



Lion Rehabilitation & Conservation LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA

At African Impact, we see ourselves as the on-the-ground AFRICAN SPECIALISTS in volunteering. We were founded over 5 years ago in Zimbabwe and have our head office in Cape Town, South Africa, with supporting operations offices in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. To date, together with our project managers out in the field, we have had the privilege of sharing Africa with over 3,000 volunteers who were determined to make a difference in the amazing conservation and community areas in which we work. And they did... and so can you...

Your mission on the Livingstone Lion Rehabilitation & Conservation Project...

Contribute to the welfare and rehabilitation of the cubs as they undertake pre-release training in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park; take part in a research program to better understand the ecology of elephants in the Park and join our conservation education and community programs to involve communities in conservation as part of our holistic approach. Enjoy time spent walking with the lions along the banks of the mighty and beautiful Zambezi river, with the potential of witnessing them chasing down game in the National Park as well as getting involved in important tasks related to the conservation and preservation of this noble beast.



African Impact

PHYSICAL ADDRESS 6 Carlton Close, Noordhoek, 7985, Cape Town, South Africa.

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Project Highlights:

- Walk alongside lions as part of the pride and enjoy the exhilaration of being part of a hunt as the young cubs learn to stalk their prey;
- Work on the world's leading programme for the release of lions back into the wild;
- Experience the African bush in a very special way as you spend time out in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park. You will be actively involved in a number of conservation activities;
- Join the conservation education team in local schools giving you a wonderful insight into the community, as well as giving you a chance to help save the future of the Zambian environment by educating the local children;
- Immerse yourself in local Zambian culture;
- Enjoy the many adventure activities available from white water rafting on the mighty Zambezi River; bungee jumping from the Victoria Falls Bridge or taking to the air for a helicopter flight over the Falls giving a bird's eye view of this natural wonder;
- Take advantage of optional trips to see more of the areas spectacular wildlife areas in neighbouring Botswana or Zimbabwe including the enormous Hwange National Park, Chobe National Park, the chance to walk with rhino at Matopos National Park and visit the lion rehabilitation programme's breeding base at Antelope Park;
- You have the option to spend a night on our very own island in the centre of the Zambezi River and wake to the sounds of hippos;
- Make friends for life with the other international volunteers on the programme.

Location: Livingstone, Zambia. The project is located on the outskirts of Livingstone town; a stone's throw away from the magnificent thundering waters of the Falls themselves.

Age limit: Minimum 17 years, maximum decided on potential participants' health

Required experience: No specific prior experience is required for this project but an interest in and passion for wildlife and conservation is important

"The most brilliant part for me has been working with the lions in such a close-knit team. Not only have I learned more than I ever expected about the animals and their habitat, I've also made some brilliant friends and feel as though we've all helped to make a difference."

Rachel Lonsdale, UK

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African Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Programme



In 1975 over 200,000 lions used to roam the African continent. Estimates from 2002 put the number of lions between 23,000 and 39,000, representing an 80 – 90% decline in less than 30 years.

The IUCN states that *“the causes of this reduction are not well understood, are unlikely to have ceased, and may not be reversible”*.

Lions are listed as Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II and are regarded as ‘vulnerable’ by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List [Version 3.1 2001].

“There is probably no other species whose distribution range has shrunk over historical times to the extent shown by the lion” (Smithers, 1983)

African Impact has partnered with ALERT, the African Lion & Environmental Research Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the African lion. ALERT supports the Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program, founded at Antelope Park in Zimbabwe, which is seeking to provide solutions to the problem of rapidly decreasing lion populations by releasing into appropriate National Parks and reserves the wild borne offspring from rehabilitated captive bred lions, using a unique four stage program.

The program is a multi-faceted one as ALERT believes that for the lion to survive in viable numbers then its programs must also consider the environment within which it can thrive as well as the communities that live alongside it. As such the program incorporates the Conservation Centre for Wild Africa (CCWA) and the ALERT Communities Trust (ACT) to ensure that habitat is protected, that research is conducted to provide a basis for sound conservation management plans to be developed and that those communities bordering the conservation area are involved every step of the way to foster support for wildlife conservation.

All elements of the project are carried out in partnership with appropriate national and local authorities and we work alongside partner organizations to ensure that cross program cooperation is maximized.

Commercial enterprises are encouraged to develop around all programs to provide long-term financial security to the projects, and here in Livingstone we work very closely with Lion Encounter Zambia which operates stage one of the rehabilitation programme. Tourists are given the opportunity to join the lions on their daily walks through the wild and experience our programme first-hand. The additional funding raised by these walks goes back into the project to further our conservation and community development aims.

The highest standard of care for the lions whilst in captivity is paramount, and as such the program is linked to PAAZAB, which provides an ethical code for us to abide by in good animal husbandry techniques.

Further detailed information regarding ALERT and the lion release program can be found by visiting www.lionalert.org where a number of PDF documents are available to download providing a step by step guide to the project in full.



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Your involvement:

The involvement of volunteers on the project is paramount to achieving our aims on all fronts. You can expect days to be long, but you will also be able to end each day knowing that you have given something back to Africa; having made a difference to the animals and people that you come into contact with.

Your primary task whilst on placement will be to assist management and their team of guides, handlers and scouts in all aspects of care for the animals in their charge; giving them the opportunities to develop their natural instincts in preparation for their release into the next stage of the program.

Research is a significant part of your role; collecting data not only on the development of the lions, but also joining our elephant monitoring team in the National Park.

You will also help us with our various community programs that may include conservation or health education as well as a number of other projects that you will be told about on arrival.

To give you an idea of how your time will be split between the different aspects of the program, the following should be taken as an approximation:

Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program	75%
Conservation work within the National Park	20%
Conservation Education & Community Development	5%



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Your daily tasks may include:

Lion Walks. Spending time with the lions in the wild each day is an essential part of the cubs upbringing. If the cubs are to be successfully released it is important that they spend time out in a natural environment. They need to adapt to it, learn from it, understand, observe, feel and smell the wild.

Since the start of this intensive lion walking programme, we have noted a marked increase in the lions' awareness of their natural surroundings, as well as an improvement in their hunting skills. The larger cubs are now able to take down smaller game species whilst out on walks, and these abilities are being enhanced each day whilst under the supervision of volunteers. These are invaluable discoveries, which have earned us further support for our world first endeavours.

Alongside the walks you will be involved in the care of the animals which overnight in enclosures. They need feeding, cleaning, and occasionally will need veterinary care to ensure that they are kept in the best of health.

Join our team of professional guides and other dedicated volunteers, gain a deeper understanding of the King of Beasts and assist us in gathering vital information that will facilitate their eventual release back into the wild.

Research. As part of the program we conduct a number of research activities to better understand lion behaviour and ecology. The lion walks offer unique opportunities to observe lions close up in their natural environment with the data collected assisting us to make the best decisions for the animal's welfare and eventual release. Volunteers will assist our research technician in gathering and analyzing this vital data. The research studies being undertaken whilst on your placement will vary depending on the needs of the project at the time but may include looking at hunting development, character traits, spoor sizes or mane growth. You will receive all the training you need in order to ensure that you are able to provide valuable input to this program regardless of previous experience.

Elephant Monitoring. Conflict with humans is a major issue for elephants in the region, but understanding how to mitigate the conflict first requires an understanding of the ecology of the species within the National Park. Volunteers will join the research team to identify individual elephants, to track seasonal changes, score body condition, record location and group sizes; all so that these data can be correlated to crop raiding incidents. Through this program we hope to be able to find patterns in elephant use of the Park to understand why the conflicts arise and therefore be able to provide reasonable solutions to reduce the conflict.

Conservation Education. Volunteers will join our ACT conservation education program visiting local schools to garner support for conservation through education. The syllabus was originally devised under the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) "We Care!" project with lesson plans designed to offer children a full understanding of their environment and to build an appreciation for the need to conserve what remains of the wild areas of Zambia. Each lesson may focus on a specific species or introduce conservation methods. Learning is achieved through a mixture of classroom-based talks and discussion as well as involving the children in smaller groups and practical activities such as visits to the lion programme, or Victoria Falls themselves.

A few days prior to each lesson you will work with our team and other volunteers to prepare the lesson plans whilst also receiving training on how best to teach the children that you will meet.

Community Development. During your placement you will have the opportunity to be involved in a number of community programs which may include health education, training in the sustainable use of natural resources or reading classes. The nature of the programs operating at the time of your placement will be given to you on arrival.



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A day in the life of a Livingstone volunteer...

Every day is different as animals rarely operate to our schedule. We ask that you remain flexible, but here is an example of a typical day on the project, as a guideline only:

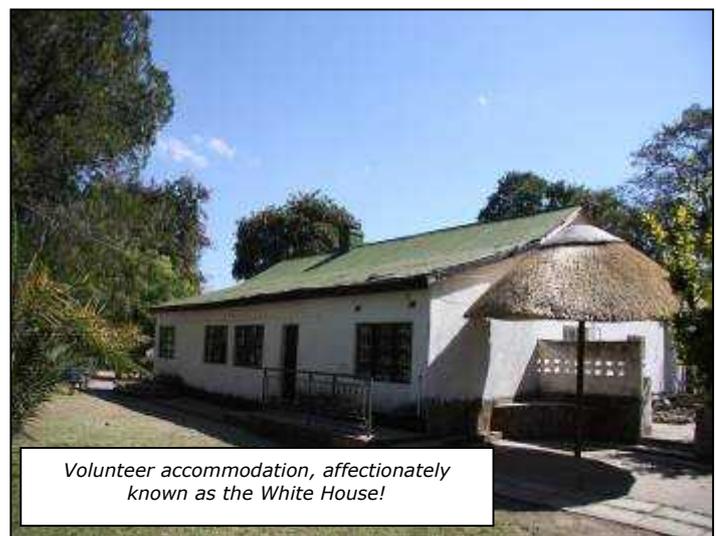
- 6:30 – 9:00am Meet your guide and their clients and join them for a lion walk, taking cubs from 4 months to 18 months out into the bush. Watch and take data as the cubs practice their hunting skills on the many game species they encounter.
- 9:00am – 10:00am Breakfast.
- 10.00am – 12.00pm One group might head off to a nearby school to begin the day's Conservation Education classes – sometimes there are up to 60 kids in a class! Chaotic but fun! The other group will be cleaning or feeding the cubs, or driving into the National Park to conduct elephant research.
- 12:30pm – 2:00pm Lunch and a chance to relax during the hottest part of the day.
- 2.30pm – 6:00pm Your afternoon duties could include a snare sweep before an afternoon lion walk.
- Evening The volunteers socialize at dinner at 7.00pm at our volunteer base. On some nights volunteers venture off into Livingstone town to experience the night life of this tourist Mecca. For others you may sit out under the beautiful Southern skies and listen to the sounds of the African Bush as it comes alive at night.

Project Support:

Throughout your placement you will have the support and guidance of our experienced project managers. They are part of our greater African Impact support team, which will provide you with competent 24-hour field support and assistance.

Project Accommodation:

- You will be staying at our volunteer house in the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park a stone's throw from the lion enclosures and the mighty Zambezi River. Rooming will be sharing with up to 3 others although we try and make sure you do not share a room with more than 2 other volunteers. We can also arrange for couples or groups of friends to share rooms. The accommodation is simple but comfortable and completely suited to your needs.
- All your meals, unless you happen to take a packed breakfast into the park on a long lion walk, will be served at the house and are prepared by our chefs.
- The house has running hot and cold water and electricity although this is Africa so there are occasional lapses of both!



Volunteer accommodation, affectionately known as the White House!



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The Fine Print...

Project Cost:

Project Cost Includes:

- Project Fee: this entails financing that goes directly back into the project that you are involved with. This project fee facilitates funding for items such as food for lions, management and maintenance of parks infrastructure, and the development of the lion breeding and rehabilitation programme
- All transfers to and from Livingstone Airport upon your arrival and departure
- Assistance in your projects by various trained guides, ecologists and field staff during your stay
- Any wildlife education talks that take place during your stay and that you might wish to partake in
- Full board and lodging which includes 3 meals a day and unlimited tea, coffee and juice throughout the day
- Laundry service during your stay and the service of a cleaner to attend to your room each day

Project Cost Excludes:

- All items of a personal nature, such as curios, gifts, clothing (work and other)
- Flights to Livingstone International Airport
- Email and telephone calls made during your placement (charged out at cost)
- Any excursions over and above your planned itinerary e.g. visit to Antelope Park
- Personal insurance cover for the duration of your placement, which must include cover for repatriation

Project Orientation:

On arrival at the Livingstone project, the following orientation will take place:

- You will receive your volunteer's manual which includes information that will help with your integration into the project, as well as give you further tips for your involvement at the Livingstone programme
- Introduction to all senior project staff and heads of department
- Familiarization of the work areas – including rivers, internal roads and tracks and some of the wildlife species
- Introduction to the lions and cub enclosures
- Briefing on how to complete data capture forms and enter data into the computer systems
- Further information on the lion breeding programme and our ultimate objective of free releasing lions into the wild
- Familiarization with all duties you will be involved in



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Project Travel Highlights...

There are a huge number of optional activities and trips that are available to you, at additional cost, whilst on your placement. Here are just a few ideas:

On your time off why not take advantage of the multitude of activities available at Victoria Falls itself, Africa's "adrenaline capital"; there are helicopter or microlight flights over the Falls; bungee jumping; white water rafting; horse rides; elephant rides; game drives; gorge jumps; skydiving; canoeing and a host of other options. There are also day and weekend trips available to the neighbouring countries of Botswana and Zimbabwe.

During your stay in Livingstone you may have the opportunity to **enjoy an excursion to some of the other spectacular spots that the region has to offer.**

- Day 1: Leave after breakfast from Livingstone for the breathtaking Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe, home of the Matopos National Park. Enjoy a half-day Rhino Walk & Game Drive as well as a bushman Cave Painting tour. You will also have the chance to visit Cecil Rhodes' resting place at 'worlds' view'
- Day 2-4: Today you travel to Antelope Park, the breeding base for the Lion Rehabilitation & Release into the Wild Program. In addition to touring the facilities to see the adult lions, here you can also ride through the savannah plains of the game reserve on horseback or take a swim on the back of an African elephant (seasonal) whilst staying at our safari camp on the banks of a beautiful river.
- Day 5: Journey to Hwange National Park; the largest national park in Zimbabwe. You will get the opportunity to go on a game drive where you could get up close and personal with a herd of elephant, buffalo, a pride of lion, clan of hyena and many more.
- Day 6: Leave after breakfast from Miombo for your return to Livingstone

Please Note: This trip only operates with sufficient volunteer interest.



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Our Partners

The Happy Africa Foundation www.happyafricafoundation.org African Impact is proud to have been instrumental in the establishment of The Happy Africa Foundation in 2007 and continues to be one of the Foundations major supporters. UK Registered Charity Number: 1123529. The mission of The Happy Africa Foundation is to empower the African people through the support of community and conservation based initiatives that operate at grass roots level.

We are proudly affiliated to the UK-based **Know Before You Go** campaign that promotes education and knowledge-sharing amongst travelers.

African Impact is delighted to have been nominated as a **2009 World Travel Awards Finalist** and see this as exciting recognition of our position as African specialists in Volunteering, with over 5 years experience in sharing Africa with travelers who have a passion for making a difference.



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