



# WILTSHIRE COLLEGE PROJECT INFORMATION PACK



## Waterberg Biomonitoring Programme

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# TRIP OVERVIEW

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## Wiltshire College – Booking Reference 4708

### Travel Dates:

17<sup>th</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### Flights:

Flight No	Flight Date	Dept.	Dept. Time	Arr.	Arr. Time
VS449	17/06/2026	London Heathrow (LHR)	22:15	Johannesburg (JNB)	10:15 + 1 Day
VS450	30/06/2026	Johannesburg (JNB)	20:15	London Heathrow (LHR)	06:20 + 1 Day

\*Always check the flight timings on your final documents

**Baggage Allowance** – – 1 piece of checked baggage @ 23kgs & 1 piece of hand baggage @ 10kgs and max dimensions 56x36x23

### Project:

Waterberg Biomonitoring Programme

### Trip Cost:

£2435.00 per person

£300.00 deposit

£1067.50 Instalment due 26/02/2026

£1067.50 Balance due 23/04/2026



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# PROJECT LOCATION

The Waterberg  
overview

# ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

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## Location

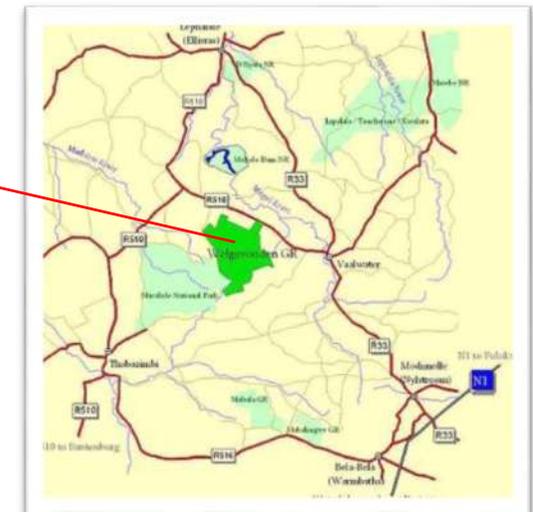
The Waterberg Biomonitoring programme is based at the Welgevonden Game Reserve, (Dutch for "well found" or "serendipitous discovery"), a 36,000ha wildlife reserve in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

Waterberg Horse Trails is based at Waterberg Cottages, located near Vaalwater in the same Waterberg Region of the Limpopo Province.

A pleasant 3.5-hour drive from Johannesburg makes Welgevonden one of the most accessible premier **malaria free** wilderness reserves in the country. It forms part of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve which was officially declared by UNESCO in 2001 and currently covers an area, in excess of, 4000 km<sup>2</sup>.

The reserve comprises mountainous terrain that is dissected by deep valleys and kloofs while flat plateaus characterise most hilltops.

The altitude varies from 1080 m in the north to ±1800 m in the southern section of the reserve.



# ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

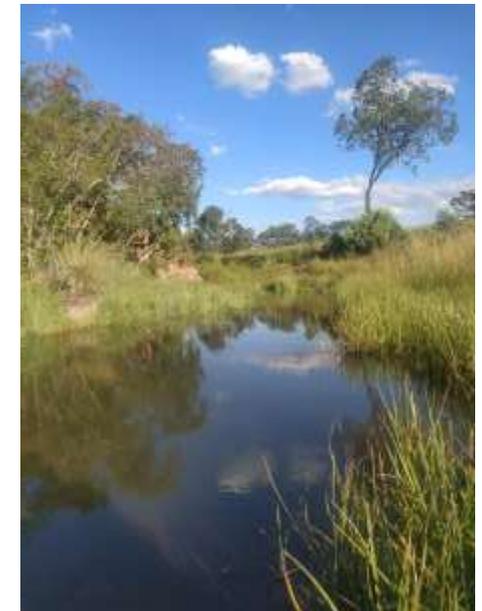
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## Welgevonden Game Reserve

Welgevonden is home to over 50 different recorded mammals, including the Big Five. There are rare and cryptic species too, such as brown hyena, aardwolf and armadillo.

The savanna bushveld abounds with antelope from the largest eland to the diminutive duiker with large herds of plains zebra and blue wildebeest as the most abundant herbivores. Apex predators including lion, hyena and cheetah as well as small carnivores like the black-backed jackal are never far. Megaherbivores; both rhino species and elephant thrive and have important roles in the ecosystem. It is the diversity of habitat on the reserve that encourages such a wide range of wildlife including over 300 bird species and rare reptiles.

At 36,000ha in size, Welgevonden Game Reserve lies in the Waterberg plateau, about 250km north of Johannesburg. Welgevonden protects a unique and special environment and the reserve's management is deeply committed to ongoing conservation research and development.



# ABOUT WATERBERG HORSE TRAILS

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## Waterberg Horse Trails

### Location

Waterberg Horse Trails is based at Waterberg Cottages, located near Vaalwater in the Waterberg Region of the Limpopo Province, just 3 hours from Johannesburg Airport. The project is set in a 3000-hectare 'bushveld' nature reserve.

The Limpopo Province is the northmost province in South Africa, and it borders Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Waterberg Region is Malaria free and the property is included in the UNESCO Waterberg Biosphere Reserve.

The reserve neighbours the Boschdraai Village, a local small community.



# ABOUT WATERBERG HORSE TRAILS

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## Waterberg Horse Trail – History, Horses and Wildlife

Waterberg Horse Trails, based at Waterberg Cottages, has been a beautiful and safe bush destination for self-catering guests for over 30 years.

They are situated in a 3000-hectare game reserve with a large list of wildlife including buffalo, giraffe, zebra, eland, wildebeest, blesbok, ostrich as well as the rare and elusive aardvark.

The reserve forms part of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and the vegetation is savanna bushveld.



A large rhinoceros and its calf are the central focus of the image, standing in a lush green savanna. The rhinoceros is on the right, and the calf is on the left, both facing towards the left. In the background, there are several tents with green roofs and a dirt path, suggesting a conservation camp or research station. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with a clear sky and vibrant green grass.

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# ABOUT THE PROJECT

Our conservation work  
in more detail

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Your Two Project Locations

Your Waterberg conservation research programme is split between two locations, both in the Limpopo province of the Waterberg, in South Africa.

You will first spent time at Welgevonden Game Reserve to participate in Research and Ecological Biomonitoring before travelling to Waterberg Cottages to take part in the Waterberg Equine and Wildlife Project.

Project locations and duration are as follows:

### Itinerary

#### **8 Nights**

Welgevonden Research and Ecological Biomonitoring, Welgevonden Game Reserve

#### **4 Nights**

Waterberg Equine and Wildlife Project, Waterberg Cottages



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# **ABOUT THE PROJECT: WELGEVONDEN GAME RESERVE**

Our conservation work  
in more detail

## Welgevonden Biomonitoring Overview (8 Nights)

Welgevonden Game Reserve's conservation management practices are arguably some of the best in the world. This is largely due to management's continued efforts in obtaining robust data on the ecological functioning of the Reserve, ensuring a thorough understanding of ecosystem dynamics within the protected wilderness area. This is where the Biomonitoring Programme comes in. The programme was established in 2015 and has since been responsible for the collection of research data and dedicated monitoring of fauna and flora on the reserve. From monitoring herd dynamics and animal condition, to assessing the state and ongoing changes in the ecosystem, the programme offers participants a truly hands-on experience in the management of a world-class, Big Five reserve. All this data is then analysed and processed by the Research Ecologist and used to inform management decisions.

If you are looking to gain some experience in ecological monitoring or are simply looking for a way to get out into the bush in a useful and meaningful way, becoming a participant in the Welgevonden Biomonitoring Programme is the way to go!



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Your Conservation Programme – Biomonitoring Research Team

As part of your project, you will be heavily involved with the day-to-day field work conducted by the biomonitoring team. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- Game transects – estimates of numbers, body condition and herd structure
- Telemetry tracking of collared animals
- White Rhino monitoring and condition scoring
- Camera Trap Surveys (Black Rhino and other cryptic animals)
- Nocturnal species ID and night game drive
- Predator monitoring
- Mortality/kill recording
- Visit temporary holding bomas (enclosures)
- Animal tracking
- Waterberg Wild Dog Project
- Collecting faecal samples for research
- Local wildlife auction (Only on certain weekends)
- Alien plant species eradication
- Vegetation Condition Assessment
- Waterberg Biodiversity Project Data Collection with experts in their fields

**It's important to remember that wildlife does not work to an agenda, therefore activities may change at short notice!**

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Research and Ecological Biomonitoring

**Rhino monitoring** – participants identify uniquely marked individual rhinos in the field using an identikit. Data is captured electronically in the field and later automatically downloaded to a secure database. Information recorded includes animal ID, location, social groupings, body condition, etc. The data is analysed by the research ecologists and used to make informed management decisions regarding the rhino population.

**Predator monitoring** – this includes all the large predators: lion, cheetah, leopard and spotted and brown hyaena. Individuals are occasionally collared for research and/or management purposes. Participants monitor these collared individuals using telemetry or GPS tracking technology. Camera trap surveys, in conjunction with Panthera, are conducted annually to determine the range and population dynamics of the resident leopard population as part of the larger Waterberg population. These camera traps are tailored for leopards, but capture photographs of the smaller, meso-predator population of the reserve – this is useful as these cryptic species are seldom seen otherwise.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Research and Ecological Biomonitoring

**Game transects** – pre-determined routes are driven along which game is counted. Transects are driven monthly during which the team collects data pertaining to animal species, body condition, herd structure and herd location. Analysis of this data provides an in depth understanding of the reserve's prey base and the population dynamics of the more important/common species.

**Vegetation surveys** – Grass species composition and biomass are determined on an annual basis. This information is used to understand the quality and quantity of available food for grazing species as well as helping to decide where best to establish fire breaks (an obstacle to the spread of fire). Woody (tree) monitoring occurs every five years and is used to determine: species composition, recruitment and growth rates and the impact of fire, elephant, browser and invertebrates on the woody plant layer.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## Research and Ecological Biomonitoring

**Plains monitoring** – Welgevonden Game Reserve was not always a protected wilderness area with its early history rooted in agriculture. Upon conversion into a game reserve, many old agricultural fields were rehabilitated into grazing lawns. These fields, as well as the animals that make use of them, are monitored on a monthly basis to evaluate the effectiveness of this long-term programme.

**Special Interventions** – As these interventions occur sporadically, where possible, participants and volunteers will be given the opportunity to join and witness these special veterinary interventions which could include elephant collaring, rhino notching, predator captures and animal releases.



## Rhino Monitoring Focused

Welgevonden Game Reserve is a significant sanctuary for two rhino species. The reserve is home to an important population of southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) with its conservation status of Near Threatened as well as Critically Endangered black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*).

Welgevonden has a reputation for its strong, high-tech approach to anti-poaching; preventing criminals from entering even near the Reserve.

The Biomonitoring department has the very essential function of closely monitoring the rhino populations and participants have an active role in this. Modern technology is utilised and the team is supported by experienced scientists and managers. A rhino's life expectancy can reach over 40 years so the same college/institution or individual participant that returns regularly can see the same rhino through its life stages over all the years.

An extraordinary opportunity considering the current plight of the species.



A large rhinoceros and its calf are the central focus of the image, standing in a lush green savanna. The rhinoceros is on the right, and the calf is on the left, both facing towards the left. In the background, there is a tented camp with several tents and a dirt path. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting with trees and a clear sky.

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# **ABOUT THE WATERBERG EQUINE & WILDLIFE PROJECT**

Our conservation work  
in more detail

## Your Equine Project Explained – Waterberg Horse Trails (4 Nights)

- A unique equine and wildlife project based in South Africa
- Live and work on a Game Reserve that specialises in Horseback safaris
- Tailor-made projects to suit your needs and interests
- Project activities include
  - Equine Welfare
  - Equine Management
  - Conservation activities
  - Community Development
- Dedicated horses, staff, and vehicles
- 4-night experience
- The most incredible mix of equine and wildlife experience you will ever have

## Waterberg Horse Trail – History, Horses and Wildlife

Waterberg Horse Trails, based at Waterberg Cottages, has been a beautiful and safe bush destination for self-catering guests for over 30 years.

They are situated in a 3000-hectare game reserve with a large list of wildlife including buffalo, giraffe, zebra, eland, wildebeest, blesbok, ostrich as well as the rare and elusive aardvark.

The reserve forms part of the Waterberg Biosphere Reserve and the vegetation is savanna bushveld.



## Waterberg Equine and Wildlife

### The Horses

The herd of 16 horses is a lovely mix of all ages. They are free to graze in the open 'veld' (wild fields/bush).

Most of the horses are a South African breed called 'Boerperd', which stand at about 14 – 16 hands in size and are known to be robust and trustworthy.

Because of the remote location all care, maintenance and most veterinary care is done on-site by the team.

The reserve's wildlife is often monitored from horseback as the animals are comfortable with the horses' presence.

The reserve has a good combination of thicker bush, sandy roads and open areas, making for excellent riding terrain.



## Community Work

Boschdraai Village which is located on the farm, only a few hundred metres, from the Cottages. The peaceful village consists of around 350 residents, many of whom are unemployed or subsistence farmers growing their own small crops and raising chickens. Some residents have donkeys which they use for transport of people and firewood. Students will join the team in checking on the community members' donkeys and offer input into the donkey's care and well-being. They will treat wounds and give the donkeys food/treats. There are also often pregnant mares who need extra care or attention.

In the community, there are many children who make village visits a delight. Dora from the cottages offers guests a village tour where one gets to visit the young and old and sample some local village food.



## Waterberg Equine and Wildlife Project

### Equine activities

- Grooming
- Feeding
- Outrides (game monitoring on horseback)
- Herding (bringing horses in and moving camps)
- Basic farriery and trimming of hooves
- Lunging
- Horse desensitising
- Poisonous plant removal
- Collecting wire and dangerous objects in bush
- Filling dangerous holes
- Basic veterinary care
  - Wound treatments
  - Preventative treatments
  - Injections
  - Deworming
  - Weekly tick dipping of horses

## Wildlife Conservation Activities

- Interpretive bush walks and tracking
- Game (wildlife) drives
- Full Day Big 5 Game Drive
- Aardvark Safari
- Telemetry Skills
- Bush Walks
- Spoor and Dung Tracking



## Other Activities

- Astronomy show
- Evening Sundowners



A large rhinoceros and its calf are the central focus of the image, standing in a lush green savanna. The rhinoceros is on the right, and the calf is on the left, both facing towards the left. In the background, there is a tented camp with several tents, some with green roofs and others with grey roofs. The camp is situated on a dirt clearing. The overall scene is a typical African savanna landscape with scattered trees and a clear sky.

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# ONLINE NATURE GUIDE COURSE

Bushwise

# ONLINE NATURE GUIDE COURSE

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## Exclusive Bushwise Nature Guide Course

Bushwise is a leading nature guide training provider, and we've partnered with them to offer an exclusive 6-week 'Explore Nature' online course – giving you a real-life insight into the training of a South African Nature Guide.

Connect with the South African bush before you even travel!

Modules include Introduction, Geology, Weather & climate, Astronomy, Ecology, Biomes, Taxonomy, Plants, Arthropods, Fish, Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds, Mammals, Ethology, Conservation management, Historical human habitation.

Your wildlife journey starts here! Build a strong foundation in field guiding, wildlife, and ecology, so that you're fully prepared for the hands-on experience in South Africa.



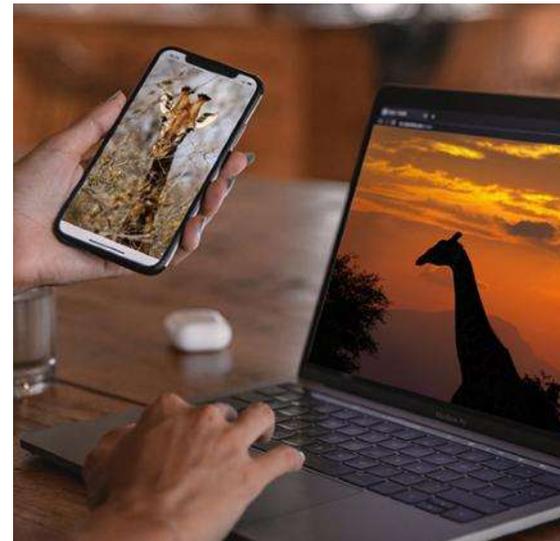
### Course Start Dates:

5 January 2026

30 March 2026

22 June 2026

14 September 2026





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# **ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE**

Life in the African Bush

# ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

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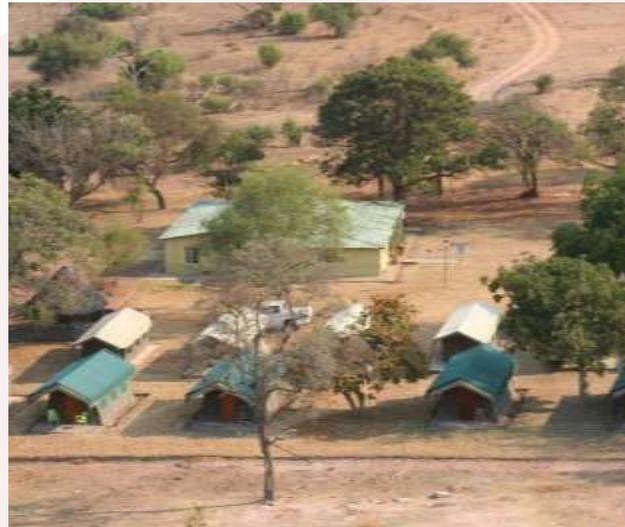
## Welgevonden Accommodation

The student centre and camp is based on the reserve and boasts ten tents that sleep two 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.



# ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

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## Meals at Welgevonden

All meals are enjoyed together mostly in the outside eating area and sometimes inside on colder evenings.

Three meals are provided daily on a self-cook basis. The evening meal is prepared by the group in small teams. Students are responsible for the communal cooking and washing up.

Evening meals and breakfast are served at the facility and lunch is normally brought into the field and taken picnic-style in the bush.

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

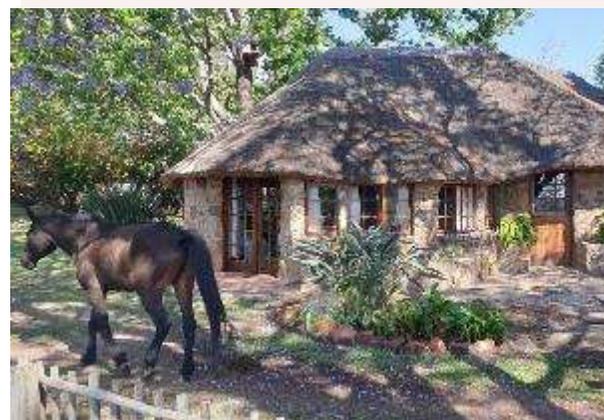
Most evenings are spent at leisure in camp mostly outdoors at tables and benches or around a campfire.



## Waterberg Cottages

The group will be accommodated in the beautiful historic thatch cottages surrounded by gardens, horses, animals and views of the bushveld.

On one of the evenings, students will have the opportunity to experience the glamping tents, including the signature woodfired hot tubs.



## Meals at Waterberg Cottages

All meals are provided. Hosts create wholesome home-cooked style meals made with local ingredients and cater for all dietary requirements.

Dinners are catered and served to the students in the evenings, lunches will be made by the group in teams and breakfast will be self-service.

There will be opportunities to taste local dishes including the traditional 'braai' (BBQ) and to enjoy meals in unique outdoor locations.

Please advise us of any dietary requirements so we can make sure you are adequately catered for.



## Life on the farm – Waterberg Cottages

In your spare time you can enjoy the heated swimming pool, play volleyball, enjoy an outdoor bonfire, relax in the garden with the family farm dogs, watching birds or go on the walking trails. You can play board games and cards or just lounge at the cozy indoor fireplace on colder evenings.

There will be many opportunities to enjoy your morning tea or coffee while watching the sunrise or watch the sunset with a drink; *sundowners* are quintessential in the African bush.





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# **USEFUL INFORMATION**

Inclusions/Exclusions &  
Recommended Kit List

## What is Included?

- Flights
- Transfer to/from project
- Accommodation
- Three meals per day
- All activities as part of the project
- ATOL protection
- Airport meet/greet
- 24 hour in country support



## NOT Included

- Personal Travel Insurance \*
- Meals on travel days – before arriving & after departing from the project
- Any activities not specified as part of the project
- Visas/travel documents
- Tips
- Riding hat, boots, gloves, body protector – see kit list (for equine students)

\* We recommend you take out insurance as soon as your booking is confirmed

## Suggested kit list

To allow for ease of transfer to the project a soft holdall/ soft suitcase is preferred.

- Short and long sleeve t-shirts
- Long work trousers and shorts (or work/zip-off trousers)
- Hiking boots/comfortable walking shoes to work in every day
- Waterproof jacket
- Sweatshirt/Fleece (Winter months pack plenty)
- Padded jacket/windbreaker (Winter months) although it can get very cold on an open vehicle even in summer
- Socks
- Underwear
- Change of casual clothes for evenings
- Sandals / comfy shoes to wear after work hours
- Warm hat (Winter only) / Hat for sun protection (all year)
- Gloves for warmth (Winter only)
- Working gloves
- Daypack rucksack
- Riding hat – *for equine students*
- Jodhpurs – *for equine students*
- Riding boots – *for equine students*
- Swimwear
- Sunscreen and Sunglasses
- Personal medical items
- First aid kit
- Toiletries
- Tick / Insect repellent
- Water bottle
- Good torch

### Other useful items:

- Binoculars
- Camera
- Power bank

\* All work clothes should be neutral or earth tones for working in the bush. No skimpy or bright-coloured clothing to be worn



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