



INTERNATIONAL  
VOLUNTEERING AT RIAS

# PROJECT SITE

## WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE - RIAS

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RIAS is the Wildlife Rehabilitation and Investigation Centre of the Ria Formosa and is located in Olhão in the Algarve. This Centre, formerly known as CRA—Bird Rehabilitation Centre, exists for over 20 years and has been involved in the rehabilitation and release of thousands of wild animals after treatment. As of October 1st 2009, under the orientation of the ICNB (Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Biodiversity) and with the financial support of ANA—Airports of Portugal as a “Business & Biodiversity” initiative, the Association ALDEIA (a non-profit environmental organization) has assumed the management of the Centre as a broader project:

RIAS has as its main objectives the rehabilitation of injured and debilitated wildlife, the investigation of the risk factors for their conservation, and the environmental education of the general public to the importance of biodiversity.

As a Wildlife Hospital, work at RIAS consists in the reception of injured or debilitated wildlife, their treatment and, later, their release back to Nature where they were found, whenever possible. It also receives wild animals of endangered or special concern species that are found dead, so it can determine the cause of death and try to determine the risk factors for the wild populations.

If the rehabilitation work has a direct and immediate impact on the well-being of each animal that goes through RIAS, that work, associated with investigation and the environmental education and awareness of the general public, can have a global impact on the conservation of wildlife populations locally and nationally.

At the same time, there are many investigation projects that you can be involved, like the “LIFE *Trachemys*”, which the main goal is the conservation of the European pond turtle and RIAS is working at a captive breeding program. You can also help doing bird surveys or participate in specific projects like parasitology or environmental improvement.



## ALGARVE

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### Location



### NATURAL PARK OF RIA FORMOSA

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**Name** – Ria Formosa

**Classification** – Natural Park

**Established in** – 1987

**Area and extension** – 18 400 acres and 60 km

**Habitats** - Marsh, dunes and forest

### Description

- The Ria Formosa Natural Park extends along 60 km of the southern coast of the eastern Algarve, in the south of Portugal, from Ancão to Manta Rota. It occupies an area of about 18 400 acres (7 895 hectares of land area and 10 505 acres of wetlands).
- It is characterized by a ridge of sandy coastline (beaches and dunes) that protects a lagoon area, which includes a wide variety of habitats: barrier islands, marshes, sand banks and mud flats, sand dunes, salt marshes, freshwater and brackish ponds, waterways, forests and agricultural areas.
- The Natural Park of Ria Formosa received this designation in 1987 by Decree-Law No. 373/87 of 9 December, with the main goal to protect and conserve the lagoon system, its resident flora and fauna, migratory species and their habitats.



# PROJECT SUMMARY

## WHY VOLUNTEER WITH RIAS?

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The project is multifaceted and not only would you learn about working in a wildlife rehabilitation center but you can also develop activities and projects related to your studies giving you work experience. As you will be working in a new country it will demonstrated that you can work hard in a multicultural environment.

Other advantages are: be part of a team, with the probability of making friends for life; feel valued, as your ideas are very important to us and of course the process of self learning and of self development.

## Highlights of the Project

- Opportunity to explore the *Ria Formosa*
- Two different landscapes: nature and beach
- Possibility to receive training
- Help to protect wildlife
- Gain work experience in a multicultural environment

## Requirements

- Be at least 21 years old
- Interest in wildlife, environment and its conservation
- Speak Portuguese, Spanish or English or Dutch

## Other important aspects

- We accept couples and groups of friends
- The project will only accept volunteers from April to October
- Meals are the responsibility of the participants
- Two free days a week to rest or to visit the region
- Free Wi-Fi at RIAS' office

## Duration

- 8 weeks

## KEY FACTS

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### KEY FACTS

<b>Location</b>	Olhão, Algarve - Portugal
<b>Activities</b>	Feeding the animals Help in the maintenance and cleaning of the center Fence building Create activities of environmental education Organize workshops Other specific activities related to different subjects
<b>Transfers</b>	Faro airport – Project site – Faro airport
<b>Accommodation</b>	Volunteers house

## TYPES OF VOLUNTEERING

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### GENERAL VOLUNTEERING

Anybody is welcome as a volunteer as long as they are hardworking, positive and committed to making a difference. You don't need to have any special knowledge or background to work at RIAS.

General volunteering includes the following tasks: feeding the animals, helping in maintenance and cleaning the center, fence building, helping in activities of environmental education and helping to organize workshops.



## **VETERINARY / BIOLOGY**

As we are a wildlife rehabilitation center one of our biggest tasks is to treat and rehabilitate the rescued animals. We need someone that is studying or that finished a degree in Veterinary or Biology that is fearless and strongly motivated to work with wild animals, mostly birds.



## **DESIGN AND MARKETING**

Do you have or are you taking a degree in Design, Arts or Marketing? If so, this position is for you. As a design and marketing volunteer you will work along with our team to develop strategies of publicity for RIAS, create merchandising and flyers, etc. It is a great opportunity to apply in the real world what you learned at school.

## **INFORMATICS**

Web is very important nowadays and RIAS is no exception. We need a very creative person to help us create a website or improve our blog. We also want to reach a bigger number of people worldwide so if you know any programs, social networks or websites where we can talk about our work it would be great.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

An important part of RIAS' mission is to work with the local community to increase awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation.

We need someone to help us develop a range of activities of environmental education for different kinds of public. For this task you should be able to speak Portuguese (although we can arrange for specific situations where this would not be necessary) and having previous experience working with children would be a plus.



If you are volunteering with us as a way to gain work experience and you need a certificate of your work at RIAS or a recommendation letter we will be glad to give you one (as long as you deserve it!)

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARRIVE?

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- ***Flight information***

We advise you to fly directly to Faro Airport. There are several low-cost airlines that go to Faro from some European cities. If you buy your plane ticket in advance you will get very advantageous rates. Check Ryanair and EasyJet for low-cost flights, and check-out the follow link for all the companies that flies to Faro - <http://www.ana.pt/pt-PT/Aeropostos/Algarve/Faro/Partidas/DestinoCompanhias/Paginas/destinoscompanhia.aspx>.

For volunteers from other continents it may be advantageous to fly to Lisbon Airport. There are more flights daily and more destinations available. In Lisbon you must catch the train to Faro, it is a 03h / 3h30 trip, and it costs 21€/23€. For more information about trains schedules and prices check the following link –

<http://www.cp.pt/cp/displayPage.do?vnextoid=87cbd5abe2a74010VgnVCM1000007b01a8c0RCRD>.

- ***Transfers***

Transfers are included in the price. One member of our team will pick you up at Faro Airport at your arrival and in the end of your volunteering we will take you back to the airport.

It may be possible to pick you up at Lisbon Airport, but very specific limitations apply so please ask us about this possibility and be prepared to make your way to Faro, as we may not guarantee this in advance.

- ***Welcome Package***

We want only the best for our volunteers! So on your arrival you will be received with a warm welcome and a Welcome Package. This package includes a volunteer t-shirt, maps and tourist information about Algarve (so you can plan your days-off), a free adoption of an animal at your choice, your volunteer manual (in CD or pen), a Portuguese simcard for your mobile phone, discounts on several activities and a dinner to introduce you to the team and other volunteers.

## **WHERE WILL YOU BE STAYING?**

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- ***Volunteers House***

You will stay in a Volunteers House with other volunteers. Houses in Olhão are very humble but comfortable. You will share the all house with other people so you will need to be responsible and friendly.

## **WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?**

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As a volunteer you will participate in all the daily tasks of the rehabilitation center (see activities in page 5). In a typical week you will work six hours a day (may vary), five days a week.

Main activities are at the rehabilitation center facilities, but there are also some tasks that involve trips and field work. You may go on a trip to release a rehabilitated animal, or go to the field to survey habitats and catch invasive freshwater turtles.

Be prepared for some monotonous/dirty tasks, but also to be surprised, have a lot of fun and make some friends!



# APPLICATION DETAILS, DURATION AND COSTS

## **IMPORTANT APPLICATION DETAILS**

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### ***Making the application...***

- Make your application at least 6 weeks before your preferred date of arrival.
- We will give you a feedback within 7 days regarding approval or not.
- You must pay 50 % of your fee to confirm your application and the rest must be paid at least 15 days before your arrival.
- Payments are made by bank transfer.

### ***Before you arrive...***

- Make your payments before the deadlines and send us the confirmations.
- Send us the follow documents and information:
  - Your flight details: dates, airport and hours of arrival and departure;
  - A copy of your insurance;
  - A copy of your passport.

### ***If you can't come...***

- Applications must be cancelled at least 30 days before the program starts.
- For cancellations made less than 30 days before the beginning of the program, RIAS can charge you a fee from 50€ to 200€ to cover costs already made with the arrangements for your stay.

## **DURATION**

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You can join RIAS for two months from June to July.

## COSTS

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2 months

€ 600

What's included	
Before you come	Help defining your trip All the information about the project
In-country	Accommodation Project orientation and training Airport pick-up (Faro Airport – Project Site – Faro Airport) Insurance that cover any complication during your work at RIAS Welcome package Travels during your volunteer work 24/7 support by an assigned tutor
What's NOT included	
	Flights
	Food
	Visas
	Travel Insurance (Obligatory)
	Extra activities

## CHECK-LIST

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- Laptop
- Adaptor
- Unlocked phone
- Pocket money
- Comfortable clothes
- Sunglasses
- Bikini
- Sunscreen
- Repellent
- Sleeping bag

## **Contacts**

### **Address**

Parque Natural da Ria Formosa, Quinta de Marim  
Quelfes 8700 olhão

### **Mobile Telephone**

*00351 927659313*

### **Email**

*rias.volunteers@gmail.com*

### **Skype**

*rias.volunteers*

**A Project:**



**Partners:**

