

# The Young Conservationist

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16-18 YEAR OLD'S  
FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS



Nkonzo Wildlife Research  
[www.wildlife-research.com](http://www.wildlife-research.com)

Nkonzo Wildlife Research  
[WWW.WILDLIFE-RESEARCH.COM](http://WWW.WILDLIFE-RESEARCH.COM) | [INFO@WILDLIFE-RESEARCH.COM](mailto:INFO@WILDLIFE-RESEARCH.COM)

## Who is Nkonzo Wildlife Research?

Nkonzo Wildlife Research (NWR) is an ethical conservation and research company focusing on hands on operations, real world application, research to the benefit of wildlife and inspiring a new generation to care for the planet. Founded on the dream of being different, the name Nkonzo comes from the language of Lingala in central Africa meaning possibility or new beginnings. At Nkonzo we believe in the bigger picture; creating experiences that not only focus on the ethical wellbeing of all animals, both human and not, and the future of the environment by making a positive impact on the conservation industry and the lives of African wildlife. We're working for a better future by showing the world what wildlife is supposed to look like and how we can coexist together.

NWR prides itself on ethical operations, supporting local business, and the reduction of human-animal conflict. To reach a wider audience and have a greater impact NWR implores individuals of all ages to apply and join as a student intern.

### Our Methods for Making a Difference

**Educate:** To increase awareness and educate individuals and groups from all walks of life regarding the various conservation issues and threats to African environments and their sustainability through hands on training, involvement, and workshops.

**Act:** Field research in wildlife areas to protect the environment and study those that inhabit it, the Young Conservationist Program specifically works with wildlife monitoring, biodiversity sampling, and hands-on education in the field to assist in the experience appropriate areas of our national conservation efforts.

**Empower:** To foster the care, knowledge, and initiative in students and participants to continue making an active difference in wildlife conservation from all over the globe in promotion of a sustainable and animal friendly future.

Nkonzo Wildlife Research focuses exclusively on ethical wildlife conservation and research that operates with immediate and long-term goals and conclusions that directly benefit the quality of life, coexistence, and sustainability of wildlife in Southern Africa.

*NWR neither endorses nor supports the practice of or institutions providing wildlife interactions in the form of cat walks, cub petting, elephant rides or feedings, or any subset thereof; nor does it support or endorse captive animal hunting, the breeding of wildlife for hunting, or any institution supporting or providing these services be it directly or indirectly.*

*As an ethical operation, one that stands for animal welfare and believes that animals have a right to exist independent from humans Nkonzo does not support or sanction the hunting captive animals for sport, human interaction with predators, or the use of wildlife in captivity for human interaction or entertainment. The world is at a turning point and now is the time to make a change for the future of wildlife and the environment. Say no to predator interactions.*



## General Information on the Young Conservationist

All students and chaperones are housed together at a local, secure facility in the coastal town of Mossel Bay. Here they stay in shared dormitory style accommodation with full access to all facilities, including but not limited to; swimming pool, free WiFi, Adventure Centre, and recreation room.

The Young Conservationist is an all-inclusive opportunity, Nkonzo arranges and facilitates the full experience from pick-up at the airport to your return to the airport two weeks later. We work with the parents, educators, chaperones, leading up to their travels to ensure everyone is well aware of the full program, trip planning assistance, and having constant communication available for all parties. We strive to make this experience as stress and worry free as possible.

Students and chaperones join us on the reserve five days a week for hands-on education and conservation involvement in the way of guided hikes, wildlife monitoring, biodiversity sampling, training, and real-world application of biology, zoology, and ecological ideas taught in the classroom. Evenings are filled with in-house and guest speakers to cover topics such as ethics and conservation, language lessons, and cultural sessions. Over the weekend we provide additional cultural activities that are both informative and exciting such as boat tours of the bay and their resident wildlife, trips to the local museum, and a guided tour of the local cave paintings!

This opportunity takes place on a free roaming wildlife reserve. It is noted here that students in this program are not permitted to work or traverse on foot in dangerous game areas (where lions, elephants, rhinos, etc. are present). Any and all on foot work and teaching will take place in a separate area where no dangerous game are present.

## Students and their Chaperones

We hold strict guidelines on the groups and their chaperones to ensure a safe, exciting, and educational experience and this begins with the selection of participants.

Student groups are able to join us with their school or with their parents/legal guardians. Regardless of which category the students fall into, all students must be recommended by a teacher or another educator for their; maturity, academic standing, willingness to learn, and personability. High school is a trying time for students and by vetting the students beforehand we can help ensure that all students have the best experience possible with their select group.

Chaperones can be teachers/educators from the student's school OR can be parents/legal guardians of the students themselves. We require one chaperone for every three students, this group of four individuals will have an Nkonzo team supervisor for field work and extra activities who oversees the group. For example, if there are six students from the school joining us, we require two teachers or parents to be present and will have two Nkonzo team members dedicated to the group.

## Learning Experience

The goal of the Young Conservationist is that of education and conservation involvement for high-school aged students. We strive to provide a safe educational experience that will inspire a global view of the world that takes the environment into consideration for generations to come. Through various avenues and options we expose students to many different facets of conservation, environmentalism, zoology,

biology and ecology in addition to field skills such as identifying species, introductions to research, bush skills, and approaching wildlife in respectful and ethical ways only.

The students assist with various initiatives that are well suited for their age and academic level and encourages academic and personal growth through action. In addition to the full experience; students will be taught and practice the following skills and will be privy to workshops, guest speakers, and cultural experience.

1. Creating Ethograms
2. Creating Activity Budgets
3. Botanical Surveys
4. Use of and Types of Transects
5. Designing Basic Research
6. Wildlife Management
7. Carrying Capacity
8. Social Behaviour of Mammals and Birds
9. Identification of Birds
10. Bush Survival
11. Human-Animal Conflict
12. Non-lethal predator control
13. Ethical Wildlife Approach Methods
14. Conservation Biology
15. Animal Ethics
16. History of South Africa
17. Language Lessons
18. Animal Behaviour
19. Nature Hikes
20. Community Involvement
21. Cultural Exploration
22. Marine Life

## Lifestyle

All students and chaperones stay in a safe, gated accommodation facility at the heart of Mossel Bay. With views of the oceans and sunrises over the mountains it is a great place to stay after an eventful day in the bush! Walled and secured with gated access, security personnel, and CCTV cameras, you can feel safe knowing that both you and your possessions are in the best place possible.

The facility is located at the beach with views of the ocean from the facility and a short drive to the reserve each day. The area is highly unique in that days are spent on a free roaming wildlife reserve and evenings are by the beach.

Young Conservationist participants stay in shared dorms with members of their group (same sex only) and chaperones staying in the same facility but in separate rooms. The facility, in addition to safety, has an outdoor swimming pool, snack stall, free WiFi, lounge area/game room, housekeeping, and communal kitchen for extra snacks and drinks.

Staying in this hotspot location, we are within walking distance for our weekend activities to the local beach and shops, and are privy to staying in a highly sought after location! Private rooms are available on request and are subject to availability and additional cost.

Ensuring a fulfilling experience, each day is filled with various activities, each with it's own unique educational and exciting aspect. In the next section, you will find the standard layout for the Young Conservationist experience with activities and workshops. In general, days are structure as follows:



### **Weekdays (Monday to Friday)**

7:30- Breakfast

8:15- Leave for the Reserve

8:45-12:30- Conservation Activities

12:30-13:30- Lunch Break on Reserve

13:30- 16:00- Conservation Activities

16:45-18:00- Free Time

18:00-19:00- Dinner

19:00-21:30- Workshops/Guest Speaker

22:00- Lights Out

### **Weekend (Saturday and Sunday, exc. 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> day)**

7:30-Breakfast

8:15-11:45- Boat Tour of Bay and Marine Life

12:00- Lunch

13:00-16:30- Museum/cultural activity

17:00-18:00- Free time

18:00-19:00- Dinner

19:00-21:30-Structured activity

22:00- Lights Out

## **Schedule**

The following is a tentative schedule that varies based on academic requests and customization as well as where the students' help is needed. Below is an example of the standard Young Conservationist Experience.

**Day 1:** Saturday- Group arrives at George Airport (GRJ) in George, South Africa where they are met by our team and transported as a group to their accommodation roughly 30 minutes away. Depending on the time of arrival, lunch will be provided at a picnic area along the way. Once at the accommodation in Mossel Bay, everyone will be taken to their rooms and given a short break to settle in a relax from the travel, roughly 45 minutes. After this everyone will gather to be given a short briefing and a tour of the facility and it's amenities. Concluding the briefing, students will be given free time to clean up from their travels and to get to know their home for the next two weeks. This gives our team time to get to know the chaperones and them the team. That evening we will have a traditional South African Braai around the fire and the students can get to know their supervisors and ask questions. Following the braai, students will be off to bed.

**Day 2:** Sunday- A dedicated day to safety and introductions. An in-depth Health and Safety Orientation is required for both students and chaperones where both reserve safety and safety in South Africa will be covered. The orientation will also cover project introductions and provide background on the necessity for these projects. After lunch the group goes for a guided walk around the town and down to "The Point", a rocky beach a few minutes walk from the accommodation where we often are privy to whales, dolphins, Cape fur seals, and rock hyraxes. After a hot dinner we will all settle in the lounge for a talk on the history of South Africa from a local teacher. A time to learn about the colonization of South Africa by Jan van Riebek, the development and subsequent fall of apartheid, and the culture of moderns day South Africa.

**Day 3-7:** Monday to Friday- Breakfast at 7:30 am, duties and "educationals" from 8:30 to 12:30 , a lunch break in the field and then continuing on the reserve until 4:30. Back to the accommodation to clean up and get ready for dinner from 6 to 7 pm followed by an evening lecture or workshop\*

**Day 8 Saturday-** Students and chaperones go on a local boat tour of the bay for a marine and cultural education experience and after lunch explore the local museum. After dinner that evening, a chance for everyone to relax as we have a game/movie night.

**Day 9 Sunday-** Students have the option to go on a horseback safari at a local wildlife reserve or take a surf lesson in the morning. That afternoon we head to the local caves for a tour of, what are estimated to be, the oldest cave paintings in South Africa by a local historian.

**Day 10-14: Monday to Friday-** Breakfast at 7:30 am, duties and “educational” from 8:30 to 12:30 , a lunch break in the field and then continuing on the reserve until 4:30. Back to the accommodation to clean up and get ready for dinner from 6 to 7 pm followed by an evening lecture or workshop\*.

**Day 15: Saturday-** transportation back to the airport for catch your first flight back home.



## Safety in South Africa

Safety in South Africa is of paramount importance to us. Our vigilance for safety extends from the reserve to cultural activities and evenings and free time.

### General Safety

We require that students are always in the presence of either a chaperone or a member of our staff when outside of their accommodation, additionally, with chaperones staying on site with the students and our team on site from 7:00 to 22:00 each day, we ensure that there is always a responsible adult available and watching out for the students.

In keeping to a pre-set schedule, free time for students is kept to a minimum. This ensures that the students not only get the most from the experience but do not have access to dangerous or unsupervised situations.

### Safety at “Home”

Students and chaperones stay at a highly secure facility in Mossel Bay, which has statistically been the safest town in South Africa for the past ten years. The facility itself is secured with gated, restricted access via access code, has CCTV cameras, and overnight security personnel. Students have shared bedrooms that are segregated by gender with chaperones in separate rooms in the same facility.

### Safety on the Reserve and During Cultural Activities

Students will be in a vehicle driven by our experienced conservation and research team members. Each vehicle, in addition to our staff member, will have three students and one chaperone at all times. Our team members are highly experienced in the field of conservation and safely approaching wildlife and working in areas with African animals. On foot work, such as plant identification and guided walks take

place on the reserve but in an area designated as a “safe zone” this means that students are not on foot in areas with elephants, rhinos, lions etc.

## Communication

With any successful trip, a key component is communication between everyone. We are available to answer any questions that a student, educator, chaperone, or concerned parent may have. We understand that it is a big deal to send you child half way across the planet and we want to make the trip as comfortable as possible for everyone involved.

Typically, when interest is being generated for a potential trip, we will liaise with the teacher or parent who has taken charge of planning to answer the initial questions. After this, we will schedule an Information Session via Skype for all students and parents and teachers interested in the experience. After the group has been confirmed, we then take a chance to talk to the parents and students to provide more information and packing lists etc. as well as answer any other questions. We will also take time to speak with each of the supervisors so that they are well aware of what to expect throughout travelling and time in the country.

While the group is with us, parents will have the direct contact information for the group’s lead supervisor and can feel free to check in with them at any time. Free WiFi is available at the accommodation and we schedule time for the students to skype and call their parents. We also send out daily “Email Blasts” to the parents and faculty with a synopsis of the day’s activities and some photos of the students in action!

Once in the country, all chaperones will sit with the team each evening to discuss the specific plans for the following day including any precautions we are taking and why.

All in all, our team is happy to answer any questions, both before and after arriving, and to do whatever we can to ensure that the experience is stress free and comfortable to all those involved.

