



Wildlife Campus

LEARN PROTECT SAVE

Magazine

Seashells

by Amy Holt

**A feral future
for Australia?**

**Happy Birthday
David Batzofin**

**June
Wildlife Diary**

**The rollercoaster
of job searching**

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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Seashells more than souvenirs

We have all pocketed a few seashells when at the beach. But are we aware that these portable souvenirs are damaging the ecosystem? As we know, nothing in nature goes to waste, and some shells even serve as reusable homes. WildlifeCampus student, Amy Holt, tells us more.

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A career in hospitality

Have you considered a career providing clients with the best possible service in an African lodge, hotel, restaurant,... Both these hospitality-related courses will provide you with all the tools you need!

Special combination price!

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Exotic land, land of exotics

Australia, an exotic land or a land of exotics? Chris and Mathilde Stuart take a closer look at some of Australia’s invasive species. Can everything still be contained or does a feral future loom around?

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June Wildlife Diary

Chris and Mathilde from Stuart on Nature give us valuable insights in these “wildlife diary”-contributions to our magazine.
If you are heading out in nature often, these articles are a must read for you to know what to expect and look out for!

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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 searching a rollercoaster

Angie Galante from Wild Dreams Hospitality describes how emotional the rollercoaster of job searching can be.

You are not alone, and yes, there are things you can do to make it easier for yourself.

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Hello to a new decade

It is David’s birthday! He says hello to a new decade and celebrates this by looking back on some memorable events in his long “bush career”.
Please join us in wishing David a happy 70th birthday! We look forward reading a lot more articles from you!

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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.

“To AfriCam, from Africam!” - October 1999

On our arrival back in the office in SA, Andy placed a worrying fax on my desk. “Read this,” he said with an alarmed look on his face, “It is from AfriCam!”. It read:

“AFRICAM: COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT”

“Your AfriCam operation is a great idea well executed – but your success has become a thorn in my side. Like you, I am about to move office and am reluctant to install a new Telkom service knowing how many incoming calls are likely to be about wild animals and the cameras that capture them. The hassle factor though, is a minor consideration compared to the potential damage caused by your infringement of my Africam copyright.

The Africam identity - developed over seven years and synonymous with quality TV production - is central to a strategic alliance currently under negotiation with a high-profile empowerment partner. I have taken legal advice and I am happy to act on it.

However, I am reluctant to institute any legal action without first examining the options. Please call me to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Shorney.”

“This guy is a joker,” I said.
“Those AfriCam guys are jokers,” Graham replied chuckling, reading the fax over my shoulder.

“Shit,” said Paul. “We did take a chance.”

“What?” I questioned.

Graham smiled, but did not say anything.

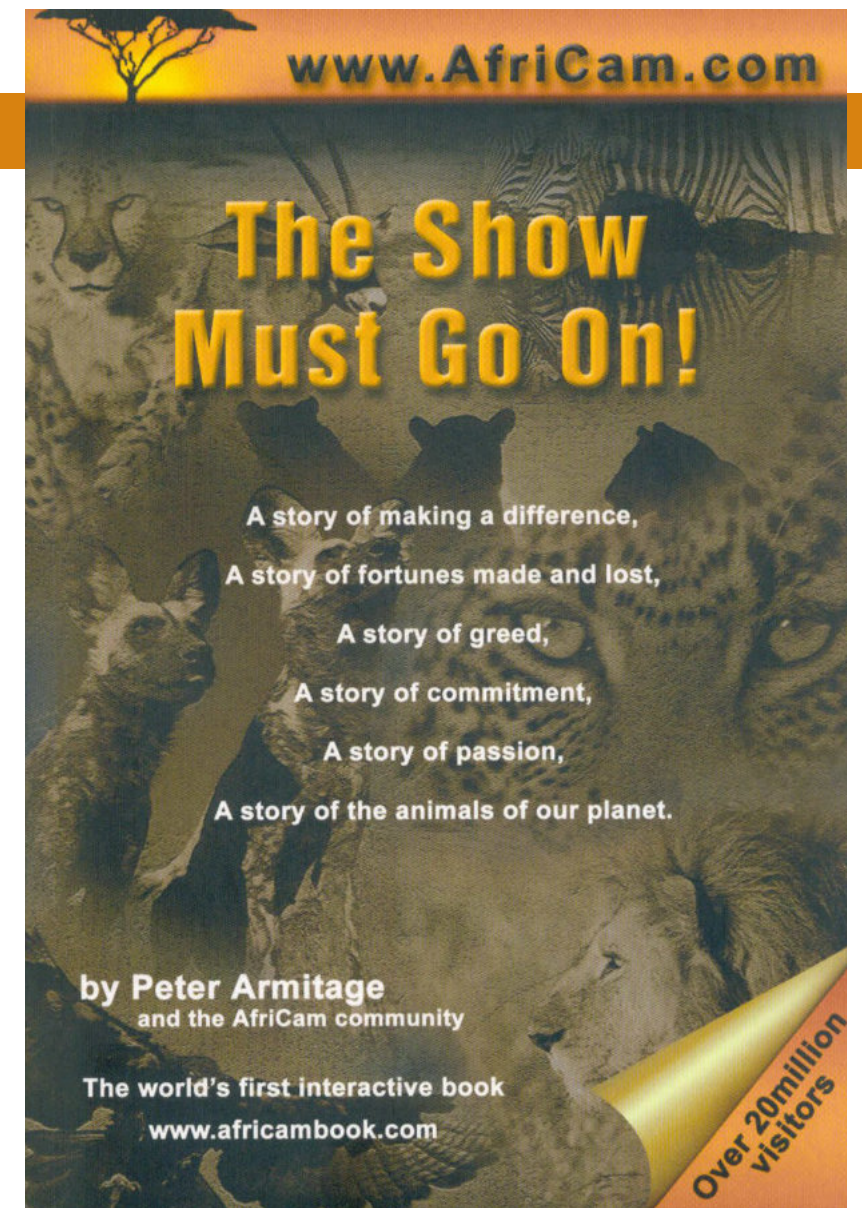
“We saw the name in the phone book and that is why we called ourselves Webcam AfriCam Services, not AfriCam,” Paul explained.

“But our website is called AfriCam,” I said, pointing out the obvious.

By this stage, Paul was starting one of his lengthy, infectious laughing fits and Graham and Andy joined in. I was a little bemused, hoping it was not serious.

I suddenly recalled some strange calls I had received over the last month or two about non-payment of accounts from suppliers I had never heard of. It was THAT AfriCam.

We summoned Steve Shorney to our “boardroom”, which at that stage was a desk outside the building. The impression I had from the fax was confirmed, but his documentation also confirmed that he had registered a company called Africam in 1992. We offered a settlement of R40 000, and he almost bit our arms off. Clearly cash was more important to him than the identity that “was synonymous with quality TV production”.



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

We paid him and never heard from him again, although we did continue to hear from some of his creditors.

“Enter Dimension Data” - October 1999

With the name AfriCam now officially our own, we needed to get back to business. We all agreed that we needed to upgrade our technology. Our site at this stage was basically an HTML site displaying images and did not provide much in the way of functionality. We also wanted to cater for a layer of subscriptions on the site. The idea was to charge subscription for streaming video. It would simply not be feasible to give it away for free.

Duarte da Silva was appointed by the Board to assist management with choosing a technology provider. Outsourcing was the accepted method to develop sites and it seemed to make good business sense. Instead of hiring staff for an intense period, you could have established experts using their staff to develop exactly what you wanted.



It took one phone call, and the Dimension Data “A Team” was presenting its credentials to ourselves. We were the sexiest site around and a plum contract to land. “We are the only player capable of delivering a world-class solution,” they explained.

We all nodded agreeably and Duarte’s view was that while they were likely to be expensive, they would definitely deliver the goods.

The only dissenting voice was Paul Clifford who had seen this all before and was naturally sceptical of outsourced service providers. But his voice was drowned out by the rest of the board.

Dimension Data were appointed as our providers on the basis of a quote of around R3m. We still had around R7m left (after paying Peregrine and myself back for the money we had advanced) and while this would eat up a large chunk of the cash, it would catapult us into the big league and make further capital raising even easier at a higher price.

We explained to Dimension Data that time was of the essence and we needed to have our full functionality launched by June 2000, so that we could list the business with a story to sell.

“No problem,” Michael Shapiro, our key account director assured.

By this stage our appetite for new ventures had increased dramatically. We spent the next two months telling the Dimension Data team about our ambitions. They explained to us that the planning phase was the most important part of their job. At this stage they sounded more like business consultants than IT developers, but we went along with it.

At a company conference we had collectively agreed on a mission statement: “AfriCam’s vision is to maintain and expand its position as the world’s leading Internet broadcaster of live content, focusing primarily on wildlife and related events. This will be driven by the best technology and content, which will result in a continuously growing and loyal community. We aim to entertain, educate and transact with the community, leaving a positive environmental impact.”

We explained to Michael Shapiro and his team that the core revenue stream was advertising, but in addition AfriCam Travel would market lodge properties to our audience, WildlifeCampus would sell education courses, AfriMusic would sell African music to the world and WildFocus would sell digital photography. E-Commerce was already taken care of through Zapship and Fingershopper.

Dimension Data were thrilled by our expansive business plan as each new leg required a great deal of development.

“It only took five minutes” - Late 1999

One of strategies that we adopted at AfriCam was to partner with experts in the expansion of our business streams. We accepted that we were experts at webcasting, and it would be beneficial to form joint ventures to expand the business. It was also becoming apparent that our capital would not last forever and if we could identify partners who had capital, this would delay the next capital raising.

One of the revenue ideas that I always believed in was wildlife education. Current WildlifeCampus.com CEO Todd Kaplan recalls the early days, prior to the launch of WildlifeCampus :

“Toward the end of 1999 I was working for a company called Allenby In-Home Study, a small subsidiary of Educor, South Africa’s largest private education conglomerate. I’d been employed to re-write and manage their traditional correspondence course in Game Ranging. Once the course had been re-written, I found that we were attracting an unusual amount of non-South Africans that were interested in doing our modest course, clearly this course had untapped potential.

At the same time as we at Allenby were looking for a broader outreach for this Game Ranging course, Peter Armitage, having recently joined AfriCam had identified “education” as

an avenue that AfriCam needed to pursue. He contacted Charles Rowlinson, the then CEO of Educor, and asked him whether any of the group’s subsidiaries had any appropriate courses. He immediately directed him to Steven Ginsberg, the then MD of Allenby In-Home, owner of the Allenby Game Ranging Course. Steven met briefly with Peter Armitage, and I was instructed to set up a broader meeting.

On 21 September 1999, Peter Armitage, Graham Wallington, Paul Clifford, Andy Parker, Steven Ginsberg, Gavin Glick (a Peregrine representative) and myself gathered for a meeting. We had to wait for Andy, who was his customary twenty minutes late. Five minutes into the conversation AfriCollege was born, later called WildCampus and finally WildlifeCampus.

Andy and myself immediately began working on the course offering. Using the current Game Ranging course as a basis, I included a vast amount of content that I had written for my Honours Degree thesis, and wrote the other half of the course from scratch; the WildlifeCampus Game Ranging course began to take shape.

In early 2000, I was working from two offices, one at Allenby

and one at AfriCam. In those early days AfriCam was rapidly expanding and was continually running out of office space. When we needed a meeting with more than three people we invariably met at a coffee shop not far from the AfriCam offices. With the course development running smoothly, the last major requirement was the actual website. Dimension Data were introduced, a decision we were later to regret.

At one such meeting, to review and discuss the “look and feel”, there were three companies represented; AfriCam, Allenby and Dimension Data, who had designs to show us for the “look and feel”. We had a good laugh when, using a borrowed laptop for the occasion, neither Graham (one of the South Africa’s foremost internet pioneers) nor Linda Misauer (the senior project manager for the country’s top IT company) could switch on the confounded machine.





Seashells

more than jewellery or souvenirs

By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Beaches glisten with trinkets and treasures. Seashells are like works of art with their different sizes, shapes, colours and patterns. For centuries, we have been fascinated by the beauty of seashells. We collect them as souvenirs, make them into jewellery, and even use them as currency. But is there more to seashells than meets the eye?

Every seashell was once part of a living sea creature. They tell the secrets of the sea and the stories of the ocean. An empty shell is a mollusc's abandoned exoskeleton. Molluscs are animals with a soft body and no spine. Seashells are made of calcium carbonate. They have three layers; the outer layer, known as the periostracum, the middle layer, known as the prismatic layer, and the inner layer, known as the nacreous layer. The periostracum layer is mostly protein, rough and sometimes contains bumps or spikes to protect the layers beneath. The prismatic layer is the thickest and it adds strength and support to the rest of the shell. The nacreous layer is smooth and shiny so, the animal's soft body can extend and retract itself.

Molluscs keep their shells throughout their lives and gradually expand them. The mollusc's mantle builds the shell. The mantle is the thin layer of flesh connecting a mollusc to its shell. Here, cells secrete proteins, chitin and minerals necessary to create the shell. The mantle follows three rules to form a spiral shell—expand, rotate and twist. First, it uniformly deposits more calcium carbonate than it did previously to create a slightly larger opening. This process creates a cone from an initial circle. By depositing slightly more material on one side of the aperture (the main opening of the shell), the mollusc achieves a full rotation of the aperture. Finally, the mollusc twists the points of deposition. Different combinations of these rules yield different spiral shapes.

Seashells allow molluscs to resist tremendous pressures on the seabed. The ribbing on the exterior of a bivalve shell directs stresses towards its hinge and outer edges.



02



While, the curving exterior of a spiral shell directs pressure towards its core and wide top. By channeling pressure to their strongest areas, they can avoid damage to their shell.

Many molluscs secrete pigments in their shells to help hide them in their habitat. Flat periwinkles have rounded shells that resemble the green and brown gas chambers of the bladderwrack seaweeds. Janthina sea snails float below the sea surface so, they have deep violet-blue shells which camouflage them in open water. Tropical seashells are more varied and colourful as a result of the greater diversity of food sources available. Seashells found in cold waters generally exhibit darker, duller colours.

Seashells have an endless variety of shapes. Scallops have flattened, fan-shaped shells. They swim for short distances by clapping their shell together. Auger shells are long and slender, resembling little unicorn horns, enabling them to drill down into sand and mud. Limpets have volcano-shaped shells that clamp down tightly to rocks so they don't get swept away by waves. Murex shells are famous for their intricate shapes and magnificent spines. The Venus comb murex is named after the Greek goddess Venus, who is said to have used this murex shell to comb her hair.

Corrugations and spines act as defences against predators. Spiny oysters in the Mediterranean are covered in spines that encourage seaweeds and sponges to settle and grow, giving them camouflage on rocky reefs. In the deep sea, carrier

shells pick up empty seashells and glue them onto the outside of their shells as extra protection.

Abalones are some of the shiniest shells. Their insides are covered in oily greens and blues. These shells evolved not for beauty, but for strength. The inner layer is coated with nacre, commonly known as mother of pearl, which makes the shells virtually shatterproof. This super strength is due to nacre's microscopic structure of diamond-shaped crystals stacked like bricks, with layers of chitin in between. If the outside of the shell gets damaged, the inner nacre layer stops cracks from growing bigger. The nacreous crystals slide over one another and the chitin stretches. This dampens the energy of a spreading crack and halts it in its tracks.

Can you really hear the ocean in a shell? The 'ocean' sounds you hear are actually the echo of the noise in the air around you. The seashell captures the background noise, which then resonates inside the shell. Different shells produce different 'ocean' sounds. Depending upon the size and shape of shell you listen to, different frequencies of sound will be echoed back to your ear. The hard, curved surfaces inside the shell cause the sound waves that enter to bounce around, amplifying some frequencies while dampening others. The sounds seashells 'catch' tend to be lower-frequency sounds. The sound of the ocean is a low-frequency sound. That's why it sounds similar to the sounds caught in a shell. As long as you stay near the sea, it actually will be the ocean you hear in the shell. Conch shells produce the best ocean-like sounds.

Seashells hold a treasure trove of detailed information about the past. They can tell past temperatures and acidity of seawater. Seashells found on mountaintops tell the story of shifting continents, and rising and falling sea levels. Nautilus shells are a link to the ancient past as they appeared over 500 million years ago, even before the time of the dinosaurs. The nautilus shell contains many sealed chambers, which increase in number as the animal grows. As each chamber seals, it is partially filled with gas, giving the animal its buoyancy.

Ocean acidification, caused by increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, is making it difficult for many molluscs to obtain enough calcium carbonate ions from the seawater to make their shells. This results in decreased structural integrity of the shells and smaller animals. The most vulnerable to ocean acidification are sea butterflies. Sea butterflies are tiny swimming sea snails which flap their feet like a pair of wings, propelling themselves through the surface waters of the ocean. They have very thin, delicate shells so, more acidic conditions means their shells dissolve more easily. Sea butterflies are an important food source for other marine animals, thus a decline in them would have a knock-on effect throughout the ecosystem.

Cowry shells were once a currency for about 4000 years. These shells were small, portable and durable making them a common form of payment in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and some parts of Europe. Cowry shells are believed to have led to the creation of the first coins.

Seashell collecting is not a new concept. A seashell collection in Pompeii, dates back to 74AD. The shells in this collection came from distant waters and some from the Red Sea. It appears that they were collected for no other reason than they were unique and beautiful. The oldest shell necklace dates back over 100,000 years and is made from the swollen nassa. The queen conch shell is one of the largest seashells in existence. Early civilisations used the queen conch shell as a horn for religious ceremonies.

At the beach, we all pocketed a few seashells that caught our eyes. However, these portable souvenirs are damaging the ecosystem. Nothing in nature goes to waste. Some shells are reusable homes. Hermit crabs use empty shells as temporary shelters. When shells are collected, hermit crabs often have to use plastic for homes or simply die. Broken seashells benefit coastal ecosystems as they help stabilise beaches. The removal of large shells and shell fragments has the potential to alter the rate of shoreline erosion. When seashells dissolve, they add nutrients back into the sea. They also provide material to seabirds to build their nests. Seagrasses, corals and sea anemones use seashells to anchor themselves to the ocean floor.

Taking photos of seashells is a better alternative to shell collecting. This ensures seashells stay a part of the ecosystem.

She sells seashells by the seashore. People who supply seashells for collectors and souvenir shops hunt and kill the living sea creatures inside the shells. Triton's trumpet is one of the most sought after souvenirs in the marine curio trade. Coral reefs depend on triton's trumpets to keep the population of crown-of-thorns starfish in check. In a balanced ecosystem, these starfish increase coral diversity. However, when there are too many of them, they consume coral tissue faster than it can grow. When triton's trumpets get harvested at unsustainable rates, it allows crown-of-thorns starfish numbers to explode. This leads to the ecosystem being unbalanced, and eventually will have a massive impact on marine health and biodiversity. Instead of buying seashells, support local vendors who are keeping alive traditional crafts and artwork.

As travellers and tourists, we can all play an active role in protecting seashells from overexploitation. So next time you visit the beach and are tempted to collect a few seashells...remember they are far more than just pretty objects.



A career in hospitality?

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The front-of-house lodge operations course is written by hospitality industry expert Hayley Cooper of Wild Dreams Hospitality and forms an excellent addition to the Game Lodge management course.

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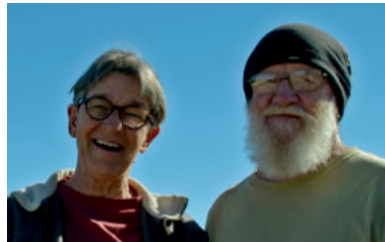
(regular price: R 4 550)

Email info@wildlifecampus.com for more info!



Exotic land, land of exotics A feral future?

Red fox



By



A report that appeared in January 2023 drew our attention- “Toadzilla”, a record-sized Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*) that tipped the scales at 2.7kg was caught in a national park in Queensland. During the period we lived in Australia in the early-2000s we encountered these toads extensively to the east of the Victoria River close to the border between Western Australia and Northern Territory. Claims were made that they were not to be found to the west of that river- not true! Whilst staying in a roadhouse on the west bank we took a night walk and encountered many of these toxic amphibians. There were box traps set for them but they were having none of it, just one went into a trap nudged in by one of our boots! Today they have spread as far west as the Kimberleys in north-west Australia.

We chatted to some fishermen in the pub and that day they had encountered a dead crocodile, floating belly up in the river. They hauled it to the bank, cut it open and found a dead Cane Toad in the stomach. Many predators have died from eating these toxic beasts, including Northern Quolls (*Dasyurus hallucatus*), snakes and monitor lizards, amongst others. In June 1935 Cane Toads were introduced to northern Queensland from Hawaii in the vain hope that they would control two beetle species that were damaging to the sugarcane industry. Of course the toads were happy in this new land of plenty and started their hopping march westwards. We encountered them under the streetlights of

Karumba, foraging for insects, Bowling Green and Hillsborough national parks, in Northern Territory they have penetrated Kakadu National Park, a hotspot for exotic aliens.

If they are eaten they may kill the predator with their toxin but they also eat many native frogs, lizards and insects. They have been reported settling in the centre of a fresh cow pat



**The Cane Toad,
a major threat to indigenous wildlife**



Banteng bull

and waiting for the dung beetles to arrive and guzzling up to 150 in one sitting. Some locals though have learned how to eat them by flipping them on their back, slitting open the belly and thus avoiding the toxin in the dorsal glands, some have even evolved to be less impacted by the toxins. How many toads are there today in Australia, certainly to be measured in the hundreds of millions.

The Cane Toad is just one of many introductions, the Banteng (*Bos javanicus*) a feral cattle form that is established in the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula of Northern Territory, where at their peak in 2007 some 10,000 roamed. In the Top End there are also substantial numbers of Water Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) that cause considerable environmental damage and pose the threat of disease to domesticated cattle. In one of Australia’s premier conservation areas, Kakadu National Park, you should not be surprised to see numerous feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*), or their destructive signs.

The feral pig is found throughout Australia except in the deserts and one population estimate gives at least 25 million of these damaging creatures roaming the land. Heavy culling by trapping, shooting and poisoning does not seem to have a major impact. More emotional is the case of the brumbies, or feral horses (*Equus caballus*), and efforts to cull them are often stymied by animal rights groups. Kill the pigs but not the brumbies! They roam widely and occur in many national parks, including the mountainous Alpine and Kosciuszko, where they are blamed for trampling, resulting in erosion and selective overgrazing. Estimates range widely but the most realistic figure seems to be around 300,000 brumbies. Then there are the widespread feral donkeys (*Equus asinus*) that may number as many as five million scattered widely across this exotic land. They don’t draw the same sympathy as the brumbies and they are subject to ground and aerial culling because of the damage they do to sensitive lands.

It doesn’t stop there, as some 300,000 Dromedary camels (*Camelus dromedaries*) roam the Outback, the arid deserts of

the interior. Major efforts to cull these animals have been undertaken in recent times and by 2013 160,000 had been culled and efforts continue to keep their numbers in decline. Meat is processed for human consumption and export, with some live exports to Arabia for meat and new blood for the camel races. There are also several camel dairies and most of the product is exported to countries in South-East Asia.

Yet another problem ungulate is the feral goat (*Capra hircus*) with several million animals spread widely across the country. They are considered to be a major pest because of overgrazing, and out-competing livestock and native grazers such as kangaroos and wallabies. However, ranchers have sensed an opportunity and capture and market feral goats as part of their livestock businesses. Most feral goat meat is exported, but then most Australians will not eat fine kangaroo meat! A strange lot!

But no tale of exotic aliens in Australia would be complete without mentioning the European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). Rabbits were first introduced to Australia in 1788 and today may number as many as 200 million but in our view this is a species that is impossible to count accurately. The ecology of much of Australia has suffered serious



European Rabbit

consequences because of this one introduction. Not only do they eat vegetation, often rare plant species, but in numbers they strip the land of ground cover thus exposing the soil to serious levels of erosion. A host of control methods have been tried and in some cases are still implemented, including fencing, poisons, biological control and shooting. When we lived in Australia we ate mostly kangaroo meat but when we fancied a change we bought wild shot rabbits at our local butcher- at twice the price of the kangaroo- this still mystifies us.

Then there are the introduced predators, the feral cat (*Felis catus*) with several million and occurring throughout the country, the Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) an import from Europe and today perhaps numbers more than 7 million, and it is also widespread.

Both are subject to poisoning campaigns (1080) but with limited success except on a localized basis.

Then there is the controversial case of the Dingo (*Canis dingo/Canis familiaris/Canis lupus dingo* –take your pick!). This dog was brought to Australia about 8,300 years before present by humans as a domesticated animal. So in our view it is an alien exotic but for that matter so are humans and their ancestors. When the first Europeans started settling in Australia they noted that Dingoes were living in human settlements. Generally livestock ranchers dislike them and kill them at any or all opportunities but some maintain that they are also important predators of other exotic alien mammals, also taking a wide range of indigenous wildlife. The Dingo is recognized as a native animal under the laws of all states and territories in Australia.

As we say, Australia is long going to have a feral future!



Emu and Dingo fence in Western Australia

June Wildlife Diary

By



- In June 1837 the explorer/naturalist James Alexander encountered Square-lipped Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) just south of the present-day town of Rehoboth in central Namibia, the most southerly recorded sighting in the western part of southern Africa. Sadly, no naturally occurring Square-lipped Rhinos occur in Namibia today; those that you see are introductions from South Africa.
- A survey in Garamba National Park, north-east DR Congo, in June 1958 counted more than 1,000 Northern Square-lipped Rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*), in 2000 there were 25 left, today they are extinct.
- Except for the south-western tip of Africa, much of the southern sector of the continent is now well into the dry winter months. In the savanna game parks of this region, such as Hwange in Zimbabwe, overnight temperatures may drop to below freezing.



Aardwolf with erectile mane raised



One of the dangerous river crossings during the migration of the White-bearded Wildebeest

- The belt approximately 10 degrees south and 15 degrees north of the Equator, from East Africa to southern Mauritania, is now at the height of its rainy season. Lagos, Nigeria, receives its highest falls of the year this month, with an average of 460mm. Further south, however, the Angolan capital, Luanda, can only expect meagre falls.
- Because of heavy rains in the upper catchment of the Zambezi River, the Victoria Falls are usually at peak flow at this time but this may vary.
- The White-bearded Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*) in the Serengeti are starting to swing away northwards away from the Western Corridor, towards the Maasai Mara, and will soon be making the crossing of the Grumeti River, running the gauntlet of crocodiles awaiting this annual feast.
- In the Ethiopian Highlands the Walia Ibex (*Capra walie*) moves to the highest altitudes it reaches during the year, approximately 3,500 metres above sea level. The Walia Ibex was first described in 1832 by Rüppell, who observed it in the Simien Mountains.
- Sable Antelope (*Hippotragus niger*) are mating across parts of their East African range, as are Puku (*Kobus vardonii*) in Central Africa.
- Some of the lemurs in the eastern forests of Madagascar are now mating. The Ruffed Lemur (*Varecia variegata*) is at the peak of courtship and mating (May-July) and young will be dropped after 90-102 days. These attractive primates live in noisy groups of five to 16 individuals.

- In the North Atlas Mountains of Morocco and Algeria, female Barbary Macaques (*Macaca sylvanus*) are dropping the last young of the season this month. They occupy areas of mixed cedar and Holm Oak forest, usually at altitudes of 1,600m to 2,160m above sea level, where the winter is harsh and the summer season short.
- That Ethiopian endemic, the Gelada (*Theropithecus gelada*), which moves to higher altitudes this month to take advantage of moderate temperatures and abundant food, also has a birthing peak now. These are the true “shuffle-bottoms” of the primate world; primarily grazers, they sit in the montane meadows and pluck grass, shuffling on their backsides rather than walking from one fresh patch to the next.



Gelada male

- Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*) females are giving birth in the lower Gariiep Basin of southern Namibia and north-western South Africa, to avoid severe summer heat. Elsewhere in South Africa most births take place centred on October.
- The Aardwolf (*Proteles cristatus*) starts mating towards the end of this month in the Northern Cape, South Africa. Its mating season is short, extending only into the first half of July. The Aardwolf is one of the true “studs” of the carnivore world, with copulatory sessions lasting from one to four hours!
- The first matings of the Sooty, or Hemprich’s Gull (*Larus hemprichii*) in the Red Sea area and along the Somali coast take place towards the end of this month.

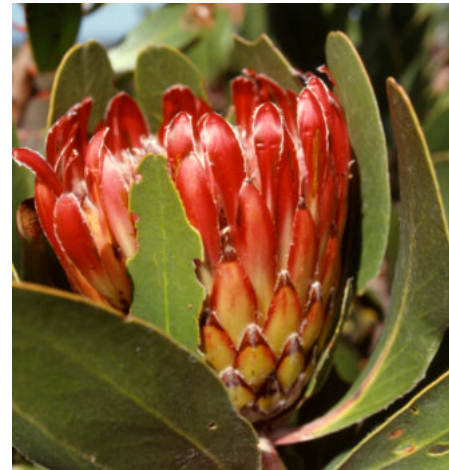
- The rare and poorly known Slaty Egret (*Egretta vinaceigula*) has been recorded nesting and laying across its limited range in Zambia and northern Botswana in June.



Crab Plovers

- That unusual shorebird, the Crab Plover (*Dromas ardeola*), lays and incubates from May into June. The single, very large, white egg is usually laid in the enlarged burrow of a ghost crab. Breeding in Africa is limited to a few colonies in the north-east.

- As the Western Cape in South Africa receives winter rains, many plants start flowering. June is the peak flowering time for *Protea obtusifolia* in the Cape Agulhas region, while *Protea acuminata* in the south-western Cape starts flowering now. The first flowering of the Black Mangrove (*Bruguiera gymnorhiza*) starts along the Indian Ocean coastline late in June.



Protea obtusifolia blossom

App Spotlight



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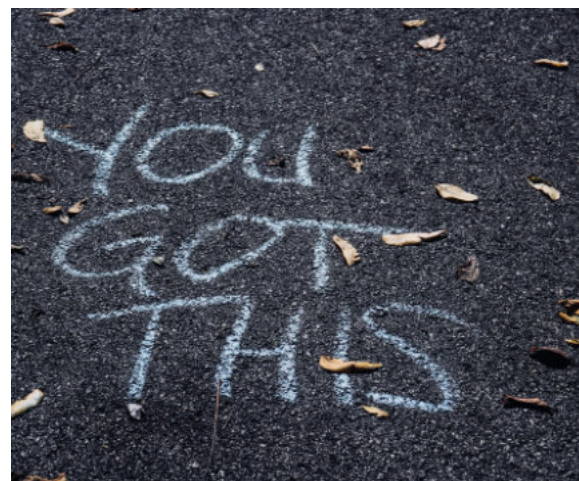




Job searching is like riding an emotional rollercoaster. One minute you are so close to landing your dream job, and the next you are crying into your pillow because you have been rejected yet again.

First, there is the initial excitement of starting your job search. You update your CV, brush up on your interview skills, and start browsing job vacancies like a kid in a candy store. For a while, everything feels possible. You are full of hope and optimism, ready to take on the world.

Then reality sets in. You start submitting your applications and... crickets. No response. Not even a "thanks, but no thanks" email. You begin to doubt yourself. Maybe you are not as qualified as you thought. Maybe you are just not cut out for this.



Just when you are ready to give up, you get a call from a recruiter for an interview. Suddenly, the sun is shining again and birds are singing. You are on top of the world. You practice your answers, pick out the perfect outfit, and arrive confident and prepared to the interview.

And then...it is over. You walk out of the interview feeling like you nailed it but do not hear anything back for days. Weeks, even. You start to second-guess everything. Did you say something wrong? Did you come across as too desperate? Maybe you should have worn a different outfit. The self-doubt creeps back in, and you start to feel like you are back at square one.

Out of nowhere, you get an offer. It is like the clouds part in the sky and a choir of angels starts singing. You are ecstatic. You accept the offer and spend the next few days floating on cloud nine, imagining yourself in your dream job.

You start your dream job and suddenly, you are back on the emotional rollercoaster again. Learning the ropes, meeting new people, trying to make a good impression...it is all overwhelming. You start to doubt whether you made the right choice. Maybe you should have held out for something better. The cycle starts all over again.

Here is the thing, eventually, the ride levels out. You settle into your new job, get comfortable, and start to feel like you belong and become like family.



The emotional rollercoaster slows down until it is just a gentle ride, and you can look back on your job search with a sense of humour and a newfound appreciation for the journey. Because let's face it: it is the ups and downs that make the ride worth it. Never give up!

Being a jobseeker can be a challenging experience, with its own unique set of highs and lows. It can be a time of great uncertainty, but also a time of great opportunity for personal growth and development. Here are some tips and insights to help you navigate this journey:

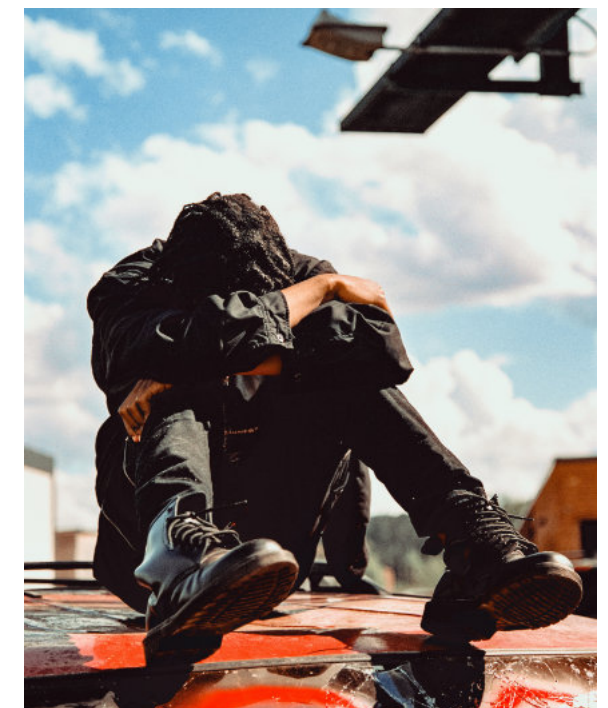
- **Patience is key:** Finding the right job takes time and effort. Be patient, persistent, and stay focused on your goals. Remember that rejection is a part of the process and do not let it discourage you. Like they always say, everything happens for a reason.
- **Build your network:** We cannot stress this enough. Networking is an essential part of any job search. Reach out to friends, family, colleagues, and industry professionals to expand your connections and increase your chances of finding the right opportunity.
- **Customise your CV:** Tailor your application materials to each job you apply for. Highlight your relevant skills and experiences, and show how they align with the job requirements.

- **Use social media:** Social media can be a powerful tool in your job search. Use platforms like LinkedIn to research the company, connect with employers, and showcase your professional skills and experiences.
- **Keep learning:** Use your time as a job seeker to continue learning and developing new skills. Take courses, attend workshops, and stay up to date with industry trends and developments.
- **Stay positive:** The job search can be overwhelming, but staying positive can help you stay motivated and focused. Celebrate small wins, stay optimistic, and remember that the right opportunity is out there. Do not give up!

If you feel like you need any help changing your industry or need any advice, reach out to Wild Dreams Hospitality. We would love to assist you and play a part in helping you find your dream job.

Getting in touch with Wild Dreams Hospitality?

cv@wilddreams.co.za



I say hello to a new decade

Those who read these back page articles regularly will know that my love of all things ‘bush’ started in 1966, when, as a 13-year-old, I was taken on a family holiday to the Kruger National Park. It was a huge event that involved a train ride from Port Elizabeth and then a coach trip to and from the Park. It was our only foray out of the Eastern Cape as our go-to reserve was Addo Elephant Park and at that time they only offered day trips as overnight facilities were not available.

By David Batzofin



It was almost 52 years until I once again stood at the exact spot in the Pretoriusskop Rest Camp that I, as a teenager, found my love of the African bush and all its inhabitants, great and small.

My journey through the decades has seen highs and lows, and with my 70th birthday fast approaching, I hope that you, dear reader, don't take offence if I wax lyrical about some of my bush adventures over the past 57 years.



If I am to be honest, the biggest highlights were finding my first pangolin in the wild in November 2019 and then spotting an Aardvark in July 2021. Those two animals were the ‘unicorns’ on my wildlife bucket list, and seeing them after waiting 53 and 55 years was almost an anticlimax. As I write this, nothing has replaced them as number 1 on my list, although I feel that one of the smaller predators might slip into that slot in the not-too-distant future.

The low light for me was, without a doubt, the COVID years. I was a non-travelling travel writer for almost all of 2020 and 2021...and 2022 was not much better. But we all took strain, and I, like everyone else, was just glad to come out of the pandemic unscathed.

Another highlight was FINALLY finishing my Field Guiding/ Game Ranging online course with WildlifeCampus. It only took me 21 years to complete a course that should have been completed in 12 months...but life got in the way (Well, that is MY excuse, and I am sticking to it).

Putting the intervening years into a cohesive timeline is difficult, as some adventures and experiences are more prominent than others.

Like being on my first international safari which took place in India where I was lucky enough to see the same tigress on all 6 of the game drives that I did. One image did cost me two broken ribs, but I got the shot and it was in focus, as that was what was important at the time.

I recently almost fell into the trap of saying that I had seen ‘nothing’ when out on a drive. In actual fact, we had seen a plethora of wildlife and even one of the Big 5, so I quickly corrected myself to say that the drive had been quiet. I trust I will not make that mistake again.

Aside from the highs and lows there have been more than a few embarrassing moments when I asked a question(s) that left me blushing.

A good lawyer will tell you that they never ask a question to which they do not already know the answer, I wish I had followed that advice.

Standing in a reserve, I asked the guide if they had issues with encroaching sickle bush. A species that can be both a blessing and a curse as it requires a lot of maintenance to keep it in check. The guide looked at me quizzically and responded, “We are standing IN a sickle bush forest!” The trees were in bloom, and I had never seen the flowers before. Lesson learned.

I have driven and walked with some of the best guides that South Africa has to offer. And I have been with guides that have had a flat tire only to find that they do not have either a spare or the correct jack. But even disastrous events become



tales that can be told around a camp fire, as long as the guide concerned is not present.

To quote Frank Sinatra, “Regrets, I’ve had a few, but then again, too few to mention ...”. The biggest one? Not becoming a game ranger (as field guides were referred to). But would I have made a good guide? I do like to think so, and for a while, I was able to conduct drives on a property close to Johannesburg that I knew well. My guests seemed to enjoy my drives and the anecdotal stories I offered instead of ‘book knowledge’ that can be Googled today.

Thank you for indulging me...

I am hoping that this new decade brings with it continued good health so that I might still travel and spend time in the bush. There are many destinations on a list that I would like to visit before my time here is done and I have to go to the ‘Great Reserve’ in the sky.



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

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NATURE GUIDING COURSES

PERFECT FOR WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS AND THOSE ENTERING THE INDUSTRY OR LOOKING TO TRAVEL/WORK/VOLUNTEER IN AFRICA.

01. FIELD GUIDING/GAME RANGING NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 82	R 6, 500
02. ANIMAL TRACKS & SIGNS OF AFRICA NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 36	R 2, 800
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04. BIRDING NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 10	R 1, 250
05. TRAILS GUIDE NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 16	R 1, 200
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08. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 42	R 4, 500
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MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

1 USER THIS INNOVATIVE FEATURE ALLOWS YOU TO ACCESS ALL OUR COURSES, FOR A SMALL MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION FEE.	R 300/ MONTH
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BY RICHARD E ESTES

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FREE COURSES

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO TRY ALL THE COMPLIMENTARY CONTENT ON OFFER; THIS WILL GIVE YOU A CLEAR IDEA OF OUR COURSE DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT MODE. THIS PROVIDES YOU WITH AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO FULLY EXPERIENCE WILDLIFECAMPUS, BEFORE MAKING A PURCHASE DECISION. HOWEVER, IF REQUIRED, A CERTIFICATE MAY BE REDEEMED AT R 250 EACH. UPON GRADUATION, WE WILL AUTOMATICALLY CONTACT YOU WITH THE OPTION TO REDEEM A CERTIFICATE OR NOT. NO NEED TO EMAIL US TO LET US KNOW YOU ARE DONE.

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TO KEEP YOUR WILDLIFE KNOWLEDGE SHARP!

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37. BIG 5 NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 6	FREE
38. BIG 5 FOR KIDS NUMBER OF COMPONENTS: 6	FREE
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Photography competition winner June

“Lion staring everyone down whilst guarding her freshly killed zebra.”

Cheyenne Victor - Mfuwe South Luangwa, Zambia

Submit your entry and stand a chance to see your picture featured on the backpage of our magazine.

Send your picture with relevant story, location and credits to info@wildlifecampus.com
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