

Volunteering Opportunities

Volunteers will be considered if they can speak English, are hard-working, fast-learning, enthusiastic and prepared to cheerfully fulfil tasks asked of them.

Here at the SAASA sanctuaries in Plettenberg Bay, we are particularly keen to fill the following positions:

1. Multilingual rangers/guides

Monkeyland, Birds of Eden and Jukani funds itself through revenues from tourists who take educational tours in our forests which house over 550 primates, more than 3,500 birds and 50 plus predator cats, reptiles and other wildlife.

The guided tours at Monkeyland are for one hour and at Jukani for around 1 hour and 20 minutes. Most visitors to Birds of Eden do not have a guided tour as it is possible to walk freely around the sanctuary. However, guided tours are available on request and these last for about an hour. Guided tours must leave the visitors with general primate, wildlife and/or bird knowledge, information about each of the species that could be located in the sanctuary and an understanding that primates, birds and apex cats do not make good pets but are happier in the trees, forests and wild habitats with peers of their own species.

German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Hebrew, Portuguese and Swedish guides are particularly in demand, but any knowledgeable person who can use entertainment to further environmental awareness will be considered.

2. Fundraiser/grant proposal writer for SAASA

The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance (SAASA) is the sole custodian of all the primates at Monkeyland, the birds at Birds of Eden and the predator cats and other wild animals at Jukani.

The South African Animal Sanctuary Alliance is constituted under Section 21 of the Companies Act as a non-profit PBO 2000/000667/08 and actively works towards providing primates with a better and more natural life. SAASA is also involved in educational and environmental projects such as the Bushmeat Crisis Africa (www.bushmeat.org.za). The most vital SAASA project at present is our Special Monkey Home for primates who are disabled, orphaned, elderly, blind or otherwise unable to live happily in the Monkeyland forest. We also welcome disabled primates from other locations in South Africa, and countries abroad to come and live out their lives with us. Similar projects have been implemented at Birds of Eden, and will soon be implemented at Jukani.

Our goal is for SAASA is to include an education centre / museum especially for children to learn about nature, recycling, gardening, pollution, conservation and of course primates, birds, predator cats and other wild animals like the ones we host. There are many projects to be done, but the main skill currently lacking at SAASA is fundraising and grant proposal writing in order to generate the necessary funding.

3. Students with photography/filming skills for documenting primates.

A comprehensive catalogue of all the SAASA residents has not yet been made and most of the information about our primates, birds and apex cats exists only in the notebooks and minds of our keepers, curators and founders.

Compiling and typing up this information, along with taking photographs and film footage (for YouTube and our archives) of individual primates, birds and apex cats is an important and big project that we would like to begin ASAP, but volunteers would need to bring their own photographic equipment, since the sanctuary video camera was stolen and our current budget does not allow for a new one. A sponsored one would come in handy one day.

Ideally, the applicants for this position would also have experience in collecting and analysing behavioural data about primates, birds, apex cats and/or other wild animals. Close cooperation with our knowledgeable keepers and curators is imperative and will certainly be highly educational for any wildlife enthusiast.

4. IT specialist and/or Social Media

There's a whole bunch of equipment that needs servicing and regular fixing at our offices, so if you have extensive working knowledge of computers but nonetheless wish to live in a beautiful natural environment with a chance to help out on outdoor projects whenever computers and time allow, then this is the perfect place for you.

Currently [Lara Mostert](#) handles most of our website updates, and [Vijver Jonck](#) handles the SAASA page. Together the two of them handle the Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram and all the other loose bits, but a bit of extra help will be more than welcome.

We also need someone to assist with additional social media platforms such as Tripadvisor, MySpace, Youtube, Nutshell mail, Wikipedia, Blogs, LinkedIn etc.

5. Public Relations/Marketing/Journalist

Monkeyland, Birds of Eden and Jukani depend on visitor interest to fund themselves. Therefore, PR and marketing are extremely important for raising awareness about our projects. Stories can be written about our primates, birds, apex cats and other wild creatures from a myriad of different angles for a huge variety of readerships and publications.

This position would be ideal for a young wildlife journalist or blogger who would like to gain experience in writing, photography, getting published in different sorts of publications, writing press releases (e.g. when new primates and/or birds are born or arrive at the sanctuary), encouraging professional journalists to write about us, taking journalists on special tours etc. We take a very modern approach to publicity and we try hard to balance out entertainment and education to reach as many people as possible in our quest to educate the general public about the plight of primates, birds, apex cats and other wild animals. Working closely with our marketing manager will prove to be fun and enlightening for any animal enthusiast with a gift for writing.

6. Volunteer veterinarian

Although we are extremely happy with the skills and enthusiasm of our local vets in Knysna and Plettenberg Bay, there is no on-site vet and the keepers and curators must often tackle medical issues themselves. Regular monitoring of the health of over 550 primates of 13 different species, not to mention the birds, apex cats and other wild animals, could be a full-time task. Since we advocate leaving the animals in their free-roaming environment as much as possible, medical intervention would only occasionally be necessary. Therefore, any applicant for this position must also be happy to fulfil other tasks such as guided tours. Our volunteer vet must be experienced and able to work closely with our local vets, which will be a highly enjoyable and educational experience.

7. Volunteer handyman

Volunteer carpenters, gardeners, electricians, plumbers, painters etc. are always welcome.

General Qualifications and/or Experience needed:

All volunteers must be able to speak English. A genuine interest in primates, birds, apex cats and other wildlife is vital. If you are interested in any of the above positions, please send us your CV and describe what knowledge/experience makes you the right candidate for the job. Applications can be sent to Paula at volunteer@monkeylandkzn.co.za

Salary/funding: None (by law)

Payment of Deposit: Though we do not charge volunteers to work with us, we do require the payment of a deposit for the uniform. The current amount for this deposit is R800 which can be paid in Cash or Credit Card. The deposit will be returned once all items provided have been returned.

Uniform: We will supply you with 2 shirts, 1 set of epaulettes and a fleece/jersey. Please bring your own pants/skirts/shorts in khaki or brown. Also please bring your own shoes in black/brown/khaki.

Term of Appointment: Ongoing

Minimum stay requirement: No less than 4 weeks

Application Deadline: Rolling

Contact Information: Paula Hallam at volunteer@saasa.org.za for an application form and to see if we have availability for the term you are planning on joining us for.