

Go Caretaker

Based on recent volunteer feedback, the Go Caretaker program has been restructured to allow for greater clarity and effectiveness and to promote Go Caretaker involvement in direct animal care and contact. The Go Caretaker program is designed for those who may not have formal animal caretaking experience (for those with veterinary skills, the Go Veterinary program is recommended). Are you between 18 and 45 years of age? The Go Caretaker program seeks to offer positions for increased responsibility and education in the care of Harnas' animal residents to those who may have the passion but not yet the formal training. Volunteers will participate in many of the same core activities as Go Wildlife volunteers, however, with an added layer of responsibility and oversight over their fellows.

Role of the volunteer:

The first week will be an intensive training week, during which time the volunteer will work with more experienced Caretakers as well as Volunteer Coordinators to learn the ins and outs of daily animal care for wildlife in sanctuaries. Part of this training will include an education session(s) with Marieta van der Merwe, during which time Marieta will instruct the volunteers in the standard of care she expects for the animals on the farm. Important lessons the volunteers must learn during their training week, regarding the animals to which they are assigned to are: standard of cleanliness expected for enclosures, proper diet and eating habits, normal versus abnormal behaviour, skills needed to work with their assigned animals safely and independently, proper record keeping, who to approach should they observe a problem or issue, and how to work with any animals under their care that may be currently sick or injured.

Once trained, Caretakers will be responsible for overseeing the standard of care given to their assigned animals. They will be leaders amongst the other volunteers with regard to the functioning of their team, and how their team cares for and interacts with their animals. Caretakers will make sure that their animals have enough blankets, water, the proper food, are eating well and behaving normally, that sick animals are treated regularly and are observed for any changes for better or worse and more tasks in the same vein. It is important to note that more will be expected of Caretaker volunteers should one of their animals be injured or ill, or should there be another (non-assigned) animal that requires extra observation and care. This may necessitate the volunteer going "above and beyond" what Go Wildlife volunteers may be expected to do.

Go Caretaker volunteers will be required to keep detailed records of the wellbeing of their animals; these records should be in greater detail than those kept by the Go Wildlife team members. Caretakers will serve as liaisons with Volunteer Coordinators, promoting better communication between Harnas staff and volunteers and allowing greater continuity. As this program is minimum 4 weeks, three as active trained Caretakers, they will be in a good position to observe long-term changes and standards than those staying a shorter amount of time. Caretakers will be encouraged to work together and communicate and meet regularly to promote a sense of bonding as well as to make sure all animals are being cared for properly and any issues are readily addressed.

Accommodation will be at the Volunteer village.

Do I need experience? No.

A commitment to conservation, an ability to adapt to changing situations and a good observing eye are key elements required from a Go Caretaker.

Minimum stay is 4 weeks and maximum stay is 3 months.

Please note that whilst there are no Go Caretaking activities, you will partake in the Go Wildlife activities!