



## Namibia Vet Safaris: Vets for Wildlife Experience



Join **Namibia Vet Safaris** on our two week **Vets for Wildlife Experience**. This is open and perfect for individual students, vets, vet nurses, biologists and everyone else keen to learn more about vet wildlife work and the role the vet plays in conservation. This experience or internship can be combined with a short safari in Namibia or with a visit to one of the Wildlife Sanctuaries in Namibia.

This programme will be based at our new Nature Travel Wildlife Clinic just outside of Outjo in north-central Namibia at the Rare and Endangered Species Trust Sanctuary and during the two-week program you will be working with our resident vet on the following:

- Treatment of wildlife at the Rare and Endangered Species Trust (REST) sanctuary – current resident species include Cape Vulture, Common Duiker, Pangolin, Bateleur, Western Barn Owl, Honey Badger, Warthog etc
- Assist in conservation projects

- Joining our non-profit foundation Nature Travel Vets for Wildlife we will respond to any wildlife emergencies throughout Namibia – you will experience working with a variety of wildlife species (ranging from Elephant, Rhino, Lion, Hyena and Leopard to smaller creatures like Pangolin, Dik-dik, Steenbok, Honey Badger. We will also respond to injured birds of prey.
- Commercial Vet Wildlife work – Rhino, Sable, Roan, Mass capture etc
- Large Animal vet work – horses and cattle
- Domestic small animal work including the opportunity for students to participate in spay and castration campaigns to neuter and vaccinate stray animals which will in turn help prevent the spread of disease to wildlife like African Wild Dog.



### **General Information:**

#### **Accommodation and Food**

There are four accommodation options for this experience:

**A: Self-Catering Tents at REST** - With this option you will be based at the sanctuary full time which will include assistance at night with treatment and care of nocturnal animals or any emergencies that might occur. Food and tents will be provided, but this will be fairly basic. There is a central building at the camping site that has flush toilets and showers as well as a communal braai and small prep area for food (no refrigerator or stove). There are basic lights within this building, but no charging ports. This option is ideal for budget conscious travellers and students.

**B: Self-Catering Bungalow at REST** - With this option you will be based at the sanctuary full time which will include assistance at night with treatment and care of nocturnal animals or any emergencies that might occur. The Bungalows are en-suite with wood-fire hot shower. There will be a small braai area in front of each bungalow for cook outs. Each bungalow has a refrigerator, basic lights, and charging ports. Food will be provided, but this will be prepared by yourself.

C: Etotongwe Lodge is located 4kms from REST and accommodation will be in a clean and comfortable air conditioned en-suite bedroom. The abundance of local birds together with the wild animals around the lodge gives your stay a unique “bush-feel”. End the day at the swimming pool, while enjoying a sundowner from the local restaurant. Accommodation will be on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

D: Sophienhof Lodge is a small safari lodge located 14 kms from REST and offers various accommodation options ranging from shared en suite bungalows, a farmhouse to backpacker rooms. They offer game drives, nature walks, mountain bike outings, nature drives and have a swimming pool on site. This option is ideal if you would like to include this as part of your holiday experience and enjoy the time you will not be spending at the sanctuary in a true Namibia environment. Accommodation here will be on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. (This option can also be added as an extension to your Vets for Wildlife Experience)

### **Optional Activities and Extensions:**

Extend your stay in Namibia and add one of the trips below to experience what Namibia is all about!

Please note that we could arrange a one week to four week experience as well

- 1: A day trip can be arranged to Etosha National Park – experience one of Africa’s best game parks.
2. A 2-3 day trip can be arranged to Etosha National Park (accommodation can be camping, chalet or lodge depending on your budget)
3. Extension trips to Sossusvlei, Damaraland (famous for Namibia’s desert adapted wildlife), Swakopmund, Caprivi Region

### **About Rare and Endangered Species Trust (REST)**

REST’s number one aim in being a good wildlife centre is to practice good conservation first. REST feels strongly that although research and education are key, conservation of a species must take priority. Extinction makes all other aspects irrelevant to survival. Of course research and education benefit from such efforts.

Allowing tourism to brush with conservation & research in order to conserve, understand and educate. Founded in 2000, REST aims to bring attention to some of the most misunderstood and endangered animals in Namibia –THE FORGOTTEN 5



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For more information on this amazing Vets for Wildlife experience contact us at: [jonas@thewildesttrail.com](mailto:jonas@thewildesttrail.com).

We look forward to welcoming you to Namibia!!

## **Please read down below our most recent vet student's review 2019, Zoja Verlic from Ljubljana University:**

### **WHAT I WOULD CALL: A DAY IN A LIFE OF A RURAL NAMIBIAN VET**

To anyone that might find this interesting.

My first thoughts before flying across the world were filled with nervousness, I was scared of travelling alone, facing Africa alone. Or so it was in my head, because what I thought would be two a bit difficult weeks turned out to be one of the best in my life ever.

Nick was a big help. He answered all of my questions I had before hand but I could see how difficult it must had been to explain the awesomeness of being the only student instead of part of a group program. As I arrived to Namibia I actually had the first weekend as a quick intro to this amazing country by visiting Sossusvlei with a personal tour guide. I could not imagine a better start, as the view from the top of a 45' was breathtaking. On Monday Nick then came to pick me up personally to take me to Rest, introducing me to everyone and helping me settle in comfortably. Immediately I felt welcomed and everyone I met there were superbly nice, kind and full of interesting stories to tell. I stayed at the student house which is still building itself up, but it has everything you need, most importantly hot water. You have to set the fire for it but luckily I was sharing this household with 3 boys that took care of it for me. We bonded the first night already and only got closer with days to come. At the end of my trip I basically experienced quite a few proper briberies. And I am a vegetarian, so that should say a lot. But nevertheless warming up next to the fire, listening to old 80's classics and talking whatever came to our mind made the nights in Namibia the perfect endings of days filled with learning experiences.

On my second day at Rest I finally got to meet Lindsay, one of the best people on this planet. She was the vet that I spent everyday since with and learned more from than my first 3 years in college. Our days were then filled with interesting vet stuff,

from doing both wildlife work and going to farms to work with cattle or operating dogs and cats. I had the opportunity to help with tuberculosis testing, taking blood from 72 cows and 10 bulls, castrating kittens on my own, also actually doing an OVH operation on a pyometra dog. I had the chance to experience stuff I only learned from books so far. Because I was the only student I got to do it all. From every blood smear needed, to drawing blood itself, measuring medicine and applying it either s.c., i.v. or i.m., even setting up infusions on my own and taking care of anaesthesia. I got to do pregnancy diagnostics on lots of cows which I've never done before, experienced a live version of lumpy jaw and abscesses. Moreover I experienced hands on vet work on wildlife as well. I got to catch an eagle on my own, learned how to do a physical on it, did an ultrasound on a pangolin, did a physical examination on a jackal, drew blood and gave vaccines and almost went on a lion catch and collar job, which was sadly cancelled because of lions acting like lions and not being at the expected location when needed. But the fun thing about it was the not knowing what would happen tomorrow and where would we end up.

To add even extra I got to visit Etosha with Lindsay and her husband Alex. We went together for a whole day, filled our car with picnic goods and they really made me feel accepted or like at home. To make it even more freakingly better we got to see leopards twice. And not like on a tree so away you would need binoculars, but like next to the road, giving us a show. We saw the first one stalking his pray and on our second luck we saw a male and a female mating. Call us lucky or call it the awesomeness of Namibia, anyway it was pretty unforgettable. To top it up we saw black rhinos crossing the road in front of us, whole families of elephants and more of the amazing safari inhabitants.

One afternoon Lindsay and I visited an amazing lady that started rescuing baboons, taking them in from poachers and black markets, and went from knowing absolutely nothing about them to devoting her life to saving them. She is actually accepted by the wild groups now and walks with them daily, learning more and more about this amazing creatures that are like so many others misunderstood. But despite the difficulties of living that way she was one of the kindest people I got the chance to meet.

I keep saying kind, but there is no better way to describe people from Namibia. Wherever you go everyone would be friendly, helpful, generous and full of positive energy. They are accepting of who you are or who you want to be and they all want to do good. By following Lindsay I got to meet so many wonderful and amazing people, even lots of really highly respected vets in Namibia as well as in South Africa, which could one day mean little opportunities for me as well. Nick made all of this possible and I will forever be grateful.

Nevertheless my two weeks would not be as memorable if it weren't for Lindsay herself. She is amazingly sweet and kind but at the same time determined when it comes to her patients, superb vet that knows what to do in a second. She thought me so much not only about vet work but also what it all means, how important it is to do what you enjoy doing, giving it your best but believing in yourself and taking care of yourself too. We spent many hours in a car together, driving to different places and within those road trips have we bonded, laughed, singed and shared stories you only share with your close friend. She has become my inspiration, someone who has thought me so much, who I could ask anything anytime and we would talk it over, regarding either simple medicine or heavy operation techniques. She is a mentor you can only dream of and an idol I will always look up to.

To sum up, my days were always different, sometimes more chill, staying at the clinic and taking care of its residents, and some were full of traveling to farms and active on vet opportunities. But they were all equally interesting and fun. If you are open to it, you can experience more than your mind could imagine. The right people are already here, you only just have to join them.

Kindest regards,

Zoja Verlic

Third year Vet student, Ljubljana University