with	• Afternoon monitoring before sunset

In terms of daily food preparation: The centre accommodates a wide range of animals including carnivores which need to be fed protein/meat. Vegetarian volunteers need to be aware that food preparation will include the cutting up of meat and poultry for these animals.

Looking after all the food specieses such as rats, mice, chickens, cockroaches, mealworms etc would also be part of the day to day work load.

The staff will ensure volunteers are taken through a full orientation and fully prepped in safety procedures if and when they assist with rescues and releases in the field. For those volunteers who do not wish to participate in rescues and releases, please note this is not mandatory and you can elect not to go

## ACCOMMODATION

Here at ALBIZIA we base our volunteers at Umkhumbi Lodge in a self contained dorm room or one of our visitor chalets.

Volunteers are responsible for doing their own laundry (facilities are provided) and keeping the house clean and tidy.

Volunteers will have access to all facilities at the lodge like the pool, bar and restaurant.

All volunteers are expected to cook and eat together in the main unit near reception. A weekly roster is drawn up and easy to follow recipes are provided to help those who need them. A weekly shopping list is compiled according to the planned menus. Please note that our volunteer fees covers 3 basic meals a day. You will be expected to purchase any luxury food items yourself. The restaurant will be available should you not feel like cooking.

The lodge has internet which is available for the volunteers to use, however, the wireless booster does not reach the volunteer house. There is a seated area at CROW's office where volunteers can access the internet.

## CLOTHING

We strongly recommend that you bring old, light and comfortable clothes to wear during your stay. Bear in mind that the volunteer activities are quite physical and will be done outdoors so be sure to bring a lightweight raincoat and sunblock with you just in case. Closed, comfortable shoes are a must!

Please note that volunteers are required to look neat and presentable during their stay. No inappropriate or revealing clothing will be accepted.

## COST AND IMPORTANT INFO

The cost of participating in our volunteer programme worked on a per person, per day basis. This covers your 3 basic meals per day as well as all accommodation costs and volunteering training and supervision. Volunteers who wish to stay longer than 4 weeks will pay a reduced rate per day.

This will include a game drive into Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve and a day trip to St Lucia Estuary for a boat cruise and a drive through the Eastern Shores part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

## **WHAT TO PACK:**

Please remember that you will be spending the majority of your time outdoors and Hluhluwe has a hot and humid climate and in summer temperatures can be up to 45 degrees. It does get cooler during the winter months so a fleece or a warm jacket for your outdoor work will be needed.

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We recommend that in addition to your normal clothing, you bring the following with you:

- Walking shoes (trainers will be fine!)
- Warm Jacket/Raincoat
- Day Bag - small rucksack
- Sunhat/Sun cream (at least factor 30 in the summer months)
- Alarm Clock (especially if you're not an early riser)
- Towels (bath/beach)
- Adapter plugs (3 round pin)
- Toiletries/shower shoes
- Padlock (lockers are provided in the volunteer house for valuables)
- You do not need bedding, it is provided for you. A sleeping bag is optional. If bringing your own bedding, the volunteer house has single size beds only.
- A smart/casual outfit and shoes for any special occasions or event
- A pair of gardening gloves
- Camera, binoculars (optional)
- Books, games, cards (optional)
- Personal Discmans, iPods, laptop etc

## **PLEASE DON'T FORGET:**

- Passport & visas where applicable
- Air tickets
- Travel insurance
- Cash & credit cards
- International driver's license (if you will be renting a car during your stay) – please note that the old pink British license is not valid in South Africa
- Baggage – advisable to use a rucksack;
- Pocket money

## **ITEMS YOU CAN BRING TO HELP:**

If you have any spare space in your luggage, here are a few items you can bring with to donate to the centre: Small feeding bottles (available from your local vet or

pet shop and are usually used for domestic kittens and puppies), lambing teats, heating pads and hot water bottles to use for baby animals.

### **INOCULATIONS AND MEDICATION:**

Rabies and tetanus inoculations may be required, but please check this with your local doctor and take his/her advice. Speak to your travel clinic with regards to malaria prophylaxis – Durban is not in a malaria area but you might like to travel to other areas in the province that are. It is also recommended that you bring a small first aid kit with your regular medication and general items you might require while away from home – speak to your pharmacist about suggestions.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Mobile phones do operate with full reception and it is recommended that you bring one with you. SIM cards are cheap and readily available. You will need to ensure your phone is unlocked to be able to use this. Please speak to your mobile service provider about their policies and charges for setting up international phone services during your stay at CROW.

**the Best cage is an Empty cage!**