



# WildlifeCampus

## *Nature Calls*

**Nature  
Patterns**  
By Amy Holt

**Travel Buggz  
Adventures**

**Mimi Magic**  
Laure-Marie Martin

**Rise of the  
Baobabs**  
By Warren R. Schmidt

**African  
Folklore**

**An exciting new  
partnership**

# CONTENT



01	02	03	04	05
The origins of WildlifeCampus	Nature Patterns	Mimi Magic Part 2	Kafue National Park	An exciting new partnership
“The show must go on”, a book written by Peter Armitage tells the birth story of a company called AfriCam. Read with us as the story unfolds, AfriCam grows and eventually, WildlifeCampus finds its origin.  <b>Part 29</b>	This month, WildlifeCampus student Amy Holt, explores patterns in nature part 3.  A pattern can help attract a mate, provide camouflage, deter predators, or even act as a form of communication.	WildlifeCampus Student, Laure-Marie Martin shares the emotional story of Mimi, a brave little white rhino who survived a poaching incident.	In June, WildlifeCampus student, Sheldon Victor and his wife Tanya visited Busanga plains in Kafue National Park, Zambia.  Read all about their amazing experience and have a look at some of their wonderful photographs.	The WildlifeCampus Team is proud to announce that we have teamed up with Bhejane Nature Training as recommended practical training partners!
PAGE 6	PAGE 10	PAGE 14	PAGE 20	PAGE 23



06	07	08	09	10
Rise of the Baobabs	Travel Buggz	African Folklore	A Career Course and Job Vacancies	Once upon a time in Africa
Baobabs are one of the most iconic trees of the African savanna and have greeted humans traversing the landscape for thousands of years. These majestic trees are used extensively by people and animals for food and shelter. Read more about the incredible trees, written by Warren R. Schmidt.	Something cool for the kids! Bella Butterfly, Aiden Ant and Lucy Ladybug continue their trip in the Kruger National Park!	This content is written from transcribed tapes recorded by the late Credo Mutwa, one of Southern Africa's most celebrated Sangomas. The content therefore is not scientific but rather represent the feelings, beliefs and experiences of this exceptional man.	Check out a free career course details as well as the latest Wild Dreams Hospitality Job Vacancies.	David explores if one can have too much of a good thing? Especially when it comes to food and snacks. But when you are in the bush, too much is never enough!
PAGE 24	PAGE 28	PAGE 30	PAGE 32	PAGE 34



# About us

WildlifeCampus is a world-renowned, reputable, Approved FGASA Delivery Partner. Over the past 23 years, we have trained over 29,000 students in 160 countries. The courses we offer are the most comprehensive of their kind in the online space.

We pride ourselves on being the leaders in online wildlife education delivery, our authentic and unique E-Learning experience, quality content, value for money and exceptional service.

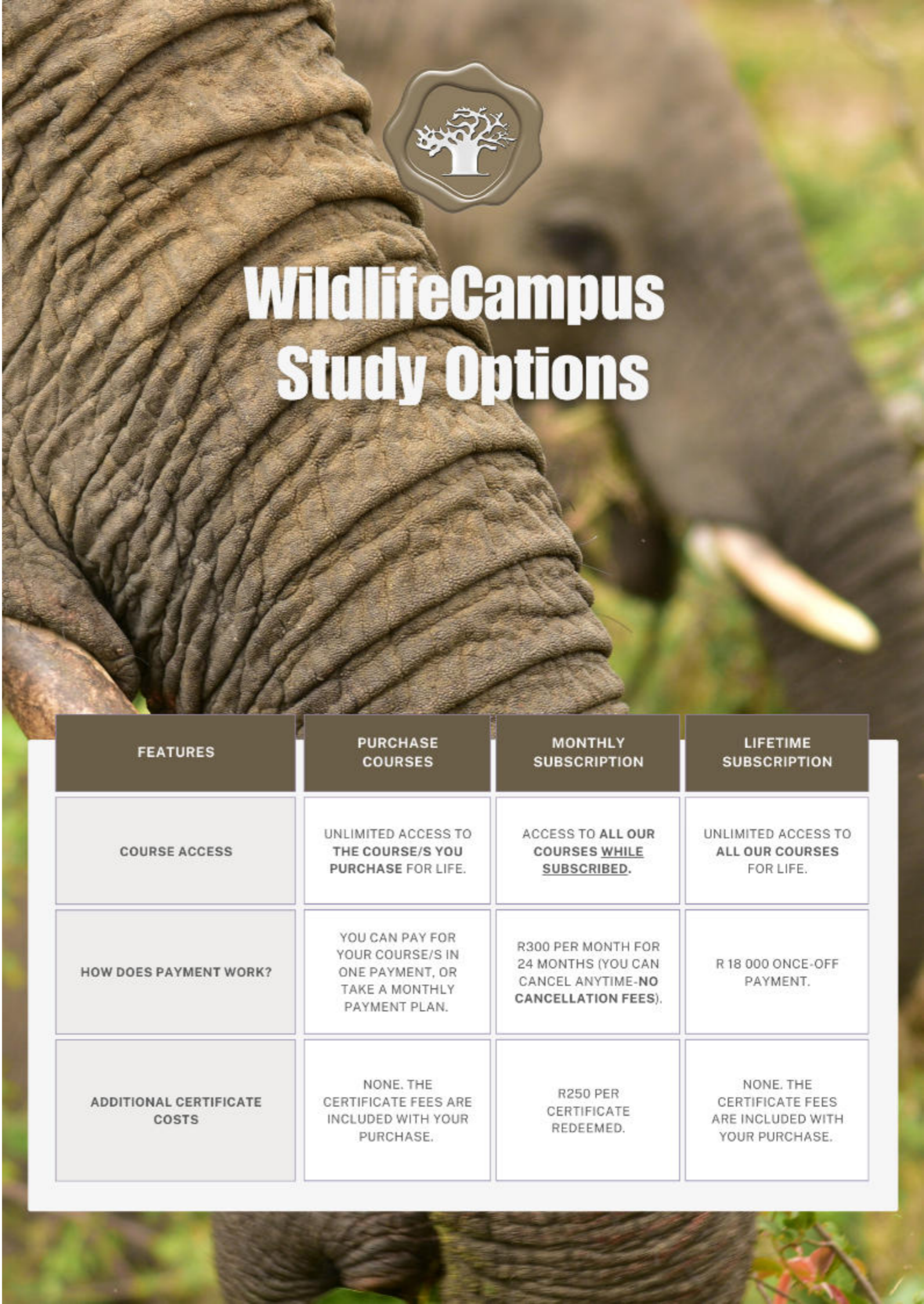
There are no barriers to entry, course deadlines or set semesters. Students are welcome to register and begin any courses at any time.

WildlifeCampus students have found that the knowledge gained through our courses has immeasurably enhanced their enjoyment of the bush. Many are now employed in the wildlife, hospitality and tourism industry.

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# WildlifeCampus Study Options

FEATURES	PURCHASE COURSES	MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION	LIFETIME SUBSCRIPTION
COURSE ACCESS	UNLIMITED ACCESS TO THE COURSE/S YOU PURCHASE FOR LIFE.	ACCESS TO ALL OUR COURSES <u>WHILE SUBSCRIBED</u> .	UNLIMITED ACCESS TO ALL OUR COURSES FOR LIFE.
HOW DOES PAYMENT WORK?	YOU CAN PAY FOR YOUR COURSE/S IN ONE PAYMENT, OR TAKE A MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN.	R300 PER MONTH FOR 24 MONTHS (YOU CAN CANCEL ANYTIME-NO CANCELLATION FEES).	R 18 000 ONCE-OFF PAYMENT.
ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATE COSTS	NONE. THE CERTIFICATE FEES ARE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PURCHASE.	R250 PER CERTIFICATE REDEEMED.	NONE. THE CERTIFICATE FEES ARE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PURCHASE.

# The show must go on!

## The origin story of WildlifeCampus

### 01

By co-founder of  
WildlifeCampus and  
Anchor CEO

Peter Armitage



Missed the previous parts of this story? [Click here](#) to open the WildlifeCampus magazine where this exciting journey starts.

We arrived at the house, which was clearly in need of repair. Some chickens jumped out of an old VW Beetle shell and hurried away as we walked past. I patted the mangy dog as Denise began her negotiations, which did not look to be going well.

The owner of the house was a bronzed Brazilian man who looked like he had been wearing the same pair of shorts for a few weeks. After what sounded like an intense negotiation in their mother tongue, Denise explained to us that man was happy to rent us a room and have the satellite dish on his property, but it was ultimately his wife's decision.

We hung around the house until she arrived home about an hour later. The husband and wife team conversed for some time and they showed us the room where we could place the PC. A deal was eventually struck – we would rent the room for US\$10 per month and the only other condition was that the man was allowed to bring his friends into the room to see the image from the forest.

We agreed, as this did not add too much to the AfriCam rent bill.



WildlifeCampus Magazine

- 6 -

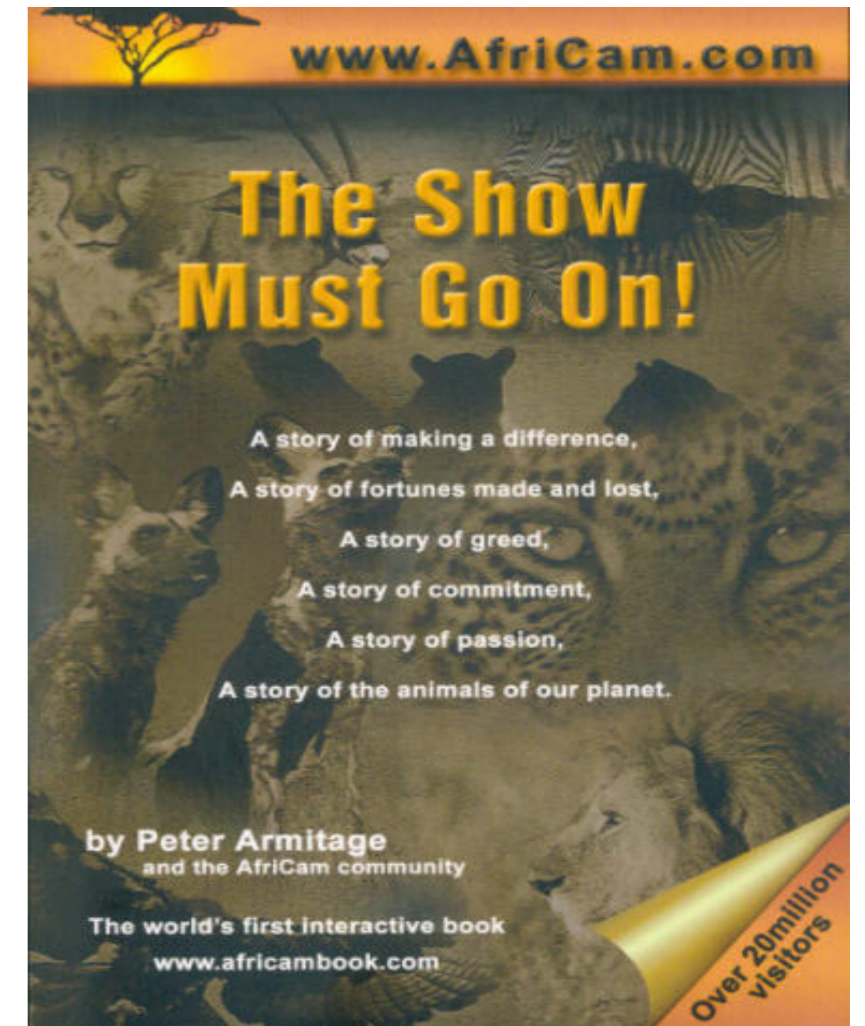
After completing the installation work, the camera was live on the AfriCam website a few days later and viewers were treated to seeing GLT's in the wild. We left the Reserve proud of what we had achieved, but not very confident of the long term future of the GLT.

The GLT's habitat is shrinking due to the development of plantations, cattle grazing, and condominiums. With the development also comes human diseases such as rubeola and herpes to which tamarins are highly susceptible. Less than 6% of the Atlantic Rainforest now remains and the population continues to cut trees down for firewood. On the mornings that we were there we were woken up by the sound of chainsaws cutting down the trees and the GLT's have to survive in the scattered remnants of the forest.

A positive sign was the proclamation of a further 20 square kilometres of rainforest as a protected Reserve on 5 April 2001. The re-introduction and growth of the GLT population in the wild has been a massive and commendable conservation achievement and survival of the wild-born off-spring remains an encouraging 60-70 per cent.

However, this species is now restricted to an area that is a fraction of what it was 100 years ago. Small pockets of protected land and the re-establishment of forest corridors should see the GLT survive in the short-term, but I could not help feeling that these 1000 GLT's remain extremely vulnerable and will eventually lose the battle against man's encroachment and capacity to destroy.

The involvement of the conservation organisations disturbed me. I read Denise's annual report for the prior year which showed that five major global wildlife organisations had donated a total of US\$300 000, which is an average



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

of US\$60 000 each. A representative of the Smithsonian Institute was visiting at the same time as us and he explained how a number of the Institute's members visited every year. I left with the impression that the donors spent more money on visiting the location and marketing "their" success story than on the project itself. My fear is that well less than half of the money donated to wildlife conservation actually "hits the ground".

Each of the donors claimed the project success as their own and spent a great deal of money marketing the success.

We headed back to Rio and had a customary Pino Colada at the Copacabana Hotel, before boarding our plane. We all found Rio disappointing. It is a dirty city which Graham aptly described as "Hillbrow at the beach" (Hillbrow is a run-down, overpopulated, crime-ridden suburb of Johannesburg).

WildlifeCampus Magazine

- 7 -



“Virtual Game Rangers”

The unsung heroes of the AfriCam staff were the game drive staff. They worked in teams of two and because they spent most of their time in the bush, they often did not feel part of the team. However, they were responsible for most of the great African wildlife content that was viewed on the AfriCam site.

These game rangers became known as “virtual game rangers”, which is really an inappropriate term and tended to irritate them as it did not properly reflect their job. The rangers who worked for AfriCam included Anthony & Tilanie, Ilan & Helen and Paul & Greg, Link and Tammy.

The rangers often operated unreliable vehicles and lived in less than ideal conditions. This was because game lodges do not normally have spare sleeping quarters.

The first “VGD” was at Djuma where they slept in Jurie’s backroom. Hluhluwe was also a very successful VGD and the rangers had a good time, in spite of having to live in a small caravan.

“The cameras that never were”

For every camera location that has been broadcast on AfriCam, there is generally another camera that never made it to the site. This was sometimes due to the difficulties in securing permission but more often due to the complexities and cost of broadcasting from a remote location.

The countries north of South Africa were a constant frustration. It took three trips and literally hundreds of calls to Tanzania before we obtained permission to broadcast from the Serengeti. Unfortunately by the time we secured permission, the cost of broadcasting was well beyond our shrinking budgets.

Among the other cam locations that we physically visited, but never made it on to the AfriCam site were Mzima Springs in Kenya (technology not freely available), Bald Eagles in Maryland (did not use nest), Zanzibar (costs), Ugandan mountain gorillas (cost and complexity), White Sharks (complexity), Robben Island (red tape), Great Barrier Reef (not a priority), Catalina Island, bats in Madikwe and a dolphin safari in Los Angeles (not a priority).

“The best internet business in the country” -  
September 2000

It was now approaching the end of 2000 and the Nasdaq had retraced back towards the 2000 mark. There was still a strong appetite for internet shares, but it was clear that in order to list we would have to present a solid, profitable business.

In late 2000 we received a prestigious award which gained us a great deal of coverage. Bain, the global management consulting firm, had partnered with the South African business magazine leader, the Financial Mail, to identify the best internet business in South Africa. Bain performed a basic due diligence on our business and we won the award.

This earned us our second cover story in the Financial Mail with a picture of myself sitting on top of a whale’s tail (see [www.africambook.com](http://www.africambook.com) for pictures) Sasha Planting of the Financial Mail quoted me saying that “the company is 70% of the way through a major infrastructure and service-offering upgrade, which all forms part of Armitage’s vision of changing AfriCam from a narrowband Web cam business into a broadcaster.

“Using new, cutting-edge technology, the various Web cams will feed images back, through satellite, to a television production studio being built adjacent to the company’s head office. ‘The images will be professionally edited and packaged and sent directly to television networks around the world,’ he says. Armitage is in advanced negotiations with a US network.”

She ended her article with a telling question: “AfriCam’s offering is certainly unique and the business plan is ambitious. One major question must be asked, though: will people pay for the services being developed?”

The public profile of AfriCam was high and there was no perception of financial difficulty. In fact, in her score sheet AfriCam scored as follows:

Innovation:	25/25
Impact:	25/30
Execution:	24/25
Funding:	16/20
Total:	90/100

Because we had strong shareholders and had just concluded a US\$15m deal with Peter Henderson we were perceived to be financially stable and scored 16/20 for funding. We had missed the first listing opportunity and had done some big deals, but the cash balance was dwindling.

The top 10 places in the competition went to: 1) AfriCam, 2) Healthbridge.co.za, 3) Tradek.com, 4) Healthe Zone, 5) MTN Ice, 6) Agri124.com, 7) Inthebag.co.za, 8) Streetcar.com, 9) Careerjunction.co.za and 10) Bidorbuy.co.za. In spite of the fact that we had signed a deal with Peter Henderson in January 2000, he had still not authorised a business plan. It was now nine months later and the entire management team was extremely frustrated.

It was becoming apparent that Peter’s plan was to make the contractual commitment to secure the opportunity, and then hedge himself by either signing a revenue-generating contract or getting other investors to co-invest with him. He was clearly not going to take all the risk, in spite of what the contract said. In many respects, it was similar to taking a free option on the upside of the business.

We had lost valuable time and in the internet era, time was money. His behaviour was not in the spirit of the agreement and it had an adverse impact on the relationship. Peter

wanted to try and secure a TV deal before practically committing to the roll-out, in spite of what the contract said. He had to spend US\$5m in 2000 in order to retain his stake in AfriCam and at this stage he had only spent a fraction of that, so the situation was getting complicated.

After much debate and pressure on Peter we eventually received an e-mail from him, on 4 September 2000, stating that “We should proceed with the 5 VSats to create our broadband feeds as soon as possible. This should be done simultaneously to the audio feed. This product will make up both the broadband internet feed and the output styled for cable and satellite partners like Sky.”

He also indicated that we should staff up in order to be able to deliver and Richard van Wyk began hiring staff in order to fulfil the vision. The TV division of the business theoretically had the funding to expand its business, in stark contrast to the internet division. With the reduced valuations on the Nasdaq, Peter believed this was an opportunity to increase his stake in AfriCam and he stated “I will let you have a formal offer by the end of the week regarding TVBus’s interest in acquiring a larger equity stake.”

It was clear that Peter was emotionally committed, as he often used to say. His financial commitment was a little harder to assess. Because he was holding the purse strings, he effectively controlled everything and we became increasingly frustrated. We should have launched the VSats months before, and we were only now getting authority.

“This commitment to spend money is nonsense. We should have insisted on US\$5m cash being deposited into the AfriCam bank account,” I told Graham and Paul. “We cannot run a business like this.”



# Nature Patterns

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By WildlifeCampus student

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Amy Holt

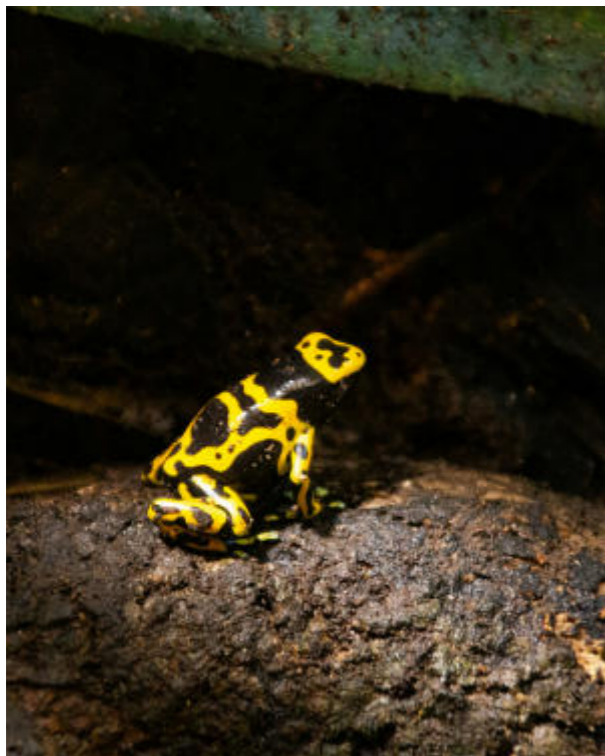
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Beyond the obvious patterns of spots and stripes, nature also showcases some colourful and distinctive patterns. From the wrinkly skin of an elephant to the vibrantly colourful poison dart frogs, these patterns represent the complexity of nature's creativity.

## 02

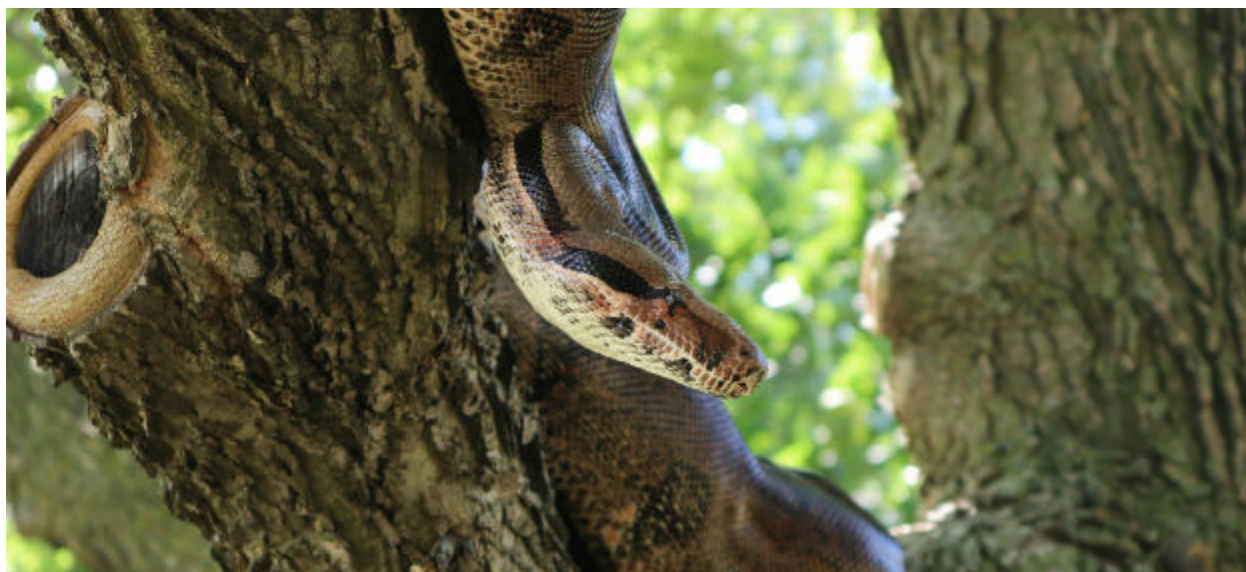
The turtle species with arguable the most beautiful shell is the hawksbill turtle. It has a marbled shell pattern with an irregular combination of shades of amber, orange, red, yellow or brown. This intricately designed shell pattern is a true work of art, but this beauty has come with a cost—the hawksbill turtle is critically endangered due to overexploitation. The classic tortoiseshell pattern used for jewellery, ornamental souvenirs, combs, etc, was originally made from the shells of hawksbill turtle. A much loved pattern with a devastating effect for nature. The hawksbill turtle's shell pattern provides excellent camouflage against its coral reef habitat. These turtles specialise in eating sponges, thanks to their small shell size, narrow head and bird-like beak they can forage in crevices in the coral reefs. This diet keeps sponge populations in check and allows other species to inhabit the reef, thus increasing biodiversity. Without hawksbills, sponges can overgrow and suffocate slow-growing corals causing them to die. As reefs become more and more threatened by climate change and other impacts, the role of the hawksbill turtle on the reef is even more vital.

Despite humans disliking wrinkles, the elephant's distinctive wrinkly skin pattern is essential to their survival and has an extraordinary purpose. Elephants do not have sweat glands, and instead rely on their wrinkles to keep them cool. The intricate network of tiny micrometre-wide crevices on the elephant's skin fill with water and mud when the elephant wallows. Wrinkled skin is better at retaining moisture than smooth skin, so keeps elephants cooler for longer. An elephant's dead skin cells build up over time causing the skin to thicken. This exerts enough pressure to generate cracks, which creates more sags and folds. Thus, increasing the intricate network of wrinkles.



Asian elephants have smoother skin than African elephants because they live in a wetter environment, so do not have trouble cooling down.

The boa constrictor is recognisable for its mesmerising patterns. It has a cryptic pattern of jagged lines, ovals, diamonds, and circles. The coloration and patterns can vary significantly depending on the individual or specific subspecies. Boa constrictors can range from shades of black and brown to vibrant colours of red and orange. For example, the Argentine boa constrictor is silvery grey, while the boa constrictor ortonii (native to Peru) has a distinctive red tail pattern. These intricate colour patterns mirror the colours and shapes of the forest floor, thus blending the boa



constrictor perfectly into the environment. This camouflage adaptation allows them to hide in plain sight and aids them in ambush hunting. With a swift strike, boa constrictors can capture unsuspected prey. Boa constrictors play a key role in balancing the ecosystem by controlling rodent populations and aiding in seed dispersal. When they consume fruit-eating animals, they pass the undigested seeds which can grow in new locations. This supports forest regeneration and growth. Boa constrictors are one of the few snakes that undergo a physiological colour change. They can darken their appearance in response to low temperatures, which allows for rapid heat retention. The remarkable patterns of the boa constrictor highlights evolution's brilliance.

The tropical rainforests of Central and South America are home to poison dart frogs. These frogs come in a range of bold and bright colour patterns, including neon yellow with black spots, and bright blue. Approximately 10,000 years ago, poison dart frogs looked pretty much the same. However, rising sea-levels in modern-day Panama, isolated the frogs in different habitats, and thus led to them following different evolutionary paths. Researchers found a single species of poison dart frog can have 10 completely different colour patterns depending on where they live. This is an example of local evolution. Known as the jewels of the rainforest, these ting frogs have bright colours not for beauty, but to act as a warning to potential predators that they are not worth eating. This adaptation is known as aposematic colouration. The dyeing dart frog is one of the largest species of poison dart frog, and is one of the most variable in colour and pattern. This poison dart frog species displays an irregular pattern with a varying combination of bands, splotches and dots in different shades of blue, yellow, white or orange. Its colour pattern not only stops it from being eaten by the predators, but also acts as excellent camouflage from a distance.



Chameleons are known for their colour-changing abilities, however, it is commonly misunderstood that they do this for camouflage. A chameleon cannot generate its own body heat, therefore a cold chameleon may become dark to absorb heat or a hotter chameleon may become paler to reflect the sun's heat. Chameleons use bold colour changes to communicate. Male chameleons may change to bright colours to signal their dominance, or they may turn to darker colours during aggressive encounters. The speed and brightness of the colour change can be a sign of strength and will often predict which chameleon will win the fight. The scales of a chameleon have intricate patterns and colours. These scales are made up of a complex system of interlocking cells, which are arranged in a unique pattern. The outermost layer of a chameleon's skin is transparent, therefore these cells, known as chromatophores, contain the pigments needed to produce the chameleon's distinctive colours. A chameleon's nervous system and hormones tell specific chromatophores to expand or contract. This causes a change in colour when the chameleon experiences a change in mood or body temperature.

Chameleons also have specialised cells, called iridophores, which reflect and scatter light creating an iridescent effect. Despite chameleons not making extreme colour changes for camouflage, they can make small adjustments to their colour to match their environment. The colour and pattern of a chameleon is usually very similar to their habitat, so that they blend into their surroundings. The chameleon's extraordinary colour-changing ability showcases the brilliance of evolution and how they survive and thrive in the complexity of nature.

Native to Australia, the Gouldian finch is instantly recognisable for its patchwork of colours. This species of grass finch has a bright green back, yellow belly and a purple breast. The facial colour is usually black, but can be red or yellow. Both male and female birds are colourful, however, males are slightly brighter. The Gouldian finch's head colour diversity cannot be explained by natural selection. Instead, balancing selection has maintained the different head colours over thousands of generations. Balancing selection is where different versions of a gene are kept in the gene population at numbers higher than gene mutation. Scientists discovered the red/black gene was found on sex chromosome Z. Birds have a different arrangement of their sex chromosomes, with males being ZZ and females being ZW. To have a black head, males need two copies of the black gene variant, while females only need one. To have a red head, males need two copies of the red gene variant or the red gene needs to be dominant with a black gene, while females only require one copy of the red variant. Yellow heads are rare and is caused by an unknown gene not on a sex chromosome, which interacts with the red variant. Red-headed finches are more dominant and preferred by female finches. However, red heads have higher levels of stress hormones and poorer reproductive outcomes. These disadvantages prevent the black headed finches from disappearing. Thus, both colours can be maintained (balancing selection).

The patterns of nature are a testament to the marvels of evolution. This underscores that everything in nature is intertwined and interconnected.



# Mimi magic Part 2



A white rhinoceros  
miraculously rescued,  
but still in danger.

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**By WildlifeCampus Student**

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**Laure-Marie Martin**

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[Click here for Part 1](#)

# 03

It took 3 days - 72 hours – of extensive searching to find her in the thick bush where traumatised by the loss of her mother and aunt, she was hiding in agony and terror. The scare wasn't yet over as when Mimi was eventually found, it was discovered she'd been shot. Dr William Fowlds, a local Vet and his team quickly tranquilized her, provided first aid and put up a drip. Mimi, now very weak from dehydration and trauma, was speedily transferred to the Rehabilitation Hospital.

It was like déjà vu for all at Sibuya, only worse because Mimi's prognosis was life-threatening. Sibuya held it's breath.

Meanwhile, the poachers blatantly attacked another reserve in the area and again escaped. Knowing that they were wanted and that all the roads were blocked, they hid in the reserve, just a few hundred meters from the carnage they had left behind. In familiar territory, like ghosts, they thought they could disappear once the searches had subsided.

A mixture of anger and relief greeted the fact that the five guilty poachers were arrested and convicted within a few months. Rhinos are safe until the next gang finds its way to the Eastern Cape.

Mimi survived!

A true miracle. The glimmer of a will to live.

The bullet passed through her body, by a miracle missing all her vital organs by a breath. Inexplicably, she was saved!

Mimi magic. The Rehab Hospital team did a fine job with Mimi - their expert treatment, nurturing care, calm and time healed her wounds. Like a second déjà vu, a new Rhino calf, a young female, was brought to the Centre. nTombi arrived! Rejected by her mother and in need of a nursery, nTombi too found refuge under the care of the dedicated Rehab team. Mimi and nTombi quickly became inseparable. Together, they overcame tragedies and with carefree joy, they lived in the nurturing care of the Rehab Center where they were kept under continual surveillance. The Vet, carers and whole Sibuya team were reassured and delighted by their progress.

For Mimi one battle had been won, that of remission, but the war was not yet over. There were many challenges ahead before she could return to Sibuya, the land of her birth.

First hurdle, the inseparable ... had to be separated. This time, adopting nTombi was sadly out of the question. She had to return to her own reserve. Each owner had invested huge sums of money and emotion in these rescues and were waiting for their respective protégés to return home. It was enough to break hearts, that the precious bond between the protégés would be broken.

The investment for each animal was colossal, as the babies, who had to be constantly fed, now weighed hundreds of kilos. They had to be weaned off their costly specialized Rhino milk and Lucerne at the Rehabilitation Centre before returning to the wild.

Sibuya was hugely humbled and grateful to various generous people who assisted by making generous donations to the cause.

A registered non-profit charity was set up, Sibuya Rhino Foundation, to raise the funds needed to keep the Rhinos in the Rehab Centre and to pay for their return to the reserve.

In the short term, the funds were used to feed Mimi on a daily basis. There was also a need to fund the Anti-poaching Team and the K-9 Unit working to protect the remaining males on the reserve. Their horns had been removed to give them some reprieve as targets for poachers. Without horns, the pressure of the poaching threat is hopefully reduced. It takes two years for the horn to grow back, and Sibuya has no intention of repeating the operation a second time if they can help it... Rhino horn exists for a reason. To deprive them of their horn is to deprive them of their only defense. The changes in behavior after the removal were obvious. Rhinos are uniquely sensitive, and dehorning them is traumatic.

Sibuya have had to make a long-term investment towards reintroducing the entire group of Rhinos to the reserve.

The first priority has been to find a companion for Mimi, who couldn't be reintroduced to the reserve on her own. The dream was to find another young female Rhino needing rewilding. The shock of separation from nTombi would be too great, an immense stress for Mimi who had already suffered so much, if she were to return vulnerable, stressed and alone. The best option was to introduce a new companion for Mimi at the Rehab Centre, in order for them to bond for a couple of months before they both returned to Sibuya.

And it took place on 13th April 2024!

What a poignant day, lots of tears of joy welcoming Mimi back home. She was accompanied by Lulu, her new friend, who discovered Sibuya for the first time. Lulu settled down immediately and has become Winston's close friend. Unfortunately Mimi's home-coming has not been so easy as she's had a couple of stressful and traumatic experiences since her return and seems to be grieving as she's visited her mother's and aunt's graves a number of times. She's withdrawn into the dense bush on her own and only appears fleetingly. It is felt that she must be lacking in self-confidence and feeling vulnerable.

The second priority has been to complete and boost the Anti-poaching team. It had to be prepared for the return of the extra Rhinos, as the risk of attack doubled with the number of individuals. Two K-9 dogs and handlers are going to be trained. A promising start. To cover the reserve effectively, the number of handlers and dogs has to be doubled.



Two drones are necessary, ready to be deployed in an emergency. One following the animals and the other to track the poachers. In the two previous attacks, the group of Rhinos had split in two as they fled. So drones would help to track the group, in case it got separated in the future. More drones? Developing artificial intelligence programmes to predict the animals' movements?

These are avenues worth exploring. But we still need to find the right people with the necessary skills and passion.

These actions are band-aids on a wound that is barely closing. How can poaching incidents be prevented? Why do they still happen? Understanding and education are the keys to winning the war, locally. The more people's consciences are raised, the more allies there will be on Mimi's and the rest of the herd's side, and the more defenders there will be on the march.

As for the poachers, they are becoming armed with more sophisticated weapons and technology with every hour that passes. The threat is not diminishing. The poaching problem will not disappear by magic. The demand from China, Korea and Vietnam has been there for thousands of years and continues unabated because of illegal trade on the black market and sadly collaboration among government officials. Rhino horn is a great status symbol in Asian countries, as well as supposedly having medicinal qualities in traditional Asian medicine. A Rhino horn is on average worth USD65,000 per kg (records from Dec 2022). More than gold, diamonds or cocaine.

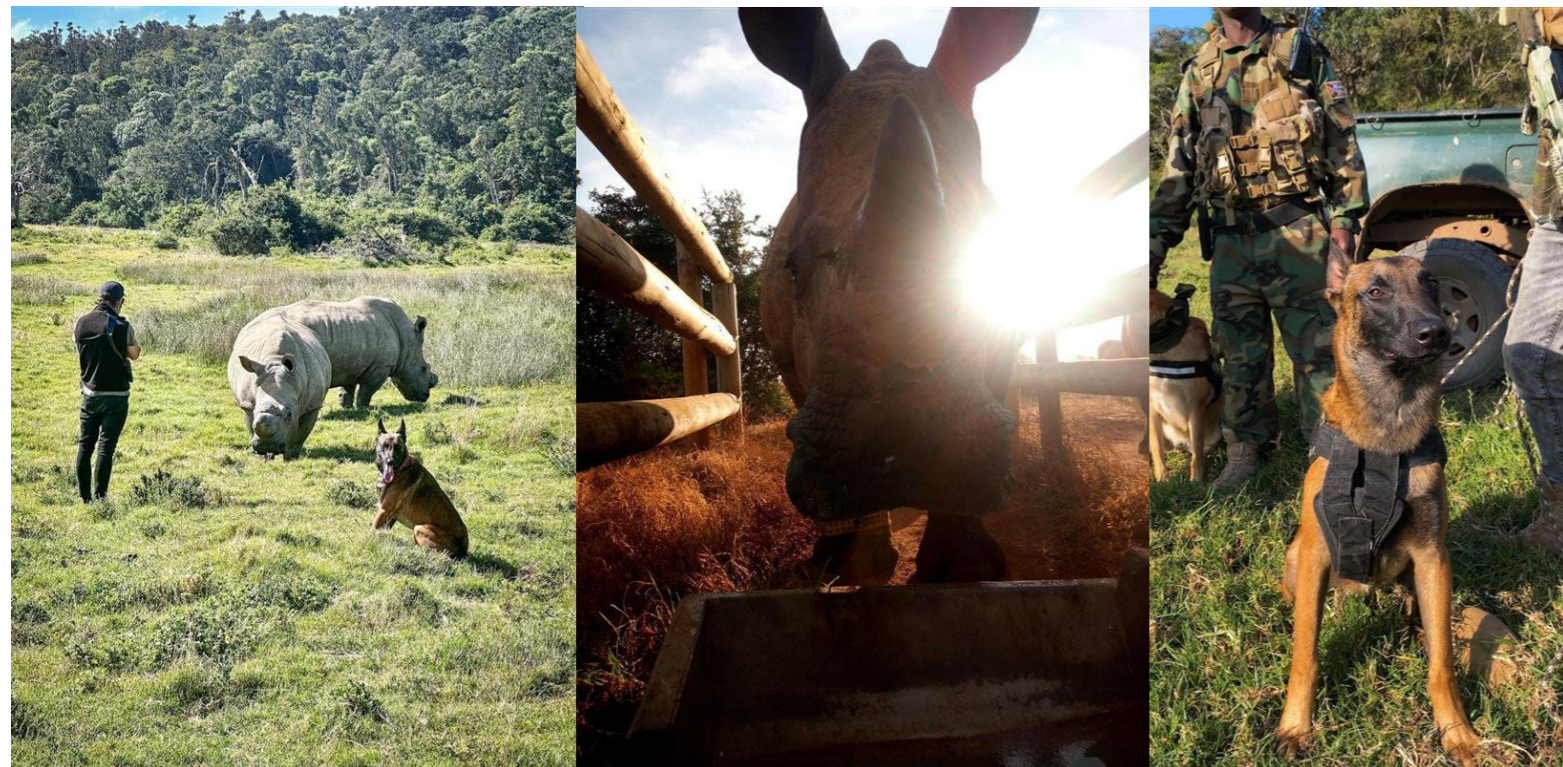
Private reserves are a great source of employment and opportunities: field guides, lodge managers, dog handlers, maintenance workers, cooks, gardeners, chambermaids etc etc. Tourism helps to boost the local economy, and Sibuya is looking to expand and invest.

Today, the priority is to finance the safety of the animals. Private donations are the only breath of fresh air for future development projects and the creation of new prospects.

And, The Mimi saga continues. UPDATES ! What does it look like on Sibuya now ? How are the Rhinos settling ? It is at times like this that we realise just how much we underestimate animal behavior, memory and natural instinct. It's become clear that Mimi still remembers the poaching of her mother and aunt a year ago... when she was last on the reserve... and has visited their gravesite a couple of times since her return. Lulu is relaxed and has taken her place with Courage and Winston, while Mimi has chosen isolation for now. All Sibuya Team stay respectful, keep their distance and don't bother Mimi by putting pressure on her as she's so skittish. Lulu, Courage and Winston seem, on occasion, to visit her at night. We believe in resilience and that time will allow her mourning soul to heal and that she'll take her place in the Sibuya herd and add to the perpetuation of this iconic species in the future.

The Rhino crash is recovering, surrounded by the love and protection of all the Sibuya Family. We are excited to anticipate newborns again, a testimony that life goes on.





Money rules our society, silently driving the most vulnerable to extinction. Let's not wait until it's too late.

Protecting Rhinos starts with raising awareness. We need to talk about this problem, which affects the whole of Africa, and bring it to light internationally. Setting up partnerships so that together, in solidarity across the world, we can leave children a world as diverse as the one we find so wonderful today.

<https://sibuya.co.za/rhino-foundation/>



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for an obligation free quote.

# Kafue National Park, Zambia

By WildlifeCampus student Sheldon Victor

*"In June we had an upcoming long weekend here in Zambia, so my wife Tanya and I decided we should visit the Busanga plains in the most northern part of the park. We left early on the Saturday, the 300 km took the better part of six hours, mainly due to the road conditions.*

*When we entered the GMA, we were filled with excitement, as this meant we were close to the northern gate of the Kafue National Park, Kabanga gate. After entering the gate and concluding all formalities, we made our way to where we would camp for the next four days.*

*We quickly checked into our camping area, and climbed back into our "Landie" and headed off to see what we could find, in this very wild park in Zambia. We found a "Dambo" with wonderful waterhole, right next to the Lufupa River, where we spent the last remaining hours of the day, watching hippo, crocodile, Egyptian geese and a myriad of other water birds, we then headed back to our campsite for the evening.*

*The following morning, we were up at 04h30, having prepared hot water the night before and leaving it in our Stanley flask, we made sure we filled our mugs with hot Milo and headed out toward the Busanga plains, it would take us approximately an hour and a half to reach the plains. The drive to the plains did not disappoint, we were greeted with a male lion, with full mane, drinking from a stream, and he then casually walked past us. I was clicking away on my camera very enthusiastically,*

*As the day progressed, we saw so much wildlife, Liechtenstein hartebees, puku, impala, reed buck, kudu, wildebees, hippo, crocs, waterbuck, zebra etc..... , then my wife said "Look over there quickly, across the plains", I quickly shifted my focus and in the distance ,we could see a cheetah trying to run down an impala, we were quite a distance away and could not get a great pic. We then saw a cloud of dust after which the cheetah and impala vanished, the cheetah had gone to ground with her catch, and we could not locate her again, with that amazing sighting we headed up north.*

*We came across a coalition of seven male lions, sitting atop a "Tree Island", we were so very fortunate to spend over an hour with them, and we were all alone, not a game viewer in sight. We headed off again to find hippo pool, marked on my GPS, on the way there, we came across a fresh buffalo kill, the vultures were feasting, we again spent about an hour just watching, and taking a couple of photographs, waiting for the next predator, to make its way to the carcass. We went back to the plains every day, and every day was just as special as the day before. I could go on and on, about what we saw....and I have not even mentioned the birdlife yet, from fish eagles, snake eagles, vultures, bataleurs, saddle-billed storks, wattle-necked cranes, grey crowned cranes, lilac breasted rollers, an assortment of herons, the list is endless. We enjoyed it so much so, that we will be back in the Landie, and making our way to the Busanga Plains at the end of July for five days.*

*We cannot wait."*

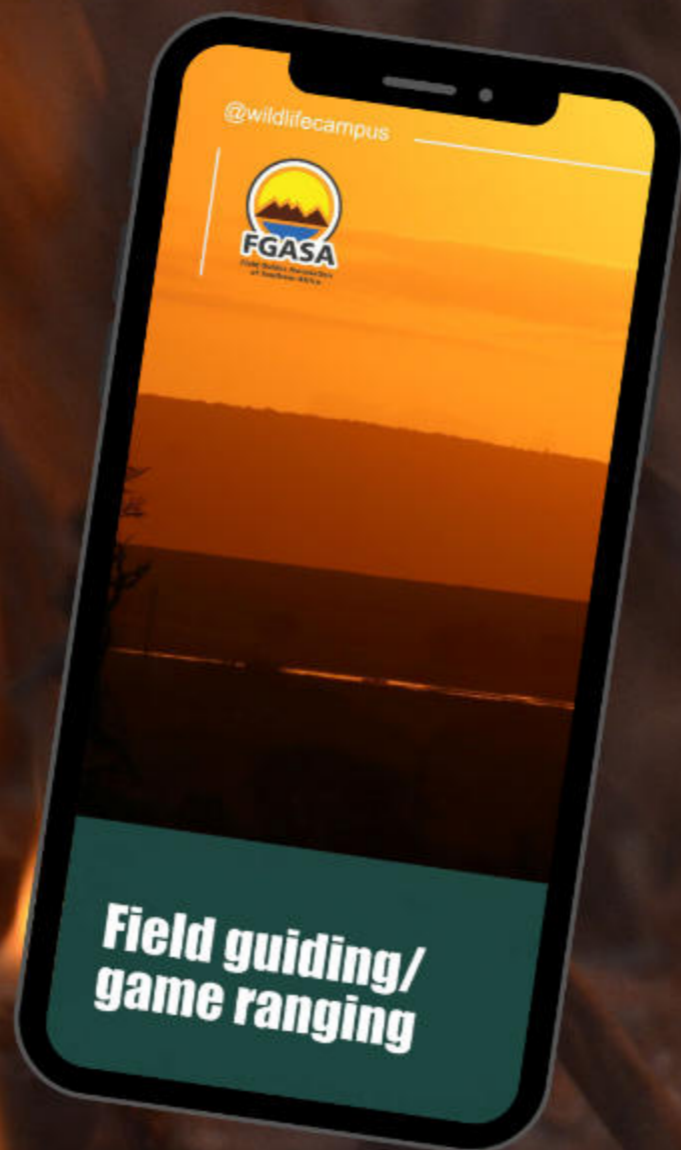
*Sheldon Victor*



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## An exciting new partnership announcement!

**The WildlifeCampus Team is proud to announce that we have teamed up with Bhejane Nature Training as recommended practical training partners!**

Bhejane Nature Training is owned and run by Dylan and Christa Panos and a passionate team of academic, field and camp staff.

Recognizing the need for accredited nature guide training providers in Northern KwaZulu Natal, Bhejane Nature Training was started in 2009 by Dylan and Christa. uBhejane is the Zulu name for the African Black Rhino, a flagship species for northern KwaZulu Natal.

Bhejane's professional and career courses are aimed at serious career students who are looking for professional and recognised training in the fields of Nature Guiding, Marine and Coastal Guiding, Trails Guiding and Wildlife Conservation.

**For more information, please visit:**

[www.bhejanenaturetraining.com](http://www.bhejanenaturetraining.com)

**You can also follow them on social media:**

Facebook and Instagram

*"In union there is strength." - Aesop*

# 05



A FGASA training delivery partner





# Rise of the Baobabs

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**By Warren Schmidt**

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**Baobabs are one of the most iconic trees of the African savanna and have greeted humans traversing the landscape for thousands of years. These majestic trees are used extensively by people and animals for food and shelter. Unfortunately, over utilization and climate change is jeopardizing their future.**

A recent comprehensive study, using cutting edge molecular and statistical analysis, has provided greater clarity on the origins of baobabs. This study was undertaken by Jun-Nan Wan from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, together with colleagues from Madagascar, Kenya, the United Kingdom and Denmark, and published in the journal Nature. Their key findings were that baobabs originated and diversified on the island of Madagascar and from there dispersed to north-western Australia and the mainland of Africa.

Baobabs are often referred to as ‘mother of the forests’. The stem lineage (ancestral origins) of *Adansonia* has been dated at around 41,1 million years ago, long after the breakup of the Gondwanan land mass which now includes South America, Africa, India and Australasia, which took place around 160 million years ago. So, if baobabs originated in Madagascar, how did they spread to Africa and Australia? The hypothesis presented in the Nature paper is that an ancestral seedbank made its way to western Australia via ocean drift from Madagascar giving rise to *Adansonia gregorii*, also known as the Australian bottle tree. The same may have happened with the African species *Adansonia digitata*, but there is some debate around a possible land bridge connecting Madagascar to Africa that may have aided dispersal to the African continent.

# 06

The massive stems store water and the bark and crevices are used as shelter by many animals. It is noteworthy that the African species *digitata* is a tetraploid species having four sets of chromosomes whereas the Madagascan and Australian species have two sets of chromosomes (diploids). Polyploidy, including tetraploid plants, are generally found to be more adaptable and resilient to landscape and climatic changes and this may explain the vast distribution of the African baobab.

A leaf-covered baobab along the Zambezi River valley near Tete, Mozambique. However, across their range, baobabs are still under threat, especially in Madagascar. Climate change has been identified as a major threat to baobabs. A study published in 2022 by Batsirai Chitungo, Tawanda Manyangadze and Shepard Ndlela in the African Journal of Ecology, using different climate models, showed a potential reduction in range of up to 50% for African baobabs in the future. Soil type was also shown to be an important attribute in the distribution of baobabs. Unfortunately, this paper has several minor typographical errors, but none-the-less provides some noteworthy recommendations on future conservation management of baobabs in Africa.

Another problem facing baobabs is that of overexploitation. Even in protected areas, baobabs are at risk due to extensive damage caused by having too many elephants. Repetitive stripping of the bark eventually leads to the tree dying. Outside of protected areas, slash and burn agriculture is practiced extensively, and although large trees may be spared, seedlings are often overlooked and have little chance of surviving to maturity.

A mighty baobab is no match against a man with an axe or bulldozer. Tete, Mozambique. We need a collective effort to ensure the continued survival of these majestic trees which are so symbolic of the African savanna.

A little bit on taxonomy and species diversity...

Family *Malvaceae* Subfamily *Bombacoideae*

There are eight living species of baobab with six only found on the island of Madagascar and one in Australia and the other in Africa. A ninth species was described in 2012 called *Adansonia kilima*, but this species was later refuted in a detailed taxonomic analysis and placed in synonymy with *Adansonia digitata* in 2016 by Glynis Cron and colleagues from the University of the Witwatersrand.

- *Adansonia digitata* – Africa (Not Assessed)
- *Adansonia grandidieri* – Madagascar (Endangered)
- *Adansonia gregorii* – north-western Australia (Least Concern)
- *Adansonia madagascariensis* – Madagascar (Least Concern)
- *Adansonia perrieri* – Madagascar (Critically Endangered)
- *Adansonia rubrostipa* – Madagascar (Least Concern)
- *Adansonia saurezensis* – Madagascar (Endangered)
- *Adansonia za* – Madagascar (Least Concern)

**References:**

Chitungo, B., Manyangadze, T. & Ndlela, S. 2022. Potential effects of changes in climate, population density and land use land cover on spatial distribution of *Adansonia digitata* suitable habitats in Africa. African Journal of Ecology <https://doi.org/10.1111/aje.13008>

Cron, G. V. et al. 2016. One African baobab species or two? Synonymy of *Adansonia kilima* and *A. digitata* Taxon 65 (5): 1037–1049 <http://dx.doi.org/10.12705/655.6>

Wan, J-N. et al. 2024. The rise of baobab trees in Madagascar. Nature <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07447-4>

**Text and photographs:** Warren R. Schmidt

**About Biodiversity and Environment Africa**

Developed in September 2009 as Biodiversity Nature, the project has evolved into Biodiversity & Environment Africa...a digital platform dedicated to showcasing the staggering biological diversity, culture and natural beauty of the African Continent.

Biodiversity and Environment Africa delivers impactful and informative content on a range of environmental issues and species across Africa. In addition, we are developing a vast range of reference books and field guides as well as downloadable PDF documents.

**[www.bioenviroafrica.com](http://www.bioenviroafrica.com)**



# The Travel Buggz Adventures

**What are Bella Butterfly, Aiden Ant and Lucy Ladybug up to in the Kruger National Park this month?**

The Buggz come back to camp and eat sandwiches for lunch.

"Let's cool off in the pool," Lucy Ladybug has energy to spare.

"Last one in to the pool is a frog," yells Aiden Ant as he leaves a cloud of dust behind.

"Marco. Polo." Children are playing a game as Aiden leaps up, tucked legs and splosh, he lands in the deep end, water spraying in all directions.

Lucy takes a more graceful dive.

"Look, there's a squiggly pattern in the sand," Aiden points as they walk along the tree shaded path back to their cool thatched bungalow.

"It's a snake that slithered by, perhaps an olive grass snake, they are common reptiles of the Kruger."

"Ooh", shivers Lucy. "Let's go quickly in case it comes back."

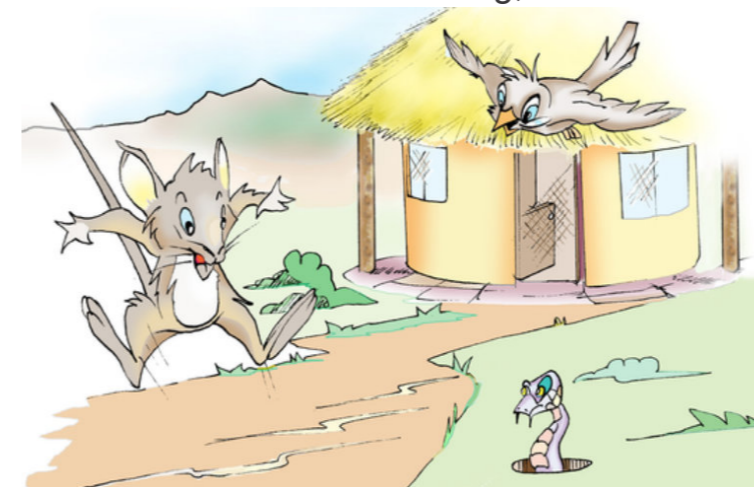
The mesh door of the bungalow created a gap, then sprung back with a slam, waking sleeping Bella Butterfly.



"I really enjoy being in our beautiful natural heritage," says Bella.

"There's so much wildlife to see in the park and around camp too. Make sure you pull the window mesh down to keep those mischievous Vervet Monkeys out while we're on our walk."

The birds sing gaily in the trees as the trio makes their way to the souvenir shop. An ice-cream to cool down, a bumper sticker for the car and biltong, of course.



Why not send a photo of your coloured in page to [sandy@travelbuggz.co.za](mailto:sandy@travelbuggz.co.za) to enter the lucky draw to win a goodie bag hamper.

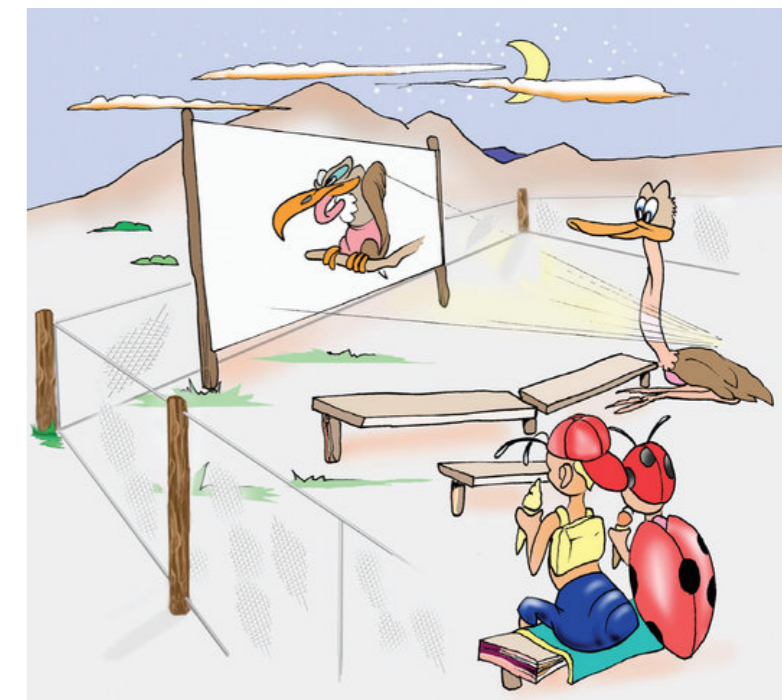
"Melting ice-creams, baking sun, birds chirping and distant animal sounds, the Travel Buggz enjoy walking alongside the camp fence.

As the sun dips behind the mountains, Aiden and Lucy skip back to the boma.

"I wonder what movie is on?" Lucy asks.

"It'll be a wildlife one, of course!" cheeky Aiden replies.

"I brought a blanket for the hard wood benches, and munchies to chew. Look how big that outside screen is Aiden!" Lucy exclaims.



The Travel Buggz stories are a series of children's story books about the adventures of the author and her two children. If you would like copies of any of the nine titles of books, contact : [sandy@travelbuggz.co.za](mailto:sandy@travelbuggz.co.za)

More stories in the collection:

The Travel Buggz go to the Seaside

The Travel Buggz help save the Rhinos

The Travel Buggz take their First Flight

The Travel Buggz visit the Vervet Monkey Foundation

# African Folklore

## Crested guineafowl

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By Credo Mutwa

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**The content that follows is written from transcribed tapes recorded by the late Credo Mutwa, one of Southern Africa's most celebrated Sangomas. The content therefore is not scientific but rather represent the feelings, beliefs and experiences of this exceptional man.**

**These stories are written in precisely the same way that Credo Mutwa tells them, with all their original colloquialisms and styles.**

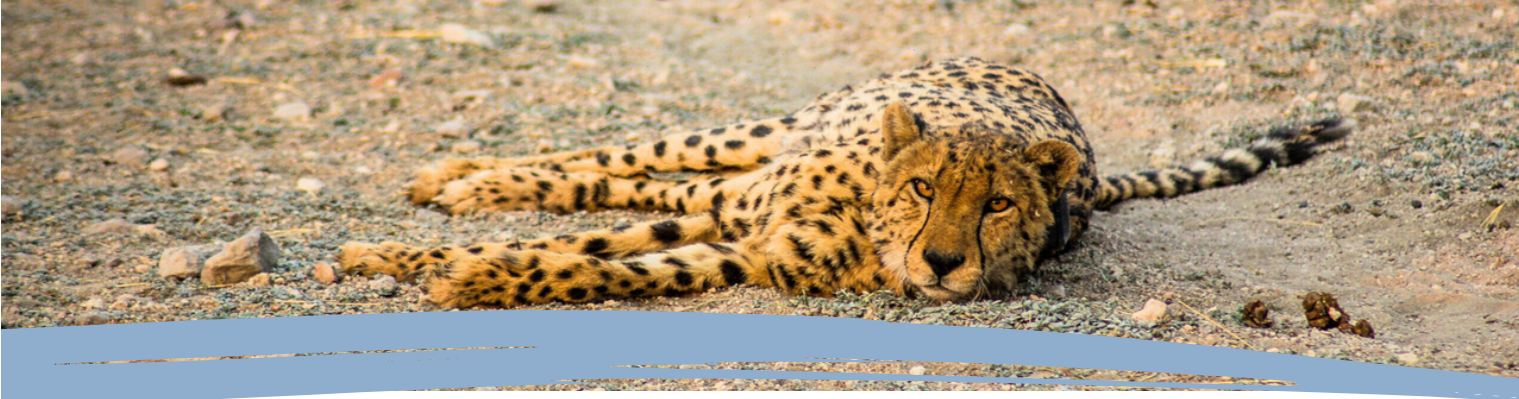
# 08



Inpangela is the crested guineafowl. This is a very sacred bird amongst all people throughout Africa where I have travelled. It is a bird of protection. Our people believe that the guineafowl is gifted with protective powers by the gods, that the guineafowl will protect your village's chickens against chicken disease.

The Zulu name for a guineafowl is inpangele, which means the one who is in a hurry. The word inpangele comes from the verb pangela, which means to wake up in the morning and go to work. The guineafowl is a bird that is symbolic of human effort at survival. In the language of the Botswana or BaSotho, the guineafowl is known as a kgaka.

Again, the word kgaka has to do with effort. If I say in this language I am hurrying gehgaketsi, in other words, I am running like a guineafowl making an effort. It is said that when a country loses its fertility, the guineafowls are the first birds to disappear. Zulu queens and sjangane chief used to try and breed guineafowls with domestic chickens in order to create a strong breed of chickens which were as strong as guineafowls and capable of enduring drought.



## WILD DREAMS JOB VACANCIES

Wild Dreams is a prominent company in the hospitality industry, specialising in recruitment and consultancy. We mainly focus on the safari lodge sector, as evident from our clientele. Our clients range from small lodges that accommodate only a few individuals to well-known large lodge groups with properties scattered throughout Africa.

At Wild Dreams, we are always on the lookout for field guides with various levels of experience. Additionally, we have positions where guiding knowledge is required, but the role is more focused on front of house or management responsibilities.

As a company, we prioritise conservation and actively support wildlife sanctuaries. We are deeply involved in community work and collaborate with numerous non-profit organisations in the wildlife and conservation field.

While we believe that most of you may find the aforementioned positions interesting, we also have constant vacancies in areas such as reservations, maintenance, and chef roles. To access these job opportunities, you can scan the provided QR code to visit our main jobs page. If you come across a job that catches your interest, you can submit your application online. However, if you don't find a suitable job at the moment, you can still upload your application directly into our database.

Furthermore, we have dedicated pages offering interview advice and CV tips. We even provide a free CV template that you can download. Our founder, who is a certified career coach, is deeply passionate about assisting individuals in finding their dream jobs.

Wishing you a successful job search!  
The Wild Dreams team.

[www.wilddreams.co.za](http://www.wilddreams.co.za)



# 09

## Get clear on your dream career

This free course is designed to help you get clear on your dream career. Created by Hayley Cooper, a certified career coach, multiple business owner, lodge manager, author and creator of the Front of House Lodge Operations Course, written for WildlifeCampus.

Her business, Wild Dreams Hospitality, offers hospitality recruitment, consulting and training services. She has a range of career and business coaching options, from 1:1 express calls where you can ask a general question you really need help with to interview preparation coaching as well as long-term 1:1 personalised coaching. She also offers holistic career clarity coaching, including group programs such as "Aligning Dreams: Career Clarity."

Her area of expertise is helping people find value-aligned careers, as well as her niche in the hospitality and tourism industry, where she has spent the last 25 years of her own career.

Although this is a short course, it will get you on the right path to feeling like your career is an extension of who you are.



# Once upon a time in Africa

By David Batzofin

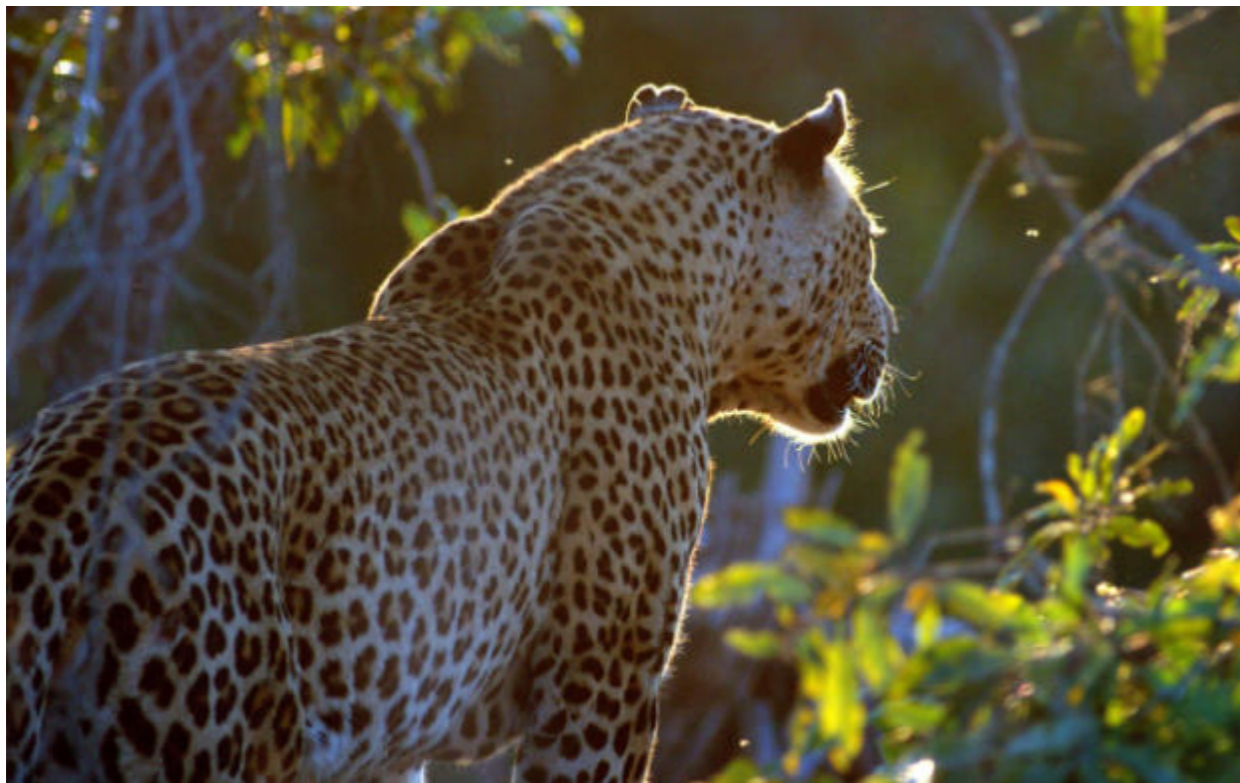


Can you have too much of a good thing?  
Of course, you can.  
Especially when it comes to food and snacks.  
But when you are in the bush, too much is never enough.

Leaving a sighting, be it predator or prey, is always a decision that is not easily made.

Beware the field guide who says “Do not worry we will see more of those later”, because you never do!

So what happens when all the stars align and you find yourself in a multiple sighting of an animal that is so elusive and secretive that even I, after spending decades in the bush am still excited when they are spotted.



David is an award-winning blogger whose work can be found at [www.travelandthings.co.za](http://www.travelandthings.co.za)

Leopard sightings can be as scarce, as well leopard sightings, so how do you react when you have multiple leopards within a short distance of each other?

A visit to a reserve that is officially known for almost guaranteed daily leopard sightings, is where this interaction took place. (In a way, I suppose the odds were in our favour for at least one sighting)

These predators are solitary and usually not as easy to find as lions, who tend to sleep in the same spot for most of the daylight hours.

In stark contrast, leopards are on the move almost constantly. Patrolling their territorial boundaries and generally making themselves scarce and often impossible to find.

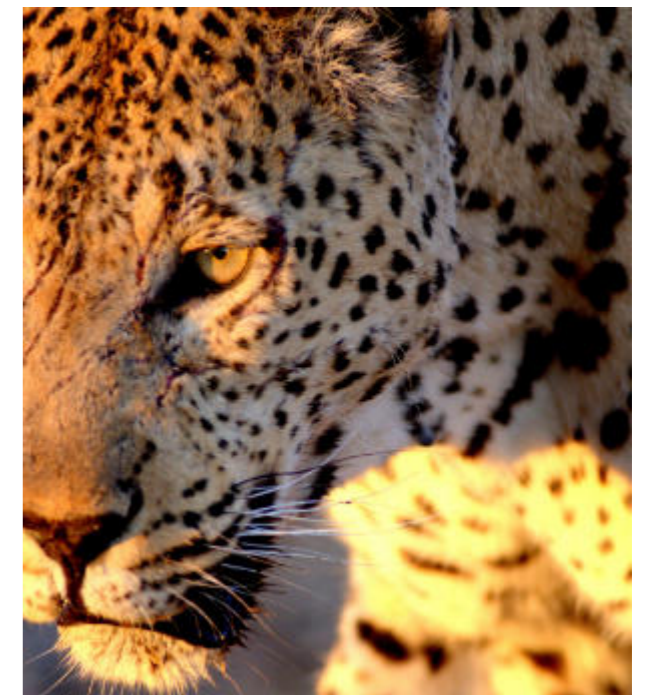
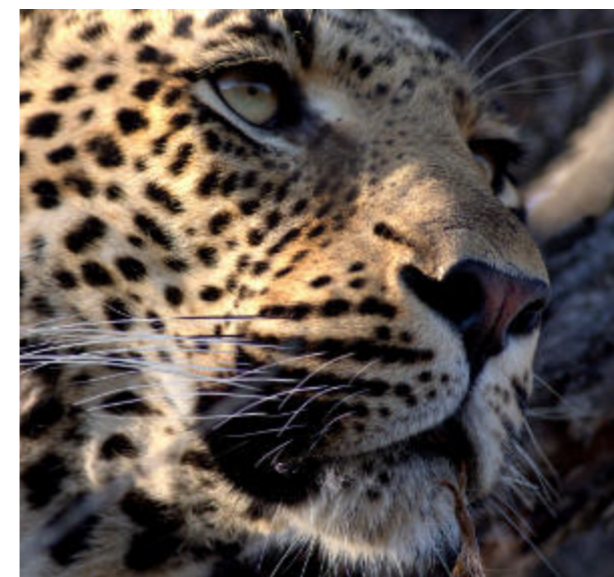
So what happens when you are watching a leopard lying quietly on the branch of a tree yet is growling quietly and her unease is not directed at the vehicle you are in?

You start looking around, and lo and behold, a second leopard was discovered just a short distance away. Our arrival could have interrupted this large male from mating with the female in the tree.

However, having witnessed mating leopards, they don't seem to take notice of vehicles full of humans peering at them.

We stayed a while and then headed off, only to bump into a THIRD leopard not too far away.

It was at this point that decisions and choices had to be made. Which animal to follow and what would the possible outcomes be?



When sitting on a vehicle with 10 people the real meaning of the word ‘democracy’ comes to mind.

There was an African statesman who was quoted as saying: “Democracy is great...as long as you don't share it with the masses”.

So in a game drive vehicle, guests are expected to trust the guide and believe that they will make the correct choice.

In the end, because the animals were in such close proximity, we decided to just stay where we were and see how things turned out.

As it happened, it was the correct choice.

Leopard number one stayed on her branch, where she dozed off. Her one eye occasionally opens to keep an eye on us and the male close by.

The male closest to our vehicle remained camouflaged in the grass, his infrequent grunts allowing us to keep track of him. And leopard number three wandered around, not quite making up its mind as to where the safest place to be was. It was this animal that was the first to leave our sighting, but that being said, we caught up with it later during the drive and were able to spend time alone with it.

A day to be remembered with gratitude and thanks.

Three of these elusive apex predators in such close proximity to each other, allowing us to enjoy this bounty that nature had bestowed on us.



Travel Buggz