



Action for Cheetahs in Kenya General Volunteer Information

PO Box 1611, 00606, Nairobi, Kenya
+254733997910/721631664

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Action for Cheetahs in Kenya (ACK)!

Our project is looking for volunteers who are passionate about wildlife conservation!

ACK work includes:

- habitat monitoring and modeling; and
- community education and awareness; and
- community development.

ACK research, education and community programmes are conducted in affiliation with Cheetah Conservation Fund and Kenya Wildlife Service.

We have prepared this information sheet to help prospective volunteers understand the type of work and living conditions they may anticipate. However grass roots conservation efforts require the project to be flexible and accommodate current needs, please anticipate changes in programming may occur.

Please note this is a fact sheet relating to ACK in Kenya. For additional travel information refer to travel books and/or embassy web site.

APPLICATION

All volunteers are required to go through an application process to assure the prospective volunteer's skills, interests and objectives are put to the best use while addressing the priorities of the program.

Limited volunteer space is available. Applications are processed on a first-come basis. Please note we do not accept volunteers from 20 December through 10 January. This is to respect the cultural trends in Kenya and accommodate our Kenyan staff having a much needed break with their families.

VOLUNTEER FEES and PERMITS

Volunteer Fees:

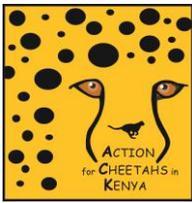
US\$1500 for a minimum of two weeks, US\$400 subsequent weeks.

The volunteer fees include:

- room and board; and
- in-country transportation related to the project.

A deposit is to be paid directly to ACK upon confirmation of application approval. The balance of the fee is due at least one month prior to your volunteer date unless otherwise agreed (more information available from ACK as requested).

- Refunds will be made for emergency situations only.
- Transport to and from Kenya is the responsibility of the volunteer.
- Personal travel or weekend expeditions during your time with ACK are at your own expense.
- Health insurance and vaccinations are the responsibility of the volunteer.



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- General volunteers do not require permits as long as their time with ACK is not being used for any degree or publication.
- If you are from the media and planning to use film for public media you must apply for media permits (please contact us for more information).

VOLUNTEER WORK

Unless you have made specific arrangements with the primary investigator, the following are work related activities you can anticipate while in Kenya:

Research

- Most of the field work requires physical stamina and the ability to be on your feet and outdoors in various weather conditions. Habitat monitoring involves walking and driving game counts, vegetation surveys, cheetah scat and spoor monitoring. (It is recommended that you become familiar with the antelope, predator and large bird species before you come to Kenya. “The Audubon Field guide for African Animals”, Collins “Field Guide to Mammals of East Africa”, and Collins “Field Guide to Birds of East Africa” are good resources. It is also recommended that you become familiar with estimating distances in meters. Practice identifying objects in 50-meter increments.)
 - Walking counts are conducted monthly with the cheetah scouts on a transect of 5KM (10KM (6 miles) round trip) starting at the same time each morning – walks usually last up to two hours.
 - Driving counts involve sitting or standing in a vehicle on morning and night-time counts lasting two to three hours each month.
 - Vegetation surveys are conducted during the game counts.
- Scat and spoor are recorded and collected at scheduled dates and may also involve several hours of intermittent walking.
- Computer work includes data entry, generating reports and writing articles for newsletters and web sites. It is recommended that you are familiar with computers and word processing software.
- Camping gear and equipment maintenance is required prior to and on return from field exercises.

Education Programs

- School programs educate children about cheetahs; including distributing materials and organizing activities.
- Community “baraza” are meetings at which ACK presents results from research or conducts information and question exchanges with interested members of the community.
- Tourist presentations include a powerpoint slide show, selling crafts, and answering questions about cheetahs.

LIVING CONDITIONS

ACK operations are based out of a home in Nairobi and/or a tented Camp near Salama along the Mombasa Highway approximately 90 kilometers south east of Nairobi. Some field work may also include camping as needed.



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Accommodation in Nairobi:

- Has utilities including electricity, hot water and a gas/electric stove/oven for cooking
- Separate male and female rooms with shared bathroom facilities. Facilities are dormitory style; you will likely be sharing living and sleeping space with others.
- Bedding is supplied (mosquito netting, pillow, sheet, blanket and mattress). You may choose to bring your own as well. Towels are also provided although it may be beneficial to bring a small towel of your own for traveling.
- There are pet cats and dogs living at the house, **if you have severe animal allergies**, discuss with ACK.
- Laundry service is done as a group, therefore it is recommended to mark clothes with a marker to prevent clothing mix ups. Each person will wash their own personals (underwear).
- Toiletries and basic personal supplies are available in stores if needed.

Accommodation in Salama – Field camp

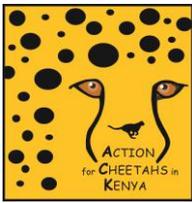
- Kitchen and office building has electricity for running refrigeration, freezing field samples and charging field equipment.
- There is NO piped water. “Bathrooms” (shower area) uses a basin – NO overhead shower and water must be heated if you require warm water.
- Camp toilets are basic long-drop, NO flush toilet!
- Separate male and female walk-in-tents with camp beds.
- Bedding is supplied (Bed with mattress, pillow, sheet and blanket). You may choose to bring your own as well.
- You may be sharing your tent with one other person as each tent sleeps two people.
- Toiletries and basic personal supplies can be purchased in Nairobi prior to departing for the field.
- Laundry service is done as a group, therefore it is recommended to label clothes with a marker to prevent clothing mix ups. Each person will wash their own personals (underwear).
- Bring your own torch or headlamp.

Food (Nairobi and Camp)

- Meals are typically prepared by everyone and eaten together (no house staff). Be prepared to cook a full meal for a large group of people.
- Food availability is *similar* to the US/UK – including pastas, rice, fruits, vegetables as well as local dishes (ugali, chapatti).
- Meal schedules are variable. We are often on the road for several hours at a time.
- If you have specific dietary requirements/needs it is your responsibility to make sure they are addressed.

Fieldwork in other areas of Kenya

- Fieldwork **other** than Salama often requires camping. If you are not able to bring your own tent, sleeping bag and pad OR if you are unable to camp, please let ACK know in advance.



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TRANSPORTATION

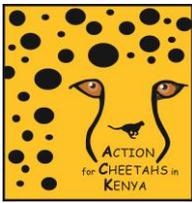
- Fly into Kenyatta International Airport (Nairobi, Kenya)
- If your flight is delayed or your flight plans have changed, call ACK and notify them as soon as possible. Use your country dial out extension +254 733997910 or 721631664 to reach Mary Wykstra and +254 722463648 to reach Cosmas Wambua, research assistant.
- ACK will arrange for you to be picked-up at the Airport. In most cases, we will arrange for a taxi driver to meet you with your name on a sign. The taxi will bring you to our location. If for some reason this does not happen, please call ACK (in country dial. 0733 997910 (Mary), 0721631664 (Mary), 0722463648 (Cosmas)) to find out what further arrangements should be made. Otherwise, hire your own Taxi at the airport and proceed to 181 Jacaranda Court in Mountain View Estate. You should continue to try to contact ACK en-route. Approximate cost is approximately US\$20 or 1500ksh. If you decide to take a taxi, make sure it is a licensed taxi driver (a guard at the airport can assist) before getting into the car. The drive is ½ - 2 hours drive depending on traffic.
- You are responsible for any personal travel transportation costs in Kenya during your stay, as ACK vehicles are used for business and research only. If family or friends are planning to meet you they are responsible for finding their own lodging. Lonely Planet Safari Companion is a good guide for finding reputable tour companies – if you need suggestions for local tour operators please contact ACK. If you chose to participate in other travel in conjunction with your trip, notify ACK as you are making the arrangements. Please plan your travel at the beginning or the end of your volunteer period. Failure to notify ACK in advance of your travel plans may result in the termination of your volunteer period and you will not be refunded your volunteer fees.

KENYAN CUSTOMS

- When you arrive Customs will ask for an address in Kenya. Please use: Mary Wykstra, 181 Mountain View Estate, Nairobi. This address is for customs use.
- If you are staying for three months or less, or have not received a Research Permit, state that you are on vacation/holiday **and not entering Kenya to work**. Once you arrive at ACK the additional details for permits and visas can be dealt with as needed.
- If you have already received student documentation fill in the form accordingly.

DOCUMENTS AND MONEY

- A Passport is required (keep a separate photocopy of your passport at home and another in your suitcase).
- Keep separate copy of airline tickets in suitcase, money belt or alternate location.
- Tourist Visas are required. You can either get a three-month tourist visa upon arrival at Kenyatta Airport, or obtain one in advance through the Kenyan Embassy in your home country. **Check the embassy requirements and reports on the internet as requirements are subject to change**. Your time in the airport will be slightly less if you receive your visa in advance, but it is a very simple process at the airport as well.



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When you arrive at the airport and do not have a visa you will need to fill out a visa application, available next to visa counter. You will need US \$50 in exact change. Make sure to stand in VISA line for processing. If you go through the embassy, please allow enough time for the appropriate processing of paperwork.

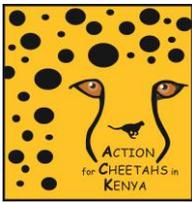
- Copies of bankcard information, travelers checks, driver's license, yellow fever card, emergency contact, insurance, etc. should be left at home and in another location of your baggage.
- Keep your yellow health card with you (vaccination record obtained from doctor or county health dept.) as volunteer work may require travel into other countries requiring proof of Yellow Fever vaccination.
- If you will be driving you will need an International Driving License. (**Check your local AAA office.**)
- When bringing US Dollars be sure the **dates are newer than 2004** as most Forex Bureaus will not accept money dated older. Teller machines in Nairobi are efficient means of using VISA for cash withdrawal. US money and Travelers Checks can be exchanged at banks in Nairobi and in most other cities, but you should exchange about US\$150 at the airport exchange teller (for hotel, bus and other immediate expenses). Traveler's checks not recommended as only means of money, as exchange rates are often less, and there are often difficulties with exchanging them. You will be responsible for your own snacks, sweets and soda/beer (a reasonable estimate is US\$5- 25 per week depending on your own snack cravings).
- Most large establishments in Nairobi accept VISA credit cards and they can also be used to obtain cash at a bank or automatic teller machines. However, many smaller shops do not accept credit cards or traveler's checks, so outside Nairobi it is best to carry some cash.

MEDICAL

- Speak with your doctor and/or health department about current requirements and recommendations for Kenya.
- Malaria medication is your personal choice and is recommended in Kenya. Speak to your doctor and health official about this as well. We are not in a high-risk area, but it is a good idea if you plan to travel. It is recommended that you begin taking malaria medication prior to arrival in Kenya.
- Bring enough of any medications you need to last your entire trip and a copy of your prescriptions with the generic name. It is also recommended that you bring two courses of antibiotic that you can take in case you do get sick – please discuss it with your doctor prior to departure.
- A good reference guide is Lonely Planet's "Healthy Travel in Africa."

INSURANCE

- Be sure to look into international health insurance coverage (through your current plan or with supplemental insurance).



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- You may want to purchase medical transportation insurance, or emergency evacuation insurance in case of emergency. Check with your travel agent or insurance company for options.
- A waiver of liability will be sent you to sign and return to us, when you have paid the final deposit of your volunteer fee....two months prior to arrival.

LUGGAGE

- Check with your airline for restrictions, each airline has its own baggage weight restriction and limit to the number of bags permitted.
- It is best to use luggage and not boxes.
- Occasional field research is required. Therefore, it is recommended that you bring basic camping gear including: a sleeping bag, tent, flashlight (spare batteries), and day pack. Other useful items include a water bottle or canteen, insect repellent, and a sleeping pad. Power Bars or other nutritional bars are also good to have as we do skip meals on long cross-country trips. Check with ACK before departure to confirm what equipment you will need to bring. If you are a student bring your own equipment or contact ACK prior to arrival regarding your needs.
- We may ask you to bring additional items, but will let you know closer to your departure date.

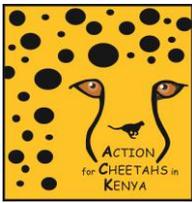
CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

- March through early June = The Long Rains
- October to end of November = The Short Rains
- December through March = Summer.
- Late June through October = Winter.
- Temperatures range from a low of 14-18 degrees C to 30-34 degrees C .
- Bring sunscreen as the sun is strong at any time of the year.
- During the winter, a rain jacket is recommended. When we do nighttime game counts, it gets chilly, so you may also want to bring a hat, gloves and warm fleece.
- The rest of the time, summer clothes are fine during daylight hours. And a pair of long pants, fleece, and light jacket are useful for cool nights. Tank tops are fine for work at the house. Be considerate of local customs of modesty, visits to town and field interviews button down or elbow length tops are may be required and skirt or pant.
- Laundry services are available.

General Use

The following items are recommended to be included in your packing list.

- Flashlight and batteries
- Binoculars
- Alarm clock
- Hiking boots or tall-topped tennis shoes
- Camera and film (film available here, but more costly)



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- Rubber-soled, strap-on sandals (in warmer months)
- Flip-flops
- Fleece jacket, sweatshirt and warm hat, evenings can become chilly especially in winter months (June through August).
- Women should bring sports bra as roads are often extremely rough
- Small basic First Aid Kit
- All prescriptions
- Over the counter medications that are used regularly
- Mosquito repellent
- UV protected sunglasses, bring spare pair
- Hat for sun protection
- Water bottle (camel back, bladder pack or other portable water carrying devise)
- Swimsuit
- Day Pack and/or bag for 3-5 day of clothes for field work
- USB or jump disk to transport electronic data
- Optional: Local phones and phone cards area relatively inexpensive and make it easy to keep in touch with friends and family. GSM phones and modems for computer are also available in Nairobi
- Recharging batteries or use of electronic equipment is available at the house and the field camp in Salama. Power when camping is limited You should confirm that your electronic equipment is 220v capable or bring a power converter (220V in Kenya) and outlet adapter (type G British three-prong adaptor plug).
- Internet cafes are available in Nairobi and mobile phone networks offer services via your mobile phone as well as 3G and 4G USB technology for use with computers. If you desire regular communication, it is possible to purchase equipment in Nairobi.