

THE DELL CHEETAH CENTRE'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME



About the Dell Cheetah Centre:

The Dell Cheetah Centre is a cheetah breeding and reintroduction centre, based near Parys in South Africa (100 km south of Johannesburg). It is situated on a reserve which borders the Vaal River and is home to a variety of antelope species as well as giraffe.



We began working with captive-bred cheetahs in 2001 and during the past five years 20 cheetahs have been bred and raised with a fantastic success rate. Our initial aim was to provide these cheetahs to other breeding programs, both in South Africa and internationally and therefore preventing them being taken from the wild. Due to the rapidly declining numbers of cheetah in the wild, we have realised that further action needs to be taken to address this problem. We aim to do this with a three-phase project which will see our cheetahs released into managed environments which are closer to their natural habitat.

About the Volunteer Programme:

We are inviting you to come and work with our beautiful cheetahs, and help us save this incredible species. Our volunteer programme is designed to introduce you to the fascinating wildlife Africa has to offer as well as the incredible cheetah, and to work closely in all aspects of reserve management. Once a month we take our volunteers on a trip to Kruger National Park, which is home to the 'Big 5', where you can see the best of Africa's wildlife in its natural habitat.

We are currently in the initial stages of our reintroduction project, and are offering you the chance to work with us to help reintroduce cheetahs back into their natural habitat. You will be playing a vital role in monitoring and teaching our cheetahs (from the age of three months) to prepare them to hunt for themselves, so that we can realise our goal of seeing free-roaming cheetahs again. You will also be helping us educate the public about the plight of the cheetah through our Cheetah Visits.

The aim of the programme is to give you a deeper understanding of conservation and its importance in the 21st century, as well as giving you the incredible experience of interacting with our cheetahs on a daily basis. The programme has been running since July 2008 and we have a maximum of 6 spaces available per month, providing you with the best possible experience by giving you plenty of interaction time with the cheetahs.

Highlights of the Programme:

- Working and interacting with our resident cheetahs every day
- Helping to monitor any young cheetah cubs we might have during your stay
- Making a difference in the lives of many different species through game monitoring and reserve maintenance
- Exploring and discovering the African bush veld through our 3 day trip to Kruger National Park (we can only guarantee the Kruger trip for participants of the 4 week programme)
- Making friends and having new experiences, both with the staff and your fellow volunteers



Programme Deliverables:

You will get large amounts of hands on experience with the cheetahs, as you will be spending time with them every day. You will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining their enclosures, exercising and feeding them. You will also be able to monitor any cubs (from the age of three months) we have at the time.

You will spend a lot of time out in the African bush, learning first hand about the wildlife and working to improve the reserve for them, and you may even have the chance to assist our wildlife vet in his work (darting, capturing and examining the animals). You will also receive informal lectures on a wide variety of topics, such as animal identification, conservation and much more.

Participant Requirements:

The programme is open to anyone from the age of 18 to 50, however all participants must be in good health and able to carry out all duties required of them.

All we want from you is a passion to learn, help, have fun and make a difference. No previous knowledge or experience is required, only a desire to learn! You will get the most out of the experience if you put your all in, it can be hard work, but it will be incredibly rewarding.

Regardless of your dietary preferences, it is important to note that you are expected to be **fully involved** in the preparation of the meat (usually horses and donkeys) for feeding the cheetahs. This includes removing the meat from the bone and cutting it up - you will be fully supervised at all times, as well as preparing the meat for each feed.

Programme Facilitators:

Everyone at the Dell Cheetah Centre has a contagious passion for nature and conservation, and especially the cheetahs. You will be working side by side with the staff and will find their knowledge and expertise invaluable during your stay.

A Typical Day:

While we have a routine in place, our timetable is fairly fluid and we have to be ready to act in any eventuality.

Here is an example of a typical day as a volunteer at the Dell Cheetah Centre:

7 – 8:30am: Cleaning the cheetah enclosures and running the cheetahs to exercise them and to provide stimulation and enrichment

8:30 – 9:30am: Breakfast

9:30 – 1pm: Morning duties, which could be a game count, meat preparation, a boundary patrol or the removal of alien invader plant species

1 – 2pm: Lunch

2 – 4pm: Afternoon duties, which could be reserve maintenance, spending time with the cheetahs or creating fire breaks

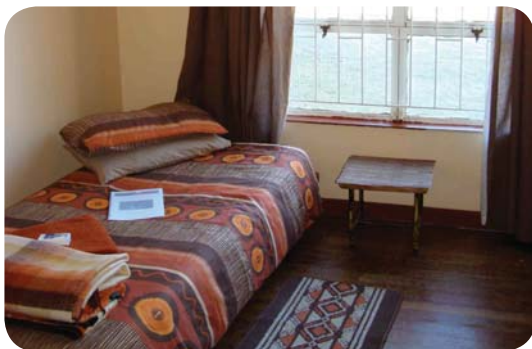
4 - 5pm: Cheetah feeding (this can change depending on the time of year)

4 – 5pm: Evening duties, which could be enclosure maintenance, a quiz or a bush walk

At the end of each day we have a short meeting to go over the events of the day and inform everyone of the coming day

5pm onwards: Free time; a time to socialise and eat dinner. We may occasionally also do other activities during this time.

Programme Accommodation & Facilities:



You will be staying in our specially designed volunteer house, which is very comfortable and cleaned on a regular basis. There are areas to relax and socialise in, and there is a TV and DVD player for watching films on as well as DStv (cable) television.

We also have Internet on the volunteer computer, available at a small additional cost.

The closest town is Parys, 10 km away. Regular trips are organised for food and you can pick up any luxury items on your days off. Please note that because the project is located on a reserve, there is no access to town for volunteers apart from on your days off.

You will get one day off a week; you can choose to spend it relaxing on the reserve, or enjoying one of the many activities, such as river rafting, abseiling and quad biking which are available in the area, for an additional cost.

Alternatively you can visit one of the many attractions in the surrounding area as a group with your fellow volunteers.

You also get Sunday afternoons off, which is a time to relax.



Programme Meals:

Coffee, tea and juice are available throughout the day and we also sell snacks and cool drinks in our shop. We will provide you with a substantial breakfast as we believe this to be the most important meal of the day. Lunch will be a cold spread and in the evening you will cook communally from ingredients we provide. This is a chance for you to get together, relax and discuss your day.

Kruger Trip:

The three day trip to the Kruger National Park is a highlight of the programme. We pay for all transport, accommodation, entry fees and food, though you might want to bring some additional money for snacks and souvenirs.

The trip is designed to give you the chance to see Africa's wildlife in their natural habitat, and to show how the whole ecosystem works, so you can understand how important conservation is, and why each and every single organism has its own place and role. We also do a tour of an animal rehabilitation centre just outside the park which is extremely informative and enjoyable and gives you another perspective of conservation. Everyone really enjoys the Kruger Trip and it is a fantastic experience. Please note that we can only guarantee that participants of the four week programme go to Kruger. It is possible for those coming for two weeks to coincide their stay with a Kruger trip, however they will need to pay an additional fee to cover costs.

Programme Costs:

Please contact us for the most up to date prices for the two week and one month programmes.

Please contact us if you would like to spend more time at the Dell Cheetah Centre, or you would like to combine this programme with another project. Please note that all information is correct at time of going to press. Costs and arrangements may change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Programme Costs Include:

- Return transfers to and from Johannesburg International Airport (O. R. Tambo)
- All accommodation, food and housekeeping costs
- All transportation and equipment required to carry out Dell Cheetah Centre work
- Complete 24 hour support and guidance from the Dell Cheetah Centre team
- All wildlife and conservation education during your stay
- The three day trip to Kruger National Park which is a chance to see the African wildlife in their natural habitat (only applicable for the four week programme)
- Programme Fee – This is the large bulk of the programme cost and finances all aspects of the cheetah breeding and reintroduction work, for example; enclosure improvements and feeding the cheetahs

Programme Costs Exclude:

- Return flights to Johannesburg International Airport (O. R. Tambo)
- Any items of a personal nature, such as gifts and curios and additional food, drinks and snacks
- Internet access, which we sell time for
- The appropriate personal medical insurance, which must cover the entire duration of your programme, and should include cover for repatriation and any activities that you will undertake, including working with animals
- Any additional trips or activities organised in your free time

Programme Support:

Before and during the programme you will have full access to the Dell Cheetah Centre team to ensure you receive all the support and help you need. We are committed to ensuring you have the best possible time here at the Dell Cheetah Centre and your health and happiness is of the utmost importance to us.

Programme Training and Orientation:

Upon arrival you will be fully briefed and trained in all appropriate areas. You will be introduced to all members of staff and given a tour of the reserve. You will be shown where all the tools and equipment are, and briefed exactly how to use them. You will not be expected to carry out any duties without the appropriate training and supervision.

You will also be given more information on our reintroduction project and the plight of the cheetah, so that you fully understand just how important our work here is.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Dell Cheetah Centre for a unique, rewarding and unforgettable experience. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any more questions or would like to apply.



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