

Hosting an Intern through the WWF Internship Programme

Kyle Smith

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Internship Programme aims to increase employability and help graduates transition from a learning environment into a working one by providing relevant work experience and skills development. The year-long internship is seen as a year of opportunity and growth. Through careful evaluation and screening of applicants, WWF links potential candidates with various host organisations who then invite and interview potential interns. WWF provides final approval to appoint selected interns.

The programme is a collaboration between WWF and various host organisations who share responsibility in ensuring the programme's ultimate success. Importantly, interns are guided by a dedicated mentor within each host organisation. Together, the mentor and intern develop a plan for growth and development which is assessed each quarter. By embedding an intern within a host organisation it is expected that the intern will be exposed to a range of activities and networking

opportunities. For this to occur the mentor needs to ensure that the intern becomes an integral and active participant within the organisation. The intern is also supported by various WWF-lead training workshops. During these workshops interns are exposed to ideas around career possibilities within the environmental sector, career planning and development, holistic wellness and various workplace competencies, including managing workloads, rights and responsibilities, communication and learning from feedback.

SANParks was host organisation for 2021/2022 internships, taking in five interns working in diverse areas of park planning, scientific services and veterinary wildlife services. Based on the partnership success, SANParks is again hosting interns from the 2023/2024 cohort. We look forward to another opportunity to host and mentor, nurture and hopefully inspire some budding conservation scientists.

in Kruger on fish, crayfish invasions, macroinvertebrate community assemblages and impacts of anthropogenic activity on freshwater systems. I am eager to be upskilled in freshwater biomonitoring and analyses and to improve my understanding of savanna ecosystems and how to manage the protection of these areas. Outside of research, I am an iNaturalist enthusiast, travelling far and wide to collect observations for the citizen science platform!

Let the journey continue - from intern to Junior Scientist:

Khensani Nkuna



When I started my internship in 2021 with the Scientific Services Department through the WWF Environmental Leaders Program, I had no idea that I would continue to live my dream of working in the Kruger National Park. More recently (2023) I became a SANParks Junior Scientist, focusing on biological invasions in the park. As a Junior Scientist, I have been given a unique opportunity to kill two birds with one stone; furthering my studies while gaining hands-on work experience. My current research in KNP and surrounding areas is exciting because the outcomes can potentially impact the management of alien and invasive species, not only in the park but also in the neighbouring communities that I grew up in. I am grateful to be embarking on this journey, and I will continue to develop my career under the mentorship of Prof. Llewellyn Foxcroft, through whom I have gained invaluable knowledge.

SANBI Groen Sebenza interns

Mmathapelo Fumo - new water technologist and laboratory manager for Kruger NP



I am a SACNASP registered Environmental Scientist and completed a BSc Environmental Sciences degree, majoring in geology and botany, at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2015. In 2019, I obtained a BSc Honours in Environmental Management from the University of South Africa. I have experience in the coal and gold mining industry as environmental management intern, and am skilled in environmental compliance monitoring (in terms of company procedures, best practices, laws and regulations), water quality monitoring, project management and technical review of operational outputs. I am currently working at Scientific Services, Skukuza as a water technologist and managing the Scientific Services Laboratory. I am eager to be working in the Kruger National Park with researchers from across the country and beyond. I am looking forward to expanding my knowledge base and skill set within the research field.

Interns and junior scientists in Kruger

Esi Bossmann: the underwater entomologist

I have been picking up insects for as long as I can remember! It is no wonder that I have unwavering love and passion for entomology! I studied at the University of the Witwatersrand, where I completed an MSc in freshwater entomology, focused on the functional feeding group classification of mayfly nymphs in rivers of the North West and Limpopo Provinces of South Africa. I am passionate about environmental research and science communication, with a specific interest in freshwater ecology, entomology and conservation. I was selected by WWF and SANParks as freshwater ecologist intern based in Kruger National Park. I am excited about the opportunity to live, work and conduct research

