



WATCHING WILDLIFE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Luke Hunter
Susan Rhind
David Andrew

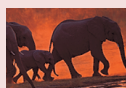


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AUTHORS



Luke Hunter

Melbourne-born Luke decided at the age of three to work with big cats in Africa. Twenty years later he embarked on his PhD at the University of Pretoria, working out methods to reintroduce cheetahs and lions into areas where they had been wiped out. A hiatus from academia led him to write and photograph a book on cheetahs, followed by a film-making sojourn at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Natural History Unit. He is now continuing his work on wild cats in South Africa, based from Monash University. He is convinced that a combination of paying tourists and conservation-oriented research represents the greatest hope for protecting Africa's wildlife.



Susan Rhind

Susan was raised on a farm in Western Australia and has always been besotted by animals. After working as a nurse and science teacher, she followed her real passion and became a wildlife biologist. She ventured to Africa for a break following the completion of her PhD, and spent nearly two years working and travelling around seven of Africa's countries. Susan has scientifically studied dolphins, monkeys and Australian marsupials, and is coauthor of *Watching Wildlife East Africa*. She currently lectures in ecology at the Australian National University.



David Andrew

After his father was mauled by a gorilla at Howletts Zoo, David's family fled the wilds of England to live somewhere safer – Australia! There David created *Wingspan* and *Australian Birding* magazines; edited *Wildlife Australia* magazine; and among other jobs has been a research assistant in Kakadu NP, a birding guide for English comedian Bill Oddie and an editor of Lonely Planet guides. He was coordinating author for LP's *Watching Wildlife East Africa*, contributed to *Watching Wildlife Australia* and is now the Series Publishing Manager for the *Watching Wildlife* guides.

FROM THE AUTHORS

Luke Hunter

Thanks to the staff of South African National Parks, particularly Adel Smit and to Lee Vincent and Jeff Gaisford of KZN Wildlife. Many researchers and specialists provided valuable information, especially Adrian Bailey, Joel Berger, Vic Cockcroft, John Dini, Andrew Hockly, Mike Hoffman, Robyn Keene-Young, Andrew Mortimer, Stephen Mulholland, Simon Murray, Karl Rosenberg, Dion Sadie, Rob Slotow, Gus van Dyk and Martin Whiting. I'm grateful to Ansie Dippenaar for the map of Karoo NP and to Harvey Croze for the rhodopsin idea. Afroventures provided exceptional support in Botswana; thanks to Phillip Lategan and especially to Seagal Tembenaar and Moffat Nsiwa of Afroventures, two of the finest guides I've met. Thanks also to Des Pretorius and his staff at Camp Moremi, Darren and Michelle McKissock at Nxabega, Sonja and Brendan Ferrar at Savute Camp, the lovely Mbina Ntshwabi at Chobe Game Lodge, and thanks again to Adriaan and Jo Erasmus for the bed at Tswalu.

Thanks a stack to the LP team for a great series, especially to David Andrew and Sean Pywell for launching it, to Miranda Wills for her speedy editing and to Andy van Smeerdijk for some excellent

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Susan Rhind

I owe considerable thanks to many for smoothing the travel path and providing information. In Zimbabwe I am particularly grateful to Flo Nyongoro and Alison Hewitt (African Adventures), Steve Pope (Chipembere Safaris), Craig MacRae (Sengwa Safaris), Beat Accorsi (Shamwari Safaris), John Stevens (John Stevens Safaris) and Peter Ginn (Peter Ginn Birding Safaris). Thanks also to the staff of River Lodges of Africa, Hwange Safari Lodge, Mbizi Game Park, Kazuma Trails, Toddhall Tours, Shearwater and Elephant Sands Safari Lodge. In Malawi, Central African Wilderness Safaris, Ulendo Travel, Mike and staff at Mvuu (Liwonde), and David Foot and team (Nyika Safaris) gave me considerable assistance. Jens Haugaard provided invaluable detail on Malawi's birds, and Will and Valerie Darwall introduced me to the intricacies of cichlids. Thanks also to Chinteche Lodge and Kayak Africa. In Zambia, Penny Mae and Doris Glasspool of Kachelo Travel were fantastic and made it all happen. Thanks to Tagd Wixsted and Edmund of Kasanka Trust, and the staff and guides of Chinzombo Safaris, Kafunta River Lodge, Wildlife Camp, Basanga Trails, Royal Zambezi Lodge and Chiawa Camp.

THIS BOOK

LUKE Hunter researched and wrote the Nature in Southern Africa, Wildlife-Watching and Habitats chapters; the South Africa, Namibia and Botswana sections of the Parks and Places chapter (including the introduction); the Mammals section of the Wildlife Gallery chapter; and the Introduction to the book. Susan Rhind researched and wrote the Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia sections. David Andrew researched and wrote the Birds section with assistance from Luke Hunter; and Andrew van Smeerdijk contributed supplementary information to several sections.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

THE idea for this series came from David Andrew and was supported by Chris Klep, Nick Tapp and Sue Galley. The concept was developed further by Sean Pywell and Jane Bennett; Sean became the first series editor and Mathew Burfoot designed the layout for the series. Maps for *Watching Wildlife Southern Africa* were drawn by Ray Thomson and Simon Tillema. Editing and proofing were done by Miranda Wills, Sean Pywell, Andrew van Smeerdijk, Thalia Kalkipsakis and David Andrew (with assistance from Janet Brunckhorst, Jennifer Garrett and Andrew Bain). Layout was by Vicki Beale with assistance from Wendy Wright. Most of the photos were sourced and supplied by LPI – special thanks to all at LPI who put in much extra effort for this title. Jamieson Gross designed the cover. Mapping was checked by Michael Blore and Chris Klep; layout was checked by David Andrew, Michael Blore and Glenn van der Knijff.

PREFACE

WHEN I left my home in England 25 years ago to travel overland through Africa, it was the realization of a dream. Finally I was going to make a safari for myself, camp out under star-filled skies, listen to the sounds of elephants and hyenas, and see my first big cats in the wild. In those days guide books were for identifying what you saw – giving it a name. But I was looking for something more. I wanted to know how the animals and birds lived, how the web of life fitted together. What I didn't want was to have to wade through an exhaustive list of every animal and bird I might see – if only *Watching Wildlife Southern Africa* had been available then.

In those days South Africa still lived under the cloud of apartheid, so after a quick visit to Kruger National Park I headed for Botswana (where I spent a year working) before returning to East Africa which remains my home to this day. But I had already glimpsed such gems as Botswana's Okavango Delta, Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, and the Luangwa Valley and Kafue National Park in Zambia. What treasures await the traveller to these destinations! But don't make the mistake of trying to see everything. Cast off your workaday persona and savour the essence of Africa. Take time to watch, look and listen.

I have always felt that *Lonely Planet* was an evocative title for a series of books. There is a poignancy that speaks to me of our responsibility to cherish and help protect the staggering diversity of life that our planet still sustains. But time is running out. I have seen huge changes since I first set foot in Africa. Tens of thousands of rhinos and hundreds of thousands of elephants have been slaughtered, and the bushmeat trade has reached staggering proportions.

Africa is blessed with wonderful friendly people, but many of them live in abject poverty and view wildlife as either a threat to life and property or as competition for scarce resources. Only by helping to reduce poverty and by including local communities in efforts to conserve wilderness areas can we hope to provide a meaningful future for people and wildlife. I hope that by learning more about Southern Africa and its spectacular wildlife you will return home with a renewed commitment to protect our planet.

Jonathan Scott

Jonathan Scott is an award-winning wildlife photographer and author of more than a dozen books on Africa's wildlife. He is the co-presenter of the popular BBC/Animal Planet television series *Big Cat Diary* filmed in Kenya's Masai Mara National Reserve. Jonathan is married to wildlife photographer Angie Scott, and they live within five minutes' drive of Nairobi National Park.

INTRODUCTION

MORE than any other continent, Africa is synonymous with wildlife and there are two truly exceptional regions here for viewing it. For many, East Africa has traditionally been 'classic' safari country but Southern Africa now outranks it in terms of numbers of foreign visitors (and, of course, most of them come for the wildlife). While the diversity and density of species here is exceeded in some forests of Central Africa and South America, there is nowhere else on earth where such a variety of wildlife is so visible. Even a week's tour of the parks here guarantees sightings of dozens of mammal species and hundreds of birds, as well as sundry reptiles and smaller fry. For the wildlife devotee, Southern Africa will probably deliver the safari of a lifetime.

This book aims to assist and enhance the process. For the first-timer, we cover the basic 'how-to' information for planning a visit, specifying the best times, the various safari options, suitable equipment and clothing, the best places to see particular species and so on. Then, for everyone from the complete novice to the wildlife specialist, we detail how to extract the most once you're here. The most productive reserves of Southern Africa are reviewed in detail, providing information on the specific wildlife attractions of each destination and the finer points of finding them. We cover a range of different parks and reserves, including everything from the largest national parks to lesser-known attractions noted for a particular species that's hard to find elsewhere. Additionally, we've gone for diversity over duplication, so that coastal, desert, fynbos and wetland reserves appear alongside the typical savanna-grassland ones for which Africa is so well known. The book does not aim to cover every reserve – there are over 500 of them in Southern Africa – but you will find the very best of them here.

To help with identification, our Wildlife Gallery illustrates over 270 species most likely to be seen, all of them in colour photographs. But more than that, the Gallery also provides a little interpretation of animal behaviour and ecology. Beyond simply ticking species off a list, Southern Africa offers exceptional opportunities to truly observe animals, whether it's interpreting the vocalisations of vervet monkeys, unravelling the chain of command among different vulture species or perhaps even anticipating where and when a kill might happen. We hope you'll find this book provides the clues for that extra insight.

Above all, we hope it inspires you to keep on watching wildlife. Whether it encourages and aids your first trip, a return visit or even just an armchair safari, we want the book to increase your enjoyment of wildlife. Money from wildlife-watching tourism is very much the main form of revenue for conservation in Africa. However you decide to go on safari, keep on doing it! And if your stories enthuse a friend, encourage them to do likewise; if this book has helped you at all, pass it on to someone else who is thinking of going.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Nature

Wildlife-Watching

Habitats

Parks and Places

Wildlife Gallery

Each chapter is colour coded to help you navigate through the book – look for the thumb tabs.

Highlight page *Animal's range* **Group page**

142 Wildlife Gallery – Mammals

AFRICAN ELEPHANT

Social giants
The largest mammal on earth is also one of the most social. Leading a core group of closely related females, one of the older females makes most of the decisions about where and when the herd forages, drinks and rests. Younger members of the herd act as helpers to the calves, and all family members are protective of the calves. Males live alone or in small bachelor groups, often competing for old males accompanied by two or three 'oppressors', known as askans, and only top bulls when females are in heat. The askans are prevented from coming into contact – the heightened status of a bull's annual estrus – by the presence of musth bulls, a status which probably prevents young males from attempting to breed and they are fully mature. Elephants live for about 60 years, during which they maintain enduring relationships with other individuals, the death of a family member provokes grieving behaviour very similar to our own.

Roaching even less and one high in the largest bulls, an elephant's daily requirements are on par. They eat up to 150kg of vegetation each day and drink 80 to 70% of water (though a family elephant can guzzle twice that volume). Males may roam hundreds of kilometres in search of mates, but most are sedentary, converting dense woodlands into savanna. The great diversity of foraging habits makes elephants the most general and promiscuous soil burrower but it may also drive woodpecker species toward extinction. A central factor in the functioning of savanna ecosystems, elephant engineering may be extreme when populations are confined to reserves. For almost all of Southern Africa's population, hunting requests for greater protection than their counterparts elsewhere in Africa, southern elephants are now one of the most threatened mammal species on the continent. Culling, culling, contraception, translocation and trading their precious ivory are among the annual options employed in the effort to establish.

Hotspots: where to find animals

Hotspots: where to find animals

Wildlife Gallery – Mammals 243

DASSIES

The elephant's little brother
Known throughout Southern Africa by their Afrikaans name *das*, which means 'little kangaroo' (because they are small herbivores) and looking like a porcupine given pig, these unusual creatures are neither kangaroo nor porcupine, in fact are unrecognisable as it may seem. Their closest relatives are elephants, dugongs and manatees. Added to longer and sparser rosettes both on the neck and on the body, the dassie's distinctive porcupine-like mane for species recognition. Even so, dassies had probably been separated from the elephants another ten perhaps 70 million years and other than close relatives, they should be thought of as distant branches of the one evolutionary tree.

Southern Africa has three species, of which each species are the most diverse. Widely spread throughout the region except in the dense forest or where their one and only overgraze are lacking, these dassies live in colonies that may number in the hundreds. Whilst the colonies of young males are territorial and adult males associate in smaller groups, the colonies consist of a group headed by a single male. Other males using their territorial range to defend their territory.

Aggression, rock digging and highly repetitive and subtle a wide variety of grunts, notes, grunts when going to dismount and bray or bleat, bawl and bray when it's not. When foraging, a central family or older females keeps a head of their group steady and sends the colony ranging for a cover with a soft warning bark. In Durbans, western Bushman and southern Bushman, they share their rock habitat with very similar yellow-spotted dassies. Distinguishable by the yellow pigmented gland on their back and generally lighter colouring, the two species have very similar behaviour and other occur in their associations. In fact, they respond to one another's alarm calls, the two species have very similar behaviour and other occur in their associations. In fact, they respond to one another's alarm calls, the two species have very similar behaviour and other occur in their associations. In fact, they respond to one another's alarm calls, the two species have very similar behaviour and other occur in their associations.

Hotspots: where to find animals

Hotspots: where to find animals



Summary information

Hotspots: where to find animals

YOU'RE here to see the animals and we're here to help you: *Watching Wildlife Southern Africa* shows you how to recognise the major players and advises you on where to find them. This book is also packed with background information on wildlife habitats, advice on getting started, when to go and how to prepare. There are also detailed watching tips (eg, which trail or pan to go to), and clues on the best time to look. Read on to help plan your wildlife-watching adventure and get the best out of this treasure-trove.

Getting Started There are two main ways to go about watching wildlife: pick your animals and then find out where to go; or choose where you want to go and then find out what's there. In Southern Africa you'll see a lot of the same wildlife in a lot of places (eg, wildebeests and zebras); but for other animals you'll need to go to certain places (eg, Lengwe NP for Woodwards' batistes). The key chapters cover both approaches: Parks and Places describes where to go and what's there; and the Wildlife Gallery tells you about the animals. Flipping between these chapters will tell you almost everything you need to know.

Index The quickest way to find out about an animal or reserve is to look it up in the Index. Animals are arranged into groups according to their common names (Burchell's zebra comes under zebras) – page numbers in bold indicate a photo of that animal. Reserves are listed alphabetically by name.

Table of Contents This gives you a quick overview of the book. We've colour-coded each chapter to help you find your way around until you're more familiar with the layout.

Wildlife Gallery This is a run-down of all the key species and groups: what they look like (and how to tell them apart) and the kinds of things you can see them doing. This chapter is divided into three sections: Mammals, Birds, and More Creatures Great and Small (eg, reptiles).

Key animals are presented as feature pages, which describe unusual and interesting aspects of their ecology. A side-bar next to the main text summarises some of their main characteristics (eg, behaviour, breeding and preferred habitat); and a Hotspots box lists some places where they might be

found (use this as a link to the Parks and Places chapter). A small map indicates each species' range.

Other animals appear in family (or closely related) groups – these pages are packed with photos to help you work out what's what.

Parks and Places Organised country by country and starting with an introduction to the overall region, this chapter describes the best national parks, reserves and other places in which to see wildlife. Each country section begins with an overview (including itineraries). Specific destinations, eg, national parks and other reserves, are ordered alphabetically according to their importance for wildlife-watching. Thus major attractions, such as Kruger NP, are given more-detailed treatment and less-frequented reserves may be covered in only one page. Facts for travellers (like location, contacts, accommodation and wildlife rhythms), watching tips and wildlife highlights are summarised for each; and a colour map points out major features and good wildlife-viewing areas.

Wildlife-Watching Essential background reading. This chapter tells you when to go and how to look, and explains the ins and outs of safaris, guides, equipment and field guides. Special features cover diving and snorkelling, bird-watching, photography and some safari alternatives, such as walking or canoe trips.

Nature in Southern Africa We explain the reasons behind Southern Africa's great biodiversity and introduce some of the conservation issues.

Habitats Describes Southern African ecosystems in simple terms.

Resource Guide This lists recommended field guides and other books, reliable tour operators and wildlife-related web sites.

Glossary Explains any confusing words in the text.

General park information

Wildlife highlights

112 Parks and Places – South Africa

ITALA GAMESERVE
Life under the iron mountain

Wildlife highlights
It's very good for viewing kudu, topi, reedbuck, reedbuck, impresso, bushbuck, impresso, and bushbuck. Local specialist hunting both with and without horns on record.

EXTREMELY rugged and some terrain is flat's hulk and these mountain peaks are steep. These mountain peaks can come to the feeding on grass from lowland grazing. It is heavily forested by extensive agriculture and forestry and more so to a number of patches of forest. The forest is very tall and often extends far into the distance here and a few of the tallest are gently eroded near clearance due to logging while from the numerous lookout points.

The mountain grasslands
It has high plain grasslands in a rich savanna of grass, ranging in size from numerous and only seen white these down to the smaller scale. The hills are forested with acacia, but steepening from much of its range where habitat grazing for crops and agriculture has disturbed the habitat. It is a mix of open and wooded forest of the small, they are not easy to see the grassland around the acacia and the mountain top with its wooded and with a few scattered rolling hills and more open. The hills are forested with acacia and the forest is very tall and often extends far into the distance here and a few of the tallest are gently eroded near clearance due to logging while from the numerous lookout points.

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Parks and Places – South Africa 113

Wildlife highlights
Kruger National Park, Itala Gameserve, and other parks are highlighted on the map.

Watching tips

It is very good for viewing kudu, topi, reedbuck, reedbuck, impresso, bushbuck, impresso, and bushbuck. Local specialist hunting both with and without horns on record.

Wildlife-Watching

18 Wildlife-Watching

OTHER SAFARIS

FOR about most, most game-watching in Southern Africa takes place in the parks. Apart from a number of small reserves, the parks are the main places to see wildlife. It is very good for viewing kudu, topi, reedbuck, reedbuck, impresso, bushbuck, impresso, and bushbuck. Local specialist hunting both with and without horns on record.

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Resource Guide
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RESOURCE GUIDE

The following information isn't intended to be comprehensive; we've put together some key references and contacts as a starting point.

RECOMMENDED READING

Field guides

Mammals Probably the best guide for the region is C & T Stuart's *Field Guide to the Mammals of Southern Africa*. Their compact *Southern, Central & East African Mammals – A Photographic Guide* is a concise pocket-guide to 152 species most likely to be seen. The *Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals* by J Kingdon, covers the whole of continental Africa and is packed with information and colour illustrations.

Birds The original and still one of the best, *Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa* by G Maclean, is a little weighty for the field but is extremely comprehensive and excellent value. K Newman's *Birds of Southern Africa – The Green Edition*, and *Sasol – The Illustrated Guide to the Birds of Southern Africa* by I Sinclair, P Hockey & W Tarboton, are also excellent. *Collins Illustrated Checklist – Birds of Southern Africa* by B van Perlo covers the entire region including Malawi, northern Mozambique and Zambia (which the others don't). For Malawi alone, K Newman's *Birds of Malawi* is excellent and D Aspinwall & C Beel's *Field Guide to Zambian Birds not found in Southern Africa* illustrates over 100 species not found south of the Zambezi.

Reptiles and amphibians B Branch's *Field Guide to the Snakes & Other Reptiles of Southern Africa* is the most comprehensive guide and covers 480 species in detail. *South African Frogs* by N Passmore & V Carruthers is a start for amphibian watchers, but *Amphibians of Central & Southern Africa* by A Channing covers all frogs and caecilians of the region.

Invertebrates Field guides for the smaller denizens of the bush are a little patchy but some useful ones include *Butterflies of Southern Africa – A Field Guide* by M Williams, *The Centipedes & Millipedes of Southern Africa – A Guide* by R Lawrence, and *Southern African Spiders – An Identification Guide* by M Filmer.

Aquatic life *Reef Fishes & Corals – East Coast of Southern Africa* by D King illustrates the common reef fish and coral species along the KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique coasts, while *A Guide to Whales, Dolphins & Other Marine Mammals of Southern Africa* by V Cockcroft & P Joyce covers marine mammals. *A Guide to the Fishes of Lake Malawi National Park* by D Lewis, P Reinthal & J Trendall, is invaluable for cichlid identification, and *Ad Koning's Book of Cichlids & All the Other Fishes of Lake Malawi* by A Koning is excellent. A Koornhof's *The Dive Sites of South Africa* details more than 160 sites along the coast.

All-in-one *The Wildlife of Southern Africa* by V Carruthers covers everything, from lower invertebrates through all the animals and plants; for identifying virtually every species you're likely to encounter in the one volume, it's hard to beat.

Background reading and references

R Estes' *Behaviour Guide to African Mammals* is comprehensive; his *Safari Companion* is a more compact version designed for the field. *Creatures of Habit – Understanding African Animal Behaviour* by P Apps & R du Toit is more condensed with outstanding photographs. To identify spoor, scats, nests, wallows and even skulls, you can't go past C & T Stuart's *Field Guide to Tracks & Signs of Southern & East African Wildlife*; *The Art of Tracking – The Origin of Science* by L Liebenberg gives fascinating background theory to the subject.

Island Africa by J Kingdon is a readable and well-illustrated book on the evolution of rare species across the continent while *Pyramids of Life* by H Croze & J Reader examines the intertwined ecological relationships in African ecosystems. *The Mammals of the Southern African Subregion* by J Skinner & R Smithers is the standard mammal reference for the region; for a comprehensive and beautifully illustrated coffee table version, get a copy of *The Complete Book of Southern African Mammals* by G Mills & L Hes.

Ornithologists should dip into the companion volume *The Complete Book of Southern African Birds* by P Ginn, G McIlhenny & P Milstein; for some really serious reading, consult the multivolume *Birds of Africa* series by L Brown, E Urban & K Newman, or the 12-volume *Handbook of Birds of the World* edited by J del Hoyo, A Elliot & J Sargatal – both profusely illustrated and covering all the birds of Africa in detail.

For a taste of what field work is like in a few of the most remote southern African wilderness areas, have a look at *Horn of Darkness – Rhinos on the Edge* by C Cunningham & J Berger, and M & D Owen's books *Cry of the Kalahari* and *Survivor's Song – Life & Death in an African Wilderness*. *Kakuli* by N Carr is a very personal insight on Africa's conservation challenges.

Periodicals

Africa Geographic (www.africa-geographic.com) is probably the best magazine covering Africa's wildlife and conservation issues, with detailed articles and beautiful photography. The same group produces the equally excellent *Africa – Birds & Birding*. *Getaway* magazine (www.getawaytoday.com) is also very worthwhile, especially for up-to-date travelling details for parks and reserves all over Africa. Magazines with more of a local scope include *Zimbabwe Wildlife* produced by Wildlife & Environment Zimbabwe, and *Endangered Wildlife* produced by the Endangered Wildlife Trust, which deals mainly with South Africa. SANP's *Timbila* (timbila@pentapub.co.za) has excellent coverage of South African parks with the occasional feature from elsewhere in Africa. For the conservation-minded, *Oryx*, published by the Flora & Fauna Preservation Society (c/o Zoological Society of London), has a strong African focus.

International bookshops

Before your trip it's worth checking out the comprehensive range available from mail-order natural history bookshops; several have a web catalogue and online ordering service.

- **American Birding Association** (USA & Canada ☎ 800-634 7736, fax 590 2473; International ☎ 719-578 0607, fax 9705; www.americanbirding.org/abasales), PO Box 6599, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934, USA.
- **Andrew Isles Natural History Books** (☎ 03-9510 5750, fax 9529 1256, books@AndrewIsles.com, www.AndrewIsles.com), 115 Greville St, Prahran, Victoria 3181, Australia.