

Mashatu Research Shadowing Programme

botswana



This is raw Africa... Join highly experienced elephant and leopard researchers in Botswana's Northern Tuli Game Reserve, which borders on the Limpopo River in Southern Africa. Mashatu's 80,000 acres of vast arid lands offers some of Africa's best game viewing which you will have the opportunity to experience whilst out assisting the researchers.

Project Location: Mashatu Game Reserve, in the vast game area of the Northern Tuli Wildlife Conservation region in Botswana

Project Age Limit: Minimum 18 years, maximum decided on potential participants' health

Project Length: 1 week, 2 week or 1 month placements available. Available year-round except during January.

Project Highlights:

- Experience some of Africa's best game viewing, particularly elephant and leopard sightings which are of a quality unique to Mashatu
- Be privy to what goes on with large-scale wildlife conservation, management and research on this exclusive private Reserve
- Increase your knowledge of the African bush and the fascinating wildlife that inhabit Botswana's vast game areas, and be directly involved in offering support to this noble African conservation and research effort
- Be involved in fascinating data collection and monitoring of radio-collared elephants or leopards

Project Travel Highlights:

- Landlocked Botswana offers any traveller very real bush experiences, including vast wildlife reserves such as Chobe National Park – home to some of Africa's largest herds of elephants
- The Makgadikgadi Pan – the World's largest dry lakebed
- Makori Safaris involve traversing the intriguing Okavango Delta whilst being poled by local boatmen through tranquil waterways
- The Chobe area in Northern Botswana is also a reasonable distance from neighbouring Zimbabwe and day trips to the magnificent Victoria Falls

Further Information on the Mashatu Project:

Be more than a tourist... be a conservationist.

Assist experienced researcher in their work within this exclusive wildlife reserve:

Elephants... With Jeanetta Selier, who has been researching the elephant populations in the Mashatu Reserve area for over 6 years, volunteers will learn how to identify the reserve's resident elephants, and will be supplied with data sheets that they will complete whilst observing the various herds.

The Central Limpopo Valley elephant population occurs in three different countries namely Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Management of the elephant population is different in the three countries according to their respective government policies. Planning is currently underway for a Tans Frontier Conservation Area in the region. It is therefore of critical importance to establish information such as:

- The current range of the elephants
- The size, age structure, social structure and sex ratios of the population
- Their movement patterns and what factors determine these
- What interactions between people and elephants are, what conflicts arise because of this interaction, and how to resolve these

- Determine how climate change will influence the long term dynamics of the central Limpopo Valley system

Leopards... Leopards...Volunteers will join Andrei Snyman, Mashatu’s leopard and general predator researcher, and participate in tracking through telemetry, and in studying leopard behaviour. The results of this study will be used in the future to promote better management of leopards and other large predators in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve. It will also help the authorities to make more educated decisions with regards to hunting quotas for the large carnivore species in Botswana. The use of satellite collars will also shed new light on leopard movements within their home ranges, since they will be monitored right throughout the day, instead of monitoring them just once a day.

An increase in knowledge on wildlife within the reserve area will help in formulating a management plan acceptable to all parties involved in the different countries and crucial to the formation of a Trans Frontier Peace Park. Information gained from these studies will also be used in future in-depth studies on specific aspects of the elephant and leopard populations.

Wildlife...Volunteers will also have the opportunity to participate in the various adventure activities such as horse trails and game drives offered at Mashatu, at an additional charge. Throughout your days with the researchers you will be exposed to the glorious varieties of the abundant game species within the reserve area.

“I’ve seen, done and learned a number of fascinating things since my arrival here. On the tragic side I’ve been testament to the killing of two elephants, euthanased after falling victim to an embittered farmer’s rifle and a desperate poacher’s snare. And on the majestic side I’ve witnessed under a moonlit midnight sky the roosting of over a million red-billed quelea, a spectacle more tremendous, more powerful, than any predator sighting could ever be. I’ve learned about the daily life, the struggles and habits and nuances, of elephant herds and leopard families. I’ve seen giraffes running and cheetahs napping, heard hyenas whooping at night and felt the generous warmth of the Southern African sun at dawn, rising through the stone cold morning to bask Mopane covered hillsides in a softly glowing hue.

But certainly Jeanetta or Bashi could tell you more about all of that than I ever could. And besides, I’ve learned something in addition to all of the facts and figures and hypotheses and idiosyncrasies of the bush, something that everyone else here already knows, but knows so well that it has retreated from their conscious to their subconscious, knows so well that it is barely ever even mentioned on the terrace before dinner. The one thing that I’ve learned, the thing that I find most interesting and most amazing, is something that can be spotted every day in the youthful enthusiasm of Villiers’ eyes, the eternal satisfaction in Paul’s smile. Mashatu, the bush, never stops. It never stops inspiring, bewildering, fascinating, enthralling, captivating and beckoning.”

[Account by David Morinelli, Mashatu Shadowing Volunteer July 2006]

Project Cost 2008:

	£	US\$
1 week placement	775	1550
2 week placement	1550	3100
1 month placement	3095	6190

Project Cost Includes:

- Project Fee: this entails financing that goes directly back into the project that you are involved with. This project fee facilitates funding for items such as research materials, equipment, supplies, etc.
- Transfer from the Botswana border to the Reserve by Land Rover (40 min drive)
- Orientation and introductions to research work upon your arrival
- All daily transportation within your respective research areas
- Full board and lodging which includes 3 meals a day at your respective camps
- Assistance in your projects by various Mashatu staff and volunteer coordinators. Full support from African Impact and your coordinator throughout your time at your Mashatu placement

Project Cost Excludes:

- Personal travel insurance for the duration of your placement (expected to include cover for repatriation)
- Transport from nearest international airport to Mashatu base near the Botswana border
- All items of a personal nature, such as curios, gifts, clothing (work and other)
- Email/Internet and telephone calls
- Soft drinks, wines and spirits
- All visas for border crossings
- Laundry services (these are reasonably priced at your camp)
- Any excursions over and above your planned itinerary at Mashatu and within Botswana

Project Orientation:

Your introduction to Mashatu and orientation upon arrival:

- Introduction to all senior camp staff including Guides, Heads of departments, Researchers and Assistants
- Familiarization of the Safari camp and research areas
- Introduction to current research work that is being done, and instructions on how to carry out research work that will be of assistance to the programme
- Issuing of the basic tools you require to carry out your duties
- Volunteers will learn how to identify the various elephants, as well as to age and sex the individuals and carry out data collection
- Volunteers will learn how to assist Andrei in his use of the leopard collaring equipment and how to make relevant observations and record data

Project Support:

Throughout your stay at your placement in Mashatu you will have the support and guidance of experienced researchers and Mashatu staff. They are part of our greater African Impact support team, and will provide you with competent 24-hour field support and assistance

Project Accommodation:

Volunteers will be accommodated in very comfortable guides' accommodation at Mashatu Main Camp. You will in a way become part of the staff body, taking meals with the guides and management, and assisting your researchers with client hosting where necessary

Project Meals:

You will enjoy 3 meals a day at Main Camp in the guides' and management quarters

Project Getting There: *Our placement coordinators will assist you with the procedures.*
Your options are as follows:

Please note that there are routes either by road or air charter from OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg.

Because of the remoteness of the destination, prices can be quite high for these transfers but our placement coordinators will take care in assisting you with the procedures for finding the simplest and most economical route.



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African Impact and The Happy Africa Foundation

African Impact is proud to have been instrumental in the establishment of The Happy Africa Foundation and continues to be one of the Foundations major supporters. Donations made to support our community and conservation initiatives by private donors as well as by African Impact as a voluntourism company are managed and distributed on our behalf by The Happy Africa Foundation.

The mission of The Happy Africa Foundation is to empower the African people through the support of community and conservation based initiatives that operate at grass roots level.

Conservation Development:

The Happy Africa Foundation works together with local African communities to conserve and protect the environment, wildlife and cultures in areas where the Foundation is involved. Thus, the Foundation supports, financially or logistically (or both), local and international organizations that operate projects supporting conservation education and research at a grass roots level.

Community Development:

The Happy Africa Foundation strives to initiate, facilitate and support community development projects that are sustainable. As such, The Happy Africa Foundation makes every effort to ensure and takes relevant measures in assessing, planning and monitoring community development projects for the benefit of local African communities.

The Happy Africa Foundation provides travelers, volunteers and other donors with a chance to give back to the communities they visit or volunteer in on their African journeys, or that they wish to support remotely through donations.