

Vets-in-the-Wild Expedition

Set Departure Dates for 2010:

SIM02: 23 May – 13 June

VW01: 06 June - 27 June

VW02: 04 July - 25 July

VW03: 18 July - 08 August

VW04: 25 July - 15 August

SVET: 28 Nov - 19 Dec

Join us for the experience of a lifetime, a field study program in South Africa for students in veterinary fields and wildlife conservation:

- Experience the world of wildlife conservation in Southern Africa, hands-on.
- Meet and interact with conservationists and wildlife veterinarians in the field.
- Learn about the crucial balance of people and wildlife in conservation today.
- Gain hands-on experience by taking part in game capture operations.
- Earn university credits for these programs.

About the International University Program

EcoLife Expeditions is an extension program of the Centre for Wildlife Management, University of Pretoria and has been conducting short-term field study programs for international students since 1999. Two study programs are currently presented, the *Vets-in-the-Wild* program and the *Wildlife Management* program.

Aimed at students of veterinary science and wildlife management, these study programs offer an exciting, hands-on, in-depth and educational experience, taking students behind-the-scenes in the wildlife field in Southern Africa. Participants also meet and learn from pioneers in game capture and those actively involved in the field of wildlife veterinary science on a day-to-day basis. The program includes a Capture and Care course where students participate in actual game capture operations.

The expeditions are in the form of a camping safari and lodging, and the duration is around 3 weeks. Students interact with rangers, veterinarians and researchers working in the field, giving them an insight into life, successes and problems associated with conservation in Africa today.

This revised program is open to veterinary and pre-veterinary students, currently enrolled at a recognized tertiary educational institution, as well as to qualified professionals and also to interested persons. Qualifying students enroll for the **NLB 311 Ecosystems and Wildlife Management** and **NLB 312 Participatory Nature Conservation** courses at the Centre for Wildlife Management, University of Pretoria and receive **8 credits** on its successful completion.

Course Content:

- Wildlife Veterinary Science
- Wildlife Diseases and Medicine
- Capture and Care of Wild Animals
- Breeding of Rare Species
- Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Ecosystems and Biodiversity Conservation

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

Students arrive and are welcomed at OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, by EcoLife Staff Members. You are transferred to your guesthouse, close to the University of Pretoria, and relax before the evening welcoming dinner.

Accommodation: Guest house

Day 2: Orientation, Pretoria and Cheetah and Wild Dog Breeding Center

Our expedition starts by attending a morning workshop at the Center for Wildlife Management of the University of Pretoria. We meet with staff members who have been involved in the pioneering of wildlife management in Southern Africa, and learn about the latest developments in wilderness management. After lunch we visit a cheetah and wild dog breeding centre. This facility has gained

international recognition for, through its unique captive breeding programs, bringing back from the brink of extinction both the cheetah and the wild dog.

Accommodation: Guest house

Days 3 and 4: Community Veterinary Services

After breakfast we drive towards Soweto, the sprawling black city adjacent to Johannesburg where we join CLAW, (Community Led Animal Welfare), a world renowned group of dedicated animal lovers and veterinarians who volunteer their professional time and services to Black African townships to assist in the care of these people's domestic animals.

Accommodation: Guest house

Days 5 - 8: Vet School and Wilderness Training

We visit the famous School of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria for an introduction to its renowned facilities. Then we turn east to a private camp in the Bushveld on the banks of the Loskop Reservoir. The wilderness reserve surrounding this lake is a pristine area in which to learn practical bush skills, track wildlife on foot and study wildlife behavior, and is perfect for learning how animals and man utilize plants. Weather permitting we will also do some abseiling.

Accommodation: Tented camp

Days 9 - 12: Kruger National Park

We depart after an early breakfast *en route* to the Lowveld and the Kruger National Park. The biodiversity of this jewel of wilderness areas, almost the size of Belgium, is spectacular. It is the ideal area for observing and studying most of the wildlife species Southern Africa has to offer. The greatest attraction of this magnificent Park is the opportunity to experience African game viewing at its best and to spot the Big Five. We enjoy a sunset game drive to observe the Park's inhabitant's behavior at night, drive along the Park's pristine rivers and perhaps go on an optional nature walk in the bush with experienced Park rangers to guide us. Park facilities include public telephones, a bank, a shop, restaurants and a laundry.

Accommodation: Camping

Day 13: Blyde Canyon Reserve: Swadini Resort

After a final game drive, exiting the Park, we arrive and establish our base at the beautiful Blydepoort Nature Reserve at the foot of the majestic northern Drakensberg Mountains (Mountains of the Dragon).

The pristine Swadini Resort's facilities include public telephones, a shop, heated and ambient swimming pools, restaurants and a laundry.

Accommodation: Camping (Swadini)

Day 14: Reptile Centre and Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

We attend a workshop presented on the handling and care of reptiles, including highly venomous snakes, and we also visit a world renowned wildlife rehabilitation centre. The care of a wide range of wildlife species will be experienced and demonstrated first hand.

Accommodation: Camping (Swadini)

Days 15 - 19: Hands-on Game Capture Course

The successful capture, handling and translocation of wildlife all form important parts of the wildlife veterinarian's program. The next five days are dedicated to observing and learning about and participating in actual game capture operations under the guidance of a world renowned specialist. Depending on the weather and availability, we will be able to attend and experience both chemical and mass capture of wild animals. Please note that mass capture of game is normally not done during the summer months due to the additional stress to the animals. We will, subject to the weather, also personally experience a mock darting exercise from a helicopter in flight.

Accommodation: Camping (Swadini)

Day 20: Sondela

After an early rise to strike camp we commence our long drive through rural villages and pretty towns to arrive at Sondela to set up camp.

Accommodation: Camping

Day 21: Graduation

After breakfast we visit a wildlife rehabilitation center, where we get the chance to interact with the animals. After lunch we will have enough time to write our exam. Our farewell dinner, followed by our graduation ceremony, is enjoyed under the stars around our last campfire.

Accommodation: Camping

Day 22: Departure

We depart for Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport, in time for our flights home.

Cost per person sharing: US \$4,285

Price Includes:

- Accommodation for the duration of the program
- Transportation for the duration of the program
- Airport transfers as stated
- Camping equipment
- Permits and entry fees
- All meals and group activities

Price Excludes:

- Air travel to and from South Africa
- Visa costs
- Optional activities
- Alcoholic beverages

Application and Payments

- Undergraduate and graduate students in veterinary science, veterinary technology and pre-vet, as well as veterinary scientists and practitioners are encouraged to apply.
- Students with any combination of courses taken, grade level or academic year, are encouraged to apply.
- Neither Eko Tracks, nor the University of Pretoria, South Africa offers scholarships or financial aid for these programs. Students should contact their study abroad office or financial aid office and they may be able to assist or advise you with funding.
- There is no specific application date. However, the earlier you apply the better your chance of booking a trip that suits your time schedule.
- Trip dates are fixed. The trip of your first choice and as an alternative date a trip of your second choice must be indicated on the application form.
- To apply, complete the application form electronically and send, mail or fax it to the office of Eko Tracks.

- Once we have received your application form you will be pre-booked on the program and be sent a registration form and other documents.
- The registration form and a 25% deposit must be sent directly to the vendor in South Africa to secure your booking.

Note: Money can be transferred (wired) overseas through a:

- Bank - more expensive
- Moneygram (www.emoneygram.com) which is cheaper and quicker. Moneygram outlets are available at Walmart where you can pay by cash or debit card, or at some CVS Pharmacies where you can pay cash only for a maximum of \$900 per transaction.
- The office of Eko Tracks will send you a tour dossier with information about the passport, flight schedules, vaccinations, packing list and safety tips to assist you in preparing for the trip.
- The outstanding amount is payable at the latest one month prior to the start of the program.