



THE LIONS
FOUNDATION

Volunteer information pack



WELCOME TO THE LIONS FOUNDATION

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at The Lions Foundation and the Rescue & Conservation Centre. This information pack will explain everything you will need to know to prepare for your trip and volunteer experience, so please read it carefully.

The Lions Foundation (TLF) is located at Schrikkloof Private Nature Reserve in the Limpopo province in South Africa. TLF was founded with the intention of providing big cats that have been used in circuses, in the tourist or hunting industry, as pets or that were illegally trafficked, a safe forever home in an environment as close to nature as possible. The Lions Foundation is a sister organisation of Stichting Leeuw in the Netherlands. Stichting Leeuw rescues, rehabilitates, and shelters big cats and if possible, relocates them to The Lions Foundation, for the well-being of the cats and to make room in the Netherlands for new animals in need.

As a non-profit organisation we are dependent on the compassion and generosity of our donors and volunteers, without whom we would not be able to continue with our work. Your help makes it possible for us to continue working to provide direct protection and rehabilitation for captive big cats and other wild animals.

We are very passionate about our work, and I'm thrilled to know that others actively share our mission. You will be happy to know that all funds that are donated, and part of your fee to volunteer with us, goes directly into the care of the animals at the sanctuary, in the form of food, medicine, new enclosures, enrichments and veterinary care.

As a volunteer you will be expected to respect our rules regarding the animals for their well-being and your own safety. We expect all volunteers to work as a team and assist where help is needed around the sanctuary and the estate. Some jobs may not be directly with the wildlife, but they are just as important, and keep us as a sanctuary functioning and working. We also ask everyone to come with a good work ethics and positive attitude, and of course a passion for animals, including their welfare and conservation.

We hope you will enjoy your stay with us and help our animals to the best of your ability.

On behalf of the animals, we thank you for choosing to volunteer with us.

Robert Kruijff
Director Stichting Leeuw

Albert Le Roux
Director The Lions Foundation Founder



ABOUT THE LIONS FOUNDATION & THE LIONS FOUNDATION RESCUE & CONSERVATION CENTRE

In the whole world, big cats are abused and exploited for profit and human gratification. There are many examples of animal exploitation within the tourist industry, for example, photo animals, animals performing in degrading shows, and canned hunting. There is still a thriving illegal trade in big cats for pets and 'medicine'.

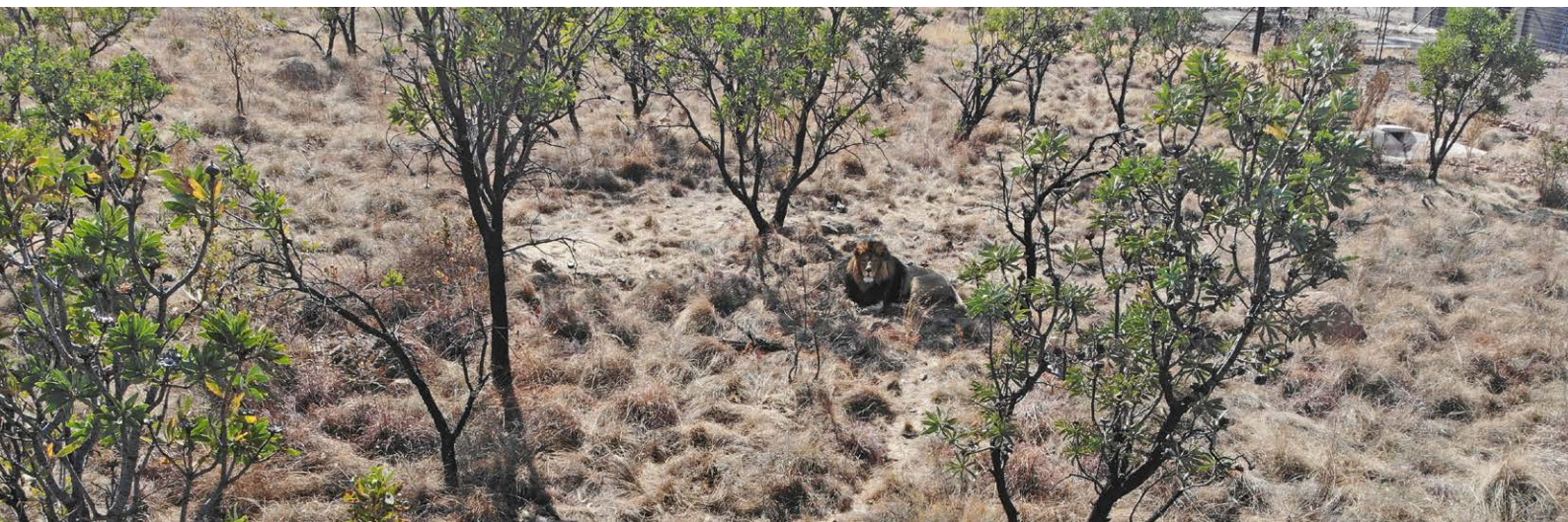
The major goals of our organisation are:

- To rescue captive big cats and rehabilitate them as far as is feasible, allowing them to live the rest of their lives in a safe environment, as close to nature as possible and providing them with the best care possible.
- To educate and encourage people to appreciate, understand and protect wildlife and their natural habitats through education. Tours are given regularly to visitors of the lodge at the reserve with the aim of raising awareness for the plight of big cats.
- To assist in and develop new projects involved in the protection, rehabilitation, humane captive environments, and welfare of all wild animals.
- To rehabilitate captive wild animals and release them back into the (semi) wild, repopulating forest areas in which they are already endangered or extinct.

TLF was founded in 2019 by Stichting Leeuw, with the help of a few major donors who acquired Schrikloof Private Nature Reserve, which they made available to The Lions Foundation. In 2023, The Lions Foundation purchased the adjacent Guestfarm & Predator Park, a long-cherished wish that is now coming true. This park is 60 hectares in size and is home to many native predators under human care, such as lions, hyenas and the African wild dog. With the purchase of this zoo, The Lions Foundation will not only be taking care of animals in captivity but will also contribute to endangered populations in the wild. In addition, and not unimportantly, The Lions Foundation put an end to the business model of the predator park: the breeding of lions and other animals that serve the petting and hunting industry.

TLF is a NGO (non-governmental organisation). We receive help from many individual donors, most of them in the Netherlands, companies, and foundations with a passion for big cats. Albert Le Roux, born and raised in South Africa, heads this project with the help from a team of full-time staff, mostly local, and a team of international volunteers who pay for their stay. Without the dedication of volunteers, TLF would not be able to continue to help these animals. We have volunteers from all over the world with a broad age range from 18 to 80. They represent various backgrounds from gap-year students, wildlife conservation/ animal husbandry related students and scientists, career-breakers, and retirees. Everyone must live and work together, so it is important to be considerate and respectful to others and be flexible with an open mind.

We are passionate about the well-being of as many big cats and other animal we can rescue and shelter. We hope you are too.



THE LIONS FOUNDATION

Since the start, The Lions Foundation has given shelter to dozens of big cats. Many of these were rescued from circuses, private possession and zoos by Stichting Leeuw in the Netherlands and were rehabilitated and relocated to TLF to their forever home. These cats can, unfortunately, not be released back to the wild. They have not learnt to hunt, some of them were bottle-fed, declawed and/or defanged. They simply would not be able to fend for themselves in the wild. At TLF they live on 1.5 ha of savannah land and are well taken care of.

The Lions Foundation is the perfect place for volunteering with big cats and other animals. We require a team of dedicated volunteers throughout the year. With us, you will have the amazing opportunity to volunteer in South Africa working with animals and helping us to care for a wide variety of wildlife.

South Africa has rich biological diversity. However, sadly increasingly, humans are influencing the lives of many beautiful animals. Big cats are turned into breeding machines, used as entertainment, or discarded by animal parks. Donkeys are being abused or left to die. Monkeys are exploited, injured, or taken from their mothers. Rhinos are poached, orphaning their young. The list goes on and on. TLF is trying its best to get those animals out of the miserable conditions they are living in.

At the sanctuary you will find lions and tigers in enclosures and donkeys roaming free in a very large enclosure. On the reserve, there are many indigenous animal species to monitor and flora to be maintained. At the Rescue Centre there are all different types of animals, such as wild dogs, hyena's, servals and mongooses.

Where feasible we try to provide the rescued animals within our care an environment as close to "nature" as possible. Our overall objective will always be to rehabilitate and release these animals back to the wild. Unfortunately for the big cats at the sanctuary, this is often difficult and, in most cases, not feasible at all.

The sanctuary always needs help from animal lovers and wildlife enthusiasts whether in the form of volunteer work, donations, or professional help such as veterinary experience.

At The Lions Foundation volunteers usually work long days, around 8-9 hours; without the invaluable contribution from volunteers the sanctuary would simply not be able to function. Although difficult at times, the volunteer work at TLF is highly rewarding.

We take our rescue and shelter work very seriously. Please be aware the TLF is strictly hands off. Volunteers will have little physical interaction with animals but will provide the essential daily and long-term needs of the animals, such as feeding, cleaning enclosures, and providing stimulation in the form of behavioural and environmental enrichments. Only our donkeys need physical attention in the form of brushing and checking them.

Located on Schrikkloof Private Nature Reserve is also a beautiful lodge, with 10 rooms for tourists, mostly people passionate about nature and big cats specifically. All proceeds of this lodge go to The Lions Foundation. Volunteers are occasionally asked to help the lodge staff if there is a special event.

The big cats

If you wish to interact ethically with big cats, learn more about them and the problems they face, and be a part of the solution, TLF is the place to come to and volunteer. TLF is a [NSPCA-accredited sanctuary](#).

The savannah land of our nature reserve gives our rescued big cats the chance to roam around in near natural surroundings. We have enclosed large pieces of land to make these bushlands their home. Our big cat enclosures are 1.5 hectares with natural bushes and trees. We couple most of them, if possible, so they can live together. They each have a separation area, where they are released upon arrival, where they are fed and monitored.

Most of the big cats were relocated from Stichting Leeuw in the Netherlands. They rescued them from circuses, private possession, and other bad circumstances, like war zones in Ukraine. When they are rehabilitated to good physical and mental health, and when enough funds are raised, Stichting Leeuw brings them to TLF, to live happily ever after.



Apart from Africa's pride, the lion, we also have tigers. Even though these majestic animals do not occur naturally on the African continent, we feel that the tigers that were sheltered at Stichting Leeuw in the Netherlands, also deserve the very best. The South African climate suits them very well.

Both lions and tigers are endangered species. Even though our big cat project cannot help the populations in a practical manner, we can create awareness about the plight of lions and tigers, by educating our visitors and volunteers, both in South Africa and in the Netherlands.

The support of our volunteers is essential. We have created a sanctuary for big cats to retire and be given the respect that these amazing creatures deserve. When volunteering with the big cats, you will help them by providing essential care such as preparing food and enrichments and assisting the caretakers in every possible way.

However, it cannot be stressed enough that around the big cats we have a very **strict hands-off policy**. There is absolutely **no petting** or feeding the animals by volunteers. You will be instructed on how close you are allowed to get to the fencing, and you will always be accompanied by a caretaker or experienced person.





VOLUNTEERING AT THE LIONS FOUNDATION

Volunteers with The Lions Foundation will spend their time with the animal caretakers and reserve manager, following a daily schedule. This includes the following:

- Prepare meat for the individual big cats and other animals
- Assist the caretakers with feeding the animals
- Clean the feeding facility and materials after feeding
- Prepare and distribute behavioural enrichments
- Observe animal behaviour
- Clean enclosures, including scrubbing pools
- Feed the rescue donkeys
- Groom the rescue donkeys
- Assist the reserve manager and staff taking care of and observing the reserve wildlife
- Place, replace and inspect camera traps on the reserve and watch and report on footage
- Carry out general reserve maintenance including maintaining fences, fire corridors and roads, plant grasses and trees
- Educate visitors of TLF
- On occasion help out at Schrikkloof Lodge
- Assist the security staff at night

To become a TLF volunteer you need to fulfill the following criteria:

- You must be in good physical and mental condition
- You must be able to speak English
- You must be at least 18 years old
- You must have a positive and practical attitude towards animal welfare and wildlife conservation



YOUR LIFE AS A VOLUNTEER AT TLF

Please take the time to review our Rules and Policies before arriving. These can be found at the end of this information pack.

When you come to volunteer at TLF, not only do you get the chance to work close to amazing wildlife, but you also get the chance to meet and work with people from around the world and experience an entirely different culture.

Volunteers are very much appreciated and are essential to the proper running of the sanctuary; however, in all that we do the animals must come first. We encourage you to make friends and socialise after work in the evenings. However please always be respectful to the animals, other volunteers and staff that live here. There is a limit to the amount of noise and disturbance that can take place at the sanctuary, and any unruly partying or reckless behaviour will not be tolerated.

Accommodation, food, and on-site amenities



Most accommodation is two or three people per room in single-gender rooms, with the exceptions of couples, friends, and families. Your pillow, blanket and bedsheets are provided to you during your stay. All rooms have either en-suite or shared bathrooms with a western style toilet and a shower.

Your room is cleaned before your arrival, and we ask all volunteers to look after their own space by keeping your personal area tidy. Keys for rooms are provided. All rooms have electrical outlets for you to use, the South African with three round pins, 220v. Please bring adapters and/or extension cords for your type of plugs.

We have a communal area where volunteers eat meals, socialise and where all your work and life at TLF is coordinated.

All meals will be provided. If you are on a special diet, please talk to your Volunteer Coordinator. Juices at breakfast, tea and coffee throughout the day is provided.

You can always do your own shopping for snacks, drinks and food to your own taste in town, and keep fresh items in the fridge in your room, labelled with your name.

Free use of Wi-Fi is available to check emails, social media and for booking flights or hotels. We politely ask that this facility will not be used to download large files such as movies.

We also have an on-site laundry where you can get your clothes washed (R5 per item).

On-site support

Our Volunteer Coordinator can help whenever you need assistance. With scheduling issues, animal issues, illness, emergencies back home, as well as personal support while you are away from home. Our coordinator can be very busy, but we have an open-door policy so you can come and talk to us any time you need. Each week our Volunteer Coordinator holds a volunteer meeting to provide updates on the animals, and to resolve any work-related issues that have arisen during the week prior, as well as to allow volunteers the chance to ask questions about the animals or their volunteer experience.

Orientation

Upon arrival, volunteers will be greeted by the Volunteer Coordinator, be shown to their room and receive an explanation regarding domestic matters as well as a brief description of the work they will be doing, including instructions on health and safety, regarding proximity to the animals. On the day of arrival or the next day, you will also be given a full tour of our sanctuary where staff will explain to you why we exist and how you can help animals in South Africa. This is a great time to meet many of our animals and learn their stories. You will also receive a tour of the nature reserve where the sanctuary is located.

Work schedule

The working day starts with breakfast at 7AM and the work starts at 7.30 AM, volunteers will normally finish work around 5PM, with several breaks throughout the day for lunch and water and toilet breaks. Volunteers are expected to work 6 days a week with one day off. The work can be quite physically demanding but the result is always well worth it.

Volunteers will be assigned to work groups each day by the Volunteer Coordinator. Each person has their own pace, their own strengths, and weaknesses. You are kindly asked to respect that not everyone has the same abilities and may work at a different pace to yourself.

Everyone is here to help the animals and makes their contribution in their own way. Please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator if you feel you have been given too much or too little work for your personal abilities, as there are plenty of tasks to suit all.

The Volunteer Coordinator will be around to answer any questions and monitor and observe throughout the day. You, the volunteers help a lot around the sanctuary with daily tasks and large ongoing projects. Without you, it would not at all be possible.



Living expenses and money matters

Whilst all your food and accommodation are covered while you are here, volunteers should bring some additional money with them, such as for local sightseeing, meals out with friends, snacks, etc. South Africa is cheaper than most western countries but is one of the more expensive countries in Africa. The local currency here is the South African Rand (ZAR or R). Check the exchange rate with your own currency from one of the many online resources, for example www.xe.com.

Examples of some typical costs:

A meal, excluding drinks, at a restaurant (average)	ZAR 150
Bottle of beer at the local convenience store	ZAR 25
Bottle of soft drink 500 ml (e.g., Coca-Cola)	ZAR 25
SIM-card starter pack for mobile phone (SIM-card including 2 GB and 60 mins)	ZAR 100

Local town amenities

We are situated at a 30-minute drive from Bela-Bela town. The town has two local shopping malls, some chain restaurants, a few supermarkets, and a shopping street. There are also ATMs, but please note that it is not always possible to pay with your own bank debit card in the village or at TLF. Please take the time to read our rules and policies section about going into town.

Contacting Home & Emergencies

Please make sure your friends and family are aware of how to contact you before you leave. We suggest if your government has a tourist registration service that you register your location with them.

Telephones

Even if you are only staying a few weeks, the best option is to bring your own mobile phone and buy a cheap South African SIM-card here (available in Bela-Bela town) or E-SIM, so you can receive calls/ SMS for free and makes calls at a reasonable cost. The mobile wavebands in South Africa are the same as Europe, Australia, New Zealand, etc. So, a mobile phone from these regions will work fine here. Cell phones from North America will need to be multi-band to be able to work here. However, it is also possible to buy a cheap new phone here.

If you do not have your own phone with you, it is not possible to make international calls from TLF. If you need to make an overseas call you can do so at one of the nearby towns such as Bela-Bela.

In case of an emergency (and only in a real emergency), you can receive telephone calls at the sanctuary. The best time for people to call is in the evenings and not after 21:00 local time. Please stress that calling the TLF numbers must only be in a real emergency and preferably not during the middle of the night in South Africa. Local time in South Africa can be checked on the following site: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/southafrica/johannesburg>

Wish list

Some volunteers ask us if there is anything they can bring to help us with the animals at the sanctuary. However, as we are mainly dealing with large animals, we also need large and strong enrichment items, which are not easy to bring on a plane. It will be very much appreciated if you donate to TLF so that we can buy what we need locally. This will also support the local economy. If you think you can help with specialized animal husbandry equipment, please contact info@thelionsfoundation.com.

Free time at and around TLF

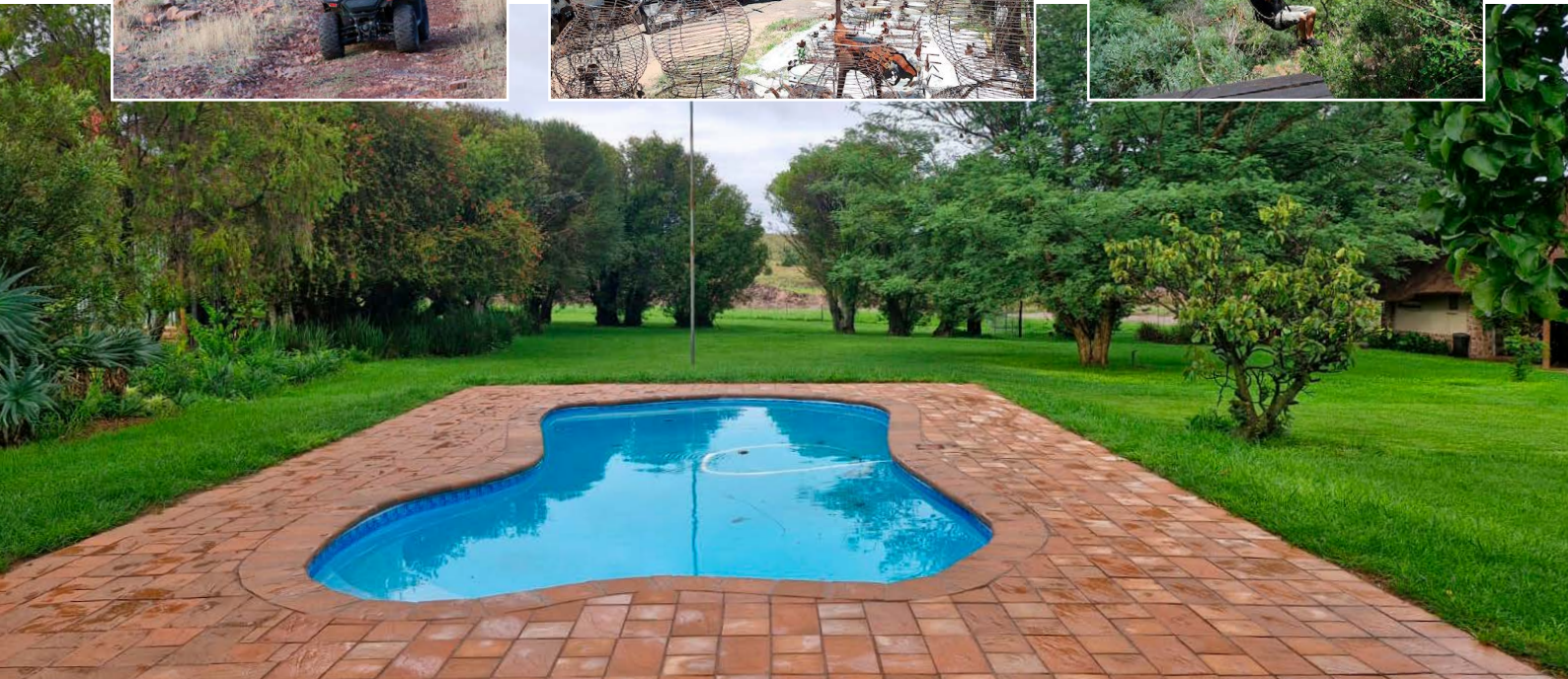
Care for the animals is required 365 days a year. However, there is free time during and after work, and we offer volunteers a day off each week and encourage you to get outside and experience what there is to do.

At TLF, usually there are enough volunteers to enable a few people from each project to have the same day off together, although on some occasions it is not possible to have many people off on the same day. We ask volunteers to be flexible about this.

- *Free time during a general working day:*
When you have breaks during the day between work you are free to fill up your water bottles, get a quick snack and use the bathroom. If you feel there is too much free time during the day, there is always some kind of work you can assist with, such as enclosure maintenance, providing extra enrichments to animals etc. Please use your initiative and ask the Volunteer Coordinator.
- *Free time in the evenings:*
There are some locations at the centre for you to relax, read, or get in touch with home. We do not encourage you to go out of the reserve after sunset, as it can be unsafe.
- *Free time on a day off:*
You can visit a town in the area, visit another animal shelter (we will provide names) visit a big-5 nature reserve, go ziplining and more.

Usually, transport can be arranged from TLF for a small fee.

Please note that the caretakers at TLF are often extremely busy with animal welfare and husbandry, as well as with other volunteer issues and can therefore not always be available to give tourist and entertainment advice.





VOLUNTEERING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Climate

With the effects of global climate change already altering the climate, it is hard to predict what the next season will bring. However, the following is a general guideline for our part of South Africa:

South African cultures

South Africa is a wonderful, but complicated place with a turbulent history. It is advisable to read up on its history, even if it is just a little bit. South Africa has been famously referred to as the rainbow nation because it is made up of so many diverse cultures and religions. Contained within South Africa's borders are Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Tswana, Ndebele, Khoisan, Hindu, Muslim, and Afrikaner people to name but a few.

All these people are united by calling South Africa home, and therefore their lives all contribute to forming a part of the country's heritage, identity, and culture.

Amongst black South Africans, a substantial number of rural inhabitants lead largely impoverished lives. Almost all South Africans speak English to some degree of proficiency, in addition to their native language, with English acting as a common language in commerce, education, and government. South Africa has eleven official languages, but other indigenous languages are also spoken by smaller groups, chiefly Khoisan languages. Members of the middle class, who are predominantly white and Indian but whose ranks include growing numbers of other groups, have lifestyles similar in many respects to that of people found in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

The Apartheid state legally classified South Africans into one of four race groups, and determined where they could live, and enforced segregation in education, work opportunities, public amenities and social relations. Although these laws were abolished by the early 1990s, the apartheid racial categories remain ingrained in South African culture, with South Africans continuing to classify themselves, and each other, as belonging to one of the four defined race groups (blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians) making it difficult to define a single South African culture that doesn't make reference to these racial categories.

Understanding that South Africa is composed of all these various influences is essential in understanding the country. If you make a real effort to understand and respect the South African cultures, you will find this really enhances your experience of the country.

South African people and animal welfare

In South Africa the way people treat each other is very different from the way they treat animals. Many people do not see animals as creatures with feelings of pain and fear. You can be confronted with, from our point of view, quite shocking situations. You can see wild animals kept in captivity, like a monkey in a dress or an eagle in a cage no bigger than itself. Note that not all SA people have this attitude towards animals. This attitude towards animals seems to be changing in and people seem to be more conscious of nature preservation, with the help of many NGO-projects such as the work TLF is undertaking.

Please be prepared for difficult situations and hold back if they occur. You are a guest in the country and animal welfare foundations are lobbying for procedures to do something about this abuse. It may also be worth remembering that certain forms of severe animal abuse are also common and legal in your own country.





HOW YOUR VOLUNTEER FEE IS SPENT

When you volunteer at TLF, the fee you paid is divided in two parts:

Volunteer housing and food

Part of your fee goes to your stay here, including all your meals, water, accommodation, and the staff that help look after you during your stay.

Animal care

The other part of your fee goes to helping us care for the animals and the general running costs of The Lions Foundation, as well as the staff needed to help care for our animals. Without you, the volunteers, we would be unable to help as many animals as we do.

Our volunteer partner organisations may charge a small commission fee to help arrange your experience here, and without them we would not get as many volunteers to help us.





PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Please read through this section carefully, so that you are fully prepared in getting to us safely, and that you are organised when you arrive.

VISA

The following is advised for most nationalities, but requirements frequently change, so do not trust your, potentially outdated, travel guide and PLEASE CHECK THE VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR NATIONALITY WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY IN YOUR COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE.

- Your passport needs to be valid for at least 6 months upon arrival to South Africa. Please check and make sure your passport will not expire soon, or otherwise organise a new one plenty of time in advance of your departure date.
- You will need to be able to show a valid return ticket. If you can't, you will need to pay a deposit.
- If your stay in South Africa is shorter than 90 days, then the free VOA (Visa On Arrival, which just means a stamp in your passport) should cover you if arriving by air.
- You may very well have to show that you have the financial means to support yourself for the time you stay in South Africa. Bring bank statements or anything that proves this.
- You may need a letter from TLF confirming your participation as a volunteer, this will be sent upon request.

Please note: Overstayers waiting in South Africa for a visa extension will be punished with a temporary ban from South Africa upon leaving the country. This banishment can be imposed for a period from 12 months up to five years. Even if you have been waiting (for a long time) for approval to extend your visa, customs will not hesitate to impose a ban on you!

Travel Documents

You are advised to make copies of important travel documents (passport, tickets, driving licence, etc.) and keep these somewhere safe and separate from the originals. An extra copy to leave with your family back home might also be a good idea. We also suggest that you register your travel details with your home countries Foreign Affairs Departments if they have one.

Travel insurance

Although we will do our best to ensure your safety, TLF does not accept any liability for you or your possessions whilst on or offsite as a volunteer. Please make sure you have the necessary insurance cover for any emergency and that you bring a copy of your insurance policy with you. Your travel agent will recommend insurance and there are several independent insurers offering deals for travel insurance.

Health insurance

Foreigners are not eligible for free medical treatment in South Africa. Since the local hospital in the nearest town of Bela-Bela is not available, you will need to go to a private clinic if you need medical attention and you will need to pay for it. Please check with your existing health insurer how you are covered and if you need extra medical insurance for volunteering in South Africa.

Packing List

This list will help you consider what you will need during your stay at the sanctuary, alongside all the other items you would normally take while travelling. Most items can also be bought in town, if you want to travel light.

We suggest:

- Sunhat, cap or bandana
- Torch/flashlight
- Alarm clock
- Power adaptor
- Comfortable shoes or sandals
- Lightweight rainproof clothing (e.g. poncho - cheap quality ones can be bought locally)
- Ensure your mobile phone is unlocked if you wish to buy a South African sim card
- Simple first aid kit with plasters, bandages, antiseptics, and various medications for gastric bugs

Summer season (Oct - Mar) specific:

- Lightweight work clothes you do not mind sweating in and getting dirty (shorts and t-shirts)
- Long sleeve top(s) and trousers to protect you from mosquito bites in the evenings
- High-factor sun-cream
- Sunglasses
- Mosquito net with hooks to hang it
- Plenty of insect repellent

Winter season (Apr - Sep) specific:

- Warm clothes, gloves, shawl, winter hat. Especially nights can be very cold here.

Pre-arrival Checklist

Pay deposit payment to TLF (as soon as possible to secure your application)

Pay remainder balance to TLF (60 days before arrival)

Health check-up with travel doctor (well in advance of travelling)

Vaccinations

Visa (if required)

Travel insurance

Medical insurance (if necessary on top of your normal health insurance)

Book flights (the sooner, the cheaper)

Notify TLF of arrival details

Give travel documents copies and TLF contact details to family members or friends in case of emergencies

Review TLF Rules and Policies before arrival



HEALTH & SAFETY INFO

Before arriving

We recommend that all volunteers go to a travel doctor plenty of time before they arrive to receive the most up to date health advice before visiting South Africa. We require that all volunteers have their vaccinations for DTP (Diphtheria/Tetanus/Polio) up to date. This is mandatory.

There are plenty of mosquitoes here, but TLF is NOT in a malarial area. Please consult your travel doctor for the latest health advice.

Whilst at TLF

The health and safety of our volunteers is very important to us, and we take all possible precautions to ensure that there are no accidents. Please see the details below which will help you to stay safe at the centre.

Animal attacks

The facilities and procedures for animal management, as well as the hands-off policy, are in place for both the safety of people as well as of the animals. However, during the normal course of work at the sanctuary and reserve, it is possible that you are in contact with an animal. You will also be warned about specific animals during your introductory tour, with whom extra caution is advised.

Volunteers that are scratched or bitten by animals are often victims of their own lack of attention, their failure to listen to guidance, or failure to correctly judge the risk involved. Please always be alert when working near the animals and please be aware that you are not expected to take any risks. In fact, you are specifically instructed not to take any risks with the animals. If in doubt about handling any situation, please ask a member of staff.

Snakes and spiders

Please be warned that, on rare occasions, you may encounter snakes or spiders during your stay here. In such cases, DO NOT approach them, withdraw, and alert a member of staff, who will move them to a safe area. Occasionally snakes are encountered in long grass, in the trees, pools, etc. but they rarely attack people unless they feel threatened, so keep your distance. Be sure to take precautions, wear proper closed-toe shoes and working gloves if handling logs and leaves, etc. Spiders can hide in many places. They are rarely venomous, but please take precautions by keeping work and living areas tidy. Please ensure your room is always kept clean and tidy to avoid harbouring any unwanted visitors.

If you are unfortunate and get bitten or stung, withdraw immediately and call for help. Do not attempt to catch the snake or spider, as this will increase your risk of being bitten again. Most of the species here are not venomous, and even those that are do not always inject venom when they bite. You will be given first aid and then taken straight to the hospital if deemed necessary. If you are bitten on the hand, then remove any rings you might be wearing, due to risk of swelling.

Mosquitoes and other bugs

In the region of South Africa where TLF is located there is no malaria or other mosquito borne diseases. Please make sure you have the necessary vaccinations or precautions if you arrive from another part of South Africa.

You should aim to protect yourself from bites as much as possible. During dusk hours or working in the bush, use adequate insect repellent and preferably wear long sleeves and trousers to cover up your skin. If you do get bitten, TRY NOT TO SCRATCH! Working in this environment means you could infect your wounds.



It is important to always keep wounds of any kind clean and dry to prevent infection. If your wounds become infected, inform a member of staff know immediately, so that we can treat you or take you to the hospital for treatment before the infection spreads. Also, your bites may flare up considerably if you have an allergic reaction, for which it is recommended to use antihistamine pills and/or cream. These can be purchased from the local pharmacy.

In the bush we do have ticks, which can cause tick bite fever. African tick bite fever is a disease caused by bacteria. You can get infected if you are bitten by an infected tick. Ticks that are infected with bacteria that cause African tick bite fever are usually most active from November through April.

There are no vaccines that prevent African tick bite fever. You can protect yourself from infection by taking the following precautions:

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Ask your Volunteer Coordinator if and where you can expect ticks.
- **Avoid Contact with Ticks.** Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in the centre of trails.
- **Treat clothing and gear** with products containing 0.5% permethrin. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear and remain protective through several washings.
- **Use an insect repellent** containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone. Always follow product instructions.
- **Check your clothing and gear for ticks.** Any ticks that are found should be removed. Cold and medium temperature water will not kill ticks.
- **Shower soon after being outdoors.** Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting tick-borne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.
- **Check your body for ticks.** Conduct a full body check upon return from potentially tick-infested areas. Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Check especially these parts of your body for ticks:
 - Under the arms
 - In and around the ears
 - Inside belly button
 - Back of the knees
 - In and around the hair
 - Between the legs
 - Around the waist
- If you find a tick attached to your skin, simply **remove** the tick as soon as possible.

Medical emergencies

Staff at the sanctuary can perform basic first aid. If you feel you or a member of staff feels you need to see a doctor, you can see one in town, which takes approximately 30 minutes to reach. This will be at a private clinic at your own cost. There are doctors fluent in English, the clinic is a hygienic and sterile environment for treatment.

Your medical insurance will probably cover the costs, but please enquire with your insurance company at home before you travel. You may need to take out extra insurance while doing volunteering work.

There is a pharmacy in town, where you can find all medications you would find available across the counter at home.

Zoonotic diseases

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that can be passed from animals to humans and vice versa (reverse zoonotic diseases). All the animals cared for at TLF are thoroughly tested and kept in quarantined areas of the sanctuary until we can confirm they are not a risk to the people working here or to the other animals. However, it is important to be aware of the health risks that can occur when working with any wild or domesticated animals.

Zoonotic diseases are a very important reason why volunteers should not handle any of the animals at the sanctuary and a good reason for not keeping them as pets. Viruses and bacteria can be transmitted to humans through bite wounds and scratches, or contact with faeces, saliva, and urine. Close petting of animals can result in exposure to disease. We have a hands-off policy for animals, and do not allow volunteers to enter the quarantine area for your own safety.

A further concern is the possibility of us transmitting disease to the animals in our care. For example, respiratory infections are the most common diseases transmitted from humans to monkeys, even when there has been no physical contact. Primates are very close to us genetically, so infections can easily cross over.

Outside the sanctuary

Here we can only advise you to be careful and obviously we cannot accept any responsibility for your safety when you are not on the premises. We recommend that you dress and behave in a respectable manner in town; this includes refraining from drinking on the streets in public. We also strongly recommend that you return from town before it gets dark and that you do not go out anywhere after dark. If you must do this, then please only do so in groups. For your own safety, we do not allow volunteers to walk out of the sanctuary after dark alone. Please be aware that you will be liable for injuries to yourself or others for failing to comply with this rule.



GETTING TO THE LIONS FOUNDATION

Volunteers are responsible for arranging and paying for their own flights. We are unable to advise or help you in booking flights. The nearest international airport is Johannesburg OR Tambo (airport code JNB).

Arranging a transfer to our sanctuary

We can arrange pickups for volunteers from Johannesburg airport or a hotel. The costs are R1500 per person, or R3000 per ride if you travel with more than two volunteers at the same time. Sometimes we can arrange pickups together with other new volunteers that arrive on the same day as you. However, this depends on what time you and other volunteers are available to be picked up.

Your pick-up details. If you wish to be picked up from the airport, please send us your flight number and arrival time. If you want to be picked up from a hotel, please send us the hotel name, address, and phone number. Payments can be made on arrival at the sanctuary.

Contact

The Lions Foundation
Schrikkloof Private Nature Reserve
Farm Schrikkloof 951
Alma Road
Bela-Bela, Limpopo
SOUTH AFRICA

Office Contact

+27 (83) 630 2081 or +27 (84) 611 0089 (during regular office hours)

Volunteer Coordinator Contact

+27 (83) 630 1059

Email: volunteer@thelionsfoundation.com

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us

Please take time to read our website www.thelionsfoundation.com and www.schrikkloof.com so that you can start to familiarize yourself with our organisation. Most importantly, come with an open mind, considerate attitude, lots of enthusiasm and you are sure to have an amazing experience with TLF.

The animals are all waiting to meet you!





THE LIONS FOUNDATION RULES & POLICIES

Please review the following pages closely and abide by these rules during your stay with us. Most of these are common sense and will help you and all the other volunteers to create lifelong memories and to have an amazing and safe experience with us at TLF.

Please follow the rules of our sanctuary when it comes to animal welfare and your own safety.

Rules regarding animals

- The Lions Foundation is NOT a zoo or a petting farm. Unfortunately, most of our animals have already had too much contact with humans, and although some may look like they want attention, we require volunteers not to touch them as we aim to introduce animals with other conspecifics. Animals appearing to give social interaction are NOT trying to be friendly. In most cases, this behaviour is a sign of significant stress and submission. Do not be drawn in by it. For example, a lion rubbing its head against the fence may not be a gesture of wanting its head scratched, it is to leave its scent on the fence to mark its territory. Though it may be a nice experience for you to touch an animal, there is a very real risk of disease transmission, both obvious (if you have a cold or cough) and not so obvious. We will ask volunteers who touch big cats without permission, to leave. We can see photos of you with big cats on social media, and we encourage other volunteers to report cases of touching.
- As we work with potentially dangerous animals and the accommodation is built on a hill, we regret that we cannot approve applications from physically and/or mentally less-abled people.
- TLF has a hands-off policy. This is so the environment of the animals is as natural as possible, so we can ease the integration with others of their own species, facilitate any future releases back to the wild, as well as for staff and volunteer safety.

- At the sanctuary we do have hands-on contact with our donkeys, such as for feeding, monitoring and grooming. Most of our donkeys have had abusive pasts. New volunteers will be given a safety briefing about working with our donkeys before starting.
- You are only to touch or to have contact with animals when you are specifically instructed.
- Volunteers may only approach the big cat enclosures together with a caretaker or Volunteer Coordinator. Big cats are extremely fast and dangerous animals, and most of them at our sanctuary have an abusive past so they are not fond of people at all. ALWAYS leave one metre space between the fence and yourself, for your safety, the safety of others and the safety of the animals.
- IF YOU NEED TO ENTER AN ENCLOSURE AT ANY TIME, ALWAYS ENSURE THAT THE ANIMAL IS SAFELY LOCKED IN THE SIDE ENCLOSURE BY A MEMBER OF STAFF BEFORE GOING IN. Only the caretakers will have keys to the enclosures. Please also always ensure for yourself that all doors/hatches that should be locked, are locked.
- Never hesitate to ask or double-check if you are unsure of what to do if you think a situation should be handled. No question is 'dumb', and always better be safe than sorry.
- Our animals' welfare, safety and needs always come first. Our sanctuary rescues animals frequently, so some schedules and rules will change to meet the specialised needs of our animals. Keeping animals happy and busy is a major task at our sanctuary. Whenever you have an idea, please discuss this with a member of staff (e.g., enrichments and improvements of enclosures).
- Please also report if you see anything broken or that an enclosure is at risk from rust, etc. Please help to observe the animals at the sanctuary so we can detect any problems as soon as possible. Always tell someone as soon as possible when you notice something out of the ordinary.

Note any observed wounds or behaviour that is out of the ordinary for the animals and report this to a member of staff. This may be an animal that is mostly cared for by you and we need your help to ensure that all animals are happy and well while they are with us.

- Our dogs and cats at the centre belong to the staff and are generally friendly. However, let them approach you for attention rather than you approach them. Don't feed them from the table and don't let them into your room.

Volunteer duties

- Volunteer morning duties usually start at 7AM at the meeting area. Be on time. If your job starts at 7AM be there at 7AM. It is not fair on other people if you turn up too late and they have to wait for you.
- Volunteers usually work 6 days a week depending on the needs of the sanctuary. Days off are assigned on a weekly basis. However, if we are short on volunteers or if we have many people to train, we may ask that you are flexible with booking days off.
- Please advise the Volunteer Coordinator if you are feeling ill. Depending on the job you have been allocated, you may be asked to switch for the day or asked to return to bed.
- Please do not wear any jewellery whilst working in the sanctuary. It is possible to get jewellery stuck in cages or on tools when working.
- Headphones should not be worn whilst around the sanctuary. Apart from the risk of being distracted and grabbed by animals, it can be dangerous if you cannot hear any warnings being shouted out. NO SPEAKERS near the animals.
- For all jobs you will find the tools you need in the workshop. Please treat these with respect and return them to the correct place after use. If you use brooms or tools please clean them and put them back where they belong so that the sanctuary is kept tidy and people can find things easily.
- Make sure the areas inside and outside the workshop and the coldroom are always clean, whatever job you are doing. Before you leave make sure all areas are swept and cleaned. This is both for hygiene and to stop unwanted visitors such as monkeys, rats and snakes.
- Every task involved with the big cats will have at least 2 persons allocated to it, one of whom will be an experienced volunteer or a caretaker. Please do not ever feed or clean out the animal enclosures alone.
- Never walk around the enclosures with food or drink or whilst smoking. The animals will react on this.
- Please take care during and after heavy rainfall as the ground becomes very slippery.

Dress code

To preserve the reputation of TLF, volunteers are asked to behave in a respectable manner at all times and to dress accordingly. Please remember that we are guests in this community. Please consider what kind of impression you make when you dress.

To prevent injuries and infections, closed type shoes are recommended. It is mandatory for everyone to wear footwear (no bare feet) for safety reasons. Ground based infections such as tetanus and a variety of parasites are not uncommon. Toe, foot, and ankle injuries are the most common type of injury at the sanctuary, because the whole area is quite rocky and some volunteers tend to wear unsuitable footwear. Closed toe rubber shoes ("cros" style) are quite popular and are safer than flip-flops.

Volunteer house, kitchen & bedrooms

- BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS! You are now living in a group situation, which may be difficult to adjust to. Think about other people before leaving a mess.
- Label your own food and do not take other people's food. Unfortunately, if your food is unlabeled, people do not know who it belongs to and may feel inclined to take it (i.e., beer, etc.). We have a communal refrigerator where you can store personal items. Please remember, if you did not buy it then it's not yours.
- Smoking is confined to a specified area. Do not smoke in the bedrooms!!! Please do not smoke at the dining tables, or around the sanctuary. Ensure your cigarettes are put out properly and empty the ashtrays on a regular basis.
- Milk is ONLY offered for tea, coffee and other hot drinks or for cereal.
- Bread, eggs, jams, condiments, tea and coffee are provided for all volunteers.
- Please empty rubbish bins when full and replace with a fresh bag. Full bags are to be placed in the waste disposal area.
- Always keep all communal areas, including your room, clean.
- Noise is a real issue. Please consider the volunteers who need to sleep close to the communal area. Noise should be kept to a minimum after 22:00. Remember we have wild animals at the sanctuary, who will react to noise unusual to them. If they are under stress, they could fall ill.
- Do not bring your bedding out of your room to sit on in the volunteer house. Bugs will crawl in and cause discomfort to you at night. This bedding will then need to be thrown out and replaced, at expense to the sanctuary.
- You may receive new roommates at some point during your stay. Please keep note of this and ensure the room is clean and tidy when a new volunteer is due to arrive.
- Bedding can be changed at the laundry and changes are encouraged once a week.
- Do not leave fans and lights on in your bedroom during the day. It will not keep the room cooler at night when you wish to be there, and it will drain energy needed for the sanctuary during the day. If fans and lights are left on, do not be surprised if someone enters your room to turn it off.
- Please recycle glass/plastic bottles, cans and plastic in the bins provided.
- If you are the last one to go to bed at night, please turn off all lights in communal areas.



Drugs and alcohol policy / socialising on and off site

- TLF has a Zero Tolerance for drugs. If volunteers are found with illegal substances or narcotics, they will immediately be escorted off premises AND reported to the police. If the police finds you on site with drugs, they can have the sanctuary closed to all foreign visitors and volunteers, which means we would have to close the sanctuary.
- Between the hours of 5PM and 7PM we sell alcohol at the bar, and we allow socialising in the Volunteer House and kitchen area. However, when the bar closes, please keep the noise down. Remember other volunteers may not want to socialise, and we have many animals living here. The communal area should be quiet at 22:00. Drunken behaviour will not be tolerated, so please be respectful.
- Working with wild animals early in the morning when you have a hangover is dangerous for yourself, other volunteers and the animals! If we think you are hung over, we will tell you to return to bed and not work. If you turn up to work drunk, you will be expelled from the sanctuary.
- We do not encourage it, but if you desperately wish to go out clubbing and drinking in town, please ensure you have booked accommodation in town and taken the next day off, and do not wear TLF clothing, giving the sanctuary a bad name. The reserve's gate will be closed at sunset, which is between 6PM and 7PM.
- Relationships with the staff are prohibited. Gossip travels fast, and such behaviour reflects badly upon the sanctuary.
- Relationships with other volunteers are discouraged. We realise that you may be attracted to someone and that the attraction may even be mutual, but we have also found that relationships are not always happy and do not always end well, which can easily cause friction within the volunteer group. We want all of you to have a wonderful experience and be happy during your stay here (and, of course, afterwards).

TLF RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE IF:

- You do anything to harm or cause distress to any animal, including touching the animals.
- Your behaviour is causing distress to staff and/or volunteers.
- You have acted with reckless disregard for the safety of staff or volunteers, or have caused them actual harm.
- Your use of alcohol is considered excessive or unacceptable by staff.
- You are found using or being in possession of illegal substances.
- You are charged with a criminal offense during your placement.
- You have acted in such a way that you are likely to bring a bad reputation to the organisation.
- You are not fulfilling your obligations as a volunteer and continually refuse to carry out reasonable requests.
- You do not follow the rules outlined in this document.

Thank you again for choosing to volunteer with us. We hope you have a wonderful experience here at TLF! On behalf of the animals, thank you for your time and dedication.



**FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, OR ASSISTANCE
WHEN IN SOUTH AFRICA PLEASE CONTACT US
USING THE BELOW DETAILS.**



The Lions Foundation

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Alma Road
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SOUTH AFRICA

Office Contact:

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(during regular office hours)

Volunteer Coordinator Contact:

volunteer@thelionsfoundation.com

You can also find further information on
www.thelionsfoundation.com, www.stichtingleeuw.nl
and www.schrikkloof.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheLionsFoundationSA

Instagram: www.instagram.com/thelionsfoundation

A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE FOR YOU IS A LIFETIME OF PAIN FOR THEM.

DO NOT SUPPORT ANIMAL CRUELTY. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- **DO NOT** have photos taken with wild animals being used as photo props, go to animal shows, or visit big cat petting zoos.
- **DO** your research! Only visit genuine rescue and rehab centres.
- **DO NOT** purchase animal souvenirs, including bush meat, or ivory and other animal products. When the buying stops the killing stops too.
- **DO** tell family and friends. Write a story for your local newspaper back home, describing your experience in South Africa, ensuring our homepages www.thelionsfoundation.com and www.stichtingleeuw.nl are mentioned.

