



# MERRIST WOOD COLLEGE PROJECT INFORMATION PACK



## Shamwari Group Expedition

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

# TRIP OVERVIEW

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## Merrist Wood College – Booking Reference 4850

### Travel Dates:

14th February – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2027

### Flights:

Flight No	Flight Date	Dept.	Dept. Time	Arr.	Arr. Time
VS449	14/02/2027	London Heathrow (LHR)	19:40	Johannesburg (JNB)	08:50 + 1 Day
TBC	15/02/2027	Johannesburg (JNB)	TBC	Port Elizabeth (PLZ)	TBC
TBC	27/02/2027	Port Elizabeth (PLZ)	TBC	Johannesburg (JNB)	TBC
VS450	27/02/2027	Johannesburg (JNB)	21:30	London Heathrow (LHR)	06:50 + 1 Day

\*Always check the flight timings on your final documents

**Baggage Allowance** –1 piece of checked baggage @ 20kgs & 1 piece of hand baggage @ 7kgs and max dimensions 56x36x23cm

### Project:

Shamwari Group Expedition

### Trip Cost:

£3,344.00 per person\* Based on a group of 22 (confirmed once flights have been held)

£300.00 deposit

50% instalment payment of £1,522.00 to be paid by 26/10/2026

Balance payment of £1,522.00 to be paid by 21/12/2026



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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Our conservation work  
in more detail

# ABOUT SHAMWARI GAME RESERVE

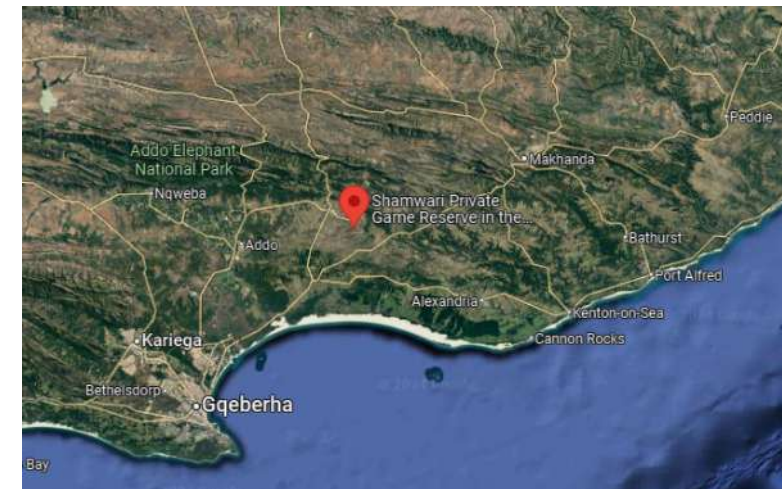
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## Shamwari Game Reserve

Shamwari, meaning 'my friend' in Shona, is the pinnacle of game reserves stretching 25,000 hectares over a malaria free landscape, it offers an award-winning nature experience and is one of the largest private conservation initiatives in Southern Africa.

Located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, Shamwari occupies a unique ecological transition zone where multiple biomes converge. The reserve encompasses diverse habitats ranging from semi-arid Karoo vegetation to subtropical thicket and indigenous forest, creating exceptional biodiversity within a relatively compact area.

Shamwari has a dedicated wildlife and conservation department with a wildlife veterinarian and ecologists who run the wildlife breeding, animal rehabilitation, Vulpro and rhino awareness centre, they also operate an anti-poaching unit and animal hospital. Offering the 'Big 5' it also hosts the Born Free Foundation Big Cat Sanctuary for rescued lions and leopards.



## Project Overview

The Shamwari Group Conservation Experience is a once in a lifetime chance to get behind the scenes and involved with the conservation efforts of the world renowned Shamwari Game Reserve. The programme is a tailor-made experience operating over a two-week period, we work with you to put together the best possible programme. This is a working field trip, and you will be taking part in hands-on activities based on the requirements of the reserve.

Shamwari boasts a multi-purpose centre geared to get participants involved in various components of conservation. The experience is a true reflection of the day-to-day operational requirements needed to manage the game reserve.

The project specialises in conservation, with a focus on ecology, wildlife, and environmental education with local community and sporting interactions as part of our social responsibility drive. Shamwari is situated in a malaria free zone and is one hour away from the closest major airport, medical facilities and other amenities in Port Elizabeth.



## Conservation Management

Whilst on your placement you will become members of the conservation department and will therefore work with the wildlife's best interests in mind at all times. Details of possible conservation, research and veterinary-based activities are detailed below, we will use these to build your tailor-made experience and ensure that all activities chosen by your group will be covered over the two week period.

- Game monitoring: Rhino, Elephant and Predators
- Camera trapping
- Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) engagement
- Use of telemetry tracking
- Research projects
- Game sex and ratio recordings
- Tracks, signs and spoor
- Field skills
- Insect, rodent and bird surveys
- Nocturnal animal monitoring (night-drive)
- Rifle handling and shooting (additional cost on weekend)



# YOUR PROJECT

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## Reserve Maintenance

Several activities include hands-on work in the field, which is vital to the conservation work at Shamwari.

- Restoring degraded thickets and landscapes
- Erosion Control
- Fence inspections
- Alien vegetation control
- Reserve clean-ups
- Road Maintenance
- Assist with cleaning and maintenance of bomas and water troughs



# YOUR PROJECT

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## Community Project

Conservation does not stop at conserving nature alone but includes a responsibility to uplift local communities. Weekly trips are made into the local community to assist in various projects.

- Age in Action (elderly day centre)
- Painting Classrooms
- Recycling Projects
- Building Jungle Gyms
- Creating and Maintaining Vegetable Gardens
- Sports Activities
- Brain training and other educational activities with local children



## Possible Rehabilitation Centre Visits

### Born Free Sanctuary

- A UK-based charity that rescues animals from captivity
- Born Free at Shamwari acts as a sanctuary for a number of big cats rescued from poor conditions across Europe who are unable to be reintroduced into the wild
- Possible activities include
  - Presentation on the work of the sanctuary
  - Guided tour of the sanctuary by one of the keepers.
  - Visit to the gift shop



### Hands-on at Vulpro

- VulPro (Vulture Rehabilitation & Breeding Centre) is a leader in Vulture conservation in Africa, dedicated to reversing the decline in vulture populations
- VulPro at Shamwari is a dedicated centre for managing and supporting populations of vultures in the area
- Possible activities include
  - Maintaining Waterholes and Enclosures
  - Collecting Nesting Material
  - Upgrading Perches
  - Feeding Vultures
  - Photographing Birds



## Various talks and presentations

In the classroom:

- South Africa's Captive Lion Industry
- Rhino Poaching in South Africa
- Ecological Management of Game Reserves
- Elephant Conservation

In the Field

- Medicinal plants and trees
- Wildlife tracks and signs
- Basic Wildlife Conservation ecology and management principles
- Astronomy
- Animal behaviour



## Sample Itinerary

- Introduction presentation and drive through the reserve followed by manual work, making pine poles
- Group 1: APU talk and snare finding activity; Group 2 : Rhino monitoring. Groups swap for the afternoon
- Group 1: Manual work, road maintenance; Group 2 : Visit the Born Free Foundation. Groups swap for the afternoon. After dinner, its Film Night
- All: Community day, the group will be assigned a specific project to undertake
- Weekend at leisure. Additional activities can be arranged away from the reserve, or you can relax at the reserve enjoying the sights and sounds of Africa making the most of the swimming pool and garden
- Presentation on tracking and the use of telemetry equipment followed by predator monitoring. In the afternoon learn to make beads
- Group 1 : Elephant debate and information prep; Group 2 : Elephant monitoring. Groups swap for the afternoon
- All: Manual work and predator tracking in the afternoon. After dinner night drive patrol
- Game capture talk, view the bomas and capture system and then cleaning of water holes
- All: Community day, the group will be assigned a specific project. Braai (BBQ) night
- Weekend at leisure

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



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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:**

**Invitations will  
be issued  
throughout  
the year**





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# DIPLOMA IN INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

Centre for Global Citizenship  
Studies (CGCS).

## Diploma in International Volunteering with a Wildlife Conservation specialism

Delivered by the Centre for Global Citizenship Studies (CGCS), this Level 3 Diploma is designed to turn your hands-on experience in South Africa into a recognised qualification, giving you academic credit and evidence you can use for university applications, personal statements and job interviews.

Beyond the subject knowledge, you'll build and evidence skills in: leadership, adaptability, teamwork, critical thinking, cultural intelligence, and personal resilience.

The course is designed to fit around your trip with online learning completed at your pace. The modules include:

- Prepare (Before your trip)
- Specialise (Pre-trip learning)
- Participate (During your trip)
- Reflect (After your trip)

Each module comes with course notes, videos, recommended readings, and compulsory assignments.

You will cover: Biodiversity & Ecosystem, Wildlife Protection, Community Engagement, Legal & Ethical Considerations.

**Cost: £425**  
**Enrolment upon**  
**payment of the fee**





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# ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

Life in the African Bush

# ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

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## Shamwari

You will be accommodated in a purpose-built lodge located on the reserve. Rooms are shared with ensuite bathrooms.

There is a communal area with lounge, bar and dining area as well as a small lecture room. There is a laundry service once a week.

The lodge grounds offer a swimming pool, large garden area and boma; enjoy sitting around the fire in the evening.

Internet access is available although speeds are not as good as in the UK.



## Food at the Project

Three meals are provided daily. Meals will either be taken at the accommodation or as a pre-packed serving, depending on planned or unscheduled activities.

## Dietary Requirements

Provision can be made for Vegetarian & Vegan diets and for those who have a medical condition such as Coeliac disease that requires a Gluten Free Diet and for those with severe allergies to dairy, eggs or nuts.





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# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS

Your free time on the project

# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES & EXCURSIONS

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## Activities/Excursions (own cost and optional)

There will be free time/days off, where you'll be able to do some additional activities at your **own cost**. These are **optional**.

Most activities are booked and paid for in advance (before leaving the UK). Others will be booked and paid for (**cash** or, sometimes, **card**) at the project.

More information will be given closer to the time. Your travel insurance **must** cover you for any additional activities you choose to do.

**Any activities booked and paid for locally are not covered under GAPAfrica Project's public liability insurance.**





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# USEFUL INFORMATION

Inclusions/Exclusions &  
Recommended Kit List

# WHAT'S INCLUDED

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## What is Included?

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

## NOT Included

- UK transfers
- Personal Travel Insurance \*
- Meals on travel days – before arriving & after departing from project
- Any activities not specified as part of the project
- Weekend activities
- Visas/travel documents
- Tips

\* 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
- Swimwear
- Sunscreen and Sunglasses
- Personal medical items
- First aid kit
- Toiletries
- Tick/Insect repellent
- Water bottle
- Binoculars

### Other useful items:

- Camera
- Power bank
- Good torch (headlamp)

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



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