



South Africa

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CONSERVATION WORKING VACATION

## Join us and work alongside some of the world's most magnificent animals.

Spend your days under the African sun with endangered cheetahs, a species close to extinction and close to our hearts. At Running Wild, volunteering is more than a task - it's a journey of connection, compassion, and purpose.

Meet rescued lions, hyenas, servals, caracals, meerkats, bushbabies, and more. Every animal has a story, and as a volunteer, you become part of their journey - from trauma to hope, from captivity to freedom.

Volunteers, students and interns play a vital role in daily care, enrichment, and rehabilitation programs that give rescued animals a second chance at life. You'll gain hands-on experience in wildlife care, conservation, and animal behaviour while learning about the challenges these species face - habitat loss, poaching, and human conflict.

Every day contributes directly to protecting endangered animals and supporting real conservation efforts.

Here, volunteers don't just observe - they participate. From feeding and enriching animals to preparing endangered species for a return to the wild, your hands and heart become part of their story.

You help transform fear into trust, weakness into strength, and captivity into hope.

Volunteering isn't just about giving - it's about learning, growing, and leaving with a deeper understanding of life, nature, and the urgent need to protect it.

## This isn't just a trip - it's a chance to make a difference.

Beyond the work, experience the beauty of Africa - the roar of lions at sunrise, cheetahs stretching in the sun, and the thrill of living alongside the wild.

Become a guardian of the wild, a voice for the voiceless, and part of a movement ensuring cheetahs and other wildlife thrive for generations to come.

## Be Part of the Change

Volunteers, interns and students are the lifeblood of Running Wild. Without them, we could not continue our mission of rescue, rehabilitation, rewilding, and sanctuary care.

By joining us, you are not just supporting a project — you are becoming part of a movement that safeguards species, restores balance, and creates hope for the future of wildlife in Africa.

This is your chance to make a difference. To step into the wild. To leave a legacy.

## Learn. Work. Grow. Contribute.

## The benefits of volunteering:

- Meet new people & feel more connected & useful
- Increasing self-esteem & a sense of purpose
- Contributing positively to our community
- Gaining valuable skills & experience
- Improving physical & mental health
- Volunteering can reduce stress, anxiety & depression while providing opportunities to learn new things

Whether you stay for a few weeks or a few months, your time at Running Wild will help give animals a second chance at life — either free in the wild or safe in a forever home within our sanctuary.

## Why volunteer with us?

Volunteering with us provides a meaningful opportunity to contribute to wildlife conservation based on strong ethical principles. Our foremost focus is the wellbeing of our animals, and we do not sell, trade, or exploit our animals. We operate without public day visits, emphasizing quality and animal welfare over profit-driven ventures. By volunteering, students, and interns, you become part of a dedicated team committed to preserving and protecting cheetahs for future generations.

## For Conservation & the Animals

- Direct Impact on Lives – Volunteers help care for rescued, orphaned, or endangered animals, often making the difference between survival and decline.
- Support for Rewilding – Sanctuaries working on reintroduction projects (like breeding cheetahs for the wild) depend on dedicated hands to raise, monitor, and prepare animals for freedom.
- Alleviating Exploitation – By choosing ethical sanctuaries over exploitative facilities (like petting zoos or canned hunting farms), volunteers strengthen the demand for true conservation.

## For the Sanctuary

- Manpower for Daily Operations – Feeding, cleaning, building enclosures, enrichment, monitoring—sanctuaries often run on tight budgets and volunteers provide crucial support.
- Educational Ambassadors – Volunteers help spread awareness when they return home, becoming voices for wildlife worldwide.
- Financial Sustainability – Many sanctuaries rely on volunteer program fees to fund animal care, vet costs, and conservation projects.

## For the Volunteer

- Hands-On Experience – Volunteers gain real-world skills in animal husbandry, conservation management, and sometimes even veterinary care.
- Personal Growth – Working with wild animals fosters empathy, patience, and resilience while also connecting volunteers deeply to nature.

- Cultural & Global Connection – Living and working alongside people from different countries builds lifelong friendships and networks.
- Sense of Purpose – Every task, from preparing food to recording behavior, directly contributes to protecting wildlife.

*In short, volunteering at a wildlife sanctuary is not just “helping out.” It’s active conservation in motion—protecting species, giving exploited animals a safe life, and shaping humans into guardians of the wild.*

## **The benefits of internships at Running Wild**

Internships at a wildlife sanctuary are more than just work experience — they are an opportunity to step into the heart of conservation, gain practical skills, and create memories that will shape your career and your worldview. At Running Wild Conservation, our internships are designed to be immersive, educational, and deeply rewarding.

### **Hands-On Experience**

Unlike classroom learning, you will work directly with wildlife and be part of the daily operations that keep a sanctuary running. From food preparation and animal husbandry to observing behaviour and assisting with enrichment activities, you’ll gain practical, real-world skills that can’t be taught in theory alone.

### **Insight into Conservation**

Interns learn the challenges and triumphs of modern conservation — from rescuing and rehabilitating animals to the complexities of rewilding. This experience provides an invaluable understanding of the bigger picture: how sanctuaries balance animal welfare, ecosystem protection, and community involvement.

### **Exposure to Veterinary Practices**

For students interested in veterinary science, internships offer a rare chance to witness and sometimes assist with treatments, health checks, and rehabilitation processes. This gives you a unique perspective on the medical care required for both captive and wild animals.

### **Skill Development**

Internships build a wide range of transferable skills, including teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and leadership. Whether your career path is wildlife conservation, veterinary medicine, or environmental education, these skills are invaluable.

### **Mentorship and Networking**

You’ll be guided by experienced staff who specialize in conservation, animal husbandry, and veterinary care. Their mentorship not only helps you grow academically but also connects you to a global network of professionals and fellow students passionate about protecting the natural world.

### **Personal Growth**

Living and working in close contact with wildlife fosters resilience, patience, and adaptability. Many interns find that their time at the sanctuary transforms their outlook, giving them a deeper appreciation for nature and a stronger sense of purpose.

## **Career Advantage**

Employers and universities value real-world, practical experience. Completing an internship at a sanctuary sets you apart, showing that you've applied your knowledge in challenging, hands-on environments and contributed to meaningful conservation work.

## **Making a Difference**

Most importantly, every intern plays a role in giving animals a second chance — whether that's helping an orphaned cheetah prepare for release or ensuring a rescued lion has a safe forever home. You'll leave knowing that your work has directly impacted the lives of vulnerable animals.

## **Our Mission Goes Beyond Cheetahs:**

Volunteering with us allows you to be part of a holistic conservation effort. Besides our cheetah rewilding program, we provide a lifelong haven for rescued animals, ensuring they live with care, compassion, and freedom from stress. We are dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating orphaned or injured wildlife, with the goal of returning them to their natural habitats. Your involvement helps support these vital efforts, making a real difference in the lives of animals and the preservation of biodiversity.

## **Our Commitment:**

Every effort we make is guided by responsibility, sustainability, and love for the wild.

We are passionate about sharing our knowledge and dedication with every volunteer, student, and intern who joins us.

At Running Wild, you won't just help wildlife - you'll grow into a true wildlife warrior, leaving with a profound respect for the wildness and uniqueness of every animal you encounter.

Our aim is also to enlighten you in the true conservation efforts done in terms of rehabilitation and release of captive animals with added skills in animal husbandry.

We offer you an opportunity to work with the animals and gain valuable experience in daily animal care and spending time with the animals to learn more about them behaviour and special needs. You get to contribute to daily animal enrichment and monitoring where needed.

With us, it is all about the animals. We believe in the rights and protection of animals. Our project is home to a variety of wild but captive kept animals such as lions, cheetahs, servals, caracals, hyenas, even the mischievous meerkats and more.

We provide a home to any other animal that cannot be released back into the wild, as well as a "day care" for animals that were abandoned, injured, traumatized, in need of care, support, medical attention and a forever home.

We strive to make life as normal as possible for animals by ensuring their happiness and well-being.

# Rates:

## Per person, per week

Discounted rate for every week you stay longer!

### 1 January - 31 December 2026

|           |           |          |          |
|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 x Week  | - R18260  | - \$1050 | - € 890  |
| 2 x Weeks | - R34650  | - \$1950 | - € 1700 |
| 3 x Weeks | - R50050  | - \$2850 | - € 2400 |
| 4 x Weeks | - R66000  | - \$3750 | - € 3200 |
| 5 x Weeks | - R82500  | - \$4650 | - € 4000 |
| 6 x Weeks | - R96800  | - \$5450 | - € 4700 |
| 7 x Weeks | - R112200 | - \$6350 | - € 5450 |
| 8 x Weeks | - R125400 | - \$7100 | - € 6150 |

## “Conservation Traveller” option available:

Pay a bit more and enjoy only the fun side of our project without having to get your hands dirty

Enjoy our animal enrichment activities such as walks with cheetah in the bush as well as on-site and off-site excursions as part of your itinerary!

On-site activities at no charge. Off-site excursions at your own cost.

Cost : € 950 per person per week

## Included in your rate:

Accommodation, 3 meals per day at the project, laundry, activities and game drives on our conservancy.

## Not included in your rate :

Flights, excursions & meals during excursions, transport to & from airport, drinks, snacks, gratuities, etc.

## Accommodation :

Five log cabins surrounding the lodge & close to the animal camps.

Each cabin consists of 2 bedrooms and a bathroom, which will be shared by max 4 volunteers.

Each room will accommodate 2 volunteers. If you are lucky, you could have the room to yourself.

The cabin has a small lounge, kitchen & bathroom. Males and females are separate in sharing rooms.

Pay \$20 per day extra and secure your own private room if available.

#### **Meals :**

**Breakfast :** Cereals, fruit, eggs, toast and spreads.

**Lunch :** Noodles, omeletes, salads, toasted sandwiches, wraps, etc.

**Dinner :** A hot meal will be served every night such as a traditional BBQ, pastas, casseroles, curries, vegetables, salads & meat

Ingredients for breakfast & lunch will be available in the lodge kitchen, you will prepare your own breakfast & lunch, while dinner will be prepared by us. Tea and coffee will be available at any time in the lodge. All other drinks & snacks will be at your own expense, although tap water is safe to drink.

Our meal portion sizes are normal, if snacks are desired for in between eating, please purchase some groceries prior to arrival or when we go into town volunteers will have the chance to go with. There will also be a fridge available for your personal food and drinks.

Please advise us prior to arrival of any dietary needs (e.g. if you are vegetarian or have any allergies).

Vegans will have an additional charge of R500 (\$40 - €35) per week for our additional cooking.

#### **Laundry :**

There is a laundry room where our cleaning staff will take care of your washing once a week, free of charge.

#### **Internet :**

Wifi is free but the signal is limited to the lodge and entertainment area.

#### **Important details :**

**Arrival date :** Monday mornings for arrival.

**Departure date :** Monday evenings for departure.

**Our Location :** Magaliesburg Region, Gauteng Province, South Africa

**International airport :** OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg

#### **Transfers :**

A private shuttle will collect you at the airport as well as return you to the airport. The cost will be discussed with you, but normally between €35 and €80, depending of the total volunteers sharing the shuttle.

**Minimum stay :** 1 week

**Maximum stay :** 8 weeks

**Requirements to join :** Basic level of competency in English & an interest in wildlife

**You must please arrive before 12h00 on Monday mornings and depart after 16h00 on a Monday afternoons, which will streamline the transfer logistics of shuttles. The cost of the shuttle is normally between 50 - 80 euros per trip. You have to pay the driver directly but the project will arrange your transfer & send you the details prior to arrival. Certain bookings through your agent will include your transport!**

Volunteers will work 5 and a half days per week. Sundays are generally your day off and will give you a chance to settle into the conservancy or go on nearby excursions. Thursday mornings are also your off time to spend as you wish. Please note that this routine is kept as best as possible, however, working with animals sometimes requires a flexible schedule. The above outline is subject to change.

### **Packing list recommended**

- Casual working clothes for warm & cold days, please avoid bright colours
- A warm jacket, comfortable hiking shoes, casual sandals (flip flops)
- Swimsuit, bath towel, sun screen & hat
- Toiletries : Personal bathroom amenities (soap, shampoo)
- Your personal needed medication
- Cash in Rand currency to the amount of R4000 max for excursions, snacks, beverages, souvenirs & shuttles.
- You can also use your card to pay for all your expenses at our facility
- Visa, Master or Credit cards can also be used locally for payments
- The shuttle must be paid in cash (South African Rand)

### **JOIN US ALSO FOR A MEMORABLE BIG 5 EXCURSION**

During your stay with us you can join our guides on a day excursion to the world renown Pilanesberg Big 5 National Park, only 90 mins drive away. The cost for the excursion is R1200 per person (€65) and it includes your transport and entrance fee!

## **General Information**

Water: Water is safe to drink, you don't need bottled water. Use water sparingly and have short showers or baths.

Insurance: All Running Wild Conservation volunteers must have medical, travel and trip cancellation insurance for the duration of their program.

Drugs: Running Wild Conservation has a zero-tolerance policy for illegal drugs. Offenders will be removed from the program immediately without refund.

Smoking: Smoking is not allowed when you are in animal camps or around any animal. Designated areas will be available for smoking

Alcohol: A responsible level of drinking (for volunteers of legal age) is allowed on certain nights of the week. Alcohol is never to be consumed during the workday. Alcoholic consumption is allowed only on Wednesdays, Friday & Saturday NIGHTS - a cash bar is available.

## Project Highlights :

- Work hands on with the big cats such as cheetahs, lions & hyenas
- Work hands on with small cats such as caracals and servals
- Learn more about our passion and dedication to rewild and release animals
- Experience first-hand all aspects of the animal's life
- Be part of a very passionate team
- Learn about conservation and Africa's wild animals
- Live in close proximity to the lion, hyena, serval, caracal, meerkat and cheetah enclosures

## Additional Information :

What is the difference between volunteering and regular tourism?

In regular tourism the emphasis is on the tourist who expects to receive excellent service on their trip (great hotel, good food and all excursions working according to a timetable). The place and local community become less important with the tourist becoming the centre of attention.

In volunteer tourism (voluntourism) the emphasis shifts to work contribution, goals of the program and helping the local community. It is the success of the program and the atmosphere between the community and the volunteers that help make the trip unforgettable – not the level of service or the quality of the accommodation.

## Will there be any surprises?

Volunteer tourism can be unpredictable! While Running Wild Conservation does the upmost to stick to timetables and examples of type of work needed by the volunteer, there are many factors that can impact these plans. For example, the weather and seasons, local holidays, mood of the wildlife and immediate needs of the program. The information you will receive from the program is important and valuable however things can change and we urge you to use it as a guideline and expect the unexpected – this is what makes volunteer tourism so diverse and exciting. It is important that you arrive with a flexible attitude and remember that just by being at the project, you will be contributing to its running, growth and success. Many of these programs are in cultures very different than yours and as such the type and length of work given may or may not seem important to you but it will be for the program.

## Culture Shock

The volunteers you will be working with come from all over the world and may be from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Volunteering is also a cultural experience where you can learn about different cultures but please be both tolerant and patient. Do not be shy in sharing your experiences, recipes, songs and traditions it will just add to the overall group cohesion.

## Extra expenses

Please consider additional expenses like tours, trips, cold drinks, restaurants and bars.

It is a good idea to carry different types of payment: Cash, Credit & Debit Cards are options.

## Travel Insurance

It is very important and necessary to purchase and carry travel insurance for any unforeseen eventuality.

In short be prepared to learn a new culture - T.I.A. (This Is Africa) - things changes, that's the awesome part of the experience. Patience can go a long way to making your trip unforgettable! Please come with an open mind and positive attitude, you will have the most awesome time of your life!

## Pay It Forward - RWC Community Outreach

At Running Wild Conservation, caring for wildlife goes hand in hand with caring for people.

Through our **Pay It Forward Program**, we support local communities by donating clothing, bathroom and sanitary essentials, kiddies toys, school supplies, and much more.

You are welcome to join this mission! If you'd like, bring along anything that could make a difference in the lives of families in need — from clothes, toys and toiletries to educational materials. Every contribution, big or small, helps uplift someone's life. Together, we can protect wildlife and empower people.

*Contact us now and get more information about your dream working holiday to South Africa*

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