Wildlife Campus

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Magazine

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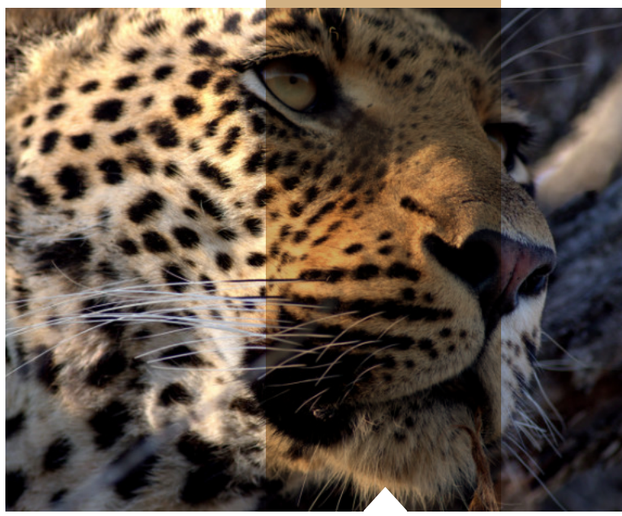


The show must go on!

The origin story of WildlifeCampus

01

By co-founder of WildlifeCampus and Anchor CEO

Peter Armitage

Missed the previous parts of this story? Click here to the WildlifeCampus magazine where this exciting journey starts.

"Enter Peregrine" - February 1999

Early in 1999, Saul Goldstein was surfing the web and came across the stories relating to AfriCam. He typed in www.africam.com. He was exceptionally excited and saw the enormous opportunity immediately. He phoned some of the other members of his consortium.

Saul was part of the "Peregrine consortium", the exact composition of which was never really clear to Paul and Graham. In June 1998, Peregrine had listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the company was one of the high-fliers of the financial services sector; with the share price rising from around 1400c to 3000c in its early months as a listed company. In early 2002, it was trading at below 300c.

The company was formed by Sean Katz, Sean Melnick and Colin Goldstein, Saul's brother. They were all in their late 20's. Colin and Saul Goldstein's cousin, JB, was the major financier behind the consortium. 50-year-old JB is one of South Africa's richest entrepreneurs and at that stage he was the father-figure behind the company.

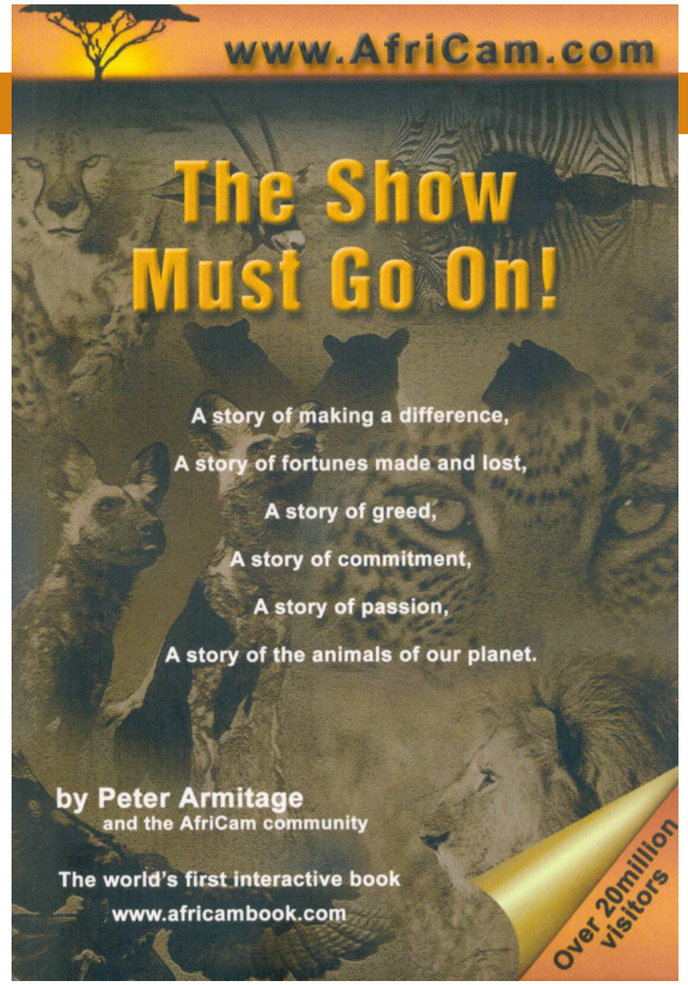
Saul had a contracting relationship with Peregrine, but investment banking deals at this stage were frequently "shared" between Peregrine, JB and other individuals who were deemed appropriate (often the shareholders of Peregrine). This is standard practice in the South African investment banking environment.

JB had been very active in the venture capital market in South Africa, taking advantage of the irrationally high valuations that were being achieved by small companies, especially in the financial services and IT sectors. Among his/Peregrine's investments were Citadel (asset management), Moneyweb (an online investment site), farming.co.za and PNet (an online recruitment agency).

AfriCam looked like the perfect opportunity, especially because its international flavour meant that it could possibly be listed on the Nasdaq market in the United States, where valuations where a multiple of those achieved in South Africa.

Saul was an inexperienced 23-year-old at this stage, but he has unrivalled chutzpah, belief in his own abilities and aptitude for making money. Saul is a religious Jew and an honest man, but also very opportunistic. He learnt quickly from those around him and he realised that AfriCam could be his big break.

Saul discussed the AfriCam opportunity with Dr Duarte da Silva, who had joined Peregrine a few months earlier. Duarte had been poached from Merrill Lynch, in a multi-million dollar deal, where he was the top-rated IT analyst in the country. On joining Peregrine, the share price spiked to new highs which implied a value for his services of tens of millions of dollars. He headed up an investment company, Taita, which was a joint venture between African Harvest (also JSE-listed), Peregrine and himself.



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

Duarte was excited when Saul told him about the opportunity and they decided to approach the founders of AfriCam, coincidentally just after they had had their meeting with Usko.

Paul and Graham visited Peregrine on Friday, 12 February 1999. Paul and Graham now had some experience in dealing with these overtures and Graham took the lead in communicating the AfriCam story to their two suitors.

Saul and Duarte were chomping at the bit. AfriCam was at the perfect stage in its life cycle; it had not spent too much money, the traffic was big (by South African standards anyway) and the founders were seemingly naïve as far as corporate finance transactions were concerned.

selling property and he knew a large part of any deal was the psychology and tactics. JB believed Duarte and Saul's assessment and suggested that they immediately fly Paul and Graham over to London. This would limit their ability to negotiate with the other parties and they could force their collective hand.

Two days later, Paul and Graham were flying first class to London, with Duarte and Colin (Saul was left back in South Africa). Graham's financial situation had not changed much as AfriCam had not generated any cash. When he left for London he had R50 in his bank account and Sarah felt a little insecure being left alone with Joshua, now seven months old. Paul and Helen had more liquidity, but the events of the ensuing days would make a huge impact on their lives.
With a taste of what was possible, and with the Nasdaq index making new highs on a daily basis, Graham realised that he and his partner had created a valuable asset. He comforted Sarah by promising that that he would return with a sum of money that would make the trip worthwhile.

Duarte picked Paul up at his modest Lonehill residence and Paul asked if he could drive Duarte's sparkling new BMW M3 to the Johannesburg airport. Duarte immediately consented. After all, this trip was all about making a positive impression on Paul and Graham.

Duarte, Colin, Graham and Paul laughed and drank all the way to London. For the moment, Paul and Graham both forgot about their penchant for Zamaleks and indulged in expensive whiskies and red wine. It was as if they had all been friends for years. It was a mutually beneficial friendship. Paul and Graham believed that Duarte and Colin were going to make them rich and the thoughts and expectations were mirrored by both parties.

At Heathrow, the South African contingent was picked up in JB's black chauffer-driven automobile and driven to the Grosvenor Hotel. Paul discussed expectations of JB with his partner. They both agreed that he would be a suave, well-dressed man in his forties.

It transpired that while Paul and Graham were inexperienced, they were not naïve. They appreciated what a good story they had to tell, and satiated Saul and Duarte's appetites with all the anecdotes they wished to hear. They placed an emphasis on the other parties that had contacted them in the previous week and made it clear that if they did not do a deal with Peregrine, there were others on the table. They failed to tell their hosts that it was extremely unlikely that a deal would be consummated with the other existing suitors.

The tactics, massaging and manoeuvring were two-sided. Duarte and Saul, in turn, told Paul and Graham everything they needed to hear and the chemistry was good. Peregrine looked to be ideal partners; they had the right experience and there was synergy with their other investments. Duarte talked of Nasdaq listings and vast wealth creation. Both parties were convinced and it was decided that they should take the next step – the "equity two-step" as Graham often refers to this stage of proceedings.

"Off to London, first class" - February 1999

Duarte and Saul quickly contacted JB, who was in his residence in London. JB had made his fortune buying and

Paul and Graham were pleasantly surprised when JB met them at the turnstiles outside the Grosvenor Hotel. Not quite what they expected, the grey-haired JB was dressed in his tracksuit and slip-on shoes with no socks. A heavy, simple overcoat was keeping him warm. JB never tried to impress anybody with his dress and his comfort was clearly the first priority. This understatement impressed Paul and Graham.
The niceties were concluded and JB won the visitors over with this pleasant and unpretentious demeanour. They all walked to a few blocks to his Mayfair apartment. Paul and Graham were full of anticipation. How does a multi-billionaire live in London? Was his attire a clue as to what to expect?

They all climbed in the lift and JB pressed "4". The elevator opened directly into JB's living room, which meant that his apartment was in fact the entire floor (and the third floor). The butler welcomed them.
They all sat down in the living room, which was in the "upper class" category, but was nothing sensational. However, the first clue as to what was to come was the fact that everything the butler served was stainless steel.

After half an hour or so, Graham needed to go to the toilet. He was pointed in the direction of the bathroom and when he entered he got the shock of his life. He immediately thought of Star Trek, with mirrors and stainless steel dominating the lavish room.

A four hour meeting in the living room ensued. At this stage Paul and Graham had a great deal of enthusiasm, but no written business plan or projections. The hype and potential was enough for the suitors. They were keen to conclude a deal and JB insisted that all negotiations were concluded prior to their departure.
It was immediately evident why JB had made so much money. He is a highly intelligent, visionary man and had studied for a doctorate in mathematics. He is also a very honest, honourable man and a smooth negotiator.

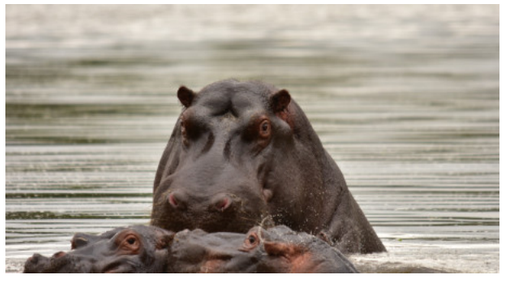
Figures were bandied about and Paul and Graham were offered a sum of money for 25% of the business, which made it worth their while. It was nowhere near the figures they had given Mark Thatcher, but enriching nonetheless. The initial figure was not far off Paul and Graham's expectations, but they wanted to push for a little more.
The offer also included a complicated option, which allowed the consortium to increase their stake to 50% if the business reached certain valuation targets. Caught up in the excitement Colin agreed to the extra amount, which did not impress JB, who later faulted him for giving in so easily. For JB this was partially a game and the negotiation was one of the most critical aspects. He was the old hand, teaching his young cousin the art of the deal.

Graham had achieved what he had promised Sarah when he set off for London.

Shortly thereafter they proceeded to the dining room, which was the first time Paul saw the theme of the apartment. The entire apartment was decorated with glass and stainless steel, in a very minimalist fashion. The passage to the dining room was made entirely of glass and stainless steel and was suspended from the ceiling. Paul and Graham realised that this man had money.

The lunch that was served was one of the most impressive that Paul and Graham had ever attended. At this lunch they discovered that JB was a culinary artist and very passionate about good food. His staff had prepared a seven course meal and each course was served with a different wine, culminating in a 200-pound desert wine to accompany the lavish last course.
"I could get used to this," thought Graham.
During dinner at a Japanese restaurant that evening the final terms of the deal were thrashed out and JB made a call through to his Durban office and briefed a lawyer on the deal that had been concluded. He was charged with the responsibility of drawing up the contract.

After dinner Paul and Graham made their way back to their hotel and ordered one of the most expensive bottles of champagne to celebrate. They realised that this was a coup that they would be unlikely to ever repeat in their lives. Paul had spent a cumulative US$50 000 on the business and they had just realised a value of US$4m for the business. All the parties were happy as, compared to similar global businesses, JB and his team had got a bargain.



Welcome to the African bush

By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Be quiet. Be patient. Be present. Nature is putting on its show. You are greeted by magical skies, the dawn chorus, changing landscapes, remarkable wildlife, and so much more. Welcome to the African bush. A wild, diverse and unpredictable place. It has the power to touch everyone in a different way.

02

As you marvel at the beauty of the African bush, remember there is more to see than just the Big 5. The small 5 help us to appreciate the smaller, less noticed animals. They share part of their name with the Big 5—leopard tortoise, antlion, elephant shrew, rhinoceros beetle, and buffalo weaver. The leopard tortoise is the fourth largest tortoise species in the world and the largest in Southern Africa. It gets its name from the unique pattern on its shell which, resembles a leopard's coat. They are able to float and swim slowly because, their large domed shell has a sizeable lung space that allows buoyancy. Leopard tortoises gnaw bones and consume carnivore faeces to obtain calcium for shell growth and egg development. Indeed, everything in nature relies on each other to survive. Leopard tortoises play a significant role in seed dispersal, due to seeds passing undigested through the gut.

The antlion does not resemble an ant or a lion. Instead, it got its name from the fact that they are predators and mainly feed on ants. Antlions are known for their conical pits which, they use to trap their victims. They dig small pits in areas of soft, sandy soil. Here they wait, under the sand with just their jaws above the surface, for insects such as ants to pass by. The antlion flicks soil particles over the victim struggling to get out. This causes a small scale avalanche in the soil and the victim ends up trapped at the bottom of the pit. The antlion captures its prey by using its strong jaws and starts the feeding process. Several sharp protrusions inject a potent venom into the prey as well as enzymes to start digesting the prey's soft parts. The antlion sucks the victim dry and then, discards the exoskeleton by using its head to shovel the carcass out of the pit. The conical pit is reset as a trap and the antlion waits for its next victim. Antlions are important as they act as predators controlling insect populations.

Elephant shrews are not shrews nor elephants. However, they are closely related to elephants, manatees and aardvarks. Their name comes from their long pointed head and very long, flexible trunk-like nose. Elephant shrews use their long nose and large ears to detect any predators or prey. They only grow to a length of 10 to 30 cm, yet are capable of leaping up to 3 feet in one bound. The elephant shrew is one of the fastest small mammals, with speeds of about 20mph. They play a significant role in keeping insect populations in check.

Rhinoceros beetles get their name from the horn-like projections on and around the males' heads. They use their horns in mating battles against other males. Also, they use their horns to quickly dig themselves into the soil to escape danger. Rhinoceros beetles can grow up to 6 inches, making them some of the largest beetles in the world. They are a force of nature because, they are able to lift 850 times their own body weight. Rhinoceros beetles help break down organic matter and so, recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Buffalo weavers get their name from their habit of following buffaloes for the insects they disturb while grazing. You are likely to hear buffalo weavers before you see them. They are sociable birds that live together in noisy colonies. Buffalo weavers make the worst nests of all weavers—building large communal nests of sticks and thorns with several side entrances. These messy nests are built high in a tree in a fork of branches. Buffalo weavers are one of the largest members of the weaver family. They play a key role in keeping insect populations in check. Focusing on the smaller aspects of the African bush leads to a better understanding of the bigger picture. Big or small, every species in nature plays a vital role.

The ugly 5 might not be pleasing to the eye but, they are still unique and fascinating creatures. Hyenas have had a bad reputation due to their depiction in Disney's The Lion King. They are portrayed as greedy, dim-witted and villainous animals who have no respect for fellow creatures. Yet, hyenas are social, fierce, powerful and fascinating animals led by strong female leaders. They have an awkward appearance thanks to their hind legs being shorter than their forelegs. This adaptation makes them great endurance runners and accomplished hunters. The iconic 'whoop' of the hyena is a privilege to hear and a truly signature sound of the bush. As successful hunters and scavengers, they play a crucial role in the ecosystem. Scavengers keep our planet clean and help prevent the spread of disease. This in turn, helps break down organic matter and recycle nutrients back into the environment. The hyena has one of the most powerful bites in the world. Their powerful jaws and strong digestive juices mean hyenas can eat almost all of their prey, however, they cannot digest the hooves, keratin sheath of antelope horns or hair. By breaking down bones, hyenas recycle calcium back into the environment. Tortoises eat hyena scat to absorb the calcium which, strengthens their shells. The hyena's opportunistic habits mean they clean up what others leave behind. By hunting sick and weak animals, hyenas help keep animal populations healthy. It may not be a glamorous job but, hyenas fill a niche in the ecosystem.

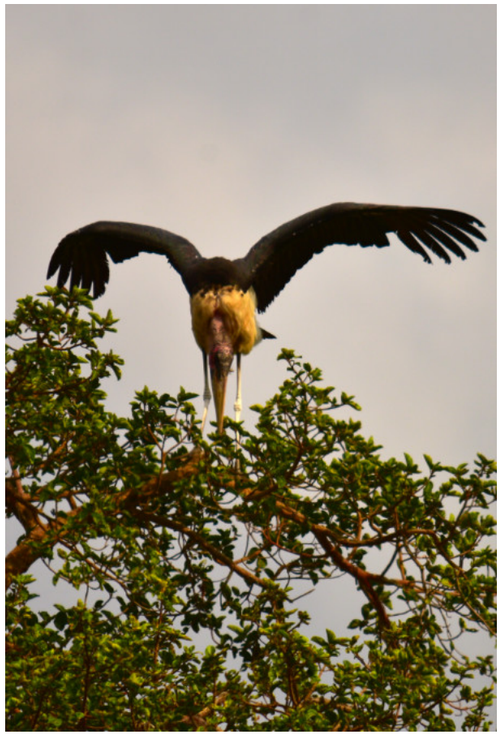
Wildebeest have a disproportionate build and shaggy hair which make them unattractive. They are also considered stupid as they will run at the slightest provocation and then, keep on running even when there is no apparent reason. However, the wildebeest's disproportionate appearance has its advantages. Their long, relatively spindly legs enable them to run in bursts as fast as 40mph. Furthermore, their high shoulders and a back that slopes down to their lower hindquarters is energy efficient for travelling long distances at an easy canter. They have a wide muzzle, a broad row of incisors, and flexible lips which, allows them to take big bites of short grass. Wildebeest are prey for large carnivores and actively create and maintain the grassland habitat. They help keep the grass young, healthy and easy to digest. Keeping the grass short means reduced frequency of fires, fewer fires ultimately leads to more trees, thus increased habitat for other species.

Like hyenas, vultures have had bad press thanks to Disney's The Lion King. They are not the prettiest birds in the sky—with a lack of feathers on their heads and necks, prominent brows and a hunched stance. However, these underappreciated birds have evolved to fill a specific niche. Vultures are scavengers and act as nature's clean-up crew. They can quickly devour large amounts of flesh and their strong stomach acids neutralise pathogens, and so, vultures may help limit the spread of harmful diseases such as tuberculosis and rabies. Many vultures have bald heads and necks to prevent bacteria and parasites from burrowing into their feathers. The vulture's beak has the ability to tear through skin and tendons making them one of nature's most efficient waste disposers. The loss of vultures from the African landscape could have far reaching ecological consequences, and it should be taken very seriously.

Warthogs are rather ill-favoured in the beauty department. They get their name from the large protruding bumps on their face which, look like warts. Luckily for warthogs, they were well portrayed in Disney's The Lion King. Warthogs can run at speeds of 30mph and will run with their tails rigid in the air like aerials so, when a group of warthogs are running through long grass, they can easily keep track of each other's tails. The warts are thick growths of skin which, provide some form of cushioning when fighting. Warthogs are efficient diggers who use their snout, tusks and feet to expose roots and tubers. The tusks are actually elongated canine teeth, with one pair growing from the upper jaw and another pair from the lower jaw. They use their tusks for protection against predators, to root around in the ground for food, and to fight other males during the breeding season. Through their digging, warthogs play a significant role in the ecosystem. The soil is aerated which, aids plant growth. They expose other bulbs that attract birds. Furthermore, the soil is softened, which allows the rain to infiltrate into the ground.

Marabou storks are dark grey with cloak-like wings, white tail feathers and long, white legs, all of which portray the appearance of an undertaker bird. Their featherless heads and scabby pink faces make them an eyesore to many. Yet, all of this ugliness has a fascinating function. Their featherless heads are important for preventing infections. The 18-inch gulag sac is used to show dominance and aids in thermoregulation. Their legs are white from defecating on themselves. This is not just a gross habit but a scientific process called urohidrosis which many birds practise. The liquid faeces activates evaporative cooling and assists in the regulation of the internal body temperature. Marabou storks play a vital role in the ecosystem by clearing away dead and decaying matter, thus preventing the spread of pathogens. Further, they help speed up the decomposition process by breaking through thick animal hides with their strong beaks. Being ugly doesn't make any of these species any less fascinating or important.

The shy 5 refers to the smaller, more elusive group of animals which are rather timid in the company of people. All of them are nocturnal except for the meerkat. Standing only 30 cm tall, meerkats rely on group cooperation for survival. Although they are timid animals, they are gregarious among their species. They live in groups of 20 to 50 extended family members in large underground tunnels.



Meerkats are specially adapted to life in the harsh desert environment. The dark patches around their eyes are to reduce the glare of the sun. Also, their eyes have a clear protective membrane that shields them from dirt while digging. Their ears are closed tightly to keep the dirt out. Meerkats play a crucial role in maintaining ecological harmony in arid regions of Southern Africa. They are a food source for predators and they control pest infestation by eating insects. Meerkats do not store fat, therefore, they can eat lots of insects in one day. Their burrowing and tunnelling activities help keep the soil aerated. The smallest parts of nature can contribute immensely to the balance of an ecosystem.

Aardvarks are rarely seen and so, remain mostly mysterious because of their shy nature. These solitary animals tend to only socialise when mating and caring for their young. They are nocturnal creatures who can travel up to 30 km in a single night. Aardvarks use their feet and strong claws to dig three different types of burrow; shallow holes when hunting for food, temporary shelters, and large tunnel systems. The holes they dig are used by other species such as snakes, lizards, and hyenas. They have poor eyesight but, acute hearing and a good sense of smell that helps them find ants and termites. The hair is thick around the nostrils, which filter dirt when eating. Further, the nostrils can be closed fully to prevent dirt from getting in. Aardvarks play an important role in controlling ant and termite populations. Their sticky tongues can trap up to 50,000 termites and ants in one night.

Instantly recognisable for their quills, porcupines are timid, solitary creatures that are rarely seen. The quills are actually just large, modified hairs made out of keratin that are used for defence. Shaking the quills makes them rattle, which acts as a warning for potential predators. They do not shoot out

their quills, instead, they get stuck in whatever touches the porcupine. The Cape porcupine is the largest rodent in Southern Africa and one of the largest in the world. The porcupine's foraging and digging helps aerate the soil and allows water to seep into the ground. This promotes the growth of new bulbs. Also, their debarking of trees helps prevent the development of denser forested environments which maintains the local savannah ecosystem.

Resembling a small striped hyena, the aardwolf is a shy, nocturnal animal that sleeps in burrows during the day. Like hyenas, an aardwolf has longer forelegs than hind legs so, it appears to have a sloping back. Aardwolves rely on their acute hearing and their well-developed sense of smell to locate termites. As they are not equipped with specialised claws, aardwolves lack the capability to excavate for termites underground. Instead, they use their long, sticky tongues to lick termites directly from the ground surface. Their termite diet supplies them with most of the water they need. The aardwolf plays a crucial role in controlling termite populations. In an average night, an aardwolf can consume around 250,000 termites.

Bat-eared foxes are highly social among their own species but, have a timid nature around people. They are known for their unusually enormous ears in proportion to their heads. Thanks to their huge ears, they have an acute sense of hearing. This is used to locate prey, including the ability to hear insects moving underground. Also, they have huge ears for thermoregulation. This is done by releasing excess body heat through blood vessels running through the thin skin of the ears. Bat-eared foxes have many tiny teeth (46 to 50 teeth—more than most mammals) set in a long, narrow jaw specially adapted for an insectivorous diet. There is a special jaw muscle that helps the bat-eared fox open and close its jaw five times per second. This is a useful adaptation for eating live termites. Furthermore, the elongated and highly flexible jaw can scoop up dozens of ants or termites at one time. They get most of the water they require from eating termites. Bat-eared foxes play a vital role in controlling termite populations.

The impossible 5 consists of the most elusive animals in South Africa and so, you will have very little chance of seeing them. It is no surprise that the timid aardvark also appears on the impossible 5 list. Aardvarks are rare to see because, they are mostly solitary, nocturnal, and spend so much time underground.

Cape mountain leopards are known as 'ghost cats' as they are incredibly elusive. They face many threats including habitat loss and fragmentation, depletion of prey species, and human-wildlife conflict. However, they are adaptive to change due, to the vastness of their home ranges and they are opportunistic about their food sources. The Cape mountain leopard is an apex predator in the fynbos mountains of the Cape. Here, they play a significant role in maintaining the mountain ecosystem. Conserving the Cape mountain leopard is essential for conserving other local species.

Pangolins are the world's most trafficked mammals due to the huge demand for their scales. The scales make up 20% of a pangolin's total body weight and provide a good defence against predators. They roll into a ball when threatened, with the scales forming an armoured exterior. Pangolins are difficult to find because, they are a threatened species, nocturnal, and they blend in with their surrounding environment. They play an extremely important role as predators of eusocial insects, consuming large quantities of ants and termites, thereby keeping insect numbers in check. One single pangolin can consume around 70 million ants and termites per year. If pangolins go extinct, there would be a cascading impact on the environment. Their large and elongated claws enable them to burrow underground for shelter and to excavate termite and ant nests for food. In doing so, the soil is mixed and aerated. This improves the nutrient quality of the soil and aids the decomposition cycle, providing a healthy substrate for lush vegetation to grow from.

All species are necessary to maintain the fragile equilibrium of nature, even if their role is not immediately obvious.

The critically endangered riverine rabbit is one of the world's rarest mammals and is South Africa's most endangered wildlife species. The current population is estimated at less than 250 breeding pairs and is declining. The riverine rabbit is nocturnal and endemic to South Africa's Karoo region. They are threatened by habitat degradation from agriculture. The riverine rabbit feeds on the riverine vegetation which, causes the vegetation to regenerate. This binds the soil together and prevents it from being washed away, which promotes filtration of rainwater to groundwater.

Wild white lions are incredibly rare, with currently less than 13 white lions living in the wild. Their rare colour mutation is due to the recessive leucistic gene which, causes partial loss of pigmentation. The mating female and the mating male must both possess the recessive gene in order to produce a white lion cub. This is why very few white lions are born. Besides their unique colouring, they are exactly the same as the usual lions that roam Africa. As apex predators, lions, restore balance within the trophic levels by regulating herbivore populations. Count yourself lucky if you have the chance to see any of the impossible 5, even if its just a glimpse.

The African bush has awaken all of your senses. It has taught you to enjoy a slower pace and appreciate all of its hidden wonders. You will leave with profound respect for the magic Africa has to offer!

03

Thank you Warren!

At the beginning of 2022, WildlifeCampus launched the **newly updated** Field Guiding/Game Ranging course.

The massive update of this the content was done in collaboration with a Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) assessor.

However, this update would not have been possible without the valuable photographic contribution of our students and partners.

In this edition, WildlifeCampus would like to thank **Warren Schmidt** for his amazing photographic contribution towards our courses.

Warren holds a Master of Science degree in Ecological Sciences awarded by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He has three decades of experience in ecology, conservation science, invasion biology and herpetology. He has worked as a journalist, magazine editor, and lecturer, and has presented talks, seminars, and lectures to thousands of people from pre-schoolers to university students.

See more about Warren's work on his website: **www.biodiversitynature.com**

Thank you Warren! We look forward to our students seeing your incredible work throughout the Field Guiding/ Game Ranging course.

To try the free component of our recently updated Field Guiding/Game Ranging course, CLICK HERE.

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The Sengis
Unique to Africa

***Elephantulus intufi* - Bushveld Sengi**

By

STUART ON NATURE

The Afrotherian clade is a group of mammals with mainly African roots and some groups such as the golden moles, sengis (elephant-shrews), Aardvark and most hyrax species are unique to the continent. Others such as the tenrecs have their concentration in Madagascar but with three species, the otter shrews, occurring in tropical Africa. Other members of this group include the elephants, Dugong and West African Manatee, all represented in Africa.

Our main concern here lies around the sengis, or elephant-shrews, of which there are 20 species. Most are small with fairly long tails, soft fur, large eyes and ears, with a long, slender, cylindrical snout, thus giving them their original name, the elephant-shrews. A few are much larger but closely resemble their smaller cousins. A good friend of ours, sadly now no more, Galen Rathbun, was the world expert on these fascinating beasties and he always referred to them as “flute-snoots.”

Elephantulus brachyrhynchus
typical dust-bathing site

Elephantulus rupestris - Western Rock Sengi

These fascinating mammals have their origins some 57.5 million years before present and the different species today occupy habitats from true desert, to bushland, mountains and tropical forests. All 20 living sengis belong to a single family (*Macroscelididae*) with two sub-families, and five genera, the giant sengis (*Rhynchocyon*) with five species, *Petrodromus* with a single species, the three species of *Macroscelides*, the single species of *Petrosaltator*, and the biggest genus with ten species is *Elephantulus*. As four of these species have been described in recent years it seems likely that more will be discovered over time, especially in those regions least travelled by scientists. We will never forget when sengi expert Galen was visiting us on the high Karoo plateau we set out box traps on a rocky outcrop just a few kilometres from our home and caught several sengis, and he immediately said that this was something different and new and so it turned out, and how right he was, the Karoo Rock Sengi (*Elephantulus pilicaudus*) joined the sengi club. Over the years he added three more species, including the Giant Grey-faced Sengi (*Rhynchocyon udzungwensis*), weighing in at a very respectable 700 g, and only found in the forests of the Udzungwa Mountains of Tanzania.

***Macroscelides flavicaudatus* -**
Namib Round-eared Sengi, © G. Rathbun

Nineteen of the twenty species occur to the south of the Sahara Desert, with only the North African Sengi (*Petrosaltator rozeti*) found in north-western Africa to the north of the desert. The smallest of the group, are the three round-eared sengis (*Macroscelides*) only found in the arid areas of western southern Africa, tipping the scales at an average of around 25-35g.

All sengis have several things in common, the young of most species (one or two young per litter) are fully haired, eyes open and soon able to move around after birth, they have a long digestive tract with a caecum, they can move very rapidly, and the males' testes are in the abdomen and not in an external scrotum.

***Rhynchocyon petersi* - Black and Rufous Sengi**

All sengis forage for and feed on insects and other invertebrates but some of the smaller species also eat small fruits, seeds and some green plant material. Several of the rock-dwelling sengis that often share their rocky homes with rock hyraxes (dassies) frequently forage on the dung middens of these larger cousins, seeking out attracted flies and beetles. We have observed this with Cape, Eastern Rock and Western Rock sengis. As far as is known all species live in monogamous pairs but females defend against females, and males against males. Most activity is during daylight but there may be some crepuscular activity, with some small species foraging both at night and during the day. The giant sengis construct domed leaf nests on the forest floor, with most of the smaller species using burrows dug by other species, or dig their own, shelter in rock crevices in boulder mounds, or even on the surface under vegetation. Most species make and follow regularly used trails that radiate out from the nest or den site when foraging and these are kept clear of debris by side flicking with the front feet.

***Elephantulus myurus* - Eastern Rock Sengi**

Most of the smaller sengis are not considered to be threatened, mainly because of the nature of their favoured habitats but the giant sengis largely restricted to forest and dense woodland habitat are suffering declines because of habitat loss. One of the giants, the Boni Forest Giant Sengi occurring in north-east Kenya near the border with Somalia is only known from camera traps and may be threatened even before it is described. The area is earmarked for the development of a deep-water port and oil facility, attracting thousands of people and all that goes with it.

***Elephantulus rufescens* - Rufous Sengi, © G. Rathbun**

Rhynchocyon cirnei - Chequered Sengi, © G. Rathbun

***Macroscelides proboscideus* skull, length 30mm**

***Macroscelides proboscideus* skull viewed from above**

***Rhynchocyon cirnei* skull, length 70mm**

Petrodromus tetradactylus Four-toed Sengi,
© G. Rathbun

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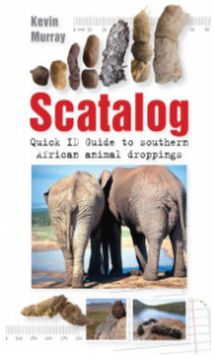
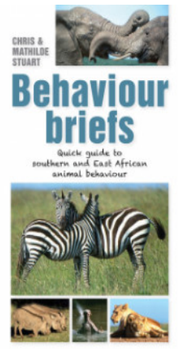
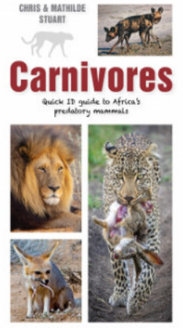
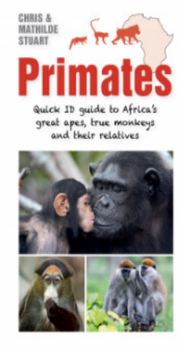
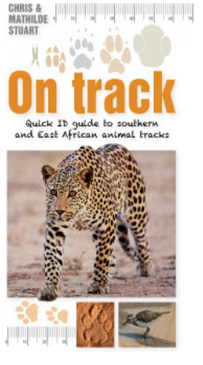


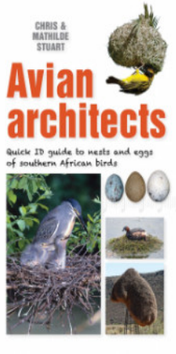


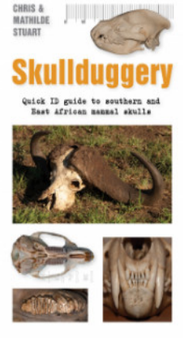


Collect them all!









A positive mindset for your interview

Job interviews can be super stressful.

It is the fear of the unknown, worry that you may not be what an employer is looking for or that your nerves get the better of you and you do not come across the way you would have liked to. In a job interview, ultimately you are being judged and regardless of how confident you are, this can be an unsettling feeling.

Here are some tips to get you through your next interview, but not your usual tips like "arrive early" or "dress smartly" we are talking about preparing your mind!

1. Reframe the way you think.

If you have a tendency to drown yourself in self-limiting thoughts, such as by telling yourself that another candidate will be better suited to the job, or that you will not come across as well on the phone/on a video call, the chances are that your brain will believe this. You might not even consciously realise that you carry these self-limiting beliefs, until you check your language for phrases like "that is impossible" or "I cannot".

Instead, reframe the way you think and try to appreciate how far you have come in your career, taking confidence and reassurance from that. You have already been accepted for, and invited to an interview, which is something to be proud of in itself. So, rather than telling yourself that you will not come across as well via video, for example, think about this as being just the same as having a conversation with someone in person – the means by which you are having that conversation are just slightly different. Remember, no one else in the interview process will have the option to meet the hiring manager in person either, so there is no need to let the fact you are not as experienced in telephone or video interviews put you in a negative headspace.

2. Do not let imposter syndrome get the better of you.

Instead of thinking "everyone will be better than me", remind yourself of your uniqueness and of your worth – and take that self-belief into your job interview.
Many people suffer from something called imposter syndrome, even the people who seem to be "highly successful". What this means is "an internal experience of believing that you are not as competent as others perceive you to be".

It is quite likely that imposter syndrome is what is making you feel like you are perhaps not good enough for this interview, or that your success so far has just been a fluke. In fact, due to the current climate, lots of people may well be suffering from self-doubt. It is so important you turn this limiting mindset on its head by telling yourself that your success is ultimately down to your own competence and effort, not luck. And even if your current responsibilities look a little different right now, all those skills and experiences you have built up still exist and are still part of your capabilities.

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3. Do not overthink it.

A job interview is, of course, a very important moment in your life. It could open countless doors for you, should you be offered the job.

But thinking too much about the significance of the interview itself could result in putting an unnecessary amount of pressure on yourself, therefore negatively impacting your frame of mind during your preparation. Especially during this difficult time, when you are likely to already be feeling more unsettled that usual. This, in turn, could lead to unhelpful thoughts that might affect your self-esteem and confidence. So, take a step back and think about this for what it truly is: a conversation with someone about a job you are interested in, to get a chance for you both to get to know each other. That is really the basics of it, so try not to get ahead of yourself and overthink its significance – just keep things in perspective.

4. Do your preparation.

You know that old saying, "if you fail to prepare, prepare to fail"? It has more than a semblance of truth to it. But thorough preparation isn't only good for improving your chances of landing the job in the first place; it's also great for your mindset, helping you to relax in the knowledge that you have done all you can and whatever happens next is inevitable. If you feel prepared, you feel confident, and your frame of mind is therefore more likely to be positive, than negative.

5. Psych yourself up.

Do you have a morning mantra that you tell yourself? Is there one particular song that makes you feel happy? Do you have a certain ritual that makes you feel good? You could also remind yourself of all of the amazing feats you have achieved in your career to date, or ask a friend to give you a last-minute 'pep talk', telling you that you have all of the qualifications and experience needed to pass this interview with flying colours.

How can a recruiter help?

Having a good relationship with your recruiter is really helpful, given that they are the experts in this field, and will have an existing relationship with the interviewer. Perhaps you could organise a video call with them? This would be a good chance to test out your technology. Also, if you have any lingering doubts or uncertainties in your head about the role or interview process, a friendly conversation with your recruiter can help to dispel them, thereby improving your state of mind ahead of the big day.

You might ask your recruiter questions like: "Is this a newly created position?", "What will the structure of the interview be?" and "Do you have any tips for a telephone/video interview?" This will help you to feel as prepared and informed as possible, so that you can enter the interview with positivity, confidence and poise, able to eloquently answer whatever questions the interviewer might throw at you.

The power of a positive mindset really could make all the difference during this interview. You'll feel confidence in the fact that you deserve to be there, with the knowledge that you stand just as much chance as anyone else of being offered the job.

With this positive mindset in place, you will also be able to enjoy your interview more and portray your authentic self from start to finish – a person who is confident, articulate and fully deserving of this wonderful opportunity. Ultimately, that is who you are, so do not doubt for a moment that you are anything else.

Wild Dreams has recruiters based in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

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The alphabet game

A road trip through a game reserve can be a nerve-wrecking experience, especially with children in the vehicle. "Are we there yet"? is replaced with "Where are the animals"?

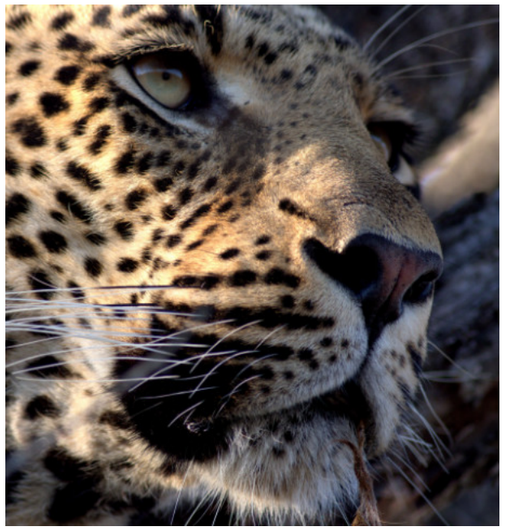
To keep said occupants from causing bodily harm to each other, how about my game reserve version of the alphabet game?

By David Batzofin

Points can be given arbitrarily which might be safer than starting a contest.

A is for aardvark. 1000 points for seeing this nocturnal mammal in daylight.

B is for bateleur. Unfortunately, no points as it has been renamed the short-tailed eagle.



C is for chameleon. They have right of way when crossing the road.

D is for dung beetle. It is a crappy job, but someone has to do it.

E is for elephant. Although the largest land mammal, they are not called grey ghosts for nothing. They can appear and disappear in the blink of an eye.

F is for frog. You might find one in your accommodation if you are lucky. And if you don't see them, you will undoubtedly hear them at night.

G is for giraffe. You cannot miss these, as they are very tall and tend to stare at you from a lofty height.

H is for hyena, no laughing matter, or hippo.
One lives in water and the other doesn't. 1000 points if you know the difference.

I is for impala. Known as the McDonalds of the Bushveld - it is a prey species to everything including baboons.

J is for jackal. They can be a nuisance to other predators, but they are necessary to keep the bush clean of carrion.

K is for kudu. Hard to spot as they are well camouflaged.

L is for leopard. In certain game reserves they are so plentiful that they will literally fall out of the trees in front of your camera, so be ready!

M is for monkey. That you will find inside your room if you don't keep the windows and doors closed.

N is for nyala. The male looks like an old man in a raincoat. Only 500 points as they are a common occurrence.

O is for octopus. Any family member who spots one of these in a game reserve can choose their own number of points.

P is for pangolin. They are so unusual that most people who work in the bush get to see one every decade or so 100000000000 points for a sighting.

Q is for QUIET. Which is how you would like the car to be. 100000 points if you can achieve this.

R is for rinkhals. One of the endemic South African snake species. And not what you want to find IN the car.

S is for seal. You get the same points as octopus if you find one in the bush!

T is for tiger.100000000 points if you find one in a South African game reserve.

U is for ungulate. Meaning "being hoofed" or "hoofed animal." To stop arguments make sure you have internet connectivity on your smartphone.

V is for victory as you arrive at your destination.

W is for waterbuck. Would you like to be a prey species with a target on your rump?

X is for X-ray vision. Often needed to see the animal species that tend to be elusive.

Y is for YELLING when you see an animal of any description.

Z is for zebra. Are they black with white stripes or vice versa?

And while everyone is concentrating on finding the Big 5, don't forget the Little 5.
Ant lion, elephant shrew, buffalo weaver, leopard tortoise and rhinoceros beetle.

Before you know it, you will have arrived at your camp and can spend some time exploring outside the confines of your vehicle and away from each other.

This game can become as intrusive and annoying as 10000000000 green bottles. You have been warned.

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

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