



# KRUGER2CANYON

## NEWS

June 2022

The Farm House, R527, Zandspruit, Hoedspruit, Limpopo Tel 078 979 6486 email: editor@kruger2canyon.co.za

## Finally ! The Bush Party is back in the Hoed !



Image : Barry Morgan

### Entertainment Correspondent

The evening started in the Kamogelo parking lot, where an eager set of Hlokomela officials checked a rather excited group of soon-to-be revellers, for their credentials and labelled us all for boarding the transfers and entry to the event of the year – the Hlokomela Bush Party 2022!

This year – after an absence of two years, courtesy of the dreaded Covid pandemic – the event was held at Pridelands (Eco Training) – a literal hop skip and jump

from the centre of Hoedspruit town (this venue was partly chosen to allow for easy transfers from town).

Nothing could deter the merry bunch of people that braved a little cold and big five animals to take part in the frivolity and joviality of the evening. All were ready to let their hair down.

The transfer took little time, and we were told that there was a slight delay as a couple of elephants had to be ushered from the dancefloor. On arrival, we were greeted by the Thornybush crew who ensured that we were all welcomed with a

glass of bubbly that had a hibiscus bud as an accompaniment. Apart from the welcome bubbly, the most important part was getting one's headphones for the silent disco. We were advised of the three channels – red, green, and blue – and shuffled our way over to some friends around the fire.

There were ethnic dancers, food galore, drinks stations and many other interesting delicacies that could be munched with gay abandon at the various stations that had been set up around a 'gathering area'. Within the area, bales of covered

hay served as benches, and fire pits were strategically placed and lit, to offer some reprieve from the cold – not that temperature was of any concern to the partygoers.

And then as the sun set and the moon rose, the dancing started, and the party really did begin! It was quite humorous to take one's headphones off, hear nothing, and watch the extreme dance interpretations of the music (that one could not hear) flooding through the headphones of the dancers. At one stage I noticed everyone was either on the green or blue channel, but there

was one happy chappie on the red channel, and he was dancing with as much fervour as all the others. How it seemed that no one had a care in the world, the pandemic was forgotten, and everyone embraced the spirit of the evening with gusto. Maybe we all just needed to vent the frustration of the last two years – and this was the time to do so.

All in all, it was an amazing party as one realises from the comments of just a few. Jane and Peter: This is amazing, the setup is beautiful, the drinks and foods

are amazing, we love it! Sarah: I am so happy to be back here at the silent disco. It's been two years, and I said to my friends - look around, we have elephants in the distance, got a gin and tonic in my hand, there's almost a full moon above me and the music has just started. I couldn't be happier to be back. Ester: This is my third silent disco and every single time it just gets better and better.

JB: Amazing event, it's a long-standing institution in Hoedspruit.

Cont. on page 3

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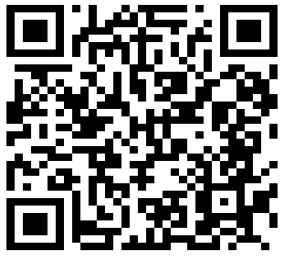
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# From the editors seat...



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From the editor/publisher

I don't want to harp on the subject of pandemics – but we really have had enough of this stuff. The subsequent dropping of restrictions, not having to have negative test results, no masks, etc., etc., all around the world, begs the question: was this all really necessary? Did we not overreact ... right now our total death toll in South Africa is hovering just over the 100 000 mark (population

61.93 million). Worldwide it stands around 6,32 million since January 2020 (population 7,95 billion) – that's after two and a half years.

Compare that to TB – Tuberculosis – South Africa records about 89 000 deaths a year from this disease! Worldwide in 2020 there were 1,3 million deaths! But there is no real noise about this disease.

Anyway, just thought I would mention that, and maybe illicit a comment from some more learned medical scholar. Not to say it was not frightening, not to say that people did not die – all I am asking is, was our reaction to the disease warranted?

And then there was the Bush Party – oh my goodness! Now that was a party. It did seem that all hinderances, troubles, worries,

anxieties and the like were abandoned for the evening. It was just what we needed ... and a lot of fun was had by a lot of people, and all for a good cause.

I had some fantastic dialogue with readers this month – one of which was on the merits and the demerits of the prickly subject of hunting. Well I was challenged last month to publish something on the merits of hunting ... "Bet you won't do that!" – well I have in a way, and published a very thought provoking article in this edition. I can't wait to share an amber liquid with my dear friend, Charl, and see what he thinks about this one.

We had to bring the printing of this edition forward by a week, as we will be on location covering the Safari Guide of the Year 2022 as

one of the media and prize sponsors. Now this IS a test of skill and knowledge. It remains a misnomer for me to see these people that have dedicated their lives (as in the piece on Mike Karantonis), that are literally the front men and women for the country, and the lodges, but they are not always being recognised for their true worth. This will have to change – they are masters, no, doctors of their universe and they need to be recognised and rewarded as such. I look forward to seeing these amazing guides ply their trade with such dexterity, and wonder who on earth will win this challenge? All will be revealed LIVE on DSTV channel 183 at 20:00 on the 2 July 2022 – make sure you watch.

So, as we say goodbye to the grasp of winter – it has

been a bit cold – and embrace the short autumn, we wait in anticipation to welcome, with open arms, the heat of summer. It is on its way; we have passed through the solstice and it's all a downhill run in from here. How exciting.

Tourism seems to be on the up, there is the possibility of an international airport in Hoedspruit, so let's look forward to the future – as hard as that may be. Remember we live in a paradise few have the privilege of doing, although many want to. Mahatma Gandhi said that the future depends on what we do today. How true.

But let me leave you with something lighter, Charlie Chaplin – "Life is a beautiful magnificent thing, even to a jelly fish". Live it and love it – until next time!



Mark Bishop  
Editor/Publisher



## Letters to the editor



Dear Ed,

Thank you for your new super newspaper. Read it from page one to end. Very interesting article's all! I will make sure I don't miss the next edition. The one I tucked into was the May edition!

Audrey van Es

*Ed: Thank you Audrey. Always good to hear, and we are trying our best to get relevance, educational and thought provoking content. Keep reading!*

Dear Editor,

Thank you for a great publication filled with really interesting articles. A truly enjoyable read!

The answer given for Magic Square sum of 34 is incorrect. Can you spot your error? Call me if you can't.

Regards Tony Patten

*Ed: Dear Tony, well done! That was put in to see if anyone actually did the puzzles AND got the mistake - top right hand corner 1 vs 3. As you are the first to respond I'm happy to advise that you have won a R200 voucher to The Farmery Restaurant. You can pick up the voucher from our office at The Farm House, right next to FGASA. Thank you for the*

*compliments. We are trying hard to raise the quality of the publication to another level. PS: Tony has already picked up his voucher!*

Dear Editor,

We live in the most peaceful, amazing place on earth. We come here for the serenity, and overall love of the bush. Sadly not all have the same ideas or values.

On Sunday, 12 June at about 16:30 some person, clearly with no thought of noise pollution or anyone else in the surrounds, took off from Zandspruit airstrip in a bi-plane. The pilot then proceeded to do loops and fly around the area making a great deal of noise with absolutely no consideration for the people in the area – we were just settling down for peaceful bushveld sundowners on our deck.

This beastly intrusion on our space and peace is unacceptable, and surely the said pilot can understand that – but no. The continual roar of his engines lasted for about half an hour, disturbing the peace, increasing anger in those that had to endure the racket, with blatant disregard for anyone and everyone wanting a quiet moment on a Sunday afternoon to themselves. If there was a smidgen of respect in the pilot, he/she

would certainly not do this at this time. Have your fun in the mornings or afternoons of the work-week – you're welcome to that – but don't disturb our weekend peace. Shame on you!

Anon

PS: needless to say that our sundowner moment was ruined as I suspect were many others in the vicinity

*Ed: Well Anon, what can I say, but that I agree with you. As it happens I too was one of those unfortunate to experience this on Sunday afternoon – I too was upset.*

Geagte Redakteur,

Is daar enige manier waarop ons 'n prysvergeliking tussen kleinhandelaars in die voedselbesigheid in jou koerant kan hê? Alles het so duur geword hier in Hoedspruit en ek dink dit is tyd dat ons as die verbruikers hierteen opstaan. Dit is oukei om wins te maak, maar moet ons asseblief nie afskeur nie!  
Groete RT

*Ed: Beste RT, goeie idee en bly om dit te doen. Dit kan sommige mense kwaad maak maar is ongetwyfeld relevant in ons dorp. Laat ek kyk wat ek kan doen.*

## Sudoku

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# Finally ! The Bush Party is back in the Hoed !

Cont. from page 1.

It started at Thornybush many years ago, and we are delighted to be back here, participating, and celebrating and supporting Hlokomela which is the most phenomenal, amazing organisation, driven by Christine du Preez and her team, and I think we should do this more often to look after organisations like Hlokomela, who look after the people that are in need in the area.

Mich: Absolutely love this event, it's my fourth year coming here, I'll come back every year – it's always a party, always a vibe and in the perfect setting. Kate: We've been here for 2 hours, and it's been exceptional. We arrived as the sun was going down, a couple of glasses of bubbles, just met such beautiful people, saw the elephants leave the dancefloor as we arrived. People have been friendly the food has been amazing, and we expect things to get better as it gets darker – it's so exciting!

For some the excitement did not finish with the party – Kelly (Africology) found that her leather bag had gone missing, after having put it down with her coat on a log (as one does). On coming back from the dancefloor Kelly looked for her bag (with phone, purse, car keys, everything) and couldn't find it. Thinking she had gone mad – she finally resigned herself to the fact that it was gone. She resorted to getting a ride home with a friend.

That's never a nice thing to happen with all one's personal goodies in the bag. It has been said that one can always see what type of person a woman is by what she carries in her handbag! Well, Kelly had no such luck to show anyone, as the bag was missing!

Early the next morning she got onto her computer and linked into her phone, which she geolocated and saw was still on Pridelands! She got access to Pridelands, and with the help of her friend's mobile hotspot, she connected her laptop and walked around the now deserted party scene to find her phone – which she did, still in her bag a short distance from the party site, in

the bush. It had been commandeered by a hyena. The hyena had eaten the leather off the bag and was not interested, as others might have been, in the other contents, all that was still safely nestled in the material liner, intact and fully operational! Relief for Kelly, as she was scheduled to depart for overseas two days later.

On review, a fantastic night of festivities was had by all. How wonderful to just let go for a change, it was well overdue. Well done and thank you to the sponsors and to Hlokomela – continue with the good work. You all have our support. Until next year!



Wonderful, festive moments captured by Barry Morgan and local correspondent

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# Bipedalism - The strange business of walking

Don Pinnock  
Environmental Journalist

**We do it without thinking and have been doing it for thousands of years. But we've lost the art of saunter and the touch of the earth on our soles.**

This morning you rolled out of bed and did one of the most confounding things known to palaeoanthropology: you stood up.

Several million years ago when your ancestors did that, they should have been immediately spotted and eaten. At about the same time, proto-humans lost their scary canines and hadn't yet invented tools, so they couldn't defend themselves.

Evolutionary pressure got it right. But how on earth did we become vertical, bipedal, fangless, hairless — and survive? The greatest minds in the business of digging up old bones admit they simply don't know. But theories abound.

One is that we were forced onto the African savanna by declining forests and stood up to see over the grass. But that's been debunked because the fossil record shows we never lived there but on the forest edge.

Another theory is that our pre-human ancestors took to the water, becoming aquatic apes. You don't need hair in water and we have more fat under our skin than all other land mammals. We can also swim better than any other primate and our nostrils are built so we don't take water when we dive. But no, the fossil record shows huge crocs in the Rift Valley lakes where we are thought to have begun.

A possibility is that we stood to show off our sexual organs for appraisal — a man has twice a gorilla's tackle and a woman has the biggest breasts per body size of all mammals. Blatant peacocking. But you don't need to walk to

do that.

It could also have been because it was hot in Africa. Standing up with a mop on your head offered the smallest body area to be roasted by the beating sun. But that doesn't explain why all our fellow primates and a good few mammals besides didn't take that shadier past.

There's an even more interesting theory. A specialist on biomechanical locomotion, Owen Lovejoy, suggests that bipedalism is related to cooperation and increasing monogamy. It was far safer for an early hominid mother to stay home with the kids while the males went hunting for food.

All other primates eat what they find, but to bring food home required the ability to carry it and walking on two legs made that possible. Females would select males who lost out in the warring stakes because of poor dentures and who therefore cooperated with them and other males in order to survive. To do that they needed to become bipedal.

Their young survived better under this arrangement, emulated their parents and went on to conquer the world. Our first tool may not have been the hand axe but the shopping bag.

But of course, there were going to be problems with legs and feet that started life at right angles to the body. And being vertical in a busy, hard-pavement modern world, we walk badly. Or we sit on our bums all day and screw up our backs, then wonder why walking hurts.

The word saunter isn't used much these days, probably because so few of us do it. Instead we march. The dictionary links sauntering to words like amble, meander, drift, mosey and, my favourite, tootle. It is probably derived from the French sans terre, without land or simply drifter.

The great American wanderer, Henry David Thoreau, who cut loose from civilisation to live in the woods beside Walden Pond, had little time for those who didn't do it:

"He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all, but the saunterer is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea."

Sauntering implies a way of walking (just tootling along) but also an awareness of actually walking. And that awareness was evidently once vitally important to us as a species: our feet have more nerve endings per square centimetre than anywhere else on our body.

"Your feet are designed to feed multiple information to your brain," said podiatrist (foot doctor) Chris Delpierre when I tracked him down at the Sports Science Institute in Cape Town, when trying to work out the right shoes to run with. "They check the surface you're walking on, the temperature, gradient, grip and balance. So obviously the best way to walk is barefoot or with a minimalist shoe. If you lock up your foot in a boot you blindfold it."

**"We've lost the art of barefoot walking," he said. "Our ancestors had hard feet and could run on them all day. But our feet have evolved. They have much softer skin. And because of shoes, we walk differently."**

Together with bio kinetist Avi Pirsad, Chris explained why by slipping off his shoes and wagging his toes. "Your foot is designed to bend and when this happens it does two very different things milliseconds apart. On contact with the ground your heel acts like a turd from a tall cow and blobs. As soon as

you roll forwards the tendons go soft allowing the bones to spread and your foot to widen.

"A fraction of a second later it has to become rigid, and it does this when your big toe as it hits the ground. This tightens your foot bones which become a lever for forward motion.

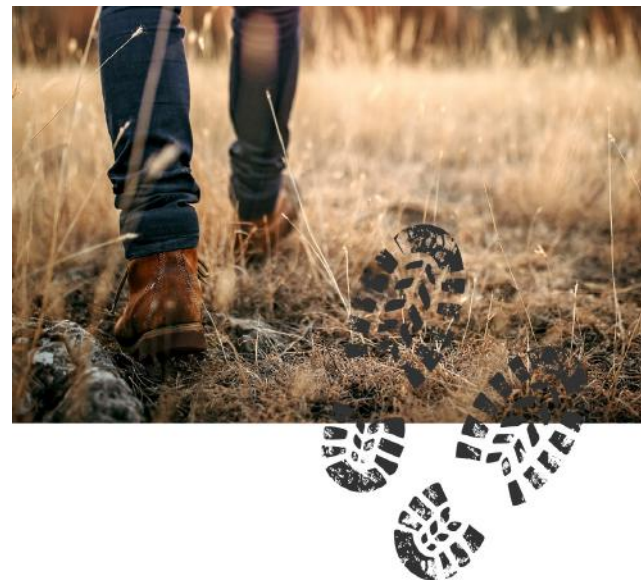
"So if your foot doesn't bend, it remains a soft, squidgy thing which loses its power as a precision device for walking on. That's what happens in a rigid boot."

The motion of walking is the bio kinetist's department: "As your foot bends," Avi explained, "the load chain goes through your ankle, up your leg into your knee and hip, which all start to take more weight. If you don't have that signal from your big toe, your load transfer is going to go somewhere else. This will change your movement dynamics — and that's when injuries can happen."

Marguerite Osler, an Alexander Technique teacher, became so concerned about people stomping and shuffling around that she wrote a book to help them walk. The Art of Walking is more poetry than prose and more Zen than science but is a lyrical plea to take off our shoes and live. There are, she says, three causes for our crippled locomotion: fashion, the cult of exercise and a tradition of military marching.

"Women have had the worst of fashion," she said, also wiggling her bare toes at me. "Men's fashions have always been more sensible, but women's fashion shoes are manufactured to make money and not aid walking."

"Sports shoes can be much better, but the fitness ethic is to go further, hammer harder and push to the limit. That's bad news for feet. Then there's our required bearing; upright, proud, elegant and



**Palaeoanthropology, also called Human Palaeontology, is the study of human evolution through the fossil and archaeological records. It is an interdisciplinary branch of anthropology concerned with the origins and development of early humans - a field whose practitioners include biological anthropologists, Palaeolithic archaeologists, earth scientists and geneticists. Fossils are assessed by the techniques of physical anthropology, comparative anatomy, and the theory of evolution.**

Photo courtesy of Canva.

... well, military. Children don't walk like us. We start strutting around as teenagers and never stop. Good walking is effortless, springy, quiet and gentle on the body. It's a glide. That way you can walk forever."

So should we all be going barefoot or in floppy 'tekies'? Chris Delpierre shook his head. "It's not as easy as that. Barefoot walking requires constant awareness. If you're a younger person or you hike a lot or trail run in the mountains, your best bet is to stay as fit and agile as possible and wear as little shoe as you can."

"It's a compromise of course. Barefoot or with minimalist shoes you risk thorns, stress fractures and even scorpion bites, but your whole system will function more efficiently. But when you get older or are a weekend warrior

and pad around the office all week, you need to step out into the wilds with a good, supportive boot and a trekking pole. Especially if you're carrying 20kg on your back.

"Something like one tenth of everyone who ends up in a hospital emergency room world over is there because of a twisted and sprained ankle. It's our weak point and that's what a boot prevents."

"But on average most of us walk around eight to 10 kilometres a day on perfectly flat urban surfaces. We'd all be in much better shape if we did that barefoot, or with as little as possible on our feet."

He wiggled his toes again and I had to admit, they did look very happy being free. I could easily imagine them on an amiable saunter.

Previously published in the Daily Maverick

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SOLE MANDATE

**HOEDSPRUIT WILDLIFE ESTATE** R 4 250 000  
Bedroom 4 | Bathroom 2 | Floor: 267 m<sup>2</sup>

This home has a spacious patio area overlooking the wilderness area; making it very private. The home comprises 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and an open plan lounge and kitchen area with guest toilet, with the potential for B&B operation.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1323091



SOLE MANDATE

**KHAYA NDLOVU GAME RESERVE P.O.A**  
3 Bedrooms | 3.5 Bathrooms | Floor size: 340 m<sup>2</sup>

This modern, elegant bush home has been built on the banks of a dry riverbed in this sought-after reserve. It offers spectacular views with loads of entertainment space. The reserve is 1,307 ha in size with only 35 stands. Home is sold furnished.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 2028774



SOLE MANDATE

**LISSATABA** R 2 200 000  
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 180 m<sup>2</sup>

This unfenced well-maintained camp has a true bush feel. The buildings are built with solid rock and thatch which keeps them insulated and cool in summer. The thatch patio has spectacular views of the Drakensberg Mountains.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1408817



SOLE MANDATE

**FULL TITLE FARM** R 13 500 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Farm size: 133 ha

The farm is situated only 35 minutes from Hoedspruit. The home is ideal for a family and it has the potential to be turned into a boutique guesthouse. There are stables, carports, a dam, storeroom and viewing deck. So many options...

Delaine Muller - 072 117 1133 Ref: 1427931



SOLE MANDATE

**RECREATIONAL GAME FARM** R 7 150 000  
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 4 | Farm size: 441 ha

Located midway along the Northern Drakensberg mountains, and 25km from Hoedspruit, this 441-hectare game farm has stunning scenery. The buyer will be the majority land owner of Canyon Game Reserve.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1444594



SOLE MANDATE

**PHALABORWA** R 1 950 000  
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 2 | Farm size: 23.7 ha

This smallholding is only 12km outside Phalaborwa and 15 minutes' drive to the Kruger National Park Phalaborwa gate. It is a small, easy to manage farm with lots of opportunity. The large traditional farmhouse has lots of character.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 2030170



SOLE MANDATE

**GREATER MAKALALI** R 20 000 000  
Bedrooms 5 | Bathrooms 5 | Farm size: 640 ha

This commercial property forms part of the Greater Makalali Nature Reserve, which is home to the Big 5 & there is 20,000ha of pristine traverse. Approvals in place for 10 commercial beds. There is a main 2-bedroom home and 3 guest chalets.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459112



SOLE MANDATE

**LISSATABA** R 5 000 000  
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 270 m<sup>2</sup>

This property will take your breath away! The views are gorgeous and the living room has large glass windows framing the view and bringing in plenty of light. The main house has one bedroom and another building has the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bedrooms.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1459717



SOLE MANDATE

**N'TSIRI NATURE RESERVE** R 7 000 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 2.5 | Traverse: 2651 ha

N'tsiri Nature Reserve is an exclusive, private use, Big 5 reserve where wildlife roam freely across the unfenced borders with the Kruger National Park, Klaserie & Timbavati Private Nature Reserves. Membership is limited to 65 homes.

Yvette Thompson - 083 655 7176 Ref: 1450349



SOLE MANDATE

**SILONQUE, PHALABORWA** R2 950 000  
Bedrooms 2 | Bathrooms 2 | Floor size: 160 m<sup>2</sup>

Easy to maintain bush home located on a 21 ha farm portion within a conservancy and 3 kms from the Kruger Park fence. It's located 7 km from the town of Phalaborwa and within a conservancy with a boomed security gate & a large variety of game.

Mike Dodds - 082 906 7004 Ref: 1317289



SOLE MANDATE

**LISSATABA** R 1 500 000  
Bedrooms 2 | Bathroom 1 | Floor size: 107 m<sup>2</sup>

This lock up and go two-bedroom bush home has a lot of potential! The perfect spot where you can come & relax, away from the stresses of city life. The reserve is 2,500ha in size & has only 54 sites. There is an excellent network of game drive roads.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1449027



SOLE MANDATE

**LISSATABA** R 3 500 000  
Bedrooms 3 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 220 m<sup>2</sup>

Stunning Olifants river views! This newer home has been well constructed, is in good condition and is perched on the hillside overlooking the river. There is an open plan kitchen, dining room & lounge, leading out to a patio with gorgeous views.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1458608



SOLE MANDATE

**RAPTORS VIEW** R 3 200 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathroom 3.5 | Floor size: 200 m<sup>2</sup>

This lovely family home, on a large stand; is conveniently located in the estate, with a beautiful mountain view & in close proximity to the nature based, Southern Cross School. Ideally located for quick access to the school and other amenities.

Michelle Severin - 083 469 3821 Ref: 1456317



SOLE MANDATE

**MAFUNYANE, KARONGWE** R 15 000 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Traverse: 8,000 ha

This property is stunning and has a wow factor that will take your breath away! Very exclusive, modern bush home, overlooking a seasonal river bed, located in a Big 5 reserve with 8,000 ha traverse. Sold furnished & including game viewer.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1443333



SOLE MANDATE

**NDLOVUMZI** R 3 950 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 3 | Floor size: 380 m<sup>2</sup>

This 21-ha Olifants river property has a 2 bedroom main home and a separate 2-bedroom cottage, all located under large indigenous riverine trees. The outdoor entertainment area has captivating views of the garden, pool & river.

Jason Jones - 083 267 4794 Ref: 1459005



SOLE MANDATE

**JEJANE** R 2 000 000  
Bedrooms 4 | Bathrooms 4 | Floor size: 426 m<sup>2</sup>

By purchasing this 17.5% share, you will have access to traverse 2500 ha of prime Big 5 game viewing in Greater Kruger. There are several dams and game hides on the reserve, a large communal pool and a well-maintained network of roads.

Rob Severin - 083 469 3820 Ref: 1449006

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# On patrol with the Black Mambas, the all-female

Valeria van der Westhuizen

**Dealing with poachers and knowing some might be neighbours is not for the faint-hearted.**

Deep in dense bush, Nkateko Mzimba raises a hand. Her patrol team, members of the all-female Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit, come to a halt. The unit has found tracks, clear imprints of shoes in the sand. They are unarmed and deep in poaching territory in the Greater Kruger area.

Before signing up with the Mambas seven years ago, Mzimba never imagined carrying handcuffs, ready to clasp on the wrists of a suspected poacher. She had been unable to study further after leaving high school, and jobs were scarce in her village on the park's rural western boundary.

Mzimba's mother, a single parent, did her best to make ends meet, but there was no money to spare for university or college. "I was sitting at home doing nothing", says Mzimba. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months.

Fast-forward to early spring 2021. South Africa was still recovering from the orgy of looting sparked by the incarceration of former president Jacob Zuma. Like many, Mzimba was rattled by the violence but had other things on her mind. She was now a Black Mamba Sergeant on patrol with three other rangers under her command.

Not far from where Mzimba raised her hand, a man watches them, hiding in the bush.

## Gift

Nkateko is a Xitsonga name meaning "gift" or "blessing". Mzimba means "body". The 31-year-old is among 23 women deployed as Black Mambas in the Greater

Kruger area on the western boundary of the Kruger National Park near Hoedspruit.

Employment is hard to find in these parts and bushmeat poaching is rampant. "The problem is not new", says Craig Spencer, the founder and director of Transfrontier Africa — a not-for-profit company that focuses on ecological research and protected area management. The Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit is one of its key projects.

Spencer reckons Covid-19 led to a spike in illegal hunting for bushmeat in the Greater Kruger area. And because wildlife laws were poorly enforced, conviction rates remained low. Left to government agencies alone to address, poaching would continue unchecked, ultimately leading to the decimation of the region's wildlife.

Spencer says the historical exclusion of people living near protected areas has exacerbated the problem. "They do not view themselves as custodians of our natural heritage or beneficiaries of the wildlife economy", says Spencer. "So, at Transfrontier Africa NPC, we use a multipronged approach in developing socioeconomic, technological and tactical solutions".

The Black Mambas are among the tactical interventions. The women patrol some of the fence lines of private nature reserves bordering the Kruger Park, on foot in the morning, and by vehicle at night. They sweep for snares, watch from observation posts and stage roadblocks.

## Snare sweep

"We are part of the first line of defence", says Mzimba. "Keeping poachers out of the reserve instead of dealing with them inside the protected



**SEARCHING:** Black Mambas searching for snares.

Photo © Frank Odenthal

area makes more sense long-term".

## Proactive

The importance of this proactive surveillance in relation to the bigger problem of rhino poaching is stressed on the unit's website. It reads: "If a person can sneak into a reserve to set snares or to collect their catch, they have the potential to evolve into a rhino poacher. They gain 'local knowledge' of the area, making them valuable contacts for organised rhino poachers".

"The snare sweep on September 2, 2021, started off quietly", Mzimba recalls.

They were patrolling the Greater Kruger conservation area north of Hoedspruit. On other days they might come across as many as 11 snares on a morning patrol. But this day was different. No matter how thoroughly the team searched, no snares were found. Branches slapped the rangers' faces. Thorns scratched their arms and hands.

Then Nkateko spotted the tracks in the sand. The four women froze. The bush was eerily silent. "Could these be tracks of an armed

poacher?" Nkateko wondered. They crept forward.

## Bags

They found two bags but did not touch them. A little further on, they spotted a man concealed in thick grass. All four women pounced, soon overpowering him. As he was handcuffed, he protested. "He said he knew that poaching was unacceptable, and pleaded to be released", says Mzimba. "He said he had no choice — he had a four-month-old baby back home". But after seven years on the frontline of countering the snaring scourge, Mzimba was not about to release him.

She radioed the Mambas' ops room. While awaiting the arrival of police, they took a video of the suspect and the contents of his two bags — bushmeat, an old saw and a kitchen knife.

## Video

Later, a video (not featuring the poacher) was published on the Black Mambas' social media platforms. Holding up the skinned, hind leg of an impala, Mzimba expressed frustration. "It seems we as rangers are failing to

do our job", she says to the camera. She was frustrated and angry, as much with the poacher as with the difficulties her team face in catching culprits.

It is a tough job. The Mambas spend 21 days on patrol at a stretch, searching for snares and human tracks. Now they had caught a poacher and he was not getting away. The case against the man was cut and dried, Mzimba thought. He was going straight to jail.

The man was Chico Khoza — a 45-year-old Mozambican national.

## Night patrol

The Mambas' compound is a basic brick building with steel doors. It's spacious but spartan: not much furniture, only beds, wooden wardrobes, stoves and fridges.

I joined Mzimba and another Mamba, Senior Ranger Loveness Mongwe, for a night patrol. It's a necessary routine in the Big Five area, checking for any fresh breaks in the fence — a tell-tale sign that poachers are at work. A beaten-up Land Rover, Shaya, waits for us

under a shed. The three of us squeeze into its single cab. Mzimba turns the key. Shaya chugs into life.

A fresh night breeze blows through the window. Rain is in the air. Could we expect a storm that night? And will we come across lions, I wonder.

## Lions

As a child, growing up on the boundary of Kruger, Mzimba was familiar with the deep sounds of lions roaring in the night. She had nightmares about encountering one, convinced that anyone who did would be eaten alive.

Six months of training with the Mambas changed all that. Over the course of seven years, Mzimba has become accustomed to encounters with dangerous animals in the Big Five reserve.

At Shaya's helm, she shows no sign of fear. But you have to be alert, says Mzimba. You never know what close encounters you might have, especially on a night as dark as this.

I turn on my voice recorder. The dirt track is bumpy. Shaya rattles and sways along. I hold on to the seat with one hand, my phone in the other, all the while trying to keep open my notebook with all my questions.

"When I applied to be a Black Mamba, my family were not happy. They also thought I could be eaten by a lion or trampled by an elephant", Mzimba laughs. Or killed by poachers. Over the last decade, at least 472 rangers have died on active duty in Africa, many of them in the Greater Kruger area, according to the Game Rangers Association of Africa.

## Relationships

Despite this, the Black Mambas do their anti-poaching work unarmed. It's part of a move to create a new conservation ethos — one closely allied to building constructive relationships between rangers and people living near private game reserves in the Greater Kruger area, says Mzimba.

"In my community, a lot of people know I work as a ranger and support me. And my family are now proud. They understand the need for the work we do, and how we also give back to the community", she says.

The Black Mambas run the Bush Babies Environmental Education Programme, which educates young children about the environment, wildlife, poaching and natural heritage.



**DEAD WILDBEEST:** Countering the snaring scourge is not easy. Unlike active hunting, which is easier to police, setting snares is inexpensive and silent, making it harder to catch those doing it. And once trapped in a noose attached to a tree, shrub or stump in dense vegetation, it's difficult for animals to escape.

Photo courtesy of ©Kate Thompson-Gorry.



**NIGHT PATROL:** Tired after a long night patrol, navigating rocky terrain in tough conditions, Nkateko Letti, 31, provides feedback on the night's findings to Black Mamba APU's headquarters.

Photo courtesy of ©Ilan Godfrey/Getty Images for Lumix

Cont. on next page

# anti-poaching unit in the Greater Kruger area



**TWO BLACK MAMBAS:** Nkateko Mzimba and Cute Mhlongo, find an opening below an electrified game fence. Poachers attempting to access game reserves benefit from burrows which are often dug under the fences by warthog and sometimes also lions drawn by livestock in neighbouring villages. Photo courtesy of © Ilan Godfrey/Getty Images for Lumix

“We work with the kids’ parents and elderly community members”, says Mzimba, talking of the need to bridge gaps, not only between protected areas and their neighbours but also the knowledge gaps between the different generations.

Mzimba has also started a charity initiative — a feeding scheme of sorts — sparked by Covid-19. “Ever since the pandemic started, I thought a lot about what I could do to help people”, she says. “I have a job. They do not. So I started to help some poorer families in my village with food”.

When not on active duty in the game reserve, she and all the other Mambas spend time in classrooms in the villages of Maseke, Makushane and Mashishimale. “I love working with kid”, says Mzimba. Together with Rosemary Alles, the founder of Global March for Elephants and Rhinos, Mzimba takes children to the Manyeleti Game Reserve, situated between the Timbavati and Sabi Sands game reserves. “It’s important that children develop the love and appreciation of wildlife from a very early age”, says Mzimba.

## Jumbo call

Elephants(!) she suddenly exclaims, interrupting the thread of our conversation. She cuts the engine. Soon the night is still but for the sound of the giant pachyderms breaking branches to feed. After a while, Mzimba fires up Shaya. The elephants, now accustomed to our presence, do not budge. We reverse on to another track. Soon, another elephant looms out of the darkness. It must be a whole herd feeding, says Mzimba, reporting the herd’s presence to the ops room.

We manage to slip past the herd and drive farther along

the game fence. Mongwe keeps the spotlights on the fence to check for breaks. Another five hours of work lie ahead. Our conversation deepens. Soon we are discussing what turns people into poachers.

## Realities

Mzimba tells me that before joining the Mambas she was naive, unaware that poachers lived in her own community. These days she knows that a bushmeat poacher she confronts in a reserve could turn out to be someone from a neighbouring family. It is not something she likes to dwell on. But she sees a big difference between rhino poachers, who are connected to crime syndicates, and those who snare wildlife to get game meat. And she tells me she often thinks about Chico Khoza’s case, especially the day of his arrest.

“He really was desperately worried about what was going to happen to his wife and four-month-old baby”, says Mzimba. We drive back to the compound in silence.

## The case

Mzimba was never called to testify against Khoza. Khoza first appeared in the Phalaborwa Magistrates Court on 6 September 2021, four days after his arrest.

Phalaborwa is a name of tribal origin. It means “better than the south” — a name derived from the time Sotho tribes first settled here, when the area was healthier than the fever-ridden areas to the south. It’s a mineral-rich area, and its original inhabitants mined and smelted copper and iron ore as far back as AD 400.

Large-scale commercial copper mining got under way in the 1960s, ultimately resulting in a massive open pit, spanning nearly 2,000m across — Africa’s widest man-made hole, visible from space. But these days, tourism and wildlife play a far

bigger role in the life of the town than mining.

The town stretches 3.7km from north to south and 2.5km from east to west. It is almost entirely surrounded by private game reserves, nature conservancies and the Kruger National Park, a gate to which lies about 500m west of the town’s Hendrik van Eck Airport. The Mozambican border is a two-hour drive away.

## Legal Aid

A Legal Aid attorney was appointed to represent Khoza. At his second court appearance, he was granted bail. When Khoza next appeared in court, on 21 September, he pleaded guilty to trespassing and being an illegal immigrant. The court heard that he had left Mozambique in 2003, but still did not have legal resident status or a work permit.

Khoza was fined R1,000 (or four months’ imprisonment), wholly suspended conditionally for five years, said Mashudu Malabi-Dzhanghi, the spokesperson for the National Prosecuting Authority in Limpopo.

He was never charged for illegal possession of game meat, and the court never got to hear his crime scene confession.

## Denial

Malabi-Dzhanghi said the admission made by Khoza to Mzimba would not stand up in court. “The attorney representing Khoza [said he] denied knowledge of the two bags”, said Malabi-Dzhanghi. Furthermore, there were other footprints at the crime scene. “After the accused was apprehended, the search continued because of the footprints, meaning the suspect was not the only person who had entered the farm”, said Malabi-Dzhanghi.

On the outcome of the Khoza case, Mzimba says: “There is nothing we can do. It was not the police that had caught him, it was



**CONSERVATION EDUCATION:** When she’s not on 21-day snaring patrols, Black Mamba ranger Nkateko Mzimba spends time in classrooms at villages near the Kruger National Park. Photo courtesy of © Ilan Godfrey/Getty Images for Lumix



**SNARE TALK:** Nkateko Mzimba shows learners at Modume Primary School a typical snare. Photo courtesy of © Ilan Godfrey/Getty Images for Lumix.

us rangers. The code of conduct says we can arrest the suspects, but after the arrest we hand the case in to the police and it is up to the police and the court to make a decision on the charges. We, rangers, keep doing our job”.

## Giving back

The small crèche where Mzimba offers her services free of charge has a playground, two classrooms and an ablution block. “I attended this crèche when I was small. Back then it was very basic — no playground, no furniture, no garden. The crèche did not even have water”, says Mzimba, pointing to a vegetable bed with spinach, onions and tomatoes. “Last year I helped create this garden so kids can learn how to grow their own food”.

Mzimba helps pay the crèche’s electricity bills. She also chips in, buying stationery and wall paint to brighten up the place. “It is tough, though”, says Mzimba. “Sometimes it takes me two to three months to save up money to make these contributions”.

Two women come out. They are crèche managers Phillis Mathebula and Constance Ndlovu. They lead us into the first classroom. Colourful

children’s drawings and educational posters — charts with numbers, seasons and days of the week — adorn the pale yellow walls.

## T-shirts

“Nkateko has been very good to us”, says Mathebula. “She even bought T-shirts for the kids”. “And she helps us teach them about nature and why animals are so important”, adds Ndlovu.

“Yes, it’s part of my mission as a ranger”, responds Mzimba, who recently completed an EcoTraining course accredited by the Field Guides Association of Southern Africa. “It deepened my knowledge of wildlife behaviour”, says Mzimba.

We walk into the second class with little tables and tiny chairs neatly set out in rows. Mathebula takes toys out of a cupboard. “Just look how old some of these are”, she sighs. “It would be lovely to get new ones”.

A pile of mattresses is stacked near a classroom window. The children sleep here after lunch while waiting for their parents to fetch them.

## Safety

It’s a hot day. Mzimba leads us to a shady spot outside,

where we continue to chat. A light breeze caresses our faces. “You know, some of the children face abuse at home”, says Ndlovu. “At least they find safety here”. A woman with a baby tied around her waist approaches us, a huge smile on her face. “Meet Michelle”, says Mzimba. She greets us warmly and starts chatting. I learn that Michelle works at the crèche as a cook, and cares for five children at home. The small wage she earns helps a lot.

“My elder kids have been to Kruger”, she adds. “They love seeing wild animals”. Then she looks me in the eye, and says: “If I could, I would also become a ranger”.

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# Safari Guide of the Year – the founder, Mike



Mark Bishop

**Calm, busy, pedantic, knowledgeable, eloquent, unassuming, guide extraordinaire – this paints the outline of the person that brought this all together.**

The Safari Guide of the Year – an annual competition pitting the strengths (and weaknesses) of five finalists in the guiding fraternity in southern Africa – the best of the best, judged by the best of the best, over eight categories; and this after nomination and selection, it's a daunting task for anyone to put their hand up and be counted.

This was the dream of Mike Karantonis – to bring together the very best, to compete in actual tasks and examine the ilk and knowledge of the contestant, and all to determine a final winner. The aim: to showcase the talent, knowledge and overall ability of people that have devoted their lives

in time (tens of thousands of hours) and effort (both physical and mental), to pursue a career as a guide in the wilds of southern Africa and beyond.

With this year's competition currently taking place, I managed beforehand to meet with Mike to get the inside line on his vision and view for and of, the competition; where it all began and where it is today. We sat together under a huge knob thorn tree outside Hoedspruit, relaxed and open, with the smell of the lowveld bush thick in the air, as we settled down to reveal the amazing story of a selfless person wanting to give back to his passion.

Mike grew up in Krugersdorp where he and his family spent many wonderful days, going to a friend's hunting farm in Thabazimbi and playing around in the bush. It was strangely not necessarily Mike's interest, but the feeling of just waking up in the morning, way

before the adults, moving in closer to the kindling from the fire from the night before, engendered a feeling of being. Listening to the hyenas calling as they made their way back to their dens, tired and weary from a night of activity, and the dust in the air, and the silence that one is not used to, which almost has a 'noise' of its own. All this triggered something inside Mike that said to him, "I want to do this for the rest of my life" – or at least he wanted to experience this feeling, just like what he was experiencing then, for the rest of his life. Mike looks heavenwards and thoughtfully states, "It's how the African bushveld makes one feel, that was what I wanted – and from about the age of 8, I wanted to be a guide".

Straight after school he went to college to do a Diploma in game ranging, lodge management and nature conservation. His first

job was at Phinda Game Reserve, in northern Zululand. That lasted for about 12 years. It was an interesting journey, going from a trainee guide through all the steps, eventually through to a senior guide and mentor, and then, head guide.

At that point the normal progression takes one of two paths: you either go into the operations management side or lodge management of the business – effectively trading in one's car keys for a white collared shirt, or you go into training. There was just NO WAY that Mike saw himself in a white collared shirt, so he was not going down that route.

The other route, training, was more of an attraction but by no means satisfied this inherent desire to be in the bush. Whilst Mike enjoyed training, the constant reiteration of subject's time and time again, did not enthrall him at all, and certainly did not stir his juices!

So, Mike stood back and contemplated the way forward – time does help to lay some clarity on the rough surface of indecision. He ticked off his passions, for guiding, for tracking, for birds, big game, and the interaction with guests, and importantly, changing people's lives. With that clarity set, Mike created a new path, like a 'specialist safari division' within that corporate, and he did his own thing in that for a while.

He then got an opportunity to partner up with a travel company, Africa Direct, to run the private guided and specialist safari division of the company. So, he left the corporate tourism side and went into the private guiding side. He became the co-owner of Africa Direct.

What happened then was a transitional, interim period, where it took time to get the concepts of the business off the ground.

A year passed to a stage where his own private guided guests started picking up, to a point where he was busy enough.

But there was, thankfully, a quiet time in that transitional, interim period, where Mike had time. This was a new, to a point, uncomfortable experience for him, because he was used to the grindstone of being a guide - you're on for 46 days driving back-to-back(!) – it's like a sausage factory. It was something he loved and thrived on, but now he had the freedom of his own time – a surreal opportunity to have his own time available for himself.

The first thing that dawned on him was that he wanted to make people aware of how hard safari guides worked, because he had worked that hard; and, for a lot of the time, it's a very thankless industry. The pay is generally not great, and guides often live off their gratuities a lot of the time. The feedback from guests is always great, but then what does a guest really know about your skills – how good are you really? Guests generally have a great time and you as the guide are the hero, but they are not the best people to judge and assess you.

So, Mike pondered on this conundrum. How could he, Mike Karantonis, bring it across to the world, that the safari industry has professionals out there, that don't just have a holiday job – they would work solid for 7 weeks at a time and go on leave for 2 weeks, fully qualified, passionate, and committed?

In those 2 weeks that one had off, one would go and see one's mates at a bar and this one is a doctor, that one is a teacher, this one an accountant, that one a lawyer ... they all had their 'professions'. But Mike felt that he would be the odd one out – so unless he was speaking wildlife he didn't really talk,

because he could not relate to the life in the city. If people were not interested in wildlife, he literally had nothing to say.

When the mates eventually turned over their drinks and enquired, 'So are you still a game ranger?', they had a very preconceived idea of what a game ranger was. They thought you drive around in the Kruger with a covered canopy, ball crunching shorts and bangles up to your elbows – that for them was a 'game ranger' – but it's not like that at all.

Guides have spent a lot of time getting the highest qualifications that they can, in each particular field they literally are 'doctors' of their profession. There are some that have been guiding for 10 years and more, spending thousands of hours in the bush, always impeccably dressed, incredibly articulate, with an in-depth knowledge that has guests in awe. They are as good as they can be in their profession. And all this on top of the fact that they are also ambassadors for our country, they always speak positively – a good guide will always talk about the good things. They are positive and colourful about our country, they give our country a positive hope from the outside in, and then of course they are the custodians of our wildlife, which is under immense pressure. They are on the ground in the forefront, at the coalface, fighting for our wildlife. They are not some corporate entity or organisation trying to make an impact – they are there, getting their hands dirty, and grinding their fingernails to the bone to protect our wildlife resource.

The question in Mike's mind was this: "How does one bring the true reflection of a very cast-aside professional career into the spotlight"?

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# Karantonis – his vision, his view, the inside line

Cont. from Page 8.

Miss South Africa came to mind – those contestants were lucky they were born beautiful. Hundreds of thousands of people watch that contest over television, and they get substantial prizes, cars, money and then they spend a year travelling around the country, conveying messages and such. That's only for one year: many guides has been doing that for 10 years or more!

A competition like Miss South Africa can become a reality for someone that is beautiful – and that's just their luck – but for a guide, they work hard, it's a dream that they want to follow, and they choose that path, which is generally considered against the grain of normal employment or career choice. They almost ostracise themselves from their community, to go and live in a place with no malls, no movies, no Woollies – and they become exceptionally good at what they do. They are doing a great job and are in the middle of one of the largest forms of generating foreign income for the country – yet they are not really recognised! Who are we?

Mike spent hours thinking of how does one get something going that will give as much exposure to guides, as a Miss South Africa pageant does to a beautiful woman? And that is where it all started in his head. It all started thanks to the gift of the time he had to himself. Mike understood that he had worked really hard at creating the best version of himself as a guide, but he also realised, that there were others out there that were even better than him. And he realised too, that he would love to get a pat on the back, and get spoilt for things that he had done, and the sacrifices that he had made as a guide.

He realised that this concept was an opportunity to say thanks to the guides, to say that we get you, we understand it 100%, and we want to find a way to say thank you. And as long as someone saw it, Mike would be happy. No one wants to go through a career working as hard as one does, and giving as much as one can give, with no one ever saying a huge thank you, we see you, and you have done a great job. And so, the vision was about exposure.

The other key point was that when Mike was a trainee guide, all his head guides and mentors were 10 years older than he was – and when he saw them sitting around a fire talking, and he accepted that he knew nothing - and there were these gurus around the fire, he said to himself "I wonder

what they are talking about, and I'd love to hear it. Imagine sitting around a fire with people like that?" It had to be the most intriguing time, because he confesses to hanging off the lips of his mentors, their stories were crazy, and he learnt so much from those stories that they told and from hearing their experiences.

In Mike's mind, he thought that the Safari Guide Of The Year (SGOTY) was going to be almost a symbolic form of that. He knew that when the senior guides from the lodges leave for the younger guys to come through, that conversation of senior guides that he used to be in awe of, was almost like a closed curtain event. An unexperienced guide does not have the experience nor the authority to go sit down there with them. He wanted SGOTY to be that fireplace – for the young guys to see their peers going to compete, and when the curtains close, they stay behind, and they wonder 'can you imagine being there and hearing what is being spoken about at SGOTY. The guides there are all senior, they are all great people, there's a great panel of judges, and gurus of the industry, and I want to get there one day'!

The longevity of a young guides career is incredibly volatile – they can leave at the drop of a hat, when it's not quite what was expected. Hopefully SGOTY adds another brick of security to that guide, and the industry, to somehow increase the longevity, and to give them something to look forward to and to work towards. That was another reason why Mike came up with the concept.

So, in essence there were two reasons for SGOTY: to give accreditation, exposure and what guides deserve; acknowledge that it's not just a holiday job – they are serious professionals out there. And then also to give someone something to aspire to, and hopefully keep them in the industry for longer.

Mike wanted to do it for the guides but in the big picture of the competition, he humbly considered himself 'a nobody'. So, he went to the first organisation where he could get to present this concept, to try and gain traction and leverage, authenticity, and credibility. That organisation was FGASA (The Field Guide Association of Southern Africa).

Once it was conceptualised, he went to FGASA, presented the concept, and asked them if they would partner up with him and endorse it. It was very well received and enthusiastically driven, and the partnership has been phenomenal and has developed from strength to

strength. The credibility and strength of the organisation is what gives this competition its traction.

The first SGOTY was in 2011 after the dream had been nurtured and born in 2009.

It's moved on from those days in no uncertain way. Having FGASA involved was the beginning of a great, dynamic partnership, and having a partnership that is selfless, paves the way to developing ideas and breeding great things. That is what has happened. It now has sponsorships, is supported by locals and people from all over the world, is televised world over and has become the ultimate, gold-standard-challenge in guide recognition.

FGASA sees Mikes input as something quite unbelievable. Last year he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award. For Mike, that was very unexpected, but it was very special for him. "It wasn't necessarily that I wanted to do this to gain anything out of it at all – other than a great time", says Mike.

He goes on, "It was something very special and I am grateful to FGASA for considering that my input is valuable – but in reality, everyone that is there has an incredibly valuable input. That's what I love about it – you are putting a whole bunch of great people, who have come a long way down the road of the tourism industry, all having common interests, putting them in the same beautiful place for a week, and it just organically manifests itself into this buzzing bubble of ideas. We feed off each other, and it just gets bigger and better. It kinetically generates more energy, because of the commonalities of all the people at the same place, at the same time. There are very few things that I could personally be very proud of in my life – my kids, my parents, and when I look back at my choice of career that I chose, and also that I followed my heart. But that moment of the award, is a moment that I can look back on, and say that it made me very proud of being able to see that it made a difference in someone's life – because that's what I personally think we are here on earth to do".

So where does Mike want this to be in 5 years? Mike pauses, and then very directly proceeds; "No one can say no to great things. If career opportunities come to bare, because of the awareness out there of guides, and what they do, and how they do it, they can add it to their portfolio which is a well-deserved title. None of us are in it for the money, so I wish and hope that one day it will become big enough, so that

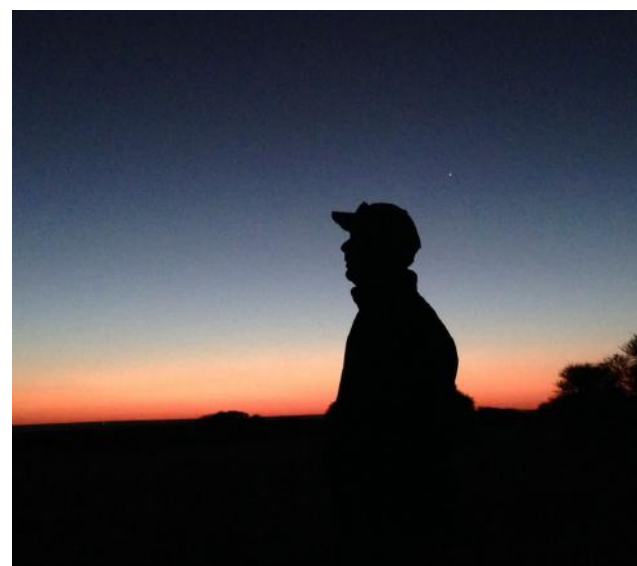


Mike (second from the left) and guests having a laugh during the 2021 Safari Guide of the Year event that was held at the NJ More Field Guide College, Marataba. Images supplied

we can spoil someone with a nice big wad of cash, that makes them feel that finally after 10 years or more of doing this, it's all been worth it. Obviously, they have the love for their job, but for us to spoil them is very worthwhile." He goes on, "It would also be nice for the big corporates (like Land Rover and Toyota) with whom the lodges spend millions - it would be great if they would invest in the people themselves. You know the more financial support we can get with this, the greater we can make it. As tourism is one of the keystone factors of our country, we, as guides, are just investing in it from a different angle, from the ground up. So, in five years I want it to be televised and viewed by millions of people, I want a vehicle to be standing there for the winner, and I want them to travel around the country telling people what they do, that they are proud of their job, which is not just a holiday job but a proper professional, meaningful, and essential career".

Mike is now the co-owner of Africa Direct – a tour operator, and a fully international travel organisation. They are based in White River, Mpumalanga. They take care of clients travel plans from the time they set foot on South African soil, with transfers, flights, vehicles, accommodation – everything, until that plane door closes, and the guests are on the way back home. With over 30 years collective experience of travel, across hundreds of lodges and hotels, they are very orientated around good value for money. "We make sure that the clients' money is well spent. We also have a great ethos, in that we will not send anyone to a place that we would not take our own families to. Safety, comfort, value for money are all huge priorities for us" says Mike.

It goes without saying that safari often finds itself at the heart of their itineraries – their view is that trav-



Mikes silhouette (above) inspired the icon of the official logo for the Safari Guide of the Year brand.

ellers don't come to Africa, to come to a restaurant or cities – South Africa is just lucky that it has all of that; but the iconic things are the animals; lions, elephants, giraffes, zebras and all the others. Africa Direct showcases our country around the heartbeat of what we as South Africans are proud of – our culture and wildlife. It is evident as we speak, that Mike and his partner almost vicariously, live their client's journey in South Africa in their minds, through their itinerary – they put together stuff and activities that they know excites them! By the time they have finished detailing and putting together the whole thing, the excitement is palpable!

I thanked Mike for his time and his insights. I leave the meeting feeling warm and fuzzy inside – how wonderful this industry is, how amazing are the people involved, and yes, how they need to be acknowledged and recognised for their

time and efforts. As you read this, I am at SGOTY looking in awe and wonder at these "doctors of nature", some might say "doctors of the universe", as they delicately and confidently ply their trade, in pursuit of the ultimate award – Safari Guide of the Year 2022.

Make sure you are follow the event - Safari Guide of the Year on Facebook, and watch the final awards ceremony on **Saturday 2nd July 2022 (on WildEarth Channel 183 @ 20:00)**, to see who wins this prestigious, life-changing event.

I will sip my 'G and T 'at sunset, and toast these unassuming champions, and take a bow Mike Karantonis! Cheers!

Africa Direct can be contacted on [www.africadirect.co.za](http://www.africadirect.co.za), or call bookings on 082 565 9573 and speak to Tanya Kotze.

# Winter 'survival' – keeping warm and fed



Mike Meidlinger

**Crisp and cold, as was promised from rain and moisture so late in the summer, we have well and truly reached the precipice of the austral winter.**

During these few months, even we as humans, adorn every garment possible to stave off and keep us from the frigid discomfort of the cold. We have the luxury of manipulating our surroundings and appearance, but for all other living things, including our avian contemporaries, it is all about braving and surviving through this time of hardship.

As we are now on the far side of the sun, there are environmental changes that lead to a number of life-altering challenges facing the birds here. Aspects such as plummeting nocturnal temperatures, a reduction in cover, resulting in more exposure to elements or predators, as well as the ever increasing scarcity of both water and food, are all life-threatening issues. In order to overcome these fatal threats, which are rarely in isolation, birds have evolved a few general adaptations, alongside a number of specific behaviours, to help them make it through.

Some begin later in the

day, and are active through more of the morning, thus saving energy when cold and using mellow middays to their advantage. Bird parties of passerines form and morph through vegetation, but where specific areas are rich in gleanable resources, they can become faithful honey holes. The same patch of bushes can attract party after party, and thus are jumping and hiving with movement and species throughout the season.

Many species will bask atop trees or perches, defrosting by means of absorbing the very first rays of sunshine that were less inclined to grace each day. The most famous of these are the Mousebirds, whose name is derived from the fact they appear and move like mice in the trees, their long tails concealed, when partaking in this particular activity.

If there is a chill in the air, birds will puff themselves up, trapping air around their body and therefore becoming better insulated. It is in fact, for this very reason, that feathers evolved. Formed from the scales of those dinosaurs that gave rise to birds in the first place, their celebrated perfection for independent flight, is amazingly, and really an advantageous by-product of their design.

Some allometric species, those that live in close so-

cial flocks throughout their lives, snuggle up together for warmth and to strengthen their already strong interpersonal bonds. This shared body heat results in a higher chance of survival through steep drops in temperature where hypothermia and death from exposure are real threats. Birds like Little Bee-eater, Blue Waxbill, Red-billed Firefinch and Southern White-crowned Shrike all huddle together at night in cosy rows, cheek to cheek with their neighbours.

Behaviourally, some birds that were less inclined to gather and were spread out into individual pairs during the breeding season, now gather in numbers and concentrations not found in summer. Families and clades like doves and pigeons, waterbirds and seed-eaters, gather during times of non-breeding for a variety of reasons and advantages.

With water drying out, those sources that are left become increasingly valuable as the dry times drone on. In the Lowveld, this leads to an accumulation of piscivores, those that eat fish, such as Storks, Herons and their allies. As larger oxbows and puddles fade, they expose the sometimes sizeable fish that have grown in their depths. De-

hydrating and defenceless, short work is made of these shoals by active and energetic mixed flocks, that can number into the hundreds, and last for a period of days to weeks. As each individual tries to make the most of every vanishing waterbody and its bounty, there is a flurry of mania before each is depleted and birds move on to the next.

On the Highveld, as pans and lakes shrink and dry, waterfowl like Ducks, Geese, Coots, Cormorants and others concentrate into those that remain. These must importantly also hold enough resources to sustain large amounts of life. Habitat requirements vary slightly between those that prefer diving in deep water, like the declining Maccoa Duck and those that need shallow water, for scything and filtering out invertebrates or vegetation.

Red-billed Quelea surely have to be one of the most amazing savannah species. They are one of the best examples which show vast post-breeding irruptions and large numbers of birds in close association. Mirmirations of many birds coalesce at roosting or drinking sites, splitting into smaller groups of only a few hundred, or thousand, or hundreds of thousand, to feed. Mixed in with the masses of this staple are smatterings of other spe-

cies for those brave enough to attempt sifting through the large flocks. Rewards can be generous for those willing to try with Whydahs, Widowbirds, Indigobirds, Weavers and in rare cases, other Quelea species, all found harbouring amongst the high percentage of Red-bills. Subtle but discernible differences in bill-shape, colour and head pattern, help to separate these different species from both the main flock, and each other.

Doves and Pigeons gather in large numbers in farm and fallow-lands, often roosting together in clumps of large trees as well as feeding together on open fields, after crops have been harvested.

All of these are examples of dilution rather than amorousness, whereby, when sticking together in large groups, there is a reduced risk for each individual from predation. If alone, a prey species is vulnerable, but when as part of a larger group, there is less chance for each bird to be taken. Food sources may also become less widespread, thus being more localized and this too can result in larger associations than is found during the more bountiful wet season.

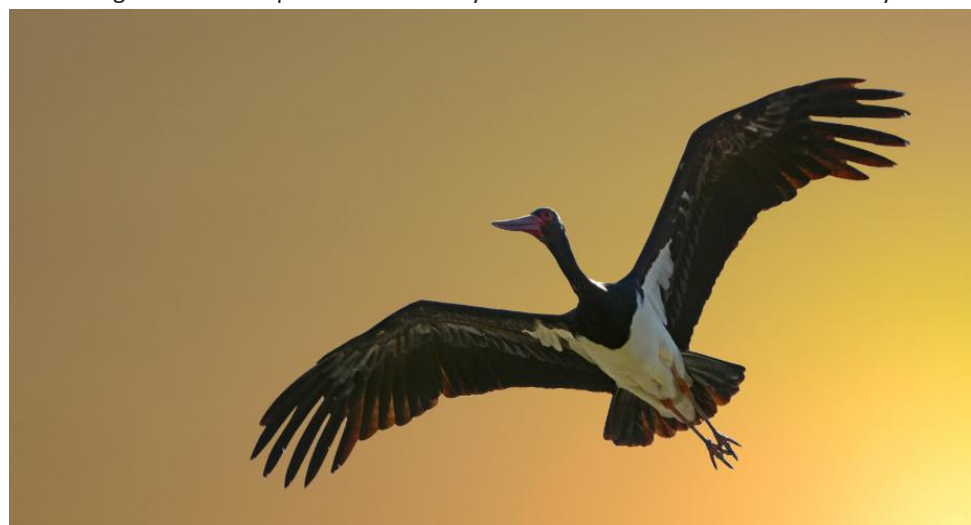
One adaptation or behavioural shift that often results due to this scarcity of food and water, is the reliance of some birds on the activity of humans.

Gardens with seed, fruit or nectar feeders, bird baths, winter flowers or other indigenous plants that are good for supporting bird-life simply erupt into life.

Well maintained and considerate horticultures offer oases that, purely and simply, provide a much needed lifeline for many. Humanity has the ability to offer both long and short term bounties for birds and for other wildlife. Thus, for those individuals adaptable or malleable enough to live their lives around us, there is much to gain.

In many cases, the best thing we as the general public can do, simply involves leaving a little slice of natural habitat aside, amongst or in-between, our own living spaces. A simple example is leaving stretches of road verges, field fringes and grassy areas un-mown during winter. This not only offers birds like Sparrows, Buntings and other finches a seed bank, but also provides places for them to dash to, when avoiding possible predators.

This month, keep an eye out for the less celebrated concentrations of birds out there, sift through a Quelea flock or two, or where possible, encourage these and other creatures to thrive around us in even the smallest of ways.



Quelea murmuration (above left) and Black Stork (above)

Images : Canva

*Khaya Ndlovu*  
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# ‘Hardekool’ – the Leadwood Tree - *Combretum imberbe*

Brett Heaseaman

**Hardcore, yes this sums up this month's tree - one that lives a thousand years, dies and still supports life for hundreds more. The Leadwood tree gets its name from its incredibly dense inner core.**

The heartwood weighing in at an incredible 1215 kg per cubic meter, has been ranked as the sixth heaviest wood in the world!

This titanic specimen of a tree will not support Rose and the last whispers of Jack on the ocean, but will in fact sink faster than your bank balance after refuelling your car! This rather impressive Bushwillow species stands as the tallest of its kind. It's a semi-deciduous tree, which grows up to 20m in height, and has a significant spreading canopy. This tree is a very long-lived but slow-growing tree.

The Leadwood is one of the easiest trees to identify, with a pale grey to white, and what I refer to as 'crocodile skin' bark. It has small leathery leaves that are arranged opposite each other

- to me it looks like a fuzzy television with no signal from twenty years ago! The leaves are eaten by many animals including elephant, giraffe, kudu and impala. The flowers are yellowish cream-coloured and have a sweet fragrance. As with the other Bushwillow species, the leadwood produces four-winged fruit pods, known as samara's, which are yellowish-green, and turn pale red when mature.

Recently I viewed an advert selling Leadwood furniture, which was absolutely stunning. I had to think long and hard, no pun intended, about this article, and make sure not to offend anyone or make anyone panic. Many years ago the wood was well sort after, for making railway sleepers, supports, hoes and furniture. But due to this, and the wonderful firewood it produces, the tree numbers dwindled - thankfully though it became a protected species. Yes, a protected species, much like our other animals on the decline.

The Afrikaans name for the tree is 'Hardekool', a testament to how long the wood

takes to burn when used as firewood. I once responded to a tree on fire, weeks after a wild fire had passed through the reserve. The embers were still burning within the trunk, which re-ignited weeks later - that's how slow this wood burns!

There are many traditional medicinal and conventional uses for the Leadwood tree, as well as a host of spiritual beliefs surrounding it. Traditionally the Herero and Ovambo people of Namibia attach special cultural and religious significance to the tree. To them it is the great ancestor of all animals and people, and must be passed with respect.

The burning wood is used as an ancient remedy for curing coughs and colds - simply inhale the smoke from the burning wood of a Leadwood tree. The ash can also be used as a white wash or toothpaste, with its high lime and calcium content. It works very well if you run short of those items, but again I reckon that Dulux and Colgate work just as well.

Some have stood tall for



over a thousand years. One can only imagine the tales they could tell hey could

speak. Let us all ensure that they stand proud for a few hundred more years.

**The Leadwood Tree and beautifully textured bark Images supplied**

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was called. Thankfully they arrived quickly and took me to Tzaneen Medi Clinic, a private hospital, for the best care".

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# Hunting and wildlife trade will save our wilds, not CITES trade bans - experts warn

Rio Button, Dominic Naidoo and Fred Kockott

*The wildlife economy of Africa is vast and largely untapped, but there are very thorny issues to address if its full potential is to be realised in a way that benefits the continent's people and preserves natural systems, say top economists.*

While the rest of the world has lost 82% of its wildlife in the past 50 years, southern Africa's wildlife populations, including rhino and elephant, are increasing rapidly.

This is no thanks to poorly managed and under-funded national parks, says wildlife scholar, Brian Child.

Child said private games reserves and ranches were having a much greater impact on the rewilding and conservation fronts, also generating huge amounts of revenue for conservation and people's livelihoods.

But "sanctions" on wildlife trade, including rhino horn and ivory, were imposing "opportunity costs" of about USD 1 billion a year – "enough to manage all the protected parts in Africa", said Child.

## Relations

Child was among guest speakers in a Tipping Point webinar recently hosted by Oppenheimer Generations Research and Conservation – a not-for-profit organisation, that fosters research and dialogue on human-nature relationships.

The webinar looked at how wildlife economies could be developed in Africa to improve the lot of communities, while conserving wildlife, and protecting the natural environment. Indigenous communities, the webinar heard, had got a raw deal in the past when it came to conservation efforts organised by, and for the benefit and enjoyment of the well-to-do.

Speakers focused how things might be done more fairly in the future and addressed the question, "Paying the price: Is a conservation economy worth it?"

## Case for hunting

Child, an Associate Professor at the Centre for African Studies, University of Florida, and an expert on conservation, park management and economics, with years of hands-on experience, made the case for hunting and wildlife trade.

His presentation lashed out at CITES for 'continuing to reward failure and



**Trophy hunting is worth half a billion dollars in southern Africa**

Photo courtesy of Canva

punish success in African conservation since 1975'. And he explained why he believed tourism alone was insufficient to conserve Africa's wildlife, and why we shouldn't look to agriculture either.

Besides no longer being profitable – neither for traditional commercial farmers or small growers – agriculture would not help solve major issues of climate change, soil degradation and deforestation in Africa.

## Hungry farmers

Farmers were getting hungrier, said Child. "And it's going to get worse... Many of our grandparents were farmers. They are not now because it's not viable". He said that intensive livestock and crop farming had also wiped out wildlife populations on vast swathes of land, causing massive biodiversity loss.

More recently, he said, wildlife experts in Namibia challenged Southern African colonial policies, and the ownership of wildlife was returned to landowners and farmers. The result today was that wildlife, including rhino, was increasing rapidly in southern Africa, and in ways that could benefit growing numbers of people, including many previously excluded from the conservation economy.

## Land use

Referring to a map of Africa, Child said: "Just look at all this space – this green unproductive land – we have got to develop this economy". As things stand, people in these communities were making less than a dollar a hectare, said Child. While by comparison, Namibian game ranches were making between USD 40 – 50 a hectare. "One ranch that has hunting and tourism on the same land, makes USD 200 per hectare", said Child.

## Kruger

Child said Africa's na-

tional parks could work well as an engine for economic growth, but out of a total 85 national parks, only 10 were working effectively. "The other 75 are really struggling", said Child. He said the Kruger National Park created more than 36,000 jobs and added USD 807 million to South Africa's GDP each year, but these tourism activities were closely clustered around a very small area near the park.

**"Tourism is really good at making a lot of money and creating a lot of jobs in really small areas. It won't conserve Africa's wildlife. That is why we need hunting and wildlife trade," said Child.**

He said in addition to sanctions placed on wildlife trade, in particular rhino horn and ivory, moves to ban trophy hunting were also a concern. He said trophy hunting in southern Africa was worth half a billion dollars, and USD 200 million to local farmers. "It's paying for and conserving about 60 - 80% of the wildlands in the region", said Child. "But there is a target on its back".

"Important markets are being closed down by international people, with a huge amount of resentment from the very people who are looking after wildlife. Here in Namibia, people are calling them sanctions", said Child.

## Precious asset

Dr Sue Snyman, an economist by training and the Director of Research, School of Wildlife Conservation at African Leadership University, said institutional failure, mismanagement, skewed priorities and a lack of imagination had stymied efforts to develop inclusive and sustainable wildlife economies.

And judging by the way the world has been working over the last few decades,

it seems many people have forgotten that economies, livelihoods, and well-being ultimately all depend on the world's precious asset: nature.

She shared graphs showing that produced capital – machinery, tools and buildings used to produce goods and services – had increased more than 100% over 22 years; human capital – skills, knowledge, and experience – had risen by nearly 20% over the same period; but natural capital – the world's stock of natural resources – had fallen by nearly 40%.

It need not be this way, said Snyman. Conservation and development could work together for the benefit of current and future generations.

## Value

"It is a key growth opportunity for Africa", said Snyman. "Unlike other continents that have virtually depleted their natural capital and are now rewilding, Africa still has spectacular fauna and flora".

Looking at the key enterprises which make up Africa's wildlife economy, she noted that ecotourism was traditionally the biggest, with the wildlife safari industry valued at between USD 12,4 billion (direct) and USD 42,9 billion (total).

Then there were hunting; ranching; wildlife estates (which was relatively new); film and photography (huge potential, but not currently being utilised); non-forestry timber products; and the largely untapped carbon offset market (which lets companies or individuals invest in environmental projects to balance their carbon footprints from other activities).

Snyman stressed that most wildlife hunting in southern Africa was not for trophies but for venison – game meat for the pot. In South Africa alone in 2019, local hunters contributed USD 875 million (85%) and inter-

national hunters USD 158 million (15%) to the economy. Actual wild meat sales in South Africa generate about USD 56 million a year.

Snyman saw great potential in tourism. She noted that in 2018, Africa received only 5% of worldwide tourism arrivals. Stakeholders simply needed to illustrate the value of this unrealised potential, in ways that would result in investment, and ultimately growth in natural capital.

## Ownership

In his presentation, conservation economist Michael 't Sas-Rolfes stressed the need to promote collaboration in developing the wildlife economy. Here, ownership was a key factor. People with "skin in the game" not only care for the land and conserve its wildlife, but also find ways to generate revenue from it, he said.

'T Sas-Rolfes referred to a case study which showed that wherever rhino conservation and anti-poaching efforts were left in the hands of the state, these had failed. The Kruger National Park was, for example, losing the battle to protect its rhino populations, whereas private game reserves were winning.

He said the trade in rhino horns and other body parts had generated as much as USD 350 million a year over the past decade, "but almost exclusively by people we would regard as criminals. It has not gone back into conservation."

This leads to the question as to who *actually* benefits from the rhino horn trade ban – those conserving rhinos or those killing them? And who would benefit if the trophy hunting ban, now lobbied for internationally and in South Africa, was approved? asked 'T Sas-Rolfes.

Above all, whose values and priorities count when making such decisions? Answering those questions,

said 'T Sas-Rolfes, was not just about economics, but moral and ethical considerations too.

He concluded that an effective wildlife economy needed to be diverse, sustainable, and adapt to different and diverse approaches arising from decentralised (bottom-up) governance, not a top-down approach if it was to be resilient in a changing world.

## Cappuccino critics

Responding further in the Q&A session, Child said: "If I am a hungry person and I need to intensify my land use to feed my children, is that a wrong thing? The whole question of what's domestic and what is wild, and what is good and what is bad, needs a lot more nuance. We trash trophy hunting where people are killing animals that live a wildlife, and also eat them, but we are quite fine eating chickens".

"This is something we need to debate in a way in which the ordinary people living with the wildlife have a voice", added Child. "At the moment it is being debated by the liberal westerners who are drinking cappuccinos in the capital cities of the world without the inputs of local people. That is not going to result in sustainable solutions. Local people are quite aware of issues of cruelty and the beauty of the environment. If we simply trust the local people (to conserve rhino for example), I think a lot of these problems would go away".

*Previously published in the Daily Maverick. Rio Button is a marine biologist, commercial diver, surfer, and regular correspondent for Roving Reporters. Dominic Naidoo is a freelance environmental journalist. Fred Kockott is Director at Roving Reporters.*

## Do animals have private space?

Every animal, including humans, has areas around its body in which it feels varying degrees of 'threat' from would-be aggressors/enemies. It is unwise to state what size (at what radius from the body) these areas may be because they are dependent on many variables.

The most important of these being:

- The nature (species) of the aggressor – is it alone or in groups and/or is it a big enemy or not?
- The behaviour of the aggressor – is it antagonising or not?
- The nature of the victim - what species it is, and is it alone?
- The behaviour of the victim - what is it doing?
- The mood/disposition of the victim – is it in a good or bad mood?

There are 3 basic zones around each animal based on how the victim will react in the presence of an enemy at that distance. If it runs away, then the enemy is in the **flight zone**, but if it feels it has no option but to stand and defend itself, then the enemy is in the **fight zone**. The presence of the enemy outside of these zones is of no consequence with the victim feeling totally relaxed

and this area is therefore called the **comfort zone**.

The flight zone is larger than the fight zone. Once an aggressor enters the flight zone from the comfort zone, the victim will feel an urge to open the gap again to one of safety. It will move away or flee. At this stage there are still plenty of escape options. The fight zone is a much smaller zone closer to the victim's body. Should the aggressor manage to get into such close proximity so as to make the victim feel that escape is no longer an option, then the flight zone has been entered or breached, and fighting its way out is the only alternative.

This phenomenon, determined by the critical factors mentioned previously, is exactly why it is so dangerous to stand up in open vehicles. For example, for humans to approach the average lion under average circumstances on foot, the chances are that the flight zone of the lion will be about 35-50m and the fight zone would be about 10-20m. With vehicles it is different – although larger, they are less threatening than humans. One must remember that man is perceived to be the biggest enemy of most species because of centuries

1. **Fight zone** : no time or space to flee danger - attacks
2. **Flight zone**: time and space to move away - flees
3. **Comfort zone**: totally relaxed with the presence of danger at this distance - no need to flee or attack

of persecution. So animals have become habituated to vehicles, and do not regard them as food or a significant threat. The flight zone is therefore, as little as 5-10m and the fight zone 1-5m (you literally almost need to drive onto them). It will now be apparent that vehicles are able to get much closer than people on foot before lions show signs of distress. Now let's assume that a game-drive car pulls up to some resting lions and stops at 12m. bearing in mind that as long as the occupants stay seated, the lions are oblivious to human presence (they see but do not recognise, see below). The lions will be relaxed because the vehicle is outside of the fight zone **for a vehicle aggressor**. Should someone, however, now stand up or do anything to make them-

self visible in shape and therefore recognisable as humans to the lions, then they are in very real danger of attack because the self-same position has now become the fight zone (within 10-20m) because the aggressor has changed from vehicle to human.

### Why are animals relaxed with cars?

In established wildlife sanctuaries, animals have over time become habituated to vehicles and now realise they are not to be feared and are not edible. They now largely ignore these bulky nuisances. They see the vehicle in its entirety and, believe it or not, do not discern or recognise individual occupants. Primates are an exception to this rule because they have colour vision and

## Why are animals relaxed with cars?

can discern detail.

Although animals may hear voices and scent humans (soaps, perfumes and fuel fumes tend to mask the scent), they do not, and cannot, reason that people are inside the vehicles. Do not be mistaken and think that these animals are tame and used to people – they are only familiar with the vehicles themselves. Predators can, however, learn that people occupy vehicles in areas where lack of caution and poor behaviour with regard to interactions with animals are present. The overriding sense in mammals is eyesight. The majority of mammals lack colour vision and therefore detect shape and movement at the expense of detail. It is not that their eyesight is bad (they can after all see brilliantly in total darkness) but rather the way the brain interprets the image. Because they see but cannot recognise people – their biggest enemy – in the vehicle and consequently humans have not invaded their personal space, they are relaxed.

This scenario changes drastically should someone stand up, dangle arms and legs out the side of the vehicle or alight from it. By doing this you 'break' the friendly outline of the

vehicle and make yourself discernible as a human. The animals are suddenly faced with their biggest enemy at close quarters, within their so-called 'fight' zones. They might not have the option of fleeing, and they could instinctively attack out of fear for their own safety. This is why animals are much more difficult to approach on foot. The 'fight' and 'flight' zone distances would be much smaller for a human aggressor than they would for a vehicle aggressor. What invariably happens, therefore, is that the flight zone for the vehicle aggressor would be equivalent to the fight zone for a human aggressor at the same spot. Hence when you stand up, the animal attacks.

An excerpt from 'Beat about the Bush – Mammals and Birds' by Trevor Carnaby, Published by Jacana Media, Second Edition reprint 2018.

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## Crux - The Southern Cross

Ben Coley

### Mythology

Crux, also known as the Southern Cross, is probably the most recognisable constellation in the southern skies. Due to its southerly location, the constellation is not visible from the northern hemisphere and thus has no Greek mythology associated with it. The Greeks were aware of it, but included it within the constellation of Centaurus.

The Bushmen believed the four brightest stars were a pride of lionesses, with the fifth, dimmer star, their lone cub. The pointers represented the two pride males following close behind as the pride circled their celestial hunting grounds. Ancient Zulu and Xhosa tribes saw Crux as a journey of giraffe, along with the two pointer stars, Hadar and Rigil Kentaurus (the Pointers). The constellation was known to these tribes as 'Dithutlwa' (the giraffe).

Since the constellation was so important for navigation, the main stars also feature prominently in the flags of Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and various Pacific Island nations.

### Notable Stars

Alpha Cruxis is the brightest star in the Southern Cross and is the thirteenth brightest star in the sky. Its brightness is due to it being a multiple star system and even binoculars can split the two main components into a great example of a double star.

Beta Cruxis is also known as 'Mimosa', possibly named after the yellow/white globular flowerheads of the same name. Beta Cruxis is in the top twenty brightest stars in the sky, and thought to be one of the hottest in the galaxy, due to its relatively young age of around ten million years.

### The Jewel Box (NGC 4755) – A deep sky object

The Jewel Box is small open cluster of stars found close to Beta Cruxis. To the naked eye it can easily be mistaken as a faint star, but binoculars will reveal the cluster. An amateur telescope will reveal the varied colours of the stars that give it its name, including the central three stars of differing colours that form a line known

as the 'Traffic Lights'.

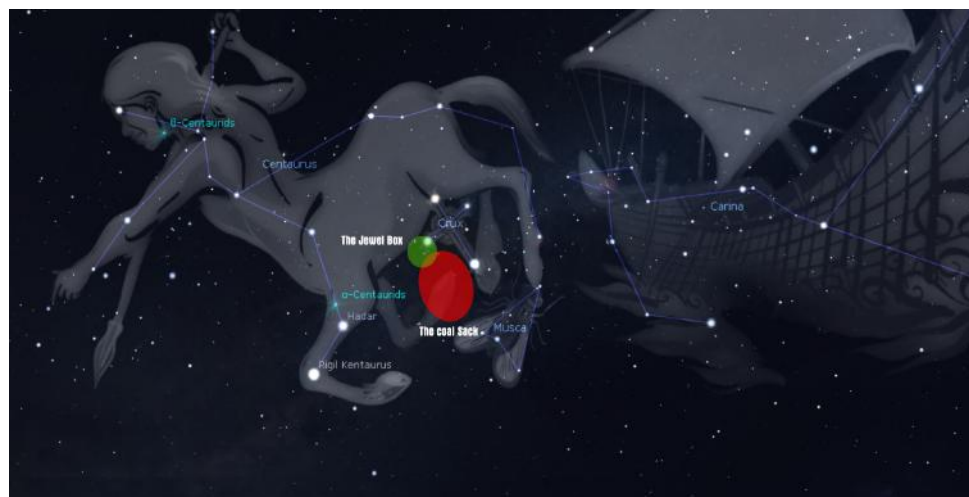
The Jewel Box is one of the youngest known clusters in the sky and was discovered by Nicolas De Lacaille from his observatory in the Cape of Good Hope, in South Africa, on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1752.

### The Coal Sack – A deep sky object

The Coal Sack is an 'Absorption Nebula', occupying a large region of sky between Alpha and Beta Cruxis. It is the most prominent nebula of its type visible from Earth. The area looks devoid of stars to the naked eye, but binoculars will resolve many stars hidden within. The area is a dense patch of interstellar dust and gas situated between the Earth and the stars of the Milky Way, thus blocking out the majority of their light.

The Bushmen called the Coalsack the 'Old Bag of the Night', and other African cultures considered it a hole in the sky, that once housed the Small Magellanic Cloud before the god's became angry and kicked it out. Literally!

See **Celestial Events SA** advert for contact details



The Southern Cross Crux (above)  
The Jewel box (below) and Deadviei (below right)

Images supplied



# The Siyafunda Slog 2022 - no walk in the park!

Mark Bishop

2 days: 23 starters: 16 finishers: 8 nationalities: 99,6 km walked: R 185 000 raised!

It started as a call to action three years ago, and now Michael Job has realised for the third time, the absolute power of people's convictions, and dedication and grit, in completing a gruelling walk over two days, all in the name of conservation. As Michael says, "We do it for The Rhino Protection Trust, The Game Ranger Association of Africa and The Makalali Land and Wildlife Trust, because conservation is everybody's business and not just ours!"

There were diverse nationalities represented: South African, Dutch, Belgian, American, Australian, German, French, and Portuguese.

The objective of the event is to raise funding for conservation efforts on Makalali Nature Reserve and beyond. It is an epic two days of hard walking, which is a tough personal challenge. What it does bring home to many of the participants, are the challenges that Field Rangers and Anti-Poaching teams face in their endeavour to protect our natural resource and to combat poaching, covering vast areas of bush, with limited resources.

Day one, and all 23 walkers set off, all with smiles and laughs. There were some comments that at an average walking pace of 4,6km per hour, it couldn't be that tough. What was not considered was the time aspect. The beaming smiles soon faded to grimaces and steely looks as the day wore on – step by step, hour by hour, morning to afternoon, and on it went. Eleven hours after starting out with a certain bounce in the step, the walkers trudged into the last checkpoint after completing 49,6km.

But this day had a bigger story. As the first walkers approached the first checkpoint, the drone flying overhead to capture their arrival, picked up other movements in the bush. Not walkers, not big game, not anything expected – poachers! Four poachers were seen run-

ning away from the walkers and the sound of the drone.

Immediately the support crew jumped into action and alerted the Anti-Poaching Unit K9-Conservation. The walkers and drone were lucky to have flushed the poachers when they did, because they had just entered the reserve. The chopper was sent up, but unfortunately the poachers bomb-shelled and went to ground and no arrests were made.

Mike was stunned, "It was incredible that the day we set out to raise money to support our conservation efforts, we inadvertently also saved our animals by just being there at the right place at the right time".

At the start of day two, three walkers opted out. Although it had been cold sleeping out in the bush that night, a short shot of Old Brown Sherry certainly fired up the masses, and twenty walkers took to the challenge and embraced the start of the day, facing the challenge ahead with determination to get this 'slog' done!

There was a noticeable absence of the quirky chirps from day one. The discussion was on strategy, all were focused on how to get through this second day and finish the 'slog' in style

Of course the second day had its challenges – modifying the route due to the late rains that had flooded the Selati River. This added a couple more kilometres to the route, which the walkers accepted as part of the potential perils of the undertaking.

There was also a big highlight on this day – 'Rae', a new cheetah to the area, had been released on the reserve by the Askari Conservation Project. She made an unannounced appearance on the road, quietly stretched and gracefully and silently, casually walked towards the walkers. As the walkers all stood still in awe at this beautiful beast, Rae passed them nonchalantly, within touching distance, and wondered off into the bush.

At the first of the days check points, three more walkers pulled out, and at the second check point one



more walker exited. That left sixteen starters to put their heads down and forge on to the finish in ten and three quarter hours, having covered a distance of 50km. That meant that the total distance that was covered in the two days came to a staggering 99.6km!

Thanks must go to all the donors, the support from the Makalali Landowners and Lodges. And of course the support crew, Tilly, Flo and Gavin from Siyafunda, and Judith and Kyle from World Wide Success Partners, who spotted the poachers, but over and above that, kept us going at the check points.

It was an undertaking of grit and determination, and to all who participated, well done! The money raised will go to a good cause, and again – conservation is everybody's business, so let's get involved, spread the word, and do something for the good of all our wonderful natural resources.

All pictures courtesy of World Wide Success Partners; [www.worldwidesuccesspartners.com](http://www.worldwidesuccesspartners.com)



The walkers tackling the fenceline (top) Intrepid sloggers(above) Rae the cheetah, stretching alongside the walkers, unperturbed (left) Blisters...! (below)



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# Drakensig mathematics prodigies



Carina Nel

**Drakensig Primary School's maths learners participated in the annual Horizon Maths Competition this term.**

The competition was initiated by the Star Colleges group of schools with the

objective to cultivate a love for mathematics, science and technology.

The competition was presented in two rounds. Twenty three 'Drakies' took part in round one, but unfortunately only thirteen made it through to the second and final round. Nine

of these learners completed the challenge and 'Drakies' excelled by taking the top three places!:

Marko Bredenkamp triumphed in first place, Johan Liebenberg came in second, and Conrad Claasens secured third to ensure that 'Drakies' commanded

a full house on the podium. The other learners to complete the challenge were Ntsakelo Nikwinika, Ekene Arukwe, Rianco Haggard, Tammy MacGregor, Phenyto Legoia and Lindy-Lee Meyer.

Well done to all, we are very proud of you!

**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Johan Liebenberg, Rianco Haggard, Ekene Arukwe, Ntsakelo Nikwinika, Tammy MacGregor, Marko Bredenkamp and Conrad Claasens. Phenyto Legoia and Lindy-Lee Meyer was absent when the photo was taken. Image supplied**



## Sudoku Solution

3	2	7	9	8	4	6	1	5
1	4	9	3	5	6	7	2	8
5	8	6	7	2	1	4	3	9
7	6	4	8	9	2	3	5	1
2	9	1	5	6	3	8	4	7
8	5	3	4	1	7	2	9	6
9	3	2	6	7	5	1	8	4
6	1	5	2	4	8	9	7	3
4	7	8	1	3	9	5	6	2

## The Mayor's minute ...

Mark Bishop

**Due to a hectic schedule this past month, coupled with the Kruger2Canyon News going to print a week early, we have not had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor. But we will make up for that next month!**

I did have the opportunity to meet the Mayor when he and his relevant municipal colleagues attended an exploratory meeting of the Maruleng Tourism Forum. This is an initiative driven by Tom Vorster, to get relevant role players to try and establish an association that will allow everyone to market the area as a unit. There are obstacles, this type of initiative having been tried before with no

luck, but it seems that there is a will and an urgency to get it up and running for the benefit of all.

The Mayor made time, from his pressured schedule, to attend this meeting, and for that we are very grateful. He opened the meeting with his vision of the way forward and stayed on for a while to listen to the discussions. He was happy that the initiative will be driven by competent and able individuals with the full ongoing support of the municipality and the interested parties therein. He left saying that he was expecting proposals that he could present to obtain greater support from the Limpopo authorities (and central Government), and a full buy in from them regarding the forums' endeavours. Watch this space.

I look forward to chatting to him next month to find out what he's been up to.

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# Getaway to Franks Bush Camp

Travel Correspondent

Welcome to a 'home away from home'. Franks Bush Camp is a very welcoming environment in the heart of the bushveld, and is only a short 30 minute drive from Hoedspruit, and 20 minutes drive from the Orpen gate to the Kruger National Park. Easily accessed from the Orpen road, it is located just off the Guernsey road bordering on Thornybush Nature Reserve.

The camp is owned and run by Johann and Welma Jurgens, and is situated in the wild, amongst Marula, Tambotie and Buffalo Thorn trees. This camp provides an authentic bush experience and whilst not being a big 5 reserve, there are a variety of animals that include leopard, buffalo, hyena and from time to time, wild dogs.

The camp accommodates 20 guests in 10 rooms - 5 comfortable rooms and 5 backpacker rooms. With Kruger National Park around the corner, the camp offers guided game drives into the Park – either full or half day drives. They also offer local game

drives on the Guernsey Reserve, as well as very interesting biodiversity walks.

Attractions in the area include wildlife rehabilitation centres, the Panorama Route, hiking trails, adventure activities and of course the Kruger National Park.

The camp is run and operated by African Bush Training – a hospitality and conservation school. The whole idea of the camp is to allow our students the opportunity to showcase their newly learned skills to guests, under the guidance of their instructors and facilitators. It gives the students the opportunity to deal with guests, and it gives guests an opportunity to experience the new generation in hospitality and what the camp offers, and the standards that the school is upholding.

The camp has an outside bar and boma and a wonderful splash pool for those dizzy hot summer days. Be aware that you may be sharing the pool with zebra and antelope!

Accommodation is catered on a dinner, bed, and breakfast basis but for those that want longer



Comfortable accommodation and warm hospitality awaits you at Franks Bush Camp

Images supplied

stays, lunch is included as well.

Check out the website, [www.franksbushcamp.com](http://www.franksbushcamp.com), book and enjoy your stay.

Franks Bush Camp was a very pleasant surprise and is highly recommended for those wanting a little 'own time' not far from Hoedspruit.



# Hoedspruit animal outreach awarded grant from Cold Noses foundation

Local Correspondent

Hoedspruit Animal Outreach (HALO), was established in 2016 with the focus of uplifting the lives of domestic animals (mainly dogs) in the rural communities around Hoedspruit.

HALO has acquired a substantial grant from the COLD NOSES FOUNDATION to help fund veterinary costs for emergency treatments of animals seen by HALO.

In the last six months, HALO has experienced a huge increase in the demand for help by dog owners from

the five communities of LeBoeng, The Willows, The Oaks, Tswenyane and Lepelle. With increasing outbreaks of rabies, distemper and parvo, HALO has had to make several daily commutes to the communities to pick up dogs that require urgent veterinary treatment.

Yvette Hes, board member of HALO stated, "Our vet bills have skyrocketed in the past months and at the same time, due to the effects of COVID, we have seen a sharp decline in donations, creating a challenging situation for HALO to continue our work. HALO is

very thankful to the COLD NOSES FOUNDATION for their generous donation, so we don't have to say no to helping dogs in need. With this grant HALO is able to help dogs that require urgent veterinary treatment without having to wait for donations coming in to pay for it. This will make a difference in the lives of hundreds of dogs".

HALO helps thousands of community dogs in the rural communities. The outreach program consists of a vaccination program, a sterilization program, emergency treatments for dogs and a program of education on

animal welfare. HALO is a 100% volunteer driven organisation, with no monetary remuneration given to the volunteers for the unbelievable work that they do. HALO depends entirely on donations to continue their work. The donations are put to good use in running the outreach program, pay for transport and maintenance of the vehicle, purchase the vaccines and medication, sterilisations, operations and TVT treatments of dogs, to name but a few.

You can support to HALO and the wonderful work that they do by donating any amount, big or small. All



donations would be most welcome.

For more information on HALO go to [www.halooutreach.co.za](http://www.halooutreach.co.za) or call HALO on 082 6923688. Alternatively you can email the organisation on [hoedspruit.halo@gmail.com](mailto:hoedspruit.halo@gmail.com).

Background: The Cold Noses Foundation is a US based organisation, founded in 2010, focusing on funding small, but effective organisations, who are the "boots on the ground". These organisations (worldwide) are

out there in the streets, in the veld, swamps, forests, and anywhere else where there are animals in need - feeding, rescuing and caring for abandoned, abused and injured animals.





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# Southern Cross Schools Schoolyard Trail run challenge



Allied Mathebula

School Correspondent

Southern Cross Schools is situated on the northern edge of Raptor's View Wildlife Estate. Sharing the natural bush with the Estate, lends itself to trail running. Inspired by the Lowveld Trail Running Estate Series and the Backyard Ultra Series born around the world during lockdown, Southern Cross Schools and the PTA Committee decided to host a trail running event in our own "back yard".

This afforded them the opportunity to bring together the local commu-

nity, and at the same time, showcase their magnificent school.

There is enough space and paths on the school grounds for a lovely winding 5km route, but it was decided to offer longer options too. During lockdown, people around the world ran marathons and even ultra-marathons in their back yards. This gave SCS the idea for the "endurance challenge", where runners would be given four hours to run as far as they wished – or could – by doing laps of the 5km route. This developed into a choice of either an individual challenge, where individuals could do

as many laps as possible in four hours, or a team ongoing relay challenge, where no more than five runners could rack up as many laps as they could. This made it a fun trail running challenge for the entire Hoedspruit family.

Partnering with Lowveld Trail Running, the plan was put into action. Lowveld Trail Running has hosted many fantastic events in and around Hoedspruit, and were happy to facilitate the event on their website, expedite registrations, and assist SCS with the planning and marking of the route. This undoubtedly made the smooth run-

ning of the event far more manageable. It is surprising just how much thought and preparation is necessary to stage such an event.

On Saturday 28 May, over 160 runners consisting of school kids, their families, and seasoned local trail-runners, arrived in the early morning to a mist-blanketed school. The 5km race was planned to start at 07:00, but due to a flurry of last-minute entries, the race started 15 minutes later. The runners set off following the pink ribbons which marked the route, along single track paths and dirt roads, around dams, alongside and over

streams, around school fields, weaving between trees and through the school classroom circles.

For the runners, there were two aid stations supplying water, juice and snacks. Those who were not running, or who had finished running, could enjoy coffee and egg and bacon rolls. This became beers and 'boerie' rolls as the day progressed, and the running went from a 5km dash to an endurance challenge. Because the route brought runners through the school and then sent them out again, there was good spectator value as the runners dug



Heading off to a good start (top) and a family affair (above)

Images: Allied Mathebula

deep and continued their laps. The family support and atmosphere which is so synonymous with Southern Cross Schools, encouraged the runners to keep going for the full four hours. The U18 learners ran 25km to 30km individually, while the winning endurance runner completed 40km. The winning team logged 9 laps (45km!).

There is no doubt that it was a thoroughly enjoyable event, with "runners' highs" followed by some stiff legs and an overall sense of achievement. The funds raised on the day will go towards improving the school's sporting facilities, with the focus being on the sports field and swimming pool change rooms.

The SCS Schoolyard Trail Run will definitely become an annual event on the SCS calendar, and SCS looks forward to next year's challenge with more runners, more teams, and more kilometres run.



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## Legal Notices

### Maruleng Land Use Management Scheme, 2021

Notice is hereby given that we Torbious Solutions CC have applied to the Maruleng Local Municipality for Special Consent in Terms of Section 68 of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management By-Law of Maruleng Local Municipality 2016, read with Clause 21 of the Maruleng Local Municipality Land Use Scheme 2021, to use the Farm The Willows 197 Kt situated at Morupu Mmola Road (D21), Dingapong for a telecommunication mast and base station.

The property is currently zoned "Agricultural" in terms of the Maruleng Land Use Management Scheme 2021.

Particulars of the application will lie for inspection during office hours at the office of The Director for Spatial Planning and Economic Development, Office

27, Maruleng Local Municipality, 64 Springbok Street, Hoedspruit, for a period of 28 Days from 17 JUNE 2022.

Objection to, or representations in respect of the application must be lodged with or made in writing to the Director for Spatial Planning and Economic Development, Office 27, Maruleng Local Municipality, 64 Springbok Street, Hoedspruit, or at PO Box 627, Hoedspruit, 1380 as well as with the under-mentioned applicant within a period of 28 Days From 17 JUNE 2022.

Closing Date for Any Objections: 15 JULY 2022

**Applicant Details:**  
TORBIOUS SOLUTIONS CC  
PO Box 32017,  
Totiusdal, 0134  
418 Rustic Road,  
Silvertondale, 0184

Tel: 012 804 1504 Fax: 012 804 7072 / 086 690 0468

Email: pp@Infraplan.co.za

**Reference Number: 356526**

### Tsamaiso Ea Tsamaiso Ea Mobu Ea Maruleng, 2021

Tsebiso E Fumana Ka Mona Hore We Torbious Solutions CC E Kopitse Mmasipala Wa Sebaka Sa Maruleng Bakeng Sa Tumelo E Kgethehileng. Ho Latela Karolo Ea 68 Ea Molao Oa Tsamaiso Ea Pero Ea Sebaka Le Tsamaiso Ea Mobu Oa Mmasipala Oa Lehala La Maruleng, 2016, Bala Le Molao Oa 21 Wa Sebeliso Sa Masipase Wa Lebala La Maruleng, 2021, Ho Sebelisa Posi Mehlaba 197 Kt E Thusoa Morupu Mmola Road (D21), Dingapong Bakeng Sa Motšoantšo Oa Litšoantšiso Le Motheo Oa Base.

Thepa Hona Joale E Khetsoe "Temo" Ho Latela Tsamaiso Ea Tsamaiso Ea Tsamaiso Ea Mobu Ea Maruleng, 2021.

Lintlha Tse Ling Tsa Kopo E Tla Tsoa Ho Hlahloba Ka Lihora Tsa Mosebetsi Ka Ofisi Ya Molaoli Wa Pero Ya Sabaka Le Ntshetsopele Ya Moruo, Ofisi 27, Mmasipala

Wa Maruleng, 64 Springbok Street, Hoedspruit Ka Nako Ea Matsatsi A 28 Ho Tloha Ka La 17 Phuptjane 2022.

Kgano Kapa Diemelo Mabapi Le Kopo E Tshwanetse Ho Kenya Le Kapa Ho Ngolwa Molaoli Wa Pero Ya Sabaka Le Ntshetsopotso Ea Moruo, Ofisi 27, Mmasipala Wa Sebaka Sa Maruleng, 64 Springbok Street, Kapa Ho PO Box 627, Hoedspruit, 1380 Mmoho Le Mokhopi Ea Sa Bileng Ka Nako Ka Nako Ea Matsatsi A 28 Ho Tloha Ka La 17 Phuptjane 2022.

Kwalo Letsatsi Bakeng Sa Likanetso: La 15 Phupu 2022

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**Nomoro Ea Litšupiso: 356526**

## NOTICE OF BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 24 (2) of the National Environmental Management Act number 107 of 1998, and Regulation 41 of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice 326 of 7 April 2017, of the intent to submit an application to carry out the following activity:

### THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR SYSTEM

SITE LOCATION: Portion 14 of the farm Parsons 155 KT in the Maruleng Local Municipality, Mopani District, Limpopo Province.

SG code TOKT0000000015500014.

The proposed development will trigger Activity 12, listed under Listing Notice 3 of the amended EIA Regulations published in Government Notice 324 on 7 April 2017.

#### APPLICANT:

Mr Per Grunert.

Project EAP: Elize Osmers; Tel: 074 834 1977; Fax: 011 604 0533; E-mail: [projects@eszro.com](mailto:projects@eszro.com).

Date of publication of this advertisement is Friday 24 June 2022. If you wish to be identified as an interested and/or affected party, please submit, in writing, your name, contact information and interest in the above-mentioned project to the contact person given above on or before 25 July 2022.



[mj@hlokomela.org.za](mailto:mj@hlokomela.org.za)

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Ambulance Tintswalo	101 77
Ambulance Services Swift	060 528 2784
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Fire Brigade AFB	015 799 2172
Fire Brigade Maruleng	015 793 0536
Fire Dpt Hoedspruit	015 793 0728
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Hoedspruit Medical Rescue	072 170 0864
Hoedspruit Paws	078 431 3161
Hoedspruit Town Watch	072 812 2172
	082 683 2835

Hospital AFB Drakensig	015 799 2065
Hospital Nelspruit Mediclinic	013 759 0645
Hospital Tintswalo	013 795 5000
Hospital Sekororo Gvt-The Oaks	015 383 9400
Hospital Tzaneen Mediclinic	015 305 8536
Maruleng Municipality Medical Rescue	015 793 2409
Med Centre Emergency No Protrack	072 170 0864
SPAR Station Commander	084 770 1743
SAPS General	015 793 2585
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SPCA Phalaborwa	101 111
Victim Support Unit	015 799 4000
	071 519 7044
	082 940 0651

#### MEDICAL & VETERINARY SERVICES

Counselling Ronelle Joubert	082 787 4471
DR Van Eeden (Dentist)	015 793 1876
DR D Verhagen	015 793 0606
DR A Polley	015 793 0606
DR Shivambu	087 260 1537
DR Werner Muller (Dentist)	015 793 1894
Hlokomela	072 698 6538
Hoedspruit Clinic	015 793 2342
Hoeds Wildlife Est Pharmacy	015 793 1427
J Coetzee (Clinical Psychologist)	015 781 0012
Marlie Landman (Eye Clinic)	082 803 0369
Med Centre (Dentists)	015 793 0845
ProVet Veterinary Hospital	015 793 0797

#### REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY

Century 21	015 793 1534
Fine & Country	083 377 6622
Pam Golding	015 793 2712

#### TOURISM & THINGS TO DO

Eastgate Airport	015 793 3681
Hoedspruit-info Tourism Centre	078 979 6486
Hds Endangered Species Centre	015 793 1633
Jabulani Elephant Interaction	015 793 1265
K2C Biosphere Region	015 817 1838
Sky-Way Trails	013 737 8374

#### VEHICLES. SPARES & REPAIRS

Otto's Diesel Centre	087 550 1252/
	082 801 0141
HDS Number Plates	082 807 4757

## Vacancy - Wellness Champion



SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL ROADS AGENCY SOC LTD X.002-120-2019/1  
CONTRACT NRA X.002-120-2019/1: ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE OF NATIONAL ROUTE R36 FROM GREATER TUBATSE BORDER TO GREATER TZANEEN BORDER, R40 FROM MPUMALANGA BORDER TO BA-PHALABORWA BORDER, R526 FROM MICA TO BA-PHALABORWA BORDER AND R 531 FROM R40 TO ORPEN KRUGER GATE

#### KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

To manage the Wellness program on site. The primary role will be to educate peers about HIV, communicable and non-communicable diseases. Coordinate awareness, counselling and testing sessions on site and complete monthly reports.

#### INHERENT JOB REQUIREMENTS:

##### Minimum Requirements:

- Grade 12; 3 years relevant experience in the Wellness field
- Driver's license Code 8; own vehicle would be an advantage
- Must have own transport

##### Competencies

- Intermediate level of computer literacy
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent report writing using qualitative and quantitative performance indicators
- Ability to develop a culture of continuous improvement in the Wellness program
- Good time management, organizing & planning skills, as well as the ability to work unsupervised
- Must display the ability to work in a team, and have good interpersonal skills
- Show leadership qualities

#### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES:

##### Management of Wellness Program on Site

- Implement and manage a Wellness Program on site.
- Co-ordinate the logistics for the Awareness, Counselling and Testing (ACT) sessions on site.
- Create an enabling environment in the workplace for workers with health issues.
- Provide referrals to local clinics (Department of Health) to access effective treatment, and patient monitoring.
- Conduct regular toolbox talks with workers.
- Attend quarterly forum facilitation meetings on site, and annual combined meetings.
- Create and maintain a database of all workers and immediate families, local NGO's and clinics.
- Reporting of on-site meetings, toolbox talks, weekly planning sheets and monthly reports to service provider.

##### Communication Management

- To ensure satisfactory client liaison between the Service Provider, the site workers and other stakeholders.
- Communicate with the program manager on all aspects of the program.

#### APPLICATIONS

Applications are invited from candidates, along this route (R36 - HOEDSPRUIT). All candidates who are interested in applying for the position may send their application, together with a CV, by no later than 17 JUNE 2022 to email: [hds\\_120@bcbsolutions.co.za](mailto:hds_120@bcbsolutions.co.za) and the subject should be "Wellness Champion post for X.002-120-2019/1 - HOEDSPRUIT".



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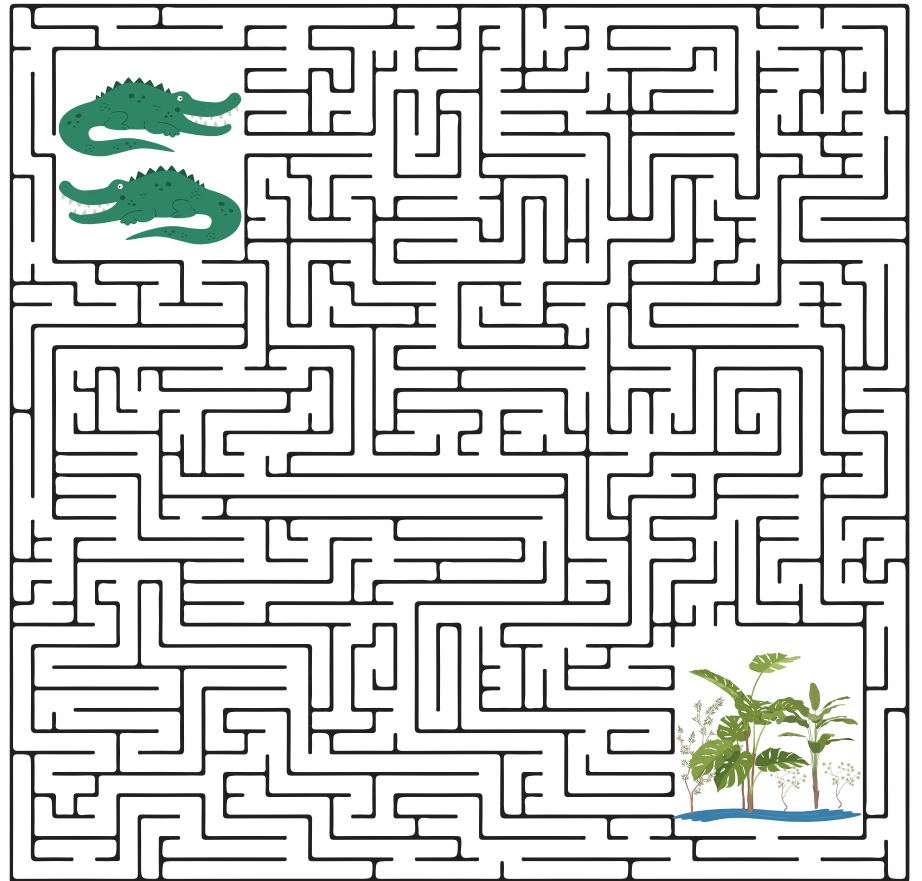
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# Junior FGASA & Kids In The Wild

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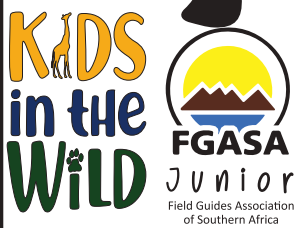
### How Are Your TRACKING SKILLS?

Here we have 9 African animal tracks. Can you name the animal that the track belongs to?



### CAN YOU NAME THE ANIMAL?

Here are 8 African animal silhouettes. Can you identify the animal by its shape?



If you love the wilderness, and are passionate about conservation, then we have the perfect thing for you. FGASA Junior in partnership with Kids In The Wild bring you the new and improved Pangolin Course. The Pangolin Course includes an interactive platform for kids to reconnect with nature and the incredible wilderness that surrounds us on a daily basis. We will be offering online live lectures as well as on-demand courses that will encompass many different modules and will also include games, quizzes, homework and so much more.

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