ARU WRITTLE
PROJECT INFORMATION PACK

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TRIP OVERVIEW

ARU Writtle– Booking Reference 4792

Travel Dates:

19th July 2026 – 1st August 2026

Flights:

Flight No	Flight Date	Dept.	Dept. Time	Arr.	Arr. Time
TK1244	19/07/2026	London Stansted (STN)	17:35	Istanbul (IST)	23:30
TK42	20/07/2026	Istanbul (IST)	01:35	Johannesburg (JNB)	10:05
TK39	01/08/2026	Johannesburg (JNB)	18:00	Istanbul (IST)	04:45 + 1 Day
TK1241	02/08/2026	Istanbul (IST)	07:50	London Stansted (STN)	09:55

*Always check the flight timings on your final documents

Baggage Allowance – 1 piece checked baggage @ 23kgs, 1 piece hand baggage max dimensions 55x40x23cm

Project:

Waterberg Wildlife & Veterinary Course (Vet Professionals Group)

Trip Cost:

£2595.00 per person

£300.00 deposit

£1147.50 Instalment due 30/03/2026

£1147.50 Balance due 25/05/2026

PROJECT LOCATION

The Waterberg overview

ABOUT THE WATERBERG

A place that promotes the connection between people and nature

The Waterberg contains pristine habitats, abundant bird and wildlife and has a natural unspoilt beauty. The Waterberg is an escarpment of massive sandstone buttresses and outcrops, incorporating many rivers, streams and wetlands, stretching for 150 km in a long arc.

The Waterberg has many special and unique characteristics which is why UNESCO approved the area for biosphere reserve status in 2001.

The Waterberg is a critical conservation area for African wild dogs, with the last free-roaming pack in South Africa; black and white rhino, with the third largest population within South Africa; and the Cape Vulture, with the largest colony of 800 breeding pairs.

ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

Welgevonden Wildlife Reserve

Welgevonden is home to over 100 different mammals, including the Big Five. There are rare and unusual species too, such as brown hyena, aardwolf and aardvark – all best seen at night.

The grassy plains abound with antelope from the largest eland to the diminutive duiker; cheetah, lion and leopard are always close by. It is the diversity of habitat on the reserve that encourages such a wide range of wildlife as well as over 300 bird species, including rare blue cranes.

At >36,000ha in size, Welgevonden Wildlife Reserve lies in the Waterberg plateau, about 250 km north of Johannesburg. Here guests enjoy unlimited traversing through the reserve and experience an environment where biodiversity conservation and wildlife viewing are managed in harmony. Welgevonden protects a unique and special environment and the reserve's management is deeply committed to ongoing conservation research and development.

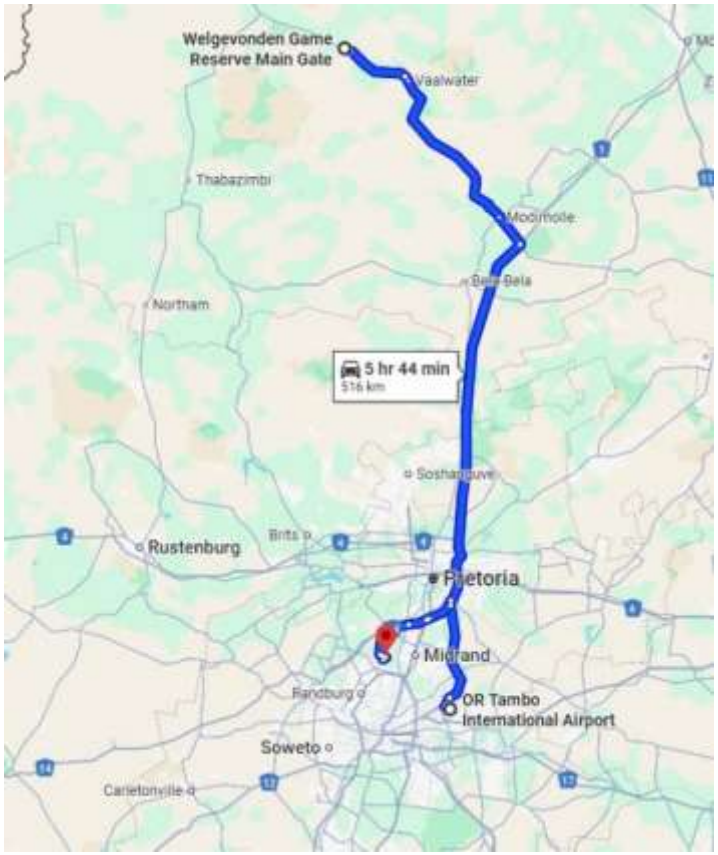
ABOUT THE PROJECT

Our conservation work in more detail

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Your Two Project Locations

This unique 12-night project will allow you to experience two different project locations in two neighbouring provinces of South Africa. You will first stay in the North of the country staying in the Waterberg Biosphere – the **Welgevonden Game Reserve** (the core, Big 5 monitoring and conservation experience). You will then travel South to the Gauteng Province where you will have a tour of the Johannesburg Wildlife Vet - the only small animal practice in the country that only works on wildlife; assist with some shelter and community cases, learn about a K9 conservation unit and participate in lectures and debates. Project locations and duration are as follows:



Project locations and duration are as follows:

8 Nights

Waterberg Biomonitoring Project – Welgevonden Game Reserve – Waterberg – Limpopo Province

4 Nights

Kyalami, Midrand and surrounding areas - Gauteng Province

ABOUT THE PROJECT: WELGEVONDEN GAME RESERVE – 8 NIGHTS

Our conservation work
in more detail

ABOUT WELGEVONDEN

AFRICA

Location

The Waterberg Wildlife & Veterinary (Vet Professionals') Course is based at the Welgevonden Wildlife Reserve, (Dutch for *"well found"*), is a >36,000ha Wildlife reserve in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

A pleasant 4-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 km².

The reserve comprises of mountainous terrain that is dissected by deep valleys and kloofs while flat plateaus characterise most hilltops. Altitude varies from 1080 m in the north to ±1800 m in the southern section of the reserve.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Your Conservation Programme – Conservation 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:

- Animal tracking
- Wildlife transects – estimates of numbers, body condition & herd structure
- Use of telemetry tracking
- White rhino monitoring research
- Elephant behaviour study
- Camera trap surveys (black rhino & other cryptic animals)
- Nocturnal species ID and night wildlife drive
- Visit to temporary holding bomas for rhino and predators
- 'Waterberg Wild Dog Project'
- Collecting faecal samples for research
- Local wildlife auction (Only on certain weekends)
- Alien plant species eradication
- Land capacity exercise – number of animals vs land support

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

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Your Conservation Programme – Veterinary Activities

Welgevonden Game Reserve utilises the services of several wildlife veterinarians, depending on the nature of the work. Veterinary interactions are never guaranteed and the below are given as examples only.

- Darting simulation and shooting practice exercise
- Immobilisation of white rhino for DNA tagging, ear notching and samples
- Lion breeding management
- Elephant contraception study
- Supplementary feeding of Buffalo and Rhino
- Wildlife capture and relocation as part of Meta-Population Management
- Replacing/fitting of tracking collars on various species
- Observe helicopter darting of large wildlife species i.e. white rhino

Some but not all of these veterinary opportunities will be carried out on the project. Working with wildlife is unpredictable and all the activities are only undertaken when required.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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

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

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.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

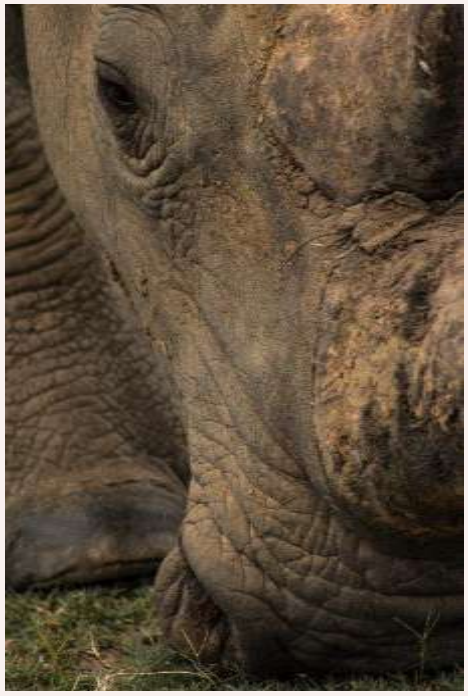
Rhino Monitoring Focused

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.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Dr Peter Caldwell – Wildlife Specialist Veterinary Surgeon

Dr. Peter Caldwell is a leading wildlife veterinary surgeon based in Pretoria. He owns and operates a small animal clinic and travels extensively across South Africa and beyond, treating priority and endangered species. He specialises particularly in cheetahs and serves as the primary veterinarian and advisor at Welgevonden Game Reserve. Dr. Caldwell is actively involved in wildlife conservation and research, contributing to studies on fertility control and disease management in wild animals. His expertise is frequently sought by reserves and conservation organisations.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Welgevonden Veterinary Intervention

A management veterinary intervention will be scheduled during your group's time on the reserve. This may include rhino DNA collection and ear-notching, the removal or fitting of tracking collars, fertility procedures, or capture for translocations. If a priority species is injured, it will receive necessary treatment. Students are encouraged to participate as ground crew and veterinary assistants if possible. However, please note that this procedure is not guaranteed, as wildlife is unpredictable, and animals will never be sedated without a valid reason.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Example Lectures - Welgevonden

- Reserve history
- Anti-poaching
- Fire to herbivore driven system
- Priority species
- Large predator management
- Managing wildlife reserves & land capacity model
- Boma management
- Fenced reserve population management

ABOUT THE PROJECT: KYALAMI, MIDRAND AND SURROUNDING AREAS – 4 NIGHTS

Our conservation work
in more detail

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Kyalami, Midrand and surrounding areas – Gauteng

- Introduction to Wildlife Veterinary work in the Context of African Wildlife (Dr Zoe Glyphis – Local Wildlife Vet)
- Visit to Johannesburg Wildlife Veterinary hospital.
- Assist with some animal shelter and community cases
- Assist with a K9 conservation unit.
- Dart shooting practice

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

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Dr Zoe Glyphis – Wildlife Veterinarian – Predator Specialist

Dr Zoe Glyphis has become one of South Africa's leading predator specialists and is on the forefront with veterinary medicine and veterinary assistance of wild dog, hyena and cheetah conservation all over South Africa.

She is helping and assisting several NGO groups and organisations with their efforts to increase predator ranges and to establish safe and genetically viable populations in new conservation areas.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Practical Sessions

- Dart shooting practice
- The kit and clinic of a mobile wildlife vet
- Q & A

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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
- Orphaned Rhino rehabilitation
- Parasite control
- Managing game reserves and Land Capacity Model
- Species control - predator pits
- State veterinary disease control in practice
- Documentation required: Red Cross Permits

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Kyalami – Johannesburg Wildlife Vet

A registered wildlife veterinary hospital and rehabilitation centre in South Africa, dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing indigenous wildlife.

Led by Dr Karin Lourens, a wildlife vet with 22 years of experience, the non-profit treats small to medium mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and arachnids—free of charge.
Their mission combines expert care with conservation, education, and research.

📺 *Featured in a Netflix documentary about a baby pangolin's journey back to the wild.*

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Kyalami - Society for Animals in Distress

Care is provided by vets, vet nurses, animal health technicians, and welfare assistants.

The focus: accessible veterinary care for vulnerable communities and rescue organisations.

Students assist professionals in treating rescued horses, dogs, cats, and small animals—rehabilitated for rehoming.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Kyalami –Pit-Track K9 antipoaching unit

A registered non-profit dedicated to wildlife protection through skilled K9 units and frontline anti-poaching operations.

Students will meet the K9 team, attend a talk on the poaching crisis, watch a live demo, and assist with physio care for working dogs.

ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

Life in the African Bush

ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

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. The communal facilities include a lecture room, canteen, lounge, entertainment area and storage fridge.

The centre also has access to Wi-Fi and the camp is fenced off inside the boundaries of the reserve. Most evenings are spent at leisure around the camp.

ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

Food at the Project - Welgevonden

Ingredients for three meals a day are provided, on a self cook basis. Students will take part in communal cooking and keeping the kitchen tidy. This creates a vibrant and social camp atmosphere.

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

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

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.

ACCOMMODATION & LIFESTYLE

Gauteng – Fair Glen Guest House

You will be staying in twin bedded accommodation with en-suite facilities.

There is a swimming pool and outdoor seating area and the guest house has WiFi.

The guest house offers comfortable areas to relax and unwind and is based in an equestrian-themed suburb.

Ideally situated for the visits to the Johannesburg Wildlife Vet Practice and Animals in Distress.

Food at the Project

All meals will be provided at Fair Glen Guest House; a packed lunch will be provided if the group are not returning to the accommodation at lunch time.

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.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Inclusions/Exclusions &
Recommended Kit List

WHAT'S INCLUDED

What is Included?

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

NOT Included

- UK transfers
- 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

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

USEFUL INFORMATION

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
- Comfy shoes to wear after work hours (no open-toed shoes to be worn around Welgevonden camp)
- Warm hat (Winter only) / Hat for sun protection (all year)
- Gloves for warmth (Winter only)
- Working gloves
- Daypack rucksack
- Surgical gloves
- Sunscreen and Sunglasses
- Personal medical items
- First aid kit
- Toiletries
- Tick / Insect repellent
- Water bottle
- Good torch

Other useful items:

- Binoculars
- Camera
- Power bank
- Stethoscope

* 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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