



GAME RANGERS

INTERNATIONAL

Volunteer Handbook



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Introduction

Welcome to Game Rangers International's Volunteer Programme!

We hope this handbook will provide you with a greater understanding of the projects, the team you are about to join, and how to prepare yourself for this unique experience! In this document, we hope to answer each and every one of your questions but if you still have queries having read through the information - don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team!



Game Rangers International

Game Rangers International (GRI) is a non-profit Zambian NGO which was established in 2008. Our focus is currently within Zambia with the aim of directly supporting conservation of the National Parks: their animals, ecosystems and surrounding communities. GRI tackles conservation support in Zambia holistically and the organisation is divided into three programmes: Resource Protection, Community Outreach, and Wildlife Rescue.

GRI Locations:

- GRI Country Headquarters, based in centre of Lusaka
- GRI Field Headquarters, based close to Musa Gate in Kafue National Park
- The Lilayi Elephant Nursery, just outside Lusaka, where our youngest, milk-dependent orphans receive round-the-clock care
- The Kafue Release Facility, in South Kafue, where the older orphans are rehabilitated and eventually released

Resource Protection:

Providing welfare, training and operational support to wildlife personnel on the front line of endangered species protection. Includes Law Enforcement, Anti-Poaching Units, and Firefighting Units located in Kafue National Park (KNP).



Community Outreach:

Inspiring greater environmental awareness and understanding through education and wildlife sensitisation at local and regional levels. Supporting the eradication of poverty and human wildlife conflict within the communities living contiguous to KNP through a sustainable and harmonious community development programme, which embraces sound environmental practices.



Wildlife Rescue:

Rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing orphaned elephants back into the wild. Our specialty is elephants via our Elephant Orphanage Project (EOP).



Zambia

Weather and climate

The weather in Zambia is variable... There are four main seasons: wet-hot (Oct-Dec), wet-cool (Jan-Apr), dry-cool (Apr-July) and dry-hot (Aug-Oct).

October is the hottest month with temperatures often reaching 40°C or 104°F! Moving into November we see the start of the rainy season where occasional showers become much more frequent by December. January and February are usually the wettest months with rain lessening and ending by March/April. When it rains, it really rains - downpours can last for a couple of hours, halting all activity... Humidity mostly remains low, even in the wet season, so the climate is comfortable. During the rains, it can get chilly but it warms up as soon as the sun comes out. You should therefore be prepared and equipped for all temperatures! In the winter (June-August) night-time temperatures can fall to 0°C or 32°F so a warm set of clothes/nightwear such as thermal underwear is essential.



Cultural Considerations

Zambian culture is very traditional and in the rural areas you will see nearly all the women wearing the customary chitengi (long skirt). As with most traditional cultures, it is not a good idea for women to walk around in revealing clothing - especially showing your legs (above the knee) - and you will earn more respect the more formally you dress.

As part of GRI's Volunteer Programme, you may be visiting the surrounding chiefdoms, interacting with community members and potentially meeting Honourable Chiefs. You will be briefed on how to behave in such situations but you should be aware of, and respect, the local customs. Zambians will really appreciate your effort at learning the local language. Just a few simple greetings or words of thanks go a long way. Our team are very friendly and helpful and would be delighted to teach you some of their language, should you show an interest.

Zambia is composed of many different tribes, rich with differing traditions and ceremonies. If you have the opportunity at the end of your volunteer programme, it's worth taking some time to explore the region and see what treasures Zambia has to offer!



GRI Volunteer Programme

GRI's Volunteer Programme was established in 2010. Since then, volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities have been sharing their skills, experiences and enthusiasm with us. Volunteers are a huge asset to GRI - we really couldn't function without them.

Volunteers help us by:

- Raising awareness and valuable funds
- Becoming global advocates for GRI
- Assisting GRI with the many duties and activities necessary to run a successful conservation project
- Bringing fresh ideas, skills and enthusiasm to our projects

GRI Ambassadors

If you'd like to become even more involved with GRI, we'd love to offer you the opportunity of becoming a GRI Ambassador once your placement is complete. If this is something that interests you and you want to find out more, please get in touch with our team!





Volunteer's donation

As well as directly supporting GRI, the cost of USD \$2500 pays for:

- All project-related transport costs:
 - Pick up from the airport on the project start date
 - Drop-off to the airport or on project end date
 - Transport to project related events
 - Transport to a lodge on rest days
- Accommodation: a tent, mattress and bedding
- Local staff whom prepare volunteer accommodation, maintain the grounds, and ensure the property is safe and secure
- Three meals a day on camp (volunteers help prepare the meals)
- The documentation required to apply for a business visa
- Experienced staff support, training and supervision
- Two working t-shirts per volunteers
- Project related materials

Application Process

The Next Step...

Submit a completed volunteer questionnaire with your CV or cover letter to volunteer@gamerangersinternational.org

If your application is approved...

- Submit a signed copy of the Placement Offer
- Submit a doctor's letter confirming your physical fitness for participation in the programme
- Pay your deposit via international bank transfer (please read our cancellation policy)

GRI will then...

- Secure your place on the GRI Volunteers Programme!
- Send you:
 - the GRI official Letter of Appointment
 - Letter of Request for Business Visa
 - Personal Data Form, to be completed and returned
 - Elephant Safety Briefs, to be reviewed and signed
 - Camp Safety Briefs, to be reviewed and signed
 - GRI Code of Conduct, to be reviewed and signed
 - GRI Intellectual Property Agreement to be reviewed and signed.
 - SES emergency responder form to be completed and sent directly to SES

Then you just need to...

- Book your plane ticket!
- Purchase travel medical insurance
- Pay the outstanding balance (no later than two months prior to your programme start date)



Before you jump on the plane, please make sure that you:

Before you jump on the plane, please make sure that you:

- Purchase fully comprehensive medical insurance
- Obtain a Zambian business visa (either at your nearest embassy or on entry into Zambia – it costs USD \$50 in cash)
- Pay the outstanding balance – due 60 days prior to the project start date
- Email us your flight details & insurance policy
- Keep up to date with GRI by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram! Request to join the GRI Volunteer group on Facebook and stay up to date with all the latest news!

Packing List

Even though there's not a strict dress code for volunteers, you'll be expected to follow our basic uniform requirements. It's requested that you wear earthy colours on camp, due to the dust and to make it clear that you're on duty to personnel on camp. Out of respect for the Zambian culture please don't wear shorts or skirts shorter than knee length. Bright colours aren't encouraged in the bush as they stand out which reduces your chances of spotting animals and might scare the elephants. Please ensure that shoes are comfortable and worn in so that you avoid blisters...

Suggested Clothing and Footwear:

- Khaki/earthy coloured light-weight t-shirts (avoid revealing vest-tops)
- Full-length trousers for the evenings and fieldwork
- Cropped trousers or knee length shorts for camp work
- Sweater/fleece
- Swimsuit (there may be an opportunity to swim at a nearby lodge on rest days)
- A wide-brimmed hat/cap
- Hardwearing shoes/strong trainers
- Flip flops/sandals

May-Sep Volunteers

- Beanie
- Hat
- Gloves
- Warm nightwear/thermal underwear is highly recommended



Oct-Apr Volunteers

- Rain poncho or rain coat
- Wellington boots/Gum boots



Other Essentials:

- UV protection sunglasses
- Sun screen
- Insect repellent
- First aid kit, including rehydration salts and anti-diarrhoea medication
- Towel
- Binoculars
- Zip-lock or water/dust proof bags
- Alarm clock
- 1L reusable water bottle
- Head torch/lamp & batteries
- Small backpack



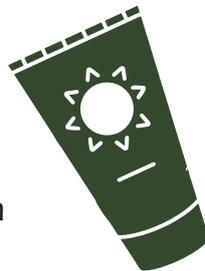
Optional Extras

- Solar charger
- Battery pack for charging phone
- Books
- Games
- Binoculars
- It would also be useful if you could bring your own laptop/tablet which we would connect to the wi-fi for project related work.



First Aid Kit

- Sun cream
- Insect Repellent
- Plasters/Band Aids
- Lint dressing
- Medical tape
- Cotton wool
- Small bandage
- Iodine/antiseptic ointment
- Antihistamine tablets/cream
- Paracetamol/Ibuprofen
- Re-hydration salts
- Anti-diarrhoea treatment
- Antifungal foot powder



Money

Your food, transfers and park registration costs are all covered by the project but you may wish to buy some snacks, treat yourself to a game drive or buy drinks/food at a local lodge on your rest days so make sure you bring some additional cash with you! ATMs are scarce in the bush....

When you arrive in Lusaka, there will be an opportunity for you to change money and visit a supermarket.

The local currency is Kwacha and can only be obtained within Zambia. It's therefore best to bring US Dollars, GBP or Euro and get these changed in Lusaka. There are plenty of Currency Exchange Locations in the city that usually have better rates than the airport. Most shops, restaurants, hotels and supermarkets accept credit cards and Visas. If you are carrying US Dollars, please ensure that they are dated at least in the year 2000 as anything from the 1990s is very difficult to exchange.

Medical Deposit

We request that you bring USD \$100 with you as a medical deposit, which should be kept in hand and used in the event of you requiring any medical attention whilst in the field.

Arrival in Country

At the Airport

When you land in Zambia, keep hold of your luggage tags and boarding card as you need to present them as you leave the airport.

Visas & Immigration

To volunteer in Zambia you need to purchase a 30 day business visa. A business visa can be purchased for USD \$50 at the airport on entry into Zambia or at the Zambian Embassy in your home country before you depart.

We'll issue you with a Letter of Appointment to the project and a Letter of Request for a Business Visa , which you can present to the embassy or show at immigration on arrival to Zambia.

Transfer to Camp

You'll be greeted at the airport by a project representative and will travel to the Lilayi Elephant Nursery to get settled in!

During the first few days you'll:

- Change money and visit the supermarket
- Be given a tour of the Lilayi Elephant Nursery and meet our youngest orphaned elephants
- Have a cultural and safety briefings
- Get to know the GRI team
- Finalise your work schedule depending on which volunteer programme you have chosen
- Receive two GRI shirts

Lilayi Elephant Orphanage

All our volunteers start their experience at the Lilayi Elephant Nursery (LEN). LEN was officially opened in September 2012 within the Lilayi Game Reserve, which is about an hour's drive from Lusaka Airport. All newly rescued elephant orphans aged three years or under, are brought to this facility, which is specially equipped to nurture and to restore health to these tiny orphans. Once they are physically, mentally and emotionally fit, these elephants are taken to the Kafue Release Facility to join the older orphans, where they begin the second step of their rehabilitation process into the wild.



Facilities

The camp is well established and volunteer tents surround a grassy area complete with fire and Braai area for cooking. Hot water is available for washing which really makes a difference after a long day of volunteering! There's limited electricity on camp - we use solar power to charge phones/laptops and to power the lights. To prioritise the project communications and work necessities our solar system is not extensive, so charging facilities are limited (particularly in cloudy or rainy weather). Conserve as much battery as possible on your devices and take this opportunity to relax, enjoy nature and move away from social media and electronic devices.

You'll share a communal washroom and kitchen/reception room with the management team and your fellow volunteers, and will be given your own tent with bedding provided.



Musa Camp

If you're one of our Holistic Volunteers, you'll visit Musa Camp! Located in Kafue National Park, near Musa Gate, this is the youngest of our volunteer camps. At Musa, you'll also find our Field Headquarters - where we run our field and Anti-Poaching operations from. Here, you'll find out more about Resource Protection and learn what it takes to be a ranger. Nestled on edge of Lake Itezhi Tezhi, this camp boasts the most stunning sunsets! Wild visitors are common and it's important that you walk around with a torch/head torch in the dark to ensure you don't startle any wild elephants who may wander through the camp. The closest town is Itezhi Tezhi (ITT) which you will visit when working with some of our Community Outreach projects. Please note that the lake is not safe to swim in due to crocodiles and hippos...!

Facilities:

As with our other camps, you'll stay in your own tent and bedding will be provided. Showers and toilets are shared between volunteers in their own ablution block and hot water is available for bathing. The volunteers are also provided with their own recreational area and cooking facilities. Everyone is encouraged to help out with the cooking during their stay at the camp, please ensure that any dietary requirements are communicated to our team prior to your arrival.



Kafue Release Facility

Depending on which volunteer programme you have selected, you may stay at the Kafue Release Facility. The camp is based in southern Kafue National Park, nestled along the banks of the Nkala River, 12km (20 mins) from the National Park Headquarters at Ngoma. From Ngoma a further 40 minute drive will take you to the nearest town of Itezhi-Tezhi (ITT).

Kafue National Park is renowned for its considerable biodiversity, with South Kafue being home to over 1,000 wild elephants, making this location a highly suitable site for a release facility. In the latter part of 2007, the Elephant Orphanage Project was constructed and established with support from the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation.



Kafue was designated a National Park in 1950 and was, at that time, the largest National Park in the world (covering an area of 25,000km²). Including the surrounding Game Management Areas, the park equalled an area twice the size of Belgium. Now the fifth largest National Park, Kafue is renowned for its incredible array of species and wildlife. Considering the vastness of this rich ecosystem, there are very few commercial operators in the South, which affords the EOP with the exclusivity of this wildlife haven.

For more information see:

www.zambiatourism.com/destinations/national-parks/kafue-national-park



Transfer to the Kafue Release Facility

Due to the poor road conditions, the journey takes approximately 6-7 hours from Lusaka. From Musa Camp, the journey is only around 45 minutes.

Once you arrive at the Kafue Release Facility, you will meet the elephants, be given a safety brief and tour of the facility and have some time to recover from the journey.



Making Bread from Scratch



Sleeping Tents at the Kafue Release Facility



Bathroom at the Kafue Release Facility

Facilities

The Kafue Release Facility is basic but is surrounded by stunning scenery and wildlife. You will find that the simple lifestyle can be very rewarding and really good fun.

We currently employ 24 full-time staff from the nearby communities to work at the camp in various capacities. Due to our remote location, all staff live on the camp for two to three weeks of the month before going to their respective villages for their rest days. Staff have their own accommodation, ablution, dining and recreational areas.

The volunteer living area is located at the southern end of the camp where you will share a communal washroom and kitchen/recreation room and be given your own tent with a mattress and bedding.

Cooking

All of our camps are working camps and everybody is expected to get stuck in and be part of the team.

Volunteers prepare their own meals based on basic camp rations. A gas cooker is available and occasionally cooking is done over a campfire! As refrigeration facilities are limited, camp diet is predominately vegetarian (pastas/noodles, rice, vegetables, fruit, canned goods etc.). It's likely that you'll assist the Volunteer Supervisor in buying the rations, so there will be an opportunity for you to pick up some comfort foods (chocolate, crisps, biscuits etc.). Please note that these costs will not be covered by the project.



Laundry

When packing, please bear in mind that laundry facilities at each of our camps is basic, so all clothes must be hand washed. We will provide washing powder, a bucket and pegs. Some volunteers choose to pay the local staff ZMW 10 (approx. USD \$1.00) to do their laundry for them.



Environmentally Conscious

Our ECO-objectives form an important part of our commitment to conservation within Zambia. At each camp we are continually attempting to minimise our environmental impact through utilisation of alternative technologies and sustainable natural resources. We encourage you to minimise the amount of material we have to burn so think about the amount of packaging on the things that you bring with you. There are no national recycling schemes in Zambia and all waste is a pollutant.

You may want to think about bringing biodegradable or organic personal products with you as all wastewater goes into soak away pits.

Please note:

- All our camps are drug and alcohol free
- Whilst we encourage interaction and friendship between all our staff and volunteers, relationships must remain purely professional
- Please ensure that the GRI Code of Conduct is read and signed before the start of your placement.

Training

A Placement Offer will be sent to you to outline the activities you may be involved in during your stay with us. You will be fully trained in order to carry out your assigned duties as well as any specific safety training relating to living and working in the remote bush environment.

Please note that our camps are active from sunrise to sunset and working hours may start as early as 06:30 and may not finish until 18:00.

Due to the nature of this project, you must be prepared to be flexible in your schedule. You should be aware that changing circumstances at any time may necessitate that volunteers are relocated between camps during their stay. Please be reassured that this is a rarity but we do expect support from volunteers if it is actioned.

Hygiene, Health and Safety

Common Concerns

Hygiene: Hygiene is a major consideration as you may not be used to the conditions of basic living. We set strict rules for the camps to make sure we don't have stomach upsets and that food preparation is as hygienic as possible.

Water: Each of our camps have their own boreholes, so all tap water is clean and safe to drink! You'll be able to enjoy a hot shower every day.

Malaria: Most of Zambia is at risk of the Malaria parasites spread by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are found on camp throughout the wet season, mostly during sunrise and sunset. The best way to stay safe is to cover up as much as possible and to use repellents. Remember to bring long socks to cover up your ankles in the evenings... Consult your doctor as to which Anti-Malarials will be most suitable for you.

Vaccinations: Please consult your doctor on which types of vaccination you may need. It will vary depending on the duration of your travel and whether you plan to visit other destinations in Zambia.

HIV/AIDS: You should be aware that HIV/AIDS is prevalent in Zambia. Please consult your health advisor for more information.

Tsetse Flies: Tsetse flies are a pest in the National Park and you may get bitten quite frequently, especially whilst travelling to and from camp. Tea Tree Oil has been known to help deter these pesky flies so please do bring with you if you wish. The tsetse flies in the area don't carry any diseases, but some people can react to the bites and the bites can become swollen. They are most similar to a Western Horse Fly.



Mosquito

Tsetse fly

Safety Brief

You will receive a full safety briefing when you arrive at camp to make you aware of the potential risks and dangers of your surroundings. We will email these out to you in advance so you can have a read through before your arrival.



Travelling Safely

For your own safety we request that Project Volunteers don't use public mini-buses in and around Lusaka. You'll need to take a taxi if you want to journey without project personnel. We will provide you with taxis details if needed and may ask you to sign a release form.

Although Zambia has the reputation of being the most peaceful of the African countries, petty theft does exist in the cities and we request that you don't travel with valuable items. It is important to avoid travelling and walking around after dark – this applies to city and field situations.

Health and Safety Protocols apply in all parts of Zambia during the volunteer programme, and volunteers must ensure they always inform staff members of their whereabouts.



Mitigating Risk

Being sensible about your behaviour and movements around camp will reduce the chances of any risk to yourself and others:

- Wear sturdy shoes and boots as you walk around camp/national park
- Wear covered footwear after dusk to protect your feet from snakes, scorpions and spiders
- Always remember to check your shoes and clothes before putting them on
- Use a torch/head torch/lamp during the dusk and dark hours
- It's possible that lions, hyenas and elephants may wander around the camps at night, so make sure that you check the area with your torch before leaving your tent in the night
- Musa Camp and the Kafue Release Facility are situated near water which is occupied by crocodiles so please keep a safe distance from the water's edge at all times
- You will always be supervised when around the elephant orphans

Medically Sound

You will need to provide evidence that you are medically fit to enter onto the GRI Volunteer Programme. Your doctor/GP must provide you with a letter confirming that you have sufficient physical and mental fitness to take part in the activities described and to live within the African bush for at least 25 days. Please ensure that this letter has been sent to **volunteer@gamerangersinternational.org** prior to your placement.

Medical Insurance

You must ensure that you have purchased a fully comprehensive medical insurance policy before you arrive in Zambia and that this includes cover for emergency air evacuation and repatriation. You will need to email **volunteer@gamerangersinternational.org** with a copy of these documents before arrival.

Please ensure that your insurance package covers at least USD \$50,000 medical evacuation cover and USD \$100,000 hospitalisation cover. Please make sure to bring a copy of your health insurance policy and carry it with you in case you need medical assistance.

Medical and Emergencies

There are no qualified doctors or nurses at our camps. All management staff do have basic first aid qualifications and each camp has a fully comprehensive medical first aid and trauma kit. There is mobile phone reception at each of our camps, it's a little more limited in Kafue National Park. All numbers for emergency or medical support are clearly displayed at the camp offices.

In case of an emergency, we will contact the local emergency evacuation specialist (SES), who will respond to a call for emergency evacuation. There is an all-weather airstrip close to Musa Camp and the Kafue Release Facility and the flight time to Lusaka is approximately 1.5 hours. We utilise a VHF Radio unit to contact the National Park Headquarters and local lodges. You will be briefed regarding our Emergency Procedures Protocol upon your arrival.

If your friends and family need to contact you in case of an emergency while you are away, please ask them to email volunteer@gamerangersinternational.org. You may also ask staff for a phone number to share with friends and family in the case of an emergency.

Staying in Touch

Mobile Phone: There's usually mobile phone reception at our camps, it's more limited at Kafue Release Facility. You can buy a Zambian SIM-card and talk time on arrival at the airport - the most reliable services are MTN and Airtel. It will be your responsibility to top-up the phone credit as you go, credit can be purchased almost everywhere! Most volunteers get a data bundle and use WhatsApp for calls and messages. Please be aware that the heat, dust and rain can be damaging so it's a good idea to buy a water/dust-proof cover for your phone.

Power Supply: At our camps, we generally use the standard British 3-pin plug or the European 2-pin round plug. Please ensure that you have relevant charging equipment and plug adaptors for your devices. We utilise solar power to charge phones, laptops and power the lights around the camp however, our solar system is not extensive so charging facilities are limited (particularly in cloudy weather).

Signing-Off

At the end of your placement, you will be signed-off and project staff will organise your transfers.

Please note: Departure tax from Zambia costs US\$25 and is normally included in the cost of your plane ticket. Please check with your airline so that you have the cash prepared if needed.

Onward Travel

Please be aware that your business visa is only valid for 30 days and cannot be extended. If you're planning to travel either side of your volunteer placement, you will need to do so within this time frame, or else contact our team to discuss tourist visa options. Please contact the Zambian Embassy in your home country for more information. Zambia is full of amazing places, too many to list them all. Here are four of our favourites!

Livingstone

If you're not on the Holistic Volunteer programme, we highly recommend visiting Livingstone and the spectacular Victoria Falls! From Lusaka, you can fly to Livingstone with Proflight in just over an hour or take a 7-hour coach trip with Mazhandu Family Bus. Please note that the bus can only be booked one day in advance.

Lodges:

Maramba River Lodge
Zambezi Sun
David Livingstone

Hostels:

Fawlty Towers Jolly
Boys
Waterfront

Victoria Falls



Kafue National Park

Home of several projects of Game Rangers International, as well as being an amazing safari destination.

Mukambi Safari Lodge: a three-hour bus ride from Lusaka and offers game drives and boat trips. Please see www.mukambisafaris.com for up to date information on activities and enquiries about costs.

Konkamoya Lodge: overlooking Lake Itzhi-Tezhi, is about 45 minutes from the Kafue Release Facility. Please see www.konkamoya.com for up to date information on activities and enquiries about costs.

Ila Lodge: close to the Mukambi Camp of the GRI Community Outreach Project. Please see www.greensafaris.com for up to date information on activities and enquiries about costs.

Kaingu Safari Lodge: halfway between GRI's two Kafue camps at Mukambi and The EOP Kafue Release Facility. Please see www.kaingu-lodge.com for up to date information on activities and enquiries about costs.



South Luangwa National Park

Another of Zambia's amazing places and internationally recognised as one of the best safari parks in the world! Home of abundant wildlife, including several packs of painted dogs, the rare Thornicroft's giraffe, and of course the two famous brother lions, Ginger and Garlic! It is a 10-hour drive from Lusaka so most people fly, see www.proflight-zambia.com for more details. There are a wide range of accommodation available in South Luangwa from tents to luxury lodges.



Lower Zambezi National Park

A wonderful National Park at the border with Zimbabwe. Cruise the Zambezi river while watching elephants and crocodiles, go canoeing in between the hippos, and enjoy the spectacular birdlife! It is about a 3-hour drive from Lusaka to the lodges and campsites on the outskirts of the park, or you can fly into the heart of the park and enjoy a truly luxury safari experience.

Please note that our volunteer programme doesn't cover the cost of any onwards travel and is not responsible for volunteers once they have signed off the project.



Welcome to the Team

The GRI Volunteer Programme will give you a unique opportunity to become part of a very special project that is at the forefront of conservation in Zambia. If you come prepared to work hard, learn and to give your best, you will be rewarded with a fantastic experience and take home many wonderful memories.

We look forward to meeting you soon in Lusaka!

