



A guide to the:
Bolivia Wildlife Sanctuary



The Bolivia Wildlife Sanctuary

Focus: Monkeys, Bears & Birds
Location: Bolivia

Start Date: Every Monday, Wednesday & Friday
Arrival & Starting Point: La Paz

With illegal animal trafficking and mass deforestation rife throughout South America, the Bolivia Wildlife Sanctuary stands as a beacon of hope to the many vulnerable animals falling victim to such practices. Situated in a verdant valley of the Bolivian Andes, the sanctuary was built in response to the ever-pressing illegal wildlife trade, one of the top five most lucrative illicit businesses in the world. Sadly, with the demand for exotic pets and animal parts, high levels of deforestation, forest fires and unsustainable agricultural practices, the population of rescued animals at the sanctuary has quadrupled in the last 5 years alone.



Whilst laws in Bolivia prohibit the return of certain endangered animals back into the wild, a partnership with the government's Environmental Ministry permits the sanctuary to rescue and care for many animals that are confiscated as illegal pets, including monkeys, exotic birds, wild cats, and even endangered spectacle bears. Since its inception in 2003, the sanctuary has taken in hundreds of mistreated and abused animals, remedying their ailments against the odds and providing them with a forever home. As well as fixing the aftermath of such devastating criminal activities, the sanctuary hopes to aid preventative measures by creating awareness of the forest and the animals within. Striving to educate and inspire local communities to take practical action towards a future where nature and man can peacefully coexist.

Now housing over 800 rescued animals of 65 different species, the sanctuary needs your help to care for them. As a volunteer, you will play a crucial role in ensuring the animals are happy and healthy, caring for them day-to-day and working to make their surroundings as close to their endemic homes as possible. Observational tasks and enrichment are also aspects of the volunteer experience which hugely improve the lives and recovery of these once mistreated animals, helping to develop their psychological and physical capabilities. Take a stand against illegal animal trafficking and habitat destruction by joining this rewarding and inspiring project, and leave your mark on the conservation of Bolivia's wildlife!



Animal Feeding

With over 800 animals needing to be fed up to 3 times per day, it's all hands on deck in the kitchen! As many of the animals have been rescued from the pet trade, their once poor diets have been dramatically transformed by the sanctuary to ensure they are eating natural foods with the correct vitamins and nutrients they need. You will be responsible for preparing and distributing food to all the animals, as well as observing their eating habits to ensure they are normal. With so many meals to make, expect many food deliveries where your assistance will be needed!

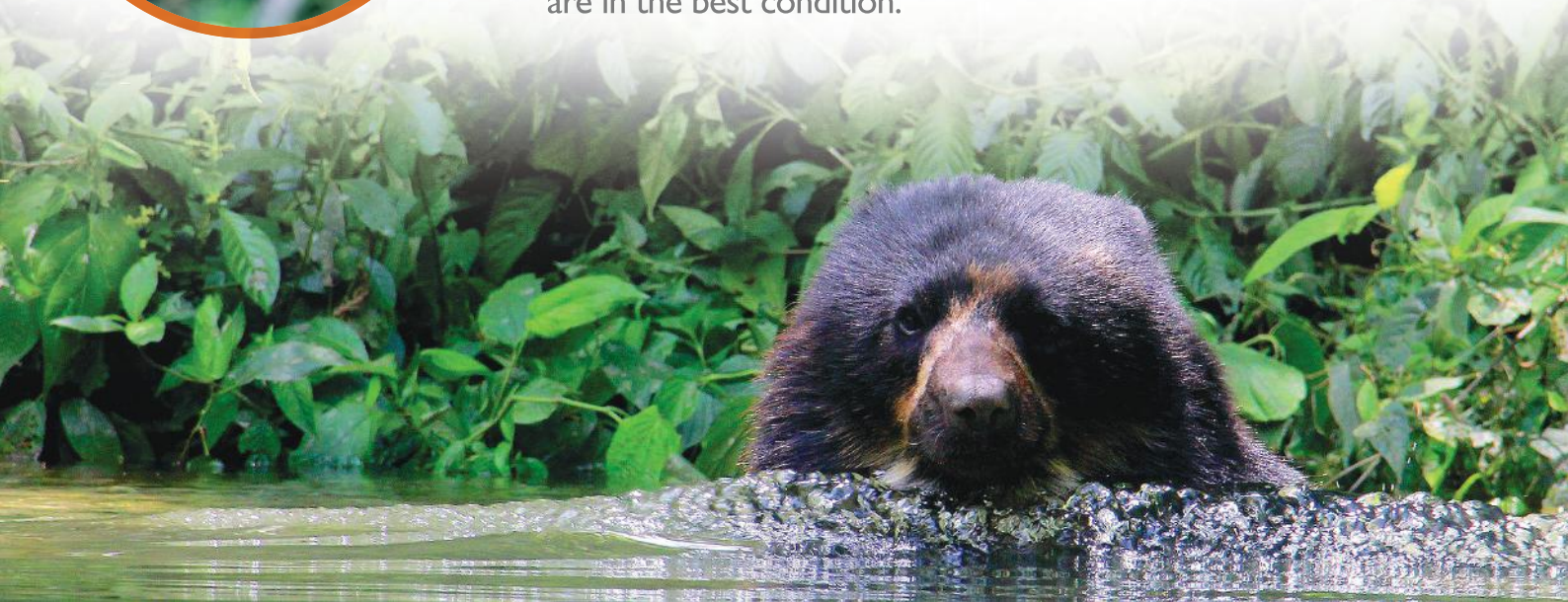
Enrichment

Enrichment is extremely important for encouraging natural behaviours and promoting positive mental health in captive animals. Sadly, many of the animals have experienced traumatic ordeals before arriving at the sanctuary and due to this, may exhibit unusual or distressed behaviours which enrichment can alleviate. You'll therefore help to create species-appropriate enrichment that stimulates the animals both physically and mentally. This might be done by hiding food around the enclosures or using puzzle feeders to encourage the animals to forage, or by changing the layout of an enclosure to encourage the animals to explore and investigate their environment as they would in the wild.



Observation

Observation is one of the volunteer's most important responsibilities and is a firm favourite as it means more time spent with the animals! You'll spend a minimum of 2 hours per day watching your assigned animal, taking notes on their behaviour and keeping the staff up to date on their physical and mental state. By doing so, the sanctuary is able to determine how the animals are progressing through their rehabilitation and are able to ensure the animals health and well-being are in the best condition.



Maintenance, Construction & Cleaning

You may be given the task of fixing or building new enclosures or asked to lend a hand in other construction activities that the sanctuary and animals may need. This is a great way to leave your mark on the sanctuary, knowing you have physically contributed to an animals forever home!

Building and restoring enclosures is an important task as it allows for new arrivals at the sanctuary, though it's equally important to keep all the animals' living spaces clean and tidy! Cleaning enclosures is as much a part of keeping an animal safe and happy as enrichment or observation is.



Extra Activities

Whilst you will spend the majority of your time at the sanctuary, you will also get the chance to step away and travel into the rainforest to take part in an adrenaline-filled activity - either canyoning or ziplining! Additionally, if you stay for longer than two weeks, you'll also be allocated a day off, giving you the chance to see more of the colourful sights and sounds that Bolivia has to offer!



Itinerary

Day 1

After arriving into La Paz Airport, you will be met by a project representative and transferred to the project site. You will then spend some time getting to know your fellow volunteers and settling into your new surrounds. Later, enjoy dinner with your group before heading to bed to get a good night's sleep - your first day with the animals awaits!

Days 2-14

The day starts early at 7:30am and finishes around 5:30pm. Your daily activities are likely to include tasks such as animal feeding, husbandry, observation, and creating exciting enrichment for the animals but all are flexible and tailored around the needs of the sanctuary. (An example of a typical day on the project can be found below.)

Day 15

Sadly, today is your final day, so after saying goodbye to your new friends (human and animal alike!), you'll be transferred back to La Paz Airport for your return flight home or to continue your onward travel plans. Staying for longer than two weeks? Your itinerary will continue as before with a day off allocated in between!

An Example of Your Daily Schedule

7:30am	Meet at the volunteer headquarters to grab a tea or coffee before being briefed about the day's tasks and activities ahead.
8:00am	Head to the kitchen to take part in food preparation before feeding the animals their first meal of the day! Whilst in the enclosures, you may also spot clean their space and feeding platforms.
9:00am	After working up an appetite, you'll sit down to eat breakfast with your group in the El Tenedor Restaurante.
10:00am	This time will be allocated to observe your assigned animal. You'll take notes on their behaviour to ensure they are happy and comfortable in their surroundings, informing the staff of anything out of the ordinary.
12:00pm	This marks lunchtime for the animals! Head back to the kitchen for food preparation and distribution.
1:30pm	Now time for your lunch. Enjoy a refreshing drink alongside your meal, and after cleaning up, it's back to the animals!
2:00pm	Spend a couple of hours either assisting with husbandry and maintenance tasks, or creating some exciting enrichment for the animals!
4:00pm	Time for the last feed of the day! Prepare and distribute meals for the animals before cleaning and organising the food preparation room and the animal clinic.
5:30pm	Your hard day's work has drawn to an end, so take some time to unwind and relax before dinner!
7:30pm	Dinner is served! Enjoy dining alongside your fellow volunteers before spending the rest of the evening at leisure.

Accommodation

During your time on the project, you will stay in the six-bed volunteer house - a cosy wooden house with thatched leaf roofing, located across the river from the wildlife sanctuary. There is an adjoining shared bathroom with hot showers, and laundry facilities, linens and towels are all provided. Please note, a refundable deposit of US\$100 will be required on arrival.

If you are travelling as a couple or would prefer a little more privacy, separate accommodation in one of the on-site Eco-Huts is also available for an additional fee.



Food & Drink

Three meals a day are provided within the cost of the project and are prepared for you by a member of staff. You can expect a mixture of local and western cuisines, with typical staples of your meal including rice, meats and various fruits and vegetables. Vegetarians, vegans and other dietary requirements can also be catered for. Tea and coffee are always available, with a complimentary fruit juice at breakfast and lemonade at lunch.

Please note, drinking water is not included but you can purchase bottled water at the sanctuary for a cost of 4 Bolivianos (approximately £0.40/\$0.60/€0.50) per bottle. Ice creams, desserts, soft drinks and beer can also be purchased.



What's Included

- Airport transfers
- Accommodation
- Three prepared meals per day
- Tea and coffee
- Laundry facilities
- A voucher for either ziplining or canyoning
- A donation to the project

Not Included

- Flights
- Visas
- Vaccinations
- Travel insurance
- Water
(bottled water can be purchased on-site)
- Soft drinks, alcohol and extra snacks

Volunteer Reviews

Jennifer

"What a wonderful experience. Exactly what I wanted - immediately you know this place is all about the animals, and everyone who works there is so passionate, too!"



Michael

"Working with the capuchin monkeys was the highlight of my time. Just sitting among them as they play around you was the best part of the day!"



Stephanie

"This experience was life-changing - I would do this over and over again if I could. I loved spending time with the animals on a daily basis!"





What Next?

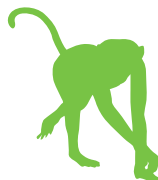
Becoming a volunteer at the Bolivia Wildlife Sanctuary is simple, and you can help make a difference to wildlife conservation efforts in just a few simple steps...



Visit the website to select your start date and how long you would like to volunteer for.



Secure your place online by paying a deposit of £195. You'll have up to 60 days before your start date to pay your remaining balance.



Prepare for your trip and ask your dedicated travel expert any questions before packing your bags and heading off to Bolivia!



Finally, have an incredible time and don't forget to send in or tag us in your photos!

#thegreatprojects



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