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# Discover South Africa as a Volunteer!

## Our Seabird and Penguin Rescue Volunteer Programme

The volunteer programme offered by YFU South Africa is an opportunity for young people from any of our partner countries, aged 18 or older, to participate in a wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and conservation programme within the guidelines of YFU.

Our volunteer programme is open to high school graduates, university students and young professionals who want to expand their horizon, discover a new country and culture, and gain practical experience in the fields of nature conservation, animal rescue and wildlife rehabilitation.

## Programme Details

The programme is offered for a duration of 3-6 months, but shorter or longer programmes can be arranged on an individual basis. The programme includes accommodation, insurance, international travel, airport transfers, several orientations, as well as YFU support throughout the programme.

Volunteers are placed at a seabird and penguin rescue and rehabilitation centre located on the outskirts of Cape Town, where they assist with a variety of tasks. In addition, volunteers have the opportunity to spend part of their stay at the partner centre in Port Elizabeth which is located on the beautiful Garden Route. Of course they also have the opportunity to explore South Africa's diverse culture and beautiful nature, and are invited to participate in local YFU activities and gatherings.

**creating**  
**citizens**  
of one  
**world**



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## Our Partner: The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB)

### About SANCCOB

The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) was established in 1968 and is a non-profit organisation whose primary objective is to reverse the decline of seabird populations through the rescue, rehabilitation and release of ill, injured, abandoned and oiled seabirds – especially endangered seabirds like the African penguin.

In almost 50 years, SANCCOB has treated more than 95,000 seabirds and independent research confirms that SANCCOB's oil spill response actions alone have increased the African population by 19%. In a non-spill year, SANCCOB treats up to 2,500 seabirds, of which approximately 1,500 are African penguins.

With a limited staff component, SANCCOB relies heavily on the support of volunteers to achieve the mission of the organisation. Volunteers become an extension of the staff and are an integral part of the daily running of the centres. Not only do volunteers assist with the hands-on work with the seabirds, but also provide assistance in all functions of the centre such as marketing, procurement and fundraising. In short, they need volunteers like YOU to join their team!

**Website:** <https://sancob.co.za/>

**Facebook:** [@SANCCOBsavesSeabirds](#)

**Instagram:** [@SANCCOB](#)



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## Life as a Seabird and Penguin Volunteer

### We offer three different Volunteer Programmes:

#### Seabird Rehabilitation (3 or 6 months):

The Seabird rehabilitation programme has been developed to equip you with basic skills for seabird rehabilitation, or even for a career in bird rehabilitation or conservation. Tasks include catching, handling and feeding birds, assisting with small medical procedures and care, assist with ringing and taking blood samples (6-month volunteers only) and the release of rehabilitated birds.

#### Penguin Nursery (3 or 6 months):

The Penguin Nursery programme is focused on caring for bigger chicks, usually weighing 1.5kg or more. These chicks remain in the nursery until they are ready to move to the swimming rehabilitation pens. Tasks include handling and feeding penguin chicks, assisting with medication and record keeping, cleaning and temperature control of the pens, observing chick behaviour and assisting with the basic training of other volunteers and interns.

#### Chick Rearing (6 months):

The Seabird Chick Rearing programme has been developed to equip you with chick husbandry skills and egg management skills, focusing on captive breeding and seabird chick rearing. Tasks include feeding, weighing and cleaning the chicks, assisting with medication and record keeping, monitoring eggs and handling/feeding penguins of all ages.

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the world  
up close**



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# Life as a Seabird and Penguin Volunteer

## Working hours

A monthly work schedule is compiled by the volunteer coordinator and volunteers will be scheduled to work a maximum of 5 days per week (including weekends and public holidays). Although the end of your work day will usually be at 5:50 pm, some days may require volunteers to assist until 6:30 pm, so your willingness to go the extra mile during the busy times will be crucial.

### *Seabird rehabilitation and penguin nursery:*

A normal working day is from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm with a lunch break 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm and a short break in both the morning and afternoon.

### *Chick rearing:*

A normal working day typically consists of shifts work for the volunteers. A morning shift is 05:30 am – 02:30 pm and an afternoon shift is 01:30 pm – 09:30 pm. From time to time volunteers will be expected to work from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm with a lunch break 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm and a short break in both the morning and afternoon.

## Transport and meals

SANCCOB does not offer on-site accommodation for volunteers, but there are various accommodation options relatively close to the project (see next page). Both are within 10-20 minutes (by foot) from the project, so you can walk or cycle (you will need to get your own bicycle). However, it is also possible to either use Uber (around 1,50 EUR for a one-way trip) or to rent a car, possibly together with other volunteers who may be staying at the accommodation.

Meals are not included in the programme fee and will be at the volunteer's own expense. Some of our accommodation partners offer breakfast at an additional fee, and all have a communal kitchen where volunteers can prepare their own meals.



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## Volunteer Accommodation Options

### Option 1

The first accommodation option is located in the quiet and safe area of Flamingo Vlei in Table View. It is only 10 min away from SANCCOB (walking distance) and offers shared accommodation in 4-sleeper dorms. Volunteers have access to a communal bathroom, as well as a communal kitchen and lounge with a TV. The property has a garden and a pool which volunteers can enjoy on the hot summer days. The dorm rooms are cleaned once a week and fresh bedding is provided on a weekly basis.

If you are looking for a quiet and cozy place within walking distance of SANCCOB, option 1 is for you.

If volunteers prefer to stay in a private room, this can be arranged for an additional fee.

### Option 2

The second accommodation option is also located in Table View and around 15-20 min (by foot) from SANCCOB. It offers shared accommodation in a 4-sleeper dorm, either in a girls only or in a mixed dorm. Rooms are cleaned every week and fresh linen is provided on a weekly basis. Volunteers have access to a communal bathroom, as well as a communal kitchen and lounge with a TV. The property also has a garden and a pool and is 600m away from the closest MyCiti bus stop.

Option 2 is slightly larger than the first option, i.e. if you are looking for a more 'busy' vibe and don't mind using Uber or renting a car for your daily commute to SANCCOB, option 2 is for you.

If volunteers prefer to stay in a private room, this can be arranged for an additional fee.



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## Volunteer Experiences and Testimonials

"The range of birds I've been able to work with is quite staggering. I've hand-reared tiny African penguin and Hartlaub gull chicks. I've helped to rehabilitate seabirds ranging in size from the delicate Swift Terns to massive pelicans and giant petrels. I've even learned to handle (and been bitten by cormorans). I've also had the opportunity to observe species I wouldn't ordinarily be able to see without a trip to Antarctica, such as the Shy Albatross and the Skua.

As well as rehabilitation work I've learned about common diseases and problems in seabirds, and attended a number of releases – which is what makes the whole rehabilitation process worthwhile, long hours, heartbreak and all. There is nothing so rewarding as watching those precious little babies who we all pour so much love, time and effort into, taking their very first dip in the ocean, or being restored to health to get back to where they're supposed to be."

*Fran Bell, SANCCOB volunteer and penguin mommy*

"There was no such thing as a typical day in the weeks we were at SANCCOB. We did a variety of tasks and most days we were on our feet non-stop from 8 am to 5 pm assisting with the treatment, and care of injured and sick birds. Back at the Zoo's veterinary hospital, we regularly drew and examined the blood samples of the Penguin Coast colony, a skill which proved to be valuable at SANCCOB because we can do it quickly and confidently. We also utilized our experience to lend a hand as SANCCOB's head veterinarian performed surgeries on injured penguins (leg injuries from seal bites are one of the most common traumas).

The highlight of the trip for both of us was attending a release of rehabilitated penguins! The beaches of South Africa where penguins naturally make their homes are beautiful and seeing penguins that were sick or injured ready to waddle along the beach and swim in the ocean again was amazing."

*Jennifer Sohl and Kaitlin Studer, Veterinary Technicians at The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, US*

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# Application Requirements & Information

## Important Information for Volunteers

While we understand that a volunteer programme is often seen as a 'gap year' and an opportunity to travel and explore the world, it is important to keep in mind that working in a wildlife conservation project requires maturity, commitment, responsibility and dependability.

While volunteers are welcome - and encouraged! - to use their off-days to have fun, travel and explore, it is important to keep in mind that the programme is a learning experience and an opportunity for personal development. It is not just a holiday. Through your work, you make a difference in the lives of the animals you care for and contribute to global conservation efforts, and all our programme participants are expected to take this responsibility seriously.

Upon arrival, all volunteers receive a comprehensive on-arrival orientation, as well as detailed information about the routines, work schedule, rules and activities at the project. Volunteers are expected to adhere to these rules and to act as positive role models for their fellow volunteers and their colleagues.

Applicants must be over the age of 18, preferably 20 or older. Applicants are expected to have a good command of the English language and must be prepared to work on a full-time basis, and to assist with a variety of tasks around the project. It is important for volunteers to be able to work in a team with both local and international staff and volunteers. Previous experience in the field of animal welfare, veterinary science, or conservation is an asset, but not a requirement.

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# Discover South Africa as a Volunteer

## Discover South Africa's Diverse Culture

Of course being a volunteer in South Africa is not just about work - it also gives you the opportunity to discover the country's diverse culture and nature and to experience the hospitality and warm-heartedness of its people!

In addition to participating in a variety of events and activities organized by the project and the volunteers themselves, volunteers are encouraged to use their free time, weekends and their days off work to explore Cape Town and its surroundings.

The project is located in a quiet suburb next to a lake and close to the beach, but the city, Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula, and many local wine farms and other attractions are just a short drive away and can be explored on day or weekend trips. Many volunteers decide to hire and share a car, but safe and reliable public transport options (such as Uber or the MyCiti bus) are available as well.

During their holidays or after completion of their programme, volunteers can also explore other parts of South Africa, such as the Garden Route, the Wild Coast, the Drakensberg Mountains, or Kruger National Park.

Last but not least, volunteers can also choose to complete part of the volunteer programme at the SANCCOB centre in Port Elizabeth, which is located on South Africa's beautiful East Coast, ca. 700 km from Cape Town. A small additional fee will be charged for this option, to cover transport and additional accommodation costs.

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*in a*  
**lifelong**  
**journey**



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## Are you ready to embark on the journey of a lifetime?

Contact your local YFU organization and apply today!

Find your local YFU organization [here](#).

YFU South Africa and SANCCOB look forward to welcoming you in South Africa.



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Visit our website [www.yfu.org.za](http://www.yfu.org.za) and follow us on social media!

