“Inspiring, mind-blowing, educational, adventurous and so much fun – that’s LEO!” – Lou Hinterhofer, 2017
LEO Africa is a Big 5 wildlife monitoring and conservation volunteer project established in 2005. Our mission is to help and provide the Park Management with relevant information about the key animal species present in the Park, (such as lion, leopard, elephant, black and white rhino, buffalo, hyenas and cheetahs), as well as supporting with conservation work, anti-poaching and veterinary operations when necessary.

LEO Africa also focuses on green energy, recycling and education on the meaning of conservation and sustainability for present and future generations.

Volunteers are the centre of our work, helping us in the field as well as supporting the project financially, making our vital work possible. You will learn new skills and make amazing memories whilst living a truly African experience!

“LEO is a genuine conservation experience where volunteers learn by participating in an exciting, ethical project”
– Lesley Oliver, 2017
Why choose LEO?

With LEO you can make a real contribution to conservation by joining a very motivated and passionate team, working in the field, learning about fauna and flora, and learning about sustainable living. By joining LEO Africa you will live a truly unique experience; admiring beautiful wildlife and breath-taking landscapes whilst making new friends from different parts of the world.

**Work in a section of a National Park monitoring Big 5 and more!**

LEO is based in the Marataba Section of the Marakele National Park. We monitor lion, leopard, elephant, black and white rhino, buffalo, spotted and brown hyena, and cheetah. With great sightings and amazing experiences you will have the opportunity to closely observe and learn about these animals including their behaviours and social interactions.

**Actively learn about and take part in conservation work**

Our daily effort is vital to the preservation of the Park. The work we do is varied and rewarding (See page 5), and is always to the benefit of the wildlife. You will get your hands dirty, working as a team and gain an understanding as to how a natural ecosystem is managed.

**Spend up to 11 hours a day in the bush!**

With two monitoring drives most days you will experience an abundance of wildlife whilst exploring the Park and enjoy beautiful sunrises and sunsets against the backdrop of the African bush.

**Experienced and friendly staff**

All LEO staff are passionate about conservation and sustainable living. We can’t wait to meet you and share our knowledge!

**Meet like-minded people from round the world**

Volunteers join LEO from all over the world. We love having enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers who are passionate about and want to learn more about wildlife and conservation.

**Don’t just take it from us!**

All our volunteers have an amazing time, so much so that they love telling everyone! Read their reviews on our website, [www.leoafrica.org](http://www.leoafrica.org) and Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/LEO.Africa](http://www.facebook.com/LEO.Africa). Follow us on social media for up to date stories and photos of our adventures!

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Leo Africa – Volunteers for Wildlife and Conservation

@leo_africa
Where we are

The experience at LEO is unique, special and exclusive, as we are located in the 24,000 hectares of the Marataba Section of the Marakele National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

LEO’s role is very important as we are responsible for all the work in the field as well as data collection and ID kits of the key animals that we monitor. We provide a free service to the Park and the operation is entirely funded by the volunteers, who have the privilege of being part of a very select group of people who can spend time in the Park and work towards conservation.

The stunning Park hosts a multitude of wildlife and bird species as well as different ecosystems. The Waterberg Mountains form a frame for the south and east of the Park, delighting us with spectacular views, landscapes and incredible African sunsets.

The Marakele National Park is also home for the world’s largest colony of the endangered Cape Vultures, with more than 800 breeding pairs.

LEO Africa is 4 hours by car from Johannesburg (OR TAMBO) airport and is in a **malaria free zone**.
The role of LEO

LEO Africa is responsible for all the wildlife monitoring of the key species present in Marataba, specifically lions, white and black rhinos, elephants, leopard, buffalos, cheetah and hyenas.

We collaborate closely with the Park Management and Veterinary Services, establishing priorities for the benefit of fauna and flora. A balanced ecosystem grants a greater quality of life for the animals.

We have a great respect for the animals and their behaviour and we try to avoid any interference when we observe them. Any sort of ‘hands on’ interaction is only done if completely unavoidable and only in medical emergencies or animal relocation.

LEO is very active in the anti-poaching activities and protection of the rhinos within the Park. We have many camera traps placed in the bush that are used both for ID purposes but also for security reasons, detecting any unusual activities. LEO also reports on suspicious tracks, low flying helicopters and aeroplanes, and we conduct observations from strategic points to support the work done by the anti-poaching teams.

All the work we do is recorded and used for monthly reports for the Park Manager which aid the decision making process concerning the management of the ecosystems within the Park.

Activities
Wildlife monitoring, conservation and anti-poaching support are performed in the following ways:

1) Monitoring drives
2) Conservation work
3) Camera traps
4) Bush walks
5) Sleep outs
6) Microlight flights
7) Aerial drones
8) Fire control
9) Game capture
Activities

1) Monitoring drives
Every day our LEO guides will take you out on two monitoring drives on board a 4x4 game viewer. We observe, write data and take identification photos of the key species, in particular regarding their behaviours, location, movements, food preferences, health, reproduction and interactions with each other in their natural habitat without disturbance.

2) Conservation work
While out in the field, our work also involves taking care of the Park’s eco-system through reserve management activities such as bush clearing, road restoration, alien plant removal, erosion control, game capture and animal darting.

3) Camera traps
Well camouflaged in the bush and placed in strategic points, camera traps are vital for our monitoring and anti-poaching efforts. Each month thousands of photos and videos are processed by LEO volunteers and staff, and are used to produce ID kits together with the data collected on drive.

4) Bush walks
Bush walks are a great way to experience the bush in more depth. Walking allows us to spot animal and suspicious tracks, discover new areas and dens, check existing or install new camera traps and enjoy nature.
Activities

5) Sleep outs
Conducting sleep outs assist the anti-poaching teams in their role against poachers, we act as a deterrent, as extra eyes and ears in strategic parts of the Park. It is also a great chance to see nocturnal animals, admire the beautiful African sky and listen to the sounds of the bush.

6) Microlight flights
At LEO, volunteers have the unique opportunity to fly over the Park, patrolling vast areas from the air. It also offers stunning views and is a great way to spot animals.

7) Aerial drones
Diurnal and nocturnal thermal imaging drones are used as a monitoring and anti-poaching tool.

8) Fire control
Volunteers help with controlled bush fires when needed. This method is used in reserve management to remove moribund grasses, excess of parasites and encourage the growth of new grass more palatable for animals.

9) Game Capture
Volunteers may have the opportunity to take part in the exciting experience of game capture. This may be done for various reasons including darting an individual for medical reasons or for sale, which contributes as an income to the Park as well as a way of controlling the excess of animal populations.
The role of volunteers

Volunteering at LEO offers a different experience than most volunteer projects as you have the opportunity to actively contribute towards conservation and observe and learn about animals in their natural habitat. Volunteers play an essential role in our project, supporting us on three main aspects of our work:

In the field: Data collection and ID photos for the species monitored; conservation work (bush clearing, road restoration, erosion control, alien plant removal); camera trap checks; animal tracking; game capture and animal darting (when requested by the Park Vet). You will also take part in bush walks and sleep-outs to monitor and ID animals and support anti-poaching efforts (organised according to the weather and need).

At base: Carrying out duties on a rotational basis with the other volunteers such as cooking, washing up, camera trap processing, data insert, ID kits, general house duties and camp maintenance.

Economically: LEO Africa is financially sustained only by the volunteers as we provide a free service to the Park Management. All the money from the volunteers is used to run the entire project (to buy and maintain vehicles, petrol, monitoring and research tools, computers, camera traps, batteries, salaries, food and accommodation etc.). Without the financial support of our volunteers, we could not operate and the Park would have nobody to conduct the vital wildlife monitoring and census data records, or conservation work.

Is it for me?
If you are passionate about wildlife and conservation then yes! The activities are not overly challenging, but a reasonable level of physical fitness and enthusiasm for manual work will be required as the weather can become hot and humid, especially during the summer months. Game drives are between 5-6 hours long and some observations may be upwards of one hour so patience and perseverance are important. The days are long but with this comes rewarding experiences. Our volunteers come from all over the world and their ages vary from 18 to 75. Be prepared to work hard, get stuck in and have fun! LEO Africa will be your experience of a lifetime!
Day to Day

Each day consists of two monitoring game drives. Morning drives leave at 5:30am in the summer and 6am in the winter, returning to base for lunch at 12pm. Volunteers have time to rest during the hottest part of the day which is also time to insert the data or photos collected on drive. Afternoon drives leave at 3:30pm in the summer and 3pm in the winter, returning to base for dinner at 8pm. The two daily monitoring drives can be replaced with a "full day out" (7:00am - 6:30pm).

Sundays are a day off for volunteers with no game drives but there is a chance to go on fence patrol around the Park checking the fence line for damage and voltage. Once a week we also spend an afternoon in the nearest town for shopping and enjoy the evening at a local restaurant.

The bush gives us much fulfilment and many surprises with each day being different but we can’t expect to see all the Big 5 every day. There can be very intense and lucky days and even on quieter days there is much to admire and see in the bush. Everything depends on the many variables which are outside our control such as weather, animal interactions, water sources etc. Wild animals can’t be controlled! They are fascinating because of this unpredictability. The only other people who can enter Marataba are the guests of the 5 star lodge located in the Park.

“LEO is the ideal program for people who want to actively conserve nature and learn about sustainable ecology whilst experiencing South African animals in the wild”

– Rainer Stern, 2017
LEO base

Accommodation
Our rustic-style house is large, bright and fully immersed in nature with a large garden. Volunteers stay in dorm rooms with shared bathrooms. A double room with private bathroom is available on request for a small surcharge subject to availability. Please remember to bring your own towel and sleeping bag as we provide bed sheets, blankets and pillows but no duvet.

Electricity and water
Most of our electricity comes from our solar panels as we strive to live in an eco-friendly way. At LEO base lights go off at 10.30pm in order to save energy and also for the consideration of volunteers who may want to go to bed early. We recommend you bring a torch. Solar energy also heats our hot water and the tap water at LEO is safe to drink.

Laundry
A machine wash is available two times per week at a small charge. You can reduce the price by sharing the load with other volunteers. The washing machine only runs full to avoid wasting water!

Communication
At LEO base we have limited Wi-Fi access. During town trips on Fridays you can access free Wi-Fi at the restaurant using your own device (i.e. smartphone). The best mobile network to use at LEO base is MTN. You can purchase a SIM card at the airport and load it with data and/or airtime.

Money
Currency can be changed at Johannesburg airport; alternatively you can withdraw money at any ATM using your Visa or MasterCard at the airport or when we go into town on a Friday. Supermarkets and restaurants also accept all cards.

Snacks and personal supplies
You are able buy any personal snacks and items from the supermarket on the day of your arrival or on the Friday town trip. A shared fridge is available to store your food and a box will be provided to store other items that do not need refrigerating.
When to come to LEO Africa

South Africa is in the southern hemisphere and consequently the seasons are opposite to that of the northern hemisphere. In all seasons there are temperature changes between day and night, so be sure to bring different layers of clothing!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Climate Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong> (Sept - Oct)</td>
<td>Mild and semi-rainy climate (mornings and evenings can be cold)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong> (Nov - Feb)</td>
<td>Very hot with high chances of rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autumn</strong> (March - Apr)</td>
<td>Mild climate tending to dry and getting cooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter</strong> (May - Aug)</td>
<td>Very cold mornings and evenings, mild and dry during the day</td>
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</tbody>
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Booking and costs

Booking your trip to LEO Africa is easy. Email us at enquiries@leoafrica.org to enquire about availability but be sure to book early to avoid disappointment! To confirm your booking we need a 50% deposit with the balance due no later than 30 days before your arrival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Price (SA Rand)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
<td>R13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Weeks</td>
<td>R19,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Weeks</td>
<td>R25,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Weeks</td>
<td>R32,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Weeks</td>
<td>R38,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Weeks</td>
<td>R43,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Weeks</td>
<td>R49,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Weeks</td>
<td>R55,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Weeks</td>
<td>R60,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Weeks</td>
<td>R65,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Weeks</td>
<td>R69,900</td>
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</table>

Transfers to/from Johannesburg (OR TAMBO) airport are not included in the price and cost R1,500 one way on a Tuesday and R2,500 one way when traveling on a day other than a Tuesday.

We love it when volunteers come back to join us and as a thank you we offer a **10% discount** to all returning volunteers!
Travelling to LEO

Getting here
Our weeks run from Tuesday to Tuesday so we kindly ask volunteers to arrive at Johannesburg (OR TAMBO) airport on a Tuesday. We will organise your transfer from the airport to LEO Africa; look out for one of our LEO staff members holding a LEO Africa sign. The journey from the airport to LEO will take approximately 4 hours plus time for volunteers to have some lunch and shop at the supermarket. When traveling to the airport from LEO Africa the transfer leaves LEO base at 7.00am.

The pick-up and drop off time at Johannesburg airport is at 11:00am. Please DO NOT book your return flight any earlier than 3pm as you will not be at the airport in time.

Flights
LEO Africa has a partnership with Flight Centre to help you with the organisation of your flights. If you would like to receive a quotation on flights to Johannesburg, you can contact Flight Centre following this link: https://www.studentuniverse.co.uk/travel-services/leoafrica/affiliate/leoafrica or call their dedicated flight consultants on 0333 333 9790 (UK). For every flight booked through this link, Flight Centre will donate £10 to our project which we will use towards anti-poaching efforts.

Passport and visas
No visa is required for passport holders of EU and North American countries for a stay in South Africa of less than 90 days. Please double check with the South African embassy of your country if you need a visa. Please remember that your passport has to be valid for at least 6 months from the date you land in South Africa and will need to have 3 free pages.

Malaria and vaccinations
LEO Africa is located in a malaria FREE area and no vaccinations are compulsory for South Africa. Please contact your local doctor or travel clinic for advice on vaccinations.

Travel insurance
Please remember that in order to come to LEO you need to have travel insurance. We recommend World Nomads. You can obtain a quote and buy direct from our website http://www.leoafrica.org/insurance. A small percentage will be donated to LEO Africa.

Spare time
Volunteers also have the opportunity to go on excursions to the Marakele National Park and Pilanesberg National Park. If requested by volunteers LEO can organised these and provide a guide. All costs associated with excursions are split between the volunteers and are subject to availability of a vehicle and guide.
What to bring to LEO

Below is a list of what we recommend you bring to LEO.

Sleeping bag (essential)
Head torch/torch and batteries (essential)
Camera (also for taking ID photos)
Battery charger/spare batteries
Memory card(s)
Towel
Shirts/t-shirts
Warm hoodies/jumpers
Shorts
Long trousers (for walks/evening drives)
Beanie, gloves and scarf (especially during winter)
Sun hat
Working/gardening gloves (for conservation work)
Walking socks/thick socks
Hiking type shoes
Comfortable shoes (time off)
Sunglasses
Waterproof jacket
Small rucksack/bag (for bringing out on drives)
Water bottle/camelback (at least 1L capacity)
Sun cream (SPF 30+)
Insect repellent
After sun lotion
Roll mat (for sleep outs)
Binoculars (8x42 or 10x42 recommended)
Mosquito net (provided but you may prefer your own)
Plug adapter (South African three pronged and two pronged plug sockets available)
Money

In the winter, early mornings and evenings will be very cold due to wind chill; this can also be the case even in the summer. Please make sure to bring plenty of layers to stay warm. Neutral shades such as olive, brown, green, khaki and beige are best (bright colours are NOT allowed in the field).

(IMPORTANT NOTE: We will provide you with 1 LEO t-shirt; the reserve requires that volunteers always wear a LEO t-shirt to be recognised in the field and to look neat. You may consider purchasing an extra LEO t-shirt once here; we also have LEO branded beanies, sun hats and more!).
We look forward to hearing from you!

www.facebook.com/LEO.Africa
Instagram: @leo_africa
Twitter: @volunteerat_LEO
www.leoafrica.org
enquiries@leoafrica.org

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Postal Address: LEO Africa, Postnet Suite 93, private Bag X6625, Thabazimbi, 0380