



WildlifeCampus

Nature Calls



**Hospitality
jobs**

**African
Folklore**

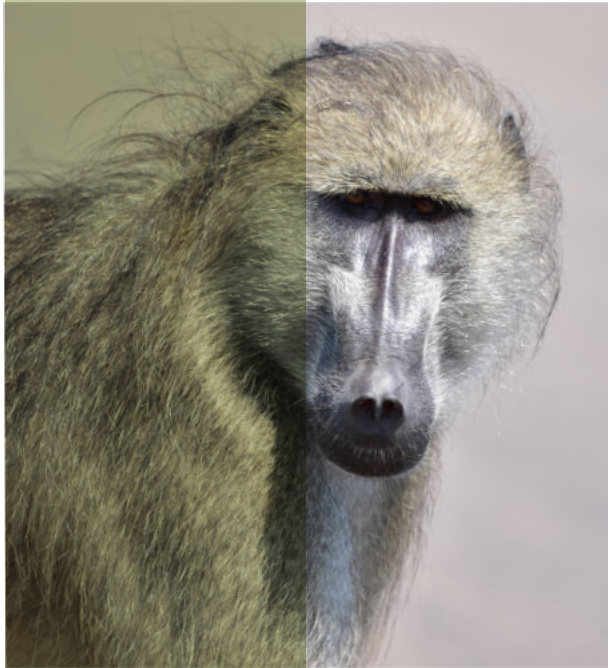
**The legend of
The Big 5**
By David Batzofin

**Recommended
Struik guides**

**The African
bush: touch**
By Amy Holt

**Travel Buggz
Adventures**

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Cover image: Impala by Jonathan Acx

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About us



WildlifeCampus is a world-renowned online nature school. We are **FGASA recognised**. With over 23 years of experience in the online space, we have successfully trained more than 30,000 students from 161 countries.

Our courses are considered to be the most comprehensive in the online space.

We take pride in being **leaders in online wildlife education**, offering an authentic and unique E-learning experience, high-quality content, value for money, and exceptional service.

There are no barriers to entry, course deadlines, or set semesters. Students can register and begin any course at any time. Those who have completed our courses have reported that the knowledge gained has significantly enhanced their careers and enjoyment of the bush.

Many of our students 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.

On 14 February 2001, I sent an e-mail to the AfriCam directors, which read as follows:

"Hi folks,

Peter Henderson made a commitment to inject R2m-R3m into AfriCam immediately following agreement being reached by shareholders. Based on the agreement that was reached, TVBus should take over the funding of AfriCam and we did not pursue any other alternatives. This leaves us completely in the hands of TVBus.

The financial situation of AfriCam has been made clear:

- *We have had a number of accounts closed at suppliers due to non/late payment.*
- *There are rumours of liquidation in the market, including an article in the Business Day. This was the first issue raised when we met with the MD of Mala Mala. They wanted to know if we wanted to cancel the contract with them.*
- *Potential advertisers are already asking questions.*
- *We have already received a summons.*
- *The staff are very unsettled and I cannot lie to them.*
- *One of our bookkeepers (Diane) has already resigned.*



WildlifeCampus

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- Our financial department has been under immense pressure.
- I receive personal calls from creditors virtually every day.

I think Tiffany has been too polite in the interests of trying to keep a good relationship with London! However, I do not believe we should be hiding anything from you. Huge damage has already been done and, to the extent that it can be repaired, this needs to be addressed immediately.

Regards
Peter Armitage

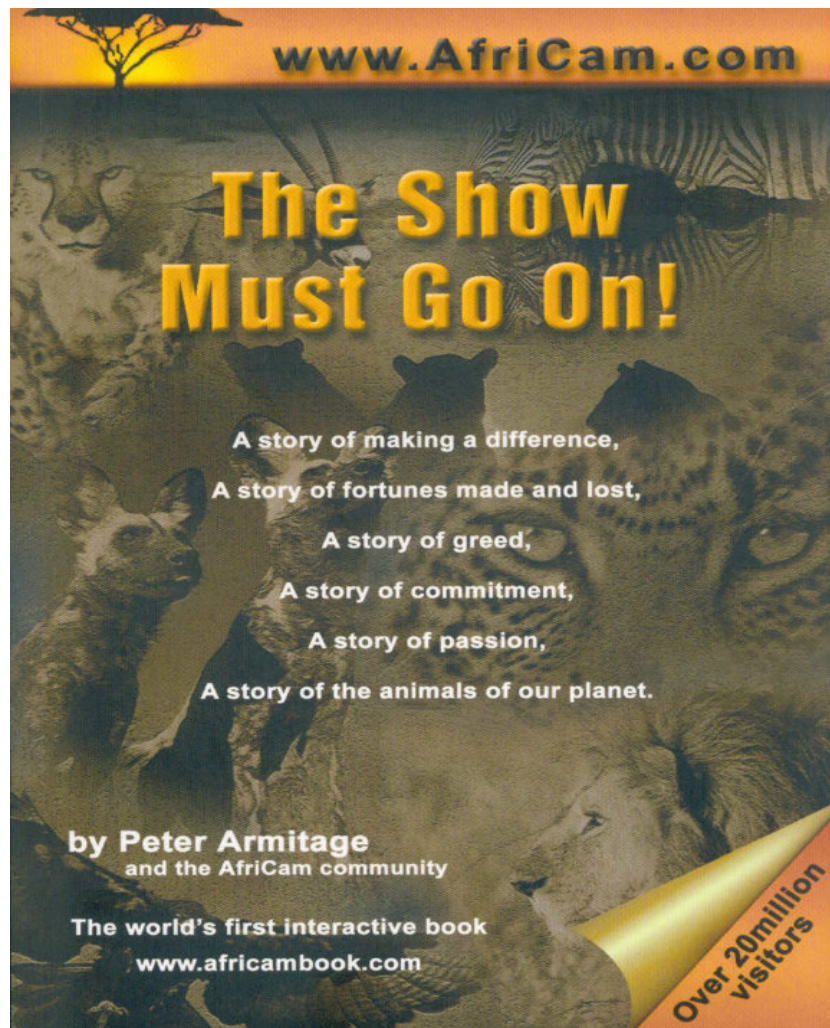
The business could not have been healthier in some respects, but in financial terms it was on the verge of collapsing. I found this immensely frustrating as we had had other funding alternatives, but had put all of our eggs in the TVBus basket.

We had no choice but to continue with building the equipment for the Live & Wild show, as if we did not the show would simply not have aired. We got sent the marketing material from BBC's UK Horizons. They had already printed a schedule showing our show as their top attraction for April. It read as follows:

"UK Horizons presents wildlife action as it has never been seen before - recorded live from the African bush. Linked from a control centre in Johannesburg, five reporters describe the scenes direct from the finest game reserves in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe."

Surely Peter had to continue funding this, I thought. The embarrassment of cancelling the contract would be immense and surely Peter would face costly legal action.

Various conference calls followed and budgets were produced showing the different scenarios. By February 2001,



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

Peter was still "reflecting on his position". It was becoming apparent that Peter/TVBus's financial resources were coming under pressure. The Peter Henderson that we knew loved this business. He was not acting in a manner which befitted his emotional commitment.

Control was becoming an ever-important issue and Peter told us that "our shareholders are insistent that if this is to proceed, TVBus must have control."

I was questioned on a daily basis by staff who were incurring liabilities in order to build the equipment required for the TV show. I was not sure what to tell them. I was convinced Peter would pay for the TV show after committing to it. We approved the bare minimum and tried to delay any purchases.



“Preparing for the show” - March 2001

Richard van Wyk was director of the show, Graham was to assume the position of operations director, and Alex was responsible for the technical construction and operations of the equipment.

However, even though Richard was Peter’s man on the ground in South Africa, there was an obvious loss of confidence in Richard by the folks in London. Nicholas Claxton was an almost permanent fixture in South Africa now and he was clearly looking after Peter’s interests from a production perspective and almost every move required approval from London. Contact between Peter and Richard became almost non-existent.

Alex had the challenging task of constructing the broadcast equipment on the vehicles in less than a six-week period. He recalls having given a quote for these vehicles over a year previously and now he had five weeks to complete a task which would normally take at least three months.

From a staffing perspective hundreds of candidates were interviewed and a talented crew emerged. The studio presenters were Kirsten Polacchi and Khensani Manganyi (who later went on to fill the role of one of the judges of the South African version of Popstars). The location staff were also finalised; in the Pilanesberg Chris Beasley would present (with Paul Henning and Steve performing the game ranger task on the vehicle), at Mala Mala the on-camera face was Andrew Wilson (with Mala Mala ranger Leon fulfilling the role

of game ranger) and at Mashatu the on-camera face, and subsequent star of the show was Saba Douglas-Hamilton (Greg was the ranger).

Saba is the daughter of respected elephant conservationist Ian Douglas-Hamilton and her knowledge of elephants proved invaluable. Subsequent to the Live & Wild show, Saba signed a contract with the BBC Natural History Unit and has recently become a third presenter on Big Cat Diary, joining Simon King and Jonathan Scott. There is talk that she is the “next Sir David Attenborough”.

It became clear that the biggest risk of not going to air (besides Peter Henderson) was posed by the broadcast vehicles not being ready. The task had been outsourced, but after a visit to the premises of the company that was doing the construction, Graham and Alex decided to take over the work. For a good few weeks, the team of Alex, John Dunne, Lance, Adam and Lucas worked around the clock to ensure that the equipment would be ready. The night-time shift was usually spent at Steve Heard’s premises working on the communications system.

Everyone piled in with passion to get the job done. Even Nicholas Claxton, who is an Emmy Award winning director, could be found soldering wires late at night.

“Three weeks to broadcast, maybe”

It was now three weeks to broadcast and the teams had been working feverishly to ensure AfriCam would deliver. But there was still no certainty that we were going to air, with Peter still in a state of indecision.

Graham took the bull by the horns and phoned Peter in London.

In an emotionally charged call, Graham appealed to the emotional side of Peter Henderson. “Over a year ago, we gave you half of our business. You have not delivered on anything that you signed, but we are still together. This show is your dream, it is my dream. There are 30 people working through the night, every night to get it on air. Don’t destroy your dreams and ours, Peter.”

“Graham, I understand and I am emotionally committed. However there are some financial realities that need to be assessed. I know how hard you guys are working and what you have done so far is a massive achievement,” Peter replied. He always said what you wanted to hear.

“Peter, this call is to say one thing; the show is going on. Tell me how much you can afford to transfer.”

“Well, I could probably make R2m,” Peter said, starting to squirm.

“Well I will give you my personal guarantee that we will do the entire project within that budget,” Graham insisted, not having a clue whether this was possible. He just wanted to secure some money.

Falling for Graham’s passion and persuasiveness, Peter agreed. The next morning we received an e-mail confirming that R2m would be transferred. In spite of this, only R1m was ever transferred, which left us underfunded for his show. But we had no choice – we were going to air.

“Live & Wild” - April 2001

The first show was to go live on 2 April 2001 and we were going to make it. Richard panicked a week before going to air, demanding a two-week delay. At AfriCam we had developed a habit of just getting things done, whatever the odds. We laughed off Richard’s request – it was just not an option.

Peter Bretherick, the owner and MD of Telemedia had worked miracles with our broadcast equipment. His employees had set up equipment at our studio and at the three locations in the bush and without Peter Bretherick the show would not have gone to air.

2 April was one of the most nerve-wrecking days in all of our lives. We rehearsed the entire morning, with the first live show at 4.30pm South African time. The number of potential things that could go wrong were immense.

The satellite links at the three locations were mostly reliable, but if anything went wrong they were 600km away from the nearest spares. The COFDM technology that we had tested the previous year at Tau was being used to get the images to the satellite uplinks and there was a limit to the broadcast

area. Hence the crew could be following a lion or leopard and suddenly get out of range.

Communications were also a challenge and this part of the system caused the biggest headaches. But the biggest fear of the BBC, which was one we had not properly considered, was the lack of content. How could we guarantee with three crews in the field and two presenters in the studio that there would be sufficient content and the show would not be boring? If you have been on a game drive in the bush, you know that you can drive for half an hour without seeing anything.

The first show confirmed that the content would be awesome. The crews did a marvellous job and we were mainly spoilt for content and had to choose between amazing scenes from the bush.

The first show went off without any disasters. This was the most amount of adrenalin any of us had ever experienced in a day’s work. On the AfriCam website, if things go wrong it is forgiven. But on TV, anything less than 100% is not good enough.

Over the rest of the month AfriCam delivered incredible live wildlife images to the UK viewing public, from leopards dining in a tree, to lion kills, to dwarf mongooses cavorting on the road at Mala Mala. There was something deeply emotional about this project and we took great pride in what we had achieved.

Graham was in charge of the teams in the field and stayed in constant contact with them throughout each show. After the first show he was really pumped up. “Do you realise what we did there. I was in constant contact with four people, in two countries all 500km apart from each other. It was like controlling a war out there.”





Practical Training Partners

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

You can also follow them on social media:

Facebook and Instagram

"In union there is strength." - Aesop



A FGASA training delivery partner



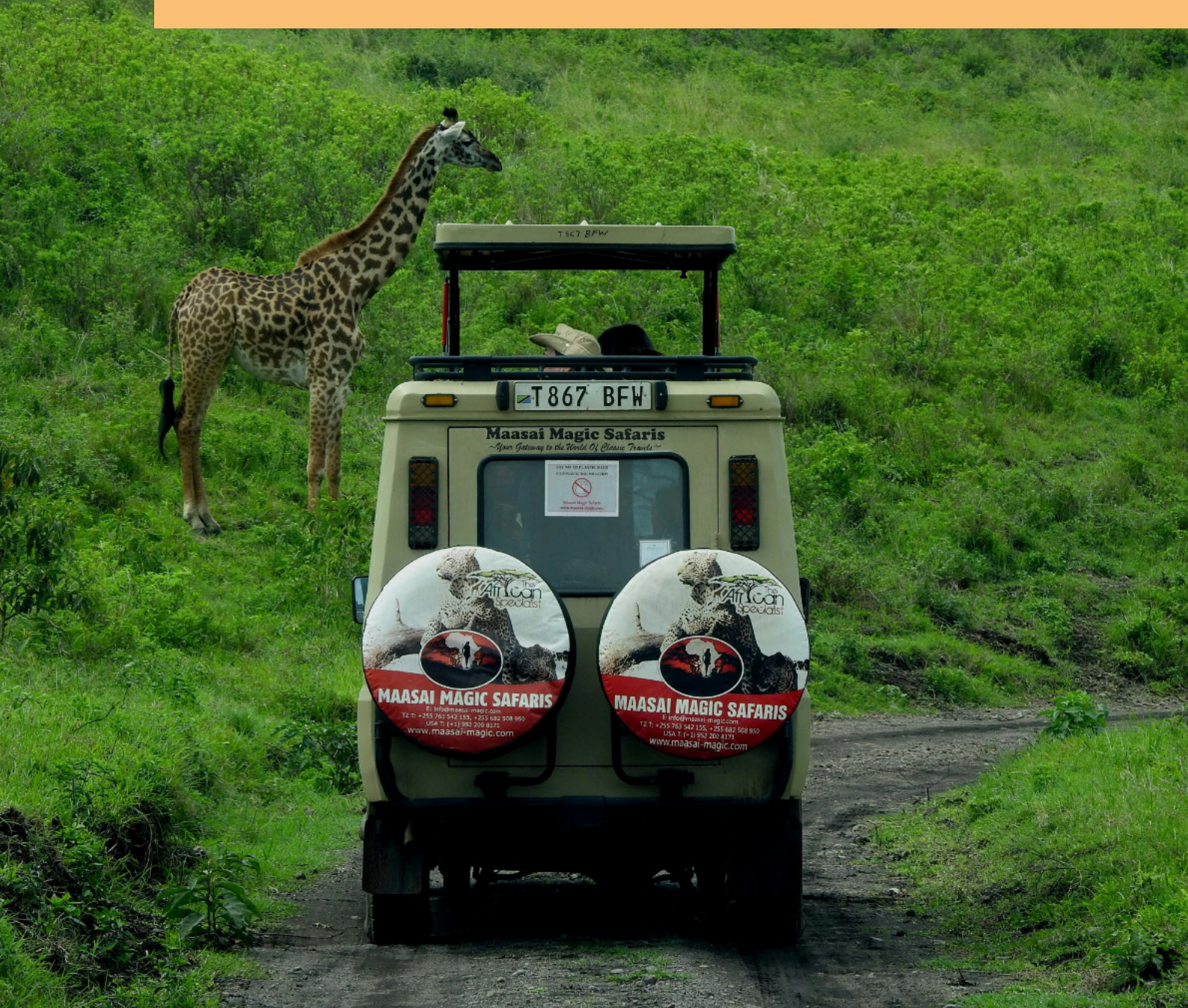
The African bush: Touch



By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Our sense of touch is a fundamental part of our lives. It is our first sense to develop, a universal language, and it can trigger memories of past moments. Now, it is time to become more in tune with your sense of touch as you explore the African bush in an unprecedented way.



As the Land Cruiser navigates through the African bush, your bum feels every bump of the landscape. You feel the warm sun's rays on your skin and the wind through your hair. But the best way to appreciate your sense of touch in the African bush is by foot.

On foot, you can feel the silky smooth petals of flowers, the intricate pattern of the veins on a leaf, the bumps and sharp edges of rocks, and the rough texture of a tree's bark. As you run your hand over the bark of the knob thorn tree, you will feel the prominent thorny knobs several millimetres apart, hence the name. These knobs offer some protection against browsing animals, such as elephants. The knobs are usually found on the newer branches of mature trees and on the trunks of young trees. This tree provides food for a wide variety of animals, including giraffes, kudus, elephants, and vervet monkeys. Furthermore, the knob thorn tree provides

a home for hole-nesting birds, which make their nests in the thorny trunk, and white-backed vultures nest in the branches when the trees grow close to rivers. The knob thorn tree is part of the acacia family, so it is a highly nutritious tree. It has a symbolic relationship with the surrounding soil bacteria and uses its nodule-like growths on its roots (rhizobia) to convert nitrogen into a form the tree can absorb in a process known as nitrogen fixation.

The jackalberry tree's bark has a rough texture with deep grooves. Jackalberry seeds are often found in the scat of jackals, hence the tree's name. This tree's leaves are eaten by elephants, giraffes, and kudus. While the fruit is eaten by kudus, baboons, vervet monkeys, and birds. Jackalberry trees can be found growing on termite mounds and so have formed a symbiotic relationship with termites.



The termites aerate the soil around the tree's roots; in return, the tree protects the termites.

Whilst on foot in the African bush, you are closer to nature. You'll be able to feel the skulls and horns of the animals that were here before you. Kudu horns are sleek and smooth to touch. Male kudus are the only ones to grow horns, and they use them when competing for females. The curves and spirals of the kudu's horns allow them to interlock. Males then proceed to push and twist until one opponent is overpowered and knocked over. As you run your hand over the kudu horns, can you work out how old it was when it died? The number of turns on the spirals indicates the age. A two-year-old male only has one twist, but by the age of six

years, the kudu will have a full two and a half twists.

The ground before you reveals a story of what walked before you. As you run your fingers over the sand, you'll feel the indentation of an animal track amongst the grains of sand. Elephant tracks are unmistakable; they're large and round, and you'll be able to feel the cracks of their pads in the sand. You can feel the difference between a lion, leopard, and cheetah track. Lions have broad and round paw prints with no visible claw marks. Leopards are similar to lions, but they are smaller and more compact. While cheetahs do not have retractable claws, and therefore the claw markings can be felt as indentations in the sand.

Leopard tortoises leave small, rounded tracks that form a tramline pattern. You may also be able to feel inward-pointing claw impressions. Leopard tortoises have unique gold and black markings on their shells similar to the leopard's coat pattern, hence the name. The porcupine's most recognisable feature is its sharp quills, and these can be felt in the sand as long, indented trails. Porcupines use their quills as protection against predators. They may raise their quills to make themselves appear larger, thus scaring off predators. Careless predators can end up with the quills deeply embedded in them, which can become fatal wounds. Some of the spines on the porcupine's tail are hollow and make a rattle sound when shaken, which is used to scare off predators.

There you have it; you have gathered detailed information about the African bush through touch alone. You have awakened your forgotten sense and can now appreciate the African bush in a different way.

As Margaret Atwood said, 'Touch comes before sight, before speech. It is the first language and the last, and it always tells the truth.'

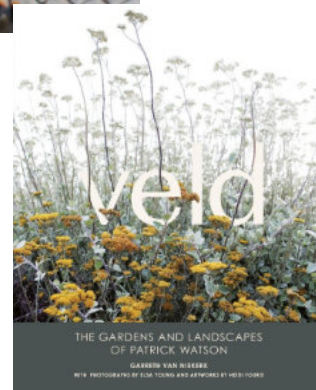
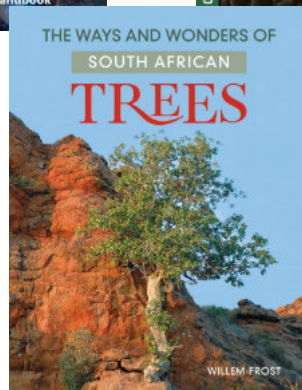
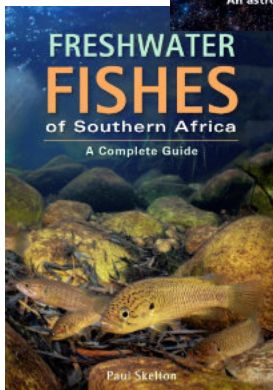
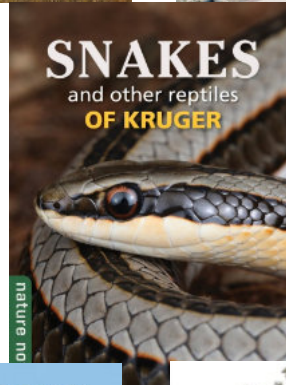
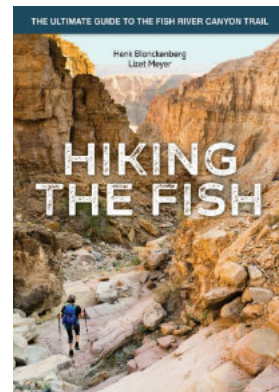
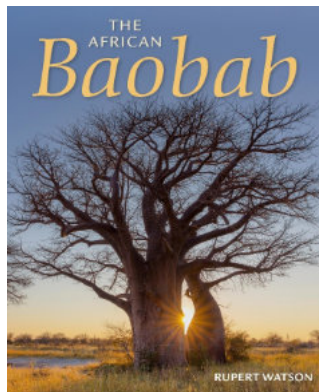
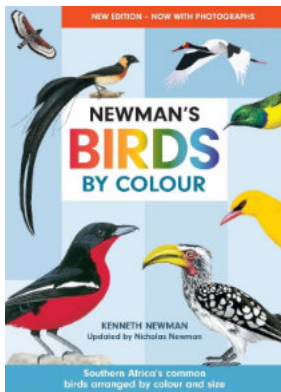


Highly recommended

by WildlifeCampus

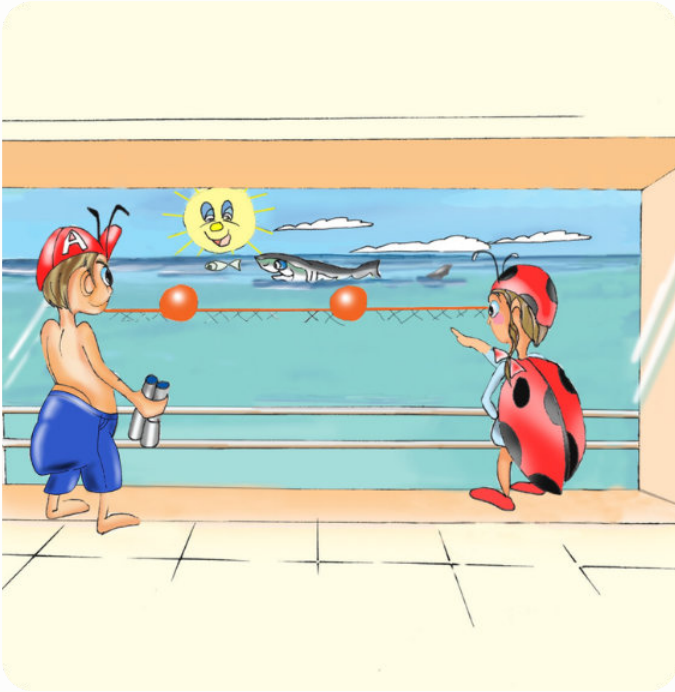
WildlifeCampus highly recommends Struik Nature Guides to our students! Struik Nature is the leading specialist Natural History publisher in southern Africa, associated with the best-selling and most highly regarded field guides in the region. You probably own one or a few of their titles. They publish full-colour illustrated books across a variety of subject areas, including birds, mammals, reptiles, trees and flowers, the marine environment, geology, astronomy, general wildlife, and children's nature.

A variety of different series covering these subject areas ensure that all levels of interest are catered for, from beginner to intermediate and serious interest, and titles are written by the region's most respected authorities in their fields, ensuring accuracy, relevance and authority.



The Travel Buggz Adventures

The Travel Buggz are at the seaside experiencing a beach holiday - let's see what they get up to.



Lucy spotted a bouy floating in the sea and thought it was a human.

"It's not a boy," Aiden laughs at her. "A bouy, is a floating object that is used as a marker in the ocean."

"Yes, says Bella, "Those red buoys are all linked together to show the Sharks Board where the shark nets are.

"Will there be sharks where we swim?" shrieks Lucy.

"No you silly," Aiden chirps, "That's why they have the nets, to keep the sharks away from the swimmers."

Next morning the Buggz are up early. Dressed in costumes, floppy hats and smeared with suntan cream, they head for the beach.

"Aargh, the sand is very hot," Lucy jumps around.

"Here's a nice spot," Bella points. "I can see you swimming from here and it's far enough if the tide comes in later."

Umbrella up, towels down, Aiden makes a dash for the cool seawater. Lucy fills her bucket with a spade full of sand.

Aiden spends hours swimming. He goes deep where the adults are, then body surfs with the big waves as they come crashing to shore.



All Travel Buggz story books are available in Afrikaans and the Kruger edition is available in iSizulu.

Suddenly a whistle sounds. “Phweet, phweet.” A lifeguard is waving at the swimmers.

“Why is he blowing a whistle?” Lucy asks.

“See those stands with the red flags on them?” Bella points, “they show swimmers where to swim and to stay between those two flag poles. The lifeguards have tested the water currents and that’s where it’s safest to swim.

So he is whistling at the people to remind them to stay in the marked area.”



An afternoon drive to Crocodile Creek near Ballito fills the day for the Buggz, who have had enough sun.

“Look how cute the babies look!” Lucy exclaims.

“That’s a West African Dwarf Crocodile”, Bella tells her.

“They’re feeding the big guys!”, Aiden’s voice trails as he dashes off to watch.



The next morning, as the sun rises over the horizon the Buggz wake up.

“Can we go for an early morning walk on the beach?” Lucy asks.



The Buggz enjoy the sound of the crashing waves and the sun warming their cheeks.

A dog and it’s owner play fetch with a ball while Lucy trails behind Bella trying hard to step into her foot prints.

“Look at this shell I found,” Aiden shows them.

“Isn’t it beautiful?” Lucy takes it from Aiden.

“Eeck!” she squeals, “There’s something inside it.”

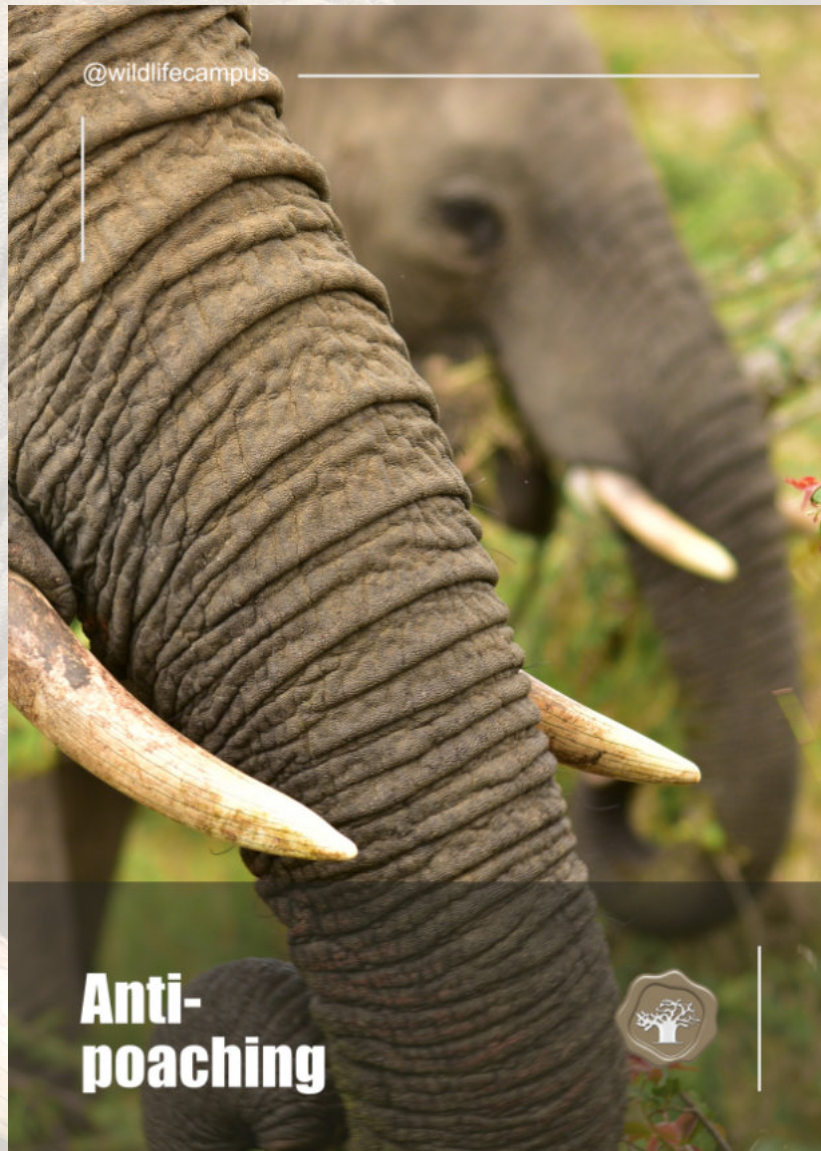
“It’s alive,” Aiden laughs, tossing it back in the ocean.



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

Course

Spotlight



Our anti-poaching course is designed for individuals who want to positively impact wildlife conservation.

You will gain a comprehensive understanding of the illegal wildlife trade and its effects on endangered species and the environment. You will learn about the tactics used by poachers and how to identify signs of poaching activity. This course will also raise your awareness of the types of poaching that may occur in your local community, the importance of conservation, and how you can help spread awareness.

Join us in the fight against poaching and make a difference in the future of our planet's wildlife.

African Folklore



Birds: beautiful fertilisers of Earth

By Credo Mutwa

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.

Our people, throughout Africa, believed many strange things regarding birds. First of all, our general name for a bird in Zulu is *ingonyi*, while in Sesotho and Tswana it is *ngonyani*. These are beautiful, strange and mystical African words, which mean 'fat' and 'fattening'.

Now... what has a bird to do with being fat? Our people believed that, like the animal herds that used to criss-cross the face of Africa, birds were bringers of fertility. We believed that the great bird migrations that used to come into our skies at certain times of the year brought fertility to or 'fattened' the land. For this reason, a bird, any bird, is called the fertiliser or the fattener... *ingonyi*.

Another belief regarding birds is that they are the souls of human beings who have reached a high state of perfection. When you have been reincarnated seven times on Earth, as either a human being or an animal, you are raised by the Gods to the state of a bird, the freest creature in the world; a creature that is a friend to the air, friend to the land and friend to the water. This is the *ingonyi* - the freest of the free, the fattener, the fertiliser.

Our people protected birds with very, very strict laws. The mosu tree (umbrella thorn, or *Acacia tortilis*) is a large acacia tree, which has bean-like pods as fruits. The Batswana, ba-Pedi and Northern-speaking people never cut these trees down. Why? These are the trees upon whose branches migratory birds rest, when they come into southern Africa at certain times of the year.

Our people used to punish with a savage fine anyone who was caught hunting more birds than was needed for food. There were exact guidelines laid down to prevent the exploitation of birds and other animals, for example you were not allowed to hunt more than two guineafowl a day and you were not allowed to hunt every day.

Each guineafowl you brought down had to last a number of days, which is why guineafowl meat was dried. The most terrible sin that our people knew regarding birds was for a man, woman or child to break the eggs of a bird. It is said that should you commit that sin, you will bring a curse of seven years upon, not only yourself, but also your family.

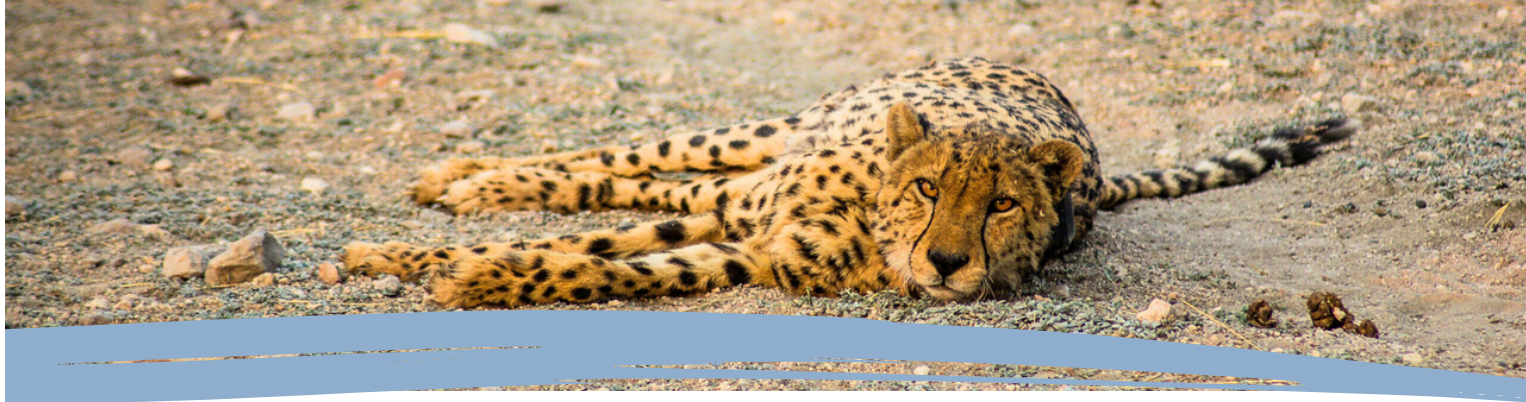
When we undergo the deepest initiation into the mysteries of our people, when we become not only sangomas, but also sanusis (who are higher than sangomas), we often are asked questions that are actually riddles. The successful answering of these riddles tells you whether one is a true sanusi or simply a fake. If someone claims to be a sanusi, I will ask him or her, "Please tell me, fellow sanusi, who is the beautiful woman who is the mother of a tree?" Now, if the person is not a true sanusi, he will not know the answer. But the answer is, "the bird is the mother of the tree."

You find a saying all over Africa, in various languages, one that was stressed upon our people again and again: if you kill a tree, you are killing a bird. In Setswana they say, "*setklara seswala kinyona*," and in Zulu, "*umuthi uzalwanyone*" - both of which mean, "the tree is given birth to by the bird." Why did our people say so?

Our people noticed that when birds from far away rest on the branches of certain great trees, sooner or later you would see strange trees growing at the feet of these big trees, since the seeds were excreted in the past by migratory birds.

The Bakgatla people have a proverb that says if you shave the great Earth Mother's green hair, she will lose her feathered lice, in other words, if you destroy trees, birds will no longer come to bring fertility.





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



The legend of The Big 5

By David Batzofin



Once upon a time, deep in the heart of Africa, the Big Five — lion, elephant, leopard, buffalo, and rhino—gathered to discuss their Christmas celebrations.

Every year, they celebrated the season of joy by sharing stories, laughter, and enjoying a grand feast.

But this year, the animals wanted to do something different, something more memorable than ever before.

The lion, as the king of the animals, stood tall and let out a roar. His voice carried far, reaching even the tiniest creatures in the distance. “This year, we shall invite all the animals, big and small, to join in our celebration,” he declared.



David is an award-winning blogger whose work can be found at www.travelandthings.co.za

Elephant, wise and thoughtful, trumpeted his agreement. “Let us make this a night of peace and unity,” he said. “Everyone is welcome!”

And so the preparations began.

Buffalo, strong and dependable, gathered fruits and grasses for the feast, while Leopard used her stealthy skills to bring in the most delicious treats from the far corners of the land.

Rhino, always eager to help, offered her services wherever they could be best utilized.

As the Big Five worked together, Giraffe, with his long neck stretched high, wandered over to see what was happening. “What’s going on?” he asked, curiously.

“We’re preparing for the biggest Christmas celebration in all of Africa!” exclaimed Buffalo. “Would you like to join us?”

Giraffe was happy to be involved. “I can use my height to decorate the tallest trees”.

A dazzle of zebra arrived and proclaimed “We will bring the music”, stomping their collective hooves in a rhythm that made the ground shake.

With the moonlight shimmering on the plains, the party began. All the animals gathered around the great baobab tree, which the Giraffe had decorated with a festive garland of leaves.

As the Big Five and their friends celebrated, a tiny but spirited Dwarf Mongoose arrived. “Don’t forget about me!” it squeaked, darting between the legs of the larger animals. “I may be small, but I can bring laughter!” And so, Dwarf Mongoose did just that, telling funny stories that had the whole gathering roaring with laughter—especially Leopard, who rarely laughed but couldn’t hold back her giggles.

Lion, watching the joyful scene, felt a deep sense of pride. “This is what Christmas should be,” he said. “A time when all creatures, great and small, come together to celebrate the beauty of life and friendship.”

In the distance, they heard the slow, thunderous footsteps of Elephant, who had gone to fetch water.

But he wasn’t alone. Behind him walked a parade of animals—impala, warhogs, meerkats, and even a family of hippos—all eager to join the festivities.

As the feast began, the Big Five took their places but they didn’t sit in silence. Instead, they shared stories of courage, kindness, and the lessons they’d learned.

Rhino spoke of the importance of protecting the land, while Buffalo talked about strength in unity. Leopard shared how patience and persistence always pay off, and Lion reminded everyone of the power of bravery.

When it was Elephant’s turn, he looked around at all the animals and said, “No matter how big or small we are, we all have something special to give. Tonight, we celebrate our differences.”

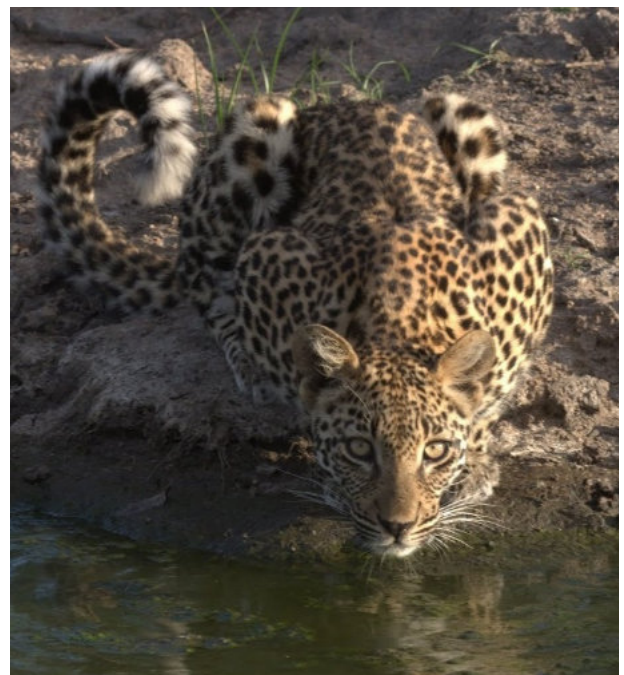
The party continued late into the night, with the Zebras leading the animals in a dance under the stars. Even the sky seemed to join in, with the Milky Way shining brightly overhead, casting a magical glow over the land.

As dawn broke on Christmas morning, the animals shared their last laugh, their last bite of food, and their last dance.

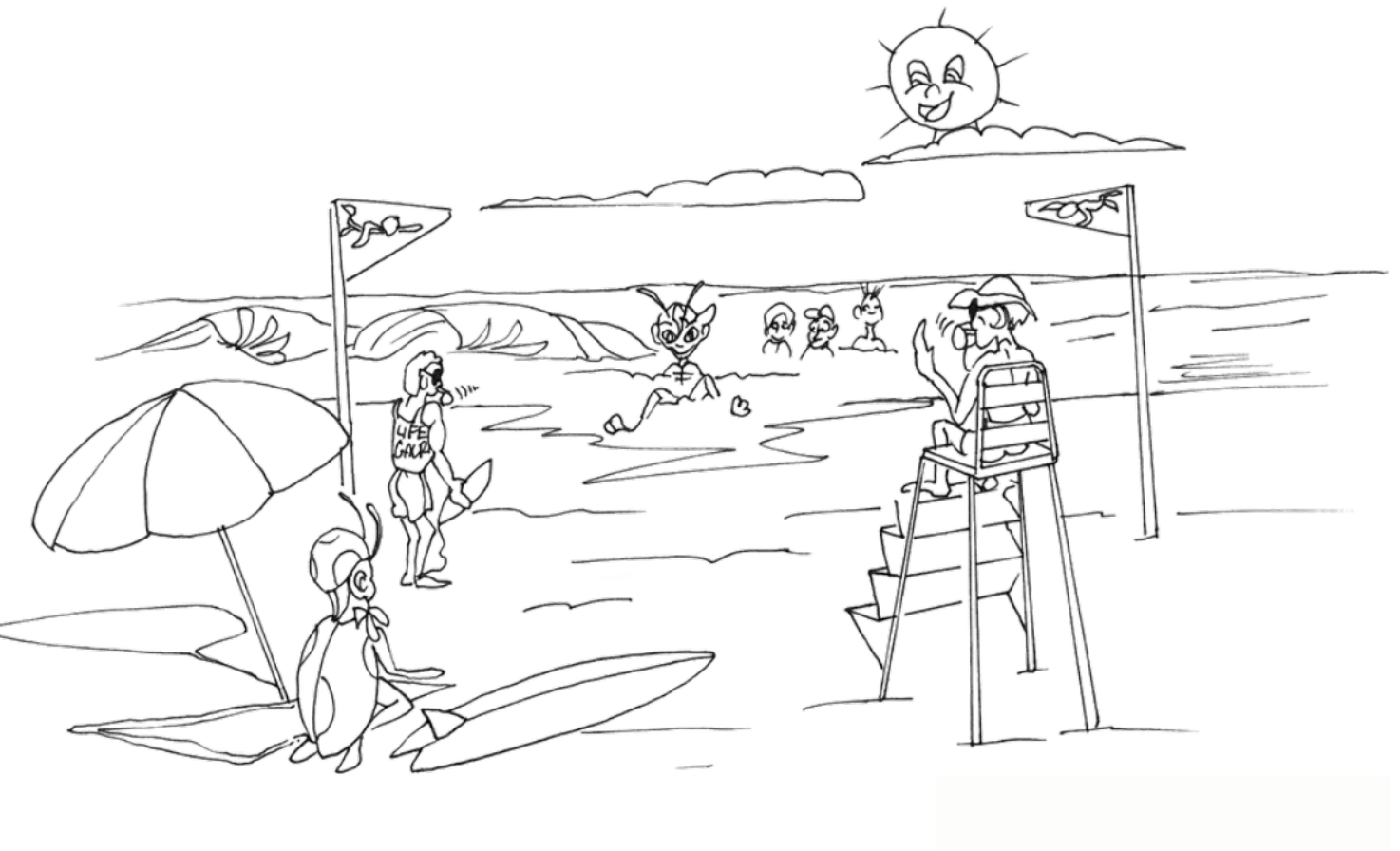
However, no one left with a heavy heart, for they knew that this celebration would be remembered for years to come—when all the animals had come together to celebrate not only Christmas, but the spirit of love, friendship, and unity.

And so, the legend of the Big Five’s Christmas Celebration lives on, reminding us that no matter our differences, we are stronger and happier together.

Listen closely on Christmas Eve, you might just hear the distant roar of a lion, carried on the wind, inviting you to join the celebration too.



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