

Marine Volunteer and Internship Prospectus and Important Information

A programme for interns and volunteers working in the unique marine environment at the tip of Africa – home to one of the densest population of the Great White Shark in the world; the breeding area of the endangered Southern Right Whale and home to one of the threatened colonies of the African Penguin, as well as resident populations of dolphins, seals and thousands of seabirds.



Marine Dynamics Shark Tours

Discover and Protect



About our marine environment

Situated near Cape Agulhas, the Southern tip of Africa, Klein Bay is an extraordinary marine environment.

The colony of about 60,000 Cape Fur Seals on Dyer Island at the centre of the Bay attracts one of the densest and most accessible populations of Great White Sharks in the world. The clear waters and relatively small area make shark sightings a daily occurrence throughout the year with a peak in the Southern Hemisphere winter (May-September). Despite their numbers and the frequent sightings, little research has been conducted on this Great White Shark population.



Through our sponsorship of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust (www.dict.co.za), made possible by income from our eco-tourism programmes including cage diving, we are filling this knowledge gap. Valuable research is conducted from our cage diving boat – Shark Fever. Now, the Trust has purchased a dedicated research boat, Lwazi (Xhosa for “seeking knowledge”) from which our marine biologists will study important aspects of shark behaviour. Our work has already been published and presented at international conferences.

The Bay is also a vitally important breeding area for the endangered Southern Right Whale: about 800 adult whales are seen between July and December each year often accompanied by recently born calves. Each year the Southern Right Whales migrate from their feeding grounds in Antarctica to breed here and to give birth.



Fortunately, boat-based access to these animals is strictly controlled with only a limited number of licences being given to responsible tour operators. Our sister company, Dyer Island Cruises, provides some of the best boat-based whale watching in the world. At the same time data which we collect provides the foundation for future research.

In addition to Southern Right Whales there is also a resident population of the Humpback and Brydes Whales while large pods of dolphins are also regularly seen.



Dyer Island, sitting in the middle of the Bay has one of the few important breeding colonies of African Penguins around the coast of the Cape. The habitat of this charming bird was largely destroyed in the 19th and early 20th centuries when guano was stripped from the islands. This removed the soft ground into which the penguins could burrow leaving eggs and chicks exposed to predators and the elements. Coupled with overfishing and marine pollution this has caused the population to fall by 90% in the last 100 years and it is now at an all-time low.



With financial and logistical support from Marine Dynamics and Dyer Island Cruises, the Dyer Island Conservation Trust pioneered the Faces-of-Need Programme of research and conservation. Using specially designed nests, the Trust has now provided > 1000 houses for breeding penguins on islands and shore based colonies around the Cape.

To fully understand the richness of this marine environment visit www.dict.org.za

About Marine Dynamics

Marine Dynamics is an internationally recognised leader in shark cage diving and shark conservation.

Every year we host thousands of international and local visitors on our state-of-the-art cage-diving boat, Shark Fever.

Every trip includes a number of our dedicated team of marine biologists all of whom are conducting specific research projects on the behaviour and biology of Great White Sharks. As a result, we are gaining significant new insights into recognition of individual sharks by their fins, tracking movements of individual sharks and their response to differences in water temperature, etc. and parasites endemic to Great White Sharks. This work, which has been published and presented, is made possible by the funds generated by shark cage diving.

Additionally, a videographer/photographer is part of the experienced crew on each trip ensuring that we build up a detailed archive of shark sightings.

Therefore, we constantly work to deliver the promise our motto:

Discover and Protect

Working with the local community

Marine Dynamics ensures that local communities are fully involved in our programmes.

This commitment was acknowledged when Marine Dynamics became the first shark diving company to be recognised by Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa

In addition to providing training for local crew members, an educational outreach programme is conducted in schools and universities. Additionally, funding is provided for a local community crafts programme, Nolwandle.



Involvement of local schools in our Clean Marine campaign

You will be a member of the team during your stay

Every intern and volunteer becomes an integral part of the team ensuring that you maximise the opportunities for time at sea and one of our three boats:

In addition to boat-based observation, you will have the opportunity for cage-diving.

Our experienced captains will also provide you with the opportunity to learn about seamanship including safety standards, boat handling and equipment maintenance.

You will also participate in ensuring that every guest gains the most from this “once-in-a-lifetime” experience aboard one of our boats. Interacting with visitors you will share your knowledge as a host.



Shark Fever (cage diving vessel)



Whale Whisperer



Lwazi (“seeking knowledge”)

Our programmes

An individualised programme is developed for each participant.

Our programme offers different learning streams.

Interns Primarily here to gain field research experience

Internship programme is a minimum of 1 month that will start on the 1st of each month.

Majority of sea time spent aboard Lwazi (our dedicated research boat) conducting white shark research with some time also spent aboard Shark Fever (cage diving vessel) collecting data and dorsal fin ID's on sharks sighted.

Tracking of white sharks which may involve sleeping at sea (tracking is a 24hr+ process) will be involved as a part of the internship. The research vessel will launch when conditions allow and you will be scheduled for at least one of those trips. If there is space on the cage diving vessel then you may be scheduled on it for the time you are not on the research boat.



Shark Fever cage diving

Interns will be expected to help in collecting and entering data on sharks sighted/tracked on both boats to ensure the research database is kept up to date. The internship is tailored to the participant's research objectives and data-collection and your mentor from the research team will help you ensure your research objectives are achieved.

Volunteers Primarily here to work closely with sharks and tourists

Majority of sea time spent aboard Shark Fever as a crew member helping out with cage diving operations. For volunteers that show a good work ethic time aboard Lwazi may also be available. Volunteers staying for longer than one month may also have the opportunity to be a part of tracking teams (usually two teams will take 10-12hr shifts at sea).

The cage diving vessel will launch 1-2 times per day when conditions and clientele allow. Volunteers will be scheduled on trips depending on numbers of volunteers/space on the boat for 1-2 trips per day where possible.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to help out collecting and entering data, data is collected on every shark sighted from both the cage diving and research boat.

Both interns and volunteers will enjoy lectures from our marine biologists as well as guest speakers from local organisations and universities with whom we work closely. Lectures will include ocean conservation, basic seamanship, shark biology and behaviour, data collection and the work of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust. Other educational programs and events such as research, tracking, and shark dissections will be available depending on conditions/staff availability.

All will have the opportunity to cage dive during your time here.

There will also be field trips to our associates such as the Save Our Seas charity, Marine and Coastal Management, Cape Nature and SANPARKS as time allows.

A detailed outline of a typical programme is available from tracey@sharkwatchsa.com

Current research projects

A number of shark research projects are currently being conducted to which new programmes will be added now that our dedicated research boat Lwazi has recently been launched.

- Previously unstudied environmental parameters affecting Great White Shark movement patterns and utilisation of their environment in South Africa.
- Comparative studies of the sharks' behaviour in our area versus other shark populations in the Eastern Cape of South Africa

We also have a number of ongoing studies from which data has already been published including:

- Identification of individual sharks by their dorsal fins
- Wound healing
- Environmental factors affecting shark sightings during cage dives
- Movement patterns of dolphins

This work is conducted under the supervision of academic institutions including the University of Cape Town and the University of Pretoria.

Interns and volunteers are given as much practical support as possible to conduct their own fieldwork and data collection

We are delighted to discuss individual projects prior to your arrival to ensure that you gain as much data as possible.

Previous interns have gained much knowledge from their time with us which has assisted them with their studies.

As a result of this research and the comparatively easy and predictable access to the Great White Sharks a number of TV crews work with Marine Dynamics. Our boats regularly host camera crews from the US, Europe and Asia with resulting documentaries being broadcast on the BBC, National Geographic and other well-respected documentary channels.

Testimonials – Learning from previous Interns and Volunteers

Previous Interns and Volunteers will be happy to share their experiences during their time with Marine Dynamics. If you would like their email addresses please contact tracey@sharkwatchsa.com

Accommodation during your stay

You will be situated in Gansbaai – known as the “White Shark Capital of the World.” This is a small town which offers a wide range of services including well-stocked supermarkets, banks, etc.

Gansbaai is about 30 minutes by road from the larger town of Hermanus which is an important tourist centre and about 2 hours drive from Cape Town. The surrounding area offers easy access to the Cape fynbos – one of the world’s most diverse eco-systems – and a number of tourist attractions and activities.

Marine Dynamics has a large, comfortable and well-appointed house close to our headquarters at the Great White House from which tours leave and research is co-ordinated. It accommodates up to 8 interns and volunteers in 4 rooms. This house is fully equipped for self-catering, laundry, etc. and has its own computer. The house is heated and is maintained by a weekly housekeeper.

Your arrival and departure

You will be met at Cape Town International Airport and transferred to Gansbaai. There are direct flights from London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, and Dubai. Alternatively, you can transit via Johannesburg which has flights from most major cities in Europe and regular connections with the US and other parts of the world including Asia and Latin America. The drive to Cape Town is about 2 hours. (No specific vaccinations are needed and Gansbaai is not in a malarial area).

On arrival you will be fully briefed and have the opportunity to meet the Marine Dynamics team including a personal supervisor who will be available to you throughout your stay. Prior to your arrival you will receive your specially tailored itinerary and your supervisor will be available to answer questions or provide advice by email.



Volunteer House

Prices and booking

Note: All prices are quoted in South African Rand (ZAR).

Prices will be sent separately

Cost for 2 weeks and more includes contribution towards Penguin housing project

Booking procedures

All bookings should be made at least 30 days before the programme starts. We accept volunteers throughout the year and starting dates are flexible. We do however recommend that volunteers stay for a minimum of 4 weeks, but any shorter stay would still be welcomed.

Applications should be emailed to tracey@sharkwatchsa.com

A 50 % deposit is required to confirm your booking.

The balance is due at least 14 days prior to volunteer arriving.

Terms & Conditions

Applications must be cancelled at least 30 days before the programme starts. If the volunteer cancels less than 14 days before the programme begins, a 100 % cancellation fee will apply.

What does the cost include?

- Transfers between Cape Town and Gansbaai on arrival and departure
- Accommodation (including bedding, coffee, tea, cereals etc)
- Internet access at accommodation
- Lectures and related activities
- Trips on the boat (weather dependant)
- Programme materials
- Welcome pack of:
 - 2 x Marine Dynamics t-shirts (please state t-shirt size)
 - 1 x Marine Dynamics cap
 - 1 x Marine Dynamics jacket (return after completion of programme. This can be purchased at an additional cost.)
 - 1 x pair of water boots (please state shoe size)
 - 1 x DVD of a trip of your choice as well as a bonus and promotional DVD of company.
- Certificate of contribution towards Penguin Nesting Project, Faces of Need, should you stay 2 weeks or longer.
- Volunteer certificate for programme participation
- Tour of Gansbaai and surroundings including a Township Tour as well as visit to famous Danger Point Lighthouse.
- There will be a co-ordinator that will take care of you during your stay. Should you experience any problems, you will have someone to turn to.

What is not included in the cost?

- Flight ticket
- Medical and travel insurance
- Excess baggage
- Use of telephone
- Food (you will need ± 200 GBP / 360 USD / 2500 ZAR for one month)
- Meals and cooking: You will be responsible for purchasing your own provisions and preparing your own meals, except the boat lunch on the dive boat, which is provided.
- Leisure/adventure activities

We can also arrange various activities such as:

1. Agulhas and surroundings tour (southern most tip of Africa)
2. Paintball: ± 9 GBP / 15 USD / 110 ZAR for 100 balls and 2 hours
3. Horse riding +/- 17 GBP / 25 USD / 200 ZAR for one hour
4. Quad Biking ± 15 GBP / 28 USD / 200 ZAR for 1 hour. ± 25 GBP / 40 USD / 300 ZAR for 2 hours.
5. Kayaking – 25 GBP / 38 USD / 300 ZAR
6. Skydiving: ± 116 GBP / 200 USD / 1400 ZAR

And many others.

Depending on the applicant habits and lifestyle, we usually suggest adding to their monthly budget 125 GBP to 250 GBP / 215 USD to 430 USD for their souvenirs, excursions, food, entertainment and other personal daily needs.

- Lodging for the first night after arrival in Cape Town and the night before departure.

We can arrange affordable back packer lodges from 15 GBP to 20 GBP / 30 USD to 50 USD / 200 ZAR to 350 ZAR per night)

What do I need to bring?

- Towel
- Pocket money
- Personal journal or notebook
- Camera
- Sun hat
- Sun block
- Some old clothing that can be worn at sea
- Old shoes for the boat (water boots will be provided)
- Your own snorkel/mask and flippers. (We can loan of rent gear should you wish not to carry extra gear.)
- Rain jacket
- Warm clothing for evenings / boat.
- Polarized sunglasses

Payment and confirmation of booking

1. After the Application is received by Marine Dynamics we will give you feedback within 5 days regarding approval or not.
2. After confirmation of approval of the Application and the possible date of doing the program, a 50 % deposit is needed to confirm booking. The balance is due 14 days before volunteer's arrival. Payment can be made into the following bank account:
Marine Dynamics Tours
First National Bank, Hermanus, South Africa
Current Account
Bank Code: 200412
Zip Code: FIRNZAJJ
Account Number: 62093597965
3. Confirmation of the dates and finalizing of program dates will then be made (or cleared out in the case where required dates cannot be approved)
4. Fax/email the confirmation of payment to tracey@sharkwatchsa.com
5. Marine Dynamics Tours will forward an invoice for the total amount.

For further information please contact:

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Please visit our websites:
www.sharkwatchsa.com
www.whalewatchsa.com
www.dict.org.za

We look forward to welcoming you.



Dyer Island

A message from Wilfred Chivell, Chief Executive of Marine Dynamics

Join us and help to make a difference

For more than 20 years, we have been dedicated to the conservation and protection of this critically important marine area where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet at the tip of Africa.



This is a rich and uniquely diverse area for research which offers easy access to the “Marine Big 5” – sharks, whales, dolphins, seals and penguins – providing numerous opportunities for research and conservation.

At Marine Dynamics, we constantly strive to link responsible eco-tourism including the world’s finest shark cage diving and boat-based whale watching, with our responsibility to conserving and protecting this fragile marine environment. Everything we do combines research and education with the pleasure of introducing visitors from all over the world to this very special area of the ocean.

All of us at Marine Dynamics would like to invite you to share our passion. Please come and spend some time with us as an intern or volunteer. Learn about these seas and the species that inhabit it.

We promise you that if you do join us you will gain knowledge and experience that you will never forget. We may change your life because our passion is highly infectious!

*Wilfred Chivell
Chief Executive Marine Dynamics*

