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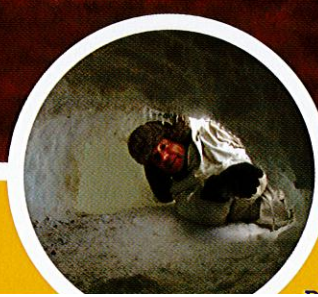
FIELD GUIDE TO ORCA

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OCTOBER 2012



USA
Australia
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Q&A

Ask the experts

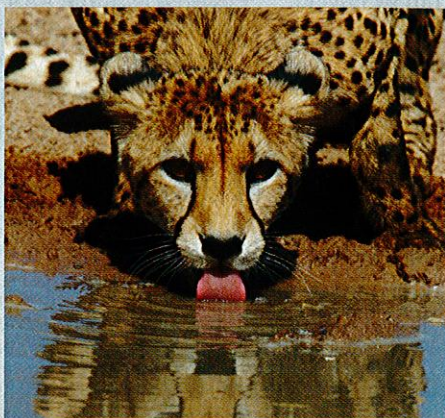
Our team tackle your questions on adventure travel insurance, family-friendly safaris and wildlife volunteering experiences

Q what type of tasks can a volunteer expect to participate in on wildlife conservation trips?

Wildlife volunteering holidays offer a diverse range of experiences. You will often find that once at a destination, your skills are developed to help with a wonderful variety of conservation work. Don't be surprised if you go to Namibia to study cheetahs and find that when you are out observing prey species like zebras and kudu, and are also asked to count and measure the termite mounds.

You may undertake surveys in support of our understanding of an endangered species, work that will help in conservation management planning. These surveys can be on land, through walking or driving, sitting at waterholes in Africa, navigating through rainforest in South America, at sea making observations on a boat, or diving under the water to survey coral reefs.

You can help by repairing or building important infrastructure, like nature paths or information points, and by managing species through the clearing of areas or planting. There are also opportunities to



work directly with animals in sanctuaries or rescue centres, supporting staff with the day-to-day running of the centres.

Within these spheres you will also be able to choose experiences that work you solidly every day, to those where the work is interspersed with sight-seeing or flopping on the beach.



KATHY GILL is Strategy Director of Biosphere Expeditions, which runs conservation expeditions across the globe. It is a member of the EVA Alliance, established to share good practice. www.biosphere-expeditions.org

Q I have two children – aged 12 and 14 – and was looking into safari holidays but I am not sure which would be more suitable for children. Can you advise?

Consider combining a safari with a beach/activity holiday, such as white-water rafting, which might be more appealing to children of their ages and something for them to look forward to if they find parts of a safari a little tedious. One of the beach activities could include snorkelling, which would offer the children a complete wildlife experience on land and sea.

I would definitely aim for a safari that involves the 'Big Five' as larger mammals, such as elephants and lions, tend to impress children more than those which require a little patience. Some companies offer two week holidays with either a 2-, 3- or 7-night safari, depending on how long you think the children would most enjoy in the game reserves.

If you decide on Kenya, I would highly recommend splashing out on a Serengeti hot air balloon ride, arriving at dawn to watch the balloons inflate and setting off over the game reserve, watching herds of elephant below. It is a truly wonderful experience. Some companies offer to see hippos in their underwater environment from a submerged hide, which must be quite amazing. South Africa and Botswana are now increasing in popularity and accessibility, although the latter destination is land-locked.

Always check with the Foreign Office about travelling to any of these destinations and check the best times to visit, as going in the rainy season may put a dampener on things!

Q I am planning a wildlife trekking holiday around some of the US national parks. What insurance will I need to take out and how much should I expect to pay for this?

Travel insurance from different providers can be as different as chalk and cheese. Looking at the bottom-line price is not a sensible option when it comes to protecting yourself medically for that trip of a lifetime, as you may find they are not covering the activity of 'trekking'! You will need to make sure they can arrange/pay for evacuation from a remote area, or High Altitude cover has been put in place, if required.

Travel insurance these days is often purchased online and therefore you can't talk to someone that easily as the cover is set in

stone. Travellers need to talk to someone when purchasing travel insurance in order to receive the correct advice. It is so important that your new policy will cover whatever activity you are wishing to pursue on holiday, rather than just assuming all policies are the same.

In terms of price, worldwide cover for the trip you mention can range from about £57 for 10 days to £76 for 24 days through Westfield. Needless to say we can arrange cover for any duration.



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Got a wildlife or travel question you want our team to answer? Email editorial@wildtravelmag.com