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General volunteer information pack.

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Lanta Animal Welfare, 629 Moo 2, Saladan, Koh Lanta

 084 304 4331

| Open daily from 09:00 to 17:00

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Information.

Thailand is a great country to visit and volunteer in and we are sure that you will have an amazing time at Lanta Animal Welfare (LAW). This information pack is designed to help smooth the path. Volunteering and living abroad can be exciting, challenging, frightening, character forming, incredible, frustrating and life changing. It can make you home sick and it can make you feel alive. Whatever happens, you will definitely remember it and you are unlikely to see the world in quite the same way ever again.

The main aim of this pack is to prepare you before you depart. It is not designed to replace a travel guide, but gives information specific to your placement at LAW. You will find a guide book invaluable for any other travel plans and learning more about Thailand.

We suggest that you spend time reading about Thailand and preparing yourself before you go. If you have any questions in the lead up to your travels, don't hesitate to send us an email.

We have done our best to provide an accurate brief and create a picture of the project, but please be open-minded and bear in mind that due to the nature of the project and life in Thailand, things are constantly changing and evolving.

Please also note that any costs quoted are a guide only and are subject to change. For example the cost of a visa or airport tax may be changed without prior warning, so please make sure you have some spare money at all times.

Checklist.

Below is a quick reference checklist for your pre-departure preparations:

4 – 12 weeks prior to departure	✓
Make payment to LAW	
Make sure your passport will be valid for your travel period	
Book flights and email details to LAW	
Apply for a visa if staying over 30 days	
Visit your doctor or travel clinic to arrange vaccinations	
Book travel insurance	
Make sure your debit and/or credit cards will work abroad	
1-3 weeks before departure	✓
Photocopy important documents	
Leave a copy of LAW contact numbers with friends/family	
Notify LAW of arrival details	



International flights.

You should book flights as early as possible to get the best deals and availability. There are a few options: a flight to Bangkok and connection to Krabi or Trang or flying directly to Phuket (see map on page 21). If flying in to Bangkok, we recommend booking a flight that arrives early so you can make a connecting flight the same day.

One way you could really make a difference to your experience is by becoming a flight volunteer on your return home, accompanying an adopted animal to its new home abroad. We urgently need more flight volunteers for Europe and the UK in particular. With this in mind, the best airlines to book with are SAS, KLM, Lufthansa Group and Air France. Unfortunately, flying directly in to the UK with animals is very costly and means the only way we can send animals there is overland from Amsterdam. This means booking a flight from Thailand to Amsterdam (with KLM) and then arranging overland travel to the UK from there.

If you can help us and become a flight volunteer, please bare it in mind when booking your entire journey. You will find more information on our website.

Getting to Koh Lanta.

We recommend flying in to Krabi, the closest airport to Koh Lanta. It's usually easiest to book a flight to Krabi at the same time you book your international flight, but you can also book it separately online. There are plenty of domestic connections between Bangkok to Krabi, including low cost carriers:

- Air Asia (www.airasia.com)
- Bangkok Airways (www.bangkokair.com)
- Thai Airways (www.thaiair.com)
- Thai Lion Air (www.Thailionair.com/en)
- Nok Air (www.nokair.com)

The onward flight to Krabi should be scheduled at least two hours after you arrive in Bangkok to allow for transit time.

We can arrange a private taxi pick-up for you from Krabi airport (cost 2,600 Baht/€58), you can also take a tourist bus (900 Baht/€21), or a public bus (300 Baht/€7) to reach Koh Lanta. The buses depart regularly all day until 5pm (the tourist buses leave from outside the airport terminal, whilst the public buses leave from a stop outside the airport perimeter). The journey time is around two hours and includes two ferry crossings.

If you would like to arrange a taxi pick up from Krabi airport please let us know a few days in advance. The cut off time for pick up is 5pm.

Alternative routes

- Overnight sleeper train from Bangkok to Trang, then a bus to Koh Lanta.
- Fly to Phuket then get a bus from the airport to Koh Lanta, or take a bus to the port and get a ferry (Nov-Apr only). The journey time from Phuket is around five hours.

There are lots of different ways to get here and there are sites that give you advice and directions. But bare in mind that these websites may not always have the most up to date times or costs, but they will give you information to help planning.

Passport and visas.

Your passport should have at least six months left on it (validity) from the date you intend to return at the end of your trip. It should also have a few unused pages for the necessary visas and stamps you will accumulate on your travels.

Many passport holders do NOT require a visa to visit Thailand if their stay will not exceed 30 days. For stays of more than 30 days, a TOURIST VISA is required. If this applies to you, you should apply at the Thai Embassy or Consulate in your home country. Please see below for important information on this.

Entry without visa (if staying for less than 30 days)

If you're entering Thailand via an international airport for a stay of less than 30 days (with a return ticket to prove this), you will get a stamp in your passport on arrival that permits you to stay 30 days. Simply fill in the form that is given to you on the plane and you'll receive the stamp at the airport Immigration desk. If you are entering Thailand through a land border checkpoint from a neighbouring country, the permission to stay is only 15 days. The above applies to passport holders of the following 48 countries:

Argentina	Germany	Luxembourg	Macau
Australia	Greece	Malaysia	Monaco
Austria	Hong Kong	Mongolia	Netherlands
Bahrain	Iceland	New Zealand	Norway
Belgium	Indonesia	Oman	Peru
Brazil	Ireland	Philippines	Portugal
Brunei	Israel	Qatar	Russia
Canada	Italy	Singapore	South Africa
Chile	Japan	Spain	Sweden
Denmark	Korea (ROK)	Switzerland	Turkey
Finland	Kuwait	UAE	United Kingdom
France	Laos	United States	Vietnam

Passport holders from other countries must obtain a visa in advance.

Entry with a visa (if staying for more than 30 days)

If you're staying longer than 30 days, you should apply for a tourist visa. You must use the visa within 3 months from the date of issue so do NOT apply more than 3 months before your departure date. It's best to apply 1-2 months before you intend to travel. The actual visa doesn't start counting down until you enter Thailand.

Tourist visa (TR)

This allows a stay of up to 60 days in Thailand. The cost is €32 per entry, so you could double it to 120 days for €64 (this would require a trip to the border for renewal after 60 days).

IMPORTANT: for the Tourist visa please state 'tourist' on the form and **do not mention work or volunteering.** The concept of volunteering is not familiar to many visa clerks and this has caused issues in the past.

Where to apply

If applying in the UK or Ireland, it's best to apply by mail to one of the Royal Thai Consulates in: Birmingham, Cardiff, Dublin, Glasgow, Hull and Liverpool. You should apply to the Consulates not the Embassy in London, as the Embassy has a different set of requirements, does not accept postal applications and is less helpful.

For more details and a visa application form please use one of the following websites:

- Birmingham Consulate www.thailand-visa.com
- Cardiff Consulate <http://business.virgin.net/royalthai.consulate/>
- Dublin Consulate www.thaiconsulateireland.com
- Hull Consulate www.thaiconsul.co.uk
- Liverpool Consulate www.royalthaiconsul.com

If you are outside the UK/Ireland, please go to www.thaiembassy.org for a list of worldwide embassies and consulates.

Please note: If you are not sure about any part of the visa application, please contact us for advice before you submit your application as it's best to get it 100% right first time.

If you are planning on staying longer than 90 days, please contact us before applying for any visa and we will advise you accordingly.

Which visa should I get?

Length of stay	Type of visa	Cost
Less than 30 days	None required*	Free
2 months (60 days)	Tourist visa (single entry)	€32.00

* See list of countries on page 5

Visa extensions

It is also possible to extend your visa when you're out in Thailand by going on a 'visa-run'. Short term extensions can be obtained from the local immigration office in Krabi, while longer extensions require a three day trip to Penang in Malaysia. If this is necessary we can help with all the arrangements.

Vaccinations.

This section gives some guidelines to help you make decisions, but you should also take advice from your GP, doctor or travel clinic. You should visit your doctor to receive the latest health advice and arrange vaccinations. Some vaccinations require a series of injections, so this visit should be arranged as soon as possible.

We require that all volunteers have updated vaccinations for DTP (diphtheria/tetanus/polio)

We also recommend that as you are working with animals, although the risk is extremely low, you should have rabies vaccinations (there are three injections required) or a booster after 5 years, if you've had the full vaccination previously.

There are mosquitoes here but malaria is not currently present on Koh Lanta. However if you are travelling around after your placement you may need to take anti-malarials on advice from your doctor.

MASTA (health advice service for travellers) currently recommends that along with the above you should also consider being vaccinated against or getting boosters for: Hepatitis A; Typhoid Fever; Hepatitis B; Japanese Encephalitis and TB. For more information see www.masta.org where you can purchase a health brief online.



Travel insurance and other documents.

Although we will do our best to make sure of your safety, we cannot accept any liability for you or your possessions whilst on or off site as a volunteer. We consider adequate travel insurance to be essential. In particular we require that you have extensive medical travel insurance cover. Please make sure you have the necessary insurance cover for any emergency and that you bring a copy of your policy with you.

Your travel agent will recommend insurance and there are several independent brokers offering deals for travel insurance. Some insurers will not cover you for volunteer work abroad, but there are those with very good policies for volunteers. You may have to shop around.

When you book your flights, we advise you to arrange your travel insurance so that you are covered in the event of having to cancel your trip. Cancellation cover normally starts from the date you purchase your travel insurance and full cover starts the date you leave. Please make sure you bring details of your insurance company, policy number and emergency assistance numbers with you - if you do not have these details we will not be in a position to provide assistance with contacting your insurance company in an emergency.

You are advised to make copies of your important travel documents (passport, tickets, traveller's cheques, driving licence, insurance policy) and to keep these somewhere safe and separate from the originals. Leaving extra copies with your family back home is a good idea, as is storing digital copies online.

Money matters.

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Baht (for the current exchange rate we suggest: www.xe.com). You can buy this currency at home, but you're likely to get a poor exchange rate so we would recommend only changing around 2,000 Baht before entering the country.

There are several banks with ATM/cash machines on Koh Lanta where you can use cards to withdraw money and change Travellers Cheques.

Debit/credit cards

Debit cards give a good exchange rate but both debit and credit cards will charge for cash machine withdrawals, and credit cards normally charge interest immediately on cash withdrawals. Both have a daily limit depending on your account. If you take your passport to a bank, you can normally withdraw cash up to the limit of your credit card.

Prepaid currency cards

You 'load' your money onto it in your home currency (at a participating retail outlet or over the phone) then use it like a debit card to withdraw money using cash machines. There are fees and limits for using the card which you should check.

Travellers' cheques

You can change these at banks or foreign exchange bureaus. American Express or Thomas Cook are preferred and you need to show your passport when changing them.

Money tips

- Check with your bank that you will be able to use cards in Thailand
- Inform your bank that you will be using it in Thailand otherwise they may block your card after its first use, assuming it's fraudulent
- Check card expiry dates and request a new card if necessary
- Set up internet banking so that you can keep an eye on your account
- Check the fees and limits for withdrawing / changing money
- Find out how cards / travellers cheques can be cancelled and replaced if lost
- Email yourself all your card details and travellers cheque numbers in case you lose them and also leave details with someone at home

Budgeting

It is possible to live relatively cheaply on Koh Lanta. It depends greatly on your choices, but 4,000 - 6,000 Baht per week is a guide. Below is a list of typical costs to help plan your budget:

Things you might buy	Cost (Baht)
Average Thai meal at a restaurant	150
Average Western meal at a restaurant	200
Average Thai meal at a street vendor	50 - 100
Bottle of beer in a bar/restaurant	90
Bottle of beer at supermarket	50
Bottle of water 1.5L at supermarket	14
Scooter rental (one month)	3,000

Keeping in touch.

The Internet is widely available in Koh Lanta: the centre has wireless internet access and a shared computer, plus there are many internet cafés on the island. Bringing your own laptop is highly recommended.

Facebook and Twitter can be a good way to keep in touch as well as sharing photos and stories. TravelBlog (www.travelblog.org) is a nice free blog service designed for travellers. If you do create a blog or page about your travels, please let us know as we would love to see it.

Mobiles and phone services

Most internet cafés offer a phone service for making international calls, or you can buy an international phone card which is slightly cheaper. Mobiles will work as long as your phone is able to 'roam' abroad (check with your network operator). It may be nice to keep your normal number and allow people to send you text messages, but this is very expensive and you will pay to receive as well as make calls. Using a smartphone app such as Whatsapp is better.

You may also choose to buy a local pay-as-you-go SIM card which will give you a local phone number. This will allow you to receive calls, send texts and make calls back home more cost effectively. You may be able to use your home mobile phone with a local SIM card. You can do this if your phone is 'unlocked' i.e. free to use any SIM card. You can test this by putting another SIM card into your phone, but it must be from a different network. If it works the phone is 'unlocked'. If it doesn't work then you will either need to get your phone unlocked (may or may not be possible) or buy a cheap phone in Thailand.

You can also use Skype, Apple Facetime, Viber or oovoo when you have an internet connection. If you have a local number and friends and family from home want to call you, it's best if they use a prefix number to get cheap call rates. A quick online search for "cheap calls Thailand" will bring up lots of options such as www.telediscount.co.uk

Emergency contact details.

Please forward this information to friends and family at home.

Postal address:

Lanta Animal Welfare
629 Mo.2, Koh Lanta, Krabi, Thailand, 81150

Telephone: +66 (0)843 044 331

Website: www.lantaanimalwelfare.com

Important contacts

Centre Director

M: +66 (0)61 232 9474

E: info@lantaanimalwelfare.com

Junie Kovacs (LAW founder)

M: +66 (0)899 675 017

E: lanta@timeforlime.net

What to pack.

Factors to consider:

Culture/safety

A certain amount of sensitivity needs to be shown with regard to local customs. You will find the locals are usually modest in their dress and behaviour in public. They are also very tidy and smart, even when they have little money to spend on clothing. Avoid wearing expensive looking jewellery, watches, sunglasses etc. and if you are female, try to not dress provocatively or show more flesh than the locals.

Clothes

What clothes and equipment you take with you is very much a personal choice, but bear in mind the centre is very informal, the weather is very hot and you will be working with animals. Given the nature of the work you will be doing, it's best to wear clothes you aren't too worried about getting dirty. We also recommend sandals with straps, such as Tevas, which are more practical and safer than flip-flops. Shorts and t-shirts or vest-tops are ideal for the daytime. Lightweight trousers and long-sleeved tops are useful for the evenings to help prevent mosquito bites. If you will be in Thailand during the rainy season we also recommend a light raincoat.

Climate

Thailand is always hot so you won't need any warm clothing or a sleeping bag. See the climate section (page 13) for more details.

Hard-wearing

Don't bring your best clothes or ones which need a lot of care and won't stand up to a fairly hard life or tough washing. Although modern materials have many advantages, particularly those that are light weight and crease resistant, they can be expensive and do not always stand up to the rigours of the local laundries.

Type and size of bag

You should aim for 20 kilos or less. Try starting with an essentials pile and adding to it until you reach your weight limit. If you are going to be travelling around then a rucksack/travelbag works best, if you are just coming to the volunteer placement a regular holdall is fine. As well as your main bag it's very useful to have a daypack (small rucksack) too.

Can I buy it there?

It's pretty easy to buy most things locally so don't worry if you have to leave a few things behind, but bear in mind the quality will usually be much lower and the range of items is likely to be limited and orientated towards travellers and locals.

Suggested kit list.

This list is not exhaustive, but it will help you consider what you will need specifically for your stay at the shelter alongside all the other items you would normally take travelling. Your clothing requirements will obviously depend upon which season you spend in Thailand, however you should consider the following:

Essentials

- Passport
- Tickets
- Clothes
- Insurance details
- Medical details and documentation of vaccinations
- Money (cash, credit cards, Travellers Cheques)
- Photocopy of passport, tickets and insurance documents
- International driving license (if you intend to drive cars or vans)
- Lightweight work clothes for daytime (t-shirts; shorts; vests)
- Lightweight trousers and long-sleeved tops for evening
- Sturdy sandals with straps and flip flops
- Comfortable shoes or trainers (good for dog walking!)
- UV protection sunglasses
- Sunhat, cap or bandana
- Light raincoat (rainy season only)

Equipment

- Combination padlocks for your bags
- Mobile phone
- Camera
- Torch
- Alarm clock
- Plug adaptor (two flat pins)
- Water bottle
- Beach towel and bathroom towel

Healthcare

Take advice on any additional items from your doctor.

- Insect repellent
- Antihistamine cream/tablets & afterbite sting relief
- Sun cream (high factor)
- Moisturiser/aftersun
- Painkillers (paracetamol and ibuprofen)
- Immodium
- Anti-bacterial hand gel / wipes
- Plasters
- Tampons (not easily available)

If you are taking prescribed medication, take a copy of the prescription with you and check if you need a letter from your doctor. It's best to pack any prescribed medication in your hand luggage.

On arrival.

Whilst on the plane, you should be given an arrival form to fill in. For the address section put:
629, Moo 2 Koh Lanta, Krabi 81150

When you reach immigration, give them the completed form and your passport. If you have a Thai visa already, make sure that the immigration officer sees the Thai visa in your passport (hand the passport over open at the relevant page). They should stamp your passport with a date 30-90 days on from your arrival (depending on the type of visa); check the stamp to make sure it is correct.

You should state you are a tourist and avoid mention of voluntary work as officials don't always understand this and may assume you are working for money.

There are cash machines at the airport if you need to withdraw money.

Getting to the centre.

Travel from Krabi or Trang airports

We have detailed information on getting to Koh Lanta from either Krabi or Trang airports. Please email us if you would like a copy. If we have arranged a pick-up from the airport for you, please look out for someone holding a sign with your name on it.

Acclimatisation and contacting home

Please remember to contact someone at home to let them know you have arrived safely, it's easy to forget in all the excitement! We often get calls from concerned friends and family because they haven't heard anything. Jet lag and travel are likely to take their toll so take it easy in your first few days and drink lots of water to stay hydrated.

Thailand essentials.

Time:	GMT +7 hours
International dialling code:	+ 66
Electricity:	220V (usually two flat pins). You will need a plug adaptor.

Useful websites for more information on Thailand:

www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand

www.tourismthailand.org

www.thaismile.co.uk

About Koh Lanta.

A popular tourist destination, the island is known for its long, sandy beaches and scuba diving. There are actually two main islands, the larger, more populated Koh Lanta Yai (commonly known as simply Koh Lanta) and the smaller Koh Lanta Noi, as well as several minor islands. The geography of the island is typically mangroves, coral rimmed beaches and rugged tree covered hills, and there are 9 sandy beaches to enjoy. Koh Lanta has a natural and laid back feel to it.

Krabi and Koh Lanta are a melting pot of Buddhists, Thai-Chinese, Muslims and even sea gypsies. The majority of the population in the rural areas is Muslim. The area however does not suffer from any religious tension and the people live in peace and harmony. With this kind of mixture, Koh Lanta is always celebrating something, be it part of Thai Buddhist, Thai-Chinese or Thai-Islamic tradition.

As in any new location, you should be careful for the first few days until you are more familiar with the local area.



Climate.

The weather on Koh Lanta is typically that of a tropical monsoon climate. The monsoons change direction twice a year, coming once from the south-west and once from the north-east. This causes Koh Lanta to have only two seasons: the dry season and the rainy season.

The dry season is from November-April and the rainy season runs from May-October. The coolest month is November, with temperatures then steadily rising until they peak in April. But even in the cool season, it's still very hot.

Not surprisingly, Koh Lanta is at its busiest during the dry season. During the rainy season some bungalow operators close down, particularly those geared to the diving fraternity. Rough seas and poor underwater visibility make diving a no-no during this period. The tourist season in Koh Lanta runs from October until May with most visitors arriving from November to March. The temperature on the island doesn't vary much all year, with a comfortable 32-34°C daytime temperature and 20-25°C night time temperature. Sea temperature similarly stays at around 28-30°C all year round.

Local amenities.

There is a good selection of small shops, mini-markets and pharmacies which are very well stocked. There is a Post Office in the main town where you can send packages, letters and post cards.

There are regular street markets where you can pick up a bargain or two and numerous different bars and restaurants, giving you a good choice for eating and going out.

Thai culture.

Thailand is such a friendly place that there are generally no major cultural issues, but to really fit in here are a few pointers:

- When Thai people meet, they say hello and put their hands together in front of their forehead. It will really impress them if you do the same.
- Do not point the soles of your feet at anyone.
- Do not touch the head of a Thai or pass an object over it.
- Remove shoes on entering peoples houses or places of work.
- Physical expressions of love (eg. hugging and kissing) are not very common among the conservative Thai. You are strongly advised to avoid such actions in public.
- Thai people are non-confrontational; if they are upset about something you do, they will just walk away. Instead of denying any request with a direct no, they will say "maybe later". You will cause a lot of trouble for the project if you behave in a confrontational manner towards them, including shouting or making bad tempered or stern remarks towards them or anyone else.
- Smile and speak a little Thai and you will be loved by the locals.
- Do not take offence if they call you 'farang' - this translates as "foreigner" and is just used to describe westerners.
- Thai people are very proud of their country and culture and we would encourage you to read through the culture section of a guidebook and make a real effort to understand and respect the local culture. You will find this really enhances your experience of Thailand.



Thai language.

English is widely spoken on Koh Lanta and being a Western run centre, the main language spoken here is English too. With only two full time Thai member of staff there is often a language barrier when speaking to Thai visitors and pet-owners, so any Thai you can learn before you come out here will be a bonus.

You could buy a phrasebook or download some podcasts to give you a head start - the locals will be very appreciative of your efforts! Here's some basic essential phrases to get you started:

Phrase	Men say	Women say
Hello / goodbye	Sa-wat-dee krap	Sa-wat-dee ka
Thank you	Kob kun krap	Kob kun ka
How are you?	Sa-bai dee mai?	Sa-bai dee mai?
I'm fine thanks	Sa-bai dee	Sa-bai dee
You're welcome	Yin dee krap	Yin dee ka

Health and safety.

Here is some general guidance about staying healthy and safe while travelling abroad, which we hope will be helpful. If you do get ill don't wait to see if it goes away, let us know straight away and get it seen to.

Eating and drinking

Many people suffer from an upset stomach or diarrhoea because of something they have eaten or drunk.

- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet and before eating
- Drink bottled water and check the seals are unbroken.
- Eat fresh, thoroughly cooked food that is still piping hot
- Meat should be well cooked, not rare
- Avoid food exposed to flies
- Avoid ice cream from unreliable sources
- Avoid undercooked or raw seafood or shellfish

Road accidents

The highest cause of deaths amongst travellers is travel accidents. Don't get into the oldest taxis or buses that are falling apart. Get out if you think the driver is drunk, or falling asleep on long journeys. It's better to arrive tomorrow than not at all. If you are on a scooter, always wear a helmet. Never drink and drive.

Sexual relationships

Don't do what you wouldn't do at home. You may find it easier to get into a relationship or have a casual fling than you would at home, and for this reason you should take extra care. Take sensible precautions and bear in mind that it is harder to get medical treatment out here.

Taking care in the sun

As well as giving you painful sunburn, too much sun can age your skin and increase the risk of getting skin cancer. Protect yourself between 11am and 3pm; make sure you never burn; always cover up. And protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses with proper UV filters, don't trust sunglasses bought locally. Make sure you keep yourself hydrated by drinking lots of water and non-alcoholic liquids.

Staying safe - general advice

- Think about what you are doing at all times and trust your instincts
- Obey local laws - there may be serious penalties for breaking a law that might seem trivial at home
- Don't openly display valuables and consider using a padlock on suitcases or backpacks.
- Only change money in banks or legal bureaux
- When you go out let someone know where you are going and when you will be back
- Be aware of local attitudes to alcohol and drink sensible
- Avoid any involvement with illegal drugs - the penalties in Thailand are very severe
- Don't overstay your visa
- Store important local contact numbers in your mobile

With a few simple precautions, life in Thailand will be exciting and safe.

About us.

Problems really began when all the big tourist resorts started being built on Koh Lanta. These resorts brought construction workers from other (Buddhist) parts of Thailand. These workers brought their dogs with them and abandoned them when work was completed. In addition to this problem, the number of tourists feeding these dogs increased, which resulted in their high survival and reproduction rates, causing over population on a Muslim island where dogs can be viewed very negatively.

The LAW clinic at Long Beach opened in January 2010.

LAW has the following objectives:

- Prevent and control the overpopulation of dogs and cats on Koh Lanta in a humane way through sterilization programmes. By doing this, the suffering (hunger, disease, abuse, injuries) will be greatly reduced as well.
- Provide care and treatment to sick and injured stray animals.
- Provide education and promote awareness of animal care and respect.

The sterilization programme is particularly vital to humane population control. Unfortunately, some of the methods used by the locals are extremely painful and inhumane, such as: food poisoning or feeding food mixed with fish hooks; drowning; throwing boiling oil on them; cutting them with knives and machetes.

Much of the population on the island is Muslim and parts of this community can have a negative attitude towards dogs. By educating and speaking with the local population, unnecessary suffering can be avoided for these animals and it is why we are also working on an education programme that will involve local community and school projects. To better serve the community, it is essential that they take part in the objectives to help suffering animals.

LAW currently has around 40 dogs and 50 cats, yet this number can fluctuate as animals are treated and released or re-homed.

Junie Kovacs is the founder of the centre and has been living on Koh Lanta since 2003. She also runs the cooking school and beach bar Time For Lime, which donates its profits to LAW. This is our main source of funding and without this valuable support we would not be here. We also receive donations from local businesses, tourists and animal lovers all over the world.

Donation wishlist

The following is a list of items that you might consider bringing if there is still room in your luggage:

- Dog and cat toys (tennis balls for example)
- Very strong, heavy duty dog leads and collars
- Books on dogs or cats, dog training, biology, etc.
- DVDs, playing cards or other games
- Resources for learning the Thai language, books, CDs etc
- First-aid or veterinary materials
- Choke chains & medium and large harnesses

Sponsorship

Have you also thought about getting your friends and family to sponsor your trip? Why not challenge them to sponsor you a certain amount for every day you stay at LAW, or ask them to sponsor one of our animals. Please contact us for more information and ideas.

FAQs.

Many volunteers experience a certain amount of culture shock and homesickness during their first few days - this is entirely normal. But stick with it and you will soon fit in and, like many others, you will be sad to leave at the end of your stay.

What happens when I arrive?

Upon arrival, volunteers will be greeted by a LAW staff member and shown to their room, with an explanation regarding toilets, showers, drinking water and laundry. You will get a brief description of work duties, including instructions on health and safety regarding proximity to animals. The day of arrival is planned for relaxing, orientation and acclimatising. The first week will follow with an induction programme to train each volunteer on the different tasks involved, working with long term volunteers and staff.

What is the accommodation like?

Accommodation will vary depending on the facility you are assigned to. Volunteers stay in male or female dorms with two beds per room. 2 sets of bed linen are provided and a set must be washed each week at the nearby laundry. Towels are not provided so please bring your own. At Long Beach, rooms have ensuite bathrooms and, there is a communal volunteer area with a kitchen and dining area. Domestic duties in the communal living areas like the kitchen are to be shared by all the volunteers. The smoking area is the sole responsibility of the smokers.

What are the arrangements regarding food and drink?

Drinking water is provided, as is tea, coffee, coffeemate and sugar. We now also provide breakfast and lunch as part of the volunteer package (see page 20-21 for more details). There is a fridge and cooking facilities are also available.

How many volunteers are there and where are they from?

There can be between 5 to 12 volunteers at any time. Some volunteers are full time, whereas some are part time and just come over to walk the dogs or play with the cats only. We have volunteers from various countries and various backgrounds. Typically Anglophones (Brits, Irish, Americans, Canadians, Kiwis and Aussies), Europeans and others. Ages vary, with the majority 20 - 30 year olds. Many gap-year students, some animal and conservation science students and many career- breakers. Everyone has to live and work together, so please be considerate and respectful to others, flexible and open-minded. Please note that volunteers who behave immaturely and cause a disturbance to the group may be asked to leave. Everyone has the same right to make their contribution to the project; hence mutual respect is expected of all volunteers.

What are the volunteer duties?

We have a regular timetable that can be pretty tiring for new people, but once you get settled into the tasks it gets much easier. The volunteers duties vary from cleaning dog kennels and cat cages (lots of poop and vomit at times), feeding and watering the animals, doing laundry, grooming the animals, spending time with the cats and walking the dogs.

FAQs.

What hours are volunteers required to work?

Care for the animals is obviously required 365 days a year and the centre operates a six-day working week, with one day off each week. **Please note that we cannot guarantee that volunteers who arrive together as friends will always have the same days off or work the same shifts.**

The rota is designed for the good of the centre and the animals first and foremost. If we have enough volunteers, we may be able to accommodate specific requests but this is not guaranteed. You will either work from 07:00 to 13:00 or 13:00 to 19:00. Typically, you will work six hours a day, with breaks. Work is spread fairly for all, although new arrivals are given an easy first few days while they are acclimatising. One night shift per week is required of each volunteer. because of the dog noise level early in the morning. Volunteers are required to sleep in the kitchen area near the kennels and quieten down the dogs at night if they start barking, which they sometimes do during the Muslim call to prayer at 05.00. This is very important because some of the neighbours have complained and we cannot risk being shut down. Nights shifts are from 19:00 to 07:00.

What is expected of each individual volunteer?

Each person has their own pace, their own strengths and weaknesses. You are kindly asked to respect that not everyone has the same abilities and may work at a different tempo to yourself. Everyone is here to help the animals and makes their contribution in their own way. Please speak to the volunteer coordinator if you feel you have been given too much or not enough work for your personal abilities. The work can often be quite physically demanding, but the end result is always well worth it.

When do volunteers have free time and what is there to do?

Volunteers will typically have a morning or afternoon free each day and one full day off each week.

Free time during the day on a working day is for:

relaxing, reading, exploring the area, socialising with other volunteers, learning Thai, etc. If you feel there is too much free time during the day, there is always some kind of work you can do. Please use your initiative and just ask.

Free time in the evenings is for:

Eating out, socialising with other volunteers and partying around the island. Please note that while we want everyone to have a good time, we ask volunteers to respect the project and not to disrupt others or get so drunk that you're unable to work properly the next day. Anyone not adhering to this rule may be issued a warning. After three warnings a volunteer will be asked to leave and references will be refused.

Free time on a day off:

There are many nice beaches to be found all around the island, particularly the further south you go (Kantiang Bay is a hot favourite). There is a choice of activities such as visiting islands nearby, snorkelling, diving, kayaking, exploring caves, etc

Will I be working with Thai people?

Yes. We have few Thai employees at the centre and also have locals volunteering occasionally. Exposure to working with westerners may vary with them but they are adaptable and respectful of the westerners and we ask you to do the same. Some are more fluent than others in English so please be patient but there will be at least one Thai staff member who is fluent in both Thai and English to help translate.

FAQs.

What are the main challenges I'll face?

The staff will do their best to inform you on what's going on and what is expected of you, however there will be times when you have to use your own initiative to organise activities, locate resources or information. Things may be organised differently from back home and things might not always make sense. You should be open-minded, patient, willing to accept new things and be prepared to get stuck in.

Do I need any specific skills?

You will need to be in good physical condition due to the nature of the work in a hot and humid environment. No specific skills are required other than enthusiasm and a strong stomach. It can also be very emotional work so you should try to be prepared for this.

What are the benefits of a placement at LAW?

By volunteering at either of our facilities, you make a major contribution to the welfare of dogs, cats and other animals on Koh Lanta. On a personal level you will have the satisfaction of helping to make a positive difference to the lives of these animals and, in the process, gain new skills and knowledge, working with an enthusiastic team. All volunteers who stay for at least four weeks are also entitled to a free cooking class at Time For Lime (please book a day in advance) plus discounted dinner prices (again, please book a day in advance) and half-price drinks at the bar.

Anything else?

Please take the time to read some of the information on our website (www.lantaanimalwelfare.com) so that you can start to familiarise yourself with our organisation. You may also wish to get in touch with other volunteers in advance and this is possible through our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/lantaanimalwelfare).

Deposit payment.

The contribution towards volunteering at Lanta Animal Welfare is:

9500 Baht for the first month

FREE for the second month

4000 Baht for the third month

This **now** includes two delicious and balanced homemade meals everyday Monday to Friday.

Served at our acclaimed restaurant on the beach - just 5 minutes from the shelter - everything is vegetarian / vegan friendly and we will always try to accommodate allergies. Help yourself to breakfast anytime between 6.30am and 9am. Expect fresh tropical fruit, cereals & muesli, brown bread, boiled eggs, oatmeal, jam, and all the milk, soy, tea and coffee you can handle.

For lunch, choose from two of our favourite home cooked dishes, changing regularly (and just wait until you try the pasta pesto with Thai basil and cashew nuts - you'll be damned!!)

Where possible, volunteers are welcome to stay in the onsite rooms neighbouring our animals (though these are first come, first served).

We ask for a refundable 4500 baht deposit that is returned to you at the end of your stay, provided that:

- (a) you do not cancel your placement before arrival
- (b) you remain with LAW for the duration of your agreed Placement
- (c) your placement is not terminated early by LAW
- (d) you leave your room as clean and tidy as you found it (if using our free rooms)

The same payment applies even if we cannot offer you accommodation as it goes directly towards the vital upkeep of our animals, training and administration, supplies & much more.

Currently, the minimum stay is 1 month and the maximum 3 months – although this can be extended in certain cases. All volunteers must be at least 20 years of age.

Please note that the best way for us to refund you half of your payment is via PayPal and not by cash. The reason for this is that we get charged large fees when we withdraw cash.

To pay for your placement:

1. Log into www.paypal.com
2. Send 14,000 THB to: monaslantahelp@gmail.com
3. Click on "Personal" and then tick "Other". Then click "Continue".
4. On the following page, please ensure you tick the "I will pay the fee" box. You need to include the Paypal fee in your payment, otherwise it gets passed on to us and we do not receive your full payment amount.
5. Under "Email to recipient", in the message box, please write your name and the words "Volunteer Payment". This is very important.
6. On payment completion, you will receive a receipt from PayPal

7. About 3-4 days after you have submitted your payment, you will receive confirmation from us.
8. If you have not heard back from us within 3 days, please get in touch.

We prefer you to use PayPal if at all possible but if necessary, you can pay by bank transfer to the following account:

Siam Commercial Bank

Sub-Branch: Ko Lanta

Address: 189.M.1 A. Ko Lanta, Krabi, 81150, Thailand

Swiftcode address: SICOTHBK

Account name: Lanta Animal Welfare

Account number: 797 21 08326

Expectations and behaviour.

One of the most important factors for us in preparing volunteers for their placement and creating a successful volunteering experience is trying to manage people's expectations. This is not always easy as people come with very different backgrounds, attitudes, goals etc. and due to the nature of the work no two experiences are ever the same. We try to manage expectations by giving you as much information as possible up front and being completely honest about what it's like.

We find that the vast majority of our volunteers have an amazing and sometimes life-changing experience. We have put some guidance below to help you prepare yourself mentally.

Working at LAW

Like in most developing countries, plans can change regularly and it can seem disorganised at times. The day to day nature of life at the centre can be a bit chaotic, so we encourage you to get stuck in and enjoy it. Things will be very different from home and that's all part of the experience. Try to adapt to the situation, make the most of your time and get involved as much as you can.

It's not a holiday

Although you may be volunteering as a holiday in itself or as part of your holiday, it's important to recognise that it isn't going to be like a normal holiday. The work can be challenging and draining although volunteers usually find that the rewards outweigh any hardships. It's also not appropriate to judge the experience by the same standards you would usually apply if travelling to tourist resorts.

Volunteering is challenging

By its nature volunteering is a challenging process involving many unpredictable factors. You may well find it emotional and it is likely your experience will leave a lasting impression on you. It is not normally the type of environment where you will be given direction all the time so we encourage you to use your initiative and don't just wait for things to happen. You may see working practices that you disagree with or are offended by. Please remember that you are not there to change working practices but to offer your skills and help. You will find that you make more difference by the work you do than by being critical.

The benefit you bring

It's important to be realistic about how much benefit you can bring (or at least that you will be able to see) in the time you will volunteer, but recognise that you are part of a bigger picture of ongoing support and development. Be assured that the contribution you are making through the time and money you are committing is making a huge difference.

Most importantly

Come with an open mind, considerate attitude, lots of enthusiasm and you are sure to have an amazing experience at Lanta Animal Welfare. The animals are all waiting to meet you.

Maps.

