

Essential Information for monthly Handa Volunteers 2024

Essential criteria for all Handa volunteers:

- **You must be prepared to live and work on a remote island, in very basic, shared, mixed-sex accommodation with occasionally hostile weather conditions.**
- **You must have a good level of health and fitness.**
This is because one of your main duties is to help visitors from the boat, which involves holding a heavy boat steady (in a variety of sea-states) and moving the wooden jetty up and down the beach all day. There is also **a lot of walking** to and from the shelter during beach duties and it's a long way uphill to the bothy!
You will be expected to carry out practical duties as and when required, and you will need to be able to carry tools, timber and equipment.
- **You must be willing to meet and interact with the public, contractors, and other volunteers.**
You will welcome visitors to the island and give them an introductory talk about the island and its wildlife. You will also be living with up to 5 other volunteers, the ranger and occasional contractors or work parties or other SWT staff, and so strong communication and people skills are essential.
- **There is a Code of Conduct that sets out what the Trusts expects from you, and what you can expect from the Trust.** The Ranger or responsible person will ask anyone found behaving unacceptably to leave on the next available boat.
- **We regret that we cannot accommodate pets on Handa.**
- **ACCOMMODATION** is provided free of charge, in a two-roomed, stone-built bothy.
- All volunteers sleep in single bunk beds located in an unheated, communal mixed-sex room. The main bothy room is the cooking and social area, with two further bunk beds, and is used by all volunteers and any other staff or contractors staying on the island. Adjacent to the bunkroom are two flushing toilets and a shower. Separate self-contained accommodation is also provided for the seasonal Ranger(s), however they also share the toilets and the shower. For much of the season, the bothy is a busy place!
- To keep our ecological impact to a minimum, as much as possible, everything on Handa is reused or recycled. Due to the remote location of Handa, the island is completely off-grid. We ask that volunteers are considerate when using resources such as gas and water, which are expensive to maintain and difficult to transport. Showers are powered by solar panels so don't expect to shower every day.
- Please refer to the Handa Volunteer FAQs for further information.

PLEASE BRING as a minimum:

- Enough **food** for yourself for at least the first two weeks, **including for packed lunches every day.**
- **Insect repellent** and/or **midge net**
- **Sun cream, sun hat and sunglasses**
- A **watch** and a **(head)torch** with plenty of battery life, preferably with rechargeable batteries.
- **Waders** are essential for working on the beach and **SWT provide these.** However, please check the availability of waders in your size with the Ranger before you come.
- **Plenty of socks** as you may get wet feet whilst working.
- **Sleeping bag / duvet, 2 pillowcases** and a **fitted sheet** for the mattress
- **Warm and waterproof clothing** (including waterproof trousers)
- At least **2 sets of work clothing** (branded SWT fleeces and T-shirts will be provided for duration of your stay)
- **Thermos, water bottle and tupperware** for packed lunches
- **Sturdy footwear** (boots or walking shoes, wellies come in handy as well)
- A sturdy **belt**, needed for wearing the waders
- A **hot water bottle** can make nights more comfortable, especially at the start and end of the season – the bunkroom where you'll be sleeping is unheated
- **Mobile phone and charger**
- **If you want to bring: Laptop, music, ...**

GETTING SUPPLIES and HAVING TIME OFF THE ISLAND

You are expected to provide all your own food for the duration of your stay. Volunteers do have a food allowance of £30 per week. This is claimed back as expenses and does not include alcohol / toiletries. Communal cooking is commonplace, but each team is different, so always assume you are looking after yourself. Check with the Ranger prior to coming as there may be an ample supply of staples such as pasta and condiments already in the bothy. Scourie Stores has some food but is unfortunately not always on good stock. To get supplies, the team organises a 'click and collect' or asks arriving volunteers to bring things if it is convenient for them. The Ranger also visits Kinlochbervie or Ullapool once every month and can give you a lift or get things for you. It is advisable to **stock up on bulk items** in Inverness or Ullapool prior to coming; you can always leave tins and packets of food in your car. The boatmen will provide one free return ferry ticket every 2 weeks of your stay, providing you come and go on empty boats. If you wish to come and go more frequently, you must pay the full fare.

HOW TO GET HERE

Please aim to arrive at Tarbet Pier for around **1pm on the first day of your placement. If you are delayed, it is essential that you contact the Ranger so that they can let the ferry operator know.** The Trust covers the ferry fare for its volunteers and some part of your mileage. When you arrive at Tarbet, please introduce yourself to the Ferry Operator and let him know you're a Volunteer; you'll be working closely with him throughout your stay.

- **If driving**, please allow sufficient time for your journey, bearing in mind that the roads are often slow during summer. If travelling via Lairg be aware that most of this route is single track. If you have your own transport, please consider lift-sharing. **Your car can be safely left at Tarbet pier for the duration of your stay.**
- **Public transport is very limited in the area and as of 2017, timings mean that this is not a viable option.** This is because the only bus service (the [Durness Bus](#)) arrives too late and leaves too early to be an option.

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS – arrival and departure

Occasionally the weather is so severe that the boat will not run or will run a limited service. Always keep an eye on the forecast, and phone the Ranger the day before arrival if the weather is looking poor. Always keep your phone on and check it where possible on your trip as the Ranger may need to contact you to advise an earlier or later arrival.

COMMUNICATIONS

For safety reasons, **we require you to bring your own mobile phone and charger.** Most mobile networks have coverage, some more limited than others. There is limited WiFi at the bothy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on your role and what it is like to live on the island, please make sure you read all of the documents and watch the videos on our [website](#).

USEFUL CONTACTS

Handa Ranger	handaranger@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk 07920 468572 - signal is patchy and text messages frequently get lost, so please phone and always leave a message if unable to speak to the Ranger directly.
Scottish Wildlife Trust Headquarters	volunteerhanda@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk Tel: 0131 312 4732 and ask for the Handa Volunteering Co-ordinator.
Durness Tourist Centre	01971 511259
Handa ferry operators	Roger Tebay 07780 967800

**Thank you for supporting the Scottish Wildlife Trust.
We hope you have a fantastic time on Handa!**