

SANCCOB Veterinary Experience Programme



The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) was established in 1968 and is a non-profit organisation whose primary objective is to reverse the decline of seabird populations through the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of ill, injured, abandoned and oiled seabirds – especially endangered seabirds like the African Penguin. Over the last 50+ years, SANCCOB has treated more than **100 000** seabirds. SANCCOB treats up to **2 500 seabirds** annually, we often have over 200 birds in care in our rehabilitation centre. This number vastly increases during crisis periods (such as oil spills or mass abandonments).

Programme description

The Veterinary Experience Programme has been developed to teach participants about avian veterinary medicine and rehabilitation by allowing them the opportunity to assist us with our work. SANCCOB is not a typical veterinary practice; our patients are wild seabirds, many of them endangered species, and we rely on volunteers, like you, to help with our daily tasks.

The programme involves daily supervision and instruction from a qualified veterinarian and our seabird rehabilitators. Participants will benefit from the opportunity to observe and assist with the clinical veterinary work at our world-renowned Seabird Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in Cape Town. Participants work at SANCCOB, from Monday to Friday, 7:45 am to 5:00 pm, although longer working hours are often required and keen participants are welcome to assist us after-hours as well.

Due to the nature of our facility, the veterinarian also has administrative and management duties to attend to. During those periods participants will assist the rehabilitation team with other aspects of our veterinary and rehabilitation work. Participants must be willing to assist with daily tasks which can include wound care, setting up the theatre for surgical procedures and cleaning afterwards, sterilizing surgical equipment, keeping the seabird hospital clean, record keeping and laboratory work. Participants will also have access to veterinary textbooks, research papers and veterinary standard operating procedures for self-study.

Normally only one participant will be accepted into the programme at a time to ensure the most beneficial experience for the participant.



Programme types and costs

International Participants (From outside South Africa)

- One-week programme – R4 000
- Two-week programme – R6 000
- Each additional week – R1 000

Local Participants (Residents of South Africa)

- One-week programme – R 1 000
- Each additional week – R 500

South African residents who are over 17 years old, who have an interest in veterinary sciences and intend on pursuing a career in this field may apply for our one-week Veterinary Experience Programme. There are only six positions available each year.

Local veterinary and veterinary nursing students should apply for at least the two-week Veterinary Experience Programme. However, they are always encouraged to spend longer than two weeks at SANCCOB to hone their skills.

Onderstepoort students can apply to work at SANCCOB during their clinical year through the VETBOX system.

SANCCOB offers three scholarships to interested students each year. All students can apply for the scholarships by writing a letter of motivation to SANCCOB.

What to expect

Each participant's experience will be different, depending on the needs of the patients at SANCCOB at the time, and the participant's prior experience, training, and willingness to assist and to learn. The first week is mainly observation, each additional week provides more opportunities to learn and contribute to SANCCOB's work. Not everyone will be able to take part in all the listed activities. The table below is a rough guide to what you can expect to observe or assist with, depending on how long you spend at SANCCOB.

First week	Second to fourth week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe during patient admission, clinical examination and treatment • Reading PCVs (lab work) • Observe X-rays • Observe anaesthesia and surgical procedures • Observe wound care (evaluation, treatment, and bandaging) • Observe weekly health examinations and treatment plans • Setting up for surgical procedures • Assisting with biosecurity, cleaning and disinfecting of veterinary equipment and the seabird hospital • Preparing surgical equipment for autoclaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in clinical examination and basic treatment of seabirds • Assist with basic procedures under the supervision of the veterinarian • Assist during wound care (evaluation, procedures and bandaging) under the supervision of the veterinarian • Record keeping • Using the centrifuge and autoclave • Preparing medication and administering injections
	<p>After the fourth week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe post-mortem examinations • Seabird handling • Seabird tubing • Anaesthetic monitoring (veterinary and nursing students) • Collecting blood samples • Placing transponders • Bandaging

Longer veterinary internships are encouraged and can be arranged on a case-by-case basis after consultation with SANCCOB's veterinarian.

No unsupervised veterinary procedures can be done by foreign participants without prior approval from the South African Veterinary Council. This approval is difficult to obtain so all participants will always work under the direct supervision of a South African vet and will not be able to perform veterinarian-only procedures.

One-week participants will receive a SANCCOB-branded volunteer t-shirt. Participants signing up for two weeks or longer will receive a SANCCOB branded scrub top. Please provide us with your size at least two weeks before you arrive (a size guide can be found here: <https://tanc.co.za/size-guide/>)

Additional volunteer shirts and scrub tops are available for purchase, on request. SANCCOB branded scrub tops will cost R 450.00 each.

To apply, please complete an application form and send it, along with a motivation letter and your CV, to volunteers@sanccob.co.za.

Thank you for your interest in our programme. If you have any further queries or concerns, please feel free to contact me. We look forward to welcoming you to SANCCOB.

Warm regards

SANCCOB Volunteer Coordinator

Email: volunteers@sanccob.co.za

SANCCOB is a non-profit organization (Registration No. 2001/026273/08, Non-profit Number: 003-134 NPO).

