

VEARN PROTECT SAVE

Whales by Amy Holt

Duiker diversity

April wildlife diary

Finding unicorns

Survival course special 5 tips for your

job interview

WildlifeCampus Magazine - April 2023 - Volume 04 - FREE

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and eventually, WildlifeCampus finds its origin. Part 15	a whale a whale and how do they adapt to life in the ocean? WildlifeCampus student, Amy Holt, takes a dive with us.	Helen Burton, takes us on a walk in this harsh landscape looking for her 'striped unicorns': Hartmann's mountain zebra.	financial worries. Have a look at the payment options for our courses!	intriguing group which we actually know very little about.	Chris and Mathilde Stuart's Wildlife Diaries tell us what to look out for this month.
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Job interview tips

Eye-level

Hayley Cooper gives us 5 tips There are many things one on how to answer the wellknown and dreaded "How are you a match for this job?"-question during a job interview.

can do while spending time in a reserve or game lodge. Game drives and trail walks only being a few of the activities.

But what if the lodge offers a secret underground hide? David tells us about his experience.

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The show must go on!

The origin story of WildlifeCampus

By co-founder of WildlifeCampus and **Anchor CEO**

Missed the previous parts of this story? Click here to open the WildlifeCampus magazine where this exciting journey starts.

"Journal 4 - thanks to Q"

Peter Armitage

Alex Will writes:



Well, as you all saw, the Shark Cam was up for a short while! At this point in time, the present problems are being worked on, but in the meantime here's how we solved the first few problems.

Initially we understood the problem to be related to a defective umbilical cable, so the production of a new one was necessary. We had a choice: either we could outsource it, or we could do it in-house. The company who manufactured the original one needed about a week to do it, and even then they couldn't guarantee it would be serviceable, so we decided to try and make one ourselves.

By mid-afternoon on Wednesday I had obtained all the parts I considered necessary and was headed for Edenvale, on the outskirts of Johannesburg, to seek the help and advice of Dave 'Q' Woodhall of DAKA technology. As the afternoon became evening, assisted by 'Q', Johan Mostert and Ken Makahaya, we attempted various methods of getting 4 cables, each 70 metres in length, through a length of flexible



pipe 65 metres long. As each successive attempt began to seem more futile than the last, 'Q' suggested that we drag the cables through with the Land Rover. So, after providing the locals with the humorous display of me dragging DAKA tech's staff around Edenvale at the end of a pipe, we finally had, thanks to 'Q's time and patience, a very serviceable umbilical.

Driving down to Umkomaas meant that I didn't arrive there till late Thursday evening. By midday on Saturday, all the equipment was at Beady Eye in Pinetown and I had established that one of the internal display screens was defective and that the camera itself was toast!

I relayed this information to 'Q' who rapidly converted another camera for us (all the equipment is non-standard) and put it on the next plane to Durban. It arrived safely, and I then set about getting the system back together. By late Sunday, and not without significant help, once again, from Len Fish, the system was up and running on his factory floor, this time with lights for 24hour viewing. Now only the path of installation remained to be tackled.

At 5:30 on Monday morning I arrived at Blue Wilderness to wrap up the last few modifications; assisted by Marcus 'Joyner' and with tea supplied by Mark Addison we were soon ready to launch.

Skippered by Roger Dengler and with a trusted dive team of Steve Yelding, Travis Holsthauzen and Emile Tirzentahl - who had already spent the last few days and nights repairing the buoy after the elements took their toll - we were on track for a smooth installation. Apart from Emile chewing through his mouthpiece on descent and reverting to his spearfishing technique of breathing under water and Steve running out of air at about 4 metres on ascent and

As we all saw, the camera subsequently produced some of the most stunning images ever. All was going well, with Mark and his team braving some of the worst seas ever to do a battery change on Tuesday afternoon. However, this Wednesday morning I got a call for Mark at Blue Wilderness to say that the screen had gone purple! At the moment the system rests once again in the capable hands of Len Fish; so far we know that two of the internal relays have toasted themselves and plans are underway to bring the Shark Cam back to life as soon as possible...

Alex Wills AfriCam Shark bait! www.AfriCam.com

A story of making a difference, A story of fortunes made and lost, A story of greed, A story of commitment, A story of passion, A story of the animals of our planet.

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> "The Show Must Go On by Peter Armitage and the AfriCam community."

breaking the surface like a Polaris missile, everything else went well.



"Journal 5 - our Waterloo"

Mark Addison writes:

Well, the bad news was that on seeing (but not believing) the screen, telling the world, that a water alarm had gone off in the Shark Cam installation we had to mobilise the AfriCam dive maintenance team and head out to the Aliwal Shoal to remove the system. The methods of both recovery and deployment are now second nature to the dive team and even the severe winds and big swell were no match for the now well-drilled and practiced team.

On this particular Sunday however, we were to finally meet our "Waterloo". The worst-case scenario had occurred. The system in the buoy was severely compromised with significant amounts of water having entered the box of tricks that brings you the live images from Cathedral.

The recovery proceeded well - but on stripping the buoy down, for what we initially thought may have been an alarm malfunction, we had about a litre of sea water in the boxes housing the electronic wizardry. The telephonic conversation between Len Fish, Alex (who was suffering in hospital from a bad case of tonsillitis - and the rest!) and myself (Mark) rationalised that the best thing would be to get the entire system up to Len's workshop to do a damage assessment.

On arrival at Len's, a look of despair was the only visible expression from a normally cheerful man. This man has really put out for the team and feels terribly personal about this contest between the elements and Shark Cam.

Progress was slow and included a week of painstaking work to resurrect Shark Cam from its watery grave. The background to which was made even more difficult with the absence of Alex - who by now was undergoing a tonsillectomy and various other treatments. Len had a week of overruns at work and was under severe pressure to get a massive order of Beady Eye power supply units out. His program amounted to working from 5am to 8:30am on the Shark Cam, continuing with his work until 7pm and then back on the Shark Cam

installation until the wee hours of the morning. This program continued for five days!

Added to the task of rebuilding the inner workings of the Shark Cam, which is clearly not an off-the-shelf plug-andplay setup, was the technical difficulty of remanufacturing some very, very sophisticated electronics.

More than up to the task, and amid many confused looks from suppliers, Len soldiered on. With the help of "Q", the final testing of the system was completed 15 minutes before kick-off in the England Vs South Africa quarter final clash (as a South African I can assure you that this was no ordinary Sunday). This made it a whole week after the system was removed - the longest outage yet.

By now you may well be watching some fantastic images from Cathedral and you will know that the deployment had been successful.

It is abundantly clear that the marine environment is not to be taken lightly. I can tell you that, for every image you see on your screen, AfriCam has made a superhuman effort to bring it to you. Although the outages are frustrating and would appear to be almost unavoidable in an environment that takes perfection and makes it puny - significant strides have been made in eliminating the problems associated with the Shark Cam.

Yet again, AfriCam has taken each challenge in its stride, and are on the threshold of an exciting future with regard to further marine viewing opportunities.

The sign on the blank screen might read "Your patience will be rewarded", a fact I am sure will no doubt ring true for such a dynamic company operating beyond the impossible.

Good viewing. Thanks for your patience and messages of support.

Mark Addison

"Journal 5 - our Waterloo"

Most of what Andy Cobb wrote was garbage and Mark AfriCam had risked life and limb to show live images of Addison is one of the most accomplished divers in the area. sharks to the world, often successfully. But the project had its All of the installations were under his supervision. In addition, detractors, the most vocal of which was Andy Cobb. his dive company competed directly with Blue Wilderness, Mark Addison's company. It smelt of sour grapes.

Andy went to a great deal of effort to undermine the project, and some extracts from one of his broadly distributed e-mail missives follows:

"In 1999 Africam set up its video monitor to watch the 'spotted ragged-toothed shark' (raggy) at the Cathedral entrance. The application was a disaster. AfriCam had a whole lot of cowboy divers install its system. There was horrendous reef damage done, as sponges and reef flora were gouged off the entrance wall whilst dropping anchor weights and from the buoy rigging. The unacceptable damage was done by the camera equipment itself, as it had a leaking frequency on frame transmission to a land base. The leaking frequency chased out all the resting raggies from the Cathedral.

"In 2000, AfriCam had its camera beautifully engineered and installed correctly, however later the cowboy installation divers undid all the good work when the camera was removed, as the rigging once again scoured the entrance wall and the sea bed was strewn with cable ties. The camera however had no leaking frequencies and the raggies were not disturbed by the camera insitu, as described for the year previously.

"The AfriCam internet footage created a demand to see the raggies and also for divers to be screened on the internet. The diving standards on Aliwal Shoal as far as harassing the raggies was disgusting.

"The operators and dive master on Aliwal Shoal need a big wake-up call to ensure the marine ecotourism remains sustainable on Aliwal Shoal. AfriCam's exposure of sharks does without suitable controls on divers is disastrous for an area called Aliwal Shoal."



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At a later date a diver maliciously cut the shark cables. The culprit was never found, but AfriCam knew who its number one suspect was.

Getting down to business "Traffic, Nasdag and content on the up" - October 1999

I had only been at AfriCam a few months and things appeared to be progressing well. I was receiving congratulations all round and everybody was filled with confidence. After all, we had the bare bones of a business plan and at this stage of the internet era a business plan was as good as a business itself. The site was getting accolades from web reviews all over the world and traffic was increasing at a compound 10% per month. Our Price Waterhouse Coopers certificate confirmed 26.7 million page impressions for September 1999. For the second quarter of 1999 we had reported an average of 22.3m page impressions per month, compared to 234 074 for Moneyweb. That was almost 100 times the traffic of Moneyweb and it confirmed that I had made the correct career decision.

We had an unique concept and everybody was amazed and intrigued by it. Time Magazine even featured us as a business to watch. In a half-page article in its Techwatch, its talked of the fact that "Fans of nature documentaries need to look no farther than their desktop".

But the main reason everybody was so bullish was that the Nasdaq had risen another 50%. In those days this was the barometer of value and this meant our value was increasing.

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By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Whales are among the largest and oldest animals on Earth. Found in every ocean, these magnificent creatures are highly intelligent and communicate through a complex language. But, what makes a whale a whale and how are they adapted to life in the oceans?

 $\mathbf{02}$

The first whales appeared 50 millions years ago. They evolved from four-legged, even-toed, hoofed (ungulate) ancestors. Cetaceans, commonly known as whales, dolphins and porpoises, breathe air, give birth to live young, produce milk and have hair-all features of mammals. The order Cetacea is split into two suborders, baleen whales and toothed whales. Baleen whales are filter-feeders and includes blue whales, right whales and humpback whales. While, toothed whales include sperm whales, beluga whales, dolphins and porpoises. As confusing as it sounds, dolphins and porpoises are simply smaller types of whales. Also, killer whales (orcas) are actually dolphins and are the largest member of the dolphin family. The name killer whale originates from sailors spotting orcas preying on other whales.

As air-breathing creatures, whales breathe through blowholes which are found on the top of their heads and connects to their lungs. Baleen whales have two blowholes while, toothed whales only have one blowhole. Whales have active control of when they breathe. They control a muscle, known as the nasal plug, that closes the passageway of the blowhole. It remains closed when they are diving and is opened when they reach the surface. The spouts that are formed on the surface occur when whales expel warm air that meets colder air on the surface, and condenses into small water droplets. Whales have large lung capacities, they can absorb 80-90% of the oxygen they breathe in. This excess oxygen is stored in myoglobin, a specialised protein cell found in muscles.





Baleen whales specialise in hearing low-frequency sounds for long-distance communication. They have a special larynx, found between the blowhole and lungs, called the ufold. It directly connects to a unique, expandable sac within the whale's chest. When the whale vocalises, air flows from

the lungs, through the u-fold, and then fills the sac. The vibrations made by the u-fold echo within the air-filled sac. The whale can sing when it expels the air from the sac back into the lungs, a process that recycles the air and eliminates the need to exhale. Humpback whales are known to sing for hours at a time. Each humpback song has a specific structure. The song is divided into eight themes which, are further divided into phrases. A phrase is composed of individual sounds like rattles, whistles, moans and grunts. Humpback whale songs were sent into space with the Voyager one and two. Carl Sagan produced the Golden Record which contained the most important bits of information that humans in 1977 wished to communicate to whatever alien intelligences might intercept them in the distant future.

Toothed whales use echolocation to navigate and to 'see' objects. They receive high-frequency sounds through specialised 'acoustic fats' that sit along their lower jawbone and lead to their internal ears. As air moves through the air sacs via the nasal passage it vibrates small fat bodies that create sound. This sound then passes through the melon (fatty structure found in the forehead) which acts as an acoustic lens to focus the sound and its direction. The whale can change the shape of the melon to produce different sounds. Toothed whales then hear the echo of this sound through fat bodies inside their lower jaws. The fat transmits the high-frequency sound to their ear bones which, the whale's large brain processes to give a view of the world, and the objects in it, through sound. Sperm whale mothers pass





certain coda dialects to their young, allowing a coda to be transmitted through time from generation to generation. Codas are successive clicks with various durations and with different interval inter clicks. It is similar to morse code.

Filter-feeding whales have baleen rather than teeth. These baleen plates are made out of keratin and resemble a fine comb. They help separate prey from the seawater. Bubble netting is a feeding technique practiced by baleen whales. One or two whales dive down below a swarm of prey, they then slowly swim vertically upwards towards the surface in a spiral. As they swim, they blow bubbles which float up in a circle and panic the fish towards the centre. The whales then dash straight up through the middle with their mouths open. This method allows them to get a more concentrated mouthful of food. Another feeding technique used by baleen whales is lunge feeding. This is where the whale approaches a concentration of prey, and then lunges at them with its mouth wide open. Toothed whales either grab prey with their teeth or suck them directly into their mouths.

Many whales migrate to the polar regions during the summer months of that region. They feed continuously during the summer months, and then live entirely on the blubber reserves for about four months during the breeding season in warmer waters. The blubber layer of fat covers the entire body underneath the skin. It gives the whales buoyancy and helps them float. Beluga whales live in the Arctic Ocean, and so their skin is white to provide camouflage among the ice.

They can swim backwards due to the vertebrae in their neck not being fused together. This helps beluga whales navigate icy waters.

Whales have poor eyesight compared to other mammals. If normal good human vision is 20/20, a whale might have 1,7/20 vision. Whales have monochromatic vision (greyscale vision) because they only have one cone cell. Cones in the eye are needed to differentiate various colours. Their eyes have many rods which, provide better night vision. Further, they have large pupils to allow as much light in as possible. An eye on either side of the head provides two distinct fields of vision. Orcas have the best eyesight among all whale species which, contributes to their success as hunters.

To learn the age of a whale, researchers look at a whale's earwax. Whales gain extra layers of earwax throughout their life, just like how tree rings increase each year. This allows researchers to age a whale and also to see what sort of pollutants they are exposed to throughout their lives.

Our oceans are home to some remarkable creatures from the largest whale-the blue whale, to the acrobatic behaviour of humpback whales, to the 'canaries of the sea'-beluga whales, to bowhead whales that are able to break thick sea ice with their large skulls and powerful bodies. Indeed it is clear to see, whales are extraordinarily well adapted to life in the water.

Finding my unicorns

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by WildlifeCampus student **Helen Burton**

had been in the Nama Karoo, Southern Namibia, for almost three months, and was yet to see anything larger than a klipspringer. At first glance, it is an empty, desolate place, but it deserves a second look, as it is filled with hidden wonders. One such wonder is the 'striped unicorns': Hartmann's mountain zebra. In many places, zebra are common and easily seen, but here they were extremely shy and liable to flee at the merest scent of a human. Just like the mythical unicorn, to glimpse one is a gift. I had been told they had a stronghold behind a nearby mountain, and my only chance to see one was to scale it.

I began my ascent. I almost turned back after looking up from the foothills (my knees are not what they used to be!), but a well-marked game trail drew my eye, and I went to examine it. Sure enough, there were zebra tracks in the dust going up. I couldn't ignore such a positive sign and began my climb. The winding scree paths were dotted with footprints and dung, but I required an easier path than the sure-footed mountain specialists, and had to leave off following their trail before the top. Gasping, I started to crest the mountain, spurred on by imagined visions of majestic galloping herds below. With the sun rising behind me, I scrambled the last few feet, peered over the peak and nothing. Just more rolling hills and valleys.

I was disheartened to say the least, but since I was now up the mountain I thought I would poke about a bit. I noticed a well-used path on the inside of the gully between two peaks, pocked with multiple trails of different ages. Some had been blown by the wind to become mere suggestions of hoof

marks, while others still bore the distinctive horseshoe shape. Here and there were scattered piles of crusty dung. It was dried out and dusty, obviously old. I imagined herds of zebra walking this way as I followed in their footsteps, gazing at the valley below, wondering where they might have been heading.

At the apex of the gully, I came to a flat expanse scattered with dozens of curious bare patches. On closer inspection, I realised they were depressions caused by zebras rolling in the dusty soil beneath the rocks! Zebra dust bath like this for many reasons, including to remove parasites, and typically indulge in the behaviour several times a day. Zebra families tend to prefer specific places for this, meaning favoured areas can become cluttered with depressions up to 2.5m wide.





There were more tracks here, seemingly scattered among the dust bathing pits, but coalescing into a distinct trail around the other side of the gully. I followed it on a whim, buoyed by the charming discovery of the pits. As I followed the trail, my curiosity was piqued by fresher looking tracks among the older ones. Although there were many tracks of various ages all overlaying each other, there were a few much sharper ones seemingly on top of all the others which lead along the gully. Here and there, the tracks were accompanied by more dung. I broke open one of the distinctive kidney-shaped lumps, to find it was still moist inside. My excitement grew as this meant it was probably dropped during the night, before the sun and wind could dry it out.

Suddenly, I was on a trail which could be just hours old, leading me down the far side of gully and over the next mountain ridge. Recalling my tracks and signs course, I checked the wind; it was in my favour. I knew where the trail would lead, and that I would be able to find my way home if I followed it, and decided I had nothing to lose.



When I'm out in nature, I like to play silly games with myself; 'Whose poo?', 'Where's that Warbler?', and my favourite, 'Master tracker.' I'm not a master tracker by any means, but trailing is one of my favourite outdoor activities. There is nothing as fascinating as following in the footsteps of another creature, and using your skills to try and understand the story of their lives.



I followed the trail, narrating the zebras' possible morning activities to myself. Here, one stopped for a roll. Here, one veered off course for a moment, perhaps to check out something on the opposite ridge. Here were some smaller tracks, maybe they have a youngster in their herd. I got so into the game that I forgot the most important skill in tracking: remember to look up on occasion! I heard a snort and snapped back to attention. There in front of me, still dusty from rolling, was a small herd of zebra looking just as surprised as me! The wind was still in my favour, and to my increasing surprise the herd stallion trotted forward. Ears pricked and nostrils flared, he circled me, high stepping through the dry grass to catch a better scent. I held my breath, equal parts enthralled and nervous to have him so unexpectedly close. Finally, a light gust betrayed my identity, and with an indignant whinny he ordered his herd to turn and gallop down into the gully. I didn't follow them, instead I remained frozen as I watched them pick their way back up to the opposite ridge. Here they paused to throw a look of disgust in my direction, before trotting out of sight.

Thrilled beyond measure, and keen not to scare them more than necessary, I kept to my side of the gully, following it as it wound along and back up to the first crest, before stopping for a rest. The valley stretched out before me, as it had when I first climbed up, except it no longer felt empty. My 'striped unicorns' were no longer a myth, and the desert felt alive with the traces of their lives written in the soil.

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The duikers (Tribe Cephalophini) are Africa's largest antelope grouping and exclusive to the continent. They are divided into three genera, by far the largest being those in the group Cephalophus with at least 18 species, the Philantomba grouping with three species, and a solitary species in the genus Sylvicapra. Several species have been described in recent years, several are contested and placed as subspecies by some, and in our opinion other species are likely to be raised to species level in the coming years.



The seriously endangered Ader's Duiker



Most species are forest and dense woodland dwellers and we know very little about them. Many of these species, especially in West and Central Africa, form an important component of the bush meat trade. Some species can sustain heavy offtake but others cannot and can be considered threatened and in some cases endangered. Ader's Duiker (Cephalophus adersi), a "red" duiker that weighs between 7 to 11kg, only occurs on Unguja Island in the Zanzibar Archipelago, and small forest pockets on the Kenyan mainland, in Arabuko-Sokoke and Boni-Dori forests. We have observed this duiker on Unguja as an individual waited patiently under a tree where Kirk's Red Colobus were feeding and ate fruits and leaves dropped by the monkeys.

Other endangered duikers include the Zebra Duiker (Cephalophus zebra), a medium sized species ranging from 15-23kg, and with distinctive striping on the body. Its range centres on Liberia and it occurs in a few conservation areas but these are poorly (if at all) managed and poaching is rampant. And then a duiker giant, Jentink's Duiker, tipping the scales at 55-80kg, is considered to be seriously endangered with perhaps fewer than 2,000 individuals surviving, its distribution also being centred on Liberia and spilling into neighbouring countries. In fact most duiker species in West Africa can be considered threatened by excessive hunting.



Yellow-backed Duiker

Sometimes considered the largest of all duikers, the Yellowbacked Duiker (Cephalophus silvicultor) weighing 45-80kg, has a very wide distribution in West Africa, throughout the Congo Basin and extending into Angola and Zambia, although heavily hunted it manages to hold its own.

All of the forest duikers are heavily hunted by shooting, snaring and netting with many struggling to survive the heavy pressure but at least one species, the Blue Duiker (Philantomba monticola) is the proverbial survivor. The smallest duiker at 3-6kg, occurs throughout the greater Congo Basin and extends into East Africa and patchily in eastern southern Africa. It occupies probably the widest range of forest and wooded habitats of any other duiker, which in part explains its success, utilizing rain forests to coastal sand forest, riverine and montane forest, even some plantations, and occurs from sea level to at least 3,000m above sea level. Mated pairs occupy small territories of 1-12 ha, in other words they occur at high densities, and can sustain fairly heavy offtake. One estimate of total population size sits at more than 7 million individuals.

The closely related, though larger (6.5-12kg), Maxwell's Duiker (Philantomba maxwellii) occurs in West Africa to the west of Benin (the Dahomey Gap) to the Gambia. Like the Blue Duiker it occurs at high densities and despite heavy hunting pressure it continues to thrive, in part because it can live in a wide range of both primary and secondary forest. Then in 2010 a genetically distinct form was split away from Maxwell's Duiker, and named Walter's (Verhayen's) Duiker (Philantomba walteri). In size (4-6kg) it is closer to the Blue Duiker and differs from Maxwell's in a few external details and genetically and occurs to the east of the Volta River in Ghana to the Niger River in Nigeria.

If we quickly slip back to the diverse *Cephalophus* duikers! The so-called red duikers are a complex mix that different taxonomic schools continue to "squabble" over, what is a species, subspecies, or... We take just one example, the Natal

Red Duiker (Cephalophus natalensis) and Harvey's Red Duiker (Cephalophus harveyi), some consider them one and the same species but others place them as distinct. Over the years we have encountered both species and the only physical difference is that the head crest is red in the Natal and either black, or with some black in Harvey's, although many also have a dark facial blaze. For many years Harvey's was considered as a subspecies of the Natal and hybrids of the two are known from several locations where ranges overlap.

One of the most limited range duikers is Abbott's Duiker (Cephalophus spadix), a large species that can tip the scales at 60kg, and only occurs in widely separated populations in the Udzungwe, Rungwe, Rubeho, Usambara and Kilimanjaro mountains in Tanzania. In other words this is a near Eastern Arc endemic. And, sadly, another endangered species that according to some estimates numbers less than 1.500 individuals. But it should be remembered that the duikers are notoriously difficult to count, in fact in many cases impossible.



Natal Red Duiker ram

To end on a less gloomy note, the Common, or Grey, Duiker has a very wide sub-Sahelian range, is super abundant (some estimates to 10 million individuals), occupies a wide range of woodland, thicket and open bush country, and in altitude from sea level to 5,600m on Kilimanjaro and 3,300m in the Ethiopian Highlands.



Common Duiker ram



Let us take a brief glimpse at the lifestyles of the duiker family. Most, if not all, species live in life-long mated pairs, defend territories against others of the same species. All species are primarily plant eaters, taking foliage, fruits and flowers but all will take animal food opportunistically. They will readily eat insects, other invertebrates and take ground nesting bird fledglings, small mammals and even frogs have been recorded.

This is a fascinating and intriguing group of antelope about which we know very little, in part because most are illusive and secretive and we believe that there is still much to learn.



Black Duiker



The tiny Blue Duiker

April Wildlife Diary

In April 1752 elephant hunter August Beutler travelled through the Langkloof valley to the north of the Outeniqua Mountains in the Eastern Cape. Commenting on the trials and tribulations of the farming community in the area, he wrote about "their troubles now being lions which infest the valley." Just 20 years later, Swedish traveller and botanist Carl Thunberg described lions as "very rare" in the area.

The first Bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*) to be collected and recorded in Kenya was shot by one F.W.Isaac in deep forest in the Eldoma Ravine in April 1902.





Female Bongo

- Entebbe in Uganda, which records an annual average rainfall of 1,506mm, will receive its highest monthly rainfall of the year. Berbera in northern Somaliland will also receive its highest monthly rainfall of the year but just 14mm. Tamatave on the east coast of Madagascar will have to cope with upwards of 400mm of rain this month.
- Where are the great herds of the Serengeti ecosystem situated this month? They have now moved to the west and north-west, away from what is left of the eastern short grasslands into more bushed and wooded country where there is still good grass cover. The Mara Whitebearded Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) population is moving in a south-westerly direction towards the Mara River. By the end of this month the rut will have started, and now the mature bulls are establishing their territories and defending them against rivals. Because the herds are on the move, the bulls can attract and hold receptive cow groups for only a few days at a time.



Flap-neck Chameleon

- South Sudan's White-eared Kob (*Kobus kob leucotis*), numbering some 800,000 animals, undertake a migration every bit as spectacular as that of the Serengeti wildebeest but it is hardly known. By the end of April, with the herds lying between the Pibor and Akobo valleys, the rut has ended and the animals are becoming restive. As the first rains start to fall over the Boma Plateau of south-eastern Sudan, the kob begin to mass in large herds and move up to 200km to the southwest, to their wet-season range. At this time they are joined by large herds of Tiang (*Damaliscus lunatus tiang*), as well as tens of thousands of Mongalla Gazelles (*Eudorcas albonotata*), previously a subspecies of Thomsons Gazelle. It is in this month that many of the Mongalla fawns are dropped.
- Lest we forget the smaller beasties, the Straw-coloured Fruit-bats (*Eidolon helvum*) are, across much of their tropical range, at the height of their mating season. In

Uganda the females have given birth by April and from now until June the males will be kept busy impregnating as many partners as possible.

At this time the Common Crane (*Grus grus*) is flying north from the Nile River basin and the rest of North Africa, to return to its European and Asian breeding grounds. Large flocks of Abdim's Storks (*Ciconia abdimii*) will have left southern Africa, heading for their tropical breeding grounds before the end of April.



Abdim's Storks gathering to return to the Central African breeding grounds

In Nigeria the Wattled Plover (*Vanellus senegallus*) is at the peak of its laying season. In north-western Africa the Western Reef Heron (*Egretta gularis*) is laying the first eggs of the season. That fynbos endemic, the Cape Sugarbird (*Promerops cafer*), has its main breeding time in April, usually building its nests in forks of large protea bushes. The Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) have laid their eggs and are incubating on those precarious cliff ledges.

In Maputoland, north-eastern South Africa, female Flapneck Chameleons (*Chamaeleo dilepis*) busy themselves with digging burrows in the ground and laying 25-50 eggs.

Sausage Tree (*Kigelia africana*) fruits are starting to fall in the south, but many remain on the tree for longer. These massive "salami-form" fruits are only occasionally eaten by Elephants, baboons, Bushpigs and Smith's Bush Squirrels.



The salami-shaped fruit of the Sausage Tree

5 tips on how to answe "How are you a match for this job?" By Hayley Cooper

n any interview, your ultimate goal is to show that you are a great match for the job. There is a good chance you may get asked "What makes you a great match for this role?" or "Why are you a good candidate for this position?" or even "Why should we hire you?"

So many people find it hard to boast about themselves, even in a job interview but this really is your chance to "sell yourself" and its so important that you are able to do this.

In reality, you do not need to objectively prove that you are the number one candidate in every way. Instead, interviewers are looking to see that you have put thought into how you would thrive in this job and understand how you're uniquely qualified for the position.

Why do interviewers ask why you are a great match or candidate for a role?

When they are considering whether you are the right person to fill a position, interviewers "want to see if you fully understand what they are seeking in a new hire and in return understand their business"

If you are working with a recruiter it is important to note that recruiters can only do so much when it comes to lining up your background with the job. When interviewers ask this question, they want to know that the interviewee has connected the dots between their skills and the requirements of the role, and be sure that they have taken the initiative to do research on the company.

Show that you have taken the time to really understand what you specifically will bring to their workplace. Not only will it tell employers what they will get from hiring you, but it will also demonstrate that you care enough about the position to really consider it.

Additionally, interviewers are looking for an applicant who is confident in their ability to perform, after all, confident employees will often need less guidance and spend less time second-guessing themselves.

If you want to be prepared to answer this question well, there are a few tips you should follow:

1. Understand what the company needs

Again, interviewers want to know that you understand what the company is looking for-both for this specific position and for any employee on their team. You cannot answer this question if you do not first know exactly what a great match for the role would be. So study the job posting and research the company ahead of your interview. You can do this by going through the company website and social media and by networking with people in the company on LinkedIn or others who are in the same or similar roles as to the one you are applying for.

Also, remember that your answer is not set in stone. This question often comes up toward the end of an interview, so you can incorporate things you have learned during the conversation. This shows you have listened to what is being said about this position.



2. Determine how you are uniquely gualified

Once you know what a company needs, you can figure out how you fit the bill. With your answer you will want to "try to demonstrate why you will succeed in the role and be a value add to the team-and why you are excited for the role," So think about it: What pain points are you going to solve in the job? What additional skills do you bring to the team or company beyond the requirements of the job description? Do you have a unique perspective on the industry or the company's product? Are you aligned with the company's values in a way that will help you thrive, support the mission, and add to the culture?

3. Incorporate examples

It is not enough to just know what qualities and traits you want to mention. "Do not just rattle [off] a bunch of adjectives". Stories resonate much better than just listing all of the skills for the position.

Strong examples will back up what you're saying and help you stand out.

Come to your interview prepared with several stories that demonstrate different skills and qualities, so that you can select the most relevant one (or ones) to incorporate into your answer to this question.

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4. Keep it concise

Make it memorable but not a long list of things. For example, you might use one story to emphasise two key skills you bring to the role.

Make sure you only provide information that is relevant and necessary for the interviewer to understand your response. Avoid going off on tangents, providing too much information, or being too vague.

5. Do not be afraid to sell yourself!

Remember interviewers are looking for hires who are confident in their skills, and job interviews are meant for showing off your accomplishments.

However, if you're someone who has trouble talking themselves up, you can:

- Mention how others have praised your skills and found them useful.
- Back your points up with examples, details, and numbers.
- Make objective connections to the role.
- If you know that a company or team is looking to launch a new project or struggles in a certain area, for example, you can mention these things and then talk about how you might be able to help based on what you have done before



Eye-level



There are several ways to experience the bush I when you are in a reserve or at a lodge.

You can go on a game drive or if you are fit enough, you can venture out on a trail walk that might take a couple of hours or even for the more adventurous, last for several days.

Or, you could stay at the lodge and, if it has a belowground hide, you can make that your base and allow the game to come to you.

When you are out in the bush, there are two things over which you have no control...

1. The weather. You can plan for it but if it rains and you are on foot or in an open vehicle, you ARE going to get wet with a capital 'W'.

2. The species that you might come across. The Big 5 is always on every guest's list, but it does not always work out that way.





It is the same in a hide. You can only photograph or enjoy what comes down to drink.

So it was that I found myself in a purpose-built photographic hide in one of the lesser-known reserves near Hoedspruit.

The hide had everything that a wildlife photographer might require, from tea and coffee to a bed to nap on should the game viewing not be up to scratch.

As I settled down for a long afternoon, the first sighting was a leopard...tortoise! As I watched it come down a steep embankment I remembered that this was the only species of tortoise that can swim as it is watertight.

As an aside, there is a difference between a tortoise, a terrapin and a turtle. The first is found on land, the second is usually found in fresh water and the latter is found in various oceans around the world.

If that was all I was going to be presented with, then I was going to take as many tortoise images as I could to keep myself both occupied and awake.

Sitting in a hide is a waiting game, and it was me that had to do the waiting. Africa moves at its own pace and refuses to be hurried.

So I sat...and sat...and sat!



And then a movement to my right caught my attention. Without a sound, a breeding herd of elephants slipped almost silently out of the surrounding foliage and made their way to the welcoming water.

Being at ground level with the largest living land mammal is a humbling experience.



Did any of them know that I was in the hide? I am certain that they did. This fact was confirmed by the owner who had had both guests and expensive equipment covered in mud and water by a well-aimed trunk.

However, it seemed that this herd was more focused on drinking than interacting with me.

The noise of litres of water being sucked up and blown into waiting mouths was almost overwhelming. As was the sound of huge feet being pulled out of the cloying mud that was being created around the edge of the waterhole.

But the sight of these huge placid pachyderms standing so close to where I was hunched over my camera will not be forgotten in a hurry.

As quickly and as silently as they had arrived, they departed and the silence that they left behind was almost deafening.

While I processed what I had just witnessed, a small movement in front of me attracted my attention and my lens. From the largest to the smallest together in a moment in time. The cricket that 'swam' past me and then vanished into the bush behind the herd was a testament to how species can share and interact without apparent harm.

I seriously doubt that the cricket posed a threat to the ellies, but they certainly could have done the insect damage without even being aware.

So, if you are offered an opportunity to spend time in a belowground hide, seize the opportunity.



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Photography competition

In order to get to a particular location for sunset, I had set off in the blazing mid-afternoon sun of the desert. I didn't expect to see anything in the heat, but right out in the middle of a quartz pan, far from any water, I stumbled across this gorgeous dragonfly with its lunch!

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Photography competition winner April

Lunch on the fly - Helen Burton - ORKCA conservancy, Namibia