



WildlifeCampus

20
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY

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Magazine

Special conservation
course packages



The elusive
Green mamba

ASI

Well spotted
by D. Batzofin

Full WildlifeCampus
Course Listing

What is guiding all about?

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What is guiding all about?



WildlifeCampus CEO
Todd Kaplan

Continuing on with true insights from Garth Thompson's *Guides Guide to Guiding*, he examines the most fundamental question of all: "What is guiding all about?"

Driving good-looking people around in an open safari vehicle, in your sleeveless khaki shirt, showing off your muscular sun drenched arms and impressing your guests on how close you can get to lions on a kill?

Telling hunting stories around the campfire each night after your sixth scotch? If that is your idea of guiding, not only are you reading the wrong magazine, you are also in the wrong profession!

Guiding is essentially about a genuine enjoyment of people and an honest appreciation of, and dedication to, the many faces nature has to offer. It is indeed a privileged occupation. Imagine being paid to take people out into the wilds of Africa, every morning, afternoon and evening. To sit around the warm, flickering flames of a campfire each evening, savouring the rich smell of wood smoke, while friendships are formed and forged. The people for whom you are interpreting Africa have worked long and hard for months, even years, to come and see what you have to show them in a couple of weeks. They have great expectations of this brief interval of time.

You hold in your hands the opportunity to realise their dreams and fantasies of Africa - or to destroy them. It all depends on one little thing that in fact should play the biggest part in life: your attitude. It's not their attitude that is relevant - they are paying you for a service and they are on a well-earned holiday.

What is each client's history? Do you know or care? I was very fortunate to learn my greatest lesson in guiding in my third year as a guide. In the 1980s a group of sixteen

enthusiastic Texans from the Fort Worth Zoo spent four days on safari with us in Hwange National Park before moving on to a number of other parks around Zimbabwe. The group was as mixed and varied as you would expect any group of that size to be. Old and young, fat and thin, loud and quiet - you can imagine how many diverse personalities were present.

A few months later I went on my first visit to the United States. My young eyes were out on stalks for the entire duration of the visit. I went to Fort Worth to give a slide show at the zoo. The following night the group of sixteen safari 'alumni' got together at someone's home, each person bringing along their ten best slides from their recent African safari. As all relived their various experiences, I marvelled at the delight and joy they showed as each slide came up. It was enthralling to see, some months after I had been with them on safari, how much it had meant to them. I asked myself, had I really pulled out all the stops? I thought I had given my best, but, what if I hadn't? Could I have done more to give these appreciative people a better wildlife experience?



What is guiding all about?

After the slide show we stood around chatting and eating. I began talking to a girl named Becky, a quiet and unobtrusive soul in her mid-thirties, the type of person who doesn't expect a great deal of attention. I asked her the standard run-of-the-mill question;

'So, when are you coming back to Africa?' I was expecting the standard reply of 'Oh, I just can't wait!' But Becky replied sadly, 'Never.'

I was quite shocked at this unusual reply, and asked her why. She went on to tell me that both she and her husband had saved up for five years to send her to Africa! It had been her childhood dream to visit the great game reserves of Africa. I asked, with a little trepidation, how she had enjoyed her once-in-a-lifetime experience. She said it was better than she had ever imagined...

How many people like Becky go through our hands without us knowing the background to their visit?



Imagine a sulky, arrogant, bored jeep-jockey, rally driver of a guide, showering their attention on the attractive tourist in the seat beside them, while ignoring their duty to show and share the countless wonders that Africa has to offer to the Beckys in the back of the vehicle?

Guiding is far more about people than animals. You may spend ten hours a day looking at four-legged animals, but you will spend between fifteen and eighteen hours daily with the two-legged ones.

There are very few professions where you spend so much time with the same people. On a canoeing, walking or mobile camping safari, you are with your clients every waking hour, which is normally from dawn till around ten at night. Most of these safaris are five days or longer. During this time you are their guide, teacher, protector, friend, doctor, storyteller, cook and dish-washer.

I am often asked, 'You must hate taking out all those foreigners and being with people for so much of the time?' But look at it another way. As a guide you see the best side of humanity. First, you work in the biggest and most beautiful office in the world. Second, your clients are on holiday. They are out for a good time. They want fun, laughter and safe adventure. They are also on foreign turf. That aggressive chief executive from Manhattan is out of his depth - he hasn't a clue how to track a rhino, or where to try and find your resident leopard. People who have high-ranking positions in society are often feared or idolised by the minions around them. In a wilderness situation, however, their credit card can't protect them from a charging lion. That's why they hired you.

In modern society, people are worried about image, their looks, brand of clothes, jewellery, how they present themselves, what car they drive, where they live, what schools their children go to, which ski resort they frequent, which cocktail party is the right one to be seen at, with whom not to be associated. Yet, when these same people are out on safari, they drop all the social barriers and pretences they need to survive in their jungle.

What is guiding all about?

They meet other guests in the various safari camps who come from totally different social, financial, political, and cultural backgrounds.

Life-long friendships are often formed.

What draws these social opposites together? The answer lies in the beauty and simplicity of untouched nature. If you had a little hand in it, too, imagine how rewarding it would feel.

When about to take some high-ranking businessmen out on safari in the past, I had been forewarned by their staff that I would be in for a hard time, because of their reputation for being fussy, aggressive, sullen, impatient, restless, and difficult to please. But once the 'ogres' arrived, they turned out to be quite the opposite. When invited to visit them back in their ivory towers, eyebrows were raised by the staff, as

the top executive gave an ecstatic welcome to a khaki-clad, rankles imposter!

Guiding is such a privileged profession: your 'office' is a massive park, teeming with so many colourful and interesting forms of wildlife. In turn, your park is a theatre, an amazing open-air amphitheatre, where the props are real living trees, clouds, rivers and mountains. The orchestra comprises the combined melody made up from the sounds of the wind, bird song, gurgling rivers, a lion's roar, a hippo's snort, the eerie yodel of a black backed jackal. The animals are the actors, their beauty and actions speaking their parts. You are the presenter, with endless opportunities to share an ever-changing and unwritten show with your fellow man. Your guests from all corners of the globe and from all walks of life, are the mobile audience.

Garth Thompson is one of the world's foremost field guides.

Did you know?

*Upon registration as a WildlifeCampus Online student, you will immediately be assigned **13 FREE courses** to your "**My Courses**" page*

We encourage you to try all the complimentary content, this will give you a clear idea on our mode of course delivery and assessment. This provides you with an excellent opportunity to fully experience WildlifeCampus, prior to making any purchase decision. If required, a certificate for a completed course may be redeemed at a cost of R 250 each.

OR... Access ALL OUR ONLINE COURSES
Find out more about our monthly subscription
option on page 15 of this magazine.



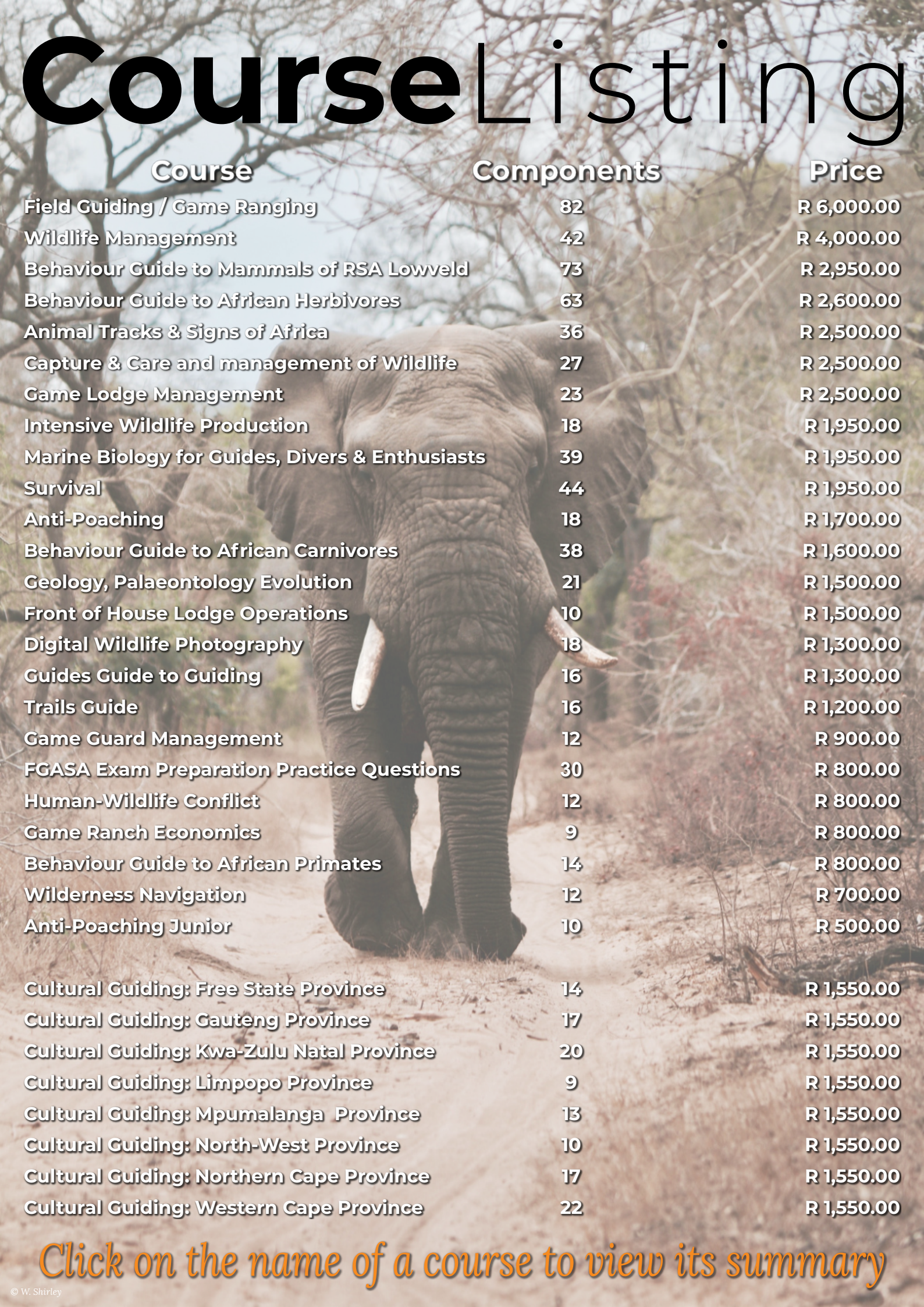
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In this Magazine

Editorial: “What is guiding all about?”	2
FREE Courses	4
Full course listing	6
The elusive green mamba by ASI	7
How to join WildlifeCampus in 4 steps	9
Course update: Front of House Lodge operations	10
WildlifeCampus student perspective: Flora Spaeth	11
Special: conservation course packages	13
“Well spotted” by D. Batzofin	14
WildlifeCampus Subscription	15

Course Listing



Course	Components	Price
Field Guiding / Game Ranging	82	R 6,000.00
Wildlife Management	42	R 4,000.00
Behaviour Guide to Mammals of RSA Lowveld	73	R 2,950.00
Behaviour Guide to African Herbivores	63	R 2,600.00
Animal Tracks & Signs of Africa	36	R 2,500.00
Capture & Care and management of Wildlife	27	R 2,500.00
Game Lodge Management	23	R 2,500.00
Intensive Wildlife Production	18	R 1,950.00
Marine Biology for Guides, Divers & Enthusiasts	39	R 1,950.00
Survival	44	R 1,950.00
Anti-Poaching	18	R 1,700.00
Behaviour Guide to African Carnivores	38	R 1,600.00
Geology, Palaeontology Evolution	21	R 1,500.00
Front of House Lodge Operations	10	R 1,500.00
Digital Wildlife Photography	18	R 1,300.00
Guides Guide to Guiding	16	R 1,300.00
Trails Guide	16	R 1,200.00
Game Guard Management	12	R 900.00
FGASA Exam Preparation Practice Questions	30	R 800.00
Human-Wildlife Conflict	12	R 800.00
Game Ranch Economics	9	R 800.00
Behaviour Guide to African Primates	14	R 800.00
Wilderness Navigation	12	R 700.00
Anti-Poaching Junior	10	R 500.00
Cultural Guiding: Free State Province	14	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Gauteng Province	17	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Kwa-Zulu Natal Province	20	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Limpopo Province	9	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Mpumalanga Province	13	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: North-West Province	10	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Northern Cape Province	17	R 1,550.00
Cultural Guiding: Western Cape Province	22	R 1,550.00

Click on the name of a course to view its summary

THE ELUSIVE GREEN MAMBA



The Green Mamba (*Dendroaspis angusticeps*) is Africa's largest and probably best-known green snake (closely followed by the Boomslang). They are usually found in thick vegetation and are shy and elusive snakes that avoid humans at all costs. They lack the nervousness of the Black Mamba and have a less potent venom.

- DISTRIBUTION -



In South Africa they are restricted to within 40 km of the sea in northern Zululand but around Durban and the KZN south coast no more than about 4 km from the sea where they live in dense coastal forest. Further north in Africa they go further inland and reach the forests on the eastern side of Zimbabwe as well as inland Tanzania and Kenya.

- SIZE -

The Green Mamba is the largest green snake in Southern Africa and can reach up to 2.5 m in length, but the average length is around 1.8m.

- COLOUR -

These snakes are bright green above, sometimes with a few scattered yellow scales and their bellies are pale to yellowish-green. Juveniles are often blue-green up to around 75cm, at which stage they gradually change to a bright green colour. They can be identified by the elongated coffin-shaped head, their so-called smile and large size. The eyes of the Green Mamba are dark green to green-brown or medium brown to greenish brown in juveniles. Harmless green snakes of the genus *Philothamnus* may have yellow to orange-yellow eyes that are quite different to that of the Green Mamba.

- HABITS -

This snake spends most of its life in dense coastal vegetation and seldom ventures to the ground, except to bask or chase its prey. Active during daylight hours, they move gracefully and quickly, disappearing into leafy backgrounds when threatened. It occasionally ventures into plantations or suburban gardens and may seek shade in houses, especially if there are shrubs that grow close to an open window.



- DIET -

Green Mambas hunt during the day and their diet consists of birds as well as tree-living mammals.

- CAN BE CONFUSED WITH... -

It is often confused with the harmless green snakes of the genus *Philothamnus* and the green Boomslang.



- REPRODUCTION -

This species is known to engage in male combat, where males will wrestle on the ground, twisting around one another with their heads raised in the air, to prove dominance. They do not bite one another, and the dominant male wins the rights to go and mate with the nearby female. This usually takes place in April in South Africa.



Mating takes place in trees, with the tails of both the male and female wrapped around one another and hanging down. Mating usually takes place from May to July. 6 -17 eggs are laid in summer in hollow tree trunks or leaf litter and the hatchlings measure 30-45 cm.



- VENOM -

Bites from this snake are rare, as they spend most of their life in dense coastal vegetation and avoid humans at all costs. Their venom is potently neurotoxic but also has cytotoxic properties causing progressive weakness and labored breathing as well as some swelling. Antivenom is effective in treating a bite and victims need to be taken to a hospital as soon as possible.

How to join *WildlifeCampus*

WildlifeCampus has been a FGASA endorsed distance learning provider since the year 2000. Over 25,000 students in over 154 countries have used WildlifeCampus to enhance their knowledge of our valuable Wildlife and Nature!

Are you a wildlife enthusiast, up for a career change, a professional in the wildlife/tourism industry or simply curious in all that involves natural sciences and wildlife?

Then our courses will be your thing!

In **4** Simple Steps

- Go to www.wildlifecampus.com
- Left on top of the homepage click the "Register" button
- Complete the registration form
- Click the "Register for free" button to complete your registration



**Or click the wax seal to start filling
in our registration form.**

Course Update

Front of House Lodge Operations

(Click for synopsis)

New subjects added:
“Tourism trends for 2021”
“Interpersonal skills”

This course is perfect for owners, managers and staff at lodges, hotels, restaurants, cafés, cruise ships/yachts, bars, airlines, catering/event venues, resorts or clubs. If you are looking to enter the hospitality industry, brush up your current and/or staff skills or merely have an interest in the subject, this course is for you!

E-mail: info@wildlifecampus.com for more information

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From a student perspective



Flora Spaeth is a German WildlifeCampus student living in the Netherlands.

Flora has been working in the horticulture industry for the past 20 years, living in the UK, Italy, and now the Netherlands. In 2016, she visited South Africa and has frequently returned after her first visit. In March 2021 she started her field guide training with Limpopo Field Guiding Academy.

"Studying the WildlifeCampus online courses gives me the chance to expand my knowledge and stay connected even when in Europe." says Flora.

An insight of how Flora found out about WildlifeCampus and how she experienced our Wildlife Management course as she wrote it on her blog [Next Stop South Africa](#):

"There I am, all inspired and motivated by my voluntary work at Leo Africa wanting to learn more and researching already online for my next locations of practical experience in the bush. But then Covid-19 hits and travelling is not an option anymore, brainstorming begins once more.



"Why not have a look into online studying? Not just because of travel restrictions but also to be able to continue learning, even when at home"

Another online search begins and I stumble across the South African training provider WildlifeCampus.

A variety of theoretical courses are on offer, from cultural subjects to wildlife in general but also more specific topics. Even future field guides find additional information on animal behaviour, poaching or practical things like navigation in the wild or mountain guiding.

An adventurer could even follow an online survival training (actually now that I see it again I am quite tempted to enrol myself for this course.....) while a "everyday tourist" could probably prepare his South Africa trip by joining a photography course in advance.



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From a student perspective

My first choice was the [Wildlife Management course](#) (click for a course synopsis) absolutely not related to specific game but everything that is so important to go hand in hand with the right game treatment.

Habitat, resources in the field like the dominating soil types and vegetation, food nutrition and supplement, pests and diseases. Did you think it was just about buying a piece of land and some animals to start a farm? Well, then you are about to learn that there is much more to it in order to be successful.

For me personally, partly repetition as I find myself remembering things I once knew by heart during my horticulture studies. Certainly it is never wrong to re-activate such long-forgotten knowledge.

I like to study in my own time, to re-read things as many times as necessary until they make sense and to even decide for myself when I am ready to take the assessments which are offered to finalise each subject.



Registration was easy, also from abroad (click the above button to register).

Course data can be read online or downloaded as a pdf document (much easier to read as one big document, but this is just my personal preference). And yes, after you have finished you are rewarded with

certificates for the respective courses to confirm your newly acquired knowledge. Was this my one and only course with WildlifeCampus? Well you probably figured... it wasn't.

By now I have already finished 4 and there is still this survival course nagging me now....so stay tuned for more to come :-)"

For more updates be sure to follow Floras blog on: nextstopsouthafrica.com



Would you like to try
a FREE component of our
Wildlife Management Course?
[Click here](#)

Conservation Packages

Contribute towards anti-poaching and rhino rehabilitation efforts while saving on our special conservation packages!

25% of the fee for each package sold will be directly paid over to either of our three beneficiaries:

The Care For Wild Africa Package	The GameWays Package	The Worldwide Experience Package
This package includes 3 online courses: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anti-Poaching2. Wildlife Management3. Capture Care and Management of Wildlife	This package includes 5 online courses: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anti-Poaching2. Trails Guide3. Game Guard Management4. Capture, Care and Management of Wildlife5. Intensive Wildlife Production	This package includes 4 online courses: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Field Guiding2. Marine Biology3. Cultural Guiding (Choose any 1 of 9)4. Human-Wildlife Conflict
 CARE for WILD AFRICA	 GAMEWAYS	 worldwide EXPERIENCE
Price: R5000	Price: R6000	Price: R7000

Should you wish to purchase a special conservation package:

1. Make sure you are registered on the WildlifeCampus website as an online student.
2. Email info@wildlifecampus.com with your username to request an invoice for payment OR purchase via our online courses shop [click here](#).

Terms and conditions: Because these course packages have been so highly discounted, they sell for their cash price only. No monthly payment options are available on the above displayed packages.

Well Spotted

By David Batzofin



Many of my back page articles have revolved around incidents where I have been placed in a situation, or, by my own doing, placed myself in a situation where I could have been killed or, at the very least, been mauled or badly injured.

This month, my story is both happy and has an uplifting ending where no one was injured or harmed.

Lockdown has proven to be a difficult time for both the lodges that I usually frequent as well as travel opportunities that were few and far between during these past 15 months.

As a regular bush goer, it was getting to a point where my need to be out of the urban situation and back into nature was getting to be a priority and important for my mental health.

Although I had been on a couple of trips, the one animal that eluded me on every occasion was the most elusive of all the cats, the leopard.

It was getting to a point that I started taking their lack of appearance as a personal slight against me.

However, this all was about to change when an opportunity presented itself to visit the "home-of-the-leopard", Sabi Sands.

Guests both local and international know that this area can almost guarantee a sighting of these spotted felines, however, given my current track record the almost was a word that loomed large in that sentence.

6 game drives beckoned and I was hoping that at least one of those would grant me a sighting, no matter how fleeting.



I should not have been concerned as the cats literally fell out of the trees from the first outing.

Each sighting was exciting and breathtaking, but it was the final sighting that was the icing on the cake.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, several of the luxury lodges had closed their doors due to dwindling guest occupation and the leopards have taken advantage of this fact.

Given that many of the lodges are built to offer their guests the best views, the animals are making use of this to their advantage when searching for prey.

Our guide responded to a radio call that one of the large males in the area had been spotted (pun intended) lying on the deck of one of those currently abandoned lodges.

Well Spotted

By David Batzofin

We arrived to find him ensconced in a corner of the deck under a Jackalberry tree, lording over all he surveyed.

While sitting and watching him watching us, a passing guide informed us that there was a SECOND leopard INSIDE the property. Try as we might, we were unable to spot him from our vantage point and, despite driving along the riverbank in front of the lodge, he remained elusive.

But we did not have to worry for this drive was about to end on a high note.

A female leopard and her cub had been sighted less than 300m from where we were parked!

There was a moment of hesitation as we considered staying to await the possible arrival of the male that was inside, but the fact that the pair was out in the open made the decision an easy one as we slowly drove to spend time with the duo.

And what a sighting it turned out to be. Mom and offspring enjoying each other and every now and again the inquisitive youngster would wander in our general direction, only to be called back by a soft vocalisation.

It is moments like this when nature provides sightings that will be remembered for a lifetime, that all else becomes secondary and just being in the moment is enough.



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SUBSCRIPTION

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for a monthly subscription fee of **only R300**.

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