



WildlifeCampus

Nature Calls

**Game drive
etiquette**
By David Batzofin

**The African
bush: scent**
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**Travel Buggz
Adventures**

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Cover image: Chacma baboon, Kruger Park by Jonathan Acx

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About us

WildlifeCampus is a world-renowned, reputable, Approved FGASA Delivery Partner. Over the past 23 years, we have trained over 29,000 students in 160 countries. The courses we offer are the most comprehensive of their kind in the online space.

We pride ourselves on being the leaders in online wildlife education delivery, our authentic and unique E-Learning experience, quality content, value for money and exceptional service.

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

WildlifeCampus students have found that the knowledge gained through our courses has immeasurably enhanced their enjoyment of the bush. Many are now employed in the wildlife, hospitality and tourism industry.



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The show must go on!

The origin story of WildlifeCampus

01

**By co-founder of
WildlifeCampus and
Anchor CEO**

Peter Armitage



Missed the previous parts of this story? [Click here](#) to open the WildlifeCampus magazine where this exciting journey starts.

“The Board convenes” - October 2000

We had not had regular Board meetings for some time, as we had been working on listings etc, but we eventually convened a Board meeting on 23 October 2000. This was the first Board meeting which had a negative tone; revenues were falling well behind budget, the technology was a disaster and the Nasdaq had plummeted.

The Board expressed concern over the rising staff complement and it was agreed that cutbacks and retrenchments would begin. They also questioned the disappointing advertising revenues.

South African advertising revenue had reduced sharply and this was due to three key factors: 1) at least half of our page impressions were “refreshes”. This is when the camera image refreshes to show a new image after 30 seconds. True, this was not as valuable as a “first” impression, but did indicate that somebody was watching the site. It was analogous to somebody on a news site clicking on a new story.

There was a negative perception in the industry that our traffic numbers were overstated because of this issue; 2) the vast majority (over 85%) of our internet



WildlifeCampus Magazine

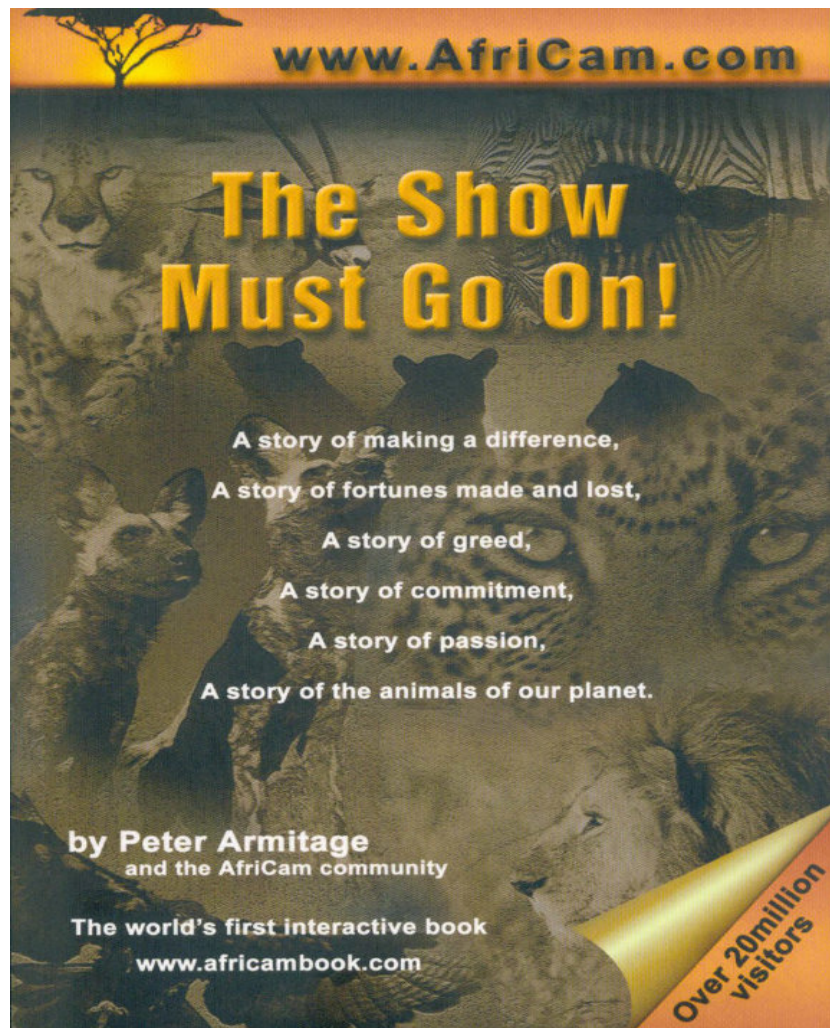
traffic was international, which meant that South African advertisers were not reaching a relevant audience and 3) there was very little money being spent on internet advertising in South Africa as the advertising community was not convinced of its effectiveness.

From an advertising perspective, AfriCam's strength was also its weakness. Our business was valuable because of its global penetration, but this also meant a globally diversified audience was not attractive to regional advertisers. We should have theoretically been attractive to big global advertisers, but we did not quite have the critical mass to appeal to the really big spenders.

Saul Goldstein insisted that I should be selling advertising personally as I had great contacts in SA business circles. "That is not sustainable," I insisted. "It is all very well to get a deal based on relationships, but the medium has to work for them."

The US advertising scenario was even more troubling. In spite of all our attempts, we had still to sell one ad outside of the NBCi deal. It was becoming clear to me that the US advertisers were not comfortable advertising on a site which is based in deep, dark Africa. They could stick with what they knew and be guaranteed success. I undertook for Keith and myself to present an advertising strategy at the next Board meeting a month later.

I also updated the Board on our technology strategy and explained that AfriCamTravel, WildlifeCampus, AfriMusic, Safari.net and WildFocus would all launch in the next two months. Our technology development had been such a failure that the internet boom had come and gone and we had still not launched our businesses which

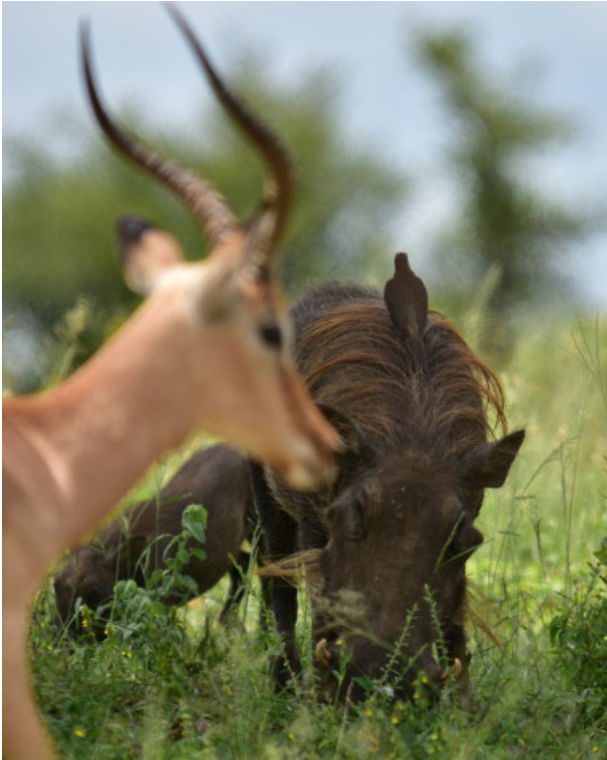


"The Show Must Go On by Peter Armitage and the AfriCam community."

were aimed at deriving revenue from our vast traffic. E-Commerce (physical product sales) had been a complete failure and total sales since the site launched had been less than R50 000 (US\$10 000). The AfriCam audience was not interested in purchasing physical products from South Africa.

In addition, our attempt at making a portion of our site subscription-based, which we had aimed to launch by June 2000, was far off. We had not even started development. We all agreed that our ambition would now be to focus on building AfriCam and aim to have it in a position where it could list by June 2001. We felt it would still be a valuable asset if the broadband initiative was working and we were profitable every month.

In corporate terms, there was some more positive news to report. Since the listing looked off the cards, I had been talking to a number of other players. Venfin (the venture capital arm of the giant Rembrandt group) had made an offer to invest. The offer was at a value of R175m (US\$20m), which meant we were close to being back to where we started when Real Africa invested two years prior.



However, the deal was unacceptable to the shareholders as it was a two-tiered offer involving the current shareholders diluting at a much lower level (R125m) before cash was injected at a higher level. I also met with Paul Edwards of Johnnic, who had expressed an interest in investing.

But perhaps the most exciting of the potential deals was a venture with Tourvest. Tourvest is a JSE-listed tourism and tourism-retail company which had a large market share of incoming travel to South Africa. The company's performance had been mediocre and the share price was in the doldrums. I had concluded an agreement in principle with Investec to investigate taking over Tourvest.

A hostile takeover was impossible because of their shareholding structure, so we approached their Board of Directors. The CEO, Steven Griessel, wanted to defend his territory and did not support any type of deal with us. We had the support of the Chairman, Brian Gutkin, however and he asked that a team be set up to investigate opportunities. This included Ian Hay, the financial director and Ian Meltzer, who was also on the Board.

The opportunity migrated from being a takeover to being a joint venture and discussions continued. There was also positive news for the education initiative. Besides WildlifeCampus, AfriCam had been running AfriSchool for some time. This was an informal exercise where volunteer game rangers went online in our chatroom at a specific time and joined a classroom, primarily in the US.

The class and the game ranger then followed the current game drive and he or she educated the class about wildlife.

Fascinated with the concept, CNBC had produced and aired a feature on AfriSchool, which I had shown to Hylton Appelbaum at the Liberty Foundation. I suggested to him that the Liberty Foundation sponsor this project in order to enable us to commercialise and expand this service. He believed that it would have a very positive impact on SA tourism and had sent an initial letter of intent, indicating that the Liberty Foundation would, in principle, be prepared to sponsor the project to the extent of R1.5m.

“Lottery loggerheads” - October 2000

A few weeks before the Board meeting, Carl Pretorius and Mark Howard had approached me with what sounded like an excellent idea – an internet wildlife lottery. The internet had not been a profitable business arena globally.

The concept of directing AfriCam's vast traffic to a wildlife lottery site where money could be raised for wildlife projects sounded like one of the best ideas we had ever had at AfriCam.

Carl was sensitive to the idea being stolen and swore me to secrecy. We approached Brait, who agreed to fund the initiative and I told Carl that we needed to present the idea to the Board. He had suggested that AfriCam have 40% of the venture, 30% be allocated to the capital contributor and 30% to management.

Prior to the Board meeting, I discussed the idea with Saul Goldstein and he immediately smelt money. Within days a proposal was presented to me, whereby Peregrine would run the lottery in return for an equity stake and I was also offered a material stake personally.

I discussed the proposal with Carl, Paul and Graham and we decided that it would not be ethical to accept the Peregrine proposal. It would have meant that we would effectively have stolen the idea from Carl. Supporting Carl was the right thing to do.

When the matter was raised at the Board meeting, matters got heated. Saul had anticipated me supporting his proposal and he was clearly disappointed when I backed Carl.

“I agree with the Carl Pretorius proposal,” said Graham.

“So do I,” echoed Paul.

“This is Carl's idea and I back him as well,” I added.

David de Bruin believed that Carl should only receive 10% of

the equity and AfriCam should be re-allocated another 10%. Saul read from a letter that Peregrine had sent to me: "AfriCam is already managerially stretched and we believe that an outside, highly incentivised management team should be sourced for this initiative.

"What is more, Carl and his team have not performed well at Buy Africa and if they cannot run that business, why should we have comfort in him running the new initiative. He should concentrate on what he is doing now and let new management run the lottery."

"Hold on," said Carl, "This is my idea and if necessary I can do it without AfriCam. You guys should not really be dictating to me."

Carl had stood his ground firmly in the face of a brutal onslaught.

"Carl, AfriCam is putting money into Buy Africa and you are wasting the money away. We will not allow you to get involved in the lottery until your business is profitable," Saul retorted. "If the Board does agree to this proposal, I insist that the highest stake you can have is 10%."

In that meeting Carl was attacked in a way that rallied the AfriCam executive management against the Board and we had the balance of the vote and Carl got his lottery.

"Goldstein attacks" - November 2000

The lottery argument had clearly not endeared us to the Peregrine camp and a few days later we felt the brunt of the dissatisfaction.

"Colin and I would like to come and discuss the business," Saul said to me on the phone.

"Sure, any time tomorrow morning."

Colin is Saul's older brother and he was one of the key founders of Peregrine and one of the shareholders of AfriCam.

Nothing could have prepared us for the tirade that was to follow. Paul, Graham, Tiffany and I sat across the table from Colin, who immediately launched into a highly emotionally charged lecture on business principles.

"You guys are messing around. Let's face the facts. There is no revenue here and the markets are down. You need to move now and we can still save this business.

Slash the costs, fire the people. You are employing over 100

people which is absolute nonsense. Saul and I have worked through the numbers and you should be running the whole business on 20 staff. Fire the rest, it is the only way you will survive. We should also be cutting all these small businesses and concentrate on advertising, and you also need to charge viewers to watch. It is irrational giving it away for free. This is a small business with small revenues."

Colin is ultimately a good guy, but he often came across in an abrasive and offensive manner. When he wanted to communicate a message, there was no point in beating about the bush.

"We set this business up and you guys have messed it up. You missed a SA listing, you have now missed a Nasdaq listing and you have raised capital from nonsense. It is your responsibility to keep this business alive. And Peregrine is not putting in one more cent. Try and raise capital from anybody. The markets are down, you won't get one more cent. That means you need to survive on what you have got and my way is the only way."

We were all taken aback and the human instinct when you are attacked is to defend. Colin had downloaded all his frustrations in almost one breath and while there was merit in much of what he was saying, the less than eloquent delivery had the opposite effect.

"Colin, we have not even launched many of our businesses and they need to have time to be given a chance," I defended. "Well the business will be messed up by the time they do. You need to slash costs now," Colin bounced back in an even louder voice.



A close-up photograph of a leopard walking through tall, dry grass in a savanna. The leopard is looking down and to the left, with its mouth slightly open. The background is a blurred landscape of dry grass and trees.

The African bush: Scent

By WildlifeCampus student

Amy Holt

Our noses have hundreds of olfactory receptors that can detect over one trillion scents. The African bush is full of smells, from the earthy scent of grass after rain to the raw, fresh smell of animal dung.



Each smell has the power to evoke a different emotion and to be forever linked with a memory. This is because, our sense of smell, emotions and memories are all processed in the limbic system of the brain. So close your eyes, plug your ears, take a deep breath and inhale the aromas of the African bush... as you explore the bush like never before.

Your nostrils fill with the pungent, stinky smell of animal dung... a distinctive sign of life. Rhinos use communal dung piles, known as middens, as a form of communication. They rely heavily on their sense of smell to interpret the world around them. Each rhino has a unique smell, and their dung provides insights into sex, age, health, and mating status. When a rhino visits a midden, it sniffs through the dung to detect the messages left by previous rhino visitors. These middens are also frequently visited by dung beetles, who have a keen sense of smell and can detect the smell of dung

over a vast distance. The rhino's waste is the dung beetle's treasure. Dung beetles use animal dung to survive and thrive. They can be classified into three types: rollers, tunnellers and dwellers. Rollers make small poo balls from the dung and roll them away. They later munch on these poo balls or lay their eggs inside them. Tunnellers, as the name suggests, make tunnels under the dung and bury the poo. This helps keep the dung fresh. While, dwellers just live inside the dung heap and bury their eggs there.

As you continue further into the African bush, the smell of buttered popcorn delights your senses. This unmistakable aroma indicates the presence of a leopard's scent marking. Both male and female leopards use urine as a form of scent marking.



It is used to communicate vital information to other members of their species. The popcorn scent warns rival leopards that the territory is already claimed. A female may scent mark more regularly than normal to advertise she is going into oestrus. Male leopards often scrape the ground after or during urination to transfer the scent onto their paws. This leaves a trail of their scent as they continue to walk.

An earthy, fresh smell of rain or petrichor awakens the dusty, red soil of the African bush. Three different things actually cause this scent. Before the rain even falls, ozone (a naturally occurring gas in the atmosphere) creates a sweet, pungent smell.

During the rain, plants release oils that are rich in fatty oils, such as palmitic or stearic acid. These secreted oils settle into the soil and are released when the rain hits the ground. The smell of petrichor is strongest after long, dry periods. After it has stopped raining, actinomycetes (a type of bacteria found in soil) secrete a compound, called geosmin, and this causes the damp, earthy smell to linger.

There is a distinct, strong, smelly odour in the air. This foul scent indicates that there are elephants in musth nearby. Musth occurs once a year in healthy adult bull elephants. It occurs when testosterone levels dramatically rise, causing males to have a strong desire to mate. Male adult elephants become increasingly aggressive during this period, which can last two to three months. Bulls in peak physical condition go into musth for more extended periods than younger, more submissive bulls. This strong aroma is created by the secretion of a hormone-rich substance known as temporin from the temporal gland on either side of the elephant's head. Also, urine steadily trickles down the back legs of elephants in musth. Adult bull elephants in musth may rub their heads against trees as a form of scent marking to demonstrate dominance. Female elephants use the smell of musth to determine the sexual maturity and condition of the male.

The smell of death lingers in the air...the stench of rotting flesh hits you instantly. You may not have seen the action of this kill or know who was responsible, but the aromas that remain tell a story of the circle of life. Nature's clean-up crew have arrived. Hyenas are excellent scavengers, they can detect a carcass by smell from as far as four kilometres away. They have powerful jaws and strong digestive juices, meaning they can eat almost all the carcass. The only parts hyenas cannot digest are the hooves, keratin sheath of antelope horns and hair.





With one of the highest bite forces in the animal kingdom, hyenas can crunch through bones and rip skin to pieces. This helps recycle calcium back into the environment. By cleaning up what others leave behind, hyenas help prevent the spread of diseases and keep the ecosystem healthy. Vultures often reach a carcass before hyenas because they can spot it from about six kilometres away. Each of Africa's vulture species has a different feeding niche on the carcass. Lappet-faced vultures, the largest vulture in Africa, often feed first as they are the best adapted to tear open the carcass. With one of the strongest beaks of all the vultures, the lappet-faced vulture uses its powerful beak to tear off tough hides and ligaments. White-backed and Ruppell's vultures gorge on the internal organs. Hooded and white-headed vultures tend to be shyer than other vulture species, so they wait their turn and then pick the scraps out to eat. The bearded vulture's diet consists mainly of bones. This vulture will drop bones to smash them into pieces small enough to swallow. As scavengers, vultures speed up decomposition by devouring large amounts of flesh. This helps stop the spread of harmful diseases. The smell of death also attracts carrion beetles, blow flies and flesh flies, which increase the rate of decay for the carcass. Horn-borer moths lay their eggs in carcasses, and their larvae feed on the keratin sheath of antelope horns. This helps get rid of the remaining parts of the carcass. Finally, bacteria break down any remaining organic matter into essential nutrients such as carbon and nitrogen. These nutrients are recycled into the soil and eventually become part of another living thing.

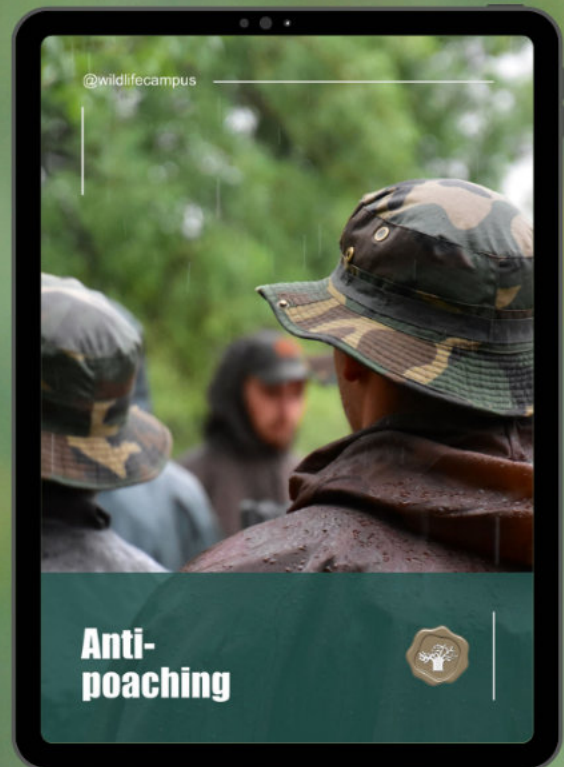
As the night draws closer, the sweet fragrance of bushveld gardenia (*Gardenia volkensii*) drifts through the air. These white trumpet-like flowers bloom from July to December and flower at night because they are moth-pollinated. Kudu and impala browse the leaves of this gardenia, while monkeys, baboons, elephants, and large antelope eat the fruits.

There you have it; you have experienced the magic of the African bush through scent alone. Please take a moment to appreciate the astonishing ways nature reveals its secrets.



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03

Nkonzo Wildlife: Leading the Charge in Rhino Research



At the forefront of wildlife conservation in Limpopo Province, Nkonzo Wildlife is making remarkable strides in rhino research and protection. With the African rhino population facing critical challenges due to poaching and habitat loss, Nkonzo Wildlife is dedicated to safeguarding this iconic species through innovative research, community engagement, and active conservation strategies.

Nkonzo Wildlife's rhino research focuses on understanding rhino behavior, ecology, and social structures, providing invaluable data that informs conservation practices. Using non-invasive monitoring techniques, the team studies the rhinos in their natural habitat, gathering insights into their movement patterns, feeding habits, and interactions with other species. This research not only helps in developing better management practices but also enhances our understanding of these majestic creatures, crucial for their long-term survival.

The organization also emphasizes the importance of community involvement in rhino conservation. Local communities are empowered through educational programs that foster a sense of ownership and responsibility towards wildlife protection.

How You Can Get Involved

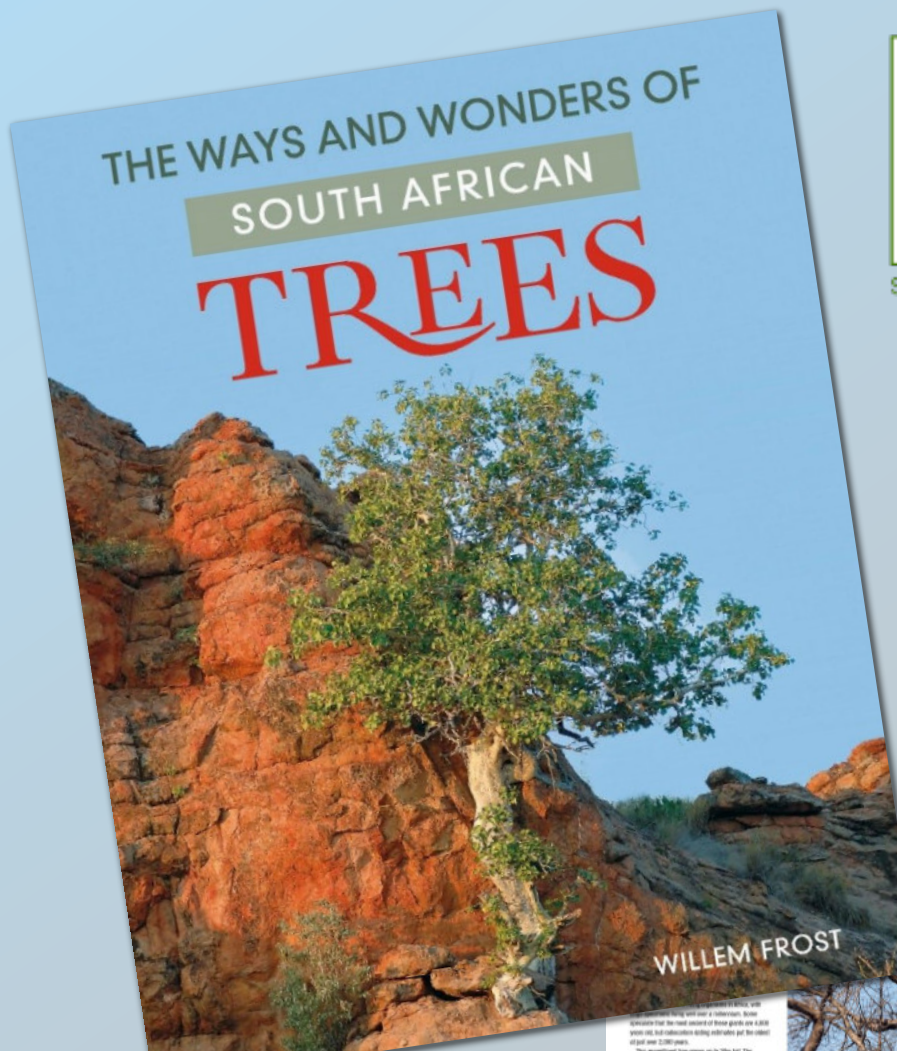
Nkonzo Wildlife offers various ways for wildlife enthusiasts, researchers, and conservation supporters to get involved in its efforts to protect rhinos. From volunteering in the field to participating in educational workshops and fundraising initiatives, there is a place for everyone passionate about making a difference.

For those looking for a hands-on experience, Nkonzo Wildlife provides programs where you can join their dedicated team in Limpopo, assisting with monitoring activities, data collection, and community outreach. These programs offer a unique opportunity to contribute directly to rhino conservation while gaining invaluable experience in the field.



If you cannot join on the ground, you can still make a difference by supporting Nkonzo Wildlife's efforts through donations, sponsoring a rhino, or joining their global network of ambassadors to raise awareness about the plight of rhinos. Every contribution helps in building a future where rhinos can roam freely and safely.

To learn more about Nkonzo Wildlife's rhino research or find out how you can get involved, visit www.wildlife-research.com today. Together, we can make a difference in the fight for rhino survival.



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A celebration of the rich diversity and beauty of indigenous trees, *The Ways and Wonders of South African Trees* uncovers the fascinating world of trees and how they function. Presented in two parts, the first explores the physiology and behaviour of trees and the second the grandeur of a select number of species, richly supported by photographs.

Part 1 focuses on the complex life of trees and unpacks the important process of photosynthesis and its benefits to all other life. It explores the ways in which trees defend themselves, their role in pollination, and symbiotic relationships with other plants and animals. Record-breakers, such as the oldest, tallest and biggest trees, are also featured.

Part 2 of the book showcases some 160 conspicuous species, including the iconic baobab, sausage tree and mopane tree, as well as lesser known but interesting trees such as baboon's breakfast. These accounts describe the unique traits of different trees and their various parts and discusses how they are used by animals and birds, and by humans.

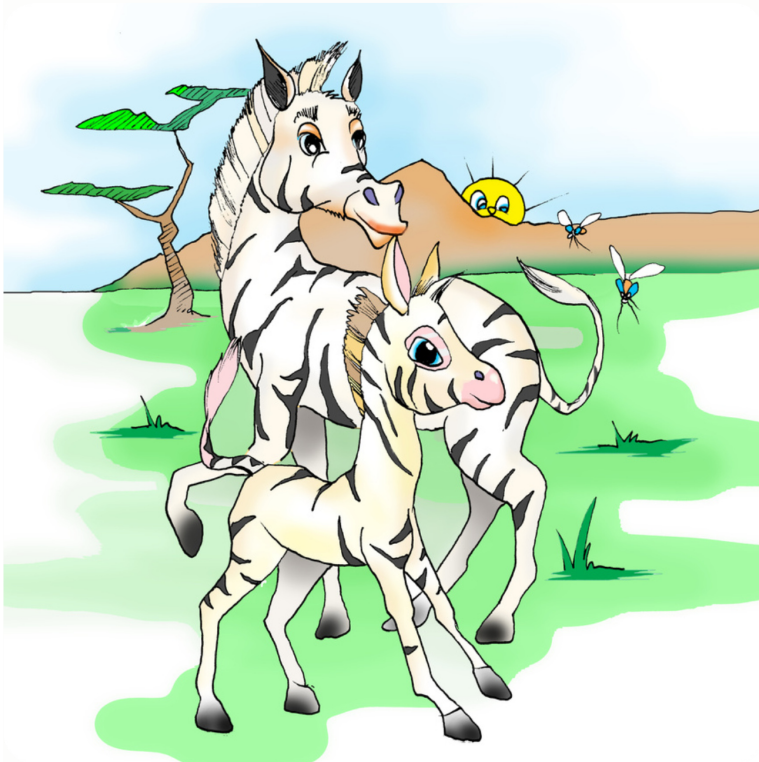
The Travel Buggz Adventures

Join the Travel Buggz game viewing in the Kruger National Park ?

“Today, we’ll drive the sand roads along the river. Pack snacks and lots of water, we’ll be out all day,” Bella Butterfly gets the Travel Buggz up and going.

“Aw look at the baby zebra with its Mom, and the herd standing in a row over there swatting the flies with their tails,” Lucy points to her favourite animal.

“Do you know, baby zebras recognize their Moms by her smell, voice and stripe pattern?” asks Aiden.



All Travel Buggz story books are available in Afrikaans and Kruger is available in iSizulu.

A young bull elephant suddenly gives a loud trumpet and mock-charges the car. Bella reacts quickly, reversing out of his way.

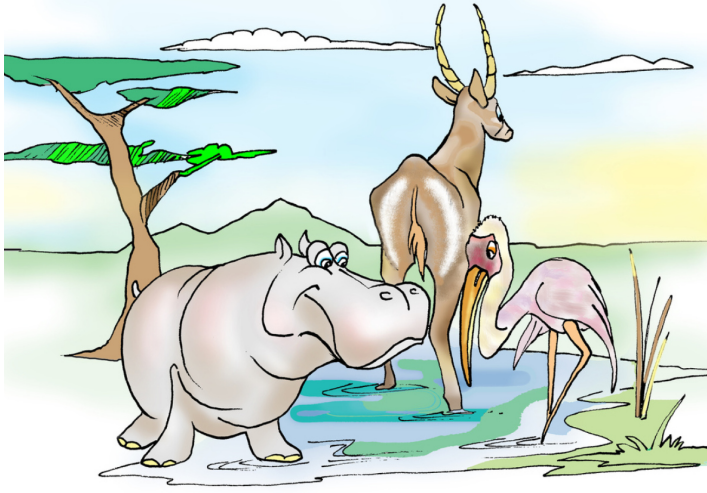
“He’s just a moody teenager but his threat cannot be taken lightly,” Bella reassures everyone.

Keeping to the speed limit rules, they drive at fifty kilometers an hour, the Buggz are looking out for animals.

They spot a Lilac-breasted Roller peeking down at them from his high tree perch, the un capturing his shimmering colours.



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



A look-out point diverts them off the main road to gaze down at the river.

Hippos soak in the sun and a yellow-billed stork wades in a pool of water.

“Look, that buck has a circle shape on his bottom like a dart board,” Lucy Ladybug laughs.

“It’s a waterbuck,” Aiden Ant quickly responds.

“There’s a few more in the far distance.”
A herd of buffalo churn dust as they come down to drink..



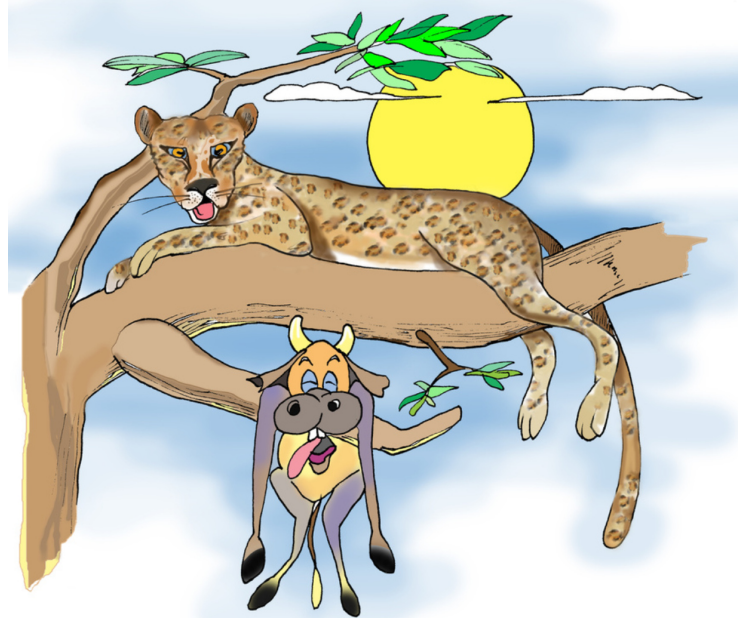
The Travel Buggz snooze for a bit, it’s a long drive back.

When the car stops, they grab binoculars with wide-eyes, expecting to see great things.

Reaching the last stretch before camp, Bella calls, “Wake-up, there are lots of cars here.”

“A leopard in the tree with a kill,” say the folks in the car next to them.

“They drag their kill up the tree to stop other predators stealing it before they eat it,” says Aiden.



The Travel Buggz stories are a series of children’s story books about the adventures of the author and her two children. If you would like copies of any of the nine titles of books, contact : sandy@travelbuggz.co.za

More stories in the collection:

The Travel Buggz visit Wild Horses in Kaapsehoop

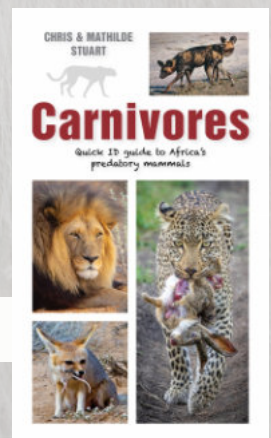
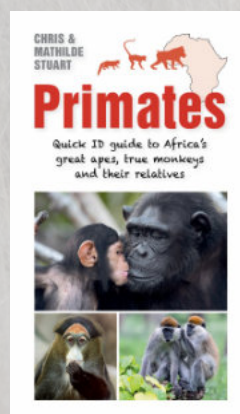
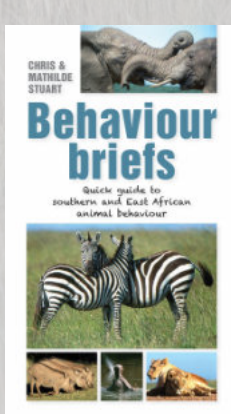
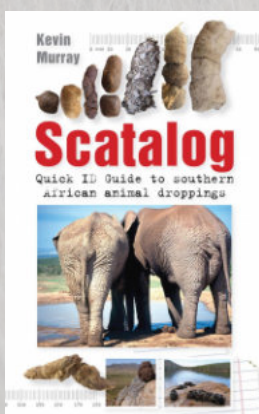
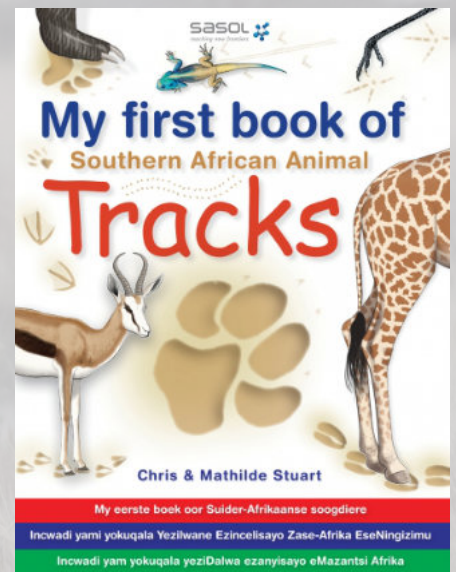
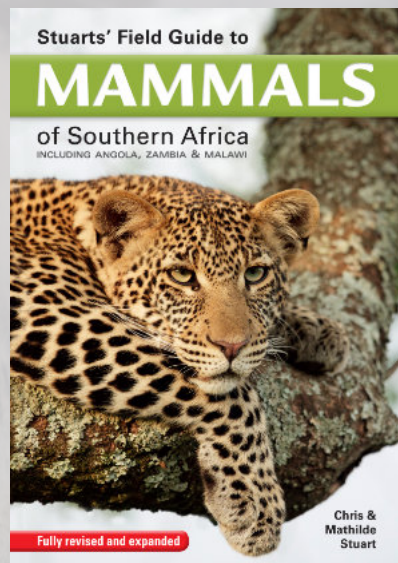
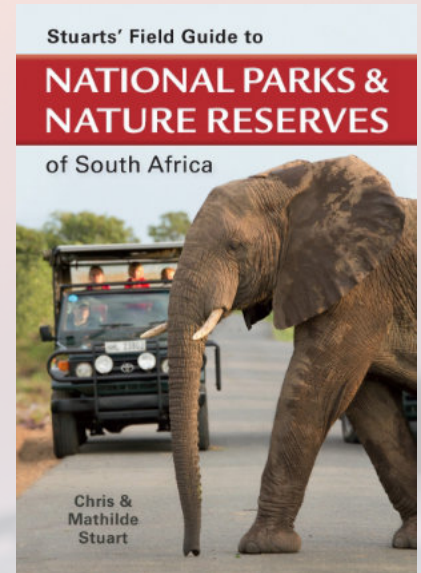
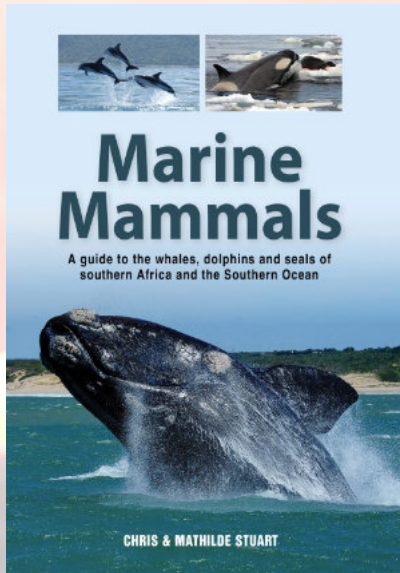
The Travel Buggz help save the Rhinos

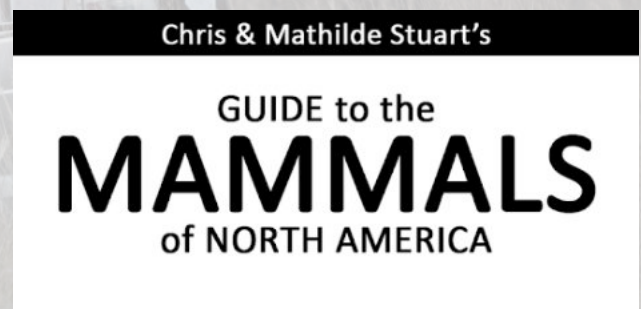
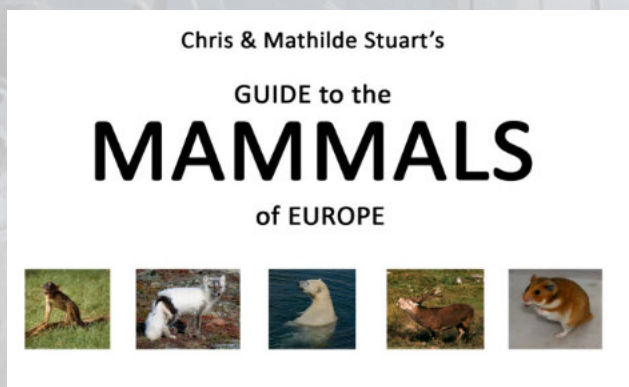
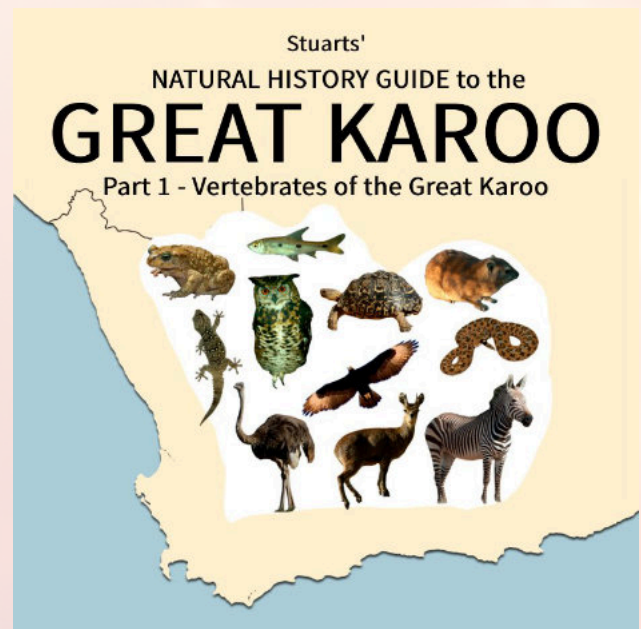
The Travel Buggz must stay Home

The Travel Buggz go Digging for Dinosaurs

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by





African Folklore



The Sangoma and the hyaena

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.

08

Animals know the meaning of love, not just affection but love. Animals know loyalty. Animals reward friendship. One day a Zulu sangoma was digging medicinal roots illegally in a prohibited place in Zululand. He had to make a living and so he did this by digging up and selling roots and bulbs, which were used as a medicine. Then all of a sudden, this day of all days, the man was attacked by a pack of baboons. They came at him like an ugly dark-grey and stinking tide. They showered him with broken sticks and rocks. He ran for his life and try to climb a tree but not before one of the apes had seized him by his trouser leg and torn the trouser leg off him.

There was the sangoma in the tree surrounded by a pack of hostile baboons. A baboon can be very, very vicious and as with human beings its viciousness is accompanied by cold intelligence. The baboons were moving in a circle around the tree in which the sangoma was and they knew the one piece of bush logic that that which goes up a tree must inevitably come down. And so, they were waiting. Then out of nowhere there arrived a saviour to save the sangoma's life. And the saviour was truly an unlikely one. It was a huge hyaena, which did something, which hyaenas never do. It went for the baboons and really saw them off in style, killing one of them with its terrible fangs before disappearing into the distance.

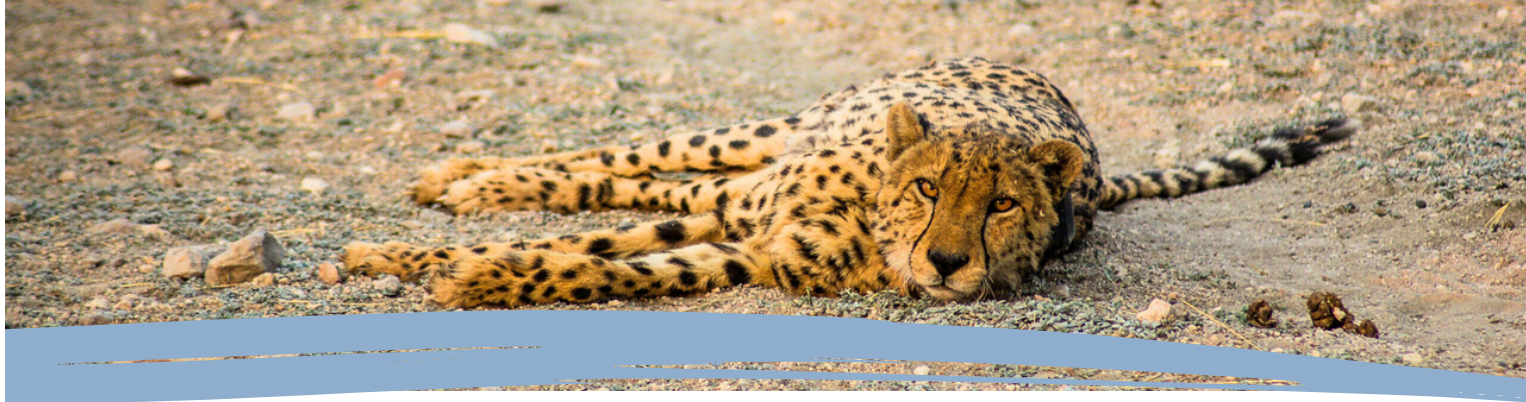
Some time later the sangoma returned to his home and told his wives about what had happened. He was in such a state of shock because when the baboon tore his trouser leg off him, it also managed to scratch one of his buttocks very painfully. And so, his great wife had been busy with an old

trowel. She had heated the trowel, builder's trowel in the fire, and had cauterised the baboon scratches, which added pain to injury. Well, he did it again, did he not, said the woman to the Sangoma? Who did what, ask the sangoma, his buttock throbbing like a battle drum with pain? Well, that was your hyaena my friend, said the woman. Don't you remember that he has saved your life before? My hyaena, said the sangoma in puzzlement?

Then he remembered that when he was a young boy he had founded a wounded hyaena in the bush and had brought it home and had given it love and had kept it illegally of course in a spare granary at the back of the homestead. The hyaena had grown and afraid of the law, the sangoma had released the half grown hyaena back into the bush. That hyaena was to return the sangoma's life on three strange occasions by saving his life, once from a python and on a second time from the baboons. And the last time the hyaena came into the man's life, was when he saved him from two human attackers who had beaten him up with sticks accusing him of being a sorcerer and were preparing to burn him alive. The hyaena appeared running towards the attackers.

It was now old and was limping on one leg, but the sight of the great beast was enough to send the attackers backing. Out of Africa do come many strange tales and this story is true, every word of it. Animals know love. Animals think, learn and feel, whether they are inside a circus or whether they are roaming free in the African bush.





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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.

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ABOUT HAYLEY

With a 25-year career in the hospitality industry and a natural talent for serving people, Hayley is the guide you need to unlock your full potential. From her beginnings as one of the first female guides in South Africa's Greater Kruger National Park to one of many roles as a business coach, Hayley's journey has been driven by a passion for helping others. With a focus on HR, staff training, and departmental development, she offers personalised guidance and actionable strategies to help you thrive in today's business landscape. Let Hayley be your partner on the path to success. Contact her today and turn your dreams into reality.



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Game drive etiquette OR How not to be “that guest”

By David Batzofin



These are some of my “do’s” and “don’ts” that make for a memorable safari experience.



1] Sometimes, leaving the vehicle is required for the guide or tracker to verify tracks that might not be able to be confirmed while in the vehicle. This is not an opportunity for those in the vehicle to take out mobile phones and record selfies or make business calls. I have seen Sir Richard Branson out on drives, and he was not on the phone.

2] Listen to your guide... or at least show interest in what they are saying. They have often spent years, and in some cases, decades, in the bush and therefore the knowledge they are sharing with you might not necessarily be found during a Google search! Aside from that, it is just good manners to pay attention.

3] Bear in mind that on a morning drive that leaves around 06h00, your guide (and tracker) have probably been up since 04h00 preparing the vehicle, hot box with tea and coffee as well as the vehicle. If you are NOT a morning person, you can stay in bed if you choose. Staff do not have that choice and have to be engaged from the moment the first guest arrives in the lounge looking for coffee.

4] An issue that recently raised its head was "How long can a vehicle remain in a sighting"? Some guests will feel that they are entitled as they have paid a large amount for their accommodation, however, in reality, all guests are equal when out on drive. It is most annoying



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

when your vehicle is on first standby, and the car ahead of you takes 20-30 minutes to give their guests the best viewing and photographic opportunities. By the time you arrive, the animal has either moved away or hidden itself under a bush.

5] If the call of nature catches up with you while on a drive (or a walk), ask your guide to stop and find a safe spot to leave the vehicle and relieve yourself.

At a drinks stop, never wander off **WITHOUT** letting the guide know where you are going. Trouble can occur quickly, and they would want to be prepared for the 'just-in-case' possibility.

At a reserve some time ago, we stopped for drinks and I asked if it was safe to find a spot to relieve myself. The guide assured me that it was safe to head for the nearest tree, which I duly did. Business done, I returned to the group to enjoy drinks and snacks, only for all of us to be herded back into the vehicle as a lioness appeared out of the bush, just a few meters away from where I had been standing. No one was injured and it made for a great story back at camp (and in this post) but it could have had a different outcome.

6] If your camera gear takes up space, as my 560mm lens does, do warn the others on the vehicle so that they do not get hit on the back of the head as you pan from side to side. I always ask for a particular seat on a vehicle so that I do not get in the way of others who might be recording with a phone or tablet.

And **PLEASE, PLEASE** do put your camera down occasionally to enjoy what is occurring around you not just through your viewfinder.

I was in a vehicle where the camera of the guy next to me sounded like a machine gun at every sighting. Nothing mattered to this intense photographer. Lighting? Who cares. Half the animal hidden by a bush? Take **MANY** images and the list goes on.

Eventually, I enquired what he was going to do with SD cards filled to capacity... "Delete them" was his response!

7] Some sundowner stops utilise a particular spot, as was the case at this camp. That is not to say that you will stop here every evening, but if you stay in camp for more than a few nights, you might experience this on several occasions. Don't dive into the snacks without pacing yourself...there is still supper back at the lodge.

8] Guides have to learn hospitality as one of their skills, but helping pack up is often welcomed.



The face of a determined guide. John is an old friend and he has decades of experience, but on a particular series of drives he was looking for lions...and they could not be found.

The old adage "The best sightings happen the day before you arrive and the day after you leave" was true in this instance as John did find the pride... the day after I left.

We might not have found lions, but we did find a young female leopard.

9] At this particular leopard sighting, the guests in the vehicle were obviously ecstatic; however, no matter how nicely the guide asked them to keep quiet, their emotions got the better of them, and they would not settle down. Eventually, quiet prevailed, and the leopard relaxed, making the sighting a good one.

10] Finally, whether you have seen the various species that you were hoping for or not, remember to always thank your guide and tracker as you step off the vehicle!

I hope this article has been informative and that you will be a better guest for these insights the next time you head off on a safari holiday.

Good night from Africa.

