



DEEP BLUE
CONSERVATION



2020 INFO PACK



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Dive into the warm Indian Ocean with this experience of a lifetime!

Our Mission

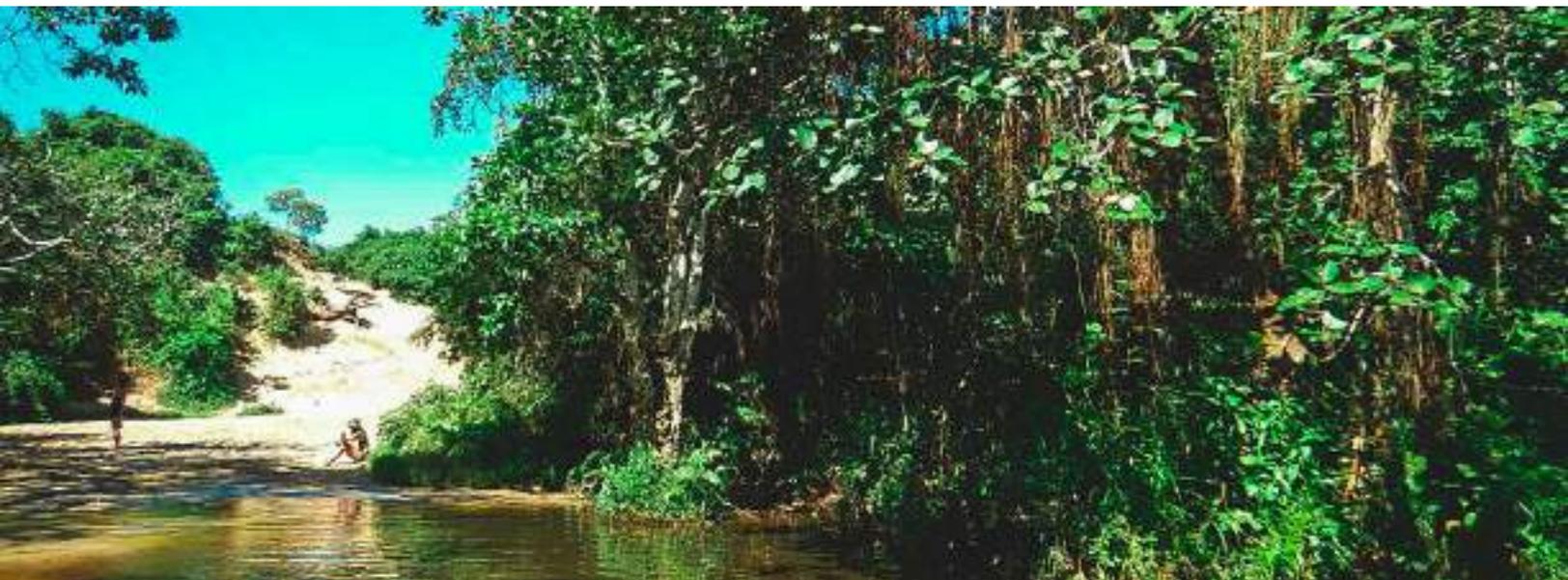
The project aims to monitor and further conserve the incredible reefs in Sodwana Bay. By continually collecting data on the reefs, the well-being of the reefs can be closely monitored to ensure their health and conservation. Through contributing data to worldwide databases, the project is also able to help conserve marine life and ecosystems around the world. The team is passionate about the marine environment and their goal is to inspire all volunteers and interns that come through the program to love the ocean as much as they do and to educate volunteers and interns on the importance of protecting this vital ecosystem.

Sodwana Bay

Sodwana Bay which means 'little one on its own' in Zulu, is a small rural town on the east coast of South Africa. It is found just outside the Isimangaliso Wetlands Park which is South Africa's first UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This coastline has the Southern most coral reefs in South Africa with 50 km of unspoiled reef. There are over 1100 species of fish that are found in Sodwana Bay waters, including the famous coelacanth that was once thought to be extinct.

The small town and the area is an experience in itself, with untouched beaches that make you feel like the only people in the world, beautiful green coastal forests and the largest freshwater lake in Africa. Time seems to slow down in this sub-tropical paradise with the abundance of nature and the laid-back locals. This town and reefs are a must-see when visiting South Africa!



Volunteer Program



Program Summary

Volunteers arrive on the first Friday of the month. The Saturday after arrival, volunteers will receive a camp orientation. The rest of this weekend can be used to settle in and get to know other volunteers and interns.

Week one will be used to complete the PADI Open Water course which takes 4 days to complete. If volunteers have chosen to complete another PADI course, this will be done during the second week to allow volunteers to become accustomed to diving in Sodwana during the first week.

Once volunteers are qualified divers, they dive each day during the week, Monday to Friday. Volunteers typically dive either once or twice a day depending on the schedule for the day and the ocean conditions. Volunteers collect photographic data on manta rays, ragged-tooth sharks, turtles, whales and nudibranchs. This data is entered into international marine conservation databases after dives. During some Fridays, volunteers may take part in various community development projects or help clean up our beaches before the litter is washed back into the ocean and onto our reefs.

Deep Blue offers Marine Lectures to increase knowledge about the ocean, these are short and casual. After their stay volunteers receive a certificate for the lectures that can be added to their CV.

The rest of the day can be spent relaxing and exploring. There are a lot of activities to keep volunteers busy during their stay!. During weekends there is a lot of opportunities for volunteers to take part in different trips, activities or explore the town.



Duration

2 - 12 weeks

Requirements

- Over 18 years old.
- Able to understand and speak English (all courses and lectures are in English).
- Able to swim.
- PADI Medical Form filled in, a doctor has cleared the volunteer to dive.



What's Included

- PADI Open Water course (If you're already a diver you can do your Advanced Open Water).
- All required dive training manuals.
- 1-2 each day (Mon-Fri).
- Hard gear hire for project dives (BCD, regulator, weight belt & cylinder).
- Dive permit.
- Airport transfers to and from the Richard's Bay airport.
- Transport to the beach for project dives as well as around Sodwana.
- Gate fees into the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (excluding weekends).
- South African sim card.
- Food (Each week volunteers buy food at the Spar and prepare their own food in the shared kitchen).
- Accommodation in single or shared wooden cabins.
- Marine lectures.
- Recommendation letter and certificate of completion.



What to expect...

- First Friday of the month:** Volunteers are picked-up from the Richards Bay airport between 14:30 and 15:00. The drive from Richards Bay to the camp takes about 2 hours. At the camp, volunteers receive a camp tour and are given a cooked dinner.
- Saturday:** In the morning, volunteers are given an orientation for the project. After which, project coordinators will take volunteers to the neighbouring town of Mbazwana to buy food for the week as well as to give volunteers a town tour and orientation. That evening volunteers are taken to the local view point of Ngoboseleni.
- Sunday:** Volunteers are allowed to relax and settle in to their accommodation and become acquainted with the other volunteers and interns.
- Monday:** If volunteers are completing their PADI Open Water, they will begin their course. This involves classroom and pool skill sessions. Volunteers that are already able to dive will meet project coordinators at the camp gate and will be transported to the beach for their first dive in Sodwana. Thereafter they will be taught about the database and given a lecture on Sodwana and Deep Blue.
- Tuesday:** Open Water: Classroom and pool skill sessions.
Divers: Two dives, database and lectures.
- Wednesday:** Open Water: First ocean dives! Two dives in the ocean to complete skills.
Divers: One dive, database and lectures.
- Thursday:** Open Water: One skills dive and one fun dive in the ocean. You are now a qualified diver!
Divers: Two dives, database and lectures.
- Friday:** All volunteers will have one dive.
Some Fridays volunteers and interns will take part in community projects and beach cleanups.
- Weekend:** Volunteers and interns can take part in different activities and explore the town. A list of extra activities will be given during the orientation and can be booked for the weekend. The town is also a short walk from the camp so volunteers and interns can walk around the town to look at the local shops, go to restaurants or swim in the local pool.

Typical Day

Monday, Wednesday & Friday:

7:00	Leave camp
7:30	Kit up on the beach
8:00 - 9:30	Dive
10:30	Leave the beach
11:00 - 13:00	Shower and lunch break
13:00 - 15:00	Database entry and analysis / Lectures
15:00	Free time

Tuesday & Thursday:

7:00	Leave camp
7:30	Kit up on the beach
8:00 - 9:30	Dive
9:30 - 10:00	Surface interval (relax on the beach & have lunch at the beach kiosk)
10:00	Kit up
10:30 - 12:00	Dive
12:30	Leave the beach
13:00 - 15:00	Shower and lunch break
15:00 - 17:00	Database entry and analysis / Lectures
17:00	Free time

**This is a rough schedule and changes day-to-day, course days will have a different schedule.





Internship Program

Program Summary

Interns arrive on the first Friday of the month. The Saturday after arrival, interns will receive a camp orientation. The rest of this weekend can be used to settle in and get to know other volunteers and interns. We also organise a drive to a local view point for sundowners during this weekend.

On the Monday thereafter, interns will begin their PADI Open Water or begin project dives if they are already qualified divers. View the 'typical day' section on page 7 for a better understanding of what each day entails.

Over the course of their stay interns will complete all the necessary courses up to Divemaster, this includes Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Rescue, EFR and Divemaster.

The main part of the internship will be to take part in research dives collecting photographic data on manta rays, ragged-tooth sharks, whales, turtles and nudibranchs. This data is entered into international marine conservation databases after dives. Deep Blue offers Marine Lectures to increase knowledge about the ocean, these are short and casual. After their stay interns receive a certificate for the lectures that can be added to their CV.

Interns will also take part in a work experience week where they will work with the dive charter to learn more about working in the dive industry.

The rest of the day can be spent relaxing and exploring. There are a lot of activities to keep interns busy during their stay!. During weekends there is a lot of opportunities for interns to take part in different trips, activities or explore the town.



Duration

4 weeks: Divemaster.

8 weeks: Rescue, EFR and Divemaster.

12 weeks: Open Water / Advanced Open Water to Divemaster.

Requirements

- Over 18 years old.
- Able to understand and speak English (all courses and lectures are in English).
- Able to swim.
- PADI Medical Form filled in, a doctor has cleared the intern to dive.

What's Included

- PADI Open Water course, Advanced Open Water, Rescue, EFR & Divemaster.
- All required dive training manuals.
- 1-2 project dives each day (Mon-Fri).
- Hard gear hire for project dives (BCD, regulator, weight belt & cylinder).
- Dive permit.
- Work experience week.
- Airport transfers to and from the Richard's Bay airport.
- Transport to the beach for project dives as well as around Sodwana.
- Gate fees into the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (excluding weekends).
- South African sim card.
- Food (Each week volunteers buy food at the Spar and prepare their own food in the shared kitchen).
- Accommodation in single or shared wooden cabins.
- Marine lectures.
- Recommendation letter and certificate of completion.

What to expect...

First Friday of the month:

- Richards Bay airport pick up between 14:30 and 15:00.
- 2 hour drive from the airport to the camp.
- Camp tour and cooked dinner.

Saturday:

- Morning - Project orientation.
- Town trip to buy food for the week, town tour and orientation.
- Evening - Town trip to the local view point of Ngoboseleni for sundowners.

Sunday:

- Relax and settle in to the accommodation and become acquainted with the other volunteers and interns.

First week:

- Monday to Thursday - PADI Open Water course.
- Friday - Project dive, database and lectures.
- Qualified divers - Project dives, database and lectures (see typical day on page 7)

Third / fourth week:

- Advanced Open Water course.

Second month:

- EFR and Rescue course (1 week).
- Begin Divemaster course.

Third month:

- Continue Divemaster course.
- One / two week work experience at the dive charter.

Internship Courses

PADI Open Water:

- Day 1 - Classroom and pool skill sessions.
- Day 2 - Classroom and pool skill sessions.
- Day 3 - Two ocean dives to complete skills.
- Day 4 - One ocean dive to complete skills and one fun dive.

Advanced Open Water:

Five Adventure Dives

- Deep Dive (30m).
- Fish Identification Dive.
- Underwater Naturalist Dive.
- Peak Performance Buoyancy Dive.
- Underwater Navigation Dive.

Rescue and EFR:

- Classroom, pool sessions and ocean dives.
- Emergency First Responder primary and secondary care training.

Divemaster:

Theory Topics

- Role and Characteristics of a PADI Professional.
- Supervising Qualified or Student Divers.
- PADI Standards.
- Divemaster-led courses.
- Basic theory in Marine Biology and Oceanography.
- Human Biology and Diving.
- Emergency Assistance Plans.

Practical Assessments

Swim and stamina tests: 400m swim, 15min float, 800m snorkel and a 100m swimming tow.

In-water rescue assessment.

Demonstrate basic 18 scuba skills in a professional manner.

Mapping project.

Underwater equipment exchange.

Assist on an entire open water course and continuing education.

Leading certified divers in open water.



General Information

Program Season: January - November.

January - March: Ragged-tooth Sharks gestating.

July - October: Humpback Whale migration.

October - March: Loggerhead and Leatherback turtle nesting season.

Arrival & Departure

OR Tambo Airport in Johannesburg is the nearest international airport, from here a domestic connection can be taken to the nearest airport in Richards Bay. Both of these flights must be booked by the volunteers and interns as well as the return flights. Volunteers and interns must hold a valid return ticket at all times. Volunteers and interns must book their flights for the first Friday of the month. Upon arrival staff will transfer volunteers and interns to the camp between 14:30 and 15:00.

The return transfer from Sodwana Bay to the Richards Bay airport is also on Friday. The return transfer usually leaves the camp at 10:00, arriving at the airport at 12:30. It is therefore suggested that flights be booked after 13:00 to allow extra time for transportation. Exact dates for flights can be confirmed with project coordinators via email to ensure accuracy.

Visas are the responsibility of the volunteer and interns to organise. International volunteers and interns must book their return flight out of South Africa within 90 days of their arrival date to comply with tourist visa regulations. Please also check the validity of your passport as some countries are required to have a passport valid for at least 6 months after the end of your stay in South Africa.

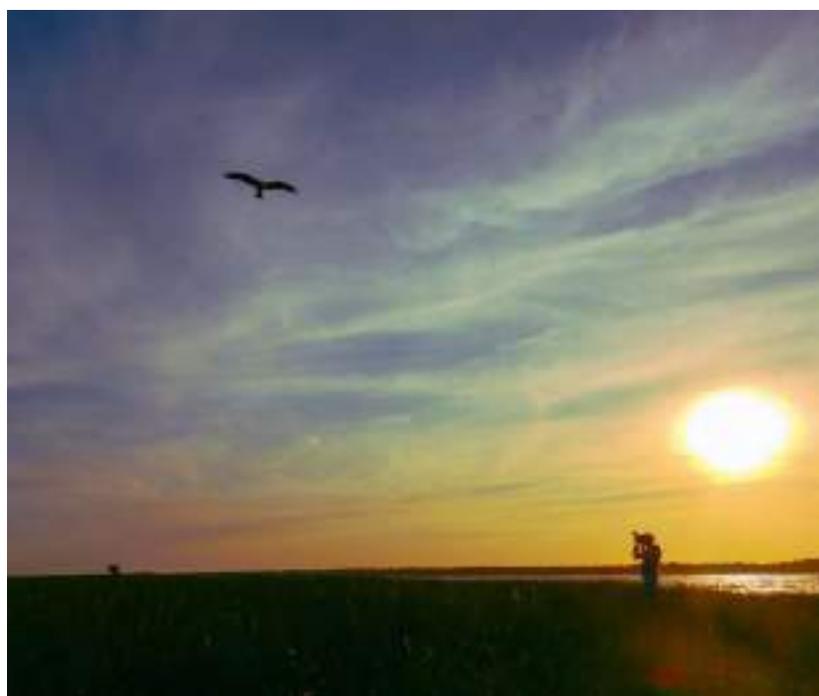
Extra Expenses

- Plane tickets.
- Visas.
- Travel insurance and diving insurance.
- Comprehensive medical evacuation insurance.
- Baggage insurance.
- Laundry.
- Some weekend excursions.
- Extra dives and further dive courses.
- Soft gear rental (mask, fins & wetsuit).



Extra Activities

- Relaxing at the beach
- Freediving
- African market
- Restaurants
- Bonfires
- Looking for chameleons
- Whale watching (seasonal)
- Picking up shark teeth at Anton's dive site
- Sundowners at local view points
- Watching the moonrise on the beach
- Turtle tours (seasonal)
- Surfing
- Lake Sibaya trips
- Game drives
- Plankton on the beach at night
- Trips to Tolla se Gat
- Forest walks
- Kosi Bay trips
- Braais (barbecue)
- Quad biking
- Fishing



Food

Every Saturday morning volunteers and interns are taken to the neighbouring town of Mbazwana to buy food for the week, this is covered in the project cost. This budget does not cover luxuries such as sweets and snacks etc.

Accommodation

Volunteers and interns stay in single or shared wooden cabins. The camp is a rustic beach-style camp situated in the heart of the Sodwana Bay town. There is a communal kitchen, bathrooms and a fire area. The camp is a 5 minute walk from the town where volunteers and interns can enjoy a pool, restaurants, a cafe and shops, the camp is also a 10 minute drive from the beach.



Packing List

- Shorts and t-shirts.
- Warmer clothes for evenings and early mornings.
- Rain jacket.
- Cap / hat and sunglasses.
- Swimming costume.
- Beach and bathroom towel.
- Wetsuit (5mm in summer months and 7mm in winter months).
- Soft dive gear (as gear rental may be expensive it is best to at least bring your own mask and fins).
- It is suggested that interns bring their own dive computer.
- Open and closed shoes.
- Mosquito spray and sunscreen.
- Flash light.
- Personal medication (the nearest pharmacy is a 2-hour drive from the camp).
- USB.
- Stationery.
- Games, books, series etc. for rainy days.
- Waterproof camera / Go Pro if you have.



Health Issues

International volunteers and interns need to have a **comprehensive medical and travel insurance (including emergency evacuation)** before arrival at the camp. A copy of the policy will be required upon arrival.

The medical facilities around northern KwaZulu Natal are remote and basic and unable to deal with serious trauma or illness. The nearest decompression chamber in the event of decompression sickness is 200 km away in Richards Bay. This is why emergency evacuation is required.

Volunteers and interns need to have **dive insurance** as well, this can be organised through DAN South Africa (Dive Action Network).

Sodwana Bay is a **low risk malaria area**. Medication to prevent malaria can be taken, but is not essential.

Volunteers and interns can contact their local doctor to find out about malaria tablets that will not affect them negatively whilst diving. Mosquito sprays are, however often the best preventative method.

Sea sickness tablets are optional but will make the boat rides to the dive sights more comfortable, especially for the first week and if volunteers and interns usually are affected by motion sickness.

If volunteers or interns are sick during their stay with us, they can be taken to a local doctor in the neighbouring town of Mbazwana. This is at their own expense.

How to apply?

Download the Application Form from the [volunteer](#) program or [internship](#) page on our [website](#) and email the completed form to info@deepblueconservation.org.

OR

Email us and we will get back to you with the Application Form and a quote for your time with us.

