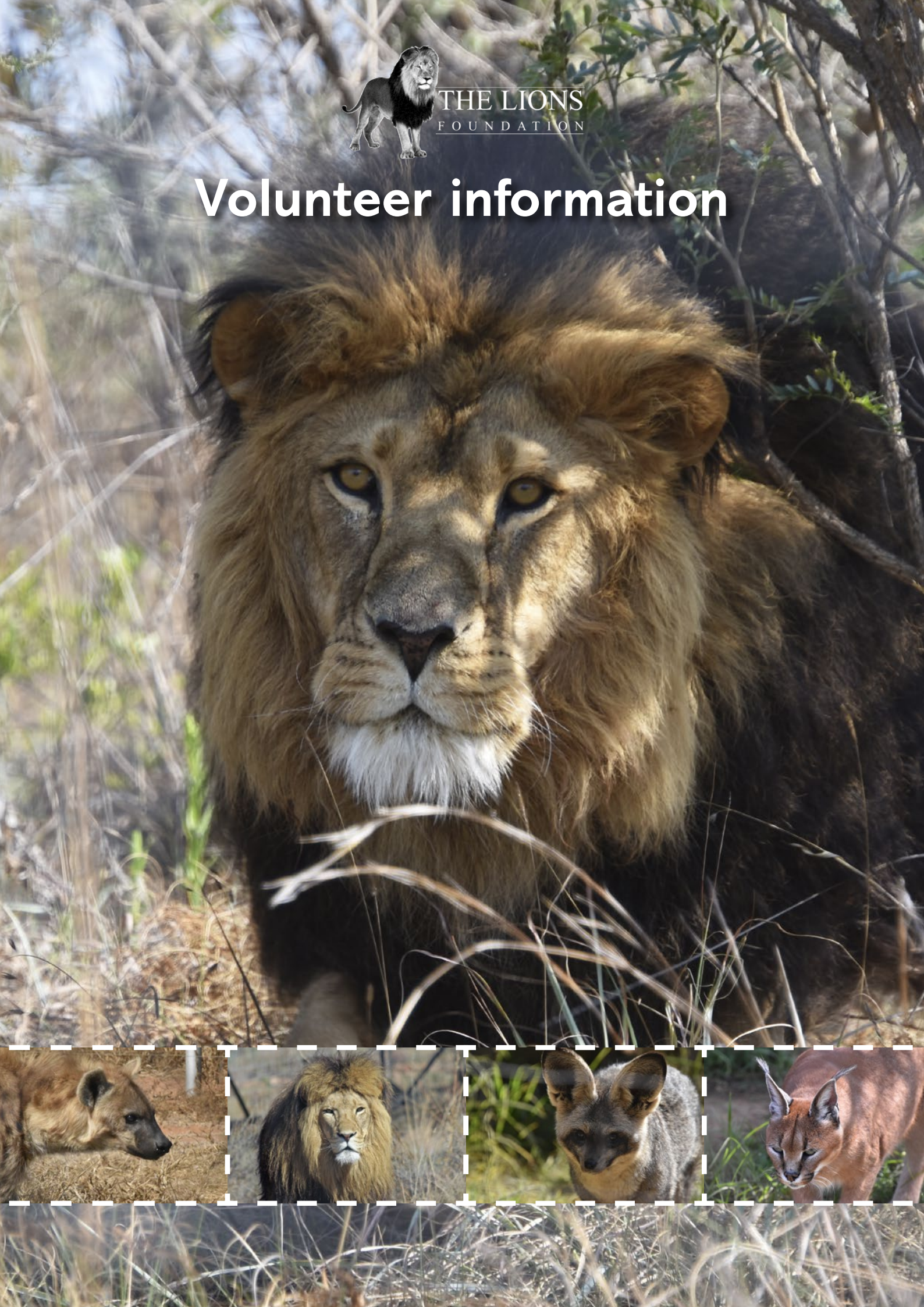




THE LIONS
FOUNDATION

Volunteer information



A lion with a large, reddish-brown mane stands on a wooden platform with a corrugated metal roof. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape under a clear sky.

WELCOME TO THE LIONS FOUNDATION

Thank you for considering volunteering at The Lions Foundation and the Rescue & Conservation Centre. This information pack will provide all the details you need to know should you choose to join us as a volunteer in the future. Please take a moment to 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 the volunteer fee, goes directly into the care of the animals at the sanctuary, in the form of food, medicine, new enclosures, enrichments and veterinary care.

All future volunteers will be expected to respect our rules, which are in place to ensure the well-being of the animals and the safety of everyone involved. Volunteers will work as part of a team, assisting where needed around the sanctuary and the estate. While some tasks may not directly involve the wildlife, they are just as important in keeping the sanctuary running smoothly. A strong work ethic, a positive attitude, and, of course, a passion for animals, including their welfare and conservation, are essential.

I hope this leaflet inspires you to choose The Lions Foundation as your charity partner. I look forward to welcoming you and offering a rewarding program where you can make a meaningful impact in supporting our animals.

On behalf of the animals, we thank you so much for taking the time to learn about our organisation and the animals.

Robert Kruijff
Director Stichting Leeuw

Albert Le Roux
Director/Founder The Lions Foundation

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 Schrikkloof Private Nature Reserve, which they made available to The Lions Foundation. In 2023, The Lions Foundation took over the adjacent Guestfarm & Predator Park, fulfilling a long-cherished wish. 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 IN SOUTH AFRICA

Have you ever considered volunteering in South Africa? It's not only a rewarding experience, but also a fantastic chance to meet people from around the world.

This opportunity is available at The Lions Foundation's Rescue & Conservation Centre, set in the stunning landscapes of South Africa, just a two-hour drive from Johannesburg International Airport. The Lions Foundation, operated by Stichting Leeuw, a Dutch organisation, offers a unique and enriching volunteer program for individuals and companies. Whether you are looking to contribute to wildlife conservation or simply seek an unforgettable experience, this program provides a chance to make a real difference.

As a volunteer, you will join a diverse group of people from all over the world, ranging from young adventurers to more experienced individuals, all with different backgrounds and cultures. It's an opportunity not just to support animal rescue and conservation efforts, but to learn, grow, and create lasting memories.

The Importance of Involvement in Wildlife Conservation

Getting involved in wildlife conservation is a powerful way to make a difference. Volunteering allows you to support important causes, contribute to animal protection efforts, and create a positive impact on the lives of wildlife. Whether you choose to help a sanctuary, join a local initiative, or dedicate your time to a conservation project, your efforts can bring meaningful change.

More people are now prioritising volunteering as a way to give back, connect with nature, and develop new skills. It's not just about helping animals—it's also about personal growth, building empathy, and experiencing the fulfilment that comes from making a difference. Volunteering has been shown to boost positive emotions such as joy, pride, and a sense of purpose. By actively engaging in wildlife conservation efforts, you can contribute to a better world for animals while also enriching your own life. Whether it's a one-time effort or an ongoing commitment, every action counts.





COSTS

Reservations will only be confirmed when your application is approved, and a non-refundable 50% deposit is received. 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.

You can currently volunteer with us for a minimum of one week. We do value long-term commitment, so the longer you stay, the more responsibilities you can get. We cannot guarantee availability on the dates of your choice, but if your application is approved, we will do our best to accommodate you.

Please, always check the website www.thelionsfoundation.com for the accurate cost.

Rates are in Euros. Please note that the rate in Rand and Dollar is only an indication. Please check the rate in your currency.

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 commission fee to help arrange your experience here, and without them we would not get as many volunteers to help us.





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.



REVIEWS

My appreciation for wildlife and the environment has been with me since I was young, so when I got this opportunity, I didn't hesitate for a second. Even though it can be heartbreaking to see the conditions some animals have endured, I found it to be an incredibly humbling and rewarding experience.

My time at TLF was absolutely amazing - from the heartwarming hospitality of the staff in the volunteer village to the dedicated animal carers who patiently educated us about animal care and their mission. It's hard to pick just one highlight, but feeding times were definitely among the most memorable experiences.

If you're still undecided about volunteering, this is your sign - you won't regret it!

Daniela

I started volunteering because I had a gap year and I thought it would be a really cool experience to volunteer abroad alone. I had a fantastic time there, because of the lovely people who welcomed me with open arms and the work I did there. It is very cool to be able to feed the lions and see how each lion has its own character.

Noor

I had an incredible experience volunteering with the Lions Foundation in 2024. I have always been passionate about wildlife, and this opportunity allowed me to get up close and learn about lions in a way I never imagined. Throughout the week, I gained valuable insights into their behavior, conservation efforts, and the dedication required to protect them.

The highlight of my experience was observing the lions in their natural habitat and assisting in their care. The foundation's team, including Albert and Loreen, was extremely welcoming and supportive, ensuring that all volunteers were well taken care of. Their kindness and dedication made the experience even more special. It was truly eye-opening, and I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat!

Gayatri

I volunteered at the Lions Foundation because I've always felt a strong connection to wildlife and wanted to contribute meaningfully to its protection. My week there was truly eye-opening. The staff and the rest of the team, went above and beyond to make us feel at home. They not only took excellent care of us but also ensured we had plenty of fun and memorable activities during our free time.

I worked closely with a passionate team and participated in the daily care of rescued animals, including feeding lions, preparing enrichment activities, and even assisting with the arrival of three tigers! I learned so much about animal welfare and the immense dedication it takes to care for these incredible creatures.

One of the highlights was quad biking through the reserve and coming face to face with giraffes - an unforgettable experience! But the most rewarding moment for me was visiting a nearby township to help feed and treat donkeys in poor condition. It was heartbreaking to see their suffering, but deeply fulfilling to know we made a difference.

This experience reinforced the importance of supporting wildlife conservation. I left feeling incredibly fortunate and grateful for the opportunity to contribute, even if just for a week.

Jennifer

One of the most unforgettable moments of the trip was seeing the lions in their enclosures and observing their powerful presence up close. Watching them move, rest, and interact with one another was both thrilling and humbling. An even more extraordinary experience was witnessing the arrival and release of the new tigers - a rare and emotional moment that underscored the importance of conservation efforts.

The safari trips added another layer of excitement, offering breathtaking encounters with wildlife in their natural habitat. Riding through the vast landscapes and spotting giraffes gracefully weaving through the trees, zebras grazing in open fields, and various species of antelope darting through the brush created a true sense of adventure.

The quad bike rides provided an extra rush of adrenaline, offering a more immersive and dynamic way to explore the surroundings. The combination of exhilarating activities and close encounters with incredible animals made this trip truly unforgettable.

Matthew

LeoVegas Group aspires to leave a lasting impact that goes beyond creating the world's greatest gaming experience - this includes making a difference for the lion population, which has declined by over 40 percent over the last two decades. In 2017, we adopted two lions, Bruno and Omar. Our collaboration includes a volunteering program for our employees, allowing them to assist with the daily care of Bruno, Omar, and other lions, as well as other animals on-site. Sponsoring employees to participate in a volunteering trip to South Africa is an effective way to show appreciation while ensuring they become passionate ambassadors for this important cause, bringing back valuable knowledge and insights to share with their colleagues and network.

Miriam



VOLUNTEERING AT THE LIONS FOUNDATION AND RESCUE & CONSERVATION CENTRE

The Lions Foundation and the **Rescue & Conservation Centre** - are located on the vast grounds of Schrikkloof. Volunteers are actively employed at both sites, which makes the work particularly varied and interesting. For example, one day you work at **The Lions Foundation**, where you help with the lions and tigers. On other days you will work at the **Rescue & Conservation Centre**, where new plans are being developed. Here all the existing, too-small enclosures are being replaced by larger and more modern enclosures in the shape of a lion's head - a unique design. Every quarter we work on a new enclosure, so if you are with us during that period, you will be contributing directly to a visible and tangible project. In addition, you will help with daily tasks. A special part of our work is also the care of donkeys rescued from emergencies in South Africa. Volunteers also help with picking up and take care of these donkeys - a drastic but rewarding task.

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 and take care of the rescue donkeys
- Assist the 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

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

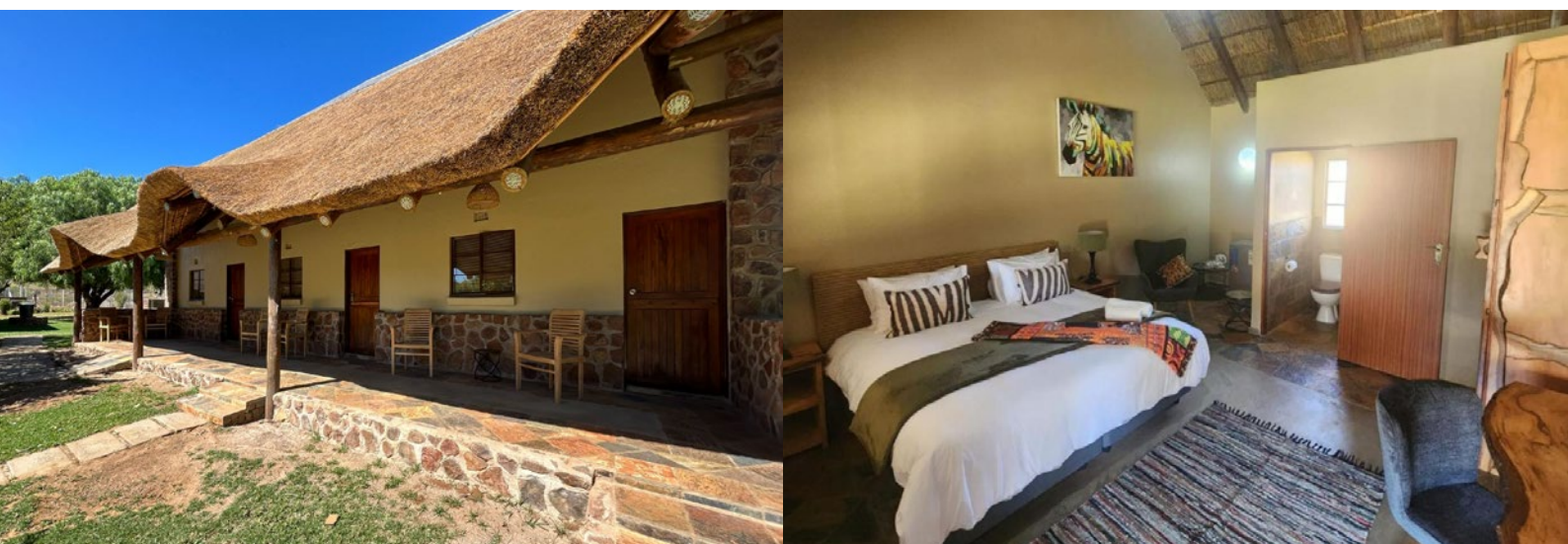


YOUR LIFE AS A VOLUNTEER AT TLF

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.

After registration, we will send a comprehensive packet of practical information, including our rules and policies. We always ask every volunteer to read these well in advance, to protect the safety of both our volunteers, caretakers and animals.

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.



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.





INTERESTED IN OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IN SOUTH AFRICA AFTER READING THIS BROCHURE?

We also offer airport pickup services, ensuring your colleagues are safely transported directly to The Lions Foundation Rescue & Conservation Centre.

Our work wouldn't be possible without the dedication of volunteers. The felines we care for have all come from emergency situations, and it's incredibly rewarding to see how we can truly improve their lives. Watching them run freely in their spacious enclosures, compared to the life they once led in captivity, is a truly moving experience. Volunteering here allows you to learn their stories while contributing to better living conditions. Caring for the animals for a week, while gaining insights into South Africa's flora and fauna from our experienced guides, is a deeply enriching experience.

In short, it's an unforgettable journey with many valuable learning opportunities that will have a lasting, positive impact, not only on the volunteers themselves but also on the companies they represent.

Do you still have questions after reading this brochure? Then send an email to volunteer@thelionsfoundation.com

Already completely convinced that you want to volunteer with The Lions Foundation?

Then go to <https://thelionsfoundation.com/volunteering-at-the-lions-foundation> and sign up by filling out the application form.

You will receive an extensive brochure with all the necessary additional information after you have applied.



CONTACT DETAILS THE LIONS FOUNDATION

The Lions Foundation

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

Office Contact:

+27 (83) 630 2081 | +27 (84) 611 0089
(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