SAMARA
KAROO RESERVE

Job Vacancy

HEAD OF CONSERVATION

Samara Karoo Reserve is a private game reserve spanning 27,000 hectares in the Great Karoo. Through its strategic location and its rewilding successes over the course of 30 years, Samara has established itself as a key privately protected area contributing to biodiversity conservation at a global, national and regional scale.

Samara currently has an opportunity for a HEAD OF CONSERVATION, responsible for leading and delivering Samara's long-term strategy for the monitoring, management and restoration of its biodiversity resources and ecosystem processes, including territorial integrity, in line with its management plan.

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated, dynamic and capable strategic thinker demonstrating a proven track record of conservation management experience, preferably at a top private reserve or national/provincial park.

Key responsibilities and duties

- Development and implementation of strategic adaptive reserve management plan as it pertains to biodiversity conservation and ecological processes.
- Implementation and management of all conservation activities and ecological monitoring, including aerial surveys, camera traps, game census, landscape use analysis, veld condition assessments.
- Coordination and management of biological reporting to feed into monitoring and security tool (Earth Ranger).
- Wildlife management including species of special interest, translocations and introductions.
- Ecosystem management including soil erosion control, alien vegetation control, land restoration, grazing monitoring and water provisioning.
- Coordination of response to wildfire, flooding and other natural events.
- Cultivation of existing research and conservation partnerships and development of new collaborations.
- Cultivation of good communications with internal and external stakeholders.

- Supervision of access control, perimeter management, security control room.
- Management responsibility for anti-poaching unit strategy and personnel.
- Administration of permits and property registrations.
- Provision of leadership to team members, fostering a culture of excellence.
- Compilation of annual budgets, quarterly forecasts and regular reports.
- Regular management meetings with Heads of Department.

Requirements

- Tertiary qualification in nature conservation, ecology, environmental sciences or related subject.
- Minimum 10 years protected area or conservation/wildlife senior management experience.
- Proficient in English and Afrikaans.
- Working knowledge of relevant environmental legislation (e.g. NEMBA, NEMPAA).
- Competent with GIS, Earth Ranger and statistical analysis methods.
- Experience in strategic adaptive management methodology.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Excellent project management, planning and report writing skills.
- Excellent leadership and teamwork skills with a collaborative style.
- Experience of people management.
- Commitment to remaining up to date with the latest conservation science, methodologies and technologies.
- Ability to solve problems under pressure.
- Valid driver's license with 4x4 experience.
- Firearm competency.
- Knowledge of the Karoo or other semi-arid environment advantageous.
- Experience of ecotourism operation advantageous.

About the job

- Live-in position **on-site** near Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Housing will be provided on the reserve.
- Remuneration and benefits will be market-related and in accordance with experience and qualifications

Should you meet the requirements for this position please apply with your CV (maximum 2 pages) and a covering letter including salary expectation and contact details of two recent independent references to sarah@samara.co.za.

Please note that applicants must be legally entitled to work in South Africa.

Correspondence will be conducted with short listed candidates only. If you have not received any communication from us within 14 days of your application please consider your application unsuccessful.

Samara reserves the right not to make an appointment.

Closing date: 11 December 2026

Reservations:
P.O. Box 649, Graaff Reinet, 6280
Tel +27 (0)31 262 0324
E-mail: ***reservations@samara.co.za***

Lodge/Reserve:
Petersburg Rd, off R63 to Pearston, near Graaff-Reinet
Tel +27 (0)49 940 0059 / +27 (0)49 891 0880
E-mail: ***lodge@samara.co.za***