



Volunteer Preparation Document

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Welcome to VulPro, the Vulture Programme. We are delighted that you will be volunteering with us. This document is designed to help you prepare for your trip. It contains instructions and phone numbers that you will need on your journey, so you should print a copy and bring it with you.

Travelling to VulPro

All volunteers are responsible for their own travel costs including flights, travel insurance, and airport transfers.

The shortest way, internationally, is to fly to Johannesburg Airport (OR Tambo). You must arrange your own transport from the airport or your port of entry. We highly recommend a door to door shuttle operator (costs are about R550) which is the safest method. Contact Bes at Best Shuttles, 082-492-0823 or best.shuttle@yahoo.com to arrange.

VulPro is settled nicely close to the Magaliesberg Mountains, just 10 driving minutes from Hartbeespoort and about 40 driving minutes from Pretoria City and 50 minutes from Fourways out of Johannesburg.



Accommodation & Food

At the VulPro Centre

The accommodation at VulPro is in a shared house. Typically, volunteers may have a room to themselves, but this is not always possible, so some sex roommates may be assigned during busy seasons. **Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the whole property nor inside any of the work vehicles or inside the rooms.** It is also now against the law to smoke in public places and thus when out in the field, please note smoking may not be allowed. Please always check with managers and owners of the field sites whether smoking is allowed or not. Always pick up your cigarette butts and throw them away. Cigarettes are litter and thus VulPro does not allow anyone to throw cigarette butts on the ground. The bedrooms are separated but in close proximity, from the communal kitchen and bathroom which has hot water. Outside is a nice sitting area with the possibility to braai (Barbecue) before dark. There is washing machine and clothes washing line for laundry once a week, maximum. Please note water is a precious commodity and thus only 5-minute showers are allowed and only full loads of laundry allowed at a time. It is not acceptable to wash just one top and one pair of shorts at a time. All volunteers will need to share household chores like washing up and are expected to respect their housemates and keep shared areas clean and clear of personal belongings. All accommodation, including kitchen, bedrooms etc are to remain neat and tidy as this shows pride and respect for oneself and for others. Everybody is responsible for purchasing and cooking his/her own food. There is a fridge and freezer and enough space in the cupboard. The kitchen is well equipped and you are welcome to use all cutlery, pots, pans, etc.

Costs

The monthly accommodation fee (to cover electricity and water) is R2500 per month per person. We ask that you pay us when you arrive in cash. Please note: we do not offer refunds if you change your mind about the length of time you wish to stay with the project. We cannot accept promises of contributions being paid "later" or after the volunteer period has ended. We must receive them in advance. If your travel plans change due to unforeseeable circumstances (such as illness or immigration

problems), contact us as soon as possible to see if we can re-schedule without you losing your deposit, though this will be subject to availability

Included:

- Accommodation in a shared house (two bedrooms) with kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Training and supervision by VulPro and project staff
- Research and conservation activities on behalf of VulPro
- Letter of reference on satisfactory completion of the placement

Not included:

The volunteer contribution does NOT include:

- Travel from your home country to South Africa and back
- Passport and visa costs – travelers from most countries are issued with a 90-day tourist visa on arrival, no more than once every 12 months. You can volunteer with us on this tourist visa. If you wish to spend more than 90 days in total in South Africa, you will need to obtain a temporary residency visa, either ‘volunteer’ or ‘student’ visa (if enrolled with a South African university) before leaving home. Rules regarding visas vary by country of origin, so be sure to ask your nearest South African consulate.
- Insurance – you **MUST** have travel/medical and cancellation insurance which covers you for the activities you will be carrying out with the project.
- Medical expenses - you **MUST** be vaccinated against tetanus.
- Personal expenses such as phone/airtime, internet/WiFi, souvenirs, shopping & excursions
- All of your meals
- Transportation to and from Johannesburg Airport

Requirements

We remind you that you need to be flexible as plans may change in response to the weather, local conditions or other factors. We are looking for enthusiasm, common sense, self-starters, independence, perseverance and patience. Bear in mind that South Africa is a developing country and things may well be different from what you are used to at home. Please remember that wants are not the same as needs, so keep an open mind and take a mental check before complaining. A positive attitude and a sense of humor are vital. Volunteering is about what you can do for the project and we are looking for cheerful, willing workers. If you have any medical conditions, disabilities or other special needs, you **MUST** inform us before your arrival so that we can assess whether or not our facilities will suite your needs as well as ours.

What to bring

The following items are necessary:

- valid passport and visa, and a photocopy of your passport to leave with us international and valid driver’s license

- a **note of your insurance policy number and emergency phone numbers**
- South African compatible (plug types M and C) electrical converter for any of your personal electrical appliances
- warm clothing for cool days and cold nights - e.g. Sweaters, fleece, gloves, hat, scarf
- long trousers and long sleeved shirts or tops in neutral colours. You need to be covered up to protect against insect bites, sun and cold.
- walking boots and/or closed-toed shoes for field work and work inside the vulture enclosures insect repellent
- good torch/flashlight (with spare batteries, preferably rechargeable)
- sunscreen, sunglasses and hat to protect you from the sun
- work gloves, for use when cleaning cages, etc.
- rubber gloves, for use when cutting meat or removing carcasses water bottle
- any medication you need
- notebook and pen or pencil

Environmentally conscious

VulPro is a conservation organisation and thus, we try to minimise our carbon footprint and urge our staff and volunteers to do the same. The following requirements should be respected in order to minimise our impact on the environment:

-No plastic drink bottles (water/cold drinks) are to be used. We ask that the purchase and use of these be avoided, and rather bring along a re-useable drinking bottle.

-When doing grocery shopping, please do not make use of the disposable grocery bags offered by most retailers. Rather make use of the re-usable and recyclable bags (material) which are also available at these outlets.

-Do not use straws.

-When purchasing Ice-cream or yoghurt, rather purchase the large containers(with lids) instead of small ones. In doing so, we can guarantee the re-use of such items as we continuously utilise these containers for holding meat pieces and the like for the birds.

-When purchasing Butter/Margarine, use the option wrapped in foil/wax paper as opposed to the plastic containers.

-Generally, be environmentally conscious when doing your shopping. Please try to minimise the amount of plastic products purchased, or chose an alternative which can at least be re-used.

-VulPro does make use of recycling bins on the property, and the monitoring of these is the responsibility of EVERYONE. If one of the containers is near full, please inform staff so that arrangements can be made to take the items to the recycling depot. Volunteers may also be asked to undertake this task.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

We recommend you get a South Africa guidebook and do some research before you arrive so you have an idea of what to expect. A bit of cultural and historical background will help you appreciate your time here more.

Weather

It certainly depends on the time of the year, but generally it is hot in summer (maximum 35°C/95°F) as well as during the days in winter (average around 15°C/60°F). The mornings and evenings in winter can be chilly (down to 5°C/40°F at times) and you may want to use long trousers and a fleece jacket.

Electricity

240 Volts. Bring a travel adaptor (to fit plug types M and C); the sockets in the house are typical for South Africa so US, European plugs will not fit directly. Many US appliances may not work on 240V. As far as possible, please use rechargeable batteries.

Health

Our tap water on the farm is safe to drink, the same is true for ice cubes in cool drinks in town. Malaria is not a concern near VulPro, but is at some field sites, proper precautions should be taken. **Proof of a tetanus vaccine is required to volunteer.**

Local Currency

South African Rand (ZAR)

Language

English and Afrikaans.

Safety

South Africa is not as bad as what you might have heard, if you just follow some rules.

- Never walk alone at night outside the property;
- Make sure you don't have a lot of valuable jewels/watches on you, you won't need them here;
- Don't leave any cameras or valuable items in the car, unless you have a really good insurance and you want the items replaced;
- Make sure, that nobody is following you when you are using an ATM. Rather go with a friend if you want to collect money;
- Never hitchhike and NEVER take any hitchhiker with you

Volunteer Activities

We currently house over 200 captive vultures and other large birds of prey, there are endless maintenance and husbandry tasks, however, daily tasks vary greatly based on the season and work load (field work and/or vulture emergencies). Volunteers will work directly with the VulPro staff. Tasks include feeding and cleaning the enclosures, which is usually done every day, usually starting around 7:30 am. The vultures are usually fed every other day, and volunteers will help store and prepare the food according to the instructions. Other large birds of prey and injured animals are fed daily. Carcasses often need to be retrieved from local farms using our 'carcass bakkie' (pick-up truck) and dropped at our vulture restaurant on site. Removing the unconsumed bones and skin from the vulture restaurant and taking them to a disposal site on the property is usually an everyday task. Dried bones are collected and manually crushed with a

hammer and redistributed to the vulture restaurant and captive birds. In the afternoon it is necessary to check whether and how much the birds have eaten. Maintenance tasks with which volunteers may help include checking enclosure and perching structures (usually once a month) and carrying out whatever repairs or constructions are necessary.



After any task, such as cleaning, feeding or maintenance, the volunteer must complete the record sheet with activities completed, quantities fed, etc., and note any relevant information, such as the vultures' reactions. One of the most important tasks is collecting data, because this data allows us to understand more about the vultures and their needs and most outstanding characteristics. You will receive training in how to observe the vultures and fill out the record sheets. Any unusual behaviour needs to be reported to the manager in charge ASAP, without delay!

Our busy season for rehabilitation is during November - February however we do still have injured and poisoned birds arriving throughout the year. There may be opportunities for volunteers to travel with VulPro staff to collect injured birds, as we literally travel all over the country to rescue birds. Critical care and medical treatment of the birds is NOT the responsibility of volunteers, but feeding, husbandry, and assisting with handling MAY be part of the volunteers' tasks.

VulPro is proud to be the only vulture conservation breeding facility on the African continent which contributes solely to conservation reintroduction efforts. Vulture breeding season is during the South African winter (April - September). On-site incubation facilities are off limits to volunteers unless given express permission otherwise, but there are ample opportunities to learn about egg development, artificial incubation, chick hatching, and care. Volunteers are critical in helping us observe the behaviours of the parents and chicks, there are also ample opportunities for contributing to the knowledge of our breeding programme through standardized observations, if this interests you. There may be volunteer opportunities to join our team conducting wild breeding surveys, if time and resources permit.

Care of the captive birds is the utmost priority, but recording data about wild vulture behaviours and daily counts of birds visiting the vulture restaurant are also critical to our efforts. We have a viewing hide from which these standardized counts are done, and we will train you in how / what to record. This is also a wonderful time to get close to the wild birds, photograph, observe, and learn directly from them.

There may be other opportunities to join in field work, such searching for vulture mortalities via power line surveys, depending on the season and if time permits. You will always be accompanied and instructed by VulPro staff when in the field.



Work Schedule

You will usually work for 7 or 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, with free time not necessarily over the weekends. Your schedule will be agreed upon with the project coordinator and we expect you to follow it.

Liability

I, _____ (full names), hereby understand and agree that VulPro NPC and all associated staff are not responsible for any property loss/damage, or injuries to any persons that may occur during volunteering period. I have read and understood the above document, and agree to all terms and conditions. I understand that any breach of the above terms and conditions may result in immediate termination of the volunteer agreement.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

