

Facility: The Wildcat Sanctuary – Sandstone, MN
www.wildcatsanctuary.org

Position: Big Cat Carnivore Keeper Internship (Free Housing)

Duration: 6 months

Start Date: January 5, 2022 – June 24, 2022

The Wildcat Sanctuary (TWS) seeks highly motivated, dedicated, and passionate individuals interested in gaining experience in all aspects of captive wild animal care and husbandry. If you're looking for a challenging and rewarding experience, and the opportunity to provide the ultimate care for our rescued felines, this may be the internship for you.

TWS is a rescue organization that is home to over 100 wild cats. Our mission is to provide a natural sanctuary to wild cats in need and inspire change to end the captive wildlife crisis. We are an accredited, non-profit sanctuary nestled between the beautiful lakes, fields and forests in rural Sandstone, Minnesota, conveniently located between Duluth and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Our goal is to provide a well-rounded experience in the animal welfare field and teach our interns what it takes to be a carnivore caretaker, while educating them about the sanctuary field and the captive wildlife crisis. Interns will gain valuable experience from exotic feline husbandry, habitat construction and modification, diet preparation, enrichment, grounds keeping, emergency response, leading volunteer workdays and more!

Please Note: Physical contact between wild cat residents and interns is strictly prohibited.

Benefits:

TWS provides FREE HOUSING and a \$70 weekly stipend. Interns are required to live in TWS housing for the entire duration of the internship.

Qualifications:

- At least six months of previous animal care experience (sanctuaries, zoos, rehabilitation, domestic animal shelters, animal hospitals/clinics, other internships, etc.) **and/or** college study in the fields related to zoology, animal science, biology, animal psychology, veterinary sciences, etc.
- High school diploma is required. College courses are preferred. A college degree is not required.
- Hold a valid driver's license
- Provide their own mode of transportation to TWS

- Provide your own health insurance
- Current tetanus vaccination required
- COVID-19 vaccination required
- In good physical condition: Able to kneel, stoop, bend, twist, lift, reach, push, pull, and walk on uneven terrain. Ability to consistently lift 60 pounds. Comfortable on ladders, using power tools, and operating lawn equipment.
- Work in all weather conditions (rain, snow, wind) and during weather extremes (hot and cold)
- Work 8-10-hour shifts, 6 days per week, including weekends, holidays and over nights.
- Comfortable driving SUV/ Cargo Van (or willingness to learn)
- Fluent in the English language (verbal and written communication)
- Positive attitude and good working in a team environment
- Must be able to multi-task and be flexible in a work environment
- No allergies around animals that would preclude you from living or working with cats

Training Program:

To ensure the safety of our interns, staff and residents, all interns must participate in all training provided by TWS. Training will be a combination of shadowing, hands on, classroom style and a series of quizzes to ensure every intern has the necessary information and training to perform daily tasks and become an advocate for these magnificent animals.

You will gain knowledge in the following:

- ***Captive Wild Cat Husbandry Training:*** Our sanctuary is divided into 3 work “zones” comprised of the various feline species that reside with us. Each intern will rotate through the 3 zones with one of our lead caretakers to learn daily cleaning/feeding, enrichment, and safe husbandry procedures. Interns are currently only rotating between 2 zones. Third zone comes with Lead Intern.
- ***Safety is our #1 goal:*** Interns will be instructed on the different procedures to ensure human and animal safety in a variety of scenarios. We take pride in our impeccable safety record. These protocols will be practiced regularly throughout the duration of each internship session. Interns and staff are expected to keep safety rules front of mind every day. Even though we’ve never experienced a breach of safety, Interns will never be asked to assist should an animal escape.
- ***Safety Equipment:*** We familiarize interns with the various equipment TWS uses. Each intern will learn the name and function of each piece of equipment; however, this is NOT a training on how to use the chemical immobilization and the lethal force equipment. Interns will learn the proper techniques using transport equipment; self-protection tools and domestic/ hybrid capture equipment.

- **Natural Disaster/Bad Weather:** Interns will learn about the system that TWS has in place to provide early warning of severe temperature extremes and weather patterns to keep TWS's residents safe and secure. Minnesota experiences everything from excessive heat warnings to blizzards. Interns should be aware of and prepared for all MN weather.
- **General Husbandry:** Learn the appropriate methods to assess an animal's behavior and the environment around them through animal observation skills. Interns are instructed on the importance of enrichment in a captive animal's life. They will learn the four different types of enrichment, what acceptable forms of enrichment are for various species and the safety precautions of providing enrichment. For the safety of humans and our residents, cats are shifted into "lock-outs" while enclosures are being cleaned or maintained. Interns will learn the appropriate methods for "locking-out" various species ranging from [African Servals](#) to Bengal [tigers](#) using operant conditioning. We will cover the policies and procedures for food preparation for all TWS feline species. Interns will also learn the methods to administer and distribute medication and supplements to TWS's residents accurately and carefully. Quarterly, interns will assist staff in fecal and parasitic prevention for its residents.
- **Animal Observation/Vet procedures:** All medical procedures/treatments are done under the direction of TWS Veterinarians and/or the Executive Director. Interns may be asked to assist or observe these procedures and treatments on a case-by-case basis. You'll learn basic animal observation and first aid techniques necessary to assist our medial team during treatments and medical procedures. Assisting in the hospital is not a guarantee for any intern. It is strictly on a case-by-case basis being decided by TWS management. The decision is based on the following criteria (but not limited to): risk and safety of humans and animal, condition and personality of the animal, and the intern's behavior and work ethic.
- **Behavioral Management Program:** This program is a tool used in conjunction with other components to provide a holistic approach to animal care. These components include enclosure design, diet, enrichment, veterinary care, and husbandry. Interns will participate where it is incorporated into routine animal care. Specific training plans with certain cats will be conducted by the Animal Caretakers. Interns may have the opportunity to observe a training session.
- **Habitat Construction and Modification:** Learn about and help build new enclosures and maintaining current enclosures. Assist in the building and modifications of habitats and enclosures that help enrich the lives of captive wild cats.
- **Captive Wildlife Crisis Education:** Endangered in the wild but overpopulated in captivity with an estimated 10,000 tigers in captivity in the US. How did we get here? In a classroom setting, Interns learn about the current state of the captive wildlife crisis and how TWS partners with the national, accredited sanctuary network to help as many animals as possible. Learn the truth about white tigers,

why you should say no to cub petting, and the new, dangerous trend of wild animal hybrids.

- **Volunteer Project Lead & Tour Guide:** Spring Session only. Develops leadership skills with the opportunity to run volunteer workdays. Interns welcome weekend volunteers and teach them safety rules, lead them in a pre-determined habitat construction project, and give educational tours of the sanctuary at the end of the day.
- **Basic Human First Aid:** Learn about the physical and behavioral signs of more common health conditions and concerns. This covers basic treatments and protocols for handling various situations, but by no means equivalent to a C.P.R. training course but intended to give Interns basics skills and knowledge.

How to Apply:

NOTE: TWS is not accepting international applicants at the time.

Interested applicants should send resume, cover letter and a copy of driver's license, [with this completed application](#) to P.O Box 314 Sandstone, MN 55072 or email the information to joanm@wildcatsanctuary.org. If emailing the document, please try and send the combined files in pdf format.

Resume – Please be sure to include the following:

- Any paid or volunteer experience with animals- native wildlife, domestic, or exotic – add in contact information for supervisor where possible
- Any experience working with the public or large groups
- Any other experience that you feel may be relevant in consideration for this internship
- Three professional (preferred) or academic references from individuals, not related to you, with complete contact information

Cover letter – Please be sure to include the following:

- Explanation of previous experience that would be valuable to TWS
- What your career goals are for the future and how this internship will help you attain your future career goals