



WildlifeCampus

Learn-Protect-Save

Nature calls

WildlifeCampus:

A learning platform loved
by students around the world

Sunrise and sunset

By David Batzofin

Hospitality Jobs

Recommended Struik Guides

Marine Biology

Online Course

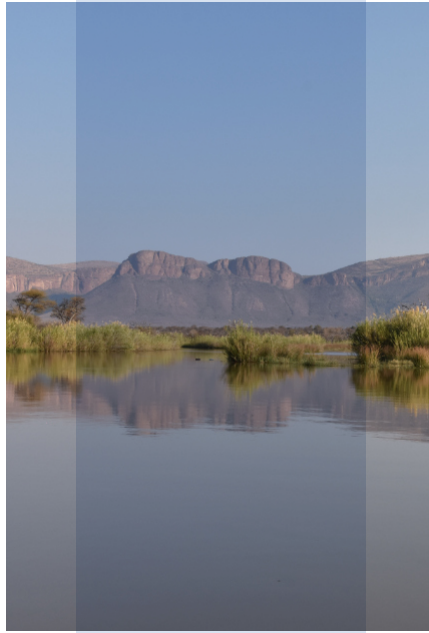
African Folklore

Travel Buggz Adventures

Old world monkeys

By Amy Holt

Content



Cover image: Elephant by Jonathan Acx

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About WildlifeCampus

WildlifeCampus is an online school specialising in wildlife education and hospitality.

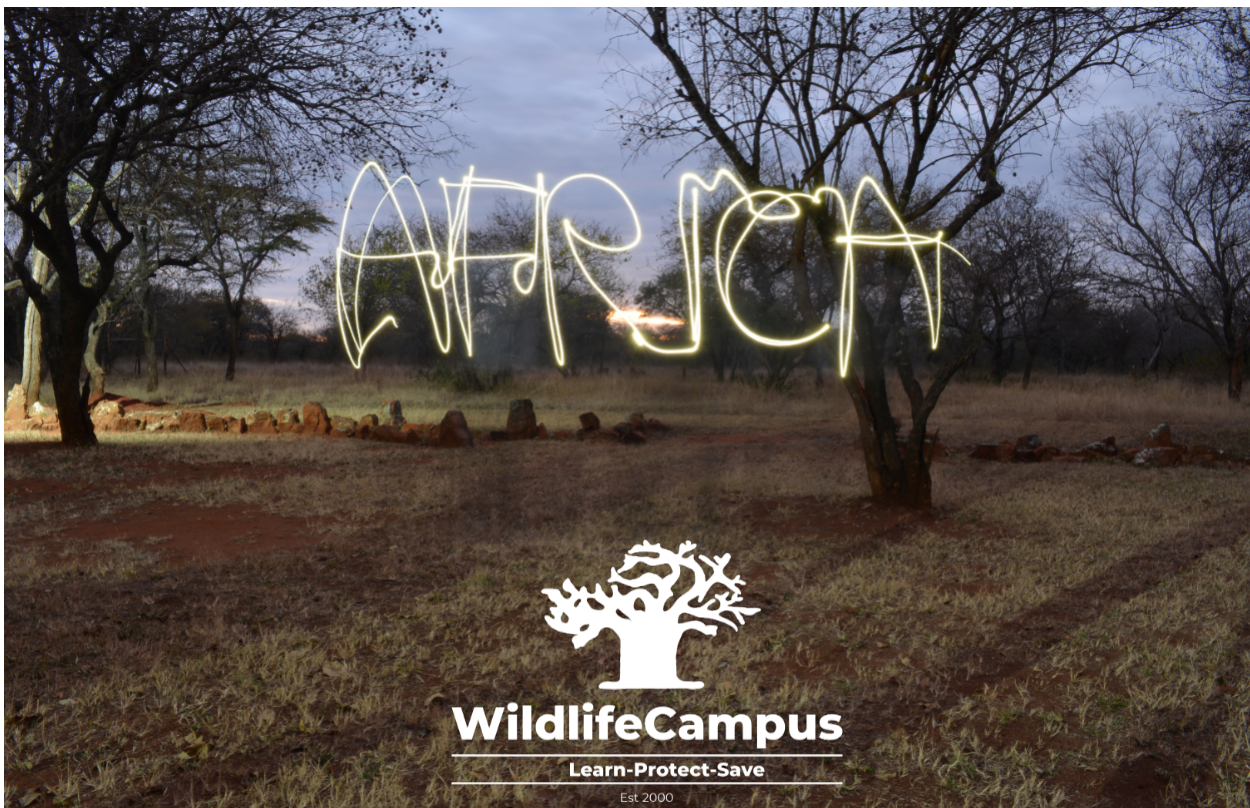
Our courses are industry-recognised, and we are an approved FGASA Delivery Partner.

Over the past 25 years, more than 30,000 students across 161 countries have taken our courses, which are considered the most comprehensive online offerings in wildlife and hospitality education.

We take pride in being leaders in delivering online wildlife education. We provide an authentic and unique e-learning experience, high-quality content, excellent value for money, and exceptional service.

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

Many WildlifeCampus students have discovered that the knowledge gained from our courses has significantly enhanced their enjoyment of nature. As a result, many have found employment in the wildlife, hospitality, and tourism industries.





WildlifeCampus

Learn-Protect-Save

Study options

OPTIONS	BUY COURSES	MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION	LIFETIME SUBSCRIPTION
COURSE ACCESS	UNLIMITED ACCESS TO THE COURSE/S YOU BUY .	ACCESS TO ALL COURSES <u>WHILE SUBSCRIBED</u> .	UNLIMITED ACCESS TO ALL OUR COURSES .
HOW DOES PAYMENT WORK?	BUY ONCE-OFF, OR PAY THEM OFF MONTHLY.	R300/MONTH - 24 MONTHS (CANCEL ANYTIME- NO CANCELLATION FEES).	R 18 000 ONCE-OFF PAYMENT.
ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATE FEES	NONE . THE CERTIFICATE FEES ARE INCLUDED.	R250 PER CERTIFICATE REDEEMED.	NONE . THE CERTIFICATE FEES ARE INCLUDED.



The Fibonacci sequence in nature

By WildlifeCampus

Nature is full of amazing patterns and designs. One of the most fascinating is the Fibonacci sequence, a series of numbers where each number is the sum of the two before it: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, and so on. This sequence is not just a math idea; it is a pattern we see all around us in nature.

What is the Fibonacci sequence?

Let us start with a quick explanation. The Fibonacci sequence was introduced to the Western world by an Italian mathematician named Fibonacci in the 1200s. You can see this sequence in plants, animals, hurricanes and even galaxies.

This sequence is also connected to something called the golden ratio, which is about 1.618. This ratio often appears in nature's designs, making them efficient and beautiful.

Aloe polyphylla, a plant endemic to the mountains of Lesotho in Southern Africa, is a great example of the Fibonacci sequence. This plant grows its leaves in perfect spirals that can twist either clockwise or counterclockwise.

As the plant grows, its leaves stay in this spiral pattern, creating a stunning, almost hypnotic design. Usually, the plant forms five spirals, and the number of leaves in each spiral often matches Fibonacci numbers.

The Fibonacci spirals in *Aloe polyphylla* are not random. They help the plant in several ways:

- The spiral pattern spreads the leaves out, giving each one plenty of sunlight for photosynthesis.
- The overlapping leaves direct water toward the centre of the plant, helping it collect and store water in dry conditions.
- The spiral arrangement ensures the plant uses space efficiently, which is important when growing in rocky or crowded areas.

Aloe polyphylla is just one example of how the Fibonacci sequence appears in nature.

You can also see it in how seeds are arranged in a sunflower, in the shells of sea creatures, and in many other places.

These patterns are not just beautiful; they are nature's way of solving problems and making things work better.

By studying these patterns, we can better understand and appreciate the amazing world around us.



WildlifeCampus:

A learning platform
loved by students
around the world



WildlifeCampus has been at the forefront of conservation education for more than two decades, providing a unique, flexible, and accessible online learning platform.

However, the overwhelming love and appreciation it receives from its students truly sets it apart. WildlifeCampus has created a community where passion for wildlife and learning thrive from aspiring conservationists to seasoned ecotourism professionals.

So, what is it about WildlifeCampus that students rave about?

Flexibility that fits every lifestyle

One of the most common praises from students is the platform's self-paced learning model. Whether you're a busy professional, a full-time student, or someone passionate about wildlife and seeking a career change, WildlifeCampus fits seamlessly into any schedule. "I love that I can study anytime, anywhere," says Sarah, a student from Kenya. "The flexibility allowed me to balance my job and studies without feeling overwhelmed."

Affordable access to world-class education

WildlifeCampus has made quality conservation education available to everyone, regardless of their financial situation. Many students highlight the affordability of the courses as a major draw. "Studying wildlife and ecotourism was always a dream of mine, but traditional programs were out of reach financially. WildlifeCampus made it possible," shares Andrew, a student from South Africa.

Diverse and engaging course offerings

With 50 courses ranging from Game Lodge Management to Wildlife Photography and Field Guiding, WildlifeCampus offers something for everyone. Students appreciate the depth and practicality of the content. "The courses are so detailed and relevant. I could immediately apply what I learned to my job at a game reserve," says Emma, a student from Australia.

Supportive and passionate community

WildlifeCampus isn't just a learning platform; it's a global community of wildlife enthusiasts and professionals. Many students highlight the sense of connection they feel to others who share their passion. "The platform connects me to like-minded individuals. It feels like I'm part of something bigger, something meaningful," says Johan, a student from Sweden.

Empowering careers and personal growth

Perhaps the most impactful aspect of WildlifeCampus is how it empowers students to achieve their goals, whether that's breaking into the wildlife industry or simply deepening their understanding of nature. Students often go on to work in ecotourism, conservation, and education. "WildlifeCampus changed my life," says Thandiwe, a student from Botswana. "It gave me the knowledge and confidence to start my own conservation initiative."

Loved by students, trusted by the industry

WildlifeCampus has earned its reputation as a trusted name in wildlife and conservation education, not just because of its high-quality courses but because of the stories of success, growth, and transformation from its students. It's more than an educational platform; it's a stepping stone to a brighter, more sustainable future for both people and the planet.

For students, WildlifeCampus isn't just about learning; it's about becoming part of a movement dedicated to understanding, preserving, and celebrating the natural world. And that's why they love it.



Old World Monkeys:

Colobus Monkeys



**By WildlifeCampus
student**

Amy Holt

Old World monkeys are more closely related to us and other apes than the New World monkeys. They are native to Africa and Asia and include colobus monkeys, macaques, mandrills, drills, baboons, vervet monkeys, mangabeys, and Roloway monkeys. Old World monkeys are unique due to their downward-pointing nostrils, opposing thumbs, large and complex social structures, and large body size in comparison to New World monkeys.

Colobus monkeys are an unusual Old World monkey thanks to a physical oddity; they lack thumbs. Why do they lack thumbs? What makes these monkeys distinctive? Let's delve into the lives of colobus monkeys.

Colobus monkeys are divided into three genera: Genus *Colobus*, which has six species; Genus *Procolobus*, which has only one species; and Genus *Piliocolobus*, which has twelve species. Genus *Colobus* includes one of the most strikingly beautiful primates: the Angolan black-and-white colobus. These monkeys inhabit a fragmented range from Nigeria to Tanzania, and Gabon to Ethiopia. They have shiny black coats paired with white fur that frames their face.

Their offspring are born completely white with pink faces. This makes the newborns easier to spot amongst the leaves. It takes about three months to transition into the iconic black and white colouration. Black and white colobus monkeys are the most arboreal of all African monkeys.

They use branches as trampolines to leap up to fifteen metres. Their hind legs are longer than their forelimbs, helping them manoeuvre in the forest canopy. Whilst leaping through the forest, their long tails help with trajectory, and their mantle hair acts as a parachute to slow them down as they land. These monkeys don't have cheek pouches like most African monkeys.

Instead, they have a sophisticated digestive system: a three-chambered stomach that has specific bacteria for fermenting and digesting leaves efficiently. Black and white colobus monkeys are able to eat toxic and indigestible plant matter which other monkeys are unable to do, thus they don't need to worry much about competition for food.

These monkeys are territorial and live in troops of five to ten monkeys: a dominant male, several females and their young. Females remain with their natal group for life, while males leave just before maturity to establish their own troops or challenge existing dominant males.

Black colobus monkeys, as the name suggests, are entirely black and are the oldest of the colobus monkeys, appearing about three to four million years ago. They are native to the forests of Equatorial Guinea, Congo, and Gabon. Their babies are born brown and change to black after a few months.

Black colobus monkeys have thin and long fingers that act as hooks to hold onto branches. The lack of thumbs allows them to swing through the trees with ease. They have thickened areas of tissue on their rump, known as ischial callosities or, more simply, sitting pads.

These allow them to sleep sitting up on thin branches without falling. Like other colobus monkeys, their eyes are set further apart to give them better depth perception. This allows them to accurately judge the distances between branches. Black colobus monkeys eat foliage, seeds, and buds, but it depends on where they live.

Black colobus monkeys that inhabit the forest in Douala-Edea in Cameroon eat more seeds than leaves because the leaves are low in nutrients. The lack of thumbs makes the task of eating seeds time-consuming. However, their molars are flat and well-adapted for crushing seeds. Black colobus monkeys have relatively low activity levels; they spend most of their day socialising and grooming in the upper canopy.

Adult males groom one another, as do juvenile males. While females groom across generations and genders, with adult males getting the most attention. These monkeys live in multi-male and multi-female troops of ten to twenty individuals, which can include up to three adult males. Both males and females leave their natal group to join a new group when they are ready to mate.

King colobus monkeys are native to tropical lowland and montane rainforests of Africa's west coast; they rely on primary forests and struggle to thrive in degraded forests. These colobus monkeys are mostly black with striking patches of long white hair framing the face.

Long silvery-white hair streams down from each shoulder. The tail is distinctive, as it is black closest to the body, with the rest covered in long white hair. Newborns are born with white hair and black hands and feet. They develop their black coats as they age. King colobus monkeys eat mostly leaves, supplemented with fruits and flowers. They spend most of their day foraging and are highly arboreal like other colobus monkeys.

These monkeys live in troops of three to four adult females and one to three adult males. Males maintain a dominant hierarchy and don't often interact with each other.

Olive colobus are the only species in the genus *Procolobus* and they are endemic to the western coast of Africa. This is the smallest colobus monkey but has the largest feet of all the colobus monkeys. Olive colobus monkeys, as the name hints, are olive-coloured with a tint of brown and grey. This camouflages them within the trees. These monkeys prefer to eat young leaves, supplementing their diet with flowers and unripe seeds.

As shy monkeys, they prefer the dense growth in the lower forest. Olive colobus monkeys live in small troops of three to fifteen individuals: multiple males, females, and their offspring. All juveniles leave their natal group, once matured, to join other troops.

After an infant is born, it is carried in its mother's mouth for the first few weeks—this is unusual among primate species. Some studies have found male olive colobus monkeys associate with Diana monkey troops for years to gain protection and mating partners. Female olive colobus monkeys felt safer around these males.

The genus *Piliocolobus* is known as the red colobus and includes the ashy red colobus monkeys and the Zanzibar red colobus monkeys.

The ashy red colobus monkey lives in forests of western Uganda and western Tanzania, with about 20,000 individuals alive today, making them endangered.

These colobus monkeys have ashy-grey coats with little caps of red hair on top of their heads, long dark-brown tails, and dark grey or black hands and feet. Babies are born with black faces that lighten to a dark grey. These monkeys eat immature leaves and leaf buds. Due to digestion occurring through multiple chambers, it is a slow process.

Thus, ashy red colobus monkeys spend most of their waking hours lazing around the canopy. They often feed in proximity to other monkey species for protection. Ashy red colobus monkeys form troops of forty-five to fifty-nine individuals. These larger groups frequently break into smaller groups when in search of food, then return to each other again.

Males remain with their natal group, while females are free to move between different groups. Unlike other colobus monkeys, females develop noticeable swellings on their bums that signal when they are ready to mate.

These swellings often develop when females are not in oestrus. Males are likely to kill infants that aren't theirs, so females mate with more than one male to make it unclear who the biological father is. This is known as paternity confusion. Ashy red colobus infants are very playful, engaging in social play for more than a quarter of their lives. They often play fighting and chasing games.

The Zanzibar red colobus monkey is endemic to the main island of the Zanzibar archipelago. They are a dark red to black colour, with a black stripe along the shoulders and arms, black faces, long white hair crowning the top of their heads, and the nose and lips feature a distinct pink mark. Newborns have black and white hair, with red and brown pigments appearing as they age.

The Zanzibar red colobus monkey's diet primarily consists of young leaves. They have a four-chambered stomach, which makes digestion a very slow process.

This makes Zanzibar red colobus monkeys the slowest-moving of all the colobus species. They spend long periods of inactivity grooming and playing with each other and burping. These monkeys are very social, with troop sizes ranging from thirty to fifty individuals. This consists of up to four adult males, many females and offspring. There is a dominance hierarchy among the males. Similarly to ashy red colobus monkeys, they will divide into smaller groups when foraging and then regroup.

Both females and males leave their natal group to breed with members of other groups. Just before mating, males will probe the females' vaginal area with their fingers, then sniff the area. This is done so the male can determine if the female is actually ready to breed by detecting certain hormones. Red colobus monkeys are one of the most threatened non-ape primates in mainland Africa, with more than half of red colobus species classified as endangered and critically endangered.

Each colobus genus and species has a different fur colouration, a specific geographic range in Africa, and a different social structure. However, all colobus monkeys face the same threats: habitat loss and fragmentation, and bushmeat hunting. For example, Uganda has only one-twentieth of its original forest still standing—home to the ashy red colobus monkeys. Black colobus monkeys are an easy target for bushmeat hunters due to their large size and

By protecting colobus monkeys, we can protect Africa's tropical forests. This is vital for lessening the impacts of climate change.

Image below: Zanzibar red colobus monkey
By Stuart on Nature.



Hospitality courses

and a new course coming in March 2025!

WildlifeCampus offers **three hospitality courses** that provide a well-rounded skill set for success in the lodge industry.

The combination equips you to effectively manage operations, optimise financial performance, and deliver exceptional guest experiences, making you a versatile and valuable asset in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Game Lodge Management: Covers all aspects of lodge operations, including staff and resource management, guest experiences, and advancements in lodge technology and food services, preparing you for leadership roles.

Front of House Lodge Operations: Developed by Wild Dreams Hospitality, this course focuses on guest relations, interpersonal skills, and service excellence for guest-facing roles.

Game Lodge Economics (coming in March 2025): Provides essential financial skills, including budgeting, financial analysis, revenue forecasting, and pricing strategies to optimise profitability.

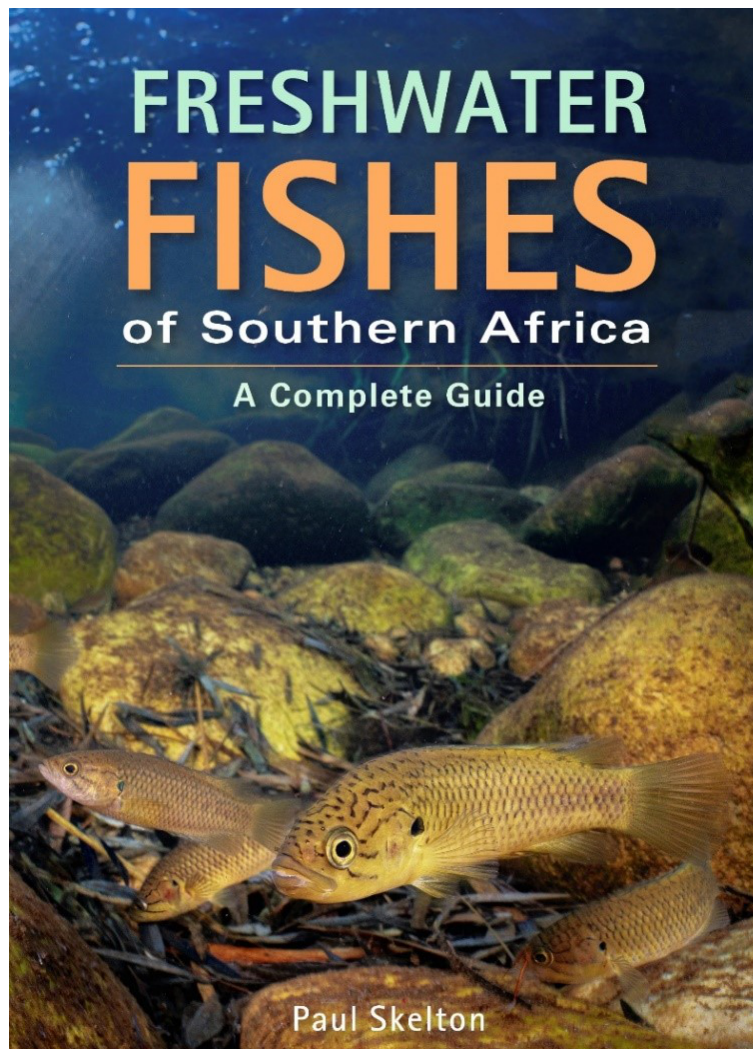
All three courses are perfect for anyone looking to enter or advance in the wildlife hospitality sector. Upon completion, students receive **industry-recognised certificates**, highly valued by potential employers, demonstrating your expertise and commitment to professional growth.



Highly recommended

By WildlifeCampus

Struik Nature Guides are the perfect complement to our online courses, offering practical, in-depth field references that enhance your learning experience. While our courses provide the theoretical knowledge needed to excel in wildlife and hospitality industries, Struik Nature Guides feature thousands of species to assist with identification, paired with detailed illustrations and expert insights.



WildlifeCampus Magazine
- 14 -

Well over 300 freshwater fish species found in the region's rivers, lakes and dams feature in this fully revised third edition of *Freshwater Fishes of Southern Africa*. Updated and expanded, this definitive guide includes newly described species, the latest taxonomic changes, new photographs and full-colour illustrations, and up-to-date distribution maps.

An in-depth introduction, supported by explanatory illustrations and photographs, covers:

- A short history of fish science in the region
- Ecoregions in which species occur
- Anatomy, biology and ecology
- Human impacts on fishes
- Conservation status
- New understanding of evolutionary relationships between fish groups.

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The book also includes detailed species accounts (size, diagnostic features, biology, ecology, conservation, and uses by humans) and succinct descriptions of large taxonomic groups of fish, with global distribution charts.

An invaluable tool for anglers, students and academics in the field, and conservationists.

Otjikoto tilapia *Tilapia guineensis* Trevaux, 1936
Otjikoto-kurper



140 mm TL. D XIV-XV, 10-11; A III, 8-10. Scales 27 or 28 in lateral line. Body shape variable, usually moderately deep and ovoid. Head predorsal profile straight; mouth small and terminal; teeth fine and bicuspid, in 3 rows; gill rakers 9-12, short.



A school of Otjikoto tilapia in Lake Guin, Namibia

white, blue, yellow and black. Black throat, abdomen and anal fin characteristic of breeding individuals.
Distribution Naturally endemic to Lake Guin, Namibia. Translocated to Lake Otjikoto and several reservoirs in Namibia.
Biology and ecology Lake Guin is an open sinkhole lake, 120 m across and more than 100 m deep, with clear water and temperatures within a limited range of 20-27°C. The fishes may occur in the middle of the lake, but generally congregate, breed and feed from the near-vertical shores. Feeds primarily on diatoms and algae. Narrow shelves used for breeding. Territories are established and defended, and eggs guarded and tended by both parents.
Uses Attractive aquarium species. Valuable for evolutionary studies.
Notes The common name reflects its presence in Otjikoto Lake in northern Namibia, where it has been introduced. Otjikoto is exposed to the public and somewhat better known than Lake Guin, after which the species is scientifically named.
Conservation Use and depletion of local groundwater resources and the potential impact of introduced fishes to the single indigenous population site seriously threaten the species' long-term survival.

Okavango tilapia *Tilapia ruweti* (Pill) is Thyx van den Aulmeirde, 1953
Okavango-kurper



104 mm TL. D XIV-XV, 10-12; A III, 8-9. Scales 27-29 in lateral line. Body slender and ellipsoid. Head obliquely pointed; eyes large; mouth small and terminal. Caudal fin rounded-truncate. Colour variable and attractive. Body olive or bright iridescent green with rows of bright blue spots and 8 or 9 sooty vertical bars. Head with iridescent green and blue tawny in

breeding males). Fins green-yellowish, the soft dorsal, anal and caudal fins distinctly spotted with sooty or creamish spots; margin of dorsal fin a thin tricoloured blue, white and red band; pelvic sooty. Breeding females turn dark greenish-black. Juveniles can be recognised by their ellipsoid shape, spotted caudal fin, and sooty pelvic fins and body bars.

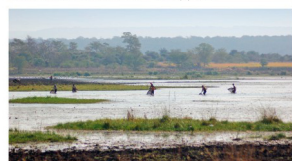
380 Austroriparian cichlids

Austroriparian cichlids 381

Thousand-spot river pipefish *Microphis mullipunctatus* (Kau, 1856)
Kortstert-pypvis



215 mm TL. D 39-54; A 4. Body slender, cylindrical, with 20-22 abdominal and 21-24 caudal bony rings. Head large, fitting 4.2-5.2x in SL, with long rostrum. Anal ring nearer end of caudal than head. Dorsal fin moderately short-based, mainly behind anal. Tail section relatively short. Yellowish-brown to dark green, with fine blackish-white spots on abdomen.
Distribution East Coast from Kenya south to KwaZulu-Natal area, South Africa. Also



448 Seahorses and pipefishes

FAMILY SPARIDAE *Seabreams*

This family includes several well-known deep-bodied, spiny-finned marine angling species. Diagnostic features include the mouth with the maxilla fitting into a groove on the premaxilla, large canine teeth at the front of the jaws, a single lateral line and an undivided dorsal fin. The single species from freshwater in southern Africa is recorded sporadically.

Genus *Acanthopagrus*

Species in this genus are described as rodent-like fishes on account of the manner in which they dart in and out to nibble baited hooks. There is one species recorded from our freshwater.

Riverbream *Acanthopagrus vago* (Peters, 1852)



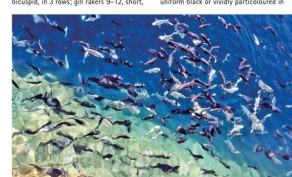
750 mm FL. D XI-XII, 10-13; A III, 8-9. Scales 43-47 in lateral line. Deep-bodied. Incisors 4-6 in upper jaw, 6-8 in lower jaw. Caudal fin forked. Silvery-grey to black, with a black patch behind upper gill cover; fins infused with yellow.
Distribution East Coast from Zambesi River, Mozambique, south to the Kinyana area, South Africa.
Biology and ecology A euryhaline species, common in estuaries, sporadic in freshwater; reported as far inland as the Kruger National Park. Feeds on a wide variety of polychaete worms, molluscs, shrimps, crabs and small fish. Breeds in winter at sea; juveniles enter estuaries from winter to mid-summer.
Uses A popular angling species; also a subsistence species.

Seabreams 449

Otjikoto tilapia *Tilapia guineensis* Trevaux, 1936
Otjikoto-kurper



140 mm TL. D XI-XV, 10-11; A III, 8-10. Scales 27 or 28 in lateral line. Body shape variable, usually moderately deep and ovoid. Head predorsal profile straight; mouth small and terminal; teeth fine and bicuspid, in 3 rows; gill rakers 9-12, short.



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380 Austroriparian cichlids

Austroriparian cichlids 381

Animal Tracks & Signs

Rolling

By Chris and
Mathilde Stuart



For more on our
Animal Tracks and
Signs of Africa course:

**Click
here**

Chris (1950–2024) & Mathilde Stuart are the highly regarded authors of a range of books, field guides and mobile applications on African mammals, wildlife and conservation. Much of Chris (1950–2024) & Mathilde Stuart are the highly regarded authors of a range of books, field guides and mobile applications on African mammals, wildlife and conservation. Much of their time has been spent travelling the world in search of wild mammals and promoting their conservation with the written word. Mathilde holds a doctorate in medicine from the University of Innsbruck and Chris an MSc from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Rolling in soft soil or sand is a common behaviour observed in many mammal species, serving various purposes such as grooming, parasite control, and thermoregulation.

Similarly, dust-bathing is a widespread activity among numerous bird species, helping to keep their feathers clean and free from excess oils or parasites.

These behaviours often take place at any suitable site where the substrate allows for effective rolling or dusting, and over time, repeated use can result in the formation of distinct hollows. These depressions may become well-established, especially if they are located in favourable areas that provide the right texture and depth of soil or sand.

In some cases, multiple species may utilise the same hollow, either sequentially or opportunistically, leading to a complex and sometimes confusing array of overlapping tracks and signs of activity.

This shared use of rolling or dust-bathing sites is particularly evident in arid and semi-arid environments, where suitable locations may be limited.

A striking example of this behaviour can be observed in the Namib Desert, where Hartmann's mountain zebras frequently create rolling sites by repurposing old ostrich nesting depressions.

These shallow, sandy hollows provide an ideal location for the zebras to roll and coat their bodies with dust, likely helping to control parasites and maintain their skin condition.

Another notable example comes from rock-dwelling hyraxes (*Procavia spp.*), which are avid dust-bathers. They create numerous small hollows, each approximately 30 cm in diameter, typically situated close to their rocky shelters.

These dusting sites serve an essential role in the hyraxes' grooming routine, helping to remove excess moisture and regulate their fur condition in the dry environments they inhabit.

Through these behaviours, both mammals and birds leave behind clear ecological imprints on the landscape, shaping their habitats in subtle yet significant ways.

Image below: A roll site used by Hartmann's zebra and gemsbok. Favoured rolling hollows are often located in riverbeds or on floodplains.



Travel Buggz

Adventures

The Travel Buggz are helping Alyssa Carter with fund raising - how can you help?

"The Buggz have met a young girl, Alyssa Carter, who is working hard at raising funds for the rhinos.

"We have to help!" exclaims Aiden.

"I have an idea," Lucy jumps excitedly.

"Let's sell the chocolates and biscuits at our schools and in our community".

"The Girl Guides can work toward their Community Service badge by helping to sell the goodies".

"Some children have even donated their pocket money towards the cause," Alyssa adds.

"I want to make posters like Alyssa, that I can put everywhere," Lucy bubbles. "let's go buy cardboard and paints".



"Slow down", Bella Butterfly warns. "This needs careful planning. Let's meet and make a mind-map just like you learn at school".

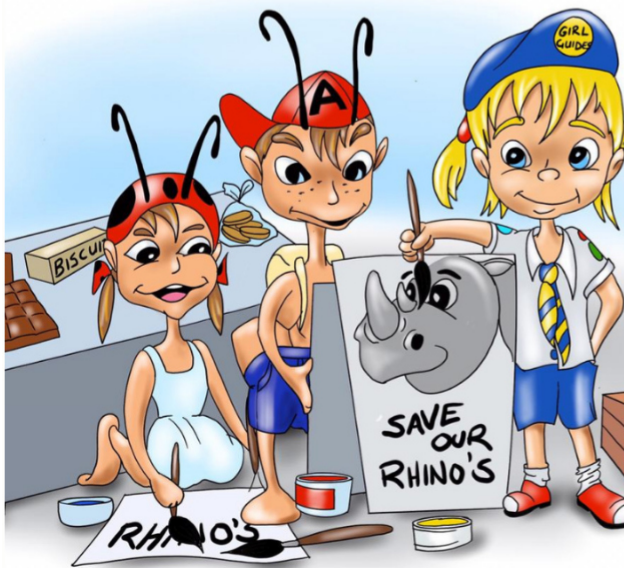
"We can use my whiteboard," Aiden sparks.

"Chocolates, biscuits and stuffed animals have sold well," Alyssa says excitedly, "and my Save the Rhino's Facebook page has many followers".

"I love chocolates, I will definitely buy," Bella licks her luscious lips.

We can help Alyssa to sell her goodies at markets.

Their plans start coming together.



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

Course Spotlight



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African Folklore

Vultures



By Credo Mutwa

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

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

Our people were always taught that if you want to live in harmony with nature, you must praise it, sing to it, sing for it and then sing in honour of it. In the land of the black people, in days before western civilization held its clouds over the face of my motherland, destroying ancient traditions, turning ancient beliefs into mockery, birds such as the vultures were respected and honoured.

Our people protected vultures with some of the strictest laws they were capable of enacting. Vultures were known as Izingwony zenkosi, which means the birds of the Lord, or the birds of the king. And they were exactly that. Vultures of all kinds were protected by the king of the land. And our kings made sure that vultures were fed and never left the land over which the king ruled. In Zululand (KwaZulu-Natal) there were special places, places in which large flocks of vultures used to gather which were under the personal protection of the Zulu monarch himself.

To African people the vulture was the symbol of fertility. It was the grandmother who laid many eggs according to one story. Eggs out of which emerge not little vultures, but any kind of animal that there is on earth. Some tribes believe that the vulture was the original great earth mother.

And our people believed that where there are vultures, there, there is safety, there, there is purity, there, there is life.

In the language of the Zulu people a vulture was called Inqe, which means the purifier, the one who cleans off the land. In the language of the Tswana speaking people a vulture was known as Lenong. Again, we see the word, Nong, which has to do with fertility, with the fatness of the land. Thus, the vulture is the fertilizer of the earth, the one who makes the earth fat.

One tribe calls vultures by a strange name, Edlanga, in singular, and Amadlanga, in plural. This word Edlanga, or Amadlanga, literally means a warrior, an army man. For warriors to assemble and form ranks before attacking is known in Zulu as Ukudlanga, to assemble to be marshalled to prepare for war.

Stories say that the vultures were the reincarnated souls of warriors who had died bravely in battle. They were also reincarnated souls of brave hunters who had died while out on a hunt. One of the greatest things that could happen to either a warrior or a hunter was to be permitted by the tribal king to wear the feathers of a vulture as part of one's headdress.



Now here is an interesting thing. You were not allowed to kill the vulture whose feathers you were to wear. You had to dig a big round hole with the help of friends, a hole into which you could go and stand comfortably. Then you had to cover this hole with a lattice work of wood and with branches of trees.

Then a dead ox would be placed very close to the lip of that hole. And then you had to wait, hour after extra arduous hour. The vultures would come and swarm around the dead animal next to the hole in which you were hiding.

And as the vultures got busy eating, you had to seize one of the birds by the legs and hold it fast, and then pull off three feathers from its tail or its wings. When you have done this, you must stay in the hole until nightfall with your feathers.

Then the vultures would go away, and you would emerge triumphant, carrying the three feathers to the king. Then the king himself would place the three feathers in your headdress.

Why did there have to be three feathers? According to African symbolism, three feathers represents what we call the three lights of a human being: truth, faith and honesty.

These were the three lights of the soul of the human being.

The bones of a vulture which has died of natural causes, are regarded by African healers and shamans as to be of great value. Ground into a powder, the bones of a vulture are used to protect people from mortal enemies, but the vulture must have died of natural causes in order for the medicine to be effective.

The beak of a dead vulture is a powerful instrument of divination and it is part of the equipment of priest diviners.

If someone dreams of vultures when one is about to build a family, this is taken to mean that one will be a parent of strong children, children who will be great warriors, great defenders of the home and the family.

But if one dreams that one is being devoured by vultures, this is a dream which has taken to mean that one must mend one's ways because the gods are getting angry and might inflict death upon the person as punishment for a long list of transgressions.



Sunrise and sunset

The bookends of
a day on safari



By David Batzofin



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

A safari is more than just an adventure; it is a journey through nature's theatre, where the rising and setting of the sun form the bookends of an unforgettable experience. Yet, in the eager pursuit of wildlife, these daily spectacles are often overlooked, mere preludes and conclusions to the search for lions, elephants, and elusive leopards. But for those who pause, who truly take in the majesty of the sky's shifting hues, these moments become some of the most profound of the entire journey.

An African sunrise is a fleeting miracle, a whispered promise of the day to come. In the hushed stillness of the early morning, the sky is painted in soft pastels—blush pinks, deep purples, and the gentle gold of an awakening sun. The land holds its breath as a sliver of light emerges, inching upward with slow determination. For a brief, perfect moment, the world is bathed in an ethereal glow. It is in this moment, before the sun has fully taken its place, that magic lingers.

Once the sun clears the horizon, the transition is swift. The land awakens, the air warms, and shadows retreat. The quiet awe of dawn dissolves into the excitement of the day. Engines start, binoculars are raised, and attention shifts to the wild inhabitants stirring in the morning light. The show must go on, but those who take the time to witness the sun's arrival carry with them an appreciation of nature's grand opening act.

As the day draws to a close, the pace slows, and the safari takes on a different rhythm. The animals have retreated into the shadows, and the air is thick with the scent of earth and acacia. A sundowner stop becomes a ritual—an invitation to exhale, to savour a chilled beverage and snacks while the sky prepares for its final performance.

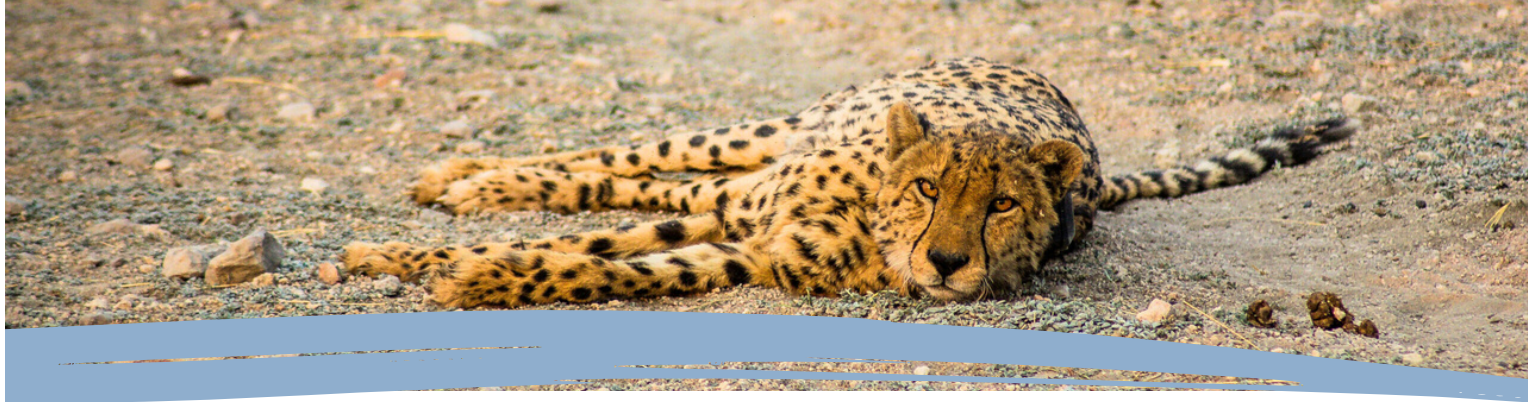
Unlike the morning's gentle ascent, the sunset often feels abrupt, as though the sun has been let go, plummeting toward the horizon with dramatic urgency. The colours shift rapidly—burnished orange to deep crimson, then dusky violet. Within moments, the sky is cloaked in darkness, the heat of the day dissipating into the cool embrace of night.

This transformation is more than visual—it is deeply emotional. The hum of cicadas gives way to the distant calls of nocturnal hunters. The reserve is alive in a different way, no longer a landscape of discovery but one of mystery. It is a time for quiet reflection, for gratitude, for feeling a part of something ancient and unchanging.

To truly embrace the safari experience is to engage with these extremes—not just the thrill of spotting a lion on the prowl, but the profound beauty of the natural world as it wakes and rests. The sunrise and sunset are not just transitions; they are sacred pauses, allowing travellers to connect with the land, with themselves, and with the sheer wonder of being present in such a place.

So, the next time you find yourself on safari, take a moment. Let the sun's ascent fill you with hope and its descent stir something deeper. Because in the spaces between light and darkness, the soul of Africa reveals itself.





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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.

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Wishing you a successful job search!
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www.wilddreams.co.za





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 ten titles, contact : sandy@travelbuggz.co.za. +27 82 908 7125



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Hayley is a 6-figure entrepreneur who has found her own purpose in helping people find theirs! As a certified career & life coach, with additional certifications in spiritual coaching & law of attraction she offers a compassionate & holistic approach to her clients whether they are trying to get clarity on a career or business path.

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