

Vacancy

Field Assistant

ORCA Foundation, Plettenberg Bay

The ORCA Foundation, a conservation node of Ocean Blue Adventures, is recruiting a reliable field assistant for a **12 month period**, starting **January 2019**. Preference will be given to registered nature conservation students (or recent graduates) or relevant BS.c graduates who are interested to gain practical experiential training in marine mammal field research, conservation and education.

The successful candidate will join our dedicated team to help with the daily running of the foundation's international volunteer programme (Mondays to Fridays, 08:00–17:00). Once trained, you will assist resident marine biologists and conservationists with various long-term projects while supervising volunteers in the field.

This will include assistance with:

- Volunteer orientation, training and providing a guided experience during fieldwork activities
- Marine mammal stranding response and necropsy, including standby duty on weekends (We respond to ~180 stranding events per year, over 90% involving Cape fur seals)
- Opportunistic boat-based surveys with Ocean Blue Adventures
- Boat-based humpback dolphin photo-ID surveys
- Boat-based seal population monitoring in Robberg MPA
- Boat-based surveys to monitor seal presence and behaviour in the Keurbooms River
- Cliff-top observations on Robberg Peninsula to monitor seals, sharks and cetaceans
- Seal scat collection and preliminary processing of prey remains
- Seal capture, tag, weigh, sample, release and routine tag re-sights
- Intertidal baboon scat surveys at Robberg, Cairnbrogie, Harkerville and Noetzie sites
- Data capture, error checking, preliminary analysis and report writing
- Alien plant eradication
- River health assessments
- Beach clean-ups
- Environmental education
- Assistance at wildlife rehabilitation centers
- Assistance at animal welfare shelters
- Attend local environmental management meetings

We are looking for a self-motivated individual who is truly interested in our projects, and does not mind working long hours in the field to collect data. In return you will gain valuable exposure and experience in marine mammal field research techniques while assisting with other conservation and educational projects. Individuals who are prone to seasickness, have a fear of heights, don't like strenuous hikes and bloody dissections, or are unwilling to work on decomposing carcasses and scat samples need not apply. For more information about our work please visit **www.orcafoundation.com**, or follow us on social media.

Minimum requirements:

21–26 years of age

Registered nature conservation student (or recent graduate), or relevant BS.c graduate

Drivers license (to transport volunteers to fieldwork sites and activities)

PDP (or ability to acquire one before being appointed)

Medical First Aid certificate (or ability to complete course before being appointed)

Seafarer's medical certificate (or ability to acquire one before being appointed)

Desired qualities, skills and experience:

Strong interest in marine research, conservation and education

Willingness to work and learn under the guidance of our small team

Enthusiastic, positive, mature, reliable, adaptable, patient and independent attitude

Sociable (you will be expected to live and work with international volunteers)

Self-motivated with determination to work responsibly without direct supervision in the field

Ability to train, lead and supervise international volunteers in the field

Willingness to perform tedious observations in sometimes challenging weather conditions

Willingness to perform tedious data entry and error checking duties

Ability to work long hours on small vessels

Attention to detail

High fitness level (Strenuous hikes on Robberg Peninsula and remote beaches to collect data)

Physically strong (to assist with capture and translocation of live seals, and to bury carcasses)

Wildlife handling experience

Marine mammal stranding response, necropsy and biological sampling experience

No fear of heights (lots of cliff-top monitoring on Robberg Peninsula)

Not prone to seasickness (or willingness to take medication)

FGASA field guide or SABBWWA marine guide certification

Skippers license or small boat handling experience (opportunity to build sea-going experience)

Previous experience training and supervising international volunteers in the field

Remuneration:

R2500/pm

+ 3 meals/day

+ accommodation in the volunteer house

Enquiries:

For further information about our projects please contact relevant staff:

Pinniped & fisheries research – Frikkie van der Vyver (**076 661 5741**)

Cetacean research – Danielle Conry (**067 086 4813**)

Conservation & education – Laura Bakker (**067 082 1898**)

How to apply:

Interested candidates that meet the requirements are encouraged to send a cover letter and CV (3 page max) to **frikkie5er@gmail.com**, before or on **30 November 2018**. If you have not received a response within 3 weeks after the closing date please expect that your application was unsuccessful. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview, at which time certified qualifications and proof of relevant skills will be requested.