



# SRUC Oatridge - Alumni Project Presentation



## Waterberg Wildlife & Veterinary Course

**AFRICA**

**GLOBAL** reach. **ADVENTURE** for all. **PROJECTS** to inspire.

A close-up photograph of a rhinoceros in a savanna landscape. The rhino is the central focus, shown in profile, looking towards the left. The background features a sunset sky with warm orange and purple hues, and silhouettes of acacia trees. The overall mood is serene and natural.

**AFRICA**

# **ABOUT WELGEVONDEN GAME RESERVE**

Project overview and  
location

## Your Conservation Field Trip Explained

- A unique conservation experience based in South Africa
- Live in a research camp on a wild African game reserve
- 12 day programme specifically tailored for VN students
- Learn about conservation management
- Project Activities include:
  - Pioneering Conservation Research
  - Conservation Activities
  - Veterinary interventions and activities
- Dedicated vehicles and conservation staff
- 12 Day - All inclusive experience
- The most incredible wildlife experience you will ever have

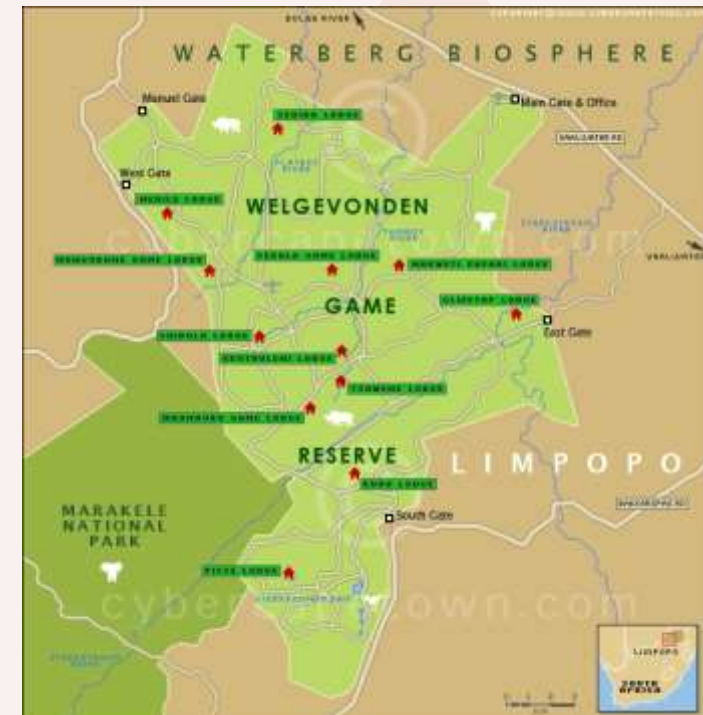
## What is a Game Reserve?

- A game reserve is a large area of protected land where wild animals can live safely.
- Wildlife is free roaming throughout the reserve allowing them to thrive in their natural habitat.
- Reserves are either Government Owned (National Parks) or Privately Owned/Managed.
- Most reserves will have physical boundaries i.e. electrified fence line.
- Due to physical boundaries, wildlife must be managed due to restraints on population growth, migration and resources.
- Wildlife is protected but also utilised as a tourist attraction (Eco Tourism) which creates funding for conservation efforts and research.



## Welgevonden Game Reserve

- 36,000 Hectare Privately Managed Game Reserve
- Forming part of the Waterberg Biosphere
- Work alongside the conservation team including:
  - Wildlife Vets
  - Conservation Researchers
  - Ecologists
  - Anti Poaching Unit
- Located in a Malaria free zone
- Proclaimed Protected Conservation Area
- Savannah Eco System
- Research Camp Accommodation

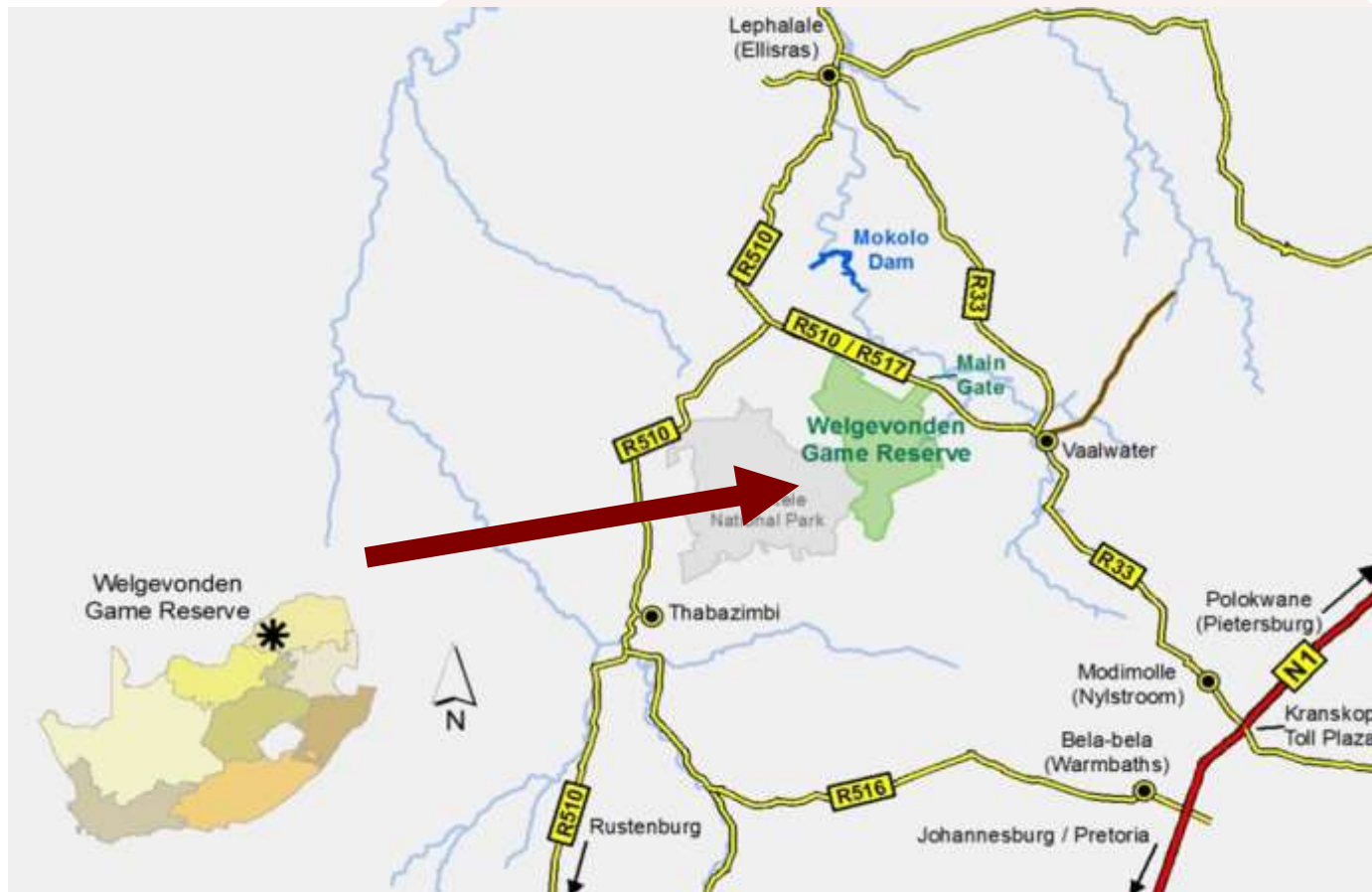


# ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

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## Welgevonden Game Reserve - Location

- South Africa a world leader in conservation
- Malaria free Waterberg



# ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

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## Home to the BIG 5



ANY QUESTIONS?

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# ABOUT WELGVONDEN

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Home to over 60 Species of Mammal



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# **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Our conservation work  
in more detail

## Course Fundamentals and Structure

- Gain understanding of wildlife research and management that govern veterinary practices on reserve
- A Wildlife Vets role and responsibilities
- Expose participants to behind the scenes wildlife conservation and veterinary work
- Immobilisation and capture techniques used for various wildlife species
- Rhino protection through Veterinary Management
- Conservation Research
- Wildlife management and conservation challenges
- Appreciate the importance of herd health and intensive wildlife breeding
- Gain experience of a variety of veterinary wildlife and conservation working environments
- Vegetation types suitable for wildlife
- Tracks and tracking of Big Five
- Waterberg Wild Dog Project

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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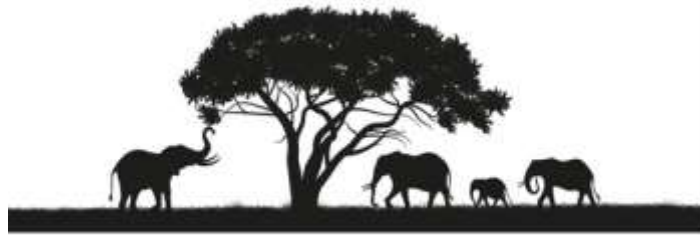
## Course Study Manual



### GAP AFRICA PROJECTS CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND VETERINARY

#### Course Manual

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Dr Peter Caldwell MRCVS  
Dr Erin Thompson MRCVS  
Greg Canning  
Research Papers: Cited



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#### History of Conservation in South Africa

##### Introduction

South Africa's national protection system includes 178 protected areas, of which 18 are national parks. Ecotourism has direct and indirect benefits to the economy in terms of job creation, rural development, and the emergence of secondary industries involving local communities and remains the fifth largest earner of foreign exchange. Approximately 5.1% of South Africa's land area is currently under statutory protection. Although land claims are permitted in these areas, the land must remain in perpetuity as a national protected area, and the state has the power to block residential development and veto commercial operations which they deem detrimental to the conservation area.

Current conservation management structure in South Africa is as follows:

- National – Department of Environmental Affairs
- South African National Parks
- Provincial Authorities
- Private Reserves
- Non – Governmental Organisations



##### Pre-Colonial Era

South Africa has a history of conservation; traditionally people lived in harmony with nature and the philosophies of sustainability and conservation were inherent in society. As hunters and gatherers, the indigenous people of this country depended on natural resources for their survival. Prior to European colonisation access to natural resources was controlled and influenced by religious and cultural beliefs. There were superstitions against killing certain species like hyaena, hamerkop or chamelison and people were prohibited from hunting or eating their totem animals (these included eland, zebra, monkeys, squirrels or crocodiles). Scarce or valuable products like ivory, pangolin meat or leopard pelts were used by chiefs and kings only. Chiefs and tribal councils were responsible for making and enforcing the rules for resource control. Chieftaincies were powerful institutions that were respected and obeyed by local people and their authority was absolute. The combination of different types of controls regulated the use of natural resources and protected the resource base.

##### Colonial Era

This period saw the natural resources of the country being exploited and in 1656 Jan van Riebeeck gave instructions to regulate hunting in the Cape. The Southern Cape forests were valuable to the British Navy and from 1811 measures were introduced to conserve the forests around Plettenberg Bay. By the 1830s rapid deforestation led to increased conservation awareness and by the mid-19th century there was an active and influential conservation community in the Cape and the first game reserves in Africa were declared in the Kynena and Taitsoamma forests in 1866.



The creation of parks resulted in communities being forcibly relocated to new areas, or losing their land. Conservation became elitist and access to parks required social privileges with game reserves being fenced off and communities losing their rights and access to resources within the reserves. Wild animals would escape from the parks into community land and damage crops and livestock and this increased feelings of resentment by local communities towards conservation authorities.

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At the higher end of the spectrum you will find professional poachers.

They have well-structured operations and use high technology methods which involve -

- tranquilizer guns,
- helicopters,
- veterinary drugs, and
- high caliber weapons to kill rhinos.
- Many of the poachers seem to have had military training
- Often they have had prior access to information about the farm/reserve they intend to target.

Unfortunately due to the fact that highly controlled and regulated veterinary drugs are often used in cases of rhino poaching it indicates that there is some involvement of veterinary professionals.



When they land the helicopter, they hack off the horns with a chainsaw. The use of a helicopter allows for easy access and quick getaways. Several media reports have indicated that the registration numbers on the tail of the aircraft get covered up or falsified during the operation. The rhino subsequently dies either from an overdose of tranquilizers or bleeds to death.

One troubling fact is that the methods being used by the syndicates often reflect those used by wildlife capture operators in professional rhino management operations. The rhinos are normally darted with a dosage of lethal drugs that may result in a quick death, although some evidence shows that the animal suffered great stress before death. If the drug dosage had been too low to kill the rhino the animal is likely to wake during the brutal removal of the horns with a chainsaw. The severely maimed rhino will then attempt to breath through a cavity in its nasal passage between its eyes. This rhino will have no sense of smell and if it survives will have a great battle to fight off any secondary infection.

##### Wildlife industry insiders part of the problem?

Increasing evidence links South Africa's rhino poaching with wildlife industry insiders. These individuals are obviously in a great position to run wildlife crime syndicates and are typically also well funded and connected within the industry. There are also rumors that rhino poaching syndicates are penetrating the hunting industry. The hunting industry obviously has access to guns, permits, vehicles and charter aircraft making them target for rhino poaching syndicates. These rumors seem to have merit because of the increasing number of arrests of - game ranchers, safari operators and professional hunters.

##### How to stop rhino poaching?

Unfortunately there is no simple and obvious solution to this problem. There is currently numerous proposals in the pipeline and some heated debates around opinions which include the following:  
**Strong differences of opinion between people calling for legalized trade in rhino horn (to turn it into a commodity) and those against it.**  
Addressing the issue of educating the end user in Asia  
To establish a database of all rhino horn DNA samples.  
Etc.

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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Course Fundamentals and Structure

### WEEK 1

Introduction to Welgevonden Game Reserve and Research Projects

Introduction to Wildlife Veterinary work in the Context of African Wildlife (Dr Andy Fraser – Local Wildlife Vet) – 1 Day

Time spent with research team conducting conservation/monitoring activities – 4 Days

### Week 2

Time spent with research team conducting conservation activities – 3 Days

Further insight into Wildlife Conservation Veterinary work (Dr Zoë Glyphis – Local Wildlife Vet) – 1 Day

Build up to possible intervention and planning

Specialist Wildlife Vet to conduct intervention with group\*\* (Dr Pierre Bester or Dr Peter Caldwell) – 1 Day



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Learning about a Veterinarians role in the field



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## Introduction of Darting Techniques

Learn the basic principles for darting wildlife. Each student will have the opportunity to use the gas powered or .22 dart gun at the range.



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## Introduction to Pharmacology



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Bush Skills – Bush Walks, Tracking Wildlife



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Monitoring the Welgevonden Rhino Population

Behavioural observations, body condition, herd structure, photos and GPS locations are recorded to document where the animals are occurring; keeping tabs on the localities and activities of Black and White Rhino on Welgevonden.



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## Research – Elephant Monitoring



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## Research – Habitat and Prey Selection: Predators



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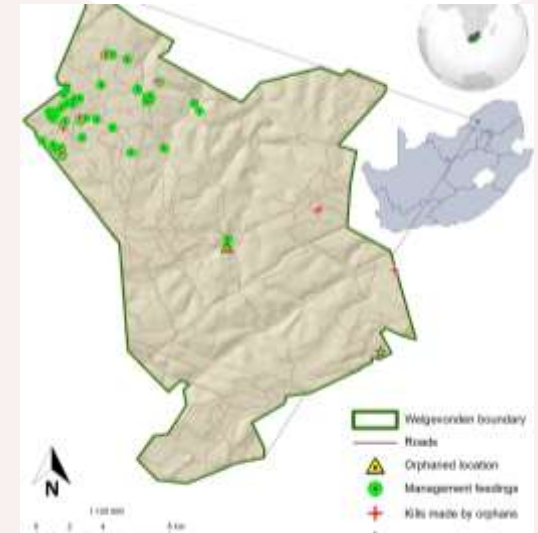
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## Population Management - Cheetah



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Camera Trap – Research and Study



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Monitoring herbivore herd structure, condition and health

Road Game Transects –  
Identifying species, counting  
animals, sexing, identifying age  
class, body condition scoring –  
input Cybertracker App

Plains Monitoring – monitoring  
grazing lawns and animals that  
utilise them including behaviour



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Night Game Drives



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## Ancient Rock Art & Reserve History

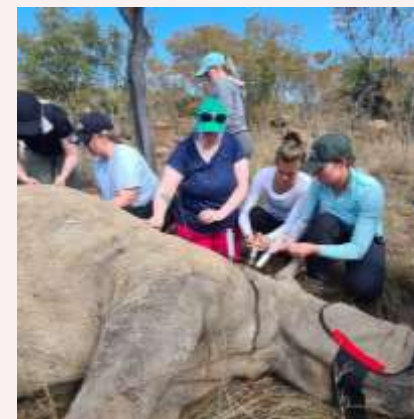




# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Rhino – DNA Collection, ID and Ear Notching (Rhodis) or injuries



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Elephant immobilisation & collar change



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Lion immobilisation & collaring/removal and contraception



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Cheetah Relocation – Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Collaring of Spotted Hyena



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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Game Release and Introductions



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Elephant Contraception



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## Post Mortems (Necropsy)



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## Waterberg Wild Dog – Boma Visit



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## Possible Lectures & Debate

- Drugs used in wildlife medicine
- Calculating doses in wildlife
- Logistics of wildlife transportation: customised vehicles, crates and equipment
- The Game Trade-Auction and value of livestock
- Game capture systems
- Darting wildlife
- Boma management and rehabilitation
- Rhino poaching crisis
- Wound care in surviving poached rhino
- Managing game reserves and Carrying Capacity Model
- Species control – predator pits
- State veterinary disease control in practice
- Documentation required: Red Cross Permits
- Notifiable disease sampling and control hands-on:
  - Tuberculosis
  - Foot and Mouth
  - Brucellosis
  - Corridor Disease



**AFRICA**

# **ACCOMODATION & LIFESTYLE**

Living in the African Bush

## Welgevonden Accommodation

The student centre and camp is based on the reserve and boasts ten tents that sleep two to four people per tent in single beds, each tent also has lighting and electricity supply. There are communal hot and cold showers and regular flushing toilets. There are communal facilities including a lecture room, canteen, lounge, entertainment area and storage fridge. The centre also has access to Wi-Fi. The camp is fenced off inside the boundaries of the reserve, check out the aerial shot of camp! You can wake up and find an elephant 10 meters from your door!



## Welgevonden

All meals are provided in the communal dining room, there is an outside area for dining as well.

Three meals are provided daily on a self cook basis, prepared communally by the group. Students will take part in communal cooking and keeping the kitchen tidy.

Meals will either be served at the facility or in the field 'picnic' style, this depends on activities either planned or unscheduled.

The research team often work 6 days a week so time off is often limited to Sundays only.

Most evenings are spent at leisure around the camp.



## Weekends – Sunday only

### Vaalwater Town and Township Tour

10h00 – 13h00: Visit local art gallery, curio shop, craft market, cultural heritage museum.

14h00 – 16h30: Traditional beer brewery and visit to Lapa for traditional dancing and music.

### Horse Riding Excursion

2 hour bush ride from 08h30 – 10h30  
Lunch included

**Weekend Activities can be booked and paid for locally. Or pre-booked with GAP Africa and paid locally.**



# ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

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## Life on Reserve



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A rhinoceros is the central focus, shown in profile facing left. It is in a savanna environment with tall grass and acacia trees. The sky is a mix of purple, orange, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The image is overlaid with semi-transparent circular shapes.

**AFRICA**

# **BOOKING YOUR ADVENTURE**

The next steps to the trip of a  
lifetime!



# BOOKING YOUR ADVENTURE

AFRICA



## Dates & key deadlines

### Proposed trip dates are:

Depart UK: 22<sup>nd</sup> June | Arrive SA: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

Depart SA: 5<sup>th</sup> July | Arrive UK: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### Trip cost:

**£2,495.00 est (based on a group of 18)**

### Key deadlines are:

- Return of booking forms or online application by: 02/08/2024
- Deposit of £300 to confirm placement within two weeks of provisional booking to confirm place
- Instalment payment of 50% due 16 weeks before departure
- Balance payment due 8 weeks before departure
- E tickets will be issued 2 weeks prior to departure and emailed to students

## What is Included?

- Flights
- Transfers to/from project
- Accommodation
- Three meals per day (self prepared)
- All activities as part of the project
- ATOL protection
- Airport meet/greet
- 24/7 In country support

## NOT Included

- Personal Travel Insurance \*
- Meals on travel days – before arriving & after departing from project
- Any activities not specified as part of the project
- Visa's/travel documents

\* We recommend that you take out personal travel insurance as soon as your booking is confirmed.

# BOOKING YOUR ADVENTURE

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## Group Web Page



[gapafriaprojects.com/booking-form-25-sra-4578-sruc-oatridge/](https://gapafriaprojects.com/booking-form-25-sra-4578-sruc-oatridge/)



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