

# Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife

## 2026

### VOLUNTEER GUIDEBOOK



# Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife

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## WELCOME TO LAO CONSERVATION TRUST FOR WILDLIFE

### 2026 IS AN EXCITING YEAR FOR LCTW!

Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) is based in Xienglaetha village, Pakngeum district, Vientiane capital around 60km north of the capital of Laos, Vientiane, directly next to a Phou Kham Khouay National Park and the ecotourism site Nam Pien Yorla Pa.

This promises to be a very exciting and busy year at LCTW. Until July 2024, the center was 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 was born in 2018.

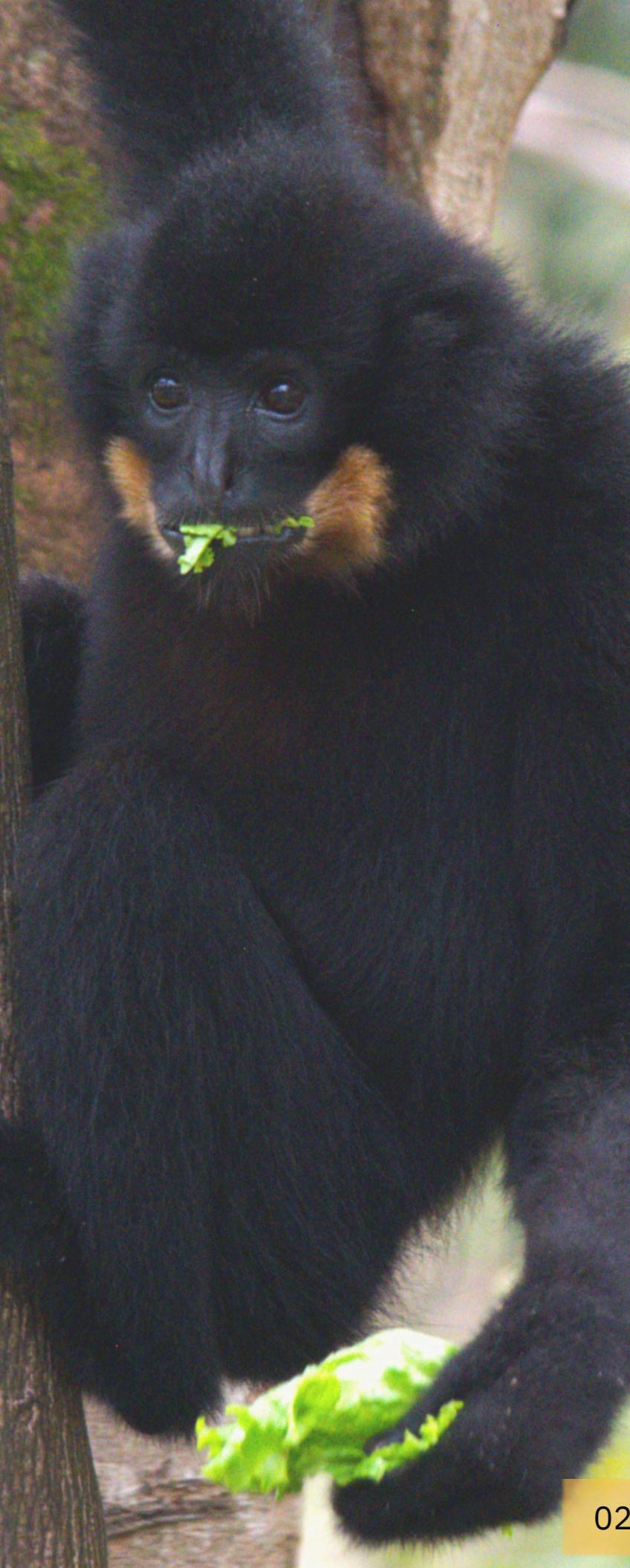
In 2023, LCTW was informed the former Zoo site was no longer available for lease and LCTW had to move. With over 400 animals and 30 years of infrastructure in place, this was an extremely tall order. Taking this as an opportunity to realize their 30 year vision, LCTW went to work to find a new site and develop it.

As a volunteer in 2026, you will be on the frontlines of creating the future of wildlife conservation at LCTW and in Laos. Whilst we are now fully moved in, our new site is still partly in development and your work will directly impact animals' lives by building and improving the site as well as caring for, feeding, and enriching our resident animals who are thriving in their new homes.

If you are staying with us as a volunteer or intern, expect to take away truly unique experiences under the guidance of our wildlife professionals here at LCTW.

Our facility has a dedicated team of both local and expat 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 Lao registered 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.



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Throughout 2026, we are **focused on caring** for our residents animals, **rescuing and releasing** animals, and **continuing to improve our new site**.

In 2022 - 2023, we saw over **30,000 visitors** to our center. Our full programs for visitors to engage with nature and provide access to knowledge and education, in an ethical setting, will resume once construction of our new Welcome Interpretive Center and Museum is completed.

In our old site we created the first and **only Natural History Museum in Laos** to provide visitors a tangible look into wildlife and our roles in conservation.

Outreach programs bring the possibility and excitement of conservation to people of all ages in schools and local communities. We work hard to make a **direct impact on our community**, and have recently began hosting school groups once again, welcoming them to our new site to learn about the importance of conservation.

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, 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 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.

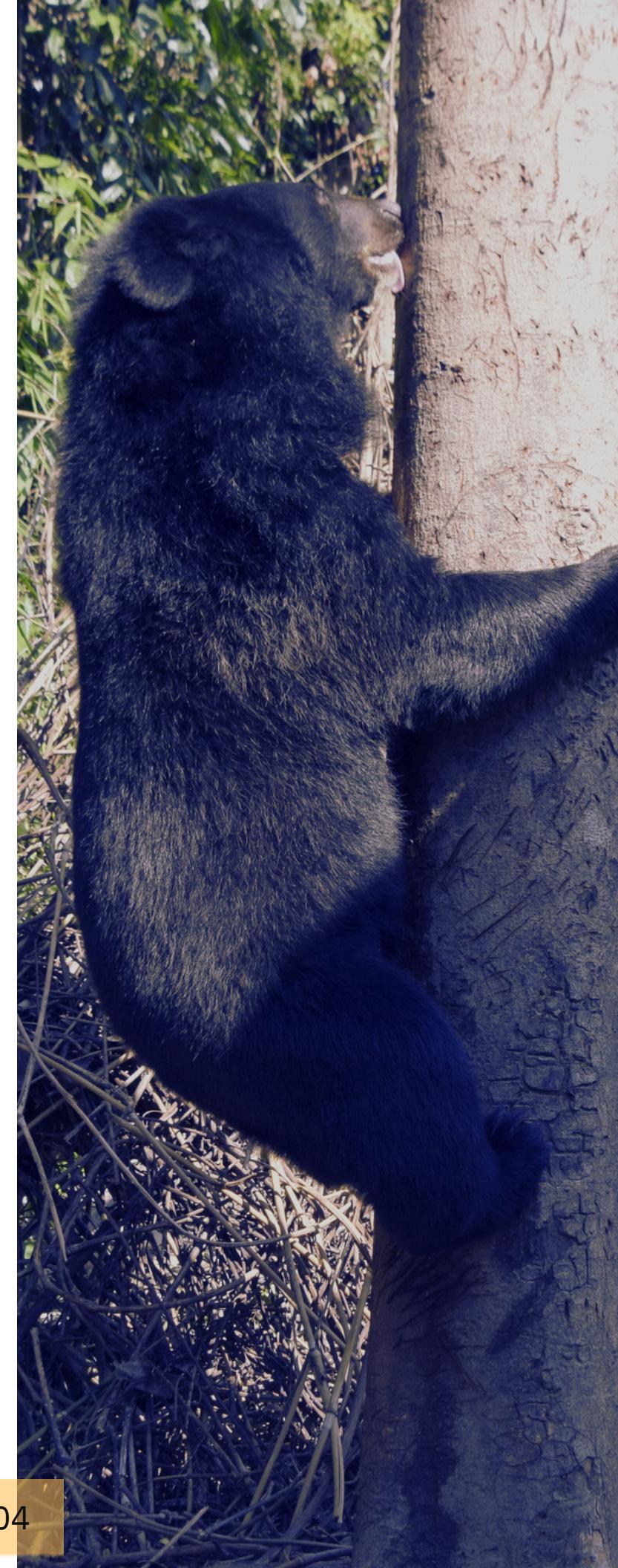
Challenging our animals and making them think through new problems is extremely important to keep their quality of welfare high.

# CONSTRUCTION

Our center is continuously expanding 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, volunteers will get to leave their imprint for years to come as you 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 to our enrichment area 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 Based Program

## WORK SCHEDULE

Our volunteers work between 07:00 and 16:00, six days a week, with volunteers having one day off. Volunteers have the same day off, almost always a Sunday. However, this is your experience. Therefore, if you need extra breaks you can ask for additional time off during the week. Volunteers are also encouraged to take as many breaks during the day as they need in order to stay healthy. This program can be quite physically exhausting due to the nature of the work being outside in the heat and humidity as well as the terrain at our site (which is quite steep and can be uneven), but we are here to work with you and help you adapt the program so you find it enjoyable. If the terrain and heat are getting to you, we have some less strenuous tasks that we can have you help us with during your time here.

We have a general work schedule for our volunteer Husbandry 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.

Most animals on site live in large, completely natural forested enclosures. This provides them with ample “environmental enrichment” which is important for their behavioural and physical development. Due to this, not all animals require regular enrichment. If there are more urgent husbandry tasks to complete, enrichment may not always be offered to our animals. You will follow the daily schedule of the keepers present on the day and join them in their daily tasks.

### HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A DAY MIGHT LOOK LIKE:

**07:00 Morning Rounds:** Mornings start with animal rounds - this includes feeding, cleaning, and preparing diets for newly rescued animals and our long term residents. Morning rounds can vary depending on how many animals have recently been rescued.

**10:00 Break:** Take this time to fill your water bottle and relax for a short time before getting back to the animals.

**10:30 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 behavior.

**12:00 Lunch:** Take a well deserved break where you'll enjoy your hot meal lunch 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!

**15:00 Evening Feed-out:** We will take this time to feed out the afternoon diets to those animals that are in the care of the Husbandry team.

**16:00 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, visit the pool next door, 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.

Our brand new, **state of the art wildlife hospital** only opened it's doors in December 2024. This large clinic is able to treat any animal native to Laos (bar elephants!) and is fully furnished with world-class equipment to ensure the highest standards of care for our patients. The hospital even features three large viewing windows into our procedure room, lab room and necropsy room, allowing guests to witness the hard work that goes into treating the native wildlife.

**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 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 7:00am to 4:00pm. 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 center prides itself on **training and empowering the local communities**, and improving the education of local people. Whilst our veterinary team is led by a fully qualified DVM who received western standard training, we also have a local Lao veterinarian who is under constant training, enabling them to become the next fully trained veterinarian, treating the animals from their own country. On days where the head veterinarian is off, you will be under the supervision of the local vet. The head veterinarian may assign you tasks to complete during these days, and it is up to the discretion of the veterinary team whether any surgeries or procedures go ahead without the presence of the head veterinarian.

# OTHER VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

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## ANIMAL-BASED STUDIES AND INTERNSHIPS

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, animal management, 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 and interns stay on-site and are provided accommodation and meals (included in internship fee).** Internships are a minimum of 8 weeks. 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 staff and are often given more responsibility relative to short term volunteer. 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, webmaster, social media master, illustrator, photographer, animal nutritionist, animal behaviorist, 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)



# VOLUNTEER ETHOS AT LCTW

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Volunteering with us is a unique and special experience, not only because you're helping wildlife, but also because you have the chance to **meet and work with like-minded people** from around the world. Read over this section about your new life as a volunteer and take time to carefully **read our rules and policy section**. Please respect all these rules and policies during your time with us.

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 terms 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 Husbandry based program focuses on three main areas: **animal enrichment, animal husbandry and rehabilitation, and various construction projects**. Our Veterinary Volunteering programs focus on providing **medical care** for the animals across the site.

*Please note: we are a **hands-off** rescue center.*

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 elicit natural behaviors.

As a result, Husbandry volunteers do not have direct physical contact with any of our animals. 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 necessarily need any previous wildlife experience depending on what program you choose to participate in.**

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**.

## General requirements for everyone 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 or 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.

## Husbandry Program Requirements

- No need to have any previous wildlife experience, just a positive attitude and be willing to learn and help wildlife.
- Duration: Minimum one week
- Pay full volunteer experience cost
  - Everything included; see page 11 for full details

## Internship Requirements

- Must be enrolled in or completed a relevant school program or have direct, relevant experience (e.g. animal management, wildlife biology, maintenance, social media, etc.)
- Approval upon successful interview
- Duration: Minimum of 8 weeks with a 15 % discount, however 12 week internships will receive a 25% discount
  - Everything included; see page 11 for full details

## Veterinary Program Requirements

- Must be a veterinarian, veterinary technician/nurse, or enrolled as a veterinary or veterinary nurse student
- Duration: Minimum one week
- Pay full volunteer experience cost
  - Everything included; see page 11 for full details

## Professional Volunteer Requirements

- Must be licensed or certified and possess a minimum of 2 years experience in your relevant field, post graduating (e.g. clinical experience for veterinarians & vet nurses, zoo keeping or other, upon approval)
- Approval upon successful interview
- Duration: Minimum of 12 weeks
- Included
  - Accommodation (incl. full kitchen)
  - Utilities (incl. main area wifi)
  - 10% Discount for Nampien Yorlapa's Activities
- Not included:
  - Meals
  - Pool (Can use at staff discounted rate of \$5/month)



# HOW YOUR VOLUNTEER FEE IS SPENT



The continued operation and expansion 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. Your donation (as part of your volunteer fee) is vital to the work that we do to save Lao Wildlife.

However, with our unexpected move and rebuild in 2024, **your volunteer fee is vital** in allowing us to achieve our goals of **continuously building new enclosures** for our resident animals and future rescues. Your payment allows us to build enclosures, improve infrastructure, feed the animals, support local staff, and rescue, rehabilitate and release animals. If you're a numbers person, look at the graph below to see an estimate of 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 or **follow us on social media to see frequent updates** on construction and moving activities!

- Volunteer costs (meals, utilities...)
- Enclosure construction
- Animal food
- Rescues/releases



# VOLUNTEER FEES



1 week =	\$750
2 weeks =	\$1,175
3 weeks =	\$1,600
4 weeks =	\$2,025
5 weeks =	\$2,450
6 weeks =	\$2,875
7 weeks =	\$3,300
8 weeks =	\$3,725
9 weeks =	\$4,150
10 weeks =	\$4,575
11 weeks =	\$5,000
12 weeks =	\$5,425
13 weeks =	\$5,850
14 weeks =	\$6,275
15 weeks =	\$6,700
16 weeks =	\$7,125

## Pricing (in USD) for our program includes:

- Supervision and training by staff
- On-site **accommodation** plus facilities (laundry, wifi, hot shower)
- **24-hour onsite support** from our staff
- **3 meals per day**
- Unlimited access to **infinity pool** at next doors eco-resort
- 1 volunteer t-shirt
- **Pick-up and drop-off** to and from Vientiane (Capital city of Laos)
- **Donation to our wildlife center** to help improve animal welfare
- Discounted access to eco-resort activities such as ziplining, canopy walk etc. (additional fees are required for these activities)
- Community Activities include local drum making, waterfalls, Laos' biggest buddha, local markets, night walks, karaoke, local weaving and organic farm.

A **10% non-refundable deposit** is required to hold your spot as a volunteer up until **6 weeks prior to your arrival** in which case **100% payment** is required or your spot can be given to another volunteer.

## Bank Transfer Information

**Bank Name:** Michigan State University Federal Credit Union

**Bank Address:** 3777 West Rd. East Lansing, MI 48823

**Account Name:** Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife

**Account Number:** 1160670

**Swift Code:** MSUCUS44

## Scan here to pay



## Pay by other Methods:

You can pay by other transfer methods such as Wise, Remitly, or other third party entities. We do not endorse or recommend any particular one but recognize they exist and will accept payment via them.

**Please note:** The above pricing applies to our *standard volunteering program only*.

Our **internship** program entitles you to **15% discount** with a minimum of 8 weeks and a **25% discount** with a minimum of 12 weeks.

# WAYS TO HELP US

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**1. VOLUNTEER** - E-mail [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org) to inquire about available dates or visit 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 [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@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 [info@lctwildlife.org](mailto:info@lctwildlife.org)

**7. VISIT** - Traveling to Laos, but not ready to volunteer? Come visit our rescue center and learn what we are all about will seeing some of our amazing rescued animals. Visit our [website](#) for more information

# ON-SITE SUPPORT

Our Husbandry coordinators, Volunteer coordinator, or other **staff members will be with you** during your entire 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 Sunday morning**. 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**, shown on the right. The bungalows house two people maximum per bungalow. Our bungalows are **nestled under the trees** at our new site, just behind our gibbon enclosure so you will lovingly serenaded each morning!

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 single-sex shower and toilet blocks, fitted with western style toilets and hot water showers. 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.

**All meals are vegetarian.** You must inform us if you have any special dietary requirements before your arrival to the center allowing our 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.



**On-site laundry is available** where you are welcome to do your laundry at your convenience. Laundry detergent is provided and your coordinator will show you the washing machines.

As a volunteer you will receive one **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

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We are located in **rural Laos in a village** known as Ban Xiengletha. You will be living in an authentic Lao setting. Whilst there is not a lot to do in the surrounding areas, in the local village there is a nail salon and many small market stalls where you can purchase fruit, ice-creams and beers. Staff will take you on a weekly market run in the car to purchase any items you wish, and you will also have access to a bicycle which can be used to explore the area in your free time. There are also some local bars which the staff can drive you to in the evenings - karaoke is a local favourite!

We are situated next to **Nam Pien Yorla Pa**, an ecotourism attraction and **Phou Khao Khouay National Park**. Volunteers can walk next door to the **infinity pool at Nam Pien** which is included in your volunteer fee, **socialize** in our common area where we can watch a movie, hike in the National Park, do ecotour activities at Nam Pien, or play games as well as have a few drinks and relax.

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 (e.g. a meal out is typically less than \$5 USD).





## VOLUNTEERING IN LAO PDR

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

The local currency here is the **Lao Kip and only currency accepted at smaller vendors**, such as those around LCTW. 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. The money you exchange must be in mint condition as well, meaning no marks or tears.

There are no ATM's around our new site, so it is important to exchange your native currency to kip in Vientiane before you are picked up. Please note not all ATM's in Vientiane will accept foreign cards. We **recommend you bring additional U.S. dollars (to exchange)** with you just in case your card does not work.



## 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 'falang', 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.

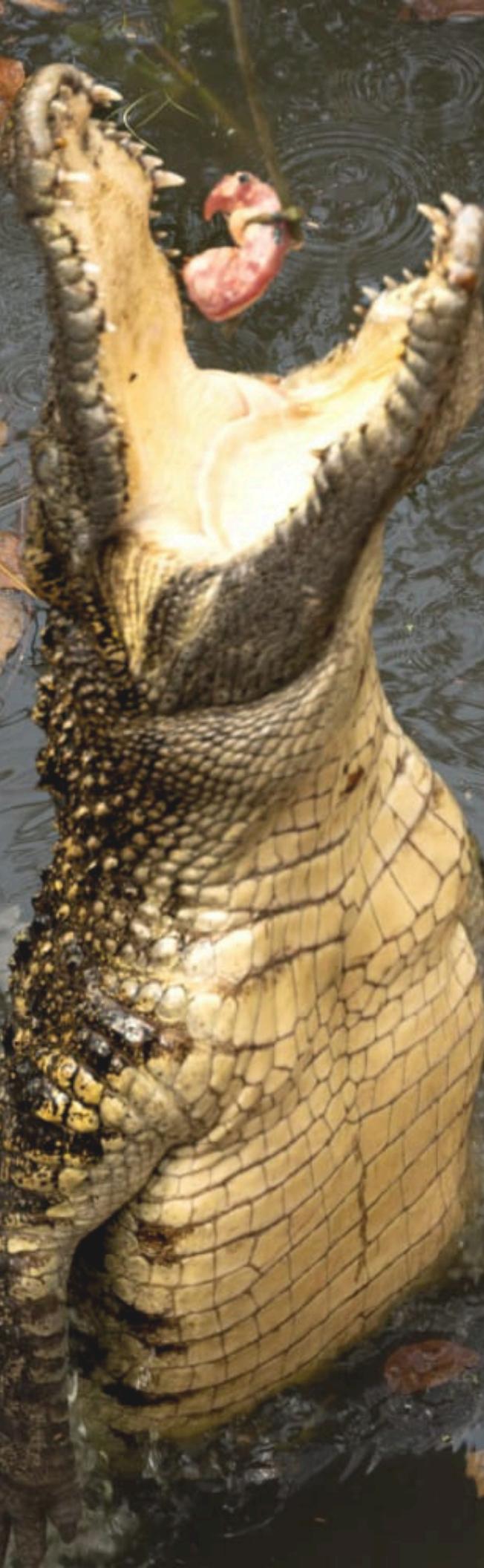
## LAO PEOPLE AND ANIMAL WELFARE

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**, with the help of many NGO 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.** Changes are happening, but remember that norms and legality are different across 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.



# 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)

## More details

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) and electricity being available to all citizens.

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.

# Lao PDR

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**.

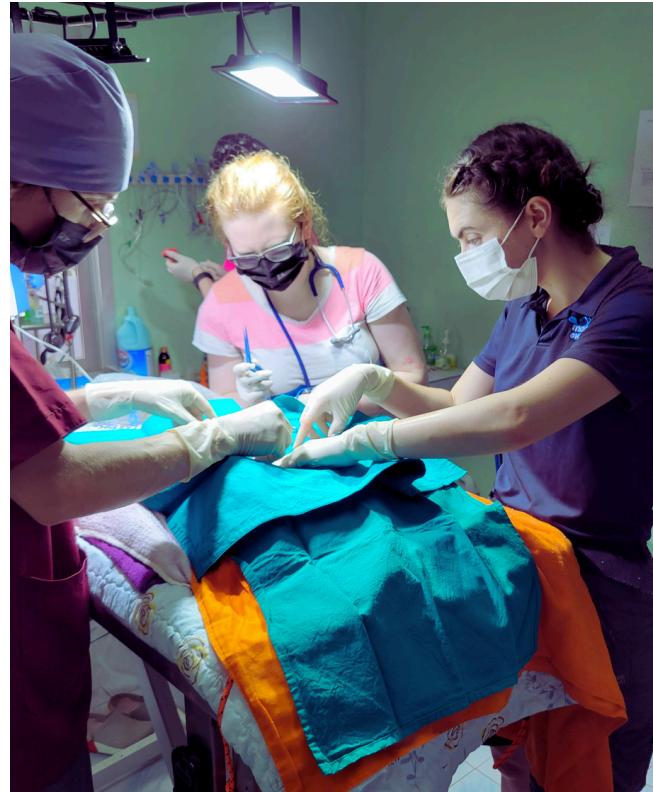
Although these bombs have been cleared in populated areas and the tourist areas, they **continue to affect the most poor and remote communities**, whom rely on their land for their livelihoods.

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 is one of the HDI growth leaders in the medium human development category, where it currently sits.

Politically, the country is Communist but has opened up considerably 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. Laos was suspended in 2023 due to its ongoing contravention of CITES treaty.



# IMPORTANT PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION



## VISA INFORMATION

To enter Laos, **six months' validity on your passport** is required. You may 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 e-visa or a 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 ~\$10 USD per day.

## 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. First, 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. 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 ZOONOTIC 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.

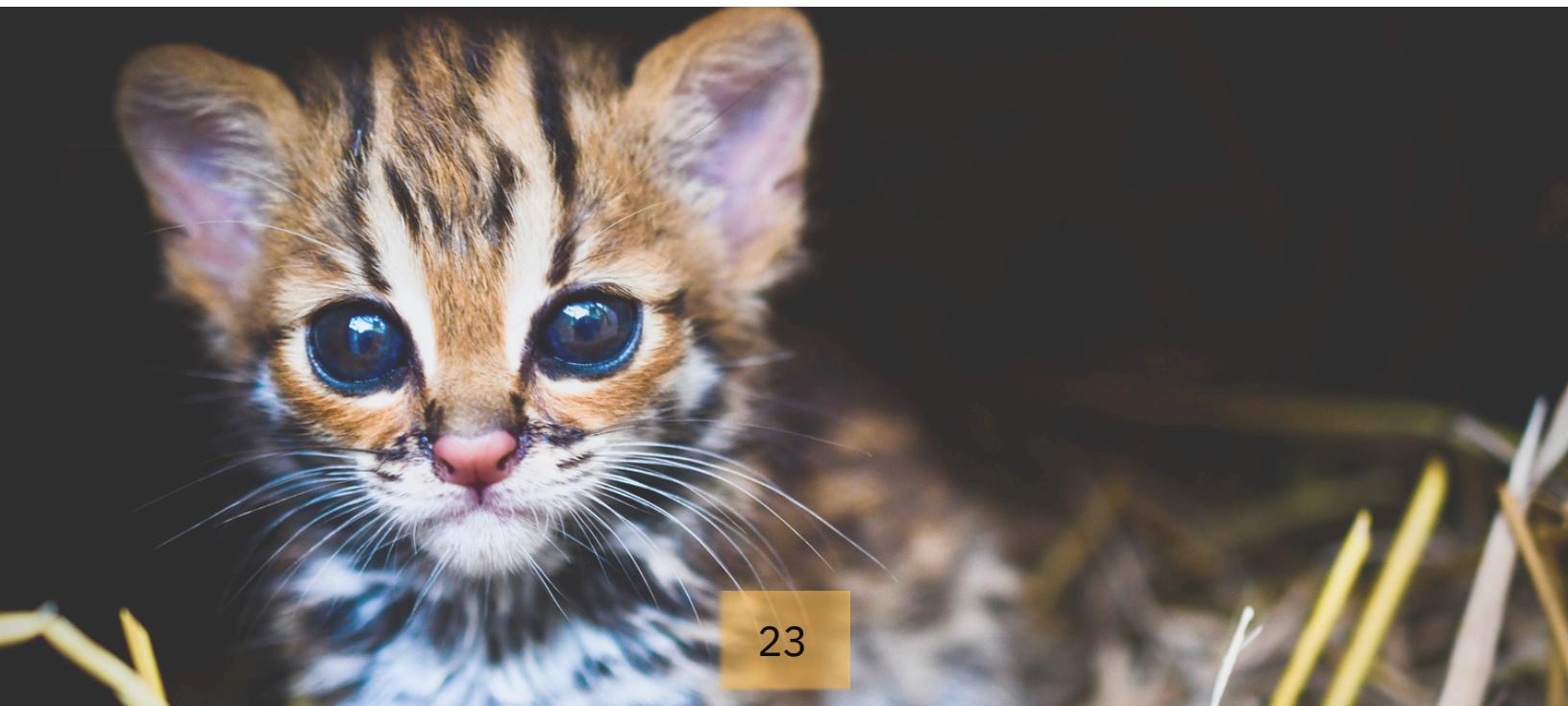
On the rare occasion that someone is bitten or stung, withdraw immediately and call for help. It is important that the person stays as still and calm as possible, this will help to slow down the effects of venom, if someone has been envenomated. Do not attempt to catch the animal, as this will increase 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**.

Pharmacies are numerous and accessible 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 responsibility for your safety when you are not on the premises. We recommend that you dress and behave respectfully. We are a part of this area and want to leave a positive impression on the people in and around LCTW.

We also recommend that you return from outside LCTW activities before it gets dark and not go out after dark. Please only do so in groups or arrange transport back. 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 that are not owned by, organized by, or driven by LCTW staff members. This can be dangerous for a number of reasons, one of which is that drunk driving is commonplace in Laos and other countries in the area.

# 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
- 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.
- 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 10:00-11:00 am only**. You will send the details of pickup (hotel address or airport) to the coordinator prior to your arrival via email. 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.

### **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.

# STAYING IN CONTACT

## 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 Lao **Lao Telecom 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.**

**Wi-Fi** is available in the volunteer community area and within the Wildlife Hospital.

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

## 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 areas 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.

## 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).

## Easy to Pack Donation Supplies

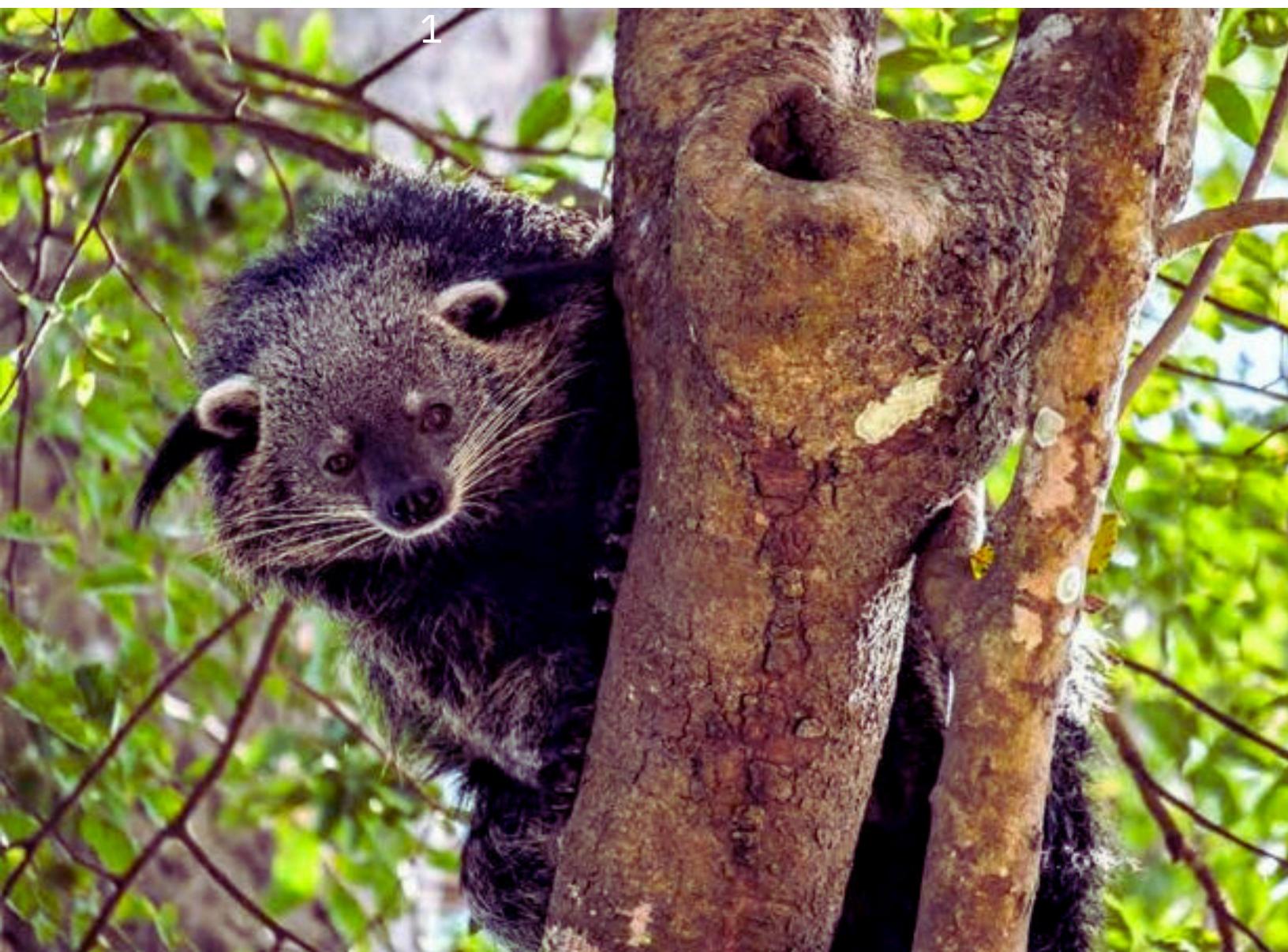
- Old towels/ blankets /sheets
- Vet Wrap/Coban
- Casting Material
- Fiberglass or Plaster
- High quality hanging metal pet water and food bowls
- Powdered Milk (human, puppy, kitten, goat)
- Thermo pad (microwavable or otherwise)
- Thermometers
- Reptile keeping supplies
- Heat lamps and bulbs
- Thermostat
- 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 email [volunteer@lctwildlife.org](mailto:volunteer@lctwildlife.org)**

# PRE-ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

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- 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

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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.

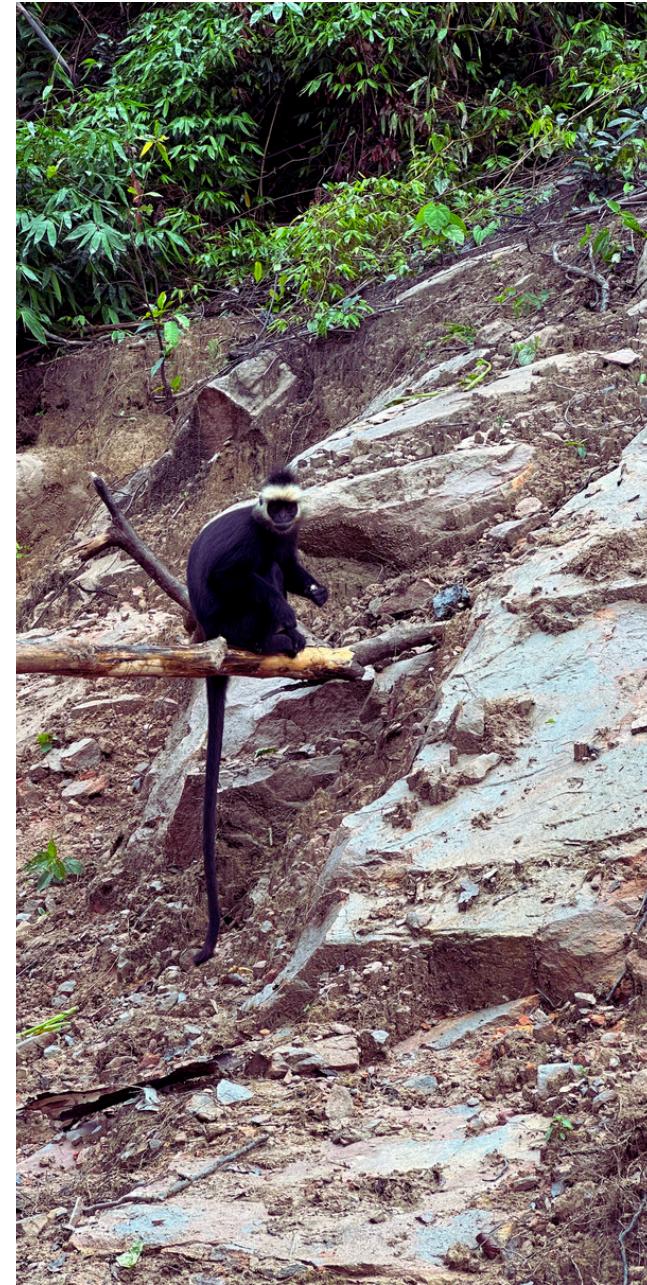
## OUR ANIMALS

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

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## 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 no 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.

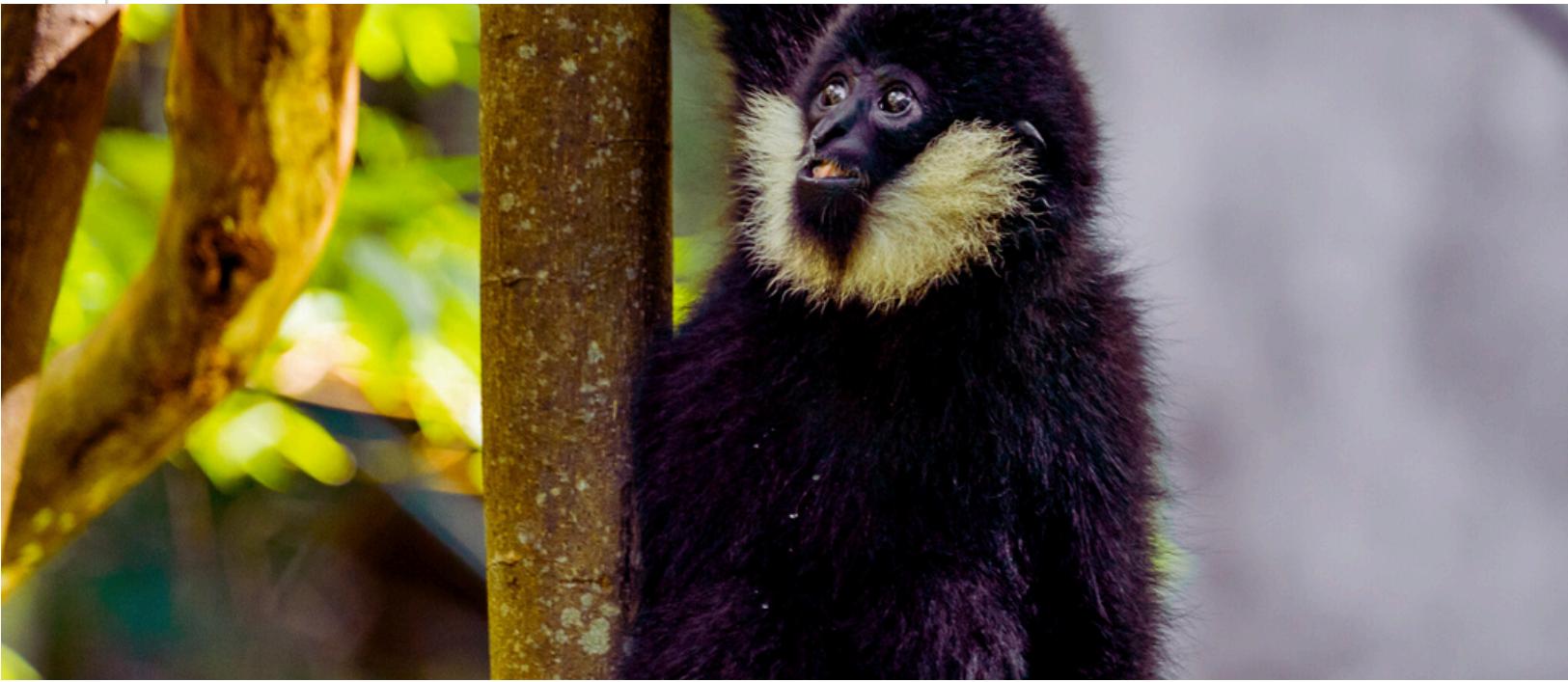
## STREET ANIMALS

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.

# PAYMENT POLICY

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We require a **10% non-refundable deposit** to reserve your booking into our system.

## Cancellation Policy

If you need to cancel your booking within 30 days of your scheduled start date, no refund will be issued, as it is difficult to find a replacement volunteer on short notice.

Cancellations made more than 30 days before the start date are eligible for a 90% refund (10% is the non-refundable deposit), excluding any transfer or processing fees incurred.

Returning volunteers will receive a 10% discount, let us know if you have volunteered here at LCTW 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

Be on time. If your job starts at 7:00 be there at 7:00. 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

For all jobs you will find the tools you need in the enrichment room, designated work areas or your coordinator will get them for 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** while 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 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 program this will make up much of the work you do. Therefore, footwear with good ankle support are recommended.

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.

# COMMUNITY AREAS & AFTER WORK POLICIES

- After dark, do not leave the living area to go into the center or try to do any work with animals unless you receive permission from staff.
- Please always wash your 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. Think about other people before leaving a mess in the communal/shared areas.
- We have a communal refrigerator and communal dry storage area where you can store personal items you buy. Please do not take food that's not yours without asking.
- If you are a smoker, please be considerate of others. Smoking is only permitted on the gravel road, and not near the Volunteer Community area or near your bungalow. Please discard your cigarette butts safely and not on the ground.
- 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 tidy rooms.
- 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.

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** during the evenings and days off. Please be aware that as soon as you leave the center we are not responsible for your well being. Always tell your Coordinator your plans 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 of 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.

Showing **too much skin is culturally unacceptable** so please cover your midriff, cleavage, top of your thighs and preferably your shoulders in the village.

**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. Sexual interactions or sexual relationships with the local or expat staff are prohibited.



# 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 52 902 093  
WhatsApp: +856 20 52 902 093  
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 52 902 093. Please contact our management on the above number for all emergency issues and leave this number with your family.

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!



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