



WildlifeCampus

Nature Calls



**African
Folklore**

**Nature
Patterns**
By Amy Holt

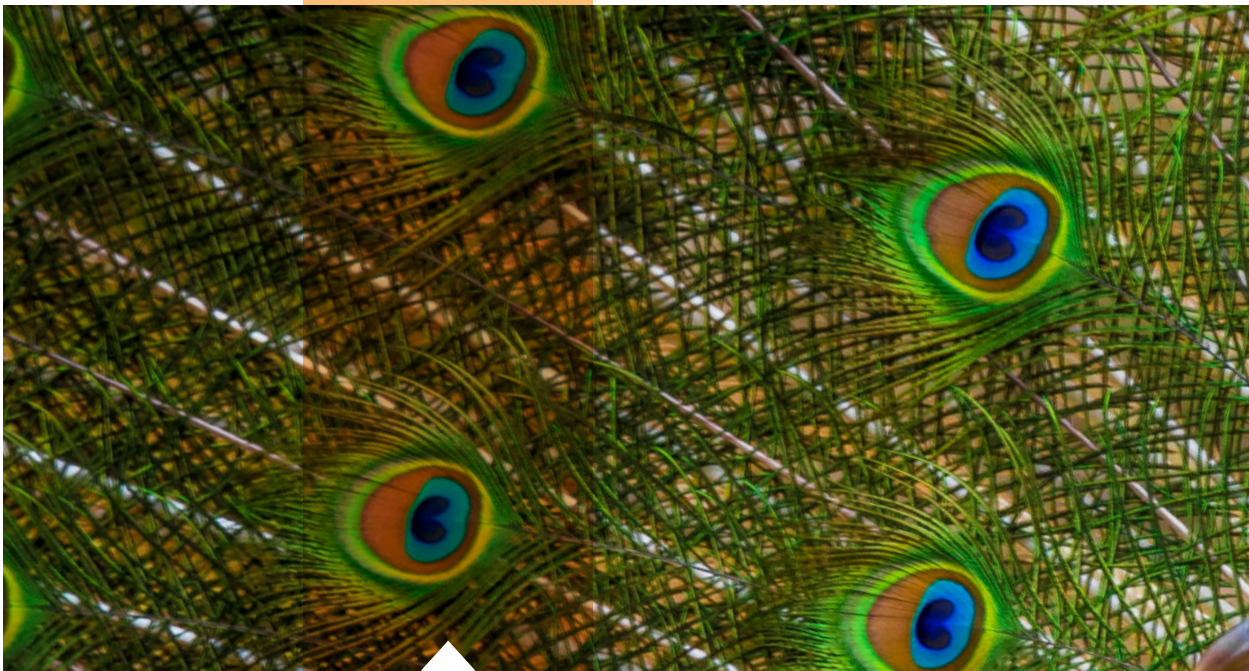
**Newman's Birds
by Colour**
New Struik book

**Travel Buggz
Adventures**

Can you speak badger?
By David Batzofin

**What is
Front of House?**
By Wild Dreams Hospitality

CONTENT



01

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.

Part 28

PAGE 4

02

Nature Patterns

This month, WildlifeCampus student Amy Holt, explores patterns in nature. A pattern can help attract a mate, provide camouflage, deter predators, or even act as a form of communication.

Read all about it on page 8.

PAGE 8

03

Birds By Colour

We are amazed by the new Newman’s Birds By Colour! If you are a keen birder, you don’t want to miss this guide in your collection.

PAGE 12

04

Travel Buggz Adventures

Something cool for the kids! Bella Butterfly, Aiden Ant and Lucy Ladybug go to the Kruger National Park!

PAGE 14

05

What is Front of House?

Hayley Cooper from Wild Dreams Hospitality explains what Front of House means in the hospitality industry.

You can also check out the latest industry vacancies. Your dream job could just be there!

PAGE 16

06

African Folklore

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

PAGE 18

07

Animal Tracks and Signs of Africa

For a great many bush enthusiasts and field guides, the presence of animal tracks and signs is either meaningless or ignored. However, a vast amount of information can be gleaned about mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates without ever seeing them.

PAGE 20

08

Can you speak badger?

David tells us a story about a honey badger . It might look cute and cuddly, but be warned: it would be hard to find a more cantankerous animal.

PAGE 22



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.

“Maybe later” - September 2000

The Nasdaq bounced back in June 2000, but from July 2000 to December 2000 it went into freefall, declining from over 4000 to just over 2000. This was a disaster for us, as we were a business primarily valued on hype and the balloon of hype was starting to deflate. While we were not doing anything differently, the value of our business was dropping by millions of dollars, by the day.

We had not heard from Chase, Merrill Lynch or any of the other merchant bankers that we had been working with for quite some time.

I phoned Joe Fizelle from Chase, who were at one time our greatest supporters and had spent hundreds of hours creating our listing proposal etc. I could not get hold of him, but eventually one of his juniors, John Anderson contacted me.

“Mr Armitage, market conditions have become less conducive to a listing, and while we still believe in AfriCam, our advice is to get on with running the business. Market conditions might change, but the market is undoubtedly now putting more emphasis on track record and profitability.



You are also 6 months behind on your technology development, which makes it considerably more difficult to make forecasts. Perhaps we will talk in few months time.”

“Thanks John,” I replied. I had also been an analyst and I knew where he was coming from. They would not be able to pull off a successful listing now and would possibly make fools of themselves by trying. They were right and we were on our own .

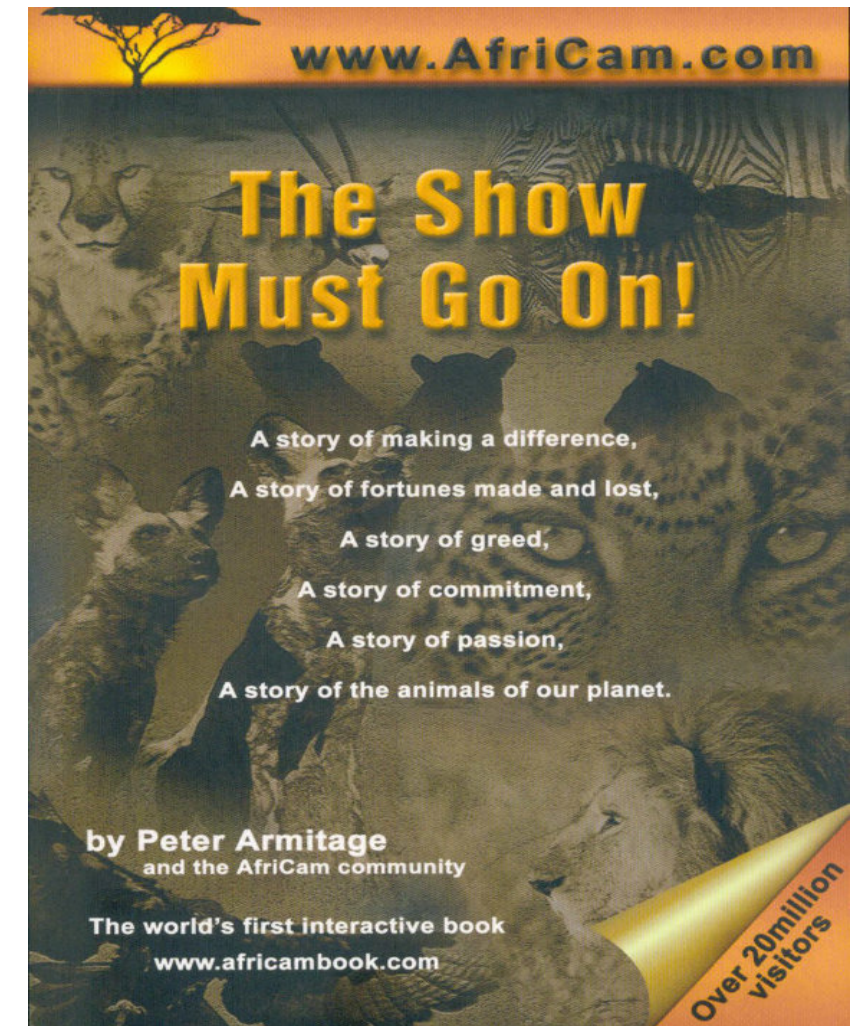
Installations

Author’s note: *This chapter documents some of the most memorable camera installations in the history of AfriCam which are not covered in other chapters. It is not necessarily in chronological order and spans the duration of AfriCam*

“Polar Bears” - 2000

Paul, Graham and Andy had spoken about polar bears for a long time. Andy had developed a strategy of AfriCam covering primarily what he called totemic or iconic species, which are animals which have widespread appeal. It is all very well having cameras on owl nests or on plains game, but the viewer ultimately wants to see those special animals. These include the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino), gorillas, polar bears, sharks and whales.

There were three potential locations that would be suitable for “camming” polar bears. Wrangell Island was a little impractical because of its remote location near Siberia and Norway was more suitable, but research showed that polar bear sightings were relatively infrequent. The chosen location was Churchill, which is on Hudson Bay in Manitoba, Canada. The area along Hudson Bay is home to the



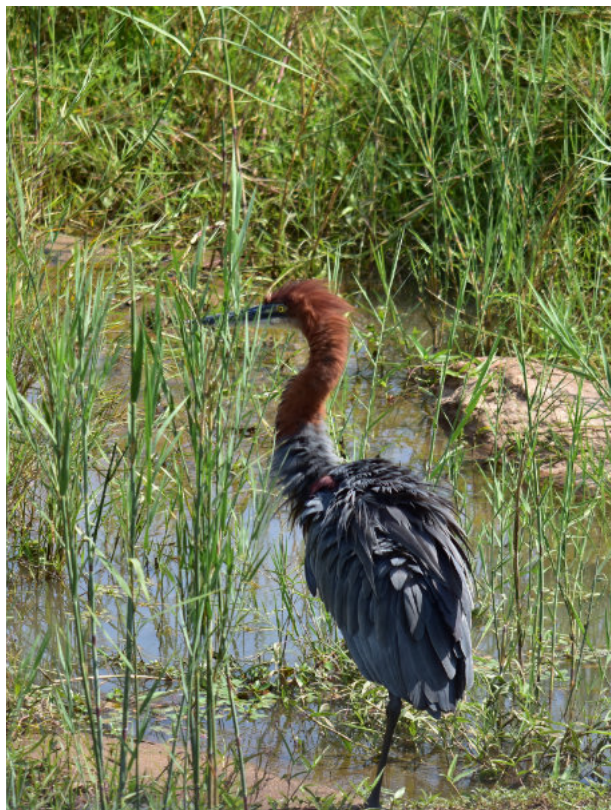
“The Show Must Go On by Peter Armitage and the AfriCam community.”

largest population of polar bears south of the Arctic Circle.

Churchill is the location where many wildlife photographers have captured their most memorable polar bear pictures.

Tundra Buggy Tours operates trips for tourists in large buggies, which are basically houses on wheels. These polar bears survive by hunting seals from the sea ice in Hudson Bay. As the ice breaks up each spring, they move to land where they begin a multi-month fast until the ice forms once again in late fall. As they gather and wait for the ice at the edge of the Bay, hundreds of visitors on the tundra vehicles have the rare privilege of viewing the males in mock battles, as well as mothers with cubs.

Andy contacted Tundra Buggy Tours, which had just been purchased by an individual called Mervin. He was very excited to participate in a webcam exercise for AfriCam, because of the publicity that the webcam would generate.



By the time the team installed the Polar Bear Cam, they were very adept at setting up webcams. Alex drew up a list of the equipment that was required and it was ordered and collected from Winnipeg AV in Canada. Paul organised the satellite bandwidth and was delighted by the ease with which this could be organised, in comparison to the unreliable systems in South Africa.

The team travelled to Churchill to complete one of the most memorable installation trips in the history of AfriCam. The hero of the story, however, is Dennis, who was employed for the duration of the project. Dennis stayed up as much as possible in any 24-hour period to operate the cameras and point them on the polar bear action. He carried this off for the full two-month period that the polar bears could be viewed, before they advanced in a northerly direction.

The heavily bearded Dennis is real character, with plenty of personality, and while the area is totally devoid of mountains, the term “mountain man” is appropriate.

The Polar Bear Cam was broadcast in a joint venture with National Geographic, which also hosted the camera on its site. This was part of a larger deal that was struck with National Geographic, which was intended to lead to live television footage.

There was nothing particularly complicated about this installation, with the only unique challenge being to operate the camera in extremely cold weather conditions.

Seeing live streaming polar bear footage on the AfriCam site was the first time that I realised what the AfriCam experience was all about for the US viewer. In South Africa, the bush is within driving distance from the major cities and seeing African wildlife live was a privilege available to many South Africans. By contrast I have never, and probably never will see, polar bears in real life. This made the polar bear cam particularly unforgettable and the footage on this camera was truly breathtaking.

“Beavers” - 2000

Wolves were another species that AfriCam was very keen to broadcast. By the time AfriCam had made the strategic decision to broadcast from locations in the US timezone, we had hired John Dunne. John had been working for National Geographic and came from a family of US Navy Seals. John had worked with Jim Brandenburg who is the “wolf man” on earth from a photographic perspective and had worked as a National Geographic staff photographer for many years. Jim is a brilliant photographer and responsible for many of the classic wolf shots that readers will recall when they see them. He has published many photographic books, which contain some of the world’s best photography.

John contacted Jim and leveraged off his friendship with the man to secure AfriCam access to his property in the North Woods of Northern Minnesota in the US.

On arriving and travelling around Jim’s vast property, Graham described it as “the most beautiful piece of land in the world”. Classic landscapes and scenery made it very conducive to photography. While wolves were the first prize, it was decided that because of the complications in capturing wolves on camera, a good starting point would be to put a cam in a beaver’s lodge, which had not been done successfully in the world before.

A beaver’s lodge is about the size of two VW Beetles and has a very thick outer layer and a den in the middle. After much discussion Paul, Graham and Alex decided that the best method would be to push a pipe through the nest. A small black and white, infrared camera was wedged into the end of the pipe. The team waited until the beavers had vacated the den and pushed the pipe through the outer lay until they had a view of the inside of the den.

The next complication, which was common to most installations, was power. The beaver’s lodge was about a mile away from the closest power source and a cable had to be laid all the way. The proprietor of the local hardware store was taken aback when Alex purchased all the cable that he had for sale.

John Dunne volunteered for the job of laying the cable, which was something he later regretted. He picked up the roll of cable and shortly after setting off he reached swampland. Undeterred and with a strong commitment to purpose, John marched through the swamp, with the water waist high, holding the roll of cable above his head. This required close to a superhuman effort.

“We should really have a Navy Seal on all of our installations,” Paul joked as John came close to the point of sheer exhaustion before finishing the task. He had earned his pay cheque. BeaverCam provided some interesting viewing, but as AfriCam had already learnt, single species cameras on “non-totemic” animals quickly become mundane. Given access to further funding, WolfCam would have followed.

“Bahamas” - 2000

On the same trip as the BeaverCam installation, the terrible trio travelled to the Bahamas to install an underwater camera. Andy had concluded an agreement with a research institute on Lee Stocking Island to house the PC portion of the camera installation and take responsibility for the upkeep of the camera.

The coral reefs around the island were beautiful, but after an initial recce, Graham insisted that they install the cameras on the windward side of the island. There was more reef on this side of the island, but the leeward side of the island seemed the obvious solution for Alex and Paul.

“Graham, you are mad. The leeward side of the island has got the calm conditions. We could kill ourselves doing it on the other side,” Alex argued in vain.

“Alex, we have travelled from the other side of the world to get the right shot. This is no time for compromise,” Graham argued.

Both Alex and Paul knew that there was no point in arguing. The team spent the next three days attempting to install the underwater cam on the windward side. There were fairly big waves which rose above the level of the concrete block that Graham and Alex had to jump off into the water.

As the ocean receded, the level of the water dropped about two metres and exposed ironshore, which is a jagged coral which is as sharp as a knife. If the dive was not timed correctly the diver would be sucked into the coral and ripped to shreds. There was something strangely appealing about the danger involved.

After three days, Graham eventually gave up and conceded that he was wrong. It was close to impossible to install the camera, but it was exactly this that had appealed to him.

“OK, I am wrong. I apologise. But we almost did it,” Graham defended as Alex and Paul reflected on three wasted days.

The subsequent installation on the leeward side of the island was fairly routine, which resulted in an excellent, well-lit image. It took place on the fourth day and took a total of five hours. The two cameras were placed two metres from the research institute, in water which was less than 2m deep. As a result, these were two of AfriCam’s most reliable cameras and one particularly narcissistic Nassau Grouper regularly spent most of his day parading in front of the camera. Also seen on the camera were Grey Angelfish, Queen Angelfish and Big Eye Squirrelfish.



Nature Patterns

By WildlifeCampus student

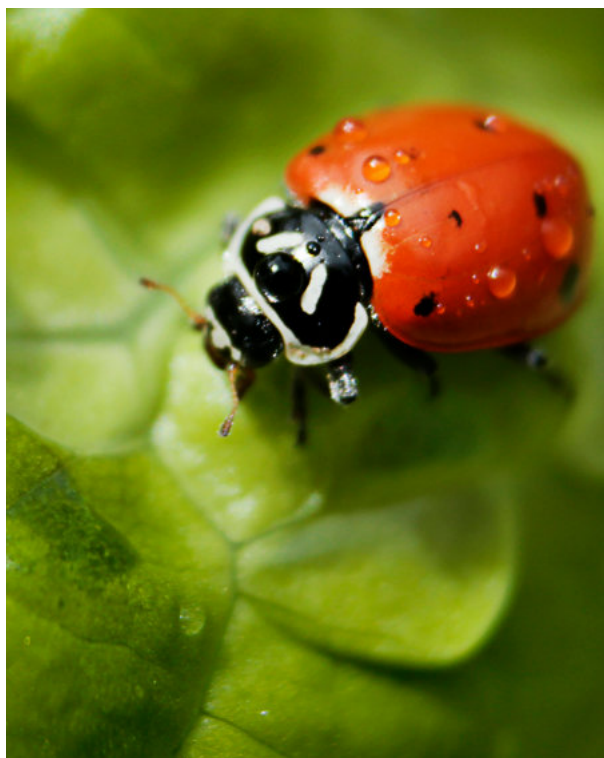
Amy Holt

02

Patterns are everywhere in nature. From the iconic stripes of a tiger to the bright patchwork colours of a Gouldian finch, these patterns help us understand and appreciate our natural world. The wide variety of patterns found in nature is not just aesthetically pleasing but serves a purpose in the interconnectedness of all life on our planet. A pattern can help attract a mate, provide camouflage, deter predators, or even act as a form of communication.

Spots are a very common pattern in nature. Cheetahs are famous not only for their speed but also for their spotty pattern. The cheetah's visually striking, solid black spots have allowed it to blend seamlessly into its surroundings when moving at speed. These spots may help offset the shadows in the grasses of the African savannahs. Cheetahs also have distinct black tear markings on their faces. These markings may help reflect the glares of the sun while hunting. This is a beneficial adaptation for the cheetah hunting in open plains, where the sun's glare is exceptionally bright. The tear markings and spots play a part in the cheetah's high hunting success rate. Without cheetahs, herbivore numbers would increase, leading to more vegetation being grazed. This would lead to higher soil erosion and less water, increasing the chances of droughts. Indeed, the cheetah's spots aren't just for show... they highlight the intricate relationship between the cheetah's genetic makeup and the interconnectedness of all life on Earth.

Instantly recognisable for their height, giraffes tower over the plains of Africa. They have beautiful patterns that resemble a mosaic of irregular patches. Each giraffe has a unique spot pattern, like our unique fingerprints. These distinctive patterns depend on the giraffe's geographic region and diet. Colours can range from light tan to dark brown with thinner or broader splotches. For example, the Masai giraffe is noticeably darker than other subspecies and has large vine leaf-shaped blotches with jagged edges, separated by irregular creamy brown lines. The giraffe's pattern acts as a camouflage and helps them blend in with the yellow and brown landscape across Africa's savannahs. Another purpose of the giraffe's patchy pattern is for thermoregulation.



Surrounding each patch is a cluster of blood vessels; giraffes can efficiently control their internal temperature by directing blood to or away from these smaller vessels. Giraffes have high visual acuity, and so the recognition of individual spot patterns may enable infraspecific communication. Research shows female giraffes associate with other females of similar spot shape. Baby giraffes inherit certain characteristics of their spot patterns from their mothers. The research also discovered that newborn giraffes with larger and more irregular spots had better chances of survival, due to their pattern being more effective at camouflaging them from potential predators.

The whale shark is the biggest fish and shark in the world. They are instantly recognisable for their checkerboard pattern of white spots on a grey, blue back. Like our fingerprints, each whale shark has a unique pattern of spots. The software used to identify star clusters from space was adapted to identify individual whale sharks, so scientists can track their migrations. There are multiple theories for the role of the whale shark's unique pattern. Young whale sharks are vulnerable to predation, and therefore, the colour pattern may be used for a method of camouflage known as countershading. The white bellies of the whale shark fade into the bright background of the surface, while the darker back fades in against the dark background of the ocean depths. The skin pattern may also be used for communication between whale sharks. A whale shark's spots may act as visual cues to recognise members of the opposite sex. Whale sharks may even use their patterns for 'threat displays.' This complex form of communication intimidates

smaller sharks by using their patterns to show off how big they are. Researchers may not know exactly why the whale shark has its spots, but the distinctive pattern certainly serves a purpose beyond just being beautiful. As filter feeders, whale sharks control the level of plankton. Excessive amounts of plankton would decrease the ocean's sunlight and oxygen, causing an imbalance. Therefore, we need whale sharks to keep our largest ecosystem healthy.

There are over 5000 species of ladybirds, all showcasing a variety of colours and patterns. Depending on the species, they can have spots, stripes or no markings. The most familiar species, the seven-spot ladybird, has a red body covered in a symmetrical pattern of seven black spots, hence the name. A single gene (pannier) produces highly diverse ladybird colour patterns. The pannier gene activates the production of black pigment, thus forming black spots in red ladybirds or the black background in black ladybirds. Ladybirds have evolved vibrant colours and patterns as a defence mechanism to warn potential predators that they are toxic or distasteful. This adaptation is known as aposematism. Brighter ladybirds have higher levels of toxins than paler ladybirds do. This is a form of honest signalling. For example, the two-spot ladybird openly signals its strong defences by being bright red. Meanwhile, the larch ladybird is plain brown and relies more on camouflage than toxins to protect itself from predators. Despite many species being brightly coloured, ladybirds can only perceive the world and other ladybirds in varying shades of grey. Birds often prey on ladybirds and have some of the best eyes in the animal kingdom. They have four types of light-sensitive cells, allowing them to see all the colours humans see and ultraviolet colours.

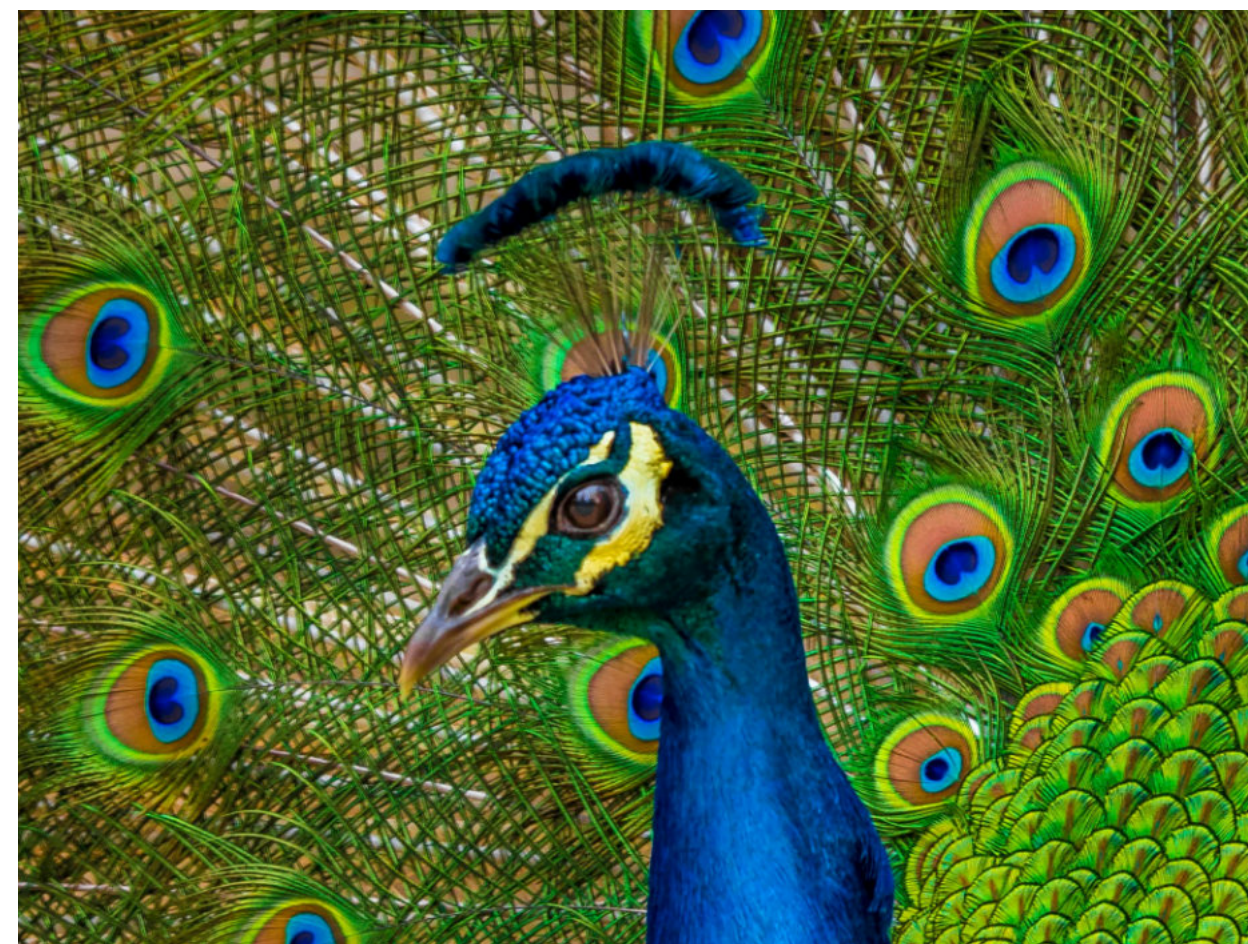
Eyespots are spot patterns that resemble the eyes of different animals. Butterflies and moths are well-known to have eyespots to deter predators. These distinctive wing markings come in a variety of colours and sizes. The owl butterfly has eyespots that resemble the large eyes of an owl, hence the name. These yellow and black spots on the butterfly's brown wings help keep predators away. Large eyespots on the wings of butterflies and moths can make them appear much larger than their actual size, leading predators to think twice about attacking. The European peacock butterfly uses four large blue eyespots to confuse predators. The emperor moth and the eyed hawkmoth both display eyespot patterns on their wings to startle potential predators. But butterflies and moths aren't the only ones to display the eyespot pattern.

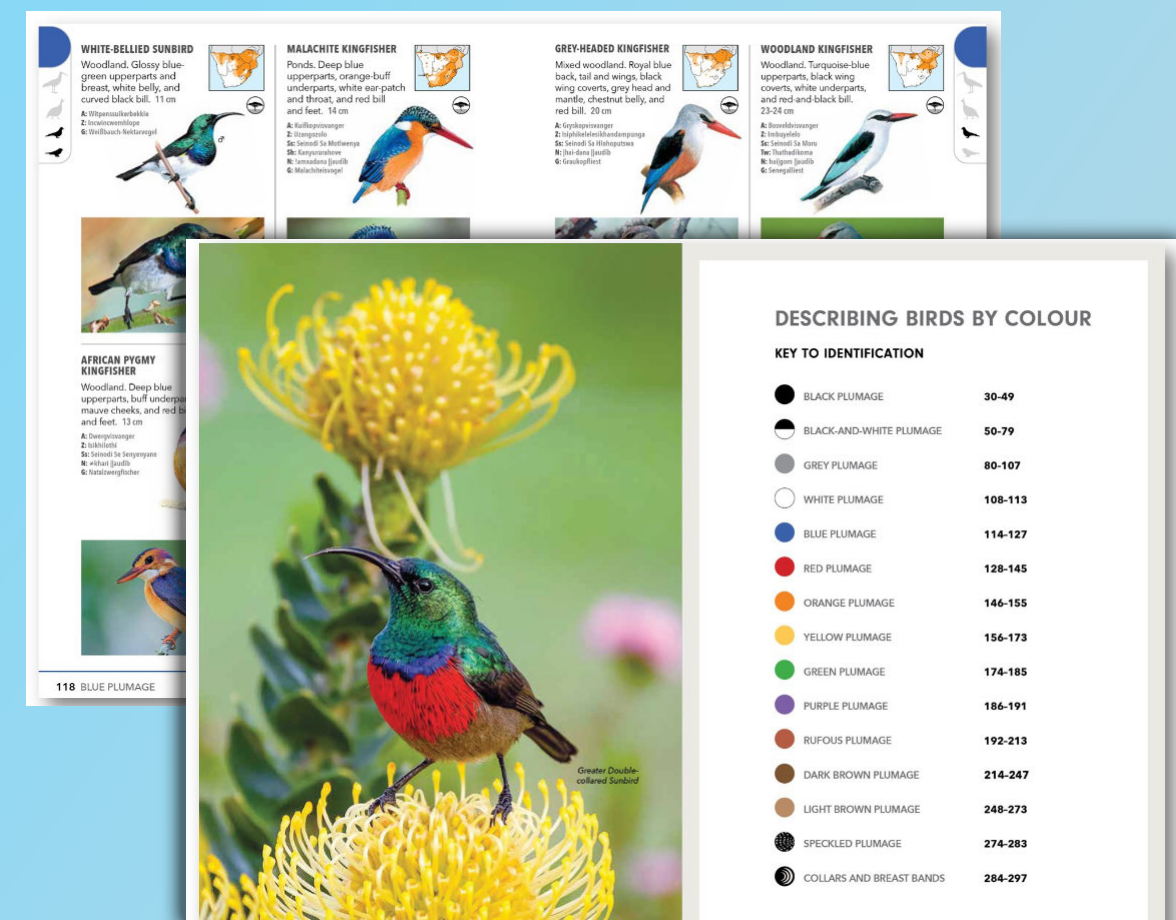
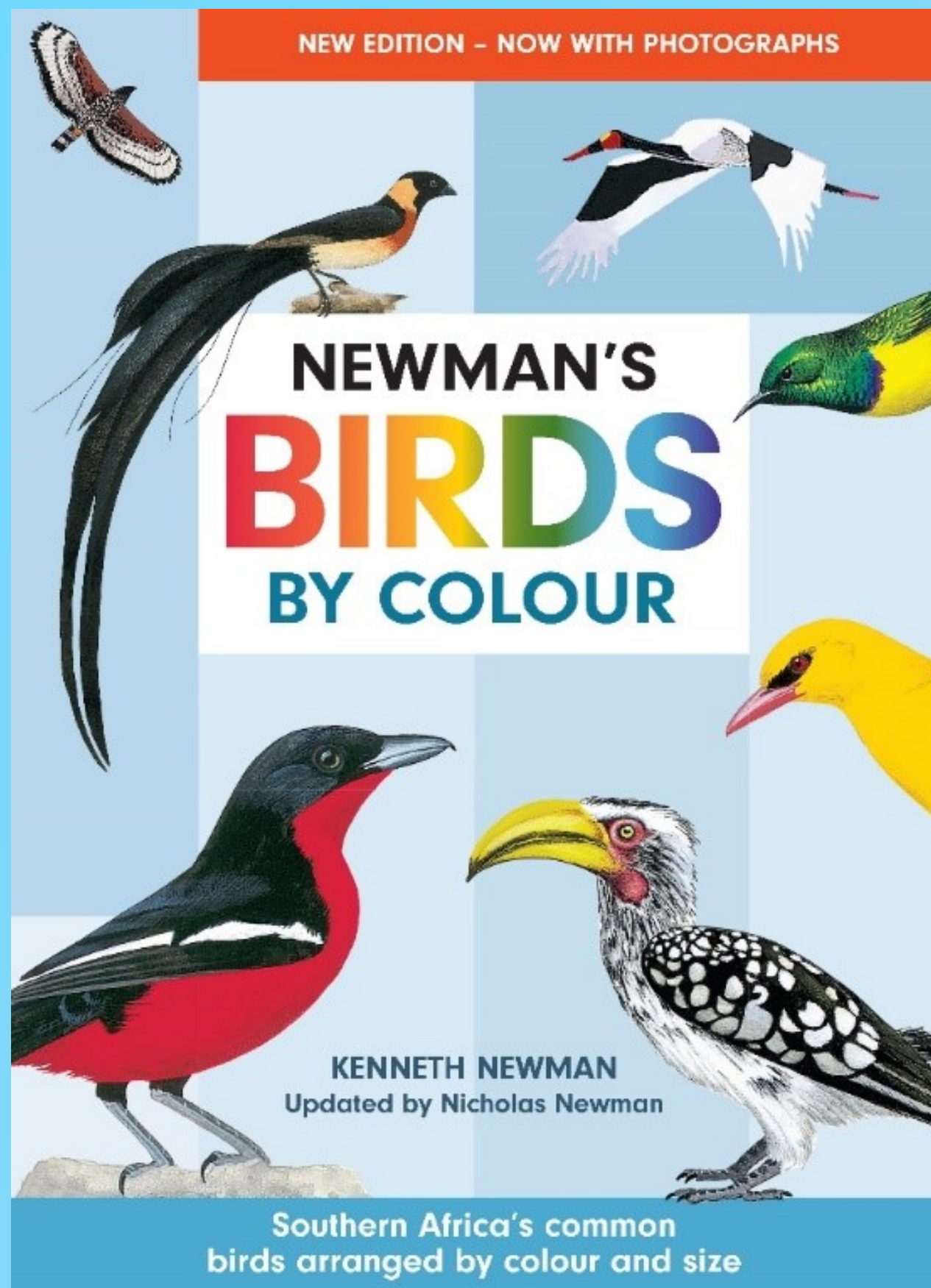
Peacocks are renowned for their spectacular plumage and vibrant colour patterns. Males fan out their metallic blue-green feathers into a mesmerising display during courtship. This visually stunning pattern serves as an advertisement of

their genetic fitness. Intricate eyespots (ocelli) on the feathers help draw the attention of females during courtship rituals. The larger and more vibrant the ocelli, the more likely a peacock will attract a female for mating. Once a female is enticed, the male proceeds to ruffle his feathers, which gives off a shimmering appearance. Microscopic 'crystal-like' structures line the feathers of peacocks to create an iridescent shine. The longer the tail feathers, the faster the peacock can shake them. The peacock's tail is an example of Charles Darwin's theory on sexual selection. Peahens prefer peacocks with more elaborate trains, and so these peacocks will mate more frequently and have more offspring. The next generation will inherit genes for these elaborate trains, thus they will have better mating success than their less decorated rivals. With each generation, courtship signalling becomes more complex as the peacocks must level up their vibrant feather patterns to compete for the attention of the peahens. The evolution of eyespots in peacocks emphasises that the eyespot pattern serve a function beyond anti-predator defences.

The rosette pattern is a type of spot pattern that is commonly seen on cats. Big cats that live in dense habitats with high activity at low light levels are most likely to have complex rosette coat patterns.

Jaguars and leopards are famous for their strikingly beautiful, patterned fur. They have a yellowy-brown base coat colour with black rosettes. The jaguar's rosette pattern is often confused with the leopard's pattern. However, there are some noticeable differences between the two. Rosettes are typically more prominent on jaguars than leopards, and the jaguar's rosettes have internal spots. Each jaguar and leopard has a one-of-a-kind appearance thanks to their unevenly patterned rosette fur. Scientists use these distinct arrangements of rosettes and internal spots (only jaguars have these) to identify individuals and monitor population sizes. Melanism is rare among jaguars and leopards. Despite appearing to have all-black fur, they still have the characteristic rosette patterns. Thanks to the distinctive rosette pattern and by utilising low visibility, jaguars and leopards can ambush prey whilst avoiding detection. As apex predators, jaguars and leopards help control prey populations. If jaguars or leopards were to go extinct, it would cause a trophic cascade with various plant and animal species declining in population size. It may even drive some species lower down the food chain into extinction. Undoubtedly, the rosette pattern of jaguars and leopards is a distinctive genetic code intricately connected to their survival.





Newman's Birds by Colour offers beginner birders a quick and simple way to identify southern Africa's most common birds using colour as a starting point.

Now in its fourth edition, this handy illustrated guide includes photographs in addition to artwork and has been updated to include the latest common names, expanded habitat information, and up-to-date distribution maps.

An informative introduction provides practical tips for identifying birds, and includes information on bird anatomy and classification, and guidance on where to look for birds and what you need to go birding.

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED, NOW WITH PHOTOGRAPHS FOR EACH BIRD ENTRY!

Kenneth Newman was a renowned bird painter and ornithologist who contributed significantly to the burgeoning interest in birds in southern Africa. His numerous books have sold close to a million copies worldwide.

Nicholas Newman is a passionate and accomplished birder whose interest in birds and their behaviour was inspired by his father's work in the field. At the helm of the Newman family business, Nick is committed to growing the community of birders via Kenneth Newman's iconic stable of well-loved birding reference tools.

The Travel Buggz Adventures

Bella Butterfly, Aiden Ant and Lucy Ladybug enjoy the real experience of seeing wild animals in their natural environment while visiting the Kruger National Park.

“We’re off !, Whoo hoo,” Aiden Ant danced around grabbing Lucy Ladybug’s hands. “It’s finally school holidays and we’re going away.” “I wonder where to. I’m so excited,” squeals Lucy as the Travel Buggz arrive home from their long school day.

Beautiful Bella Butterfly gently wrapped her shimmering violet and gold wings around the two young ones.

“I bet you can’t wait to find out where our holiday adventure will take us”.

“Can you hear the sounds of the wild and smell the fresh grass?” Bella Butterfly fluttered her wings as they arrived at the bridge that crosses the Crocodile River before entering the Kruger National Park.

The Travel Buggz grabbed their binoculars and bird books, hopping from one side of the bridge to the other. “Look, a hippopotamus!” Aiden Ant was the first to spot an animal. “What can you see Lucy?”.



“Golly gosh, I see a bird. What bird is that Aiden?”

“It’s a Giant Kingfisher. Watch him as he dives from that branch headfirst into the water. He’ll come up with a fish, you’ll see.”

“Let’s go kids, we can take a slow drive to our campsite, we have our permit, our paper bag for rubbish so we don’t litter in the park and the rangers have checked our boot,” Bella Butterfly rounds everyone up.

“Who can name all five animals on the Big Five list?” Questions Bella.

“I know. I know,” Aiden bobs up and down. “Lion, rhino, leopard, elephant and buffalo.”

“Wait a minute, I want to see the latest sightings”, Lucy Ladybug skipped to the blackboard sign. “People saw lion on the Malelane road. And look rhinos near the bushcamp. Oh I can’t wait to see the Big Five myself!” she exclaimed.

Aiden positions his binoculars, searching through the thick grassy bush for interesting birds, bugs and beasts.

“Stop! Stop!” he yells. Calling the important Kruger call.

Screech, the car stops. Everyone leans over looking in Aiden’s direction, “What is it?”

“Oops. Sorry. It’s just a lesserspotted rock,” Aiden laughs.

“Impala and more Impala. There are so many,” Lucy says. “They are striking though with their soft, caramel coats, long eyelashes and big brown eyes.”

The Buggz have enjoyed their first day in the Park.

The Travel Buggz have many more exciting adventures in Kruger National Park. Catch up with them in the next episode, featured in the upcoming issue of WildlifeCampus.

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

Why not send a photo of your coloured in page* to sandy@travelbuggz.co.za to enter the lucky draw to win a goodie bag hamper.

***colouring in page at the end of this magazine.**





Front of House, also known within the hospitality industry as just "FOH" is not as simple as it sounds! In this article, we explain what all aspects of this term mean starting with what we believe to be the philosophy of Front of House.

There are three main points that relate to the philosophy of FOH

- 1. Guest experience** and going the extra mile – Making sure the guests have the best experience possible and that they are satisfied with all aspects of their stay.
- 2. Atmosphere** – Making sure the atmosphere of the lodge is inviting at all times and a place where people feel comfortable and relaxed.
- 3. Being the communicator** – Being a warm, friendly and welcoming face to the guests, communicating with them but also passing on information to the other departments to enhance the overall operations of the lodge.

The term "Front of House" has a few different definitions within the hospitality industry. Listed below are the typical ones that are important for you to understand:

The term covers many different "job titles" within the hospitality industry. 'Front of house' refers to a *position within the industry for someone whose main job is to interact with guests directly.*

Your job title may simply be 'Front of house', but the same position can also be called by other names but still have the same duties, for example:

- Guest Relations
- Guest Liaison
- Anchor
- Host or Hostess
- Receptionist
- Guest Experience Manager
- Hospitality Manager

Bar personnel, waiters and waitresses would be considered to work *IN* the "Front of House" department or "food and beverage" depending on how the lodge is structured but their job title will not be "Front of House".

It also is a *term used to describe a duty* so you may see a position for a manager, or a guide advertised that states in the requirements something like:

'Must have excellent Front of House skills'

This typically means they need to be good with guest relations, interacting with the clientele but also overseeing the Front of House operations.

It is also a *physical area within a hospitality establishment, meaning the main communal areas that guests or customers can use* for example:

- Dining area
- Lounge
- Bar
- Reception

This term is used by all hospitality industries including many different sectors such as:

- Lodges
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Cafes
- Cruise ships/yachts
- Bars
- Airlines
- Catering/Event venues
- Resorts
- Clubs

Why is FOH important?

All positions within any hospitality establishment are vitally important but FOH positions are what hold the daily operations together, as this person is the communicator to all departments regarding guest requirements, requests and general information and will often be the first person to know of any requests. Communication is key in this position.

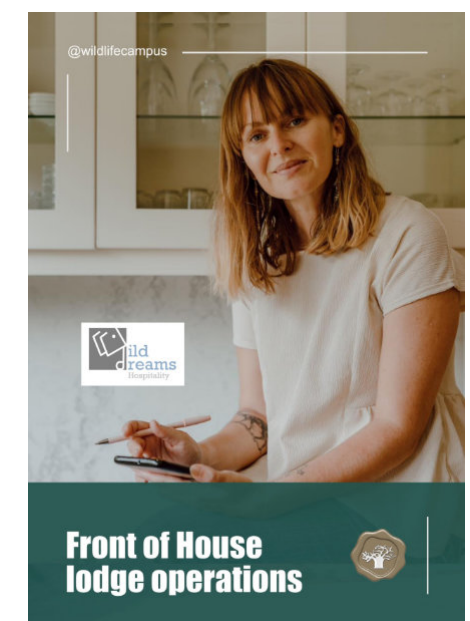
FOH is seen as the "face" of the lodge and is considered the "go-to" person for the guests for questions, complaints and guidance so should represent the lodge at all times which is a very important job. This includes when they aren't at work, they should be supportive of their work environment and represent them at all times.

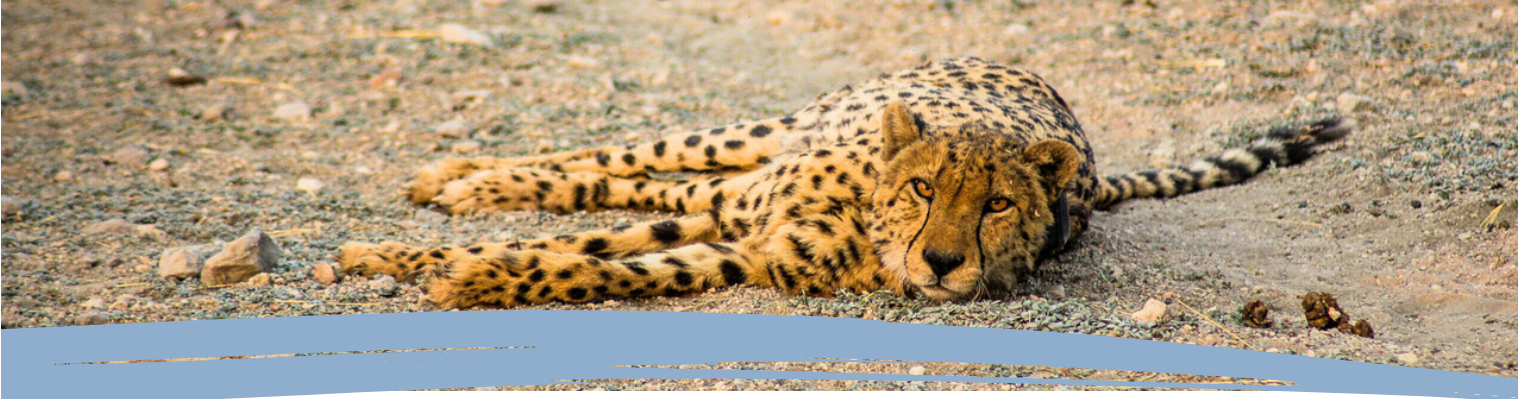
This person also would be the main person to make sure that the guests are not aware of any crisis happening related to operations to keep everyone calm and not worry the guests about things that are the job of the staff to worry about. Guests should never know that there is a problem with the acceptance only of an emergency where they have to follow instruction

If you are interested in learning more about this role, especially with a focus on the safari lodge sector then be sure to check out the Front of House lodge operations course we created for our industry partner, WildlifeCampus who is the leading online course provider within this area.

You can find out more about the course and even do a free component to "try before you buy" [by clicking here.](#)

The course would also make a fantastic Christmas gift for someone you know who wants to upskill themselves or learn more about the industry to either further their career or start one within hospitality and tourism! (click the picture for a synopsis of the course)





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



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African Folklore

Animals have feelings



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.

There is an extremely ugly superstition that one finds amongst all western countries throughout the world. This is the belief that we, human beings, are the super race of this planet, that only we are capable of noble feelings, are capable of thinking and of loving, that only we are capable of feeling and feeling deeply.

Anyone who has travelled by foot in his younger days through Africa will tell you that the belief that only human beings are capable of feeling deeply is a rank and very dangerous philosophy. If you travel through the African bush, preferably alone, you will feel feeling all around you, you will feel that all around you are living creatures who are watching you, thinking about you and feeling about you. If you walk into an area of Africa where all wildlife has been decimated, an area such as you find in parts of Mozambique nowadays where not even a bird is heard to sing. You feel an emptiness, a hollowness, a desolation. You feel that something is missing here. You feel that you are totally alone, that the universe has come to a standstill. But walk into a place, which is teeming with wildlife, the first thing that will happen is that hour after hour, by day or by night, you shall smell the animals. And if your nostrils are sharp enough you will be able to distinguish the acrid smell of a waterbuck, the horsy smell of a zebra and the heavy smell of a cape buffalo, each smell apart from the others.

06

You will even be able to smell the ostrich, the vulture, the eagle. You will be able to smell the meerkat, the spotted wildcat, the caracal and even the crocodile. And believe me, the smell of a crocodile is not a smell that one forgets likely. It is a smell of death. It is the timeless smell of a huge reptile and also it is a smell of decay. If death has a smell, then that smell is like that of a crocodile.

Not only will you smell the animals in the bush, but you will feel them. You will feel the nervousness of the impala long, long before it emerges from behind the bush to look at you. You will feel the kudu. And most of all you will feel the leopard, the lion, the elephant and in the waters of the muddled river, long before she emerges breaking the surface quietly you shall smell and feel the hippopotamus. All life is about feeling. All life is about thinking.

Whether you are in the green chaos of the African bush or deep under the waters of the ocean, you will know, oh traveller, that life is about feeling. That like your human being, animals are gifted with curiosity, animals are gifted with thinking. They want to know what this strange creature is, which has intruded into our environment.

They want to know is this thing dangerous or friendly, is this thing death or life? Not only are animals capable of thinking, not only are animals capable of curiosity but they are capable of remembering as well and sometimes they remember far more deeply than we human beings do. If that were not so, then the incident that I am about to describe to you would not have happened. I

f animals did not have deep memories, if animals did not have the ability to put two and two together and make four, then I would not have seen this incident I am about to tell you about and many others more. Animals have got far clearer memories than we, human beings have.

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**African
folklore**
By Credo Mutwa



Water Mongoose

Animal tracks and signs of Africa

By Chris and Mathilde Stuart

For a great many bush enthusiasts and field guides, the presence of animal tracks and signs is either meaningless or ignored. However, a vast amount of information can be gleaned about mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates without ever seeing them. Every animal leaves some indication of its presence or passing, whereby it can be recognised.

Many animals are active during the hours of darkness or are secretive and spend much of their time undercover.

Reading and interpreting animal tracks and signs is a skill that must have been second nature to early humans. Yet, only a few hunter-gatherer peoples, such as the San (Bushmen) of the southern deserts and the Pygmies of the equatorial forests, retain this ability. Other than a few hunters and farmers, most people today - including many sport hunters and nature lovers - cannot tell one track from another or recognise even obvious signs. And yet, tracking and reading signs can develop into an absorbing pastime in its own right.

It never ceases to amaze us how few farmers, hunters, professional conservationists and others who spend considerable time in a rural environment know about the activities of the creatures around them. Although a particular track or sign may be unfamiliar to you, with some thought and detective work, it is often possible to identify the animal that made it and establish what it was doing. It is even possible on occasion to identify a particular individual, such as a leopard with a toe missing - the result of a lucky escape from a gin trap - or an antelope with a damaged hoof.

The picture you are able to build up about an animal, or species, will often be just as clear and just as accurate as if you had been able to observe the animal. In some cases, the picture can be even more reliable.

Explore more about the Animal Tracks and Signs of Africa, with our online course! Written exclusively for WildlifeCampus by world-renowned authors - Chris and Mathilde Stuart. This course is perfect for anyone who loves nature and wants to learn more about the animals that live in it.

Over 1800 pages, featuring hundreds of species, this course takes an in-depth look at tracks, prints, spoor, trails, droppings, feeding signs, kill sites, mud wallowing, rubbing posts, tree scratchings, scent marking, holes, bark-stripping, shed hair, skin and feathers, nests, mammal and invertebrate shelters and skulls.

This course will enhance your enjoyment and understanding of the wild, even when no animals can be seen. Whether you are interested in tracking for recreation or conservation purposes, taking this course is a great way to get started. It is also a valuable skill to have if you work in a field such as environmental education, nature guiding, or law enforcement.

Click [here](#) to try a free component of this course.



Can you speak badger?

By David Batzofin



One of the toughest critters to stride across the African landscape has surely got to be the honey badger or ratel as it is known in Afrikaans. This relatively small creature is only 60–70 cm long, with the males weighing about 15kg and the females about 10kg but it has the heart of a lion and the strength of an elephant... no, make that a herd of elephants, when it is cornered or threatened.

Many a predator have come off the worse for wear after tackling what they perceived to be an easy meal. It is known to savagely and fearlessly attack almost any other species when escape is impossible, reportedly even repelling much larger predators such as lions and hyenas. Bee stings, porcupine quills, and animal bites rarely penetrate their skin.

Known for foraging for wild honey, individuals have been known to make their

home on bee farms, much to the annoyance of the farmers who have had to devise ingenious methods to keep this voracious hunter from their hives.

Now, it might look cute and cuddly, but be warned: It would be hard to find a more cantankerous animal. Given that it does not start fights, it can't finish, makes it an impressive foe.

This particular species had been in the Top 5 of my bucket list sightings, together with pangolin, armadillo, bat-eared fox and aardwolf.

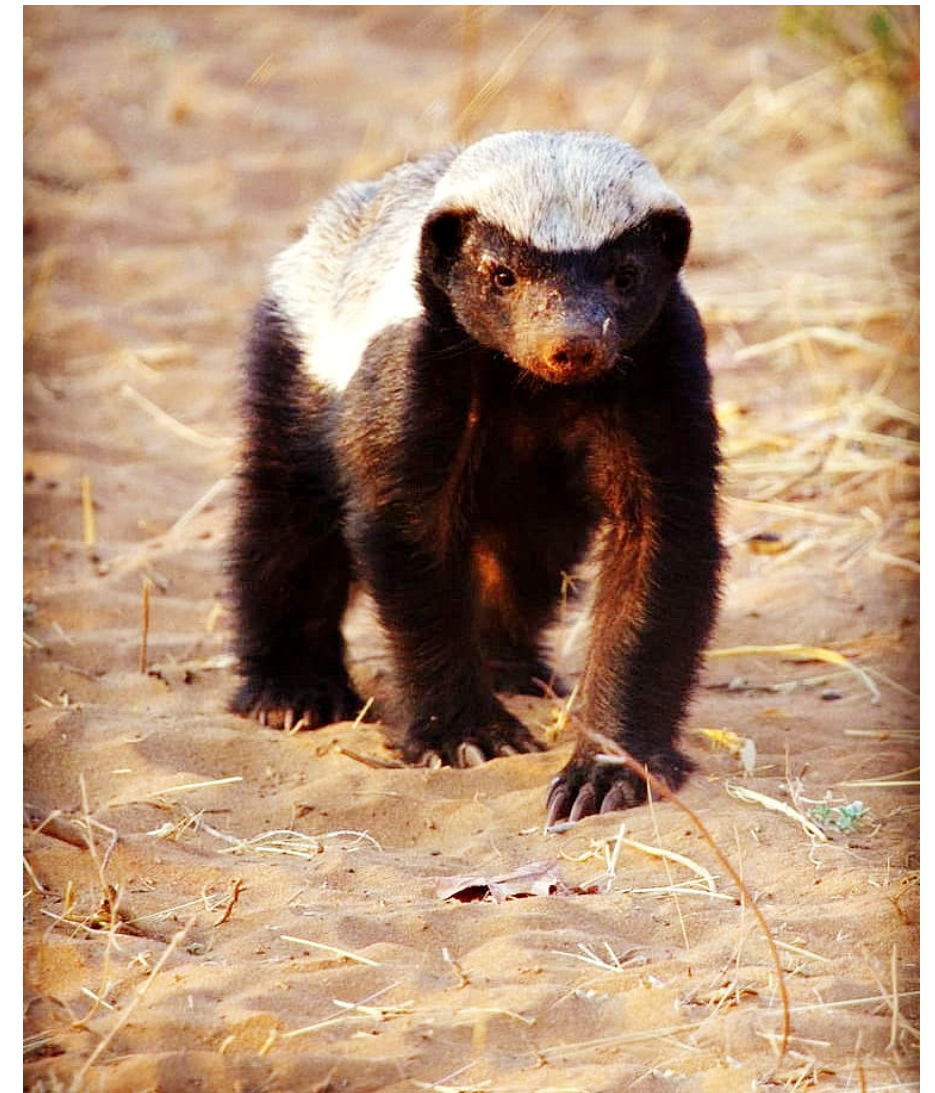
It was on a photographic safari with one of South Africa's top wildlife photographers that I saw my first honey badger. It was trotting along the road, parallel to the Unimog that we were on, and seemed to be getting ahead of us.

In fact, trotting is the wrong word, it was swaggering along with seemingly not a care in the world. Both our cameras were clicking away like machine guns trying to get images before it vanished when suddenly we heard it vocalise...or so we thought.

The badger had heard the call as well and came to a grinding halt to answer what it thought was a challenge for territory. The calls continued for a while until the two of us realised that it was our guide who was communicating with the animal to give us the best opportunity to get static shots of the rather confused black-and-white animal. Turns out he COULD speak badger!

The badger seemed to realise at about the same time that it was being hoodwinked and that there was, in fact, no rival, so it turned at right angles and immediately vanished into the bush.

After it had disappeared, the three of us had a good laugh about the interaction and how it had turned out. However, that was not the end of the story.



Some weeks went by and both of us, independently of each other, posted almost identical images of the badger on our social media platforms (we had, after all, been sitting next to each other and shooting almost frame for frame).

It was not very long before someone commented on HIS Facebook page asking if he knew that I had 'stolen' his image and was using it on my site, with my watermark on it!

Explanations were exchanged and luckily the complainant saw the funny side of the entire incident once it had been explained.

What did it teach both of us? The importance of communication.

All's well that ends well but I often wonder how the badger explained the incident to HIS mates...



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

