

# *Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife*

## VOLUNTEER GUIDEBOOK





# Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife

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## WELCOME TO LAO CONSERVATION TRUST FOR WILDLIFE

Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife is based in a small village around 60km north of the capital of Laos, Vientiane. The center is located on the former site of the national Lao Zoo. The Zoo was started in the 1990s by a Lao-Thai family, who were passionate about wildlife. In the mid 2010s, the mission was changed to one focused on Lao-species conservation, education, and eradicating the illegal wildlife trade.

In association with the Lao PDR government and the Lao Zoo, the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) was born.

We are the first wildlife rescue, conservation and education center, which is a registered nonprofit organization in Laos.

It is our mission to improve the lives of the animals that currently live here while rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing animals from the illegal wildlife trade. We partner with global conservation organizations, governments, and community-based initiatives to tackle the complex problem of illegal wildlife trade.

From caring for, feeding and enriching our animals, to helping build new enclosures, as a volunteer you will be able to see the impact you make directly on our animals' lives throughout your time here. Creating enrichment items for our animals is a regular occurrence and every volunteer leaves here having given something to the animals that contributes to their well-being.

If you are coming to intern with us or lend your professional skills, expect to take away truly unique experiences with our wonderful wildlife, under the guidance of our wildlife professionals here at LCTW.

Our facility has a dedicated team of local staff and our volunteers are integrated into the daily operations here at LCTW, making for a unique and culturally immersive experience.

On behalf of our team and our animals, thank you for wanting to come and volunteer with us. We greatly need and appreciate your help. We look forward to meeting you and having you as part of our team!





## ABOUT LCTW

Lao PDR is a major gateway of the illegal wildlife trade from Southeast Asia. Untold numbers of protected wild animals and their parts are smuggled in and out of the country. Biodiversity is declining and risks to humans are increasing from emerging diseases.

LCTW aims are to improve the conditions for our resident animals rescued from the illegal wildlife trade, provide rehabilitation to prepare for release, release animals into protected areas, and continue partnerships with government and other non-governmental organizations to combat the illegal wildlife trade.

Our work has grown and expanded to encompass local and global conservation and education programs. In 2018, our organization officially became a registered Lao nonprofit - the first all inclusive wildlife rescue and conservation organization in Lao PDR.

We work closely with the Lao government to build better infrastructure, laws, welfare and community projects to help protect the wildlife of Laos. Our Rescue Team, which is on call 24/7, receiving tip offs via our National Wildlife Crime Reporting Hotline, covers cases throughout Laos and has become a vital partner for law enforcement.

While working to end the illegal wildlife trade, we recognize and value the importance of continued knowledge gathering. We work both independently and with other organizations to identify and monitor emerging diseases, zoonotic diseases, and how the human-wildlife interface impacts global health.

Our project also works with other local, regional and global NGOs as well in-country Embassies and multi-government organizations such as the United Nations.

Together, we share knowledge and collaborate to address the illegal wildlife trade, conservation, and global animal and human health.





We are open for the public to visit and engage with nature and provide access to knowledge and education, in an ethical setting. We are also developing a variety of on-site educational programs.

We created the first and only Natural History Museum in Laos. Though small, it serves to educate visitors and spark discussion about wildlife's role in our lives.

Our Illegal Wildlife Trade Education Center provides interpretive displays and signs to cultivate curiosity and knowledge of the IWT.

Outreach programs help to educate people of all ages in schools and other community hubs about nature and conservation. We work hard to make a direct impact on our community.

The united vision of the whole team at LCTW is for our whole site to contribute to wildlife conservation and research, become a hub for education, and to protect and provide the best care to our rescued and long term wildlife residents.

Animals who are suitable to be released to the wild will be returned after passing through our rehabilitation program. Every animal that comes to our center will be assessed by our wildlife professionals during this rehabilitation process. All of our rehabilitated animals are released in protected areas throughout Laos depending on the species and where there is a known population.

Many victims of the illegal trade will have long term or permanent health issues. If this is the case, we can provide lifelong sanctuary for wild animals who can't be returned back to the wild. In our wildlife sanctuary, we allow our residents to live in natural environments with appropriate social groups, excellent nutrition, daily enrichment and world class veterinary care.



# ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is exactly what it sounds like, a way to enrich the lives of our animals and stimulate them mentally and/or physically by providing activities to work on throughout the day. Many long term resident animals spent many years without any sort of mental or physical stimulation.

Enrichment is an essential part of any animal husbandry routine. It helps prevent boredom and stress behaviors and helps elicit natural behaviors from animals. Enrichment can play a critical part in wildlife rehabilitation and preparation for life back in the wild. It can be tailored for certain animals to challenge them to complete specific tasks in order to survive in the wild.

Our Husbandry and Enrichment volunteers work on various enrichment tasks for our animals and staff always encourage fresh ideas to create new enrichment programs that we can add to our routine.

Challenging our animals and making them think through new problems is extremely important to keep their quality of welfare high.

# CONSTRUCTION

Our center is transitioning and we have the exciting opportunity to build new enclosures and facilities that reflect 21st century animal care and conservation principles.

Working with our on-site construction team of local staff, volunteers may be asked to help build new enclosures and environmental enrichment structures including, swimming pools, shelters and climbing towers. This is your opportunity to leave a lasting legacy for our animals.

If the weather does not permit our volunteers to do construction outside, we move inside the enrichment room to work on enrichment for our animals such as, wooden houses, rope ladders and many other smaller projects. We are also more than happy for volunteers to suggest ideas for our animals!





# Husbandry & Enrichment Based Program

## WORK SCHEDULE

Our volunteers work between 08:00 and 17:00, six days a week, with volunteers having one day off.

Volunteers have the same day off, generally a Sunday. This experience is what you would like to make of it, therefore if you need extra breaks you can ask for additional day off during the week. Volunteers are also encouraged to take as many breaks during the day as they need in order to stay healthy.

We have a general work schedule for our volunteer Husbandry and Enrichment Program, but this can change depending on season, weather and requirements for our animals. We have a small team of wildlife professionals and we ask volunteers to be patient if things do not follow the schedule exactly, if a rescue comes in or a situation arises, the animals will always take the priority.

### Here is an example of what your day may look like:

**08:00 Morning Rounds:** Mornings start with animal rounds- this includes feeding, cleaning, preparing diets and providing enrichment for enclosures that house newly rescued animals and some of our long term residents. Morning rounds can vary depending on how many animals have recently been rescued.

**10:30 Break:** Take this time to fill your water bottle and relax for a short time before getting back to the animals.

**10:45 Construction/Special Projects:** This can include anything from renovating old enclosures to helping construct new ones. Projects don't stop there as they may include preparing special arrangements for incoming animals, working on community engagement projects or even observing.

**12:00 Lunch:** Take a well deserved break where you'll get to have your hot meal delivered and waiting in the living area and maybe take a short nap in the hammock by your bungalow.

**13:00 Enrichment and/or Continuing Morning Projects:** Now is the time to put your creative abilities to the test as you help to create unique enrichment for our animals! Staff can help you develop ideas based on what materials we have available, safety considerations to animals and durability for the animals you want to enrich!

**16:00 Evening Feedout:** We will take this time to feed out the afternoon diets to those animals that are in the care of the Husbandry and Enrichment team

**17:00 Finished:** The rest of the day is now your own. You can relax with the other volunteers, walk around the center and watch some of our nocturnal species, take a stroll to the local market or relax in the hammock outside of your bungalow.





# VETERINARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

If you are a veterinarian, veterinary technician/nurse, or veterinary student, you can join us on the front line and volunteer or intern at our on-site wildlife hospital. This can be to complete your university placement requirements, gain international experience in wildlife medicine, and expand your knowledge base!

At our center, veterinary volunteers have the opportunity to be trained and lend their skills in wildlife husbandry, care and medicine, all while assisting our full time veterinary team.

Daily duties include, but are not limited to: caring for animals in quarantine and hospital areas, shadowing and assisting our veterinary team on a daily basis, performing daily health check rounds of resident animals, providing treatment to any current inpatients and outpatients, assisting in maintaining patient records, inventory management and clinic organization, and assisting our resident veterinarians with any emergency cases and surgeries.

We do not keep to a specific schedule for our Wildlife Hospital, as the required daily tasks change depending on the animals in our care. Volunteers usually work from 8:00am to 5:00pm. We ask all Wildlife Hospital volunteers to be flexible and understand that if there is an emergency, changes in these times occur. We will always put the care of the animals first. Be prepared to be kept on your toes as no day is the same for our Vet team! At any time, we could receive a large confiscation of wildlife, receive donated wildlife at our gates or have an animal which needs critical veterinary attention in our center.

Our veterinary team will always put the safety of our volunteers first. You must always follow the instructions of our veterinary team and **never** act on your own without permission. If you witness an injury or other incident when a member of staff is not with you, always inform our veterinary team before attempting to handle or treat an animal.



# OTHER VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

## ANIMAL-BASED STUDIES

Are you working towards an animal or conservation based degree? We are open to take students who are looking to work on projects or research in areas including, but not limited to, wildlife behavior and zoology, diets and nutrition, the rehabilitation process, illegal wildlife trade, and conservation. Simply email us with your proposed study or project, we can then assess whether we can accommodate your plan.

Animal-based studies students stay on-site and are provided with 3 meals a day. Typically, the duration of such internships are semester (3 months) or half-year (6 month) in duration. As each study will have different needs, please let our staff know what you require.

Student interns and researchers follow the same rules and policies of our volunteers. Please read through our policy section at the back of this guide thoroughly so you are prepared.

## DONATION OF PROFESSIONAL TALENT

Are you a professional who would like to donate your talents to help us in our fight to protect wildlife?

Whether you are a professional graphic designer, public relations, illustrator, photographer, animal nutritionist, animal behaviorist, website designer, filmmaker or have a particular skillset or profession which you think could aid us, get in touch! Let us know how you could help us by sending an email to [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org)





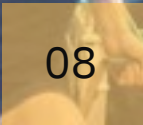
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Our volunteer program has welcomed volunteers from all over the world and each one has made a real difference. Because our program is small in term of total maximum volunteers on site at any given time, your experience will give you a very close-up view of the daily operations at LCTW. Our volunteers become part of the team very quickly.

Our Veterinary Volunteering programs focus on providing medical care for the animals across the site.

We take our role to try and rehabilitate our animals very seriously and direct physical human contact can be a detriment to their rehabilitation, recovery and their ability to illicit natural behaviors.

It's great to be able to sit back and watch animals using the enrichment you have made or the new branches you have put in their enclosure and we encourage all our volunteers to enjoy observing our animals' natural behaviors!





# REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH LCTW

To volunteer with LCTW, you do not need any previous wildlife experience.

As we require dedicated volunteers all year round, we are simply looking for volunteers with a positive attitude who are interested in helping wildlife and a willingness to learn

## **However, we do have a few general requirements for volunteering with us:**

1. Speak a moderate to high level of English
2. Be generally fit and healthy as the work load can be very strenuous
3. Be able to tolerate a hot and humid climate, including working outside in these conditions.
4. Be a minimum 18 years of age - volunteers under 18 years can join our project with a parent for guardian, but thus must be approved prior to booking so please inquire with our booking staff.
5. Have a positive attitude, be motivated to help us build our center and learn new skills





# HOW YOUR VOLUNTEER FEE IS SPENT

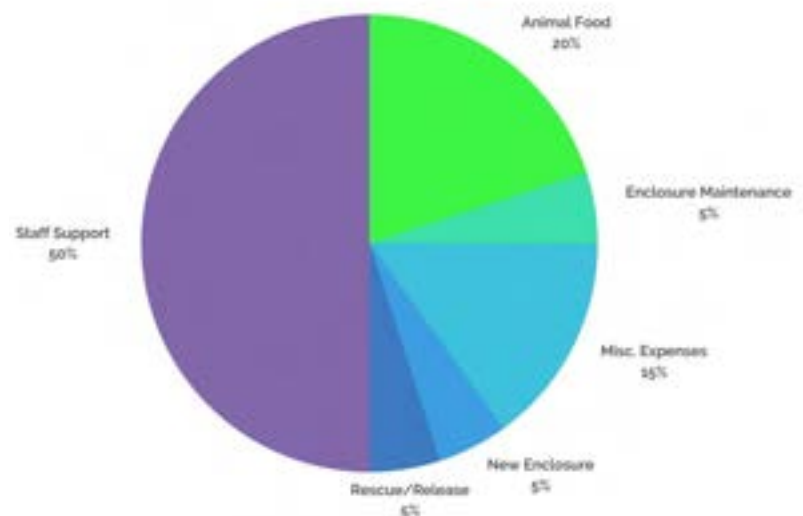


The continued operation and improvement of LCTW could not function without the ongoing support provided by sponsors, individual fundraisers throughout the world, and the donations generated by the volunteer program.

We are very fortunate in that we have had a financial sponsor to cover basic expenses for our center since its founding in 2018. However, as of 2021 our center is striving for financial independence to ensure we can operate long term and truly be a staple for wildlife conservation in Laos.

This means that your volunteer fee is vital in allowing us to operate as a successful rescue center. The donation part of your fee allows us to not only feed the animals and support local staff, but also rescue, rehabilitate and release animals and educate the Lao people. If you're a numbers person have a look at the graph below to see an estimate on how your money is spent at our center.

If you have further questions about how your money supports the center don't hesitate to ask!





# WAYS TO HELP US

**1.VOLUNTEER** - E-mail [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org) to inquire about available dates or see our website [lctwildlife.org/volunteer](http://lctwildlife.org/volunteer)

**2.DONATE** - Individual or group donations can be in many different ways: through our Facebook page, on our website at [lctwildlife.org/donate](http://lctwildlife.org/donate), or in person at our site.

**3.FUNDRAISE** - From sponsored walks and donation boxes to bake sales, there are many ways to fund-raise to help wildlife!

**4.CAMPAIGN, EDUCATE, AND FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL!** - Spread awareness of LCTW's current campaigns and educate others to the issues surrounding the illegal wildlife trade.

**5.DONATE MATERIALS** - We are always in need of supplies for the animals and the Wildlife Hospital. Check out our wish list or contact us on [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org) for the most up to date or urgent requirements.

**6.CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS** - Do you know of or work for a company that would be able to provide us with corporate sponsorship? Contact [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org)

**7.VISIT** - Want to find out more about our project? Visit [lctwildlife.org](http://lctwildlife.org)



# ON-SITE SUPPORT

Our Husbandry & Enrichment, Volunteer coordinator, or other staff member will be with you during your time volunteering with us.

Our Coordinators will not only lead you through animal rounds and your various work projects, but will also be your on-site contact for any issues that may arise such as if you are not feeling well, emergencies at home, or any questions you have about LCTW. If there are issues that come up and you need to speak with management, our management team have an open door policy and are always available to talk to you about any issues or questions.

One of our Coordinators will pick you up in Vientiane from your hotel or the airport. Once you arrive back at the center they will show you around the living area and volunteer facilities, give you an orientation tour around the center and also explain our rules, policies, and emergency procedures.

Following your orientation you will then get to meet with the current volunteers and the rest of our staff.

Our Coordinators will tell you about the day's plans and activities as they develop so you know what to expect for the day ahead. Although some days you can only expect the unexpected!





# ON-SITE AMENITIES AND FOOD

We have five beautiful bungalows for volunteers to stay in with two people maximum per bungalow.

We try to maintain single sex rooms, with the exceptions of couples, friends and families, but this is not always possible due to our capacity for volunteers.

Bungalows have electrical outlets, fans, and fully screened windows for mosquito control. Each bungalow also has a hammock available for lounging on the peaceful front porch.

Fresh bed linen is provided when you arrive and can be changed during your stay if you are a long-term volunteer. We have two shower and toilet blocks, unisex and each fitted with two western style toilets and two showers: one hot and one cold.

During your stay, you look after their own space by keeping your personal area tidy and rooms swept.

All your meals are provided during your stay; lunch and dinner are hot meals delivered to the volunteer house and breakfast materials are provided for you to eat/prepare as you wish.

Clean drinking water is also provided in a number of locations on-site for staff and volunteers.

Lunch and dinner arrive around 12-1215 and 17-1715, respectively. All meals are vegetarian. You must inform us if you have any special dietary requirements before your arrival to the center allowing our kitchen staff to plan for your arrival. You will also have space to store both dry goods and refrigerated items, like ice cream or fruit, for example, that you purchase while staying with us.

We also have on-site laundry where you are welcome to do your laundry at your convenience. Laundry detergent is provided and your coordinator will show you the washing machines.

Wi-fi is available for your use at the main house. The bandwidth is sufficient for streaming and video calls so you will have no problem staying in touch with family and friends while volunteering with us.

As a volunteer you will receive one free Volunteer LCTW t-shirt upon arrival with more available for purchase if you want multiple. We also have a variety of souvenirs for sale in our office from insulated water bottles to local hand made crafts.





# FREE TIME AT AND AROUND LCTW



We are currently located in fairly rural Laos in a village known as Ban Namark and you will be living in an authentic Lao setting. After work hours, volunteers can socialize in our volunteer house where we can watch a movie, have a bonfire or play games as well as have a few drinks and relax. There is also a karaoke bar nearby that our staff and volunteers like to enjoy for a night out.

On days off (and some afternoons) we can take volunteers to a nearby small hotel that has a pool overlooking the languid, relaxing Nam Ngum river. You can watch long boats travel down the river or see local fisherman getting their catch of the day. They do charge a small fee to use the pool (around \$3.00 USD) and you can bring your own drinks and food, or walk to a next door restaurant to fill up after an afternoon at the pool.

There are two main markets nearby the center. The closest one (small market) is about a 5 min walk and has a few small shops and local style food. The further market (big market) is about a 40 min walk and has a larger variety of shops and local stalls. Near the big market there are also a larger variety of shops and restaurants that you might want to walk through or try as well.

## LIVING EXPENSES

While all your food and accommodation is covered while you are here at the center, volunteers should bring some additional currency with them for spending money, such as for local sightseeing, meals out with friends, snacks, etc. The cost of these items is small compared to most other countries.

The local currency here is the Lao Kip and this is the only currency accepted at smaller vendors, though some larger hotels and restaurants in Vientiane will also accept US dollars and Thai Baht. Lao Kip is a closed currency meaning you will not be able to get it until you arrive in the country, but you can plan ahead of time by checking any on-line resource to see the exchange rate.

Vientiane is a small capital city in comparison to other countries, but you can still find most items you need and will easily be able to exchange foreign currencies.

In the local area around LCTW, **shops will only accept Lao Kip**. There are some money exchange locations in our village and there are a couple of ATMs that work on most, but not all international cards. We recommend you bring additional Kip or U.S. dollars (to exchange) with you just in case your card does not work so you have spending money.





## VOLUNTEERING IN LAO PDR

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Laos is a beautiful, tropical and mostly untouched country that is becoming an up and coming destination for travelers looking for a authentic taste of Southeast Asia.

It may not be as developed as neighboring Thailand, or Vietnam, but this is exactly what makes Laos unique and charming. Laos is a developing country and like others in Southeast Asia is communist, though you would never realize this, as its people have freedom of business and movement.

Laos is a relatively safe country to travel to, with a slow and laid-back lifestyle, or Bor Pen Nyang as the locals say, "No Problem!"





# LAO CULTURE

Laos is such a friendly place that there are generally no major cultural issues, though to really settle in, here are a few pointers:

- When Lao people meet, they do not shake hands, they 'wai'. When meeting someone, put your hands into prayer formation thumbs pointing towards your nose and bow your head slightly. If they 'wai' you first, you should 'wai' back.
- Do not point the soles of your feet at anyone, or any images depicting Buddha. As feet are considered impure, make sure you are not putting your feet on tables, chairs or anywhere close to someone's head or in line of their eyesight.
- Touching heads of Lao people or Buddhist statues is also an insult.
- Remove shoes when entering a temple, shops, houses, as well as your rooms. It's a sign of respect (it also keeps your room clean).
- Physical expressions of love (eg. hugging, kissing) is not very common and you are advised to avoid such actions in public.
- Smile and speak a little Lao and you will be loved by the locals. 'Sabaidee', pronounced 'Sab-ai-dee' is the standard Lao greeting, which you can use for all people. Do not take offence if they call you 'farang', pronounced 'fa-lang' - this translates as foreigner and is often used to describe westerners.
- Lao people are very proud of their country, if you make a real effort to understand and respect the Lao culture, you will find this really enhances your experience of Laos.

## LAO PEOPLE AND ANIMAL WELFARE

In Laos, the way people treat each other is very different from the way they treat animals. Some Local people may not treat animals in the way a lot of people in a Western country expect. You can be confronted with shocking situations and may see wild animals kept in captivity: like a primate on a chain, or an eagle in a cage no bigger than itself.

Note that not all Lao people have this attitude towards animals and generally, due to Laos being a Buddhist country, if you see any neglect it usually comes from the lack of access to knowledge than from cruelty. This attitude towards animals seems to be changing in Laos and people seem to be more conscious of nature preservation and the bigger picture, with the help of many NGO education projects such as the work LCTW is undertaking.

Please be prepared for difficult situations and hold back if they occur. You are a guest in the country and animal welfare foundations are lobbying for changes in order to improve the situation. It is also worth remembering that certain forms of what we would deem as animal neglect can be legal in developed countries. If you do see an issue, the best course of action, whether traveling through the country, or here at the center is to let us know so we can properly report it to the authorities.





# LOCAL AMENITIES

Just 200 meters from the gate to the volunteer accommodations, is a small village with a market for fresh fruit, snacks, beverages, toiletries, some clothing and some other supplies, as well as a pharmacy. There is also a phone shop to buy data and call credit as well as a hairdresser. This village has a few local style eateries which serve traditional meals. There are some other small snack shops and restaurants in front of the main gate to the rescue center.

We are situated about 2.5km from the main center of Ban Keun. This town also has a few small supermarket type shops with a limited range of products such as toiletries and food. There are ATMs that do accept most international cards in the town, though please note that it is not possible to use credit cards or debit cards in shops. The village is cash based. There are also facilities in the village to exchange international currencies, we recommend bringing local currency with you as these services are open and closed intermittently. There is a large regional market with a variety of fruit and vegetables, local freshly made snacks, and general household items.

We can provide transport to the main market for volunteers weekly, upon request, which can also coincide with trips to the local swimming pool for volunteers on days off. There are also a few larger riverside restaurants close to the center that volunteers may visit. Please take the time to read our rules and policies section about going into our local village. We ask volunteers to always be respectful of Lao culture and behave appropriately.

## LAO PDR FAST FACTS

**President:** Thongloun Sisoulith (2021)

**Prime Minister:** Sonexay Siphandone (2022)

**Land Area:** 89,112 sq. mi (230,800 sq. km)

**Population:** 7,425,000 (2021)

**Vientiane Population:** 948,000 (2020)

**Life Expectancy:** 68.5 years (2020)

**Major Ethnic Groups:** Lao 53.2%, Khmu 11%, Hmong 9.2%

Laos has over 200 different ethnic groups

**Religions:** Buddhist 67%, Christian 1.5%, other 31.5%

**Monetary Unit:** Lao Kip, Thai Baht, US Dollar

**Rainy Season:** May to October (25-35°C, 75-90% humidity)

**Dry Hot Season:** March and April (28-38°C)

**Dry Cool Season:** November to February (18-30°, cooler at night)

# LAO PDR

Lao PDR is a landlocked country bordering Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam. About 8 million people live in its 18 provinces, with most people (63%) still living in rural areas. However, urbanization is occurring rapidly.

The country is largely mountainous, with the most fertile land found along the Mekong River plains and it has the second highest forest density in Asia. The mighty Mekong River flows from north to south, forming most of the border with Thailand.

Despite still being one of the least developed countries, Lao PDR has made significant progress in poverty alleviation over the past two decades with poverty rates declining from 46% in 1992 to 19% in 2019 (World Bank Poverty Assessment and Profile 2020). Lao PDR's economic boom is driven primarily by direct foreign investment in natural resource extraction and hydropower. Hydropower is Lao PDR's number one export.

The 'Secret War' tied to the Vietnam War, resulted into the presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) which continue to wreak havoc in rural Laos and limits agricultural and other development. More than 8 million bombs were dropped on Laos between 1964 and 1973, with 30 percent of those failing to detonate, making Lao PDR the most bombed country per capita in the world.

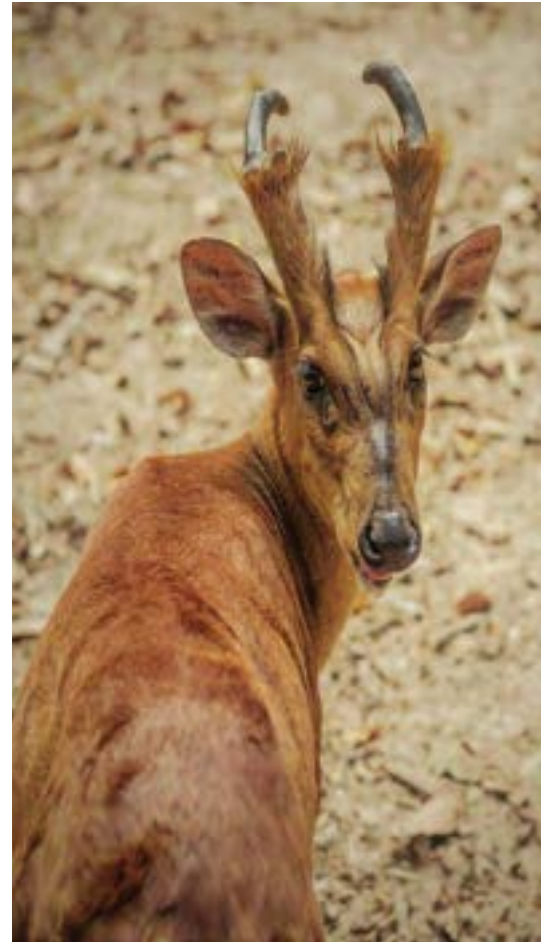
Although these bombs have been cleared in populated areas and the tourist areas, they continue to still affect the most poor and remote communities, whom rely on their land for their livelihoods. Like some other developing countries, a developing judiciary and legal system can cause business regulations and law enforcement to be less effective. That being said, between 1985 and 2012, substantial progress has been made in the main Human Development Index (HDI) indicators: life expectancy increased by 19 years, mean years of schooling increased by 2.5 years and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by 310%. Consequently, Lao PDR has seen steady improvement in its HDI value over time, making it one of the HDI growth leaders in the medium human development category, where it currently sits.

Politically, the country has considerably opened up in recent years, ratifying six out of the nine core human rights treaties, creating a more conducive legal environment for civil society and actively pursuing regional and global integration.

Lao PDR joined the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1997, the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2013 and the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.

Laos became a signatory to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in 2004, which means it has to abide by rules and regulations stipulated by the international treaty on the trade in endangered species.

Although there is still much more to be done by Laos regarding wildlife conservation, the government is reaching out to LCTW and like-minded NGOs to improve the country's policies and enforcement of wildlife protection.





# IMPORTANT PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION



## VISA INFORMATION

To enter Laos, six months' validity on your passport is required by all nationals. You may not always be required to show a return ticket if you are traveling overland. It is wise to procure a travel itinerary to avoid problems; these may be asked for on rare occasions. Most nationalities can obtain a 30-day visa on arrival at road, river and air borders for entry into Laos.

Bring two passport-sized photographs with you for the visa. To volunteer in Laos, volunteers only need a tourist visa. You do not need to apply for a special volunteering or work visa. Check specific requirements for your nationality online or with the consulate in your home country before you arrive, as there is some variation, including cost. A visa on arrival costs approximately \$40 USD. Depending on your nationality this can be more or less. Once again, check before arrival. Please ensure that you bring very crisp bills with no tears, marks, or bends to pay for your visa. Immigration checkpoints will not accept any bills that are not pristine.

Long-term volunteers (those staying in Laos greater than 30 days) will need to extend their visa. You can extend your visa up to 30 days, twice more after your initial entry (for a total of 90 days). You can pay the daily extension fee of ~20,000kip by sending your passport down to Vientiane immigration office. We will help sort these details for you when you are here. It may require you physically crossing the border into Thailand to renew your tourist visa, called a 'visa-run'.

A Visa Run means you will exit and re-enter the country in a short period of time, with the sole purpose of obtaining a new visa, these border crossings will take no longer than a day. Again, we will explain that process when you are here.

Please note, that your visa is your responsibility and make sure you talk to your LCTW Coordinators or LCTW management regarding when you need to go and we can help guide you through the process in person here.

If you overstay your visa, you will have to pay a fine when you leave the country of \$7-10 USD per day (charged in kip so USD amount depends on current currency exchange rates) overstayed.

## PERSONAL INSURANCE

Although we will do our best to ensure your safety, LCTW does not accept any liability for you or your possessions while on or off-site, as a volunteer. Please make sure you have the necessary insurance cover for any emergency that could occur and that you bring a copy of your policy with you. There are many travel sites online which will recommend insurance when undertaking volunteer work.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE -PRE ARRIVAL

We recommend that all volunteers see a specialist travel doctor or their family doctor before coming to our project, as they can provide the most up-to-date information for safe travelling in Laos and working with animals. It is best to schedule an appointment up to three months before you leave, as some vaccinations may need to be administered over multiple appointments or weeks.

We recommend all volunteers, at the very least, have their DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Polio) vaccinations up-to-date.

We also recommend you discuss the following diseases specifically with your doctor:

## **RABIES**

The rabies vaccine is used in two distinct occasions. Firstly, to protect those who are at risk of exposure to the disease and secondly, to prevent the development of rabies upon exposure as a form of treatment. The schedule of vaccinations to prevent the disease varies between each brand so check with your doctor, as you may need to begin vaccinations as long as 3 months before travel.

## **MALARIA AND DENGUE FEVER**

The risk of malaria is low in urban areas and areas surrounding Vientiane. Discuss malaria with your doctor. Medications to reduce the risk of disease may be recommended, but deciding whether or not you will use malaria medication is your own responsibility. Taking mosquito repellent precautions with Picaridin (minimum 20%) or DEET products is recommended. There is a risk of dengue fever in Laos, which is transmitted by mosquitoes. There is no vaccine for dengue fever and prevention is based upon insect avoidance via repellents, nets, and insecticides. Our area is classed as the lowest risk area for contracting malaria and dengue fever.

## **HEPATITIS A&B**

Your doctor may recommend a hepatitis vaccination. Hepatitis can be found in primates and although we function as a 'hands off' facility, mention this to your doctor. There are available vaccines to combine Hepatitis A and B that will protect you for several years to come.

## **TUBERCULOSIS**

Depending on your age and country of origin, some of you may have had this vaccine as a teenager at school. Once you have this vaccine, it will protect you for life. Tuberculosis (TB) is found in some primate species and can be transferred to humans through coughs and sneezes. Although we have no primates diagnosed with this disease at the center, we still recommend that you mention this to your doctor as a precautionary measure.





# HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE

## SAFETY AROUND ANIMALS AND ZOO NOTIC DISEASES

The health and safety of our volunteers is very important to us and we take all possible precautions to ensure that there are no accidents. Please see details below which will help you to stay safe at the center.

Our facility has certain procedures for animal management, including the hands-off policy, in place for both the safety of people as well as the animals. However, consider if you are not being consciously aware of your surroundings or are not following your coordinator's guidance, an animal with a long reach and fast reflexes may grab you. You will also be warned about specific animals during your introductory tour with whom extra caution is advised.

Zoonotic diseases are passed from animals to humans and vice versa. All of the animals cared for at LCTW are thoroughly tested and kept in specific areas of the rescue center, unless we suspect illness. However, it is important to be aware of the health risks that can occur when working with any wild or domestic animals. Some of these were discussed in the previous section. Zoonotic diseases are a very important reason why volunteers should not handle any of the animals at the center and a good reason for not keeping primates, in particular, as pets. Viruses and bacteria can be transmitted to humans through bite wounds and scratches, or by coming into contact with feces, saliva and urine. Close petting of animals can result in exposure to diseases. A further concern is the possibility of humans transmitting diseases to the animals in our care. Respiratory infections are the most common diseases transmitted from humans to primates, even when there has been no physical contact. Primates are very close to us genetically, so infections can easily cross.

All volunteers will be given a safety briefing before working with our animals. Rules are very clear and if any volunteer does not follow our safety procedures or endangers the safety of other volunteers by acting recklessly, they will be immediately asked to leave the center without refund. A list of policies and rules are found further on in this guidebook and volunteers are expected to follow them. If you do not agree with these policies and procedures please do not apply to volunteer with us. Our policies are in place to protect our animals, staff and volunteers. You will also read through our Volunteer guidelines during your introductory tour.

## RABIES

Rabies is a deadly viral infection of the brain transmitted from animals to humans. The disease itself is rare in travelers, but the risk increases with extended travel & the likelihood of animal contact. Dogs are the main carriers; however primates, bats, cats & other animals may also transmit the disease. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel & those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with animals. Note that many domestic animals roam freely throughout Southeast Asian streets. In case of any incidents onsite, there are vaccines available at the international hospital in Vientiane.

## MOSQUITOES, ANTS AND OTHER BUGS

You should aim to protect yourself from bites as much as possible. During dusk hours or working dense grassy areas, use adequate insect repellent and preferably wear long sleeves and trousers to cover up your skin. You should also keep any food packaged or open out of your bungalow as ants will always find it. If you do get bitten, then TRY NOT TO SCRATCH! Working in this environment means you could infect your wounds, especially in wet and muddy conditions. It is important to keep wounds of any kind clean and dry at all times to prevent infection. If you infect your wounds, let a member of staff know immediately, so that we can treat or take you to the hospital before the infection spreads. If you have a mild allergic reaction, it is recommended to use antihistamine pills and/or cream, these can be purchased from the local pharmacy.



## **SNAKES AND SCORPIONS**

Please be warned that you may encounter snakes and/or scorpions during your stay in Laos and at our center. In such cases, DO NOT panic or approach them. Move away from the animal. If you are on-site at LCTW, alert a member of staff, who may move them to a safe area. Occasionally snakes are encountered in long grass, in the trees, pools, etc. but rarely attack people unless they are threatened, so keep your distance. Scorpions may be found under tree bark, logs, in piles of leaves, etc. Be sure to take precautions, wear proper closed-toe shoes and working gloves if handling logs and leaves.

We have staff sweeping leaves every day around the rescue center and working areas, but please also take precautions yourself by keeping work and living areas tidy. Scorpions and other animals could even seek refuge in piles of clothes strewn around the floor. Please ensure your room is kept clean and tidy at all times to avoid harboring any unwanted visitors. Don't forget to also check your footwear for any unwanted visitors before you put them on.

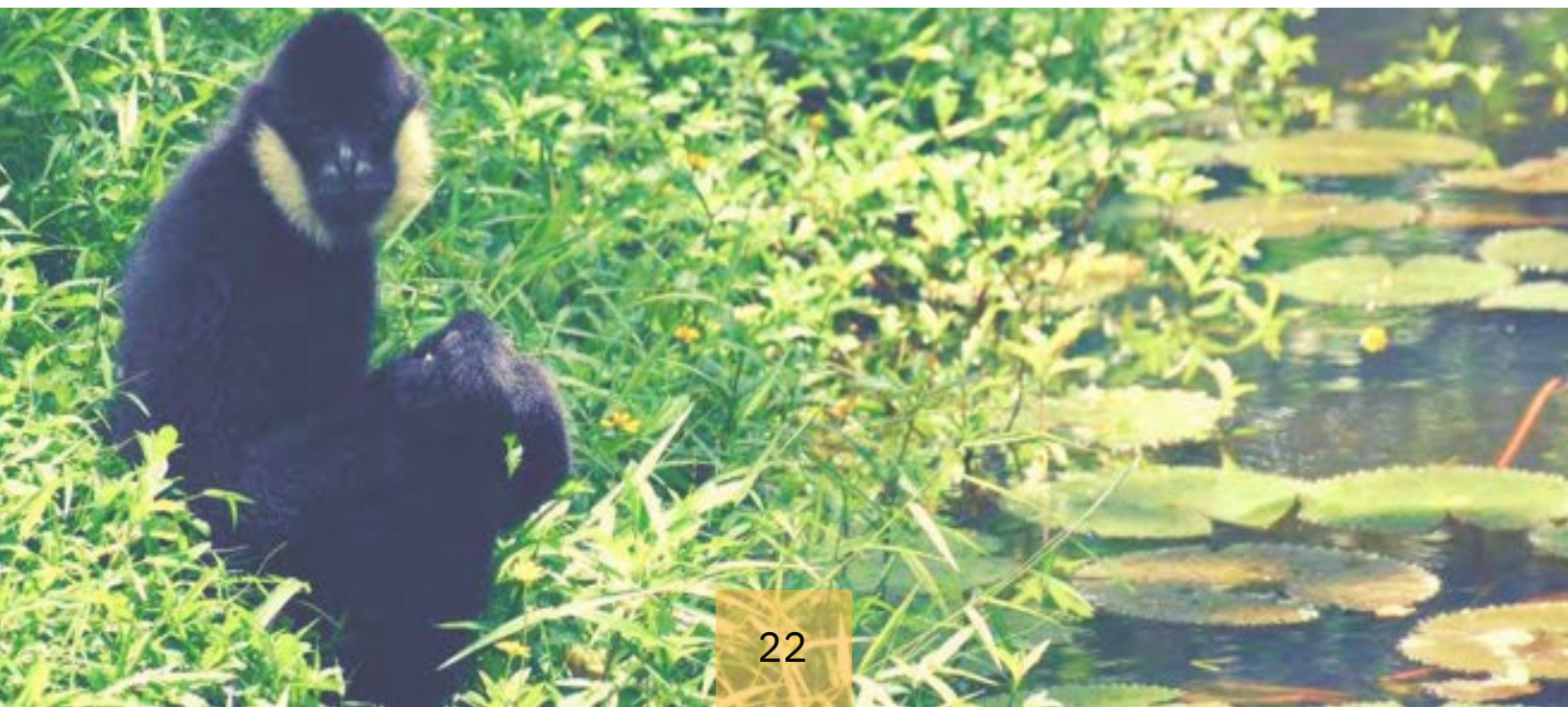
On the rare occasion that someone is bitten or stung, withdraw immediately and call for help. It is important that the person stays as still and calm as possible, this will help to slow down the effects of venom, if someone has been envenomated. Do not attempt to catch the animal, as this will increase your risk of being bitten again. Most of the species here are not venomous, and even those that are, do not always inject venom when they bite. You will be given first aid and then taken straight to the hospital if deemed necessary. If you are bitten on the hand, then remove any rings you might be wearing, due to risk of swelling.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

Multiple staff at LCTW can perform basic first aid including our medically trained veterinarians. If you or a staff member feels you need to see a doctor, there are a number of options available.

We have a couple of local pharmacies in the village for basic illness treatment, however for anything serious, staff will drive volunteers to one of three international, 24-hour clinics in Vientiane. These clinics have experienced foreign doctors who speak English or French, provide pathology, x-ray, ultrasound and many other services. For serious medical emergencies or surgery, volunteers will be taken into Thailand from the border bridge in Vientiane, as the services provided in Thailand are more comprehensive. Ensure your insurance policy covers travel over borders for medical emergencies.

In your application, please fill the emergency contact information accurately in case we need to contact them.







## **EXTREME WEATHER**

At the center, we can have varied weather patterns such as extreme heat, heavy winds, and heavy rain storms. If we happen to have any out-of-the-ordinary events, please follow the directions of staff. For example, we can have very heavy storms on-site that may not come with much warning. If staff say to seek cover, please follow instructions immediately and do so.

## **OUTSIDE THE RESCUE CENTER**

Here, we can only advise caution as we do not accept any responsibility for your safety when you are not on the premises. We recommend that you dress and behave in a respectable manner in the local village as we are a part of this area and want to leave a positive impression on the people in our village.

We also strongly recommend that you return from the village before it gets dark and to not go out after dark. If you must do this, then please only do so in groups.

Please be aware that you will be liable for injuries to yourself or others for failing to comply with this rule. Volunteers are highly advised not to get into cars or on the back of motorbikes which are not owned by, organized by or being driven by LCTW members of staff. This can be dangerous for a number of reasons, one of which is that, drunk driving is common place in developing South-east Asian countries.

Sexual relations with local people is **ILLEGAL** in Laos. If volunteers engage in sexual relations, mutual or not, with a local person while volunteering at the LCTW, they will be asked to leave immediately. It is strictly illegal and when here, you represent our center to the local community.



# PACKING LIST

Here is a suggested list of items to bring to LCTW for your volunteer experience. Many of these items are available in Vientiane however, please make purchases before your pick up time.

## **We suggest:**

- Lightweight work clothes that you do not mind getting dirty or stained
- For veterinary volunteers, clinic shoes (slip on closed toe shoes, such as Crocs)
- Long sleeved tops and trousers: to protect you from the sun and insect bites
- Sunhat, cap, or bandanna to protect you against the sun, along with plenty of sunscreen/cream
- Torch/flashlight and/or head-torch
- A device with an alarm clock
- Wash towels (they can be bought locally, but options are limited)
- Comfortable shoes or sandals for leisure and closed toe shoes for work
- Lightweight rainproof clothing (e.g. poncho - cheap quality ones can be bought locally)
- Earplugs for sleeping
- Simple first aid kit with bandages, antiseptics, and medications (allergies, headache, stomach bugs, etc., though many pharmacies with all general medicines are nearby)
- Work gloves
- High-factor sunglasses
- Power adaptor (2 straight pin or 2 round pin)

## **Optional and Rainy Season Specific:**

These items are not required for you to stay here, though may make your time here more comfortable.

- Rubber boots if coming in rainy season and a good supply of socks (rubber boots can also be bought locally).
- Good supply of clothes, especially underwear (getting clean clothes dry is more challenging in wet and humid seasons)
- Warmer clothes for the evenings in the cool season (November-February)



# GETTING TO AND FROM LCTW

## Arrivals

### **Vientiane Pick-up**

Our coordinators pick-up volunteers in Vientiane every Sunday from 09:30-10:30 am only. The details of pickup (hotel address or airport) will be worked out prior to your arrival via email with our Coordinators. We only pickup on Sundays and in the morning to allow time for your volunteer orientation tour and allow you to get ready for your first full day on Monday.

### **Local Pick-up**

If you are already out traveling and find yourself in Ban Keun or the local area we are able to pick you up from guesthouses or hotels within a 15km radius of the center. This is done every Sunday around midday and should be arranged in advance with our team via email. Ask our team for a recommendation of where to stay in our local town the night before your scheduled arrival.

### **Your Pick-up details**

Please send us the hotel name, address and contact number at least 48 hours prior to your pick-up.

Please note we will not pickup volunteers from Vang Vieng or Luang Prabang; however, we can assist you on the best way to get here simply by contacting our Coordinators.

### **Drop-off details**

When the coordinators leave to pick-up new volunteers on Sunday they will take those volunteers that need to go to Vientiane with them at 8:00am in the morning. If volunteers wish to leave earlier or later in the day on Sunday they will be responsible for paying for their own transportation, however we can help advise and/or arrange transport for you (i.e. you are traveling to Vang Vieng after your time volunteering).

Please note national holidays may affect the times and dates available, make sure you plan ahead.

## TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Even if you are only staying a few weeks, the best option is to bring your own mobile phone and buy a cheap Lao SIM card here (available upon arrival at the airport, just outside Arrivals). We recommend you get a Unitel brand SIM card as these provide the best service in our area.

There are fantastic internet and call packages available. You can grab one of these SIM cards at the airport.

If you do not have your own phone with you, it is not possible to make international calls from LCTW unless there is an emergency.

# CONTACTING HOME & EMERGENCIES

## **EMERGENCIES**

In case of an emergency, you can receive telephone calls to LCTW.

The best time for people to call is in working hours in Laos. Please stress that calling the LCTW numbers must only be in a real emergency and preferably not during the night in Laos.

Emergency Phone Number +856 2052 902 093

Wi-fi at the main house can be used for video/phone calls over internet apps. There are no Internet cafes or computers close by for volunteers to use. However, inexpensive local SIM cards can be purchased in the village as previously mentioned (see page 25).

## **MAIL**

Volunteers cannot receive personal mail or packages at the center. If you wish to make a donation of items that needs to be mailed, please contact [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org) and we can provide assistance and a mailing address in Vientiane.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

You should make copies of important travel documents (passport, tickets, traveler's checks, driver's license, etc) and keep these somewhere safe and separate from the originals. It is also recommended to leave an extra copy with family or friends back home. We also highly recommend registering your travel details with your home country's Foreign Affairs Departments, if they have one.



# WISH LIST

Some volunteers ask us if there is anything they can bring to help us with the animals at the center. We are very appreciative of anything you can bring us and are always looking for larger and more specialized enrichment and basic stocks for our animals.

We also readily accept specialized equipment such as husbandry tools, medical supplies and supplements. If you think you can help with specialized animal equipment, please contact [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org). Alternatively, you can donate money towards supplies that are cheaply available in the local area or even purchase them yourself while you are here volunteering.

Below is a general list of items we often need, but if you would like a more comprehensive list please visit our website [lctwildlife.org](http://lctwildlife.org) or email us at [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org). If you are veterinary professional and wish to donate more specialized items, please contact us and we will provide you with more specific information on items needed and how to get them into the country.



## Easy to Pack Donation Supplies

- Old towels/ blankets /sheets
- Vet Wrap/Coban
- Casting Material
- Fiberglass or Plaster
- High quality hanging metal pet water and food bowls
- Powdered Milk (human, puppy, kitten, goat)
- Thermo pad (microwavable or otherwise)
- Thermometers
- Reptile keeping supplies
- Heat lamps and bulbs
- Thermostat
- Bottles for feeding infant animals
- Exotic & domestic animal supplements:
  - Reptile calcium powder
  - Oxbow Critical Care Fine Grind
  - De-worming medications
- Specialized pet food
  - Bird Seed
  - Reptile pellets
  - Species specific biscuits
- Good quality, rust-proof tools
  - Hand Saw
  - Loppers/pruning shears
- Work gloves
- Carabiners and/or Quick links of all sizes
- Unsalted nuts and edible seeds
- Old perfumes or scented sprays for enrichment
- Blowing bubbles
- Long lasting enrichment toys
- Puzzle Feeders -Boomer balls
- To see a complete wishlist of equipment, please visit [lctwildlife.org](http://lctwildlife.org)

# PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

- Make full payment to LCTW
- Health check-up with travel doctor including vaccinations
- Visa (prior to arriving or upon arrival depending on your country)
- Travel Insurance
- Book flights
- Notify LCTW of arrival and pick up details **at least 48 hours** before arrival date
- Give travel document copies & LCTW contact details to family/friends in case of an emergency Read & review LCTW Volunteer Guidebook thoroughly





# LCTW RULES AND POLICIES



Please review the following pages closely and abide by these rules during your stay with us.

Most of these involve common sense and will help you and fellow volunteers create life-long memories at LCTW. When you arrive you will be given a safety briefing and an orientation talk and will cover the policies listed below.

The rules and policies are not limited to what is below and you may be informed of changes or new rules which you will also need to follow strictly.

## OUR ANIMALS

Our animals' welfare, safety and needs, come first at all times. Our center rescues new animals frequently, so some schedules and rules will change to meet the specialized needs of our animals.

Keeping animals happy and busy is a major task at our rescue center. Whenever you have an idea, please discuss this with a member of staff (e.g. enrichment or enclosures, improvements of enclosures and never act alone or without permission.

Please help to observe the animals at the rescue center so we can detect any problems as soon as possible. Always tell someone as soon you notice something to be out of the ordinary. For example, if you notice any wounds or behavior that is unusual for the animal, report this to a member of staff.

These situations may involve an animal which is mostly cared for by our volunteer team and we need your help to ensure that all animals are happy and healthy while they are with us. We also ask that you notify staff if you see anything that is broken or needs to be replaced.





## HANDS-OFF POLICY

### **LCTW HAS A STRICT HANDS-OFF POLICY**

We will ask volunteers to leave immediately if they touch the animals. Unless previously specified by your one of our expat staff members.

LCTW has a strict hands-off policy, this is so we can ease the integration of wildlife with their own species, facilitate future releases back to the wild, as well as ensuring staff, volunteer and animal safety.

Unfortunately, most of our animals have already had too much contact with humans as most are victims of the illegal wildlife trade. Due to this some may look like they want attention and we ask volunteers not to touch them. Animals appearing to give social interaction are most likely NOT trying to be friendly. In the majority of cases, this behavior is a sign of significant stress and submission. Do not be drawn in by it.

For example, a Gibbon showing you his/her back is not a gesture of wanting a back scratch, it is a sign that the animal is submitting due to your presence. Though it may be a nice experience for you to touch an animal, there is a very real risk of disease transmission, some with obvious symptoms (if you have a cold or cough) and some without.

If you see something you are unsure about or do not agree with please talk directly to the Coordinators or Director. They can answer any questions you may have regarding the animals here at LCTW. We encourage you to share your creativity, ideas and opinions with your coordinators or the LCTW Director.



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We encourage volunteers to share our work and our messages of wildlife conservation with friends, family, and other travelers. You are allowed to share pictures of animals at LCTW on social media, preferably tagged with our hashtag or location to further spread the message of the work you are doing here at LCTW. We also encourage you to share the official LCTW social media posts to further spread our messages of conservation.

## **Below are some rules for posting your own photos on social media:**

- Do not share any photos from 'behind the scenes' areas which are strictly staff and volunteer only areas.
- Do not share images of staff (or veterinary volunteers) interacting physically with animals including surgeries and ongoing care. We also regularly have many orphans in the care of staff. You may take these photos to show friends and family at home if given permission by staff, however they are NOT allowed to go on social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat.

This is for two reasons.

1. We do not want to advertise ourselves as a project where you can 'play' with animals. If we are to responsibly release animals back into their wild homes, they need to have a cautiousness around humans.

2. When people see others, doing what could be perceived as 'playing' with wildlife it sends a message that they can also 'play' and interact with wildlife. Which means more animals are taken from the wild and put into the illegal wildlife trade.

Social media can be a great way to spread awareness, but can also have a negative effect on wildlife. There is a demand from individuals to have these "cute" animals as pets and those businesses that know tourists/customers will pay to take a "selfie" with a cute animal. Photos can contribute towards the illegal trade, do not be part of it and think before posting.

We understand people want to share their experience with others as we do as well! However, we take this policy very seriously as it can undermine the work we are accomplishing here at the center and in Laos. If you ever have any questions about whether a photo can be posted please feel free to ask your coordinator.

Volunteers who ignore this policy will be asked to leave immediately.

# STREET ANIMALS

If you compare Laos to other Southeast Asian nations, you will notice there are considerably less street animals. Though you will still encounter some and those that are on the street usually belong to people in nearby homes. Whilst this may be hard for volunteers, we ask you not to bring any dogs or cats back to the center.

Please do not feed any of the temple or street animals or give them attention, as they are likely to follow you back to the rescue center. Street dogs and cats are also the largest carriers of rabies and many other diseases, please resist all temptation to touch any street animals for your own safety.

Please note: We do have resident domestic dogs and a cat that live with staff on-site, they will be pointed out to you during your induction tour. These animals are not to leave the property with you, go to the village, into the zoo section, or your rooms.



# PAYMENT POLICY

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We require **full payment** to reserve your booking into our system. This payment is fully refundable, if you need to cancel for any reason, up to 31 days before you are due to arrive at the center. Please note that a full refund does not include any bank fees, PayPal, card fees or any other form of transfer fees that are incurred by LCTW and are non refundable at any point.

## **Please read our cancellation policy below.**

**10%** of your total fee will be charged if you notify us of your cancellation or any changes to your booking between 30 and 22 days before your scheduled arrival date.

**30%** of your total fee will be charged if you notify us of your cancellation or any changes to your booking between 21 and 15 days before your scheduled arrival date.

**50%** of your total fee will be charged if you notify us of your cancellation or any changes to your booking 14 to 8 days before your scheduled arrival date.

**70%** of your total fee will be charged if you notify us of your cancellation or any changes to your booking 7 to 3 days before your scheduled arrival date.

**100%** of your total fee will be charged if you notify us of your cancellation or any changes to your booking 2 days before your scheduled arrival or in the event of a no show.

Returning volunteers will receive a 5% discount, let us know if you have volunteered at the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife previously during the booking process.

To make your payment and confirm your volunteer booking please email [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org). If you have any questions or queries regarding our cancellation or payment policies, please do not hesitate to reach out.





# VOLUNTEER DUTIES

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Be on time. If your job starts at 8:00 be there at 8:00. It is not fair for other people if they turn up on time and have to wait for you. If you do need to be late please let a coordinator know.

Volunteers usually work 6 days a week depending on the needs of the center. The elected volunteer day off is Sunday.

Please advise your Coordinator or your job leader if you are feeling ill, depending on the job you have been allocated, you may be asked to switch for the day or ask for extra days off.

Never walk around the enclosures with food or drink, the animals can reach through the cages and grab what you are holding.

Always be aware of your surroundings. You may be working very close to some animals that can scratch, bite, or pull you towards their enclosures. Be careful not to leave equipment where you may trip over them or where animals can grab them. You should know where an animal, other staff and fellow volunteers are at all times in order to keep all parties involved safe and you can work efficiently.

Always follow instructions of staff. If they ask you to stop something, immediately do so.

Animal escapes are rare, though if an animal escapes, remove yourself immediately, but calmly, from the area so you do not stress the animal or look threatening to the animal. Never attempt to catch or lure an animal back as this is very dangerous. Inform a staff member and make sure you retreat to your closest safe place. This can include inside a building or inside an empty enclosure. Stay there until you are told the situation is safe.

# WORK AREAS AND TOOLS

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For all jobs you will find the tools you need in the enrichment room, designated work areas or your coordinator will get them you. Please treat these with respect and return them to the correct place after use. If you use brooms or tools, clean them and put them back where they belong. If you are asked to borrow a tool from the staff in another area please return to its original place.

Make sure your work areas are always clean after your task is complete. After you're finished, make sure all areas are swept and cleaned. This is for hygiene and to reduce the amount of unwanted visitors that may spread disease. Wipe down benches, wash all utensils, and neatly return everything to where it belongs.





# DRESS-CODE AND FOOTWEAR



Please do not wear any jewelry whilst working in the center. Many animals (especially primates) are very attracted to shiny objects and they can grab and pull, which could harm both you and the animal if they ingest it. This is most prudent with facial piercings such as nose rings and large earrings. It is also possible to get jewelry stuck in cages or on tools when working.

Headphones are not to be worn while working around the rescue center. Apart from the risk of being distracted, if something is happening around you, it is also dangerous if you cannot hear any warnings.

It is required for volunteers to wear closed-toed footwear during working hours for safety reasons. Ground-based infections such as tetanus and a variety of parasites are not uncommon and can contaminate your feet if left unprotected. Toe, foot, and ankle injuries are common injuries when conducting physical work, which if you are in our husbandry and enrichment program this will make up much of the work you do. Therefore, footwear with good ankle support is recommended.

Take extra care after a rain or hosing cement the ground becomes very slippery.

Remember that cultural expectations may be different here than in your country. In order to be respectful of the culture here in Laos we do require the following dress codes:

- Volunteers should not display any midriff, cleavage, or large amounts of back.
- Tank tops/singlets with thick shoulder straps are preferable over 'spaghetti' straps. Though tops that cover your shoulders or even long sleeve are recommended as this will give you extra sun protection, protection against mosquitoes along with being culturally appropriate.
- Shorts should not be shorter than mid-thigh range.
- Must not walk around on-site in swim wear at any time.



# HOUSE, ACCOMMODATION, KITCHEN & AFTER WORK POLICIES

- After dark do not leave the living area to go into the center or to try and do any work with animals unless you receive permission from staff.
- We have a security team patrolling our site throughout the night, so don't be alarmed if you see men in blue uniform walking around the site in the evening.
- Please always **wash your own dishes properly AND immediately after you use them and remember to clean up after yourself when cooking** your own breakfast or snacks as others will need to use the cookware provided. This is especially important at breakfast as this is the busiest time in the kitchen.
- Be considerate of others. Don't forget you're now living with a group of people. Although you may be here for a short period of time, this is the home of our expat staff. Think about other people before leaving a mess in the communal/shared areas.
- Label your own food and do not take other people's food. We have a communal refrigerator and communal dry storage area where you can store personal items you buy. Please remember if food is not in the communal area it belongs to someone.
- If you are a smoker please be considerate of those that are not. There is smoking "hangout" space for staff and volunteers so please be aware of people and your surroundings. Please be sure to take care of your cigarette butts and not leave them on the ground.
- Bread, eggs, jams, condiments are provided for all volunteers.
- If you empty the filtered drinking water bottle from the dispenser, please replace it. If you are struggling to do so, ask for assistance.
- Always keep all communal areas (including your room) clean as this reduces the amount of pest problems.
- Regarding noise levels, please consider the staff who need to sleep in the living area and close to other communal areas. **Quiet hours are 10pm to 6am.**
- You may receive new roommates; you will be told of this before their arrival so please have rooms tidy. If you need new bedding please ask your Coordinator.
- Do not leave fans and lights on in your bedroom during the day. If fans and lights are left on staff have the right to enter your room to turn it off.
- If you are the last one to bed at night, please turn off all lights inside and outside the living area.
- Return your key and leave your bedroom in the condition you would like to find it on your arrival.
- If you have an issue with something or someone please talk to a Coordinator as soon as possible so we can get it sorted out for you.



# DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SOCIAL ISSUES

**LCTW has a ZERO TOLERANCE for drugs.** If volunteers are found with illegal substances, they will immediately be escorted off the premises and reported to the police. If the police find you on-site with drugs this will have serious consequences for our center. After 5:00pm on your working days (and days off) you can socialize with everyone in the living area and this includes the moderate consumption of alcohol if you are of legal age. After 10:00pm please keep noise down and return to your accommodation. Remember other volunteers and staff who live in the house may not want to socialize and it is their house as they are here year round.

Heavy drinking and drunken disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and could lead to you being asked to leave the center. Working with wild animals early in the morning when you are hungover is dangerous for yourself, other volunteers, staff and the animals. If we think you are hungover we have the right to ask you not to work. If you turn up to work drunk you will be asked to leave the center.

Volunteers are permitted to go to local bars in the village during the evenings. Please be aware that as soon as you leave the center we are not responsible for your well being this includes any decisions you may make while you are off grounds. Always tell your Coordinator your plans before you leave the center so we know where to find you in case of an emergency. We **STRONGLY** recommend that you **DO NOT** get in cars or on the back of motorbikes/scooters which are not organized or being driven by LCTW members or staff under any circumstances. Drunk driving is very common around Southeast Asia and often times ends in fatal accidents. Sometimes volunteers will go to a local restaurant or bar with LCTW staff in a staff vehicle. If this occurs, there will always be a LCTW staff member who is the designated driver.

If you walk out of the center after hours, please always have a light or torch with you. Walk close to the sides of the road or off it and do not walk in large groups or lines across the road.

Women should pay special note to Lao culture since it is quite different to what you may be used to in your home country. Showing too much skin is unacceptable so please cover your midriff, cleavage, top of your thighs and preferably your shoulders in the village.

Sexual interactions or sexual relationships with the local or expat staff are prohibited. Sexual relations with Lao people is illegal and carries heavy punishment in Laos. **DO NOT** engage in any sexually intimate behavior with a local person while you are volunteering with us. You will be asked to leave if this conduct takes place.



# LCTW RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE IF:

- You do anything to harm or cause distress to any animal, including touching the animals.
- Your behavior is causing distress to staff and/or other volunteers.
- You have acted with reckless disregard for the safety of staff or volunteers, or have caused them actual harm.
- Your use of alcohol is considered excessive or unacceptable by staff.
- You are found using or are in possession of illegal substances.
- You are charged with a criminal offense during your placement.
- You have acted in such a way that you are likely to bring a bad reputation to the organization.
- You are not fulfilling your obligations as a volunteer and continually refuse to carry out reasonable requests.
- You do not follow the rules outlined in the Volunteer Information pack, or explained to you by your Coordinator.
- You handle any native wildlife you find on-site.



If you are asked to leave for not following the above rules and policies and those explained to you on-site by LCTW staff members, you will not get refunded. Upon confirming to join our project, it is with the understanding that you have read and accepted all the policies, guidelines, and advice recommended in this guidebook.

Thank you again for choosing to volunteer with us. We hope you have a wonderful experience at LCTW! On behalf of our staff and our animals thank you for your time and dedication in helping to save the species of Laos.



# OTHER IMPORTANT BITS

## BOOKINGS AND GENERAL ENQUIRIES

All bookings, pick up arrangements and general inquiries go through our Coordinators here in Laos. Please consider operating hours in Lao time when contacting our team.

### CONTACT LCTW:

Phone: +856 20 55 537 837

EMAIL: [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org)

### CONTACT YOUR COORDINATOR:

EMAIL: [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org)

## ISSUES WITHIN LAOS

For any problems whilst you are in Laos before you arrive at the center, please contact the Phone: +856 20 55 537 837 Please contact our management on the above number for all emergency issues and leave this number with your family.

## FOLLOW US AND SHARE

You can find out further information on Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife on:



Please review your experience at LCTW on Google, Facebook, TripAdvisor or your volunteer partner website as these help us raise money and spread awareness about our project!

## SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Our center accepts volunteers year round, though there are only two days that our volunteer program does not operate. These dates are the 24th and the 25th of December. Volunteers can still stay on-site during these days and enjoy the holidays with our staff.

