



## Request for Proposals for Field Research: Terrestrial biodiversity of Africa

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Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit organization with the mission to “**engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment.**” Earthwatch is currently seeking proposals from field-based researchers to provide grants to address critical conservation issues in Africa. The research should focus on understanding and reducing direct pressures on terrestrial biodiversity and/or enhancing the status of species and ecosystems across protected, private and/or communal lands. Of particular interest are research programs which attempt to find solutions to pressing conservation issues through interdisciplinary and novel approaches, and which work with local stakeholders to support the sustainable management of biodiversity and enhanced livelihoods. Research programs involving elephants, lions, or ecosystems with high species endemism/ biodiversity value are particularly welcomed. We are not currently accepting proposals for research located in South Africa.

Earthwatch will only consider proposals for field research that have a strong rationale for requiring involvement of non-specialists (Earthwatch volunteers) in a variety of scientific tasks. Earthwatch volunteers are highly motivated citizens from around the world who are interested in improving environmental understanding. A typical project would engage a minimum of 30 volunteers over 3-10 teams per annum. Average team size is 4-12 participants and each team typically can spend 3-12 days in the field. Students are increasingly becoming a priority audience for Earthwatch; therefore ideal projects have flexibility to engage audiences such as students (age 16+) and/or groups (15-30 participants). All projects are conducted in English.

Earthwatch encourages proposals that are interdisciplinary and/or transnational. Preference will be given to projects that directly contribute to environmental or social change on the ground and that have a strong community and/or educational component. Professionals from any nationality are eligible to apply.

### **Concept Notes and Proposals**

Concept Notes for projects starting in spring or summer 2013 will be accepted through **Friday, January 27, 2012**. Invitations for full Research Proposals will be communicated in late February. Applications are to be submitted in English. You can submit a Concept Note here: <http://fs22.formsite.com/EarthwatchResearch/ConceptNote/index.html>

Research topics that may be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:

- *People and wildlife – sustainable use of wildlife, human-wildlife conflict, competition for resources, habitat degradation/ fragmentation, stakeholder perceptions, sustainable livelihoods, environmental education.*
- *Conservation biology – restoration ecology, measures for depleted species, conservation genetics, behavioural ecology, population dynamics, landscape scale conservation/ networks/ corridors.*
- *Payments for ecosystem services - investigating the potential of Payments for Ecosystem Services and REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) as a tool for conservation.*

### **Grants**

An average annual grant of \$20,000 USD is available to cover research related costs, which can include the following if appropriate: equipment (under \$1000 USD), tools, supplies, research permits, scientist transport to the field, support staff, staff and scientist food and accommodation while running volunteer teams. The grant cannot be used for scientist salaries, overhead, capital equipment, and other expenses not directly related to the project. Volunteer costs in the field (volunteer accommodation, food and transport in the field) will be budgeted for in partnership with Earthwatch. The field research proposals are tenable for three years, and potentially renewable in the fourth year.

### **Additional**

- Comfortable accommodations for the proposed project must be located a reasonable travel distance from the research site(s) in order to travel back and forth daily.
- Time for scheduled recreational activities enabling volunteers to explore the surrounding area and experience cultural aspects are encouraged.

For additional information about Earthwatch's application process see our website:

<http://www.earthwatch.org/aboutus/research/scientistopps/reqresprop/>

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**All questions should be directed to:**

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