



*Wildlife Orphan
Rescue, Rehabilitation
& Release*

Experience hands on wildlife orphan
care & rehabilitation in Zimbabwe





About Free to be Wild Sanctuary

The sanctuary began when Baye Pigors, was unable to find a rehabilitation facility for a baby baboon she had rescued and so she decided to start her own sanctuary, in her home town of Bulawayo, specialising in the rescue and care of primates.

Since those humble beginnings the sanctuary has grown into a globally recognised wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and release centre with an open door policy to all wildlife species. The purpose of the sanctuary is to ensure every animal has the opportunity to be free to be wild. That's why in the last 10 years, we have released over **450** animals back into the wild, and in June 2021, we released our first troop of **17** previously orphaned primates back into the wild, in collaboration with Zimbabwe Parks Board. Unfortunately in some instances an animal can't be released and so these animals live out their lives in comfort and freedom on the sanctuary as our permanent residents.

The sanctuary cares not only for primates but also rare and endangered species such as pangolins and vultures, but also larger herbivores such as zebra, kudu and giraffe, as well the not to be forgotten, smaller creatures like hedgehogs, mongoose and owls.

The sanctuary is a non-profit organisation and relies on donations from the general public and its volunteer programme to keep operating. Every penny from volunteers goes right back into the running of the sanctuary and supporting essential conservation work.

We have a board of trustees who oversee and manage the sanctuary, and a fabulous team of staff and animal handlers who you will go on bush walks with, clean enclosures together, and learn from.

As a registered trust, volunteers play an important role in the generation of funds towards the running of the sanctuary. Every volunteer allows numerous animals to be saved. Volunteers fit right into the team and enjoy working and socialising with staff and colleagues.

What your days will look like...

While volunteering at the sanctuary your key activities can be broken down as follows:

Animal Feeding

- 🐾 Daily food prep and feeding of all resident & rescued animals
- 🐾 Nutritional planning for a variety of herbivores, omnivores & carnivores
- 🐾 Participate in the regular bottle feeding of orphaned animals

Rescue & Release

- 🐾 Care for the permanent residents who can not be released
- 🐾 Assist with emergency rescues and releases
- 🐾 Help nurture & raise orphaned wildlife, including round the night care
- 🐾 Undertake snare sweeps and boundary patrols of release site
- 🐾 Monitor released animals as they are offered a second chance

Behaviour Enrichment

- 🐾 Bush walks with the orphans stimulating them to explore their natural habitat
- 🐾 Build toys, platforms & playgrounds
- 🐾 Become a part of the troop as you care for the young orphaned monkeys and baboons

Sanctuary Management

- 🐾 Enclosure cleaning and maintenance
- 🐾 Fence patrol and game count
- 🐾 Building of enclosures for new residents
- 🐾 Ad-hoc support across a range of activities to ensure the smooth and effective running of a very busy sanctuary

Don't be fooled though, just when we think we have seen it all, something new pops up!

From scooping suffocating fish out of a drying lake, to driving across the country to pick up a traumatised monkey, the days are varied, busy and never dull.



Life at the Sanctuary

Where you will be staying

Your accommodation will be on-site at the sanctuary in our Volunteer House.

The house consists of:

- 2 x rooms each with two bunk beds (4 single beds)
- 1 x room with a double bed (a single bed can be added if needed).
- 1 x room with one double bed and two single beds (ideal for families or small groups).
- 2 x separate bathrooms with toilets and shower run on gas geysers.
- 1 x kitchen area
- 1 x lounge area to socialise and relax in

(Room requests can be taken into consideration but are not guaranteed)

Being on-site allows you to remain close to the orphans and on-hand for any night time bottle feeds. In some cases you may even find yourself with a little orphan sleeping with you through the night.

Location

Free to be Wild is situated in the second largest city of Zimbabwe; Bulawayo, also known as the “City of Kings”.

Old colonial architecture nestles effortlessly amongst the new. Wide tree lined avenues of blooming lilac Jacaranda or flaming red Flamboyant drop their blossom, carpeting the roads. From being the gateway to Matopos Hills National Park to the friendly hospitality, Bulawayo is renowned and draws travellers from far and wide.

Volunteers are encouraged to join the team socially for evening dinners, day trips and nights out. This is a chance to really integrate with the local community and see the real Zimbabwe. Going to the vegetable and dry markets with the team for food collection is always a great experience in seeing the day to day living of local Zimbabweans.

"All things good are wild and free"

Start dates

Our start dates are flexible throughout the year, understanding that not everyone is able to travel over fixed periods we try to accommodate all travellers! Ideally we recommend you start the project on a Monday.

What is included?

It's pretty much everything!

- Induction and training on the project
- Accommodation onsite at the Sanctuary
- 3 x meals a day - we have a cook onsite but like to encourage volunteers to cook by bringing some of their local home dishes to Zimbabwe!
- All teaching and education
- Transport relating to the project
- 24 hour project coordinator available

What you pay

- Flights to and from project
- Visas
- Transfer to and from airport / bus stop - \$30 - for local Bulawayo transfer to be paid to driver in cash on arrival and departure.
- Personal travel costs during your stay
- Any excursions not related to the project including trips to town.

Arrival

You need to arrive at Bulawayo Airport or bus station, on the day your project starts. A driver will meet you and transport you to the sanctuary, we ask that you pay the driver directly for the transfer. Upon arrival you will be shown your room and given an induction by a member of the FTBW team.

General Information

Visas

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct visa for the entire length of your stay. Most nationalities can apply for an evisa before departing from home. You can check your eligibility here: www.evisa.gov.zw. Please ensure you request a **business visa** on your application form. The business visa is valid for one month. Please be sure to give the correct departure dates and that this is correctly dated on the visa that authorities put in your passport. Should you wish to stay at the Sanctuary for longer than one month you will have to contact us directly.

Some nationalities are required to arrange your visa in advance so check with the Zimbabwe embassy in your country of residence to establish your visa requirements well in advance. Passport holders of the UK, Ireland, USA, Australia, New Zealand and most EU countries can obtain an evisa in advance of travel.

Please check your eligibility before you travel.

*These are simply a **guideline** and may be subject to change without notice:

Visa required countries

Single Entry - US\$ 30

Double Entry - US\$ 45

British and Irish

Single Entry - US\$ 55

Double Entry - US\$ 70

Canada

Single Entry - US\$ 75

Food

We have a wonderful onsite cook who makes delicious home-cooked meals 3 times a day, from her famous fluffy pancakes to wholesome lasagna. We tailor to your dietary needs as much as possible – from vegan to gluten free, just let us know what you like and what you can't eat! If you have any traditional home dishes you would like to cook and share with the team, we encourage you to bring any specialised ingredients with you.

Finance

Local Currency: US Dollar

Volunteers typically spend around \$75 -\$100 per week for personal items such as restaurant meals, snacks, drinks and souvenirs. We recommend that you bring your cash with you as your main source of funds as there is sometimes intermittent access to ATMS and many smaller shops do not accept debit or credit cards. Change is also an issue so smaller denomination notes are best!

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory and must include cover for emergency evacuation and repatriation as well as lost or delayed luggage. Please ensure you are covered for the entire duration of your trip, from the day you leave your country until the day you return. Ensure that you are covered for all activities you plan on participating in within your programme and travelling elsewhere (e.g. bungee jumping / rafting in Victoria Falls). If possible we recommend your insurance covers you for having to leave the programme early. No refunds will be issued in all but exceptional circumstances should you have to leave prior to your scheduled departure date.

Electricity

The village and sanctuary is run entirely off solar electricity only, therefore appliances like hair dryers etc are of no use and the charging of electrical items can be slow. We recommend bringing solar chargers for your devices and a head torch will come in handy, in the summer months it can be extremely hot at night usb powered fans are always a bonus to have in your bag for the nights. Sockets are three pin, UK style.

Laundry

There is a housekeeper at the volunteer village and laundry is done 3 times a week. Washing powder is provided. We do recommend not taking many 'good' clothes and only using items you do not mind getting ruined while working with the animals.

Clothing

Depending on the time of year you chose to travel you will need to pack accordingly. We ask that you be respectful when it comes to wearing the correct clothing. Our staff come from strong traditional beliefs and find revealing clothing offensive. Courtesy to their religions and beliefs is essential.



Keeping in touch / WiFi

With the location of the sanctuary there is no available Wi-Fi. We advise on arrival buying a local SIM card and topping it up with a "private Wi-Fi" bundle which is more cost effective and has great coverage at the sanctuary.

Health and safety

A change in environment, climate, food and lifestyle can result in minor illness. Please inform staff if you feel unwell at any time. We recommend you obtain professional advice on immunisations before you travel. The project is not in a high risk Malaria region, but we would advise that anti-malaria medication is taken as directed by your doctor, especially if you plan to visit the Victoria Falls area.

A rabies vaccination is recommended but not required. All animals at the sanctuary are vaccinated against rabies.

Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world and we kindly request that no sexual activities are carried out while on Sanctuary property and participating in our programme. Intimate relations with members of staff is strictly forbidden and will result in immediate termination of contract for that staff member. We do not recommend promiscuous behaviour and will not be held responsible should you choose to disobey our requests.

Security

Zimbabwe is a beautiful country full of wonderful, kind and generous people but as with travelling elsewhere in the world you should be aware of the risk of opportunistic crime and take precautions to minimise the chance of becoming a victim. Please be aware of your surroundings. The vast majority of visitors to Zimbabwe suffer no problems but if you have any specific questions about the current situation in the country please contact us directly.

Going to town

From the sanctuary, town is only a short ride away. A trip to town in a FTBW vehicle will cost \$10 per trip otherwise we are partnered with a reliable taxi service that is available throughout the day and night. So you can go for coffee, lunch or shopping quite easily.

Weather

January to April - days & nights are hot with regular, short lived thunderstorms which cools the summer air.

May to September - long sunny days with a chance of rain. Nights are cooler & can be very cold at times.

October to December - high summer temperatures often accompanied by heavy rain fall.



What else to do in Zimbabwe

Visiting Zimbabwe is a once in a lifetime opportunity, therefore, we urge you to go on as many excursions during your free time as possible. We have listed below some ideas which are relatively nearby and a must see if you have the opportunity! **Please let us know in advance or once you arrive and we can help organise a trip for you with our preferential rates.**

Matopos National Park

Visit one of the most stunning national parks in Africa to see towering rock formations, ancient cave paintings and go for bush walks for a 90% chance of getting close to Rhino.

Natural History Museum

Described as one of the most fascinating museums in Southern Africa packed with the history of Zimbabwe. Visit the excellent cafe too!

Open Air Markets

Visit one of the many bustling African markets where you can pick up fresh fruit and handmade crafts, or find a bargain in the fashion market.

Victoria Falls

One of the 7 Wonders of the World. Visit this huge thundering waterfall, go rafting, bungee jumping, sip cocktails in world renowned bars or take a Safari to Hwange to see the Big 5.

Hwange National Park

The largest national park in Zimbabwe, and only 3 hours drive from the Sanctuary. There are a wide variety of beautiful lodges to stay at, where you can start the day with a morning game drive, have a delicious lunch in the park, rest and unwind in the afternoon, watch the sunset whilst a herd of elephants joins you at the swimming pool, and finish the day with a night drive to search for Zimbabwe's nocturnal species.



Our Wishlist...

Relying solely on donations, there are often a lot of items the sanctuary desperately needs but is not always in a financial position to be able to purchase. Whether it is community fundraising, personal or second hand items, any donations are greatly appreciated and go such a long way in improving the lives of our staff and animals! FTBW helps school 14 of our staff children and are always on the lookout for items to help improve their lives and further their education.

Animals

- Kitten or Puppy milk formula
- colostrum powder
dog/cat/equine
- animal feeding bottles and teets
- baby feeding bottles and teets
- baby wheat or rice cereals
- baby blankets
- soft toys
- pet baskets and blankets
- parrot toys
- dog toys/ kongs/tennis balls
- syringes
- storage containers
- feeding bowls
- dried seeds and nuts
- padlocks

Medical

- thermometers
- needles
- animal dip
- bravecto
- tick and flea powder
- wound powder
- wound spray
- bandages
- metacam/petcam
- amoxicillin antibiotics
- vitamin drops (human baby)
- probiotic powders
- electrolytes
- veterinary equipment
- animal first aid boxes

Staff

- work gloves
- leather work
gloves
- hose pipes
- solar lights
- scrubbing brushes
- cloths
- sponges
- garden tools
- work suits
- gum boots
- tools
- tool box
- 2 way radios
- torches
- batteries

Kids

- school shoes
- crayons
- reading books
- stationary
- coloring books
- backpacks
- toys
- lunch tins and
juice bottles
- clothes
- earrings
- homeschool
learning tools

Testimonial

If you wish to experience working hands-on with a variety of animals, you care about animal welfare and want to be involved in animal rehabilitation then Free to be Wild is the place for you. I was so sad to leave that I have already made arrangements to return again later this year! I am so grateful to be able to contribute to such a worthy cause and hope that even in my short time as a volunteer I was able to make a positive impact on the lives of the residents (whether temporary or permanent) as they have certainly had a positive impact on mine.

Even though the Sanctuary only opened four years ago and this is only its second year of accepting volunteers I was thoroughly impressed. Once you're through the gates you enter a mini paradise, the grounds are clean and well maintained and it's really peaceful. When I arrived I had the pleasure of being greeted by Peck (the resident ostrich), Jupiter (a male impala) waiting for release and Klipie the klipspringer. Within 10 minutes of arriving, Miles (a baby monkey) was on my shoulder and Klipie was doing his best to lick the suntan lotion off my arm.

My daily activities/duties were listed on the information board, these included food prep and feeding, orphan sit, bushwalks, enrichment, maintenance, cleaning and much more. The bush walk involved taking the babies (5 orphaned Baboons) out of their enclosure to allow them to forage and play and gain confidence in preparation for their release in the future. My only advice is not to wear your best clothes. The Babies, Lucy, Kuda, Darrel, Mana & Naleti, each with their own personalities are amazing to watch and interact with. I played with them every day and allowed them to use me as a launch pad to reach tall branches etc. and in return they ensured that I was always lice and tick free!

During my stay I also visited the markets to purchase food for the animals, was involved in animal enrichment; where we made objects to hide food in to give to the monkeys, baboons and mongoose.

My time at FTBW was an amazing experience and I have some wonderful memories that I will cherish. FTBW has reignited my desire to work with wildlife and conservation and this is not only from spending time with the animals (all of which are not mentioned above) but also from the people involved in making my stay an incredible one.

Amanda, UK, March 2018.

Sign up to be a volunteer today

Thank you for taking an interest in our Wildlife Orphan Rescue volunteer programme. We hope this information has sparked your interest in joining our work in Zimbabwe.

To become a volunteer:

1. Choose your start date and duration.
2. Email volunteer@freetobewildsanctuary.com.
3. We will provide you with our bank details. We ask for a \$300 non-refundable deposit to confirm your place.
4. Once your deposit is in, our team will send you a pre-departure document with all the information you need to prepare for your trip.
5. The remainder of the fee is due 2 months before you arrive.
6. Get on the plane & come make your African conservation dream happen!

Feel free to contact us for further information and be sure to follow us too!



[Join our Whatsapp Group](#)



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www.freetobewildsanctuary.com



Programme Fees

2026 Rates

1 week - \$875

3 weeks - \$2,494

2 weeks - \$1750

4 weeks - \$3,150

Each additional week: \$787 per week

We ask for a \$300 non-refundable deposit to confirm your place.



www.freetobewildsanctuary.org