Where was your internship?
I interned with Wildlife and Ecological Investments in Limpopo, South Africa.

Tell us about your internship?
I was a Research Assistant for WEI stationed at Welgevonden Game Reserve for one month. We stayed in a camp in the middle of the reserve that was enclosed in electric fencing to protect us from animals. Welgevonden is a Big 5 game reserve meaning it has the top 5 most dangerous African animals to hunt (lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino). The research I assisted with was ecological research focused on understanding the ecology of the biota in the reserve.

How did you find your internship?
The Biological Sciences Department sends out emails all the time about internship opportunities. I happened to look at the email they sent out and realized that going to Africa was something I’d dreamt about my whole life and decided now was the time to do it.

What is your major and did it influence your decision to become an intern?
I’m a Biology major hoping to eventually have a career in Ecology and conservation so this internship was right up my alley.

What were your main responsibilities as an intern?
We did herbivore transect counts and bird point counts to help identify and quantify the species on the reserve, as well as their habitat preferences. We also did habitat assessment to determine things such as dominant tree species and grass biomass in the various habitat types on the reserve. We also participated in a leopard identification project where we set up 120 camera traps all around the reserve and checked the photos weekly to analyze them.

What type of experience have you gained so far that you wouldn’t have learned in a classroom?
I could never have had this experience in a classroom. I gained valuable skills that I used every day on the job, saw amazing things out in the bush every day, and left with new lifelong friends in five different countries!

What is the most exciting part of your internship?
The most exciting part would be when you got to see an animal really close because you never could predict when you would see something cool. One day we didn’t see an animal all morning and then suddenly a cheetah and five cubs were walking right next to the truck.

Do you have any suggestions for students who would like to do something similar?
If you want to do something, go for it! I always thought something like this was out of my reach until I realized that anything is possible.

Do you think your internship will play an important role in your education and career?
It definitely will. Besides the skills I gained, the value of my internship on my resume alone has already landed me a great job.

Do you have any internship advice you would like to pass on to other students?
If there’s a job you’ve always dreamed of having, an internship is a great way to get there, and get some experience in it. If you have an internship, abroad especially, cherish every moment of it.