

Vervet Monkey Foundation

# Volunteer Information Pack

*Updated: January, 2014*



You can make

a real difference to the lives of vervet monkeys

**USE YOUR TIME  
USE YOUR SKILLS  
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE  
VOLUNTEER.**

[info@vervet.za.org](mailto:info@vervet.za.org) - [www.vervet.za.org](http://www.vervet.za.org)

## Your guide to Volunteering



Armstrong (aka Army Ant) gazes up at a volunteer in the Baby Care Centre

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## 2. - Introductory Letter

**VERVET MONKEY FOUNDATION**  
**PO Box 415, TZANEEN 0850**  
**LIMPOPO PROVINCE**  
**SOUTH AFRICA**

Cyd, 56, New York, US

“ The Vervet Monkey Foundation is run by truly committed people; people who will do without so the monkeys will benefit from all monies and efforts. I would absolutely unequivocally recommend this project for all animal loving people. ”

Dear Potential Volunteer,

Would you like to experience living in the African bush rehabilitating the indigenous vervet monkey?

The Vervet Monkey Foundation operates the largest centre for vervets in the world. In 2006 we became a member of PASA (Pan African Sanctuaries Alliance) and we are also a GFAS (Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries) verified sanctuary. We currently care for over 500 monkeys and we take in many orphans each year. You may be involved with hand-rearing orphans (in baby season) and be lucky enough to see them with their foster mums, watching them become real monkeys. We also have some ex-pets here that you may get a chance to spend some time with. In addition you will help the monkeys further by general husbandry, feeding, building new enclosures, observations and maintaining the upkeep of the foundation. Longer term volunteers may become involved with integrations of monkeys into social groups which is very rewarding and a lot can be learned about their behaviour.

You will sleep in a wooden cabin and eat delicious vegan (cruelty free) meals. We are situated close to the Kruger National Park and local places of interest such as Debengeni waterfalls, the Great Letaba river and beautiful tea gardens.

No previous experience is necessary although you must have an interest in conservation. We welcome volunteers over the age of 18. This is an ideal project for anyone who has ever dreamed of working with monkeys. Be prepared to work hard and experience working under the African sun with this threatened, intelligent and indigenous primate of Africa - The vervet monkey.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

*The VMF Team*

## On Arrival to the VMF

On arrival all volunteers will have to sign an indemnity form indicating that you accept and understand that you are working with wild animals and that your presence and all activities you undertake at the centre are done so at your own risk.

Volunteers will be expected to be on call at all times, including weekends. You should be prepared for often challenging and hard work, based around a shift rota with other volunteers. A typical work day is 8 hours per day depending on the time of year.

You will be presented with a day off each week that you may use to travel to the local town of Tzaneen to purchase supplies or to relax.

Volunteering can be an altogether rewarding experience, working together with like minded individuals. You will be able to see at first hand how your actions are benefiting the vervet monkey and the people striving to protect this indigenous primate of Africa.

## DEDICATION

A number of volunteers now work at the Foundation after deciding to stay on to further support the monkeys in our care.

As long-term volunteers, they help by co-ordinating daily tasks and are at hand to offer assistance and experience to new volunteers.



## The Volunteer Community

“ I loved working and living with up to 20 other people.  
I made fantastic friendships during my time volunteering. ”

Lorna, 22, London UK

“ Spending time to earn the trust and affection of these remarkable animals is worth every effort. ”

Aubrey, 28, California, US

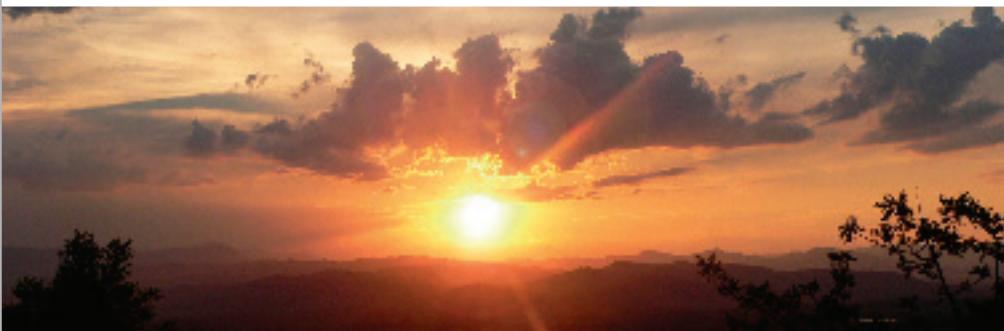
## 4. - Work and activities - Life as a volunteer

## Life as a Volunteer

## Work and activities

You will not need any prior experience as we will teach you everything you need to know - just come with enthusiasm and an interest in conservation! If you have any specific skills or interest we are happy to try and utilize them during your stay. No matter what you do, you can expect that it is hot, dirty and hands on!

- Collecting, chopping and delivering food for monkeys.
- Cooking at weekends for volunteers
- Hands-on care-giving of baby monkeys (baby season only), helping in our sickbay
- Monitoring and report writing of monkeys around the Sanctuary
- Cleaning monkey cages, washing feed bowls & plates and cleaning blankets
- Assisting with introductions and rehabilitation of new monkeys.
- Assisting with basic medical practices and administering medications.
- Clearing vegetation for fire breaks, looking after the volunteer village.
- Assisting with education outreach programs
- Participating in fundraising, newsletters, we can also use graphic design skills



“  
An experience of  
a lifetime!

”  
Hilary, 22, US

*The sun sets over the distant hills surrounding the Foundation. Temperatures in the Limpopo Province average 23°C year round*

## The Night Sky



“ Magic ”

“  
Laura, 23, Birmingham UK  
Sitting around an open fire in  
The Village watching shooting stars  
is simply unbeatable ”

The night skies of South Africa shine bright at the Foundation. Far away from city lights, the constellation Orion and the Milky Way can be clearly seen.

## Hands On Experience

During the baby season (Nov - Feb) there is a possibility volunteers will work with baby monkeys, nearly all orphaned and traumatised. We introduce them to foster mothers ensuring each baby is stabilised, healthy and able to drink from a bottle when handling them.

During the juvenile season (Mar - Oct), you may be able to see juniors being integrated into a troop within our rehabilitation programme or participate in other integrations.

Baby rehabilitation involves volunteers handling or observing the babies in their outdoor playpen, mixing up bottles of milk, preparing foods and administering medicine if required. You will feed and monitor them throughout the day, constantly checking their progress. Be aware these babies will defecate and urinate on you quite happily - this is unavoidable so old clothes are recommended. You must remember the vervet monkeys are wild animals so expect a few 'nips' whilst they play!

*You will be helping to rehabilitate vervet monkeys into viable troops for release into protected reserves, integrating them back into their natural environment.*



“ Alasdair, 23, Manchester UK

It's fascinating to work with such an emotional, intelligent and complex primate.

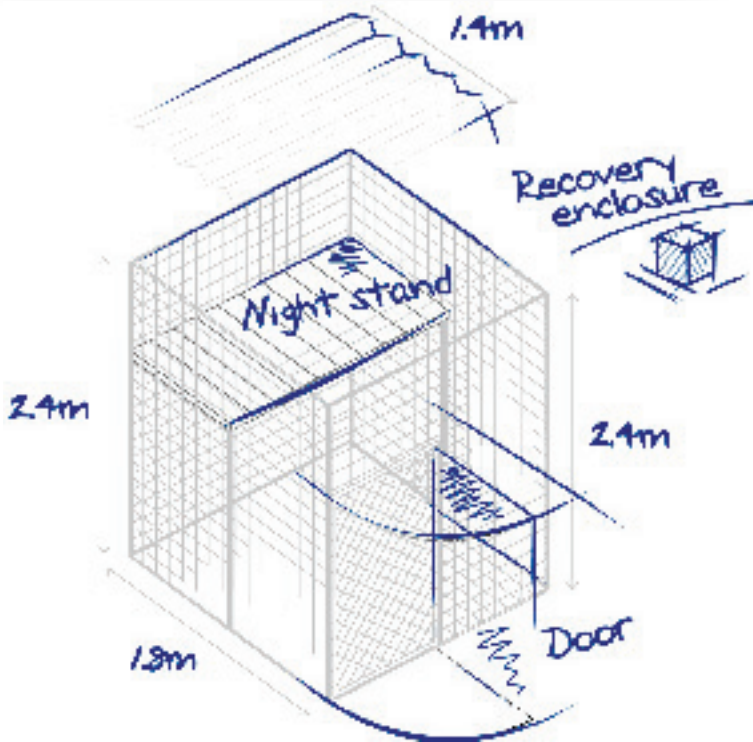
## UNDERSTANDING

Volunteers often grow attached to individuals they have rehabilitated, many from birth until adulthood.

A deep understanding of the monkeys welfare, conservation and their similar human emotions bonds volunteers to their world.

You can experience that same bond.

## Work and activities



## Construction

### DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers are the life blood of the Foundation's development. You will be involved in constructing new enclosures and facilities, often painting, wire twisting, knot tying, digging, fastening or even pouring cement. Each new enclosure or facility enables the Foundation to do more for the monkeys in our care.

Volunteers have helped build, fund and create the following facilities and enclosures...

#### Skunkey Enclosure

*Built in 2003*

#### Goliath Enclosure

*Built in 2005*

#### Baby Care Centre

*built in 2005*

#### Sick Bay

*Completed April 2007*

#### Camelot Enclosure

*Completed July 2009*

#### Skrow Enclosure

*Revamped August 2009*

#### Quarantine

*Completed 2009*

Without such dedication and hard work from volunteers, the above would remain a dream.

## VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENTS



## 7. - Work and activities - Just what will I be doing at the Foundation?

## Work and activities

### Daily Activities Main Feed + Monitoring

#### MAIN FEED

Each “Main Feed” involves the daily preparation and distribution of food to all of the monkeys in the sanctuary. As a volunteer your duty would be to prepare the food bowls. You will cut, wash and share out the fruit and vegetables equally before distributing the food bowls to the vervets.

Seed pods and fruits are also picked from our indigenous trees on a regular basis.



Each and every day, volunteers and staff prepare bowls of food to feed over 500 vervets in our rehabilitation programme.

The food bowls consist of fruit, vegetables, seeds, nuts and leaves, bought from local suppliers and distributors in the Letaba area.



#### MONITORING

This is a crucial and important job as you will monitor and observe each monkey within the sanctuary, checking for any injuries, stress or sickness - reporting information back to “base” to ensure the vervets are in the best of health.

This task is done daily; you will usually have a 2-day to 3-day shift rotation whilst monitoring to provide continuity of observation.

“ Jax Woolterton, 23, Kent UK

Monitoring is an essential job and one that I take great pleasure in doing. The monkeys depend on you to spot injury or sickness

”



## 8. - Work and activities - Just what will I be doing at the Foundation?

## Work and activities



## Fundraising and Website development

A fundraising project that simply requires your enthusiasm or skill can become a reality. We also promote a vegan lifestyle and are involved with educating people how they can help the environment. A fundraising project that simply requires your enthusiasm or skill can become a reality.

Volunteers are invited to develop new and exciting fundraising initiatives, backed by the Foundation's long term volunteers and staff. We are always looking for new innovative ways to raise funds to support our work.

*Become involved. Join the team. Get active.*

## Touring and days off

Volunteers get one day off per week; we provide a lift into Tzaneen to purchase supplies, swim in the nearby lodge pool, spa or relax over cappuccino in the mall.

Volunteers here for 4 weeks are also invited to take one touring day per week to visit local sights. Volunteers often tour with new friends met at the VMF.

You may wish to hire a car with some friends you meet here. Popular tours include the world famous Kruger National Park, only 1 hour from here. Blyde River Canyon, God's Window, stunning waterfalls and of course, wildlife viewing.



“ Kruger was truly amazing!  
We even spotted a Cheetah! ”

## Travelling to the VMF

You will need to fly into Johannesburg (Oliver Tambo) airport and take a Translux coach to Tzaneen. Translux coach tickets cost approximately R255.00 each way. The bus usually leaves Johannesburg at 9.30am, Midrand at 10am and Pretoria at 10.30am. If your flight gets in before 8am and you are able to get the bus the same day as your flight then we advise you to take the Gautrain from the airport (approx R125) to Pretoria bus station. The coach arrives in Tzaneen around 3.40pm. We will pick you up upon arrival in the car park where the bus drops you in Tzaneen and transport you to the Foundation. Please note it is essential to book your bus ticket in advance (min 3 weeks) as there may not be any seats left on the day. |

If your arrival in Johannesburg is too late to be able to connect with the bus departure, we suggest that you stay at Pretoria for the night. You may phone one of the guest houses below to arrange to pick you up at the airport and drop you the next morning at the Translux bus station.

Gautrain info [www.gautrain.co.za](http://www.gautrain.co.za)

Reserving your bus ticket:

To reserve your Translux bus ticket to Tzaneen, we recommend you e-mail Josie [josie@vervet.za.org](mailto:josie@vervet.za.org) who will be able to reserve your bus ticket for you. You will need to give your full name, title, where you are travelling from and to and date of travel. Translux will give you a reference number to quote to the driver. You will need to arrive 30mins before your bus is due to leave to pay for your ticket at the translux office at the station. You must allow yourself plenty of time to catch the bus and allow for delays. Please contact [josie@vervet.za.org](mailto:josie@vervet.za.org) to inform us of the date of your arrival when you have confirmed your travel arrangements. We ask volunteers to arrive in Tzaneen on Mondays or Tuesdays so we are able to give group orientations.

The Translux Bus Company

<http://www.translux.co.za>

Tel: +27 (0)861 589 282

+27 (0)12 334 8000

## RECOMMENDED BACKPACKERS

**Pretoria Backpackers (PRETORIA)**

[www.pretoriabackpackers.net](http://www.pretoriabackpackers.net) e-mail: [info@pretoriabackpackers.net](mailto:info@pretoriabackpackers.net)

Tel: +27 (0)12 343-9754 Fax: +27 (0)12 343-2524

That's It Guesthome (PRETORIA): [www.thatsit.co.za](http://www.thatsit.co.za), [thatsit@icon.co.za](mailto:thatsit@icon.co.za)

You will need to fly to Johannesburg

## Costs and Contributions

## Supporting our work

The work at our centre can be very challenging and requires on-the-job training so we prefer to have volunteers for a minimum period of 4 weeks and are happy to have long term volunteers and offer a discount depending on length of stay. Please enquire regarding 2 or 3 week stays.

Your fees go toward food, accomodation and much needed financial support for the monkeys and the Sanctuary.

**FIRST 4 WEEKS: (ZAR) R 9500**

**EXTRA WEEKS: (ZAR) R 2375 per extra week**

*We offer discounts for 3 month and 6 month stays, you can check the exact amount in your currency by visiting [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)*

## BANK DEPOSIT

Please deposit your contributions to the VMF account below:

Vervet Monkey Foundation  
First National Bank  
Account No: 62352498333  
Branch Code: 260349  
Swift Code: FIRNZAJJA926  
Tzaneen Branch  
Telephone Number: 015-3071278  
Physical Address: 64 Agatha Street  
Tzaneen 0850

### Internet Use

.....  
The Foundation has broadband wireless internet. You may use the internet for a small fee.

### Cellphone Coverage

.....  
All cellphone networks are available at the foundation although it is recommended that you get your phone unblocked to be able to use local sim cards for cheaper rates.

### Other expenses

.....  
Bring sufficient money and an ATM card for snacks, beverages, meals out, and touring days



## Health, Vaccinations, Insurance



### HEALTH

As a volunteer you need to confirm that you have travel medical insurance prior to arrival, and you must provide us with a copy of your medical arrangements.

The local towns of Tzaneen and Letaba both have clinics and hospitals. We have a refrigerator if you need to keep medicines, such as insulin cool during your stay at the Foundation.

### VACCINATIONS

You will need to have a valid anti-tetanus vaccination before arrival.

We recommend talking to a travel doctor. You will need to have a test for tuberculosis before working with monkeys, a chest x-ray can be done on arrival for approx R390.

If you are sick whilst here, you will not be allowed to work with monkeys for a period of time.

### INSURANCE

We require confirmation of your travel / medical insurance policy prior to your arrival.

Due to the nature of your work, handling the monkeys can result in the occasional scratch or “nip” as they are still wild animals. Ensure you have an up to date anti-tetanus shot.

Always be alert when travelling to and from the Foundation.

### MALARIA

The Foundation is based in the northerly Limpopo Province of South Africa. Anti-malarials are only required when visiting malaria areas such as Kruger between October - May. We recommend that you bring insect repellent and long sleeved clothes for use at night.

“

I asked my travel doctor for advice on travelling to South Africa - She administered my vaccinations that same day.

Alan, 22, London UK

”

## 12. - Health, vaccinations, insurance and recommended project kit

## Things you'll need to bring

### Recommended Project Kit

On occasions, you may be lucky enough to spend a weekend afternoon at waterfalls, visit a local tea gardens or relax at a nearby lodge and spa. Don't forget your swim wear and a towel. You can also download your digital photos at the Foundation.

### KIT TO BRING (not to worry, anything you forget can be purchased locally!)

- Sleeping bag and sleeping bag liner
- Torch/flashlight or headlight and small battery or rechargeable camping light for cabin
- Your own adaptor for charging equipment (3 rounded pin system)
- Travel wash & Towel, bottle for drinking water
- Driving licence (for hiring vehicles)
- Old clothes you don't mind getting dirty or torn, lots of old T-shirts, shorts, long pants
- Separate set of clothes for evening use or travelling
- Lightweight long sleeved clothes (to protect you from the strong sun)
- Work gloves and hiking boots (not essential)
- Sunscreen, after sun, insect repellent
- Malaria tablets & mosquito net
- Sarong / pyjamas / swimwear
- Flip-flops / sandals
- Trainers / sneakers
- Alarm clock / watch
- Sunhat, waterproof jacket, contact lenses if you wear glasses
- Co-ordinator's telephone number in case of delays etc 0027 82 725 9432
- Digital camera with computer cables for downloading images
- First aid kit (antibiotic ointment, anti-diarrhoea tablets, re hydration drinks, headache tablets, hand sanitizer, wet wipes)
- Optional- if you have room, we are always in need of bunny drinking water bottles or e-mail us for our latest wish list. We sell cruelty free toiletries in our on site shop also.

### DON'T FORGET...

Other items to consider are emergency contact numbers and photocopies of all important documents (such as passport, flight tickets, driver's licence, and insurance documents).

Don't forget to bring spending money. You may use ATMs across South Africa and in the local town of Tzaneen, all of which accept major credit and debit cards (remember your pin#). You may also wish to bring your mobile phone and charger (handy if delays etc).

## The Village facilities



### CABIN ACCOMMODATION

You will sleep in a wooden cabin, usually with 1 other volunteer. We provide a storage box, mattress, table, pillow and sheets but please ensure you bring a sleeping bag. There is no electricity in the village but accessories can be charged at the cottage. You may wish to bring a small battery powered or re-chargeable camping light to light up your cabin at night for reading etc.

The volunteer village houses a warm, gas-heated shower, eco-toilet (composting toilet), washing sink, fridge, and a campfire, which is great for an evening under the stars or a traditional braai (South African barbecue!).

Laundering is provided free of charge Mon - Fri. You can bring your own detergent for extra hand washing of small items if you wish.

### Hot Bush Showers



### PRIVATE CABIN

We now have an upgrade cabin available to volunteers. It's situated just up the path from the village with a double bed, duvet, outside private log fire and is suitable for a couple or anyone who likes a bit of privacy. (Enquire for fees & photos)

We provide a hook above each bed for you to hang your own mosquito net

## History, Climate and Visa Requirements

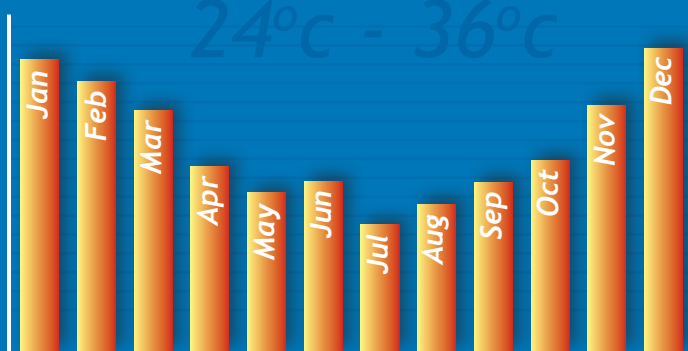
In 1964, the now famous ANC party leader, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Robben Island, off the coast of Cape Town for his lead in a campaign of civil disobedience regarding the apartheid ruling in South Africa.

In the years to follow, Nelson Mandela went on to become **president**, transforming South Africa into the country it is today and a member of the Commonwealth once again. Welcome to a country full of history, diverse cultures and vibrant people.

“ We are free, to be free. ”

Nelson Mandela

### TEMPERATURES



[www.home-affairs.gov.za](http://www.home-affairs.gov.za)

Visa requirements depend on your nationality and the length of stay in South Africa. You can visit the South African embassy to check if you are eligible for the free 3 month VISA.

On entering South Africa you will be presented with a free VISA for 3 months if eligible. When stating your purpose of visit, please respond “Tourist”. Even though you are volunteering, there can be complications if you state otherwise due to the misunderstanding that you may be entering the country to be paid money for your time volunteering.

South Africa is a land full of history, diverse cultures, vibrant people, fascinating wildlife and breathtaking landscapes

Warm winters, Humid summers

SOUTH AFRICA

## Further Information

*Please feel free to contact us for more information about becoming a Vervet Direct volunteer:*

**Email: Josie Du Toit (Animal Manager & Bookings Administrator)**  
***josie@vervet.za.org with approx dates you would like to start or other volunteering enquiries.***

**General info: *info@vervet.za.org***  
***For all enquiries about our projects, how to become involved, sponsorship etc.***

**Tel: +27 (0)83 4545 381 Dave Du Toit (Director & Founder)**  
**Fax: +27 (0)86 511 3426**



***The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a registered non-profit charity established in 1993 dedicated to rehabilitating and providing sanctuary for orphaned, injured and abused vervet monkeys.***

***Reg # 020-694-NPO***

For more information on the Vervet Monkey Foundation, volunteering and our latest campaigns and programmes please visit our website, listed below:

**[www.vervet.za.org](http://www.vervet.za.org)**

Our homepage,  
- Vervet monkey information

***Our full circle rehabilitation campaign, re-integrating rehabilitated vervet monkey troops into their natural environment.***



## We look forward to seeing you

On behalf of the Vervet Monkey Foundation, we look forward to meeting you as a Vervet Direct volunteer.

We hope that your experiences, helping to rehabilitate vervet monkeys under the African sun, remain with you always.

### *The VMF Team*

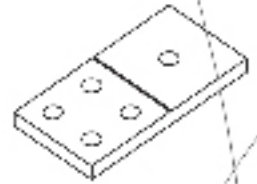


*Your experience doesn't have to end in South Africa, you can read about all the latest news in our monthly newsletter after returning home as well as join our facebook group to keep up with events and how you can help.*

*You may wish to adopt one of the monkeys you formed a close bond with or write an article about your visit.*

*Many volunteers make lifelong friends at the VMF and return year after year to help the monkeys.*

*South Africa is a land full of culture, vibrant people and ancient traditions.*



# Vervet Direct Volunteering



*The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a registered non-profit charity established in 1993 dedicated to rehabilitating and providing sanctuary for orphaned, injured and abused vervet monkeys.*

*Reg # 020-694-NPO*

