

@wildlifecampus



Survival



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Module #1 – Component #1

Introduction to land survival

Disclaimer

The views of the course author do not necessarily represent those of WildlifeCampus, its management or its staff.

All information in this course is offered with the assumption that you will exercise proper caution and care in doing any of the things that are presented. YOU are solely responsible for the use to which you put this material.

WildlifeCampus and the author of this course will not be responsible for incorrect use of First Aid, animal products or incorrect use/identification of plants leading to serious discomfort or death.

Some activities related to wilderness survival and self-sufficiency can be dangerous if done without proper care and attention. Please be careful and attentive when engaging in any of these activities.

Some of the techniques discussed in this course are meant **solely for use in wilderness survival situations**. Please note that in most places, using these methods to capture animals is **illegal** unless you are actually in a survival situation. It is similarly illegal to "harvest" (poach) or otherwise disturb native plants in many locations, including within the boundaries of National Parks.

Warning: Never eat plants growing in areas where they may have been sprayed with pesticides or herbicides (weed killers) or where the water supply could be polluted, such as from urban or industrial run-off. **Never eat any part of any wild-growing plant** unless you are certain you can identify it. Being certain means you have developed a maturity of skill in identifying plants.

Use common sense. Take proper precautions.

Objectives

To familiarise the learner with the discipline of land survival, its value, and its importance.

Expected outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Indicate the causes of a survival emergency.
- Select correctly between static and roaming survival in given circumstances.
- Indicate the dangers of the survival situation.
- Describe the value and importance of land survival.

Pre-test

Test your current knowledge of land survival.

Which of the following can cause a survival emergency?

- a. Being lost in woodland
- b. Spraining your ankle on a hike
- c. Natural disasters (like floods and fires)
- d. All of the above
- e. Only (a) and (c)

To survive in the bush, it is important to:

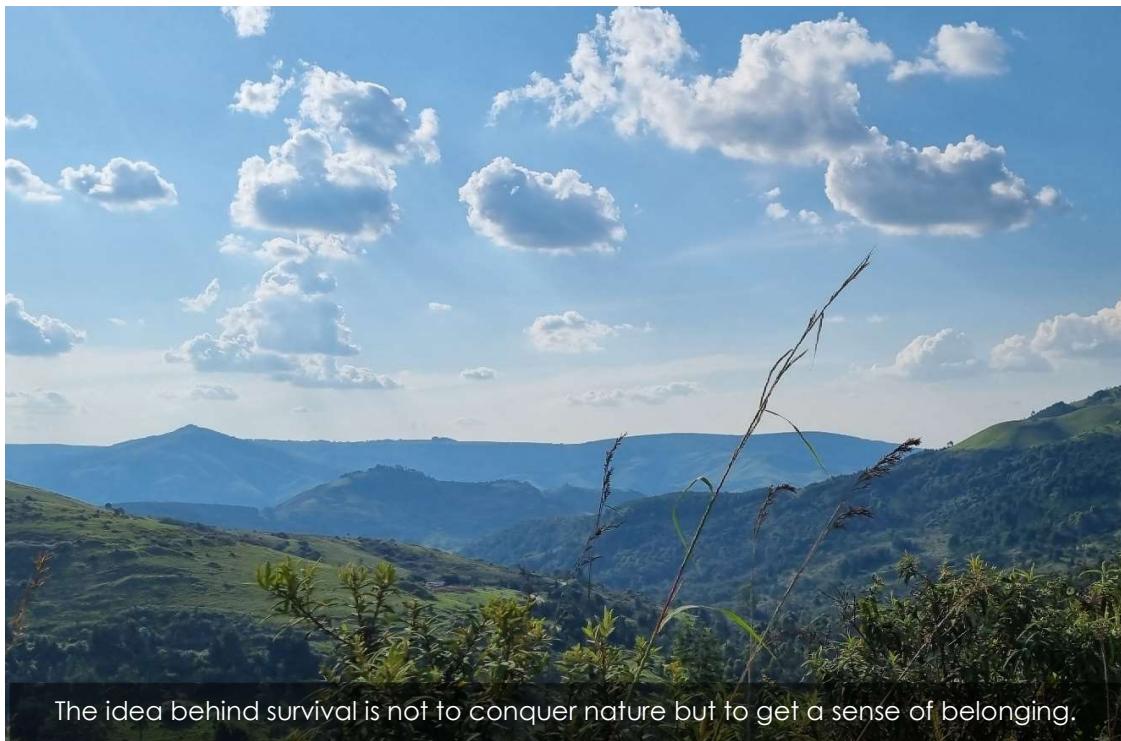
- a. Know people that are familiar with the territory
- b. Know local plants and how to make use of them
- c. Know where north is
- d. Always carry extra supplies with you
- e. Be able to hunt

Introduction

This module (and course) is intended as an **entry-level source of knowledge** for wilderness explorers or civilians that may have to deal with a **survival emergency** in the **Southern African Bushveld** (Bushveld is a term used to describe African Savannah or African woodland with its associated geomorphologic structures). The information herein aims to familiarise you with some of the most important survival aspects in an emergency.

An emergency or survival situation can arise when least expected and can be the result of:

- ⌚ Being **lost or abandoned** in the Bushveld.
- ⌚ **Disabling injury** in remote areas (like on a hike).
- ⌚ A motor vehicle or aeroplane **accident/breakdown** in remote areas.
- ⌚ **Abduction and/or hi-jacking** (being dumped in unfriendly territory).
- ⌚ **Warfare or insurgency** (like refugees fleeing from persecutors).
- ⌚ **Natural disasters** (like floods and fires).
- ⌚ **Famine and disease**.
- ⌚ Others...



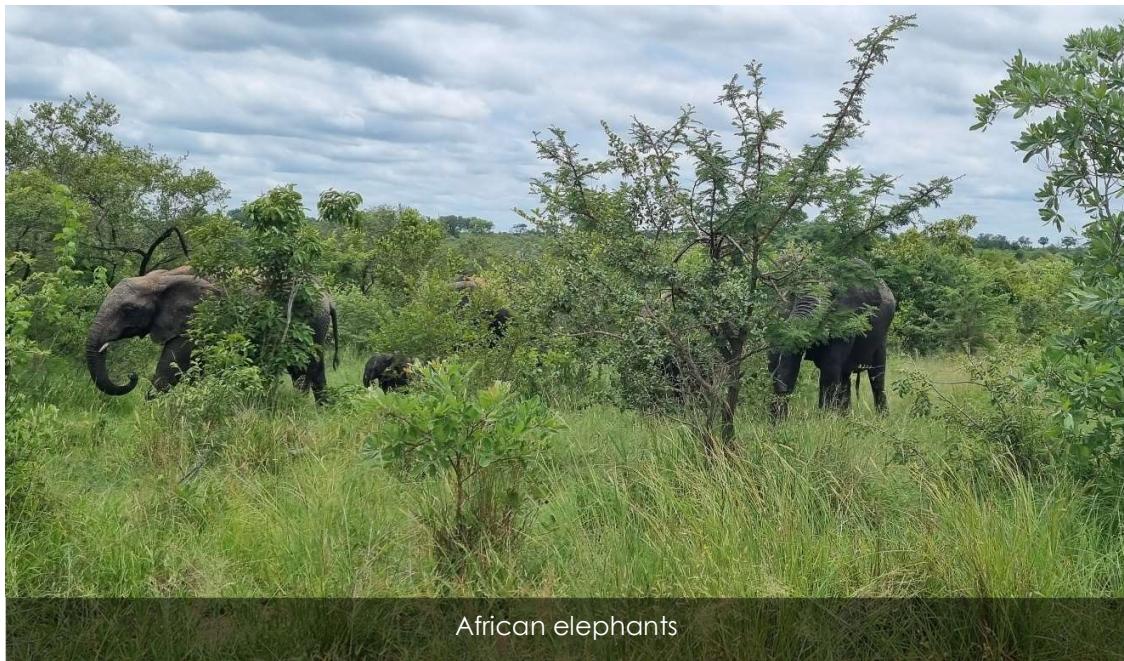
Land survival as a discipline

Once you find yourself in a survival situation (maybe due to some of the above), you would require certain knowledge to sustain yourself (and your group) or negotiate back to help or civilisation. This may require you to know the following:

- **Module # 2 - The ecology of survival** (knowledge of the terrain and the interactions between yourself and all the elements, living or non-living).
- **Module # 3 - The psychology of survival** (knowledge of the mental processes associated with survival that can make the difference between life and death).
- **Module # 4 - Edible and useful plants of Southern Africa** (knowledge of the plants you will encounter in Southern Africa and how to use them).
- **Module # 5 - Animals: their survival uses and dangers** (knowledge of the animals of Southern Africa, how to avoid being eaten and how to use them).
- **Module # 6 - Improvisations and survival skills** (all the stuff you can make and things you can do to ensure your survival effort is more comfortable).
- **Module # 7 - Bush medicine** (basic emergency care associated with bush conditions).
- **Module # 8 - Nutrition** (what to drink and to eat and where to get it from).
- **Module # 9 - Sea and coastal survival** (survival on the coastline of Southern Africa, finding food, water and shelter and how to deal with the dangers of the oceans).
- **Module # 10 - Natural navigation** (finding your way in unfamiliar territory with rudimentary or no instruments).
- **Module # 11 - Tracking and anti-tracking** (how to track people or avoid being tracked by people).

Since there are **various levels of extremity** in terms of potential danger and hazards, we will learn survival from the **most extreme point of departure**. This means we will apply our survival knowledge to a severe scenario in which you may find yourself. The scenario may change as we go along, but for the moment... here is the juice:

Your predicament - you and your group are lost in big 5 African Bushveld after your four-seater aeroplane went down. But that is not all! One member of your group has an **injury** making them virtually immovable... fine? No, there is more! Your aeroplane went down in unfriendly territory. As we speak, known **terrorists** are looking for survivors to hold as hostages to barter with. As you contemplate your sudden predicament, you hear the mighty roar of a lion that was disturbed by your crash-landing. You realise you are in **big 5** territory containing herds of buffalo, aggressive rhinos, and leopards. Then in the distance, you hear a tree being snapped like a toothpick by stealthy but extremely dangerous elephants. Are you in trouble or what?



Never thought this could happen to you... ever?

Have no fear. Land survival, as a discipline, is there to help you through all this. Many people have found themselves in predicaments just like these and survived to tell their tales. Their **knowledge**, **experience**, and **many years of research** are combined into this course to help prevent loss of life or serious injury through the art of survival.

The basics of survival

Once your ordeal starts, there are **two** decisions you can make relatively early. These decisions are totally **dependent** on your **circumstances** and are merely a choice between whether you will **move** or **stay**.

(Stay) static survival

Surviving in one place and sustaining yourself by obtaining **nutrition** and **shelter** from your immediate environment. In this instance, your circumstances rendered you **immovable** (not fit to walk due to injury or other reasons), or you are confident you can remain and **will be found** by rescuers or a search party. There may also be a good source of **potable water**, which could prolong your survival effort.

Advantages of static survival:

- Enough time to become familiar with the **territory**.
- You can build a strong or lasting **shelter** against predators or elements.
- Build up **food** stores.
- Time to filter **water** more effectively.
- Time to **improvise** items, making yourself progressively comfortable.
- Better chance of making a small and hidden **fire**.
- Time for **injuries to heal** before you attempt to travel.
- You can **post a watch** against approaching unfriendly people.

Disadvantages of static survival:

- Totally dependent on **being found** by rescuers.
- Local food or water resources can **deplete** after a while.
- You may have to **hide** your camp.
- Unfriendly visitors can spot your **fire smoke** or activity in the area.

(Move) roaming survival

Surviving on the limb while **moving towards** an end objective (help or civilisation). In this case, you would obtain nutrition in a **sporadic** fashion, as and when the opportunity arises, while covering large distances. Shelter will be improvised whenever necessary. This form of survival is **riskier** than static survival, but your odds of finding help, or a way out may be greater. It usually is best to move if there is **no accessible source of water**.

Advantages of roaming survival:

- **Making up** valuable time towards finding help or civilisation.
- May find **better nutrition** or survival resources further afield.
- May **escape** unfriendly territory faster.

Disadvantages of roaming survival:

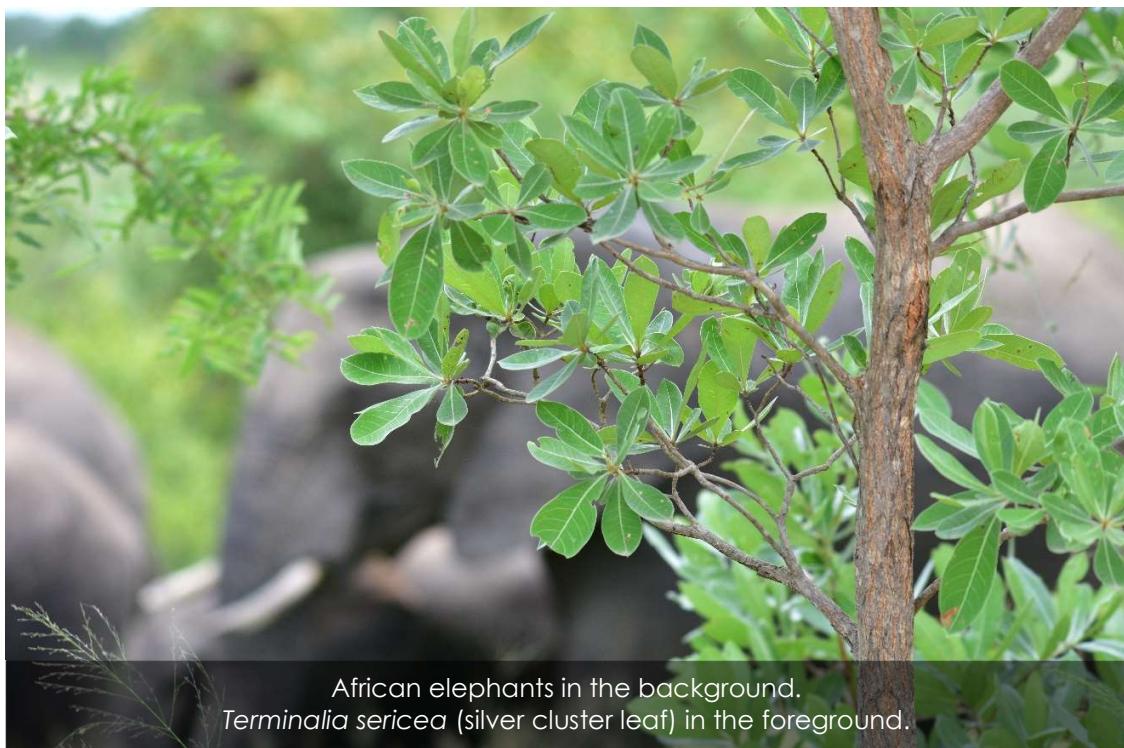
- Not as safe from **predators** as static survival.
- Difficult to make and hide a fire while on the move.
- May become **more lost**.
- Risk running **into an enemy or dangerous animals** in unfamiliar territory.
- Unsure of **water** or future nutritional resources.



What is the best way to survive?

The idea behind survival is **not to conquer nature** but to get a sense of **belonging**. Whether you stay or move, it should instead be an effort to **become a part of Mother Nature** and to be accepted by the ecology, so there is no "best" way. Survival in itself is an extraordinary and very personal experience.

To survive, you need to look deep into yourself first, check your mental state - **your psychological state of mind** - and find out where you fit in with the whole scenario. It is not the place for doing **macho stuff or being stupid**.



There is no swinging through the branches with a knife between your teeth... that is plain stupid. If you make mistakes in nature, **you are dead**. It is sometimes wise to search for local people when you need help, but it is unwise to search for people in an area **known to harbour terrorists** or insurgents.

The survival experience is visceral and reasonably rough, requiring you to make your environment as liveable and comfortable as possible. It is a question of understanding **where you are** and **how you adapt**. Mother Nature can **change within seconds**. In a short time, fortune can turn into tragedy.

What are the dangers of survival?

- The most significant danger in a survival situation **is fear**. Fear of the unknown, of nature, and the Bushveld. Fear of what you **perceive** as dangerous (maybe spiders, snakes or other creepy crawlies) or of being lost, in the dark or alone.
- Fear can lead to **panic**, and panic causes people to make the wrong decisions, inevitably getting them killed.
- **All animals** are potentially dangerous and should never be underestimated.
- Certain **poisonous plants** can lead to severe discomfort, illness or death.
- **Environmental exposure** can be just as dangerous (i.e. floods, fire, storms, wind, sunlight, etc.).
- **Unfriendly locals** in the territory may harm you and your companions.
- **Lack of water** is a severe danger because humans can only go two to three days (at a stretch) without water before they die.
- **Disease** and illness are grave dangers (from infections, tropical disease, dehydration and even hypothermia).
- **Injury** from accidents or attacks can be a serious hazard to your survival effort.

How long could you live off the land?

It is possible to live off the land **indefinitely**. It all depends on the available resources and the effort to find water and food and make your environment liveable.

What kind of personal traits do you need to best survive?

The best personal traits for survival are **self-knowledge**, **composure** and **confidence**. A person that **knows** their **strengths** and **weaknesses** stands a better chance of surviving. You must know what you are capable of and understand your limitations or the areas where you may fall short. This will have a significant impact on **how you make decisions**.

The value and importance of survival

Why learn the skills of survival? What is the value?

Survival is a form of **life insurance**, meaning that if you ever fall victim to a survival situation (even in other countries or different terrain), you will have the basic skills and knowledge to save your **own life** and maybe the **life of others**.

What is the importance of survival as a discipline?

- Learning how to survive **strengthens the bond** between humans and Mother Nature (the wilderness).
- Survival teaches us the **value** of nature's assets and **respect** for nature's inhabitants.
- **Survival saves lives.**
- Survival ensures that unique and valuable cultural and natural history **knowledge** is kept and built upon. (With the onset of the modern age and the lure of cities, African tribes are quickly losing their knowledge of their natural heritage and ability to survive in it).

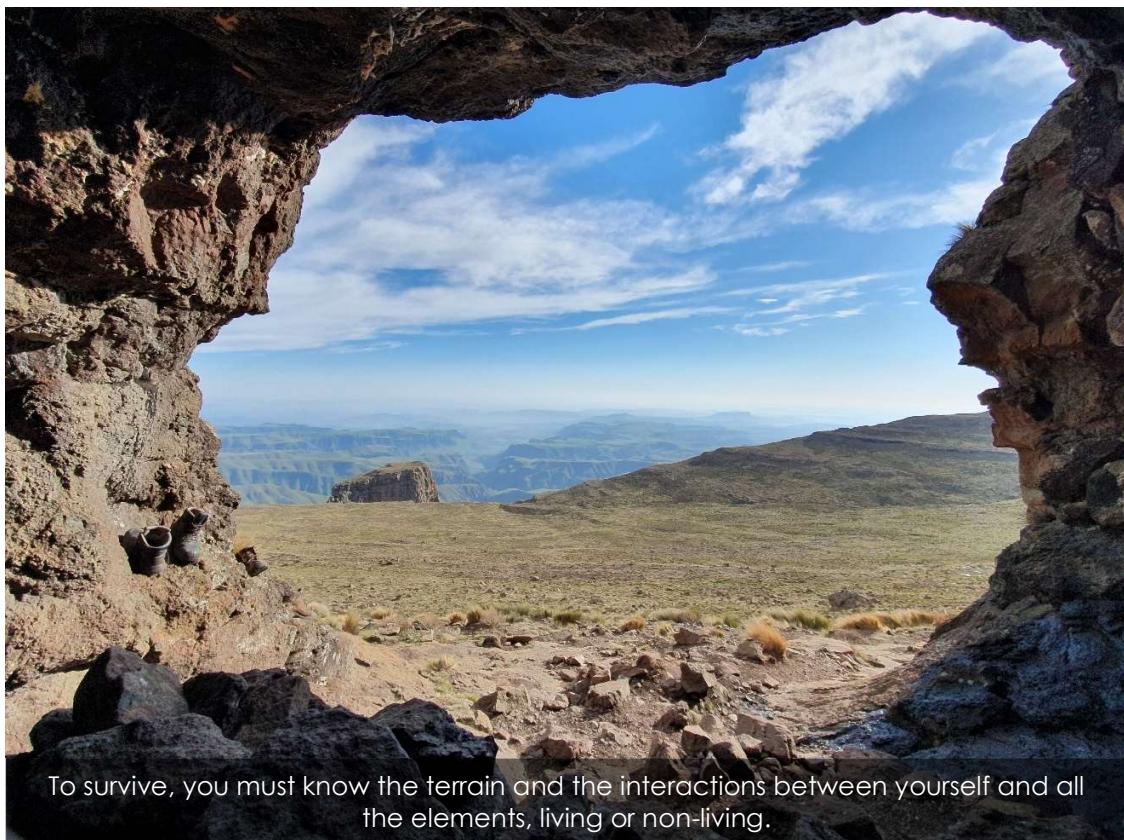


Important notice

Basic survival skills will enable you to partake in a survival **expedition but only under the guidance of a survival expert.**

Do not wander off into the Bushveld alone to see whether you can survive.

Bush survival is a very rare ability. Becoming self-sufficient in the South African Bushveld **will take in-depth study, research, practice, and experience.** Even then, you are in grave danger and can succumb to the forces of Mother Nature in all her facets.



To survive, you must know the terrain and the interactions between yourself and all the elements, living or non-living.

Lastly, the aim of bush survival is ultimately to **progressively find oneself** in a balanced relationship with Mother Nature. Frankly, you are not surviving anymore but finding yourself.