

Internship Scat Detection Dog Handler and Research Assistant



Agency: Cheetah Conservation Fund

Location: Otjiwarongo, Namibia (www.cheetah.org)

Duration: 1-month placement, potential for 6-month internship

Support: Room and Board

Last Date to Apply: Year round

Start Date: Year round

Description:

The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), located 44km outside of Otjiwarongo, Namibia, is seeking a qualified individual to assist in the daily operation and development of its Scat Detection Dog programme. The programme uses dogs trained in detecting cheetah scat for rapid, minimal-invasive cheetah surveys. Scat (both cheetah and other carnivore) found and collected by the programme is analysed in CCF's genetics laboratory and used in population level genetics studies, hormone studies, and ecological studies.

This advert is for a 1-month placement, with the potential for extension to a full 6-month internship at the discretion of CCF dependent upon performance and compatibility of the successful applicant. Early termination is not expected but can occur under certain conditions such as student misconduct, failure to progress, or other unforeseen circumstances. For outstanding trainees, a permanent position or opportunity to join the programme as MSc student will be considered at the end of the 6-month internship. The responsibilities will primarily pertain to the scat detection programme, however the successful applicant will have to participate along other CCF programmes/departments as directed, when not needed by the scat detection dog work. It is important to note that this position does not involve work with CCF's captive resident cheetahs.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Performance of high quality field searches with scat detection dogs
- The daily care and training maintenance of scat detection dogs
- Entering and Curating data collected by programme
- Assistance in programme research and search design
- Assistance with programme development
- Engage with the public through interactive demonstrations showcasing the dogs and their work

Secondary Responsibilities:

- Assisting other CCF departments and staff where necessary/required
- Contributing to the writing of articles/entries for newsletters, other publications, and CCF's social media network

Qualification Requirements:

- BSc or HONS in biology, ecology, conservation or similar field
- Strong interest in research, conservation ecology, and animal training for research
- Preferable experience with working animals, particularly with dogs. Strict animal training experience is not necessarily required, but good understanding of animal behaviour and interest and ability to maintain current training regimes and protocols is required
- Ability to work extended hours in harsh environments, ability to walk/hike for up to 10km through variable terrain (including thick thornbush). Willingness to camp for extended periods in remote areas without access to basic facilities.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications, experience or knowledge of database programmes (i.e. FileMaker) is preferred
- Excellent spoken and written English
- Valid driver's license strongly preferred
- Ability to drive manual transmission vehicles preferred

Interpersonal Skill Requirements:

- Willingness and passion to work for- and take care of a specialised working dog
- High degree of self-motivation, initiative, and pro-activity without constant supervision and guidance
- Demonstrable commitment, initiative, enthusiasm, patience, strong work ethic, and problem-solving abilities
- Strong communication skills with an aptitude to work with people of various backgrounds including local people/communities, other CCF staff personnel, CCF interns and volunteers, and international donors
- Acute flexibility, ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and ability to cope/handle uncertainty and emergencies
- CCF's headquarters is located in a very remote location, so ability to live isolated with many of the same people and without access to modern amenities is required

To apply please email your CV, cover letter, and 2 letters of reference to the name and address below. The application process will include at least 1 round of telephone interviews.

Contact Person: Tim Hofmann

Contact Email: Detectiondogs@cheetah.org