

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION WITH IVHQ, VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

March 12-23, 2020

IVHQ Nakavango Conservation Program

The award-winning Nakavango Conservation Program is committed to making a difference through the integration of conservation, education and community. The Nakavango Conservation & Community program is based at the Stanley & Livingstone Private Game Reserve in Zimbabwe. Volunteers from across the globe are provided the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in conservation management activities, research projects, and community development projects. During this experience, students' knowledge of nature conservation and African wildlife will be greatly enhanced through the dedicated program coordinators, and they will leave with a stronger understanding of conservation issues, and the knowledge that they have made a real contribution to nature conservation and local communities in Africa. The reserve is located about 10 kilometers from the town of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

About Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls is one of the largest and most spectacular waterfalls in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, situated within three separate national parks -- Victoria Falls National Park (Zimbabwe), Zambezi National Park (Zimbabwe) and Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park (Zambia). Nature enthusiasts and animal lovers will have the unique opportunity to explore the falls via safari and guided tour, exploring rainforests and swirling clouds of mist, which house many endangered species. The town of Victoria Falls offers many popular tourist spots for sampling Zimbabwean cuisine and buying handicrafts from local artisans.

Itinerary

Thursday, March 12

Depart JFK via South African Airways flight 204 at 11:15 a.m., arriving in Johannesburg, South Africa on **Friday, March 13**, early in the morning local time. After collecting luggage and going through passport control, we will check in at the City Lodge Hotel, located within walking distance of the airport terminal. We will have the day to recover from the long flight and adjust to the time difference. A tour of the Apartheid Museum or another local site can be arranged for those who don't need to rest and want to explore this city a bit. Dinner at a local restaurant or at the hotel. Overnight at the City Lodge Hotel, Johannesburg.

Saturday, March 14

We will return to the terminal to catch SAA flight 40 to Victoria Falls at 10:50 a.m., arriving in Victoria Falls at 12:25 p.m. Representatives from Nakavango will meet the group at the airport and take us to the reserve to settle in.

Afternoon at leisure on the reserve or explore the town of Victoria Falls, and the Falls itself.

Sunday, March 14

Choice of one or two of the following activities: Explore Victoria Falls on foot, Flight of Angels helicopter option, or tackling the terrifying gorge swing over the Zambezi river, or a magnificent Elephant Encounter.

Flight of Angels, optional excursion (13min).

Price is currently \$150 per person plus \$15.00 park fee

You will be collected from the reserve. When you arrive at the Heli-Pad, you will be given a brief safety talk and an explanation of the route the flight will take. You are flown over the Falls and surrounding areas which enables you to take amazing photos from a unique view point.

Elephant Encounter

The Elephant Sanctuary and Orphanage is located within a wilderness concession on the edge of the Batoka Gorge. You will have a welcome briefing and an educational presentation on the sanctuary and the individual elephants. After the safety briefing, the group takes a Land Rover out into the reserve to find the elephant group. Participants have the opportunity to take photos next to the elephants before walking between them to another spot, where the elephants are treated to Lucerne pellets.

Elephants on this reserve, located within Victoria Falls National Park, are the survivors of culling of elephant herds years ago. The baby elephants were saved and brought to the reserve.

Gorge Swing

A cable is spanned across the gorge, 135m long and 75m above the ground. A full body harness is attached securely from your back to the cable and you take a running dive off the edge of the cliff and soar across the deep gorge like a bird in flight. You will freefall for about 50 metres before swinging out into the middle of the gorge. After several pendulum swings you will then be lowered to the ground where you can take a track back up to the top of the gorge. This can also be done as a tandem. You can purchase the DVD or photos of your jump once you have finished.

Whichever activity is chosen, we will return to Nakavango in the afternoon, in time to meet the newly arriving volunteers before the formal orientation on Monday morning.





Monday, March 16- Friday, March 20

Volunteer at Nakavango Conservation Center, which is located 10 km from Victoria Falls. Orientation for this program begins on Monday morning.

From the IVHQ website, here are the volunteer activities:

Wildlife Conservation

While taking part on the Wildlife Conservation project you have the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in conservation management activities and assist with on-going research in a private game reserve and surrounding areas within Victoria Falls. The reserve is home to a wealth of native wildlife, including Big 5 animals – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo; and serves as an intensive protection zone for the critically endangered black rhino.

The Wildlife Conservation project gives you the opportunity to get involved in conservation management practices, all of which are vital for the successful operation of the game reserve, its surrounding areas and their ecosystems. Conservation management and research activities may include:

- Alien vegetation removal
- Soil erosion control methods
- Waterhole creation, maintenance and monitoring
- Freshwater eco-system analyses
- Game, predator and bird monitoring, tracking and counting, as part of regular game drives
- Road maintenance
- Upkeep of river crossings
- Reserve clean-up operations
- General clean-up of reserve and surrounding areas
- Camping out on the reserve

Work varies during the year and at times may also include:

- Game census counting
- Animal tracking
- Watching Rhino supplement feeding

You will be working in tandem with members of the game reserve team, with their work also benefitting partner organizations, including Birdlife Zimbabwe, Endangered Wildlife Trust and Zimbabwe National Parks Authority. You may also have the opportunity to attend lectures on related conservation topics, delivered by senior reserve staff or guest speakers, which will enhance your knowledge and understanding of nature conservation issues in Africa. This facilitates you in making a real contribution to nature conservation and local communities in Victoria Falls. Additionally, you supplement your time by visiting a local school to work on development projects in the local community focused on education, fundraising, nutrition and small-scale vegetable gardening.

Daily schedule at Nakavango

First Day: On your first day of volunteering, students will take part on a program orientation at the center on the reserve. On the following days, they will have a morning and afternoon shift, which will last around 2 to 5 hours. A typical day would be as follows:

6.00AM - 6.30 AM – Breakfast at the conservation center.

6.30 AM – Volunteers typically begin work for the day on the reserve or in the surrounding area.

12.00 PM – Volunteers return to the center to clean up before lunch. If volunteers are not able to return to the center, they will receive a packed lunch.

4.00 PM – Volunteers resume work at the center or surrounding area.

7.00 PM - 7:30 PM – Volunteers return to center to clean up before dinner.

7.00 PM - 7:30PM – Dinner at the conservation center.

Please note, this schedule will vary depending on the season and the nature of the work being done at the time.

Saturday, March 21

Day excursion to Chobe National Park in Botswana.

*Day excursion to Chobe National Park in Botswana
from \$170 per person and includes lunch:*



Botswana's Chobe National Park, located on the banks of the scenic Chobe River, is home to one of the largest game concentrations in Africa. Experience the thrill of a game drive on the lookout for elephants and lions that populate the park.

This full-day package from Victoria Falls, includes return transfers, breakfast and lunch, park entrance fees, local refreshments, a boat ride on the river, and a game drive.

7:30 AM: Transfer from Victoria Falls to the Kazungula border

8:30 AM: You'll be met by a representative from the Botswana company at the border and assisted through immigration procedures, followed by transfer to the jetty

9:15 AM: Boat cruise on the Chobe River with tea and coffee served, along with biscuits and rusks (cool box with mineral water and soft drinks on board)

12:30 PM: Full buffet lunch at the Chobe Safari Lodge, with 1 complimentary drink (beer, wine, soft drink, or mineral water)

1:30 PM: Game drive in Chobe National Park, with complimentary drinks on board

4:30 PM: Return to border for the transfer back to Victoria Falls

6:30 PM: Approximate arrival time in Victoria Falls

Sunday, March 22

Depart Victoria Falls at 1:25 p.m. on SAA flight 41, connecting in Johannesburg to flight 203 at 9:05 p.m., arriving in JFK at 6:40 a.m. on **Monday, March 23**.

Accommodations at Nakavango Conservation Center



Volunteers are accommodated within private rooms at the conservation center where the program is based. As the conservation center is situated on a private game reserve, it is not uncommon to see African wildlife grazing throughout the day! Bedrooms are private with one single bed per room and a ceiling fan, desk and storage shelving. They are spartan but clean. Bathrooms are shared between up to four volunteers of the same gender and offer western toilets and hot showers. In addition to the sleeping quarters, the accommodation also offers an open-air communal area with a swimming pool, braai (barbecue) and picnic tables, where volunteers can socialize and enjoy meals. WiFi is also available at the volunteer accommodation.

Bed linens are provided and during the hot months and a sheet should be adequate cover in the evenings, as there is no air conditioning in the volunteer accommodation. During the cooler months, you may wish to bring a sleeping bag for an extra layer of warmth. Volunteers are asked to bring their own towels. Temperatures in March average 86 (high) to 64 (low) in the evenings.

On-site staff clean the accommodation throughout the week, however volunteers are also required to keep these areas tidy. Laundry services are provided on a weekly basis.

Security

The conservation center has a 24-hour security guard and a safe is available in the staff office for volunteers to store small valuables. As the reserve is a “Big 5” area (home to lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo), the property is protected by an electric fence and volunteers are required to ask permission before leaving the facility. Students should bring a small padlock to lock their own belongings in their backpack or duffel bag in their room.

Meals

Meals are included in the cost of the program. Volunteers are served three meals per day, prepared by an on-site local cook. All meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) will be a mix of western and traditional Zimbabwean food. Breakfast may include cereal, eggs, pancakes, porridge, fruit or toast, accompanied with coffee and tea. Lunches will be a mixture of sandwiches, quiches, burgers, salads and other similar foods. Dinners will commonly comprise of pastas, fish, meat, starches and/or vegetables. The local team is happy to accommodate special dietary requests (vegetarian, vegan, dairy or gluten free, etc.). The IVHQ Program Manager can be informed of any special dietary needs in advance so they can ensure the local team is prepared for you.

Passport and Visa Requirements

All passports must be valid for at least 6 months beyond your intended stay. The passports of all travelers to South Africa, Namibia, and Kenya must contain at least two blank (unstamped) facing VISA pages for each country. (NOT the endorsement/amendment pages at the back of the passport). This requirement is over and above pages that may be required for visas issued on arrival in other countries. If needed, a new passport should be obtained well in advance of your trip.

Visas for Zimbabwe can be obtained at the airport in Victoria Falls. A double-entry visa currently costs \$50. Paperwork can be filled out in advance, and a letter from Nakavango is required, along with 2 passport photos.

Vaccination Requirements

There are currently no vaccinations required for South Africa or Zimbabwe. Anti-malarial medication is strongly recommended for Nakavango; these are pills taken once a day 1-2 days prior to travel, each day in Africa, and for 7 days after returning. All travelers should be up to date on vaccinations including flu, DTAP, tetanus. A typhoid vaccine is recommended but not required and can be pills (4 doses) or an injection at least a month before the date of travel.

Additional expenses

Not included in cost of trip: special excursions such as the helicopter flight, tips, laundry, spending money. IVHQ fee includes all meals and accommodations. Also not included: dinner on March 13, breakfast on March 14, and dinner on March 22 (at the airport).