



# UMPHAFa

*Private Nature Reserve*

## Internship Information Pack The University of Essex

Gain creditable work experience  
and specific job-knowledge,  
living and working side-by-side  
with stunning African Wildlife.

**'Work directly  
alongside  
UmPhafa  
management  
staff'**

### UmPhafa Reserve

The UmPhafa Private Nature Reserve, situated in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, is a 6,000 hectare reserve comprising five farms previously managed for cattle and encompasses a wide range of habitats from acacia savannah and bushveld to mountainous terrain. Due to previous agricultural practices much of the natural inhabiting species had been lost and the aim of Action for the Wild is to rehabilitate UmPhafa as an example of the region's previous natural condition. Although some mammal populations had remained and have thrived since the reserve was established, many more species have been released and UmPhafa is now home to a wide range of fauna including giraffe, kudu, impala, common reedbuck, mountain reedbuck, zebra, blesbok, red hartebeest, blue wildebeest, waterbuck, nyala, warthog, aardvark and porcupine - to name only some. Leopard and spotted hyena have more recently returned to the area naturally and are regularly recorded through camera trapping, tracking, and - on rarer occasions - sightings!! Small to medium sized carnivores such as black-backed jackal, caracal, serval, genet, and several species of mongoose are also common.

## The internship

As an intern to UmPhafa's management, you will have an interesting, exciting and - overall - valuable time by playing a crucial role in the operation of the reserve by helping to collect vital data necessary to make key management decisions. You will have the satisfaction of developing the necessary skills required to make in-roads into the field of conservation, whilst working closely with large animals and knowing that your contribution is having a direct influence to the wellbeing of the fauna on UmPhafa Reserve.

This is an opportunity to gain creditable work experience in the field and shadow qualified staff members on a wide range of aspects involved in the running of a reserve. Activities will include behavioural observations on game species which often involves stalking species through the bush at close quarters. You will also aid with the other current research projects, such as small mammal trapping and camera trapping of elusive nocturnal species, providing an exceptional chance to learn crucial survey techniques, as well as gaining a greater appreciation of African animals and habitats.

The trip will begin with a full-orientation in which you will learn valuable identification, navigation and tracking skills as well as a few useful bush skills which will make the adjustment to life in the bush all the more comfortable. Vegetation surveys and assessments comprise an important element of the whole placement and over your period of stay you will learn the importance of particular plant species, their traditional/medicinal uses, and vital nutritional information of the various herbivorous species. Some general maintenance of the reserve's roads, fences and structures is also often necessary and assistance will be required in the construction of hides, research camps and security watch-posts.

During your time in South Africa it will be possible to experience local life and thereby develop an appreciation for the different views of conservation practices in Africa and a greater understanding of traditional Zulu culture. There are also several other reserves nearby, including a 'big 5' game park which there will be the opportunity to visit.

## Eligibility and application

Internships are open to anybody with a genuine love of the natural world, particularly those who are looking to pursue a career in conservation. As competition is high, internships will be offered following a successful application process with brief interviews being held either at Colchester Zoo or The University of Essex to discuss the placement in more depth. Prospective interns must be 18 years of age by the time of deployment to UmPhafa.

'Orientation programme includes tracking, identification and navigation skills'

## Accommodation and facilities

Interns will be staying at Elworthy Farmhouse situated inside UmPhafa Reserve. Rooms are comfortable, single sex dorms with bunk-beds and lockable wardrobes for storing belongings, and will be shared with other interns on placements. A safe is also available for locking away valuables, such as cash, passports, phones, etc. however theft has never been a problem at the lodgings.

Under-sheets and pillows are provided, although a sleeping bag, liner and towel must be brought as part of the personal kit. The house is fully equipped with hot water showers, electricity, and laundry facilities. Unlimited Wi-Fi access for emails and Skype is available.

The kitchen is fully supplied with cooking facilities and residents are encouraged to plan and cook main meals together. Three good meals a day are covered by the placement cost and all interns compile a weekly shopping list themselves. A housekeeping and laundry service is provided although it is the responsibility of all residents at Elworthy to keep the kitchen clean and tidy after main meals and at weekends.

'All meals are included whilst on placement at UmPhafa'

'Comfortable working and living conditions located in the centre of the reserve'



## Spending money

Costs on many items in South Africa are comparably low in respect to the UK although average spending will vary from person to person. A recommended £100 per week is sufficient for most interns in order to cover any luxuries and excursions, with associated fuel costs, during their period of stay. The local currency is Rand and money can be changed up before departure, at the airport on arrival, or withdrawn from ATM machines.

## Financial contribution

Action for the Wild is a non-profit organisation and therefore it is necessary for internships to be self-supported.

**Two-week placement:** Contribution of £700.

This includes excursions to Monk's Cowl (Drakensburg Mountain), the Reptile Centre & Falconry Ridge and the Nambiti Big Five Reserve.

Contributions will cover accommodation and housekeeping, food, airport transfers, all costs associated with planning and running placements, preparation for interns for their field experience with professional support and dedicated staff, to answer questions, field training and orientation, and unlimited Internet access.

An initial deposit of £200 is required to secure the placement within two weeks of acceptance of a placement offer. The remaining balance is to be paid four weeks prior to departure. In the event of placements being offered less than four weeks in advance, full payment will be required at time of booking.

## Cancellation and postponement

Notice must be given of cancellation of placements six weeks prior to the departure date in order to be eligible for the return of the full deposit. In the event of cancellations being made between six and four weeks prior to the date of departure, 50% of the deposit sum will be returned, with the full balance being forfeited if cancellation is made less than four weeks before departure. This will be considered as a charitable donation to Action for the Wild's UmPhafa project and will be put towards future animal releases.

Notice of postponement must be given at least four weeks before departure except in exceptional circumstances. The deposit will not be returnable in the case of the placement being cancelled once it has already been postponed.



## Flights

Arrival and departure dates will be allocated by Action for the Wild upon successful application, in order to coordinate with pick-ups for all interns. It is the sole responsibility of the prospective intern to arrange flights for these dates. Flights should be booked to Durban International airport (King Shaka) and details forwarded to Action for the Wild. These must be received at least four weeks in advance and must include:

- Flight number
- Carrier
- Departure location
- Arrival date and time
- Departure details (leaving Durban) unless interns intend to travel on

Transfer back to Durban Airport at the end of the placement is included in the contribution, however there will only be one trip for one day. Interns that have later flights may be expected to travel to the airport at the same time as those that have earlier flights.

## Visas

Visa applications are the responsibility of the individual applicant.

Some nationalities, including UK passport holders, will automatically be granted a 90 day visitor permit by South African Immigration Authorities once arriving in South Africa. This visa covers those interns staying on UmPhafa for anything up to 12 weeks.

'Make sure to check your visa requirements well in advance of your placement'

For non-UK passport holders, please check your visa requirements with your relevant embassy and ensure you apply for your visa in sufficient time for your placement. Some embassies may require a letter from us on headed paper confirming the duration of your stay for visa applications, which we can supply on request.

We require a photocopy of this visa at least four weeks prior to your arrival on UmPhafa.

Interns will not be undertaking paid work of any kind. On arrival in South Africa when granted your visitor permit, or when applying for your visa, state the reason of visit as tourist/holiday. Stating the reason of visit as work or business may lead to refusal of entry.

Passports must have a minimum of six months validity from the date of departure.

## Insurance and Medical Deposit

The University of Essex provides comprehensive travel and medical insurance cover for your time abroad. You'll be directed to complete the application form once your place has been confirmed.

Please note there is no cost to apply for University of Essex travel insurance, it is free of charge for all students who are studying, volunteering or interning abroad as part of their University of Essex programme. The insurance is a comprehensive travel cover which includes cover for most medical emergencies. It does not cover personal possessions, personal holidays or routine healthcare. You will need to purchase your own insurance for this.

'You will be met at Durban Airport, and transferred to the UmPhafa Reserve'

As well as insurance cover, a cash medical deposit of £200 in local currency must be lodged with a project coordinator on arrival to cover medical emergencies should it be necessary. Travel insurance is not accepted upfront at the hospitals but the patient can claim any payments back afterwards. The full balance of the medical deposit will be returned at the end of the period of stay providing it was not required.

## Deployment

Interns will be met at the arrivals section at Durban Airport by an UmPhafa representative and will be transferred immediately to UmPhafa Reserve. The trip will take approximately three hours and there will be an opportunity to withdraw or exchange money at the airport before leaving. Pick-up times will be confirmed at least one week prior to project commencement.

## Fitness requirements

The work that interns undertake will be very strenuous in nature and frequently over extended periods. Survey sites will often be in locations only reachable by foot over steep and rocky terrain. A good level of fitness will be required in order to carry out these activities and an intern's involvement in certain aspects of project work will be dependent on his/her capacity to fulfil this requirement.

## Weather considerations

It is important to plan for the weather in KwaZulu Natal. Although winters are warm and dry during the day, nights can be very cold. Summers are very hot and sunny for much of the time although heavy rain and storms are frequent. It is advisable to check the internet for a more accurate picture of the weather over the period of stay and to bring suitable clothing and kit accordingly. Please also note that being in the southern hemisphere, the seasons are reversed to those in the UK.

**'It is important to plan for the weather in KwaZulu Natal, so check the internet'**

## Additional requirements

As an ambassador for UmPhafa in Colenso, offensive behaviour, either verbally or physically, towards inhabitants, UmPhafa staff or fellow team members by anybody will not be tolerated. As a visitor to the Republic of South Africa researchers and interns are bound by the laws of the country and must behave accordingly. On UmPhafa Reserve, researchers and interns are under the direct responsibility of the project coordinators and should follow the instructions of the supervising staff member and never leave the group without permission from the duty supervisor. Failure to abide by these principles may lead to repatriation at the discretion of UmPhafa staff.

Action for the Wild reserves the right to refuse research applications and placements where necessary.

All participants of UmPhafa placements will be expected to complete an indemnity form on arrival on the reserve before any field work can be undertaken.



## Essential kit

**Clothes for the Field** – These must be robust, bush appropriate and subdued in colour, i.e. beige, khaki, brown, dark green

- A good quality, sturdy pair of walking boots
- A good rain jacket
- Two pairs of trousers
- A warm fleece/top/jacket
- Two long sleeve shirts
- Two short sleeve shirts/t-shirts
- One pair of shorts
- Wide brimmed hat
- Sunglasses
- A spare pair of glasses  
(if you wear them, as well as a copy of your prescription)

**Additional essential clothing** – May to September

- Windproof, cold weather jacket
- Warm hat, gloves, scarf
- Base-layer
- Clothes to sleep in

**General kit**

- 30L backpack
- Strong leather work gloves
- Lunch box and large water bottle
- Watch
- Swiss army or Leatherman style knife
- Sleeping bag and sleeping bag liner
- Good quality camera (video function a bonus)
- Binoculars
- Head torch
- Sunscreen (at least one bottle of high factor)
- Insect and tick repellent
- Nik-wax/Dubbing for protecting walking boots
- 1 or 2 towels
- Travel plug for South Africa

**First Aid kit** – All interns must supply their own first aid kit for personal use whilst working in the field and must contain at least:

- 1 x Tweezers
- 1 x Scissors (5.5cm Blade)
- 6 x Safety Pins
- 1 x White Open Woven bandage 7.5cm x 5m
- 1 x Crepe Bandage 5cm x 4.5m
- 5 x 4-Ply Gauze Swabs 5 x 5cm
- 1 x Micropore Tape 1.25cm x 5m
- 4 x Hygienic Cleansing Wipes
- 2 Pairs sterile Gloves
- 1 x Low Adherent Dressing 5 x 5cm
- 1 x Pack of Assorted Plasters

NB: Lifesystems Adventurer or Explorer first aid kits provide all the above and are easily available online or in most outdoors retailers.

**Additional Medication** – UmPhafa staff cannot legally distribute medication. It is advised you take a good supply of over the counter medications:

- Paracetamol
- Ibuprofen
- Antihistamines (useful even if you do not suffer with allergies)
- Anti-diarrhea tablets
- Rehydration sachets
- Antiseptic spray (dry sprays rather than creams)

## Optional kit

- Clothes other than for the field
- Laptop with wireless capability for internet
- Mobile Phone
- DVDs for evenings and weekends
- Short, sturdy lock-knife for heavier work in the field
- Reading books
- Field-guides. Some available on-site, but it is advisable to at least have your own bird book
- If you have an SLR camera, a 200mm lens. 300mm even better
- Instruments if you play
- Swimwear

## Checklist

- Medical form - 4 weeks prior to departure
- Payment of contribution fee - 4 weeks prior to departure
- Flight details - 4 weeks prior to departure
- Photocopy of Insurance policy details - 4 weeks prior to departure
- Photocopy of photo page of passport - 4 weeks prior to departure
- Photocopy of Visa (if required) - 4 weeks prior to departure

## Recommended reading list

- 'Cry of the Kalahari' – Mark and Delia Owens
- 'Born Wild' – Tony Fitzjohn
- 'A Primates Memoir' – Robert M. Sapolsky

