



WildlifeCampus

LEARN PROTECT SAVE

Magazine

**Masters of
disguise**

**July
Wildlife Diary**

**Monotremes
And Marsupials**

**The problem with
elephants**

**The job interview:
Body language**

Full list of our courses and prices

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The origins of WildlifeCampus

“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.

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Masters of disguise

Whether in the ocean, forest, savannah or Arctic, animals have evolved a range of camouflage tactics. In this article, Amy Holt puts a spotlight on animals that tend to hide “in plain sight”.

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A career as a Field Guide

Have you considered a career providing clients with the best possible service as a Field Guide?

Have a look at page 12 and find a discount code for our most popular course!

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Monotremes and Marsupials

In this edition, Chris and Mathilde Stuart take us on a walk from Australia to the Americas explaining the main differences between monotremes and marsupials.

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July Wildlife Diary

With winter peaking this month in the Southern hemisphere, Stuart on Nature, opens their “wildlife diary” to tell us what to expect, and look out for, during July. Black-backed jackal, wildebeest, zebras, mango trees,... lots going on in winter!

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Our social media

An overview of the social media channels on which you can find WildlifeCampus.

Be sure to click through to the different platforms and maybe give us a like, or even better, drop us a comment or rate us!

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Job interview: body language

Wild Dreams Hospitality compiled a list of useful tips and tricks to keep in mind when we attend a job interview. Body language plays an important role in a job interview as it can convey confidence, professionalism and engagement.

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The problem with elephants

...is according to David, elephants...

David tells a story of a wise and gentle female elephant named Nokuthula reminding us all of the harmony of all life.

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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.

“Stop playing with the wildcat thing” - Late 1999

The original business relationship between AfriCam and Educor was one of a joint venture. Educor would provide the educational material and its education expertise and AfriCam its technology. Educor however, were to fall far short of its obligations and its commitment can be summed up with a quote to Steven in one of its Board meetings:

“Steve, stop playing around with this wildcat thing and get back to business”.

Allenby still tried to play its part in the design of the website. An outside consultant employed by Allenby organised with a design studio to have a go at the look and feel. Two weeks after an exhaustive brief, the “Allenby team” went for a presentation. I remember being blown away by their initial ideas and raced immediately to AfriCam clutching a large colour glossy print of the homepage. I was fortunate enough to find Peter, Paul and Graham all together. With a flourish I unveiled the print, only to have all three Directors take one look at it and rip it to shreds.



Graham commented succinctly: “Look if this was 1994, then maybe, but for 2000 I don’t think so.”

That was the penultimate design attempt by Allenby and Educor. The only contribution to WildlifeCampus, came from Allenby’s outside consultant and was the website’s WildCry and GameSaver Programme. This unfortunately was also a dismal failure with users of the site displaying absolutely no interest in the programme at all.

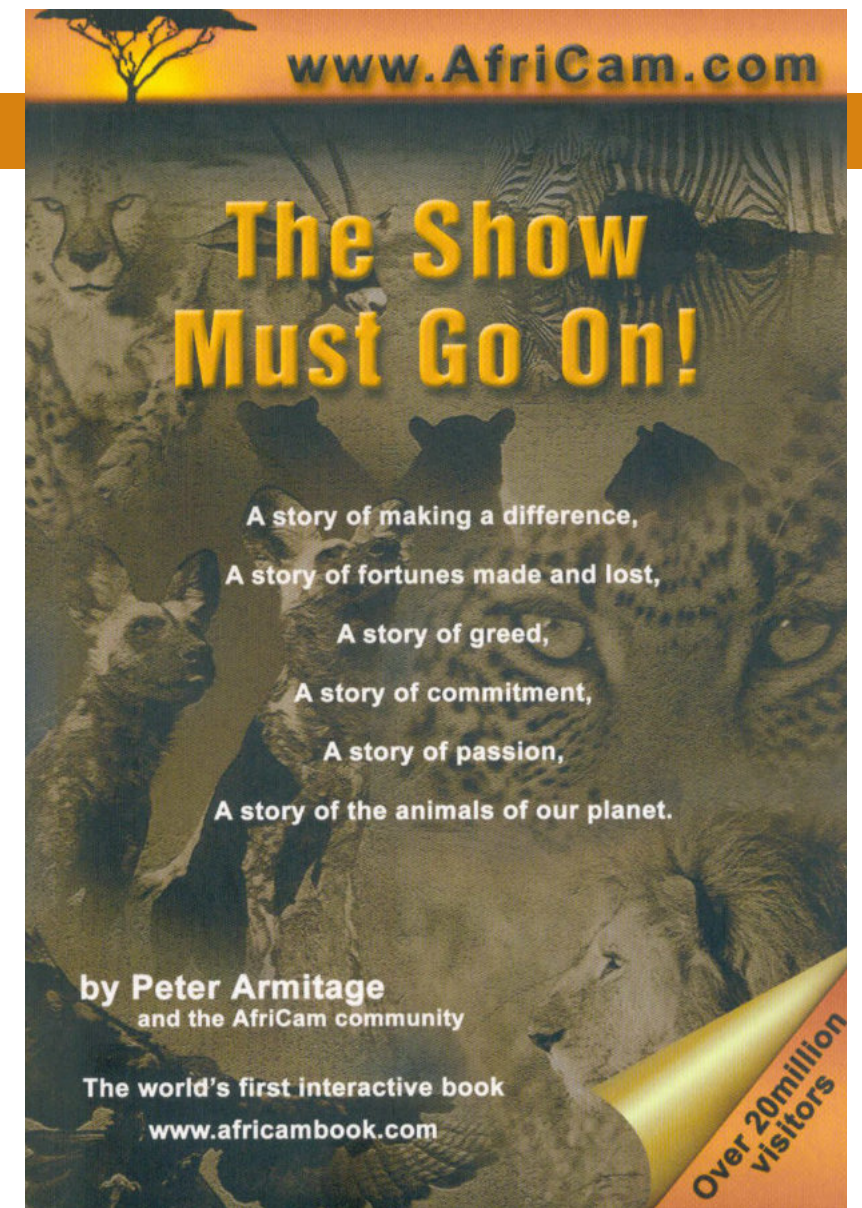
The ultimate look and feel was designed by Dimension Data, by a talented graphic artist called Tim.

Clearly Educor’s interest in the project had waned. By June 2000, I was spending three to four days a week at AfriCam and was delighted to accept a permanent position with the Company in July. Steven also parted ways with Educor in July and joined AfriCam in August.

The website was developing nicely, but we had still not finalised a name. AfriCollege had been discarded in favour of WildCampus, but we had a problem.

The URL, www.wildcampus.com had already been registered by somebody else. Since no site had been developed using the name, we assumed the owner would part with it relatively easily, but he still wanted US\$8000 for it. AfriCam at the time had significant development capital, but remember that US\$8000 was ± R70 000 in the local currency, an exorbitant sum of money for essentially a US\$20 name.

We all loved the name and developed some creative ideas, however, our designs were in vain. The owner of WildCampus.com would not budge from his US\$8000, which Peter was not



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

prepared to pay.

We all brainstormed new ideas for hours. Ideas were no problem, but we had the familiar problem of not being able to find a domain name that was not already registered by somebody else.

Early one evening, Keith Wallington (Graham’s brother, who joined as marketing director in January 2000) and I were sitting around brainstorming the “name issue” by randomly typing names into a domain registration site. Keith typed in “WildlifeCampus”. I thought it was a little wordy, but it qualified on the key criteria: it was available. Keith typed his credit card number into the computer and WildlifeCampus was christened.”

(The site www.wildcampus.com still remains nothing more than a name with no site ever having been developed!)

“Travelogue” - Late 1999

The next obvious opportunity was travel. In the early months of AfriCam we were



An example from the site was:

African Calabashes

These African Calabashes are beautifully designed and hand-painted with elephant landscapes.

Price: US \$ 25.00

Shipping: Parcel Post Office US \$ 14.00

What was also worrying was the lack of enquiries for Douglas's travel and product offerings. Even if they were not ideal and unattractively presented, surely we should get some default enquiries with our huge amount of traffic? We blamed it on Douglas rather than questioning AfriCam's ability to attract enquiries.

We quickly dumped Douglas and backed Wayne McKlintock's travel idea. Wayne ran the Savannah Game Lodge in the Sabi Sand and he was a credible travel industry player and a nice guy. His idea was to get the lodges to pay a monthly subscription fee to advertise on the site. He believed that the lodges would be prepared to pay R250 per month (US\$35) for access to our vast traffic and based on his hands-on experience in the travel industry we backed his idea.

The site was called Travelogue (www.travelogue.com). It had some initial success, but this site was a classic case of over-engineering. Dimension Data licked their lips as the functional specifications got bigger and bigger and the site was calling for over R500 000 investment (over US\$70 000).

The AfriCam team spent hours on end in workshops with Dimension Data, creating one of the most complicated websites on the internet. Potential travellers could create travel suitcases and send enquiries to players all over South Africa. Rankings, special features and other elaborate characteristics added to the perceived appeal. We linked up with the South African Travel Guide, who had been in the business for years publishing an annual hard-copy book.

We quickly learnt that we had created a monster. The internet user found the site interesting, but less than 1% of users used more than the first page of functionality.

“Safari.net” - Late 1999

Safari.net was a “vertical” of Unexplored.com and was AfriCam's first real taste of US internet extravagance. Unexplored.com was the brainchild of American former merchant banker JP Thieriot and a team of high-profile travel experts. JP comes from a wealthy family and a capital

injection from the family, together with a contribution from some hungry venture capitalists, gave Unexplored.com over US\$20m to develop a business which was planned to dominate adventure travel globally.

Our first exposure to Unexplored.com was through Alan Bernstein. Alan is an experienced and very likeable African tourism guru. He co-founded Conservation Corporation Africa in 1990 with John and Dave Varty and was the Unexplored.com representative for the Safari.net project. (Conservation Corporation is one of Africa's leading lodge owners and operators. They are backed by the Getty Foundation and their properties include Londolozi, Phinda and their lodge at the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania).

Alan made the first approach and, besides anything else, it was obvious that Unexplored.com would be prepared to devote significant capital to the tourism project. Bearing in mind our relatively small and diminishing cash pile, the opportunity to partner with a potential global leader was attractive.

A few weeks later JP himself landed in South Africa. Larger than life, JP was focussed on “the bigger picture”. With an aversion to detail, JP preached the internet gospel and identified its potential to change the world. On a smaller scale, it was also going to change high end adventure travel. And By God, if anybody was going to take advantage of this it was JP Thieriot.

JP talked big and made out cheques to match. He stood in our new boardroom and wowed us with vision. “I envision a world in which travellers use the Internet as a gateway to the world's most rarefied and exotic destinations. We will define the convergence of technology, conservation and high-end Africa travel.”

“Unexplored will be the horizontal and Safari.net one of the synergistic verticals, which will as a collaborative unit

dominate the high-end travel space globally,” JP demanded in his strong American accent.

We could not help being won over by JP and Alan's brazen enthusiasm. And the deal was even more convincing. AfriCam would have 25%, Wilderness Safaris 15% and Unexplored.com 60%. For this, AfriCam would have to do nothing but provide traffic. Unexplored.com would fund the business and do the development. JP was in a hurry to take over the world and he would do the work and provide the funding. JP wanted headlines and deals, whatever they cost.

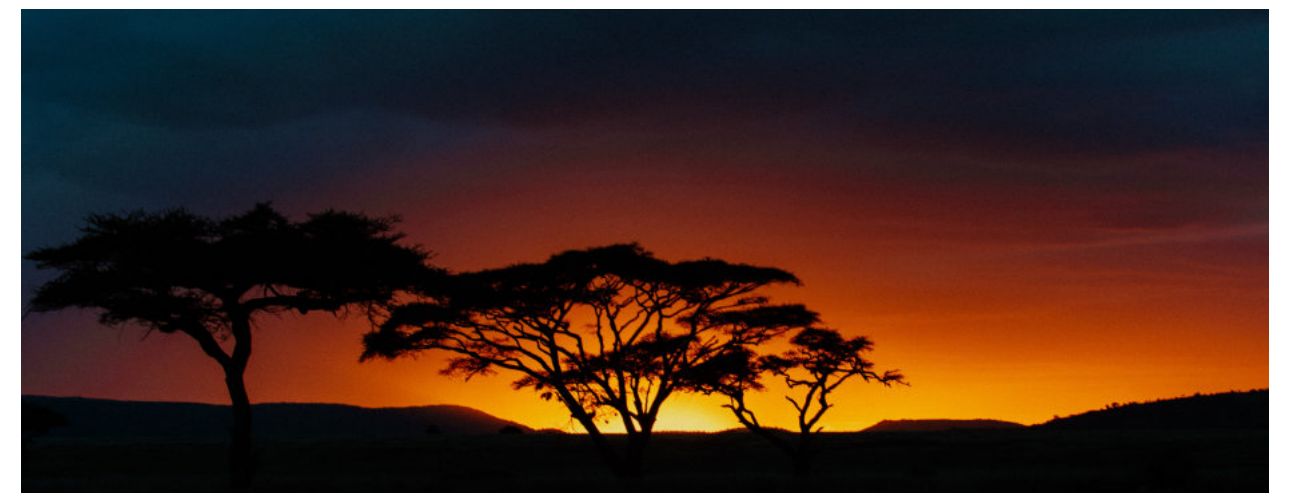
To confirm his credentials, on the same trip, he made a cheque out for around US\$100 000 for Safari.net to be the SA National Parks' exclusive global online marketing partner. Money talked, and we all listened. And signed.

JP also made an offer of US\$5m for 10% of AfriCam, which we did not accept. We were targeting higher valuations.

Shortly thereafter we signed up Greg Havermahl as CEO. He is a highly regarded travel expert and had been the CEO of Zambian Airlines. We thought he should be used to flying high.

Unexplored.com proceeded to spend more on the creation of the initial Safari.net website (US\$1m) than AfriCam spent on its entire business over two years. We were happy to go along for the ride.

Perhaps JP's greatest weakness was that he really believed the story. While his peers in the US were listing their businesses on the Nasdaq and raising hundreds of millions of dollars, JP was building a global empire. He believed that the value would be realised through long-term cash flows and value creation, rather than irrational valuations. This eventually proved to be his downfall.





By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Our natural world is full of wonders. But, nothing is more fascinating than the art to blend in... to hide in plain sight. Whether in the ocean, forest, savannah or Arctic, animals have evolved a range of camouflage tactics.

02

There are two main types of camouflage, crypsis, which makes animals difficult to see, and mimesis, where an animal disguises itself as something else. The simplest form of camouflage is for an animal to match the background of its surroundings. This is known as concealing colouration. For example, a polar bear hiding against the white Arctic ice. Polar bears have black skin but appear white because they have translucent hairs. When light shines on the hairs, each hair bends the wavelength slightly. This bounces the light around so that some of it makes it to the skin's surface, and the rest is deflected back out, producing white colouration.

Both the Arctic hare and the Arctic fox have seasonal camouflage. In winter, their coats turn entirely white, making them almost impossible to see against the snowy background. There are 21 species known to moult from brown to white to survive the winter season. However, climate change is creating a mismatch between their snowy camouflage and surroundings. As winters are milder, snow arrives later and melts earlier, making it harder for these species to disappear into their surroundings. This could lead to fatal consequences as their ill-adapted coats make them stand out. Arctic hares are becoming more vulnerable to predators, making it harder for Arctic foxes to hunt their prey effectively.

Disruptive colouration is when an animal has a patterned colouration, such as spots or stripes, that makes it difficult to see its outline. In the African savannah, many species have disruptive colouration. For example, zebras have stripes that help them to blend together when in a group. This makes it hard for a lion to detect just one of these zebras.



Due to this camouflage technique, a group of zebra are often known as a dazzle. Leopards have black rosettes on their fur, which acts as disruptive colouration. This allows them to hunt without being spotted.

In the forest, many creatures disguise themselves as leaves or branches. The satanic leaf-tailed gecko's shape, combined with its mottled brown colouration, means it is easily mistaken for a dry leaf. Cork-bark leaf-tailed geckos look like the bark of trees with their rough, mottled skin, which mimics the texture of tree bark. Vietnamese mossy frogs resemble a clump of moss thanks to their green colour, black spots, and visible tubercles and spines. Potoos are birds that perch motionless on dead or dying trees. Their colour pattern helps them to look like extensions of the tree's branches. Naturally, potoos are proficient tree mimics. Katydid are insects with long, thin bodies that resemble the leaves they live on. There are more than 600 species of katydids in the world, most of which are green. This helps them to blend in with the foliage on which they live. Their wings are shaped like leaves which helps them avoid being eaten. Disguised as a leaf, katydids can remain motionless for hours, making them invisible to predators. Erythrism is an unusual reddish pigmentation of an animal's hair, skin or fur. It affects 1 in 500 katydids, causing them to be pink rather than green—this is a bit unfortunate when you are trying to avoid being eaten. The spicebush swallowtail caterpillar practices a more unusual art of mimicry to avoid being eaten. In the caterpillar's early stage, they are dark brown with

streaks of white, which resembles bird droppings. While in their final stage, the caterpillars trick birds into thinking they are snakes. They achieve this by growing yellow and black rings that look like big eyes. When the caterpillar senses a bird nearby, they inflate the front part of their body, which creates the illusion of a snake's tongue.

In the ocean, pygmy seahorses (the world's smallest seahorse) grow bumps, known as calcified tubercles, which match the polyps of the coral that surrounds them. If they drift to a different coloured coral, their colour will change to blend in once more. Leafy sea dragons are nearly invisible thanks to their appendages that look like seaweed. They swim slowly through the ocean to disguise themselves as a piece of drifting kelp. Countershading is a type of camouflage where the top of an animal's body is darker in colour, while the underside is lighter. When seen from above, sharks blend in with the darker ocean water below. When seen from below, sharks blend in with the lighter surface water. This helps them to blend into their surroundings so they can avoid being detected by prey.

The mimic octopus is a real shapeshifter. It was the first animal ever discovered to regularly adopt the appearance and behaviour of more than one other organism. In its normal state, the octopus measures two feet long with brown and white stripes. But, it often takes on the appearance and behaviour of venomous or bad-tasting creatures to fool predators. Sacs of yellow, red, brown and black pigment, known as chromatophores, cover the



octopus' body and allows it to change its colour and pattern. A different nerve controls each chromatophore, and when the attached muscle contracts, it flattens and stretches the pigment sac outwards, expanding the colour of the skin. The chromatophore closes back up when the muscle relaxes, and the colour disappears. This master of mimicry is known to mimic 15 different species. Its lionfish and sea snake imitations are spot-on. To disguise itself as a sea snake, it simply tucks six tentacles into a hole and extends the remaining two. A lionfish is recognisable for its fan of poisonous spines. To pull off this disguise, the mimic octopus compresses its head into the shape of the lionfish's body and fans its tentacles around it like spines.

In an eat-or-be-eaten world, camouflage matters. But, camouflage isn't just about what the eyes see. Olfactory camouflage is when an animal covers up their own smell or masks itself with another species' scent. The caterpillar of the giant geometer moth not only resembles a twig, but also the chemical signature of the vegetation on which it feeds and lives on. Ants hunt through scent and so will walk right over the caterpillars who are hiding in plain sight on their

home twigs. Puff adders can hide their scent so they can go undetected. This ability may come from their low metabolic rate, which may allow them to release fewer odours. While, the harlequin filefish camouflages its scent by eating the coral it lives on.

Another type of non-visual camouflage is acoustic camouflage. This is where animals continue to produce auditory cues, but modify them so that they are harder for others to detect. For example, baleen whale mother and calf pairs will alter the amplitude of their calls to prevent eavesdropping by predators (orcas). Some cuttlefish will alter or mask their electric fields to prevent detection by electroreceptive predators. For many animals, vision is outweighed by other senses. Thus, non-visual camouflage may be far more widespread and complex than we realise.

Do not be fooled by the animal kingdom, which is full of masters of disguise. Each creature has adapted uniquely to their environment, and this serves as a reminder of the incredible complexity of the natural world.



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Tasmanian Devil



By



Our fascination with these two distinctive groups of mammals started with our time spent living in Australia and later in North America. The monotremes only occur in Australasia and although the marsupials have their stronghold in Australasia they are also diverse in the Americas. Over the years we have been lucky to observe many of these species, particularly in Australia.

The Monotremes consist of just five species, with the Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) exclusive to Australia, with three additional species of echidna endemic to the island of New Guinea/Irian Jaya.

What makes the monotremes different to the other two mammal divisions, the placentals (*Eutheria*) and the marsupials (*Metatheria*)? Apart from differing in aspects of anatomy they are the only mammals where the females lay eggs and they have only one excretory and reproductive opening like birds and reptiles, the cloaca. The eggs are relatively small, hatch after a few days and the young are foetus-like and called “puggles.” The females lack nipples so the “puggles” lap milk from the skin surface at specific lactation points. And the monotremes differ in one other way from other mammals, all carry spurs on the hind limbs and those of the male Platypus can deliver venom. This venom is powerful enough to kill a dog but in humans it usually causes

excruciating, debilitating pain and may last for some time. So, don’t handle a male Platypus, just observe! They are also the only mammals, other than some dolphins, with the ability to use electroreception, in other words they can locate prey by detecting electric fields generated by muscular contractions of their prey. Electroreception is most highly developed in the Platypus.



The poison spur above the male Platypus hindfoot



Short-snouted Echidna

We have been lucky to observe both the Platypus and Short-beaked Echidna in the wild and in captivity, fascinating beasts indeed.

[Watch a short video clip on our YouTube channel](#)

One can understand that in those early years of first discovery naturalists and scientists believed that they had been pieced together by taxidermists, in other words, fakes!

Then we have the marsupials, and the first thing that springs to most people’s minds, ah, yes, kangaroos. And indeed they are but there are in fact some 335 living species of marsupial, in Australasia and Wallacea (east of the Wallace line), these include the marsupial moles, carnivorous marsupials, bandicoots and bilbies, kangaroos, wallabies, possums, wombats and the koala; in the Americas, opossums, Monito del Monte and the shrew opossums, with most species in South America.



Red Kangaroo

So, what makes a marsupial a marsupial? All have a pouch (some more sophisticated than others) and give birth to tiny, undeveloped, larval-like young that crawl up the bodies of the mothers and attach themselves to a teat either in a pouch or in some cases on the skin surface. To ease the passage from birth canal to pouch the mother licks a saliva path to the teats. Many species give birth to a single young, others to multiples. As the young grow and develop they start to emerge from the pouch for a short period, then return to the pouch of the mother. In some species, including the kangaroos and wallabies, the young, or joeys, may remain in this warm “cocoon” for up to a year.

Many species are considered to be threatened or endangered, especially in Australia, with the threat of exotic feral cats, red foxes and dingoes ever present. But other species such as the Red, Eastern Grey, Western Grey kangaroos and the Euro occur in the millions and are subject to regular culling in range and croplands. And we can testify to the fact that kangaroo steaks are delicious!



Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo

Our first experience of wild kangaroos was on the golf course in Esperance on the south-east coast of Western Australia, and in fact if you want to see the larger kangaroos and wallabies head for your nearest golf course. There were very few species of kangaroo and wallaby we did not manage to see in the wild, the Reds in the central deserts, greys (of course mainly on the golf courses or on lawns in towns), Agile Wallabies were seemingly everywhere in the far north, the occasional Antilopine Wallaroo in the same area but in woodland, Tammar Wallabies and Western Brush Wallabies at Cape Le Grand in the south-west, Red-necked Wallabies in the Bunya Mountains in Queensland and the Black Wallaby in the woodland at Hillsborough, also in Queensland. We tried hard but failed to locate the Black Wallaroo at Nourlangie Rock near Arnhem Land but we did find Short-eared Rock Wallabies there, as well as a brief glimpse of the diminutive Monjon.

Of course there are many more, that wondrous Koala, the three species of wombat, the great diversity of possums, the gliders, the collection of cuscuses, the bilbys and the bandicoots, the dunnarts and the planigales, one of our favourites the Kowari, not to mention the Numbat. Many have heard of the extinct Thylacine, or marsupial wolf, but still around is the Tasmanian Devil (Tasmania and a recent mainland reintroduction), (actually a lovely beast and not deserving such a name), and the carnivorous quolls, superficially genet-like creatures.

Maybe one day we will return and renew our acquaintance with at least some of these fascinating creatures.



Eastern Quoll



Western Pygmy Possum

July Wildlife Diary

By



- In July 1775, explorer-naturalist Andreas Sparrman saw Cape Mountain Zebras (*Equus zebra*) at Bot River in what is now the south-western corner of South Africa's Western Cape: "...whole troops of wild zebras called by the colonists wilde paarde..." It was not many years later that this once abundant wild horse was hunted to the verge of extinction.
- The southern hemisphere winter is now peaking and on the central Karoo plateau and in the Kalahari Basin, nights are often bitterly cold. Waking up to find heavy frost and small waterbodies frozen over is not unusual.
- During this month Cape Town, with its winter rainfall regime, receives its heaviest average fall of the year-some 90mm out of an annual average of just more than 500mm.



Cape Mountain Zebra



Sheep in snow on the high Karoo Plateau

- However, South Africa's largest city, Johannesburg, receives its scantiest falls of just 10mm out of an annual average of more than 700mm. As with most of the country, this city falls within the summer-rainfall region.
- Tombouctou (Timbuktu), founded by the Tuaregs some 900 years ago as a trading centre, receives some 75mm of rain this month, out of an annual average of 231mm. The Algerian Saharan oasis of Aïn Salah will have no rain, and neither will the Egyptian Heliopolis.
- During July most of the migratory game returns to the Tarangire River which runs through the Tarangire National Park in northern Tanzania and provides the only surface water available in the area. During the rains many game species disperse over some 20,000 square kilometres of the Maasai Steppes.
- By this month the first White-bearded Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) from the Serengeti and Loita are entering the Maasai Mara sector of the ecosystem. How many arrive depends on the quantity of rain that has fallen on the Serengeti and Loita plains.
- The Robust Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) in the Gombe Stream and Mahale Mountains national parks, on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika in Tanzania, are ranging more widely in search of food. From now, well into the dry season (June-October), they are leaving the forests and entering the wooded grasslands, adding to their diet such delicacies as the sweet, brown, plum-like fruits of *Parinari curatellifolia* and the pods of several *Brachystegia* species.

- The first Black-backed Jackal (*Lupulella mesomelas*) females start dropping pups this month on the central South African plains and the Drakensberg range in KwaZulu-Natal sees a peak now in jackal birthing.
- Rock Hyraxes (*Procavia capensis*) living on the precipitous cliffs of the Rift Valley wall in Kenya have a marked birth peak in June and July. Yet just a few kilometres away on the floor of the Rift Valley, the birthing peak is in August to November.
- The Mashona Mole-rat (*Fukomys darlingi*) in the Harare area of Zimbabwe have young during July. The young are weaned after an average of 100 days, a very long period for a small rodent.
- That strange, water-orientated bird, the Hamerkop (*Scopus umbretta*), breeds almost throughout the year over its wide African range. However, in much of South Africa, July sees the start of most nest building and breeding. It builds huge, domed structures from sticks and any other debris it can find, with a mud-lined tunnel and nest structure.



Wood Owls

- The attractive Wood Owl (*Strix woodfordii*) in South Africa is also procreating at this time. African Grey Parrots (*Psittacus erithacus*) in their limited East African range are breeding now, and will again in January/February (both dry periods).



The amazing nest of the Hamerkop

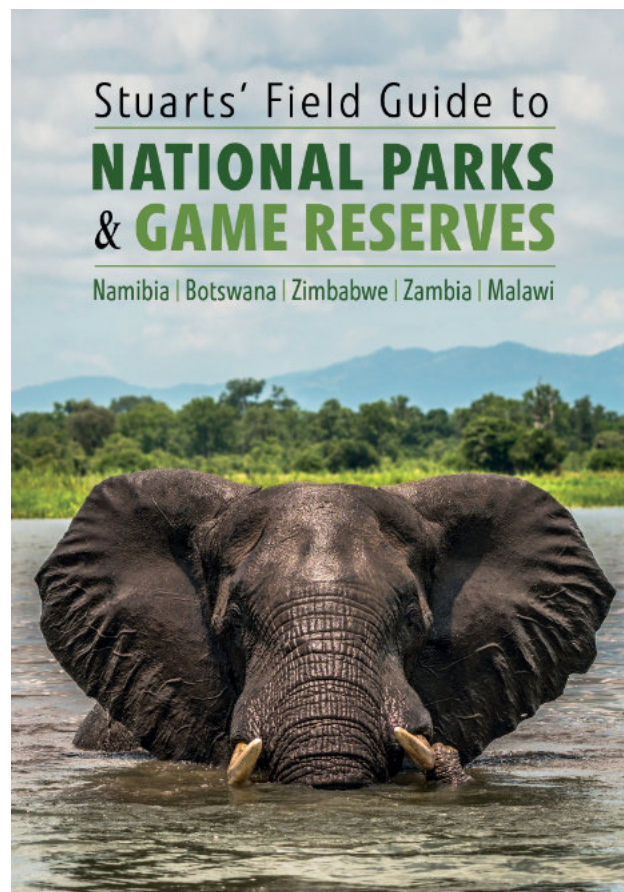
- That large and attractive aloe, the Quiver Tree (*Aloidendron dichotomum*), has its yellow flower-heads on show this month. It is a species of stony semi-desert in southern Namibia and South Africa's north-west. Simon van der Stel in 1685 was the first European to have recorded this distinctive two to five metre tall succulent tree.

- In Zambia's Luangwa Valley, and elsewhere, the Wild Mango Tree (*Cordyla africana*) is starting to produce its prominent yellow flowers.



Wild Mango in full blossom

Book Spotlight



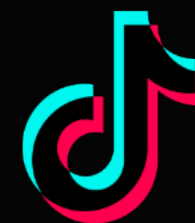
The first guide ever to document and explore the diverse parks and reserves of Africa's 'middle belt', it covers Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. The region contains prized spots such as the world-famous landscapes of the Namib and Kalahari deserts, Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls and Lake Malawi, and some of Africa's best-known conservation areas, including Etosha, Chobe, Mana Pools, Hwange, Kafue and Nyika.

Written by two prominent conservationists, the book is organised by country, and includes:

- Detailed descriptions of the history, geology, climate, vegetation and wildlife of some 50 conservation areas.
- Annotated park maps, indicating places of interest and best sites to view key species.
- Text panels featuring each park's highlights, facilities and activities, wildlife facts, and important alerts.
- A concise photographic gallery of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and trees, for quick identification of commonly seen species.

A must-have guide to the parks and reserves of a region renowned for spectacular landscapes, fauna and flora!

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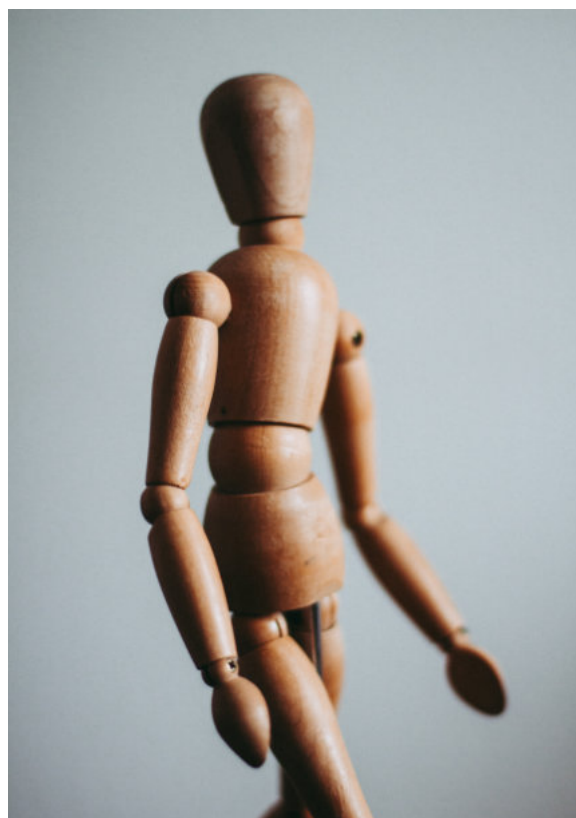




Job interview tips: Body language

Body language plays a significant role in interviews as it can convey confidence, professionalism, and engagement.

Here are some body language tips to help you make a positive impression during interviews:



- **Maintain good posture:** Sit upright with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. This shows attentiveness and confidence.
- **Make eye contact:** Establish and maintain eye contact with the interviewer(s). It demonstrates interest and sincerity. However, don't stare continuously; maintain a natural and comfortable level of eye contact.
- **Offer a firm handshake:** When greeting the interviewer(s), offer a firm handshake. A limp handshake can convey a lack of confidence, while an overly strong one may seem aggressive. Aim for a confident and professional grip.
- **Smile genuinely:** A genuine smile can create a positive impression and convey friendliness. Practice a warm smile that reaches your eyes, as it reflects authenticity.
- **Use open gestures:** Avoid crossing your arms or legs as it can make you appear closed off. Instead, use open gestures by keeping your arms relaxed at your sides or lightly resting them on the table. This signifies openness and approachability.



- **Mirror the interviewer's body language:** Subtly mirroring the interviewer's body language can establish rapport. For example, if they lean forward, you can also lean forward slightly. However, be careful not to mimic their gestures too obviously or excessively.
- **Control fidgeting:** Nervous fidgeting, such as tapping your fingers or bouncing your legs, can be distracting and convey anxiety. Try to remain calm and composed, and if needed, take a deep breath to centre yourself.
- **Use hand gestures purposefully:** Employing natural hand gestures while speaking can add emphasis and expressiveness to your words. However, avoid excessive or exaggerated gestures that may appear distracting or theatrical.
- **Maintain a pleasant facial expression:** Pay attention to your facial expressions throughout the interview. Show interest and engagement through nods, slight smiles, and appropriate facial expressions that reflect the tone of the conversation.

- **Be mindful of personal space:** Respect personal space boundaries. Avoid leaning in too close or invading the interviewer's personal space, as it can make them uncomfortable. Maintain a comfortable distance while still showing engagement.
- Remember, while **body language** is important, it **should complement your verbal communication and convey authenticity** and you should try not to overthink it because you don't want to come across as if you are distracted.

Practice these tips to enhance your non-verbal communication and create a positive impression during interviews.

If you found this article helpful and you would like to delve deeper into interview preparation, contact Hayley to enquire about the 1:1 career coaching she offers – hayley@wilddreams.co.za



The problem with elephants, is elephants...

A visit to any game reserve is always more exciting (or more memorable) when there are herds of elephants to be seen.

But as large as they are they pose a multitude of problems for wildlife photographers and non-photographers alike.



By David Batzofin



First, because of their size, photographing them can be an issue. So, the less is more attitude is an option. Focusing on a part rather than the whole can resolve this.

Second, large herds at a waterhole bring their own conundrums...where do guests look, and what do they concentrate on. And more importantly, how long do you remain at a sighting?

And given their size, the way that they

can move through the bush almost silently adds a 'ninja' quality to the largest land mammal on our planet.

All that being said, pachyderm herds can be hypnotic. Watching the herds as they interact with each other is like watching the ebb and flow of a river.

And it was watching the various herds come down to a game lodge waterhole recently that reminded me of this African myth that I heard years ago.

"Long ago there lived a wise and gentle female elephant named Nokuthula. She led a large and tightly knit herd through the daily challenges of the wilderness. Like all matriarchs, Nokuthula's priority was the safety of her herd, especially the vulnerable calves who relied on her protection.

Nokuthula knew that predators like lions and hyenas could pose a threat to the small calves and even some of the younger members of the herd. Whenever they ventured near watering holes or thick vegetation, Nokuthula positioned herself at the forefront of the herd, her massive form acting as a formidable shield. She would trumpet out warnings at the slightest hint of danger, alerting the rest of the herd to stay vigilant.

But Nokuthula's protection did not stop there. She taught the adult elephants how to form a protective circle around the calves, creating a living defence that made it difficult for predators to infiltrate. Their synchronised movements, trumpeting calls and deep belly rumbles sent a clear message to any would-be attackers that they would not succeed and that seeking easier prey was a better option.

Nokuthula's wisdom extended beyond physical defense. She knew that the best way to keep her calves safe was to instill knowledge and confidence in them. She would lead them on long journeys through the bush, teaching them how to find nourishing vegetation and how to dig for water in dry river beds. Nokuthula showed them the migration routes of the generations of elephants that had walked the lands long before they had to pass on this knowledge to those who would follow in their footsteps in the generations to come.

The calves flourished under Nokuthula's watchful eye, growing stronger each day. As they matured, they became vital members of the herd, contributing their strength and wisdom to the collective well-being.

Nokuthula's dedication to her herd and her unwavering commitment to keeping the calves safe earned her the respect and admiration of all who witnessed her noble deeds. Her story has been passed down through generations, reminding the people of Africa of the power of unity, compassion, and the profound love of a mother for her young. Even to this day, when a gentle breeze rustles through



the African plains, it is said to carry the whispers of Nokuthula's wisdom, reminding all creatures of the interconnection and harmony of life.

We, as humans, can learn a lot from watching elephant herds...if we choose to do so. Or we can just use the opportunity to marvel at nature and all that it offers us. Either way, everyone ends up a winner.

Personally, the time that I spent with the various herds on this particular trip to a reserve in the North West taught me to never take anything for granted and to always be grateful for whatever sighting come my way.

A lesson that we could all benefit from.



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

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Photography competition winner July



“Big Sigh”

Jolandie Prinsloo - Kruger National Park

*The morning, after a rainy night, was cloudy and cool, ideal weather for predators. We were hoping to find a manly, mane-ly lion, instead we were greeted with this sad little hyena fluff. He seemed not to be having a good morning at all.
Look at those "ag shame, poor me" eyes!*

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