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NATURAL  SELECTION
SAFARIS OF CHARACTER

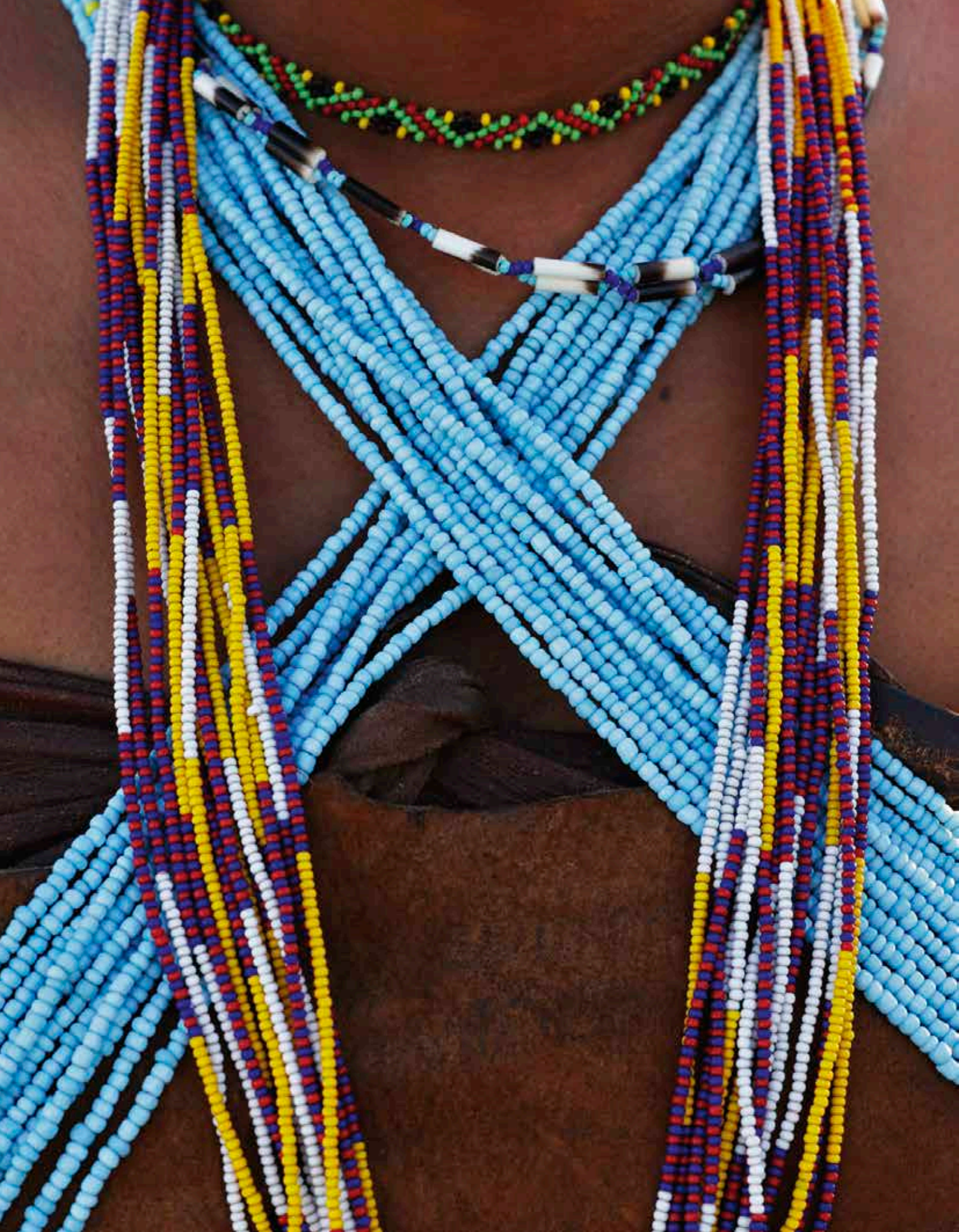
RESTORING SOUTHERN
AFRICA'S WILDLIFE
MIGRATIONS

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE
WILDLIFE WORLD

THE FIRST PEOPLE OF AFRICA

DESERT ADVENTURES

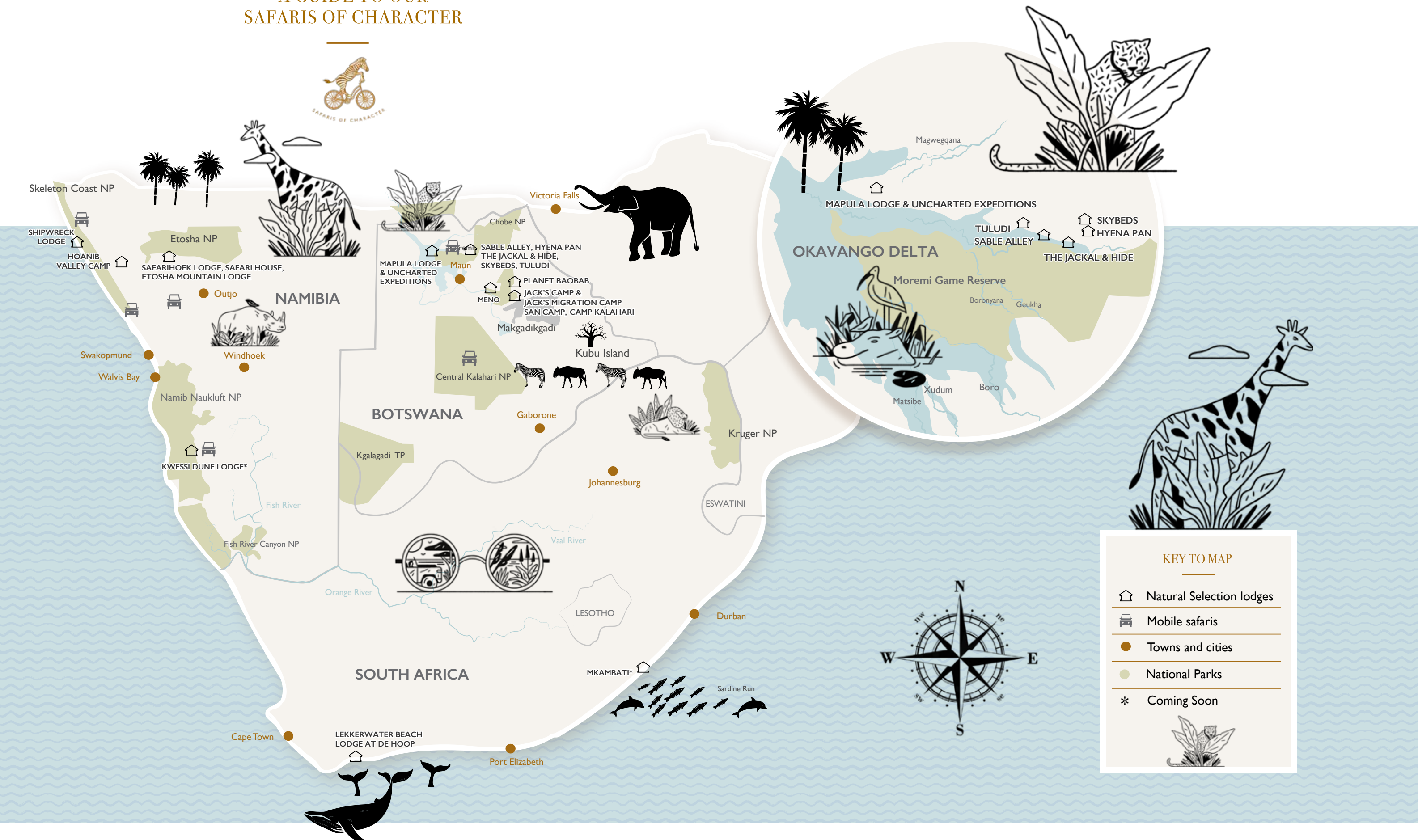
FIRST EDITION



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A GUIDE TO OUR
SAFARIS OF CHARACTER



WELCOME TO THE WILD WORLD OF NATURAL SELECTION —

Natural Selection is a new(ish!) conservation and nature-based tourism company.

Our portfolio is full of welcoming safari camps and quirky mobile safaris in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa and all of them are family-owned. Our focus is on **one-of-a-kind, characterful experiences** with people who are **passionate, extraordinary and wholly committed to conservation.**

From the beginning, we have been about creating an excellent safari experience that **gives back**. In fact, our original model was a non-profit. We soon realised, however, that we'd make a **much bigger impact** if we became a commercial safari company...

So, what do we do now?

We put conservation before profit

We are extremely proud to be a part of Africa's conservation solution through the funding of important projects. 1.5% of every booking at a Natural Selection lodge goes to conservation. That's not 1.5% of a lodge's profit on a booking, that's 1.5% of the entire booking, making it the equivalent of 40% of our profit in year one.

In addition to creating sustainable funds for important conservation projects, each traveller to our camps is also shining a light on the importance of wildlife areas. We make sure that every visitor's trip counts!

We bring you closer to Africa.

To us the most important part of a safari is finding that connection to the bush by keeping things simple and enriching. When we step out of our routines typical day to day concerns fade into the background, magnificent environments humble us and values shift, even if just slightly...

We create conservation partnerships.

Natural Selection looks for partnerships that help us contribute towards conservation. This may be towards the expansion of wildlife areas, or a conversion to wild-life-friendly land use, or the upliftment of communities who live alongside wildlife and are committed to wildlife conservation.

We are committed to minimising our footprint.

Our newly built camps use local materials, recycled materials and renewable energy. As much as possible, we want each camp to support local environmentally-friendly enterprise, to blend into the environment and to carefully manage and minimize waste.

Our deep commitment to conservation is matched only by our devotion to providing you, our guests, with the most unique and extraordinary safari experience on the continent.

#safariisofcharacter

CONTRIBUTORS

MWEZI BUPILO

A guide and conservationist who spends most of his time in one of the remotest corners of the world, Namibia's Kaokoland, Mwezi's true passion in life is giraffe. When he's not guiding guests from Hoanib Valley Camp you can be sure to find him, binos in hand, tracking the desert-adapted giraffe of the region.



JEMIMA SARGENT

Jemima is an artist and illustrator based in Hoedspruit, Limpopo. She works with a variety of media, from pen and ink sketches, to watercolour and large, sprawling acrylic canvases, but her main subject is all things wildlife-related. Jemima's work can be viewed on Instagram at @jemimasargentart and she can be commissioned to paint original artwork to order.



KHUMISO COSMOS RATHIPANA

Cosmos attained his Diploma in Wildlife Management in 1998 from Mweka College of African Wildlife Management in Tanzania and has worked for the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Botswana for over 30 years. Most of his work experience entails Community-Based Natural Resource Management and Environmental Education, and he has vast experience working with communities and school groups – both formally and informally – on matters of environmental conservation. Today, he is the Botswana programme director for Round River Conservation.



DENNIS SIZEMORE

Dennis began his 40 years of conservation work at the University of Montana following grizzly bears and since then his experiences on four continents include fundraising, community engagement, education, and research. As co-founder of Round River Conservation Studies, Dennis has served as its executive director since 1991. He is also a former President of The Wildlands Project and currently serves as vice president of the Taku-Atlin Conservancy and as a board member of the Pax Natura Foundation.



PIPPA DE BRUYN

Pippa has spent the last 20 years researching and writing about India, Southern and East Africa, publishing several guide books and writing for a variety of magazines and newspapers, including *The Telegraph* as one of their destination experts.



RICHARD HOLMES

Although he spends plenty of time at 35,000 feet, Cape Town is where freelance travel writer Richard Holmes calls home. When he's not jetting off on assignment, he's usually unearthing a new foodie find in South Africa's 'Mother City', or waxing up his surfboard for a session at his local break. If he could go anywhere in Africa on safari, the Okavango Delta would be top of his list...



ISAAC TAPA

Isaac has been a guide for over 10 years and revels in the ecosystems of Botswana. Whilst his first love is showing Natural Selection guests the beauty of his country, it's closely followed by his second – photography. Whether he's looking at animals, landscapes or flora through the lens, he's always happiest in the bush, surrounded by the wilderness he grew up in.



DETAILS

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Design :
Sue S | Design

Editor :
Katie Jacholke

After spending five years in a remote bush camp in Zambia, Katie moved to Cape Town to continue her safari career in the world of marketing and branding. She now works for Natural Selection, which might not be as wild as Zambia, but is just as exciting!

BOTSWANA



OPINION :

The seven wonders of the wildlife world (and they’re not what you think) —

Written by : Peter Allison
 Illustrations: Jemima Sargent

Whilst big cats are undoubtedly the icons of the African bush and large mammals seemingly dominate the savannah, there’s plenty more out there to shake your binos at on safari. Here, Peter Allison gives us the lowdown on his favourite (and most overlooked) species to spot on a game drive - and there’s not a whisker in sight.

1. Baboons

These primates are ubiquitous enough that they are frequently ignored as you drive, probably looking for the sorts of animal that might eat them. Yet they can be the most entertaining and even educational species you can observe. The tip is to stop merely seeing them and start watching them (that is actually true of all animals on this list). Baboons have highly complex social lives and at any given time there will be individuals flattering, fighting or fornicating with each other. Their lives are eternal soap operas, but the setting is so much better than anything you’ve seen on television.

2. Dwarf Mongoose

So much focus is given to Africa’s larger carnivores that this, the very smallest of them on the continent, is too frequently ignored. For a predator they are quite adorable, but beyond the cuteness is yet another fascinating social structure (that is almost identical to that of the African wild dog, believe it or not).



3. Fork-tailed Drongo

Another comedian, the wonderfully named drongo may not be striking of appearance (its plain plumage a shade of black not quite glossy, not quite matte), but their behaviour shows just how clever birds can be. You’ll often see drongos using larger species like elephants or giraffe as beaters. Their strides stir insects from the grass and the acrobatic drongo will swoop between their legs to grab fleeing grasshoppers, mantids and the like. The same agility is used to drive birds of prey away, and many a hapless eagle has been made to feel like a winged brick as it is harassed from above, below and the side. In Australia, calling someone a drongo means you think they’re a bit of an idiot, but the joke is on Australians because this bird is anything but daft.

4. Impalas

The most conspicuous of animals is often overlooked due to its abundance. Yet it’s worth asking your guide why are they so common. Is it their flexitarian diet? Their parasite removing lower teeth? Liberal approach to breeding? It’s heady stuff.



5. Invertebrates

Many people come on safari hoping to witness some mammal on mammal savagery (lions taking down a buffalo and leopards wrestling with impalas spring to mind), but if you want to see remorseless action, go micro. The world of insects and arachnids has created almost as many bizarre and brutal ways of doing each other in as Game of Thrones. Dung beetles provide hours of fascination and also, some bugs are quite pretty – spider hunting wasps and yellow pansy butterflies, we’re looking at you.



6. Warthogs

Why doesn’t anyone stop for warthogs more than once? Is it our obsession with conventional beauty? Drop your prejudices and spend some real time with warthogs and I guarantee you’ll fall in love. Particularly if it’s December when they have their babies - they look like little pork sausages with legs and are hysterical when they get excited.

7. Hornbills

Apart from their well-known and nifty nesting habits, hornbills are characterful birds which often develop mutualistic relationships with species like the dwarf mongoose (another reason to watch them); or klepto-parasitic relationships with camp managers, constantly stealing anything set out for afternoon tea. These busy omnivores will often be your first indication of something interesting going on, as they are particularly vocal when they find a threat like a bird of prey or a snake.



KHWAI PRIVATE RESERVE — OKAVANGO DELTA

A 200,000-hectare area of pristine wilderness in the northern reaches of the famous Okavango Delta, Khwai is one of the most beautifully iconic landscapes in Botswana. Mopane clusters jostle for space with riverine forest, pretty waterholes dot the floodplains, and waterways wind their way across the landscape from the mighty Khwai River. On the ground, we have partnered with the local communities and the Khwai Development Trust, and proceeds from staying at any of our camps in the reserve go straight back into local conservation and empowerment projects.

TULUDI



SABLE ALLEY



THE JACKAL & HIDE



HYENA PAN



SKYBEDS



TULUDI

Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana

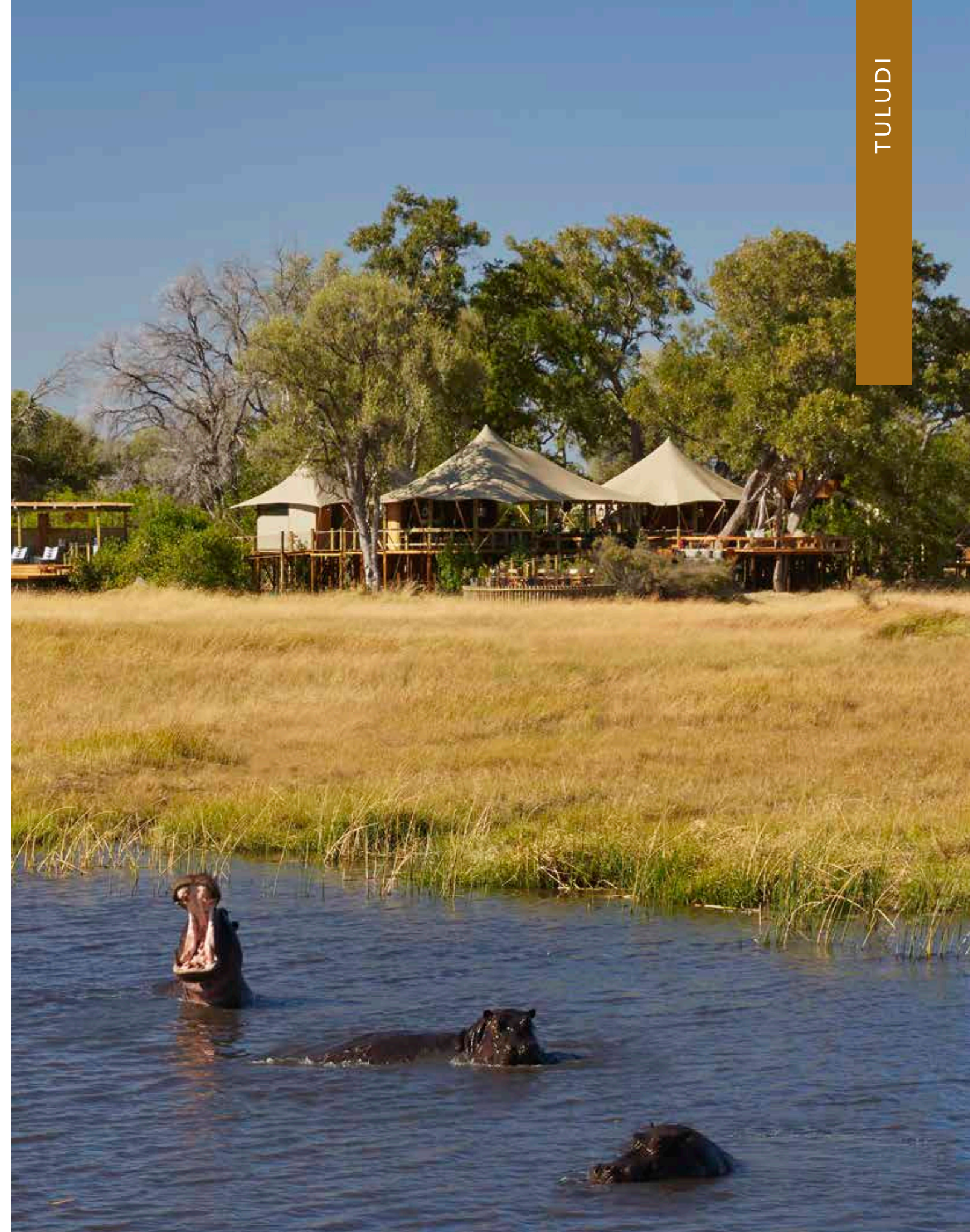
If you've been forever dreaming of an iconic Okavango Delta experience, then end your search with Tuludi. Seven, tree-house style rooms are shaded by the boughs of cool Leadwood trees, sophisticated interiors mix the contemporary with the traditional, and airy spaces are filled with maps, botanicals and treasures from around the area. The result? An exclusive oasis that you'll be delighted to return to after a day exploring the extraordinary ecosystem.

DON'T MISS

- Spending some time in your room. With over 100 square-metres of space, a private plunge pool, and those incredible views, it might even be hard to tear yourself away.

ONE MORE THING :

The name 'Tuludi' is a Tswana word that describes the colours or markings of a leopard. And what's that got to do with our camp, we hear you cry? The day that our partners in Khwai set out to find a spot to build Tuludi, they found themselves camping in a grove of enormous leadwood trees. With their low-hanging boughs and shady leaves the trees are the first choice for leopards and lo and behold, a beautiful female walked straight past them after only a few minutes. Later, as the sun began to drop, the rays created a stunning, dappled 'tuludi' pattern on the ground all around them – and it was at that moment that they knew this was the spot for Tuludi.



SABLE ALLEY

Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana

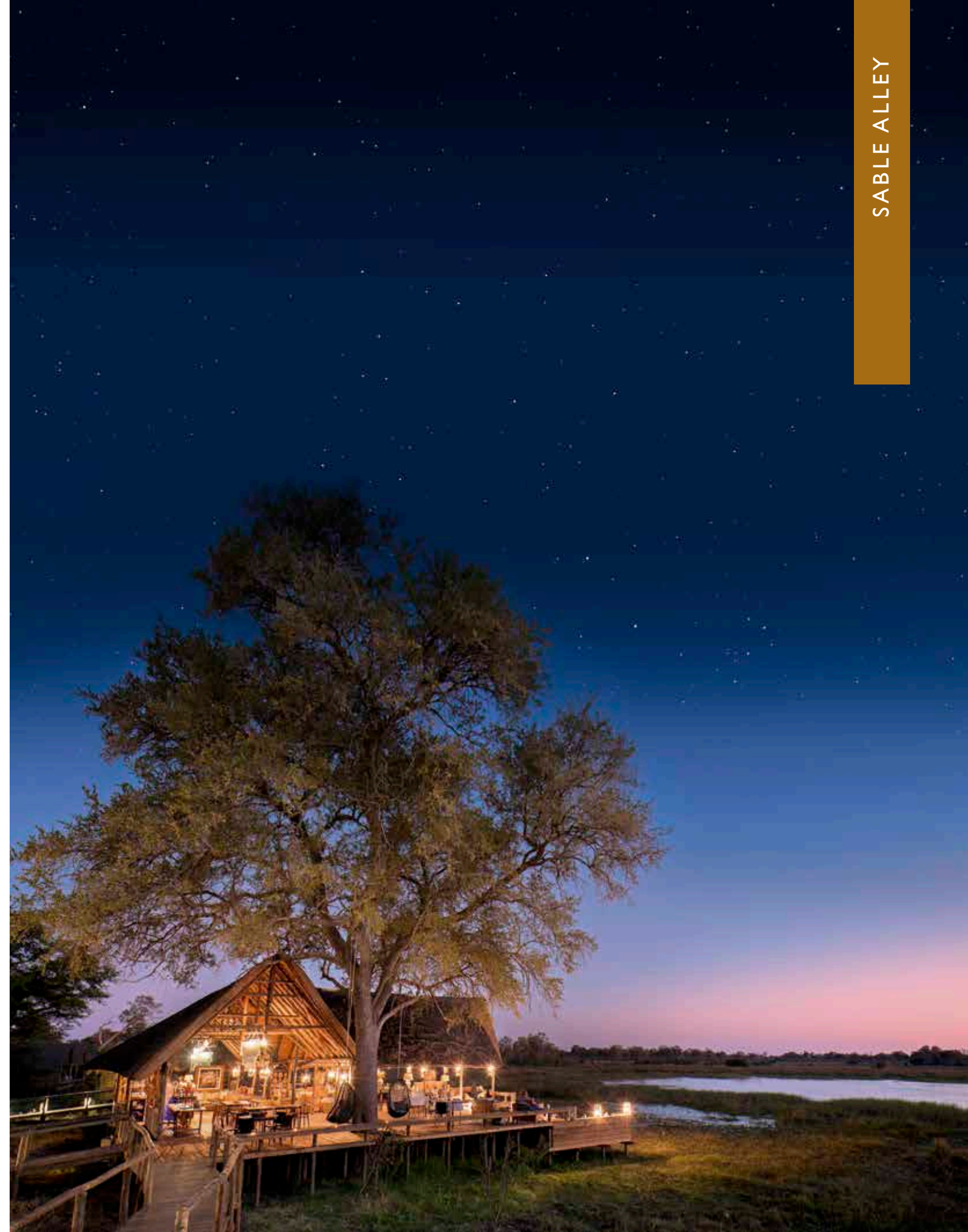
Sable Alley is a piece of light, bright and beautiful luxury amid the game-rich floodplains of Khwai. Located on the banks of a lily-covered lagoon, home to snorting hippo and a favourite drinking spot for elephant and buffalo, the big game quite literally comes to you here. But as tempting as it is to stay in camp, venture out you should, for Khwai offers an exclusive safari experience, jam-packed with wildlife - and Sable Alley allows you to do it in style.

DON'T MISS

- Trying out all the activities on offer, from water-based game viewing in mokoros or by boat, to traditional game drives and walking safaris.
- Sampling the delights of The Gin Bar as the sun dips below the horizon.
- Waking up to the sounds of the wildlife in the lagoon just beyond the tent flaps.

ONE MORE THING :

At Sable, we allow a maximum of seven guests per vehicle and only three vehicles are allowed at any sighting meaning there's not an overcrowded game drive in sight.



“WHAT COULD BE A MORE REFRESHING SUNDOWNER THAN A CRISP **GIN AND TONIC**, WITH A GIN TASTING AT THE BAR TO FOLLOW? ”



GIN IS THE THING JUST ADD **TONIC**

IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO THAT **GIN** WAS MOST COMMONLY KNOWN AS '**MOTHER'S RUIN**', and associated with women weeping streams of mascara into a glass of Gordon's, or hitting the Bombay before breakfast. So how did this housewife's tippie become Africa's hippest drink, being washed down throughout the continent and demanding its own bar at camps such as Sable Alley?



Much of the gin taking Africa (and its tonic) by storm is made in the Western Cape of South Africa, where artisanal gins have become competitive, innovative and delicious. This has much to do with the fact that the area is home to the Cape Floral Kingdom in which fynbos reigns supreme, offering up myriad aromas, tastes and even colours (more on that later).

Gin is made from grain and is then re-distilled with botanicals, and crucially, juniper berries. It's the taste of juniper that distinguishes the spirit as gin, but it's in the side show of botanicals that the Cape Floral Kingdom really gets to kick its heels up and show off its wares, thus giving rise to an African gin revolution.

"Africa lends itself to the consumption of great gin – in great quantities," laughs Allister Kreft, the man behind beverage distributor Under The Influence. "We are blessed on this continent to have a rich biodiversity in plants, and many of these are used in a sustainable way in African gins. Luckily you need a microscopic amount of botanicals to infuse a batch of gin."

At the helm of the continent's gin trend was Inverroche Distillery in Stilbaai, who create gins from distinct fynbos areas such as limestone rock fynbos, coastal dune fynbos and mountain fynbos. The founder of the distillery, Lorna Scott, was actually the mayor of Stilbaai, so knew it well, and by teaming up with a pair of botanists was able to whittle down the 9,000 species of local plant to those that would work best in gin. As a former mayor, Lorna's sense of community is strong and Inverroche proudly invests in its community. Ironical that a drink once known as mother's ruin should now bring so much hope to families.

Cruxland Gin draws inspiration from a little further north than the Cape Floral Kingdom meanwhile, using the rare Kalahari truffle along with rooibos and honeybush to infuse their gin. Rooibos is also the order of the day at the Cape Town Gin Co. who have used the plant to infuse one of their gins to a tasty and rouged effect. Up in Namibia's Walvis Bay Desolate Gin uses Namibia Devil's Claw to flavour their offering, whilst the ocean plays her part to dazzling effect in the gins of A Mari who serve up both an Indian and Atlantic Ocean gin, each of which is distilled with its respective ocean water, inspired by South Africa's Southern Peninsula where the two meet.

It's not just the flavours of Africa that make her gins stand out, for they can be quite a colourful bunch too. Take for example Six Dogs Blue which is made in the South African town of Worcester. This decidedly blue gin (thanks to the inclusion of blue pea) turns to a pink hue when tonic is added, making it an instant conversation starter. Or Musgrave Pink Gin which is infused with rose water in Cape Town.

With both looks and flavour on their side, Africa's offerings are taking the craft gin world by storm, and most importantly, are out in the wildest corners of the bush doing sterling work. Sable Alley in Botswana's Khwai Private Reserve has long been a devotee of the juniper infused thirst quencher, and boasts its very own gin bar full of South Africa's finest. What could be a more refreshing sundowner than a crisp gin and tonic, with a gin tasting at the bar to follow?

It's not only Sable Alley's guests who are benefiting from the popularity of gin in Africa, so too are the animals of the bush.

Our very own founding father, safari maverick and conservationist extraordinaire, Colin Bell has thrown his clout behind one gin to rule them all. Rhino Gin has been developed from a unique blend of rare Renosterveld fynbos to create a gin that captures the quality of South Africa's endangered flora and fauna. Renosterbos (rhinoceros grass) is at the heart of the blend, and 100% of all the proceeds go to conservation initiatives that address the causes and consequences of wildlife crime in South Africa. "In the Western Cape of South Africa we are blessed with the fynbos biome, and many of these herbaceous and characterful plants make for interesting additions to gin," adds Allister Kreft. "This is also true for Rhino Gin, which has a sustainable, and tiny amount of the Renosterveld fynbos in it."

Forget 'mother's ruin', this is Africa, where gin does good.



Visit Sable Alley and our very own gin bar in Botswana's Khwai Private Reserve. Prices start from USD 695 pppn

THE JACKAL & HIDE

Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana

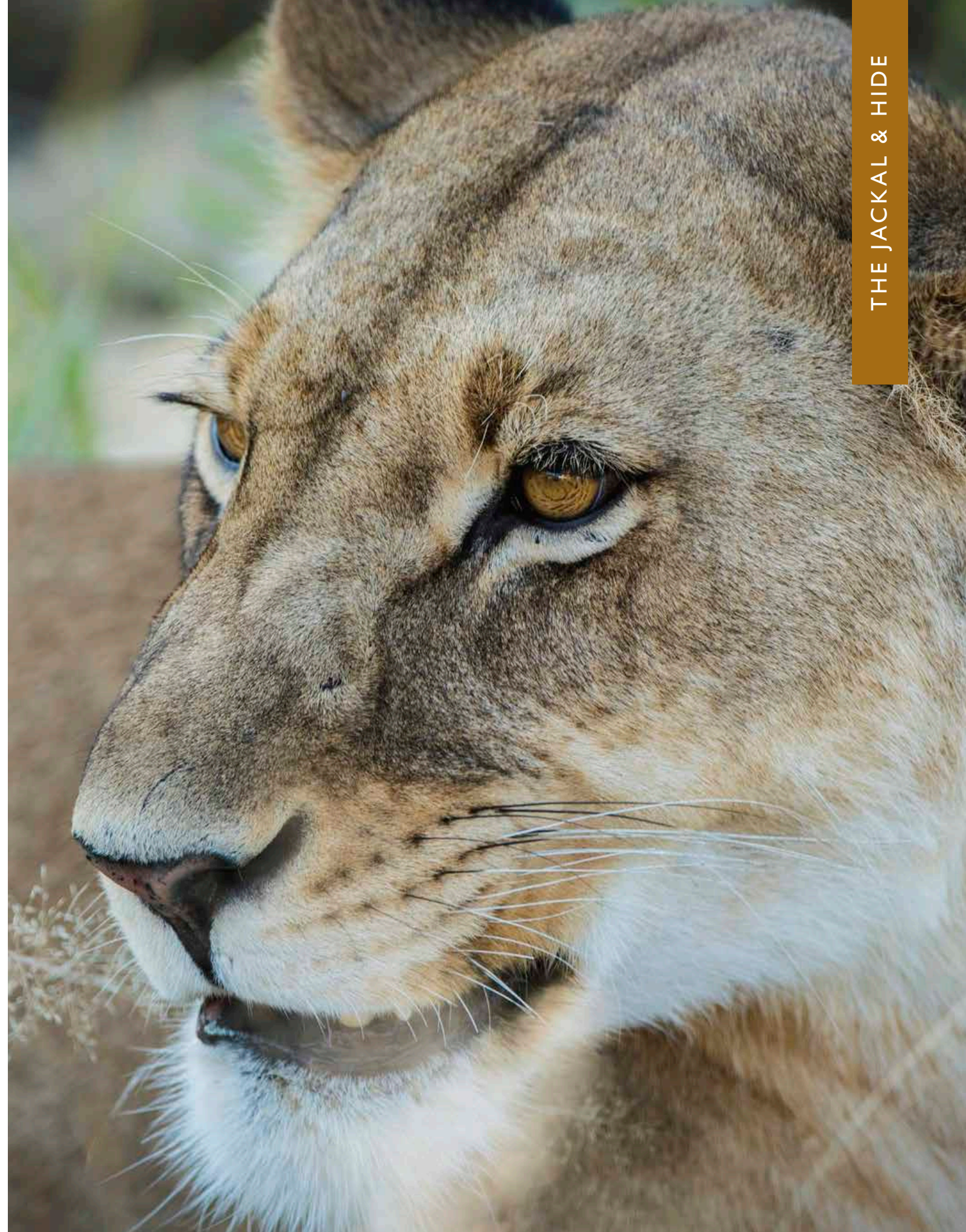
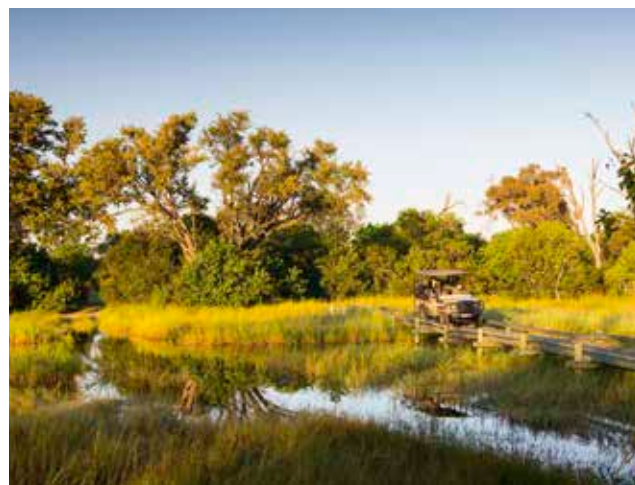
A relaxed hideout in the heart of Khwai, The Jackal & Hide joined the wild and wonderful world of Natural Selection at the beginning of 2019. With only eight, Meru-style tents, it's an intimate camp with an emphasis on comfort, hospitality and simple style and the old adage of "it's got everything you need and nothing you don't" couldn't be truer. Further afield, the safari is a classic Okavango Delta experience down to a tee from the landscape to the activities to the wildlife.

DON'T MISS

- Retreating to the sunken lounge at the end of the day and watching the animals grazing ahead, sundowner in hand.
- Floating through the waterways of Khwai on a traditional mokoro safari or visiting one of the spectacular ground-level hides for wildlife encounters of a different kind.

ONE MORE THING :

Khwai has an excellent reputation for hiding the rarer species of the animal kingdom, including wild dogs, serval cats, honey badgers and the elusive pangolin. Binos at the ready!



HYENA PAN

Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana

Quirky, fun and definitely very cool, Hyena Pan is an affordable base in Khwai. The eight tents look out over a watery lagoon of the same name and in the morning, you'll wake up to elephant ambling past, spend your siesta watching herds splash and snort, and fall asleep to antelope grazing outside your canvas walls. This isn't a place for those looking for opulence and extravagance; it's a piece of big-game Africa, where the wildlife encounters are authentic, intimate and always wild.

DON'T MISS

- Wildlife-watching from the comfort of your room. Located next to the only permanent source of water for miles around, the animals really do come to you.
- Game driving across the shimmering plains and along the Khwai River looking for predators, elephant, buffalo, and hordes of plains game.

ONE MORE THING :

Coming nose-to-tusk (safely!) with the elephants at the ground-level hide at Hyena Pan is an experience you'll remember forever - and one that will have your heart racing.



SKYBEDS

Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana

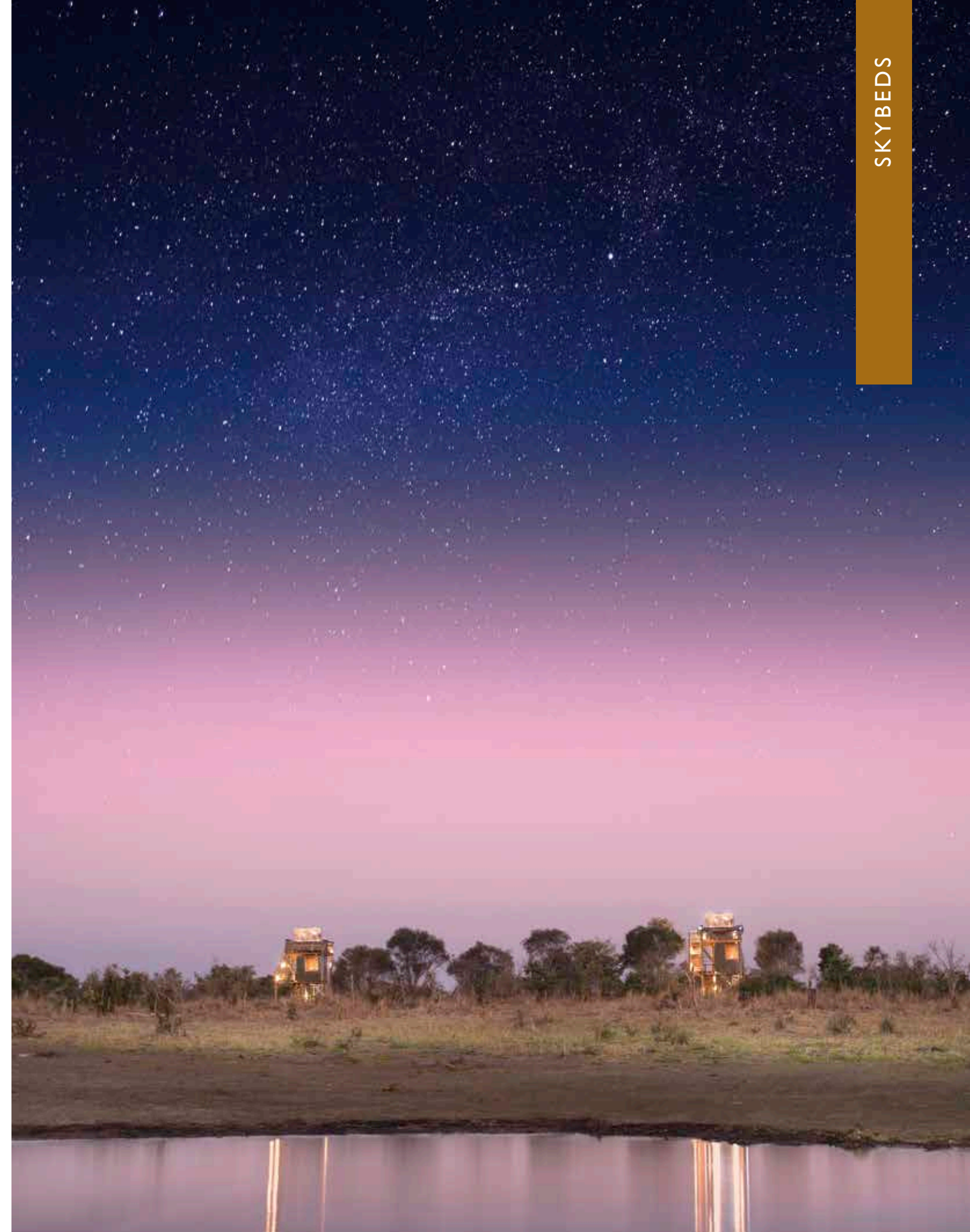
Offering a truly unique way to spend time in the bush are our fabulous Skybeds. Located deep within the Khwai Private Reserve, this is no ordinary safari camp. Instead, each "room" is actually a three-story raised platform, overlooking the wildlife-spotted plains. Charmingly rustic yet perfectly stylish, you'll find a bathroom on the first floor, a dressing area in the middle, and the ultimate cherry on the top floor, an enormous double bed, draped in white linens and a feather duvet, and completely open to the stars.

DON'T MISS

- Looking down! The Skybeds overlook a prolific waterhole and in one night, we've spotted lion, hyena, wild dog and elephant...
- Looking up! The sky is your very own celestial theatre show.

ONE MORE THING :

Sleeping under the stars in the heart of the bush isn't something you do every day, and we've kept the experience as exclusive as possible with only three Skybeds available.





WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN KHWAI

WHAT KHWAI PRIVATE RESERVE IS DOING FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH



1. LEOPARD POPULATION DYNAMICS AND CONSERVATION IN THE KHWAI AREA

PARTNER : Botswana Predator Conservation Trust, the University of New South Wales and the Okavango Research Institute

Little is known about the leopard population on the edge of the Moremi Reserve, except that the cats have a safe haven within the large tracts of mopane woodland in the area but are not tolerated in villages and on farms. Within the Khwai Private Reserve, we have an opportunity to determine territory locations, sizes, overlap, and threats to leopards residing well inside the private reserve versus those at shorter distances from villages. This research will not only inform us on survival strategies and intraspecific interactions of leopard in this area but also initiate surveying of the unexplored northern reaches of this reserve.

Researchers have been surveying the herbivore and bird populations in Khwai Private Reserve across different seasons looking at population sizes and distribution. Furthermore, alongside the Okavango Research Institute, the team has been busy testing and developing guidelines on efficient surveying techniques that can be broadly implemented by government, researchers, and land managers across Botswana.



2. HERBIVORE AND BIRD SURVEYING IN KHWAI PRIVATE RESERVE

PARTNER : Round River Conservation Studies / Okavango Research Institute



3.

CONNECTING CONSERVATION CLASSROOMS: EDUCATING BOTSWANA'S CHILDREN AND BOTSWANA'S YOUNG VISITORS ON THE VALUE OF WILDLIFE, SELF RESPECT AND RESPECT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

PARTNER : Coaching for Conservation

Coaching for Conservation (C4C) is a conservation outreach programme for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, which fosters self-respect, respect for each other and respect for wildlife and the environment. Using the incredible characteristics of different species, the programme inspires learning in fun, active games from soccer to tag to ring toss. Natural Selection has partnered with C4C, not only to support its work in rural areas, but to create visitor "classrooms" in our lodges where young visitors from overseas can partake in this integrated childrens conservation program. Young visitors can then bring Africa's conservation messages and the C4C online platform back to their overseas classrooms and begin a long-term relationship with Botswana, its wildlife and its local children.

Each year, the residents of Khwai move into the nearby wildlife area to harvest grass for building and selling. The grass cutting takes place over three months and harvesting groups can consist of more than 100 people of all ages. In the past, the villagers arrived with very little food and even brought domestic dogs to deter predators from their shelters. Furthermore, harvested grass often stood uncollected for months due to a lack of transport.

In response, Natural Selection and Khwai Private Reserve began an initiative to support harvesters by providing safe, tented accommodation, food and transportation. KPR rangers work with the harvesters on how to maintain a low footprint with minimal disturbance to wildlife and future harvesting areas. As well as teaching sustainable harvesting practices, this assistance also acts a platform where ideas can be shared between land-use partners.



4. KHWAI VILLAGE GRASS HARVESTING, BOTSWANA

PARTNER : Khwai Private Reserve

WATER FOR ELEPHANTS

AT THE ELEPHANT HIDE IN KHWAI PRIVATE RESERVE

The phrase, “up close and personal game viewing”, was simply made for our underground elephant hide in Khwai Private Reserve. Not only do you have ankle-level views of the ellies as they jostle and slosh for Botswana’s most precious resource – water – it’s also open on all four sides, surrounding you by wildlife living their lives as if you weren’t there at all...

HERE, GUIDE **ISAAC TAPA** TELLS US WHY THE HIDE IS THE STAND-OUT EXPERIENCE FOR HIM (AND HIS GUESTS!).

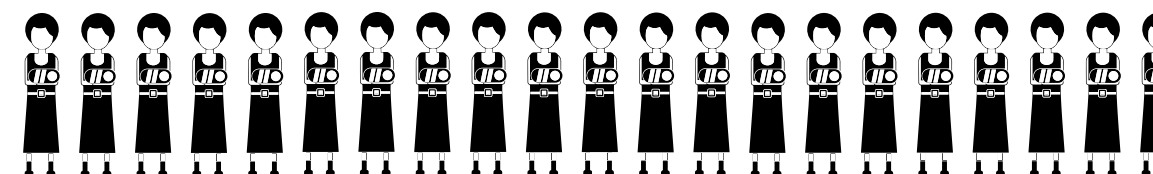
“The first time I visited the hide, I had a phenomenal time. There were lots of elephant cows and bulls and at one point, some eland came to drink as well. Now we see elephants, zebras, elands, impalas, greater kudu and giraffes almost every day and recently we have even had hyena. The best time of day to visit the hide is the afternoon because of the beautiful, golden light – it’s perfect for photographers – but sunset is also good. I am lucky enough to visit almost every day so it’s hard to choose my favourite time! Photography is my hobby and the hide is great for practising. I have been framing other species drinking underneath the elephants and I love capturing the golden light. I also love to watch and photograph giraffes drinking. It’s absolutely spectacular seeing them display their legs as they drink.”



COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN KHWAI

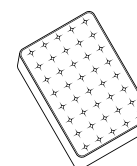
SINGAKWENZA (“TOYS TO WASTE”) WORKSHOP

The Singakwenza Workshops show parents, educators and community workers how to make their own toys and teaching materials from recyclables – egg cartons, cereal boxes, plastic bags and bottles – teaching valuable life skills but also providing effective waste solutions.



21 teen mothers and elders from the Khwai village were trained this year.

SUPPORTING THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED



x 60 In February 2019, 60 mattresses were donated to the elderly and the disabled in Khwai village.

KHWAI PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER SALARY

Khwai Private Reserve pays the salaries for **2** pre-school teachers to provide an important head start for the youth of the area.



SPECIALIST GUIDE LICENSE TRAINING OF KHWAI VILLAGE RESIDENTS



Natural Selection are training Khwai village residents in order to obtain their specialist guide license. They will then be in a position to pursue a career in eco-tourism and if possible, be incorporated into the lodges in the Khwai Private Reserve.

FEED A CHILD PROGRAMME

27 Children (aged between 4 and 6) are fed on a daily basis, **7** days a week at the daily feeding programme at Khwai Village Primary School.



MAKGADIKGADI PANS —

A haunting and intriguing landscape, the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans form a large part of the Kalahari Basin and the shimmering, salt-baked landscape is iconic in its beauty. The pan is one of the largest in the world and can be easily seen from space. With iridescent horizons that bend to infinity, this is a place that defines isolation but dig a little deeper below the surface and you'll discover the people and the wildlife that call the seemingly inhospitable area home. In fact, the three camps in our one million-acre concession offer the widest variety of activities anywhere in Africa and you can enjoy game drives, quad biking, horseback safaris, fat biking, nature walks with the San bushmen, meerkat visits, sleep outs, birding, botanising and a whole lot more...

JACK'S CAMP



SAN CAMP



CAMP KALAHARI



The BRAND NEW

JACK'S CAMP

Makgadikgadi Pans, Botswana

One of the most legendary and iconic camps in Southern Africa, Jack's Camp was founded by explorer Jack Bousfield in the 1960s. The camp sits in a striking spot on the edge of Botswana's Makgadikgadi Pans, gazing over glittering salt pans and shimmering expanses of sun-scorched earth. It's an oasis of style and old-world glamour in a landscape of savage beauty and more elegant and enchanting than you could imagine in such a remote landscape.

DON'T MISS

- Discovering the magic of the salt pans with the Zu/hoasi Bushmen on a bush walk.
- A siesta spent in the swimming pool pavilion, the only one of its kind in Africa.
- A quad bike safari to the incredible Kubu Island.
- The spectacle of 50,000 zebra and wildebeest migrating through the area from January to April.

ONE MORE THING :

We are delighted to announce that after a brief closure in October 2019, Jack's Camp will reopen in May 2020, refreshed and rebuilt! The brand-new camp will pay homage to the much-loved 1940s campaign style and the iconic interiors will remain, with the addition of new textiles and intricate fabrics. The rooms will be made larger and will include air conditioning and private plunge pools that will both be solar powered. The main area will also be made larger; the swimming pool pavilion will have a new sun deck, and a spa tent will be added.



SAN CAMP

Makgadikgadi Pans, Botswana

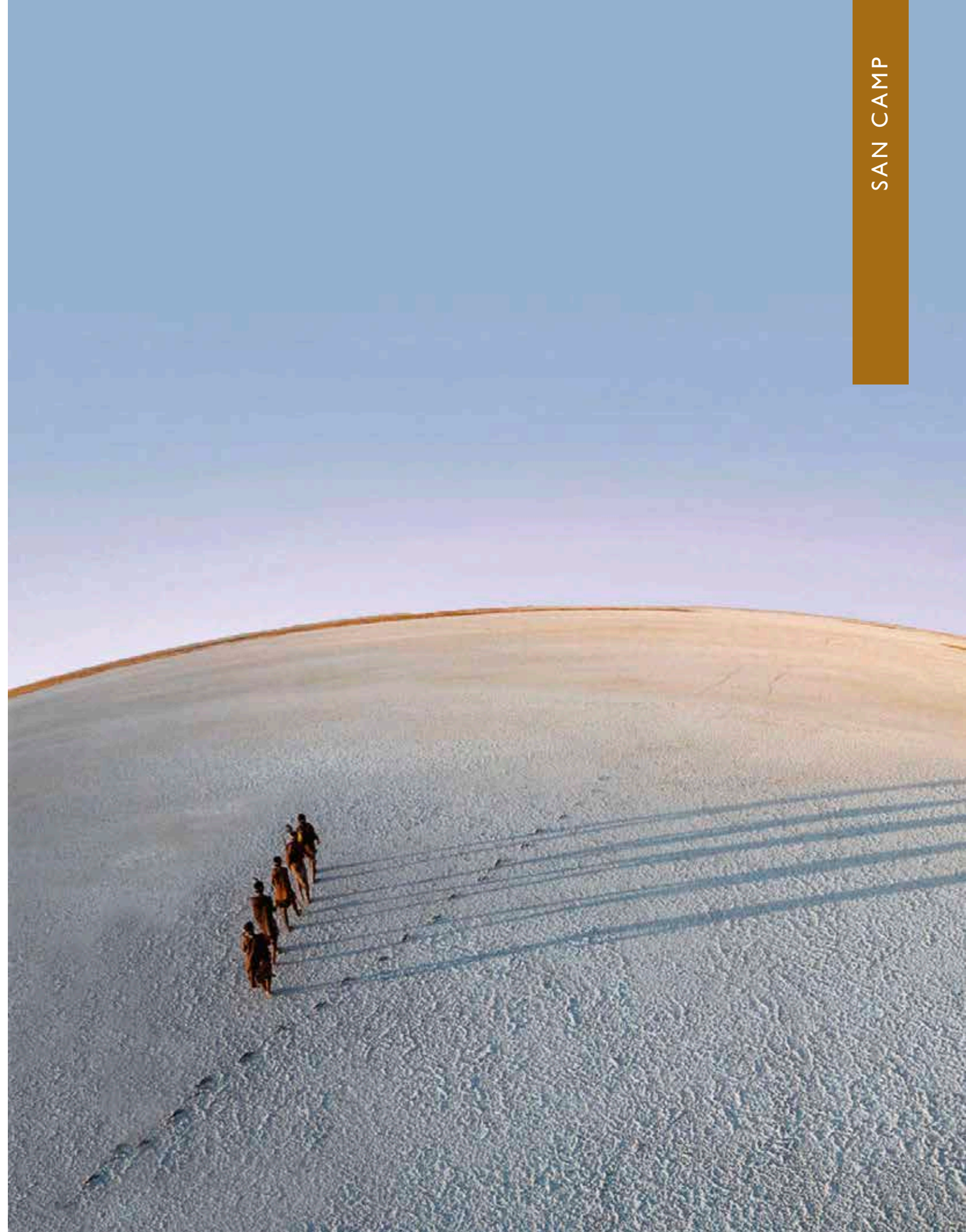
Seven, billowing white tents, shaded by desert palms and surrounded by a thousand acres of shimmering, sparkling nothingness. This is San Camp, an impossibly romantic hideaway on the edge of the Nwetwe Pan in the Makgadikgadi. Here, the magic is in the minimalism, both at the camp and in the mysterious desert landscape. You can forget the tourist crowds and over-stuffed 4x4s too; it's just you, the wildlife, and a handful of local San Bushmen, waiting to share their secrets with you.

DON'T MISS

- Spending an afternoon in the yoga tent and absorbing the compelling energy of the pans.
- Game drives to see the unique desert wildlife, visits to the cheeky meerkats and walks with the Zu'Hoasi Bushmen.
- Watching the stars unfold after a quad bike safari to the remote Kubu Island.
- An evening sundowner accompanied by 360-degree views of the pans.

ONE MORE THING :

This is a place that's a million miles from glowing screens and fruit-themed devices and one that will get under your skin in more ways than you can imagine.



OPINION :

The first people of Africa — Written by : Richard Holmes

Standing with your feet in the powdery sands of Botswana, perhaps gazing out over the pans of the Makgadikgadi National Park, it's easy to imagine that time has stopped. Out here the silence can be deafening, the landscape stretching uninterrupted to the horizon. It is a corner of Africa little changed for thousands of years.

And yet through those millennia, the indigenous San people have roamed, hunted and danced beneath these southern stars. The genetic diversity of the San has established these first people of southern Africa as the oldest continuous population of humans on the continent. And by extension, on earth, their genetic fingerprint touching more than one hundred thousand years of human history.

Travellers love to joke that the West invented clocks, but Africa owns the time. If that holds true, it's the San people that lay the first claim.

While the ochre sands of the Kalahari Desert – stretching across Botswana, Namibia and South Africa – is the region most commonly associated with the San, it certainly wasn't their only stomping ground.

For thousands of years San communities roamed from the rocky outcrops of the Klein Karoo, just inland from South Africa's famous Garden Route, to the towering peaks of the Drakensberg Mountains. As they moved, following both rain and game, they left their mark in the enigmatic etchings and rock art that still adorn the walls of caves and overhangs across southern Africa.

One of the most impressive rock art sites in the region is the Tsodilo Hills in north-west Botswana. Today the site preserves more than 4500 individual rock paintings stretching from the Stone Age to the 19th century.

Revered as one of the world's leading rock art sites, these quartzite outcrops also reveal evidence of human habitation stretching back more than 100 000 years, to a time when today's dry Makgadikgadi Pans were a vast inland lake filled with water fowl and fish. Take a moment to imagine that, as you stand with your feet in the crusted Pans while out on a quad-bike safari.

Tsodilo offers a remarkable journey back in time, and it's a place still revered by the San and local communities as a sacred cultural landscape. 'The Louvre of the Desert' is how many have described it, so little wonder it was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2001.

It's tempting to romanticise the notion of the proudly nomadic hunter-gatherer, wandering unhindered and leaving their art in lonely overhangs. But the history of the San is woven through with both unbridled freedom and conflict, though rarely of their own making. Over the millennia their nomadic lifestyle has been eroded by migration and colonialism, limiting their ancestral rangelands and forcing many indigenous San into marginal settlements, farm labour and urban unemployment.

Today, an estimated 100 000 Bushmen remain, but only small communities in isolated pockets live close to their traditional lands, their

rich heritage and shared cultural memory slowly fading away.

At Natural Selection, we believe it is a heritage worth celebrating, and sharing. At San Camp, Jack's Camp and Meno a Kwena cultural walks with local Bushmen families are available to guests interested in learning more about this ancient culture.

During these fascinating bush walks the Bushmen explain how their ancestors survived in this harsh environment. If you've ever wondered how to dig for Kalahari turnip lily bulbs, or start a fire using nothing but a pair of sticks, this is your opportunity.

"Most of our guests come to Botswana to experience the country's remarkable wildlife and landscapes, but few realise what a rich cultural history the country has to offer," explains Dave van Smeerdijk, co-founder of Natural Selection. "By facilitating these cultural immersions with the local Zu/'hoasi Bushmen we hope to introduce our guests to an entirely new aspect of the country, and help preserve these ancient traditions. After spending just a few hours in the company of these remarkable people, our guests walk away awed by their history, resourcefulness and innate connection with the landscape."

That deep and unrelenting connection to their environment has long been a hallmark of the San people. These were people living off the land, but also in harmony with it, understanding that human and habitat need to co-exist, and to be mindful of what the land can provide.

And, crucially, to be thankful to the land for sharing its resources. As author Laurens van der Post observed in 'The Lost World Of The Kalahari', "ever since the days of the first Bushman no hunter had ever killed an Eland without thanking it with a dance."

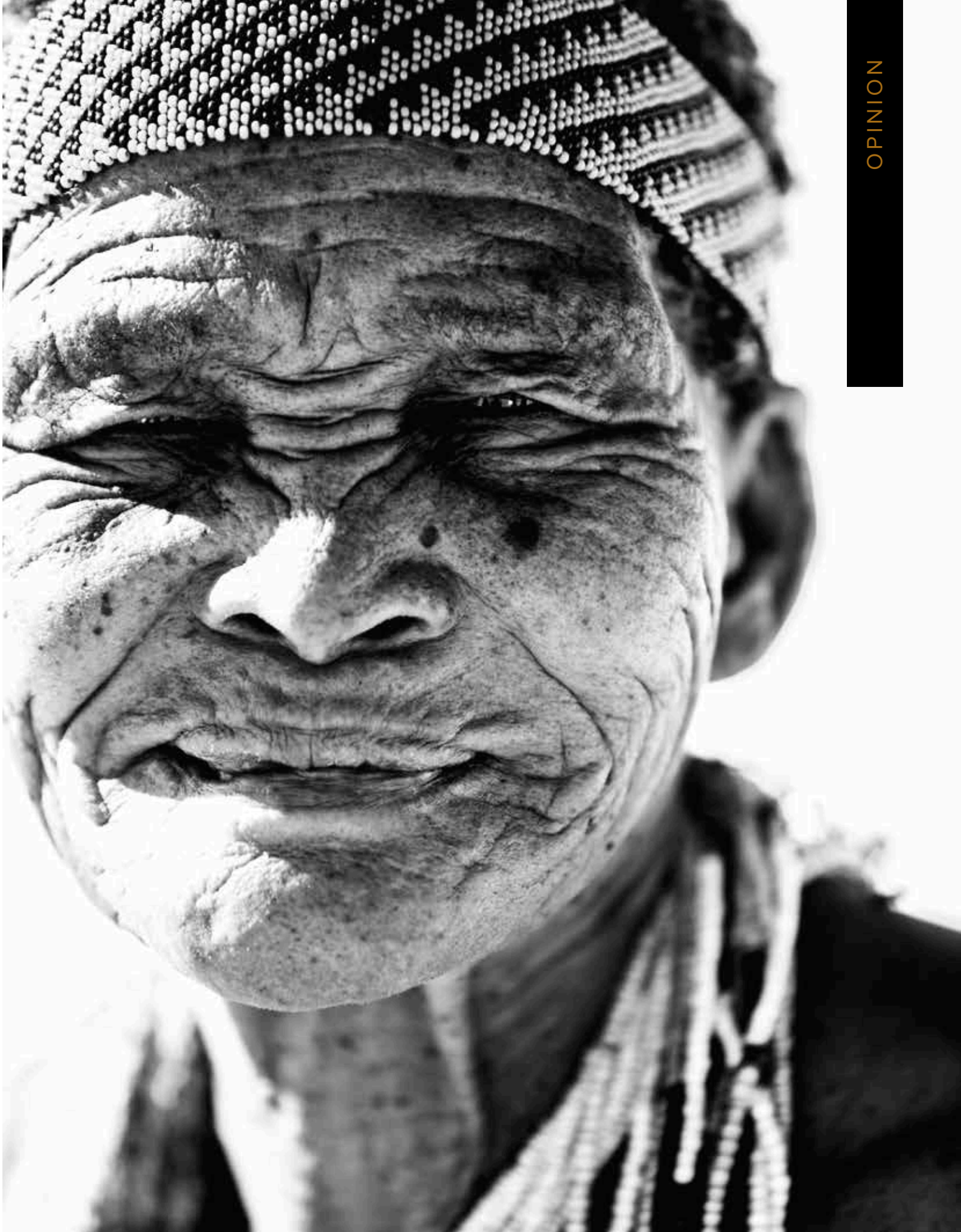
These hefty antelope – eland bulls weigh in at around 1000-kilograms – provided enormous amounts of meat and fat, and a successful hunt could sustain a San community for many days. But more importantly, the eland is a sacred animal for the Bushmen and is believed to be the physical manifestation of /Kaggen, the creator of the world in San folklore. The largest antelope in southern Africa, it was also the first animal created by /Kaggen and all other animals are believed to be servants to the eland.

In Botswana today, eland are found only in small pockets of land under conservation. This sacred antelope may be fenced off from its ancient ranges and migratory routes, and yet it remains an indelible part of the landscape. Not unlike the Bushmen that have worshipped it as /Kaggen since the beginning of time.

"What's in a name? Khoisan? San? Bushmen? It can be confusing to know how to refer to these first people of Southern Africa. While the name Bushmen derives from 'bosjesman', as the early Dutch settlers described them, for some this word is seen as derogatory."

But today many San people claim the name Bushmen with pride, as evidence of their ancient roots in Africa. Even the origins of the word San are unclear, though it is believed to be a word from the agro-pastoralist KhoeKhoe people, referring to foragers and those without cattle. In Botswana you may also see Bushmen referred to as Basarwa, while other indigenous San proudly claim their individual clan names, whether /Xam, ||Xegwi, N||nǃe or Zu'hoasi.

Meet the Bushmen of the Makgadikgadi at Jack's Camp, San Camp or Camp Kalahari. Prices start from \$590 per person, per night at Camp Kalahari.



CAMP KALAHARI

Makgadikgadi Pans, Botswana

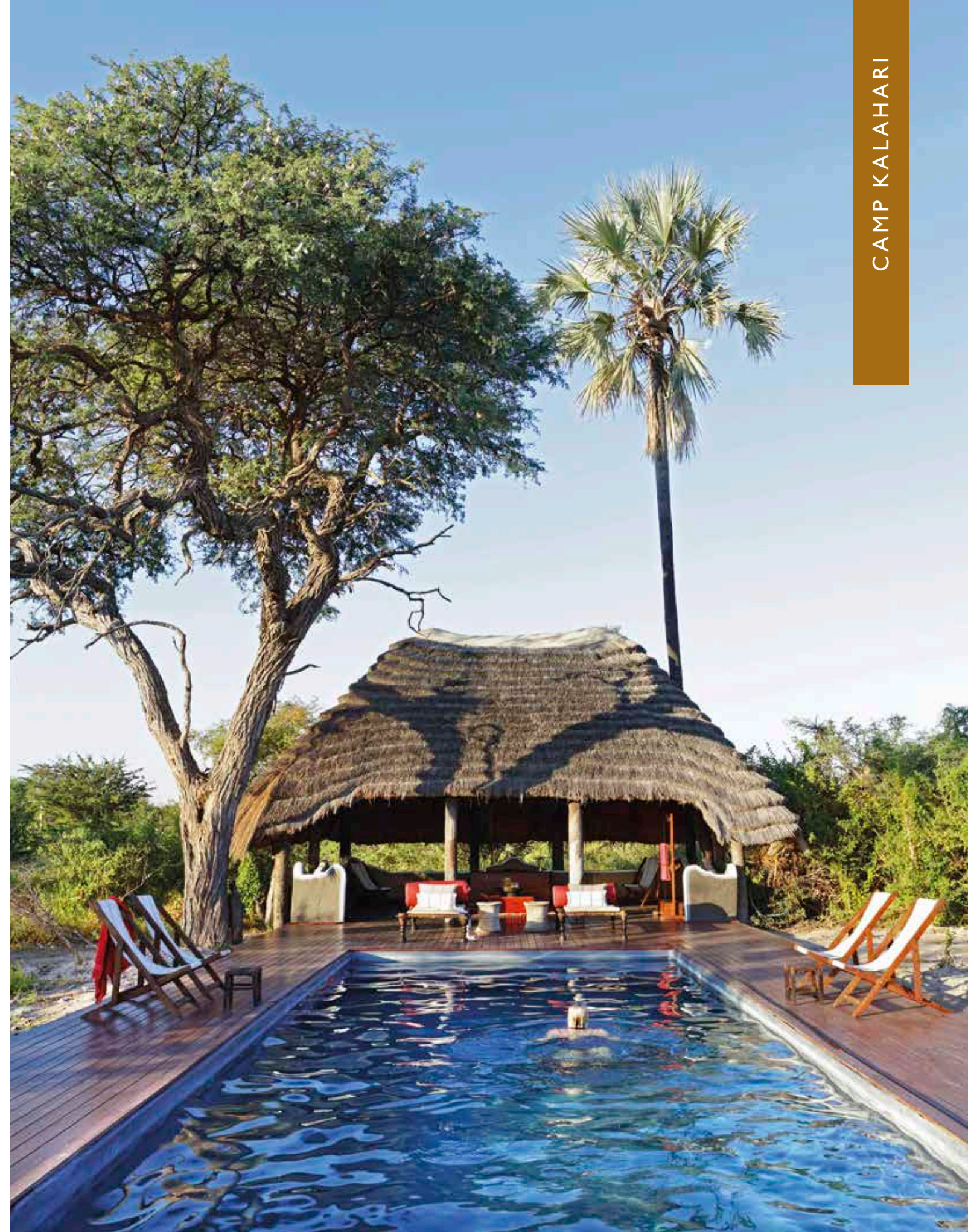
The laid-back little sister of Jack's and San, Camp Kalahari is an understated and affordable base in the heart of the great Kalahari. Set amongst the waving palms and acacia trees of Brown Hyena Island, the 12 funky Meru tents are perfect for families, groups and couples, and are an ideal base for discovering the charms of the desert and the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, a landscape that's as surreal as it is sublime and as mysterious as it is magical.

DON'T MISS

- Meeting the 'Kalahari cool cats', the habituated meerkat family who like nothing more than to use unsuspecting guests as lookout points.
- The blockbuster of activities, from game drives, quad bike safaris, horse riding and bushmen walks.
- Enjoying a lazy siesta by the pool and watching the ellies ambling by.

ONE MORETHING :

Camp Kalahari is a great camp for families. It's unique, fresh and affordable and children from all ages are welcome. There's a dedicated family suite and the diverse range of activities on offer will entertain energetic little ones for hours!



Make way for the ungulates

“

KHUMISO COSMOS RATHIPANA

Programme Director for Round River

One of our biggest success stories is the Makgadikgadi Conservation Programme, which launched with a workshop run by Natural Selection, Botswana Predator Conservation Trust, Round River Conservation Studies, and the Okavango Research Institute. The workshop was aimed at collaborating with local authorities, headmen, researchers and government institutions focusing on the bigger picture of connectivity, landscape corridors and the importance of the Makgadikgadi migration.

”

OPINION :

Restoring Southern Africa’s Greatest Wildlife Migrations

— Written by : Dennis Sizemore

It is simply visceral. Witnessing northern Botswana’s multiplicity of life, it imaginably harkens to our collective savannah beginnings or directly to our childhood fantasies. The lands comprising Botswana’s iconic natural areas, the Greater Okavango Delta, Chobe National Park, the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, and Makgadikgadi and Nxai Pan National Parks have for millennia sustained indigenous peoples, while simultaneously supporting abundant and diverse wildlife populations. Within the conscience of many elder Tswana people, however, is a very recent time when this landscape supported far more, as herds of hundreds of thousands freely moved about this landscape.

Less than fifty years ago, large fences were constructed to crisscross and stretch for hundreds of kilometres across northern Botswana to accommodate European standards for beef production. These so-called veterinarian fences severed migratory routes, resulting in immediate and catastrophic losses of thousands of trapped wildlife. Over time, the remaining and increasingly immobile wildlife populations were believed to be stable, even though they were forced to be ever more reliant to artificial water sources. There is now, however, a growing awareness that the life-sustaining processes of this entire region are in jeopardy. Exacerbated by changing climates, unsustainable livestock numbers, reduced livestock grazing areas and wildlife habitats, the numbers and diversity of wildlife are declining, and agricultural productivity is lessening, whilst conflict between wildlife and the local communities is ever escalating. Presently, there are very few economic incentives for communities to coexist with wildlife. While tourism represents the most viable opportunity for much needed financial assistance. The viability of expanding the tourism industry to benefit local economies is in turn dependent upon increasing and expanding wildlife numbers.

Fortunately, a spectacle recently witnessed by wildlife researchers is providing both hope and a way forward. During 2008–2009, after the removal of a veterinary fence blocking a migration route, 15,000 zebras walked from the Okavango Delta to the Makgadikgadi Pans.

An additional study recorded zebra crossing the Chobe River on Botswana’s border with Namibia and traveling south to Nxai Pan National Park. This movement is the longest large mammal migration documented in Africa, greater than the well-known wildebeest migration of the Serengeti and Masai Mara.

These migrating zebras had not made this journey before, but were simply following the routes of their ancestors. This phenomenon has led some researchers to suggest that the zebra may have ancient migratory routes genetically conserved within their memory. Others point to the zebra’s keen sense of smell and the onset of the rains being the trigger for the now unblocked long trek to the Pans. Regardless, these findings confirm that migratory routes can be utilized again once selected fences are removed.

First focusing in the Makgadikgadi and Nxai Pans, Round River, along with partner organisations Natural Selection and Botswana Predator Conservation Trust, is working to identify the most feasible and useful migratory routes to reconnect this region with Chobe National Park, the Okavango Delta, and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. We also recognize this work as a real opportunity to effectively improve local livelihoods and promote community and wildlife co-existence, whilst simultaneously re-establishing these critical wildlife movements.

Opportunities exist to support sustainable land use for appropriate livestock stocking levels, elevating range management practices, and establishing human/wildlife coexistence practices in livestock and agricultural production areas. In addition, Natural Selection is currently reaching out to other safari companies, seeking ways in which to provide greater community economic well-being, wildlife acceptance and favourable scenarios to promote the return of large-scale wildlife migrations throughout northern Botswana.

THE BOTETI RIVER — MAKGADIKGADI

A beautiful, ephemeral river of swirling pools and meandering channels, the Boteti forms the western boundary of the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. One of the only water sources for many miles, the river is a magnet for thirsty resident wildlife year-round. Then, in April, tens of thousands of zebra complete their journey at the river in an explosion of black and white stripes, followed closely by herds of wildebeest and their accompanying predators. This is Southern Africa's largest mammal migration and a magical time to be in the area.

MENO A KWENA



MENO A KWENA

Boteti River, Botswana

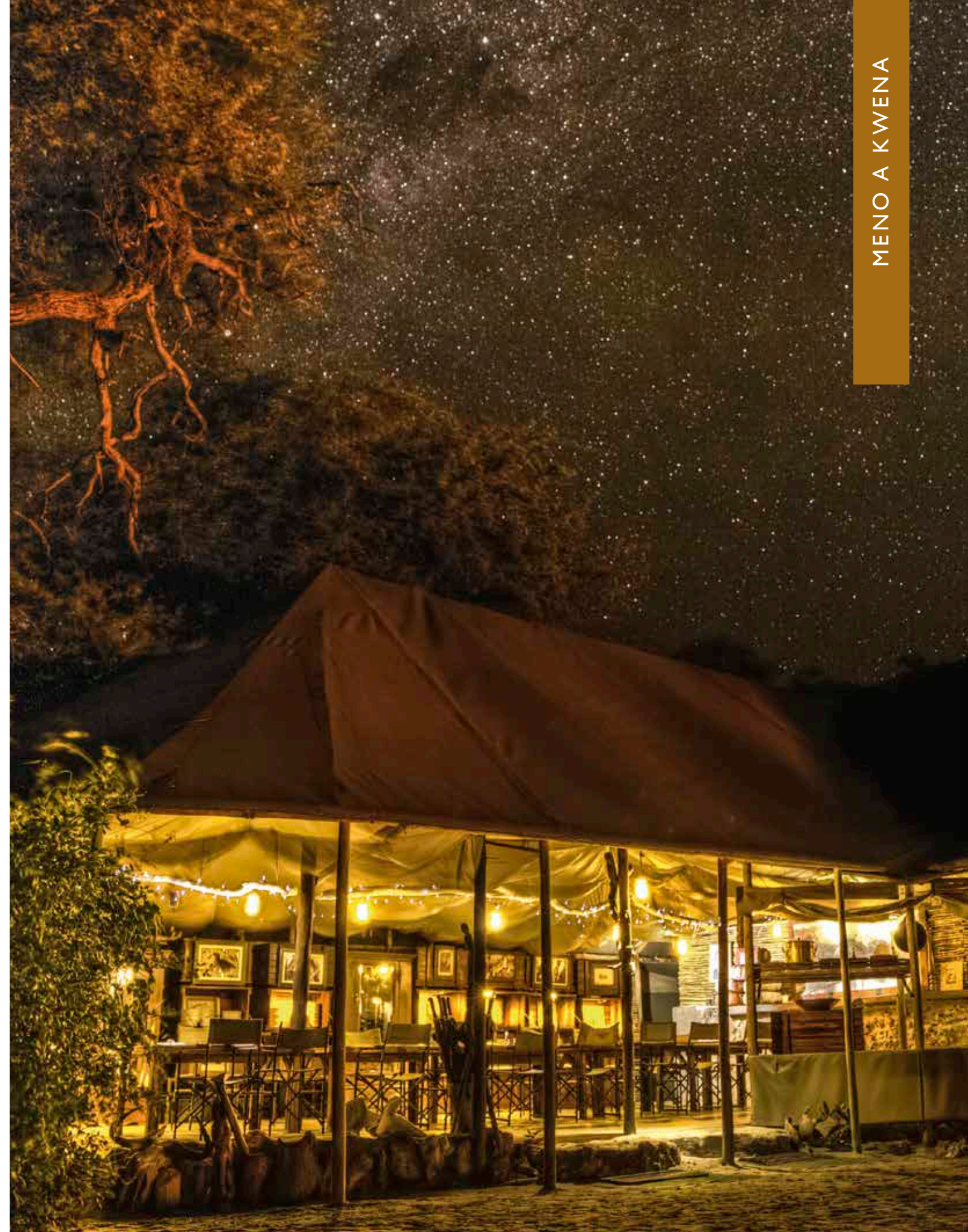
The safari never stops at Meno a Kwena, a hidden gem perched on a rocky clifftop above the Boteti River; a mere 90-minute drive from Maun. The camp was originally used by Southern Africa's legendary explorers and although we've added a few little touches here and there, it's refreshingly simple and full of character. The real treat at Meno, however, is the connection with nature; when an elephant provides your alarm call in the morning and you can game view straight from your private veranda, nothing else really matters.

DON'T MISS

- The chance to see the zebra of Africa's longest mammal migration as they congregate at the river from roughly April to October.
- Spending time with the local Bushmen on a walk or village visit.
- Taking a moment to float in the swimming pool and simply enjoy the magic of being on safari.

ONE MORE THING :

There's a glittering roster of activities to get stuck into but sometimes the best game viewing of all is where you least expect it and at Meno, it's right in front of you, on the banks of the river.





WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN THE BOTETI RIVER

WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON IN THE BOTETI RIVER REGION OF BOTSWANA

MAKGADIKGADI CONSERVATION INITIATIVE: SUPPORTING AFRICA'S LONGEST LARGE MAMMAL MIGRATION

PARTNER : Round River Conservation Studies

Before the 1960s, the area of northern Botswana around the Makgadikgadi National Park and the Kalahari Desert held the longest and possibly the largest migration of zebra and wildebeest in Africa. It was, however, abruptly cut short by land use changes requiring extensive fencing. Amazingly, the migration has re-emerged over the last decade, pushing through old fences and small-hold farms. We aim to un-restrict this movement by working alongside local communities and all stakeholders to develop land use plans that benefit all and allow this epic migration to flourish.

There are an estimated **20,000** zebra migrating in and out of the Makgadikgadi National Park every year.

There are at least **2** main migration routes used by the zebra. One is 500 km long, making it the longest large mammal migration in Africa.

So far in 2019 : We have surveyed **114 km** of park fence and observed **1353** cattle along the fence.

We have identified **83** well-used wildlife crossings. **215** animal burrows counted. We have travelled **439** km to **68** cattle posts and **43** agricultural plots, and mapped locations and boreholes and conducted interviews.

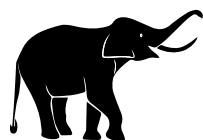


LIVING-WITH-WILDLIFE STRATEGY WORKSHOPS FOR MOREOMAOTO VILLAGE

The villages near Meno a Kwena fall within one of the highest human-wildlife conflict zones of Botswana. In order to help both humans and wildlife, we are working alongside local NGO, Elephants for Africa (E4A), to sponsor a series of workshops focusing on the interpretation of wildlife behaviour as well as looking at viable farming practices such as chilli farming to deter elephants. The long-term goal is to improve livelihoods of all residents living next to Makgadikgadi National Park.

The cattle post workshops ~**20** attendees.

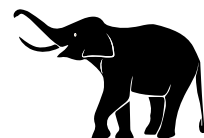
Village-based workshops ~**25** attendees.



In the **1970s** there were *1.3 million* elephants in Africa.

In **2007**, there were an estimated *472,000* elephants left.

In **2013**, this decreased further to *436,000*.

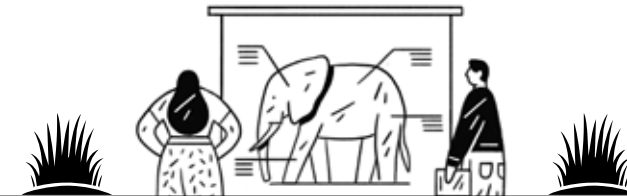


Northern **Botswana** is home to approximately *130,000-150,000* African elephants, the largest population in the world. *70-80%* of the remaining elephant population rely on lands outside of protected areas – land that they must share with humans.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB AT MOREOMAOTO VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

In a continuation of their long-standing support of the local village school, Meno a Kwena have partnered with local NGO, Elephants for Africa, to deliver a monthly environmental club with lessons and excursions into the park. It's incredible to think that many of the children in the village were not aware that they live next to a national park. Understanding this will also shed light on the relevance of the wildlife that passes through and might just inspire some future conservationists.

In the first half of **2019**, we held **3** school club meetings with **20** children attending each one.



MOREOMAOTO YOUTH CONSERVATION SOCIETY

We provide fabric and raw materials for young women to make bags and other hand-crafted items which are then sold to guests at Meno a Kwena.

Supporting and creating job opportunities for **7** women in Moreomaoto Village.



MAUN2MAUN VISION OUTREACH

Natural Selection supported a Maun humanitarian trip, during which 10 rural schools in north-western Botswana, and approximately 3500 children, received eye testing and glasses if required. The team were hosted by Meno a Kwena lodge and brought to Moreomaoto School.



CATTLE WATER POINTS

We have installed cattle water points at villages in close proximity to Meno a Kwena, thereby reducing the cattle's dependency on the Boteti River and in turn, human wildlife conflict.



NORTHERN OKAVANGO DELTA —

A diverse matrix of expansive floodplains, woodlands and waterways, the Okavango Delta is undoubtedly one of the most famous wildlife-watching destinations in the world - and it lives up to every expectation. A unique wetland area that has remained unchanged for centuries, the diverse habitats are home to all the stars of the animal kingdom from big cats to buffalo, and antelope to aardvark. The diversity doesn't simply end with the fauna, however, and with mokoro safaris, game drives, nature walks and boat trips to enjoy, the Delta provides a safari experience that's hard to beat.

MAPULA LODGE



UNCHARTED EXPEDITIONS



MAPULA LODGE

Northern Okavango Delta, Botswana

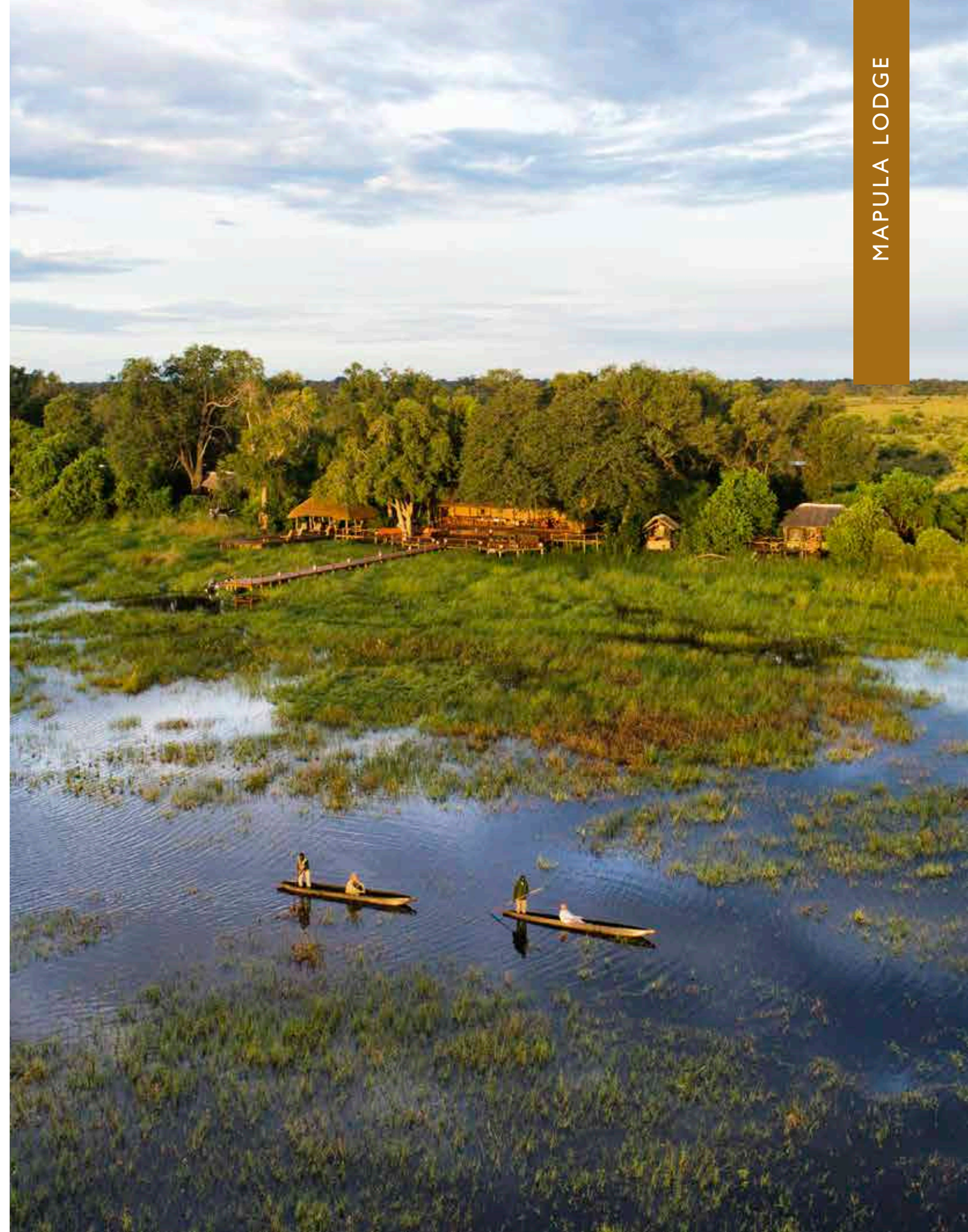
Located on the northern fringes of the Delta, in an enormous 90,000-hectare concession, Mapula Lodge is a stylish safari outpost brought to you by the creators of the iconic Jack's Camp. Quirky and characterful, the nine canvas-and-thatch tents are replete with king size four-posters and feather-filled pillows to fall face first into after a day of game viewing. Even better, it's one of only a handful of camps in the concession making for exhilarating game viewing in wonderful privacy.

DON'T MISS

- Floating down the secluded waterways on a traditional mokoro and discovering areas more remote than you can imagine.
- Wildlife-watching from the cool depths of the swimming pool as a steady stream of animals amble to the lagoon in front of camp.
- Experiencing the incredible range of activities: take to the skies on a hot air balloon flight, enjoy a spot of fishing, game drive amongst rare predators or float down the secluded waterways on a mokoro.

ONE MORE THING :

The guides at Mapula are true experts; trained by safari legend Ralph Bousfield, each one has an intricate knowledge of the area that's hard to beat.



UNCHARTED EXPEDITIONS

Northern Okavango Delta, Botswana

The Uncharted Expeditions Camp is all about putting you in the heart of the northern Okavango in some of the most hidden and beautiful corners that most will never discover. The camp is mobile and will be set up in different locations to suit your pace and interests – all you need to decide is how long you'd like to go for and what you would like to see. And forget about roll mats, deflating mattresses and cold showers. Instead, we've got real beds and pure cotton sheets, Persian rugs and bone-handled silver cutlery, and beautiful, classically-styled furniture. The only concession to roughing it are the bucket showers - but even they are private and piping hot.

DON'T MISS

An all-day predator search where you'll spend the day seeking out your favourite species: leopard, lion, cheetah and wild dog – they are all present and correct.

ONE MORE THING :

Book three or more nights in the Expeditions Camp and one of those nights will be spent fly-camping on a magical, lantern-lit private island.





“ While most of the Delta is part of a World Heritage site, important areas of the greater Okavango system are not. Eco-tourism plays a particularly important role in these areas and eventually, we hope it will help protect the entire system from Angola to Namibia and into Botswana. ”

Dr Jennifer Lalley, Co-Founder and Conservation Director, Natural Selection



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN THE OKAVANGO DELTA

WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON IN THE OKAVANGO DELTA

ELEPHANT SHUTTLE PROGRAMME

Against all odds, certain areas of the Okavango Delta have experienced a steady increase in elephant numbers over the past 15 years. Good news for conservationists, but for local villagers the increase is potentially devastating. Agricultural land is increasingly vulnerable to elephant raiding and humans are ever more at risk of fatal encounters. To combat this human-wildlife conflict, we have partnered with EcoExist who have identified ‘elephant highways’ – routes where humans and elephants are most likely to encounter one another. In these places, we have funded transport for community members, the elderly and children in particular, to keep them safe - a ‘Natural Selection Elephant Shuttle’ if you will!

PARTNER : Ecoexist



MAUN2MAUN VISION OUTREACH

Natural Selection supported a Maun humanitarian trip, during which 10 rural schools in north-western Botswana, and approximately 3500 children, received eye testing and glasses if required. The team visited Eretsha Village, which is the closest village to Mapula Lodge.

PARTNER : Global Vision 2020



HERDING FOR LIONS PROJECT

Over 50 lions in 13 prides have been identified moving through the northern panhandle of the Delta. We support CLAWS and the communal herding programme to safeguard cattle, create employment, reduce retaliatory killing of lions, and restore overgrazed landscapes. Today, 75% of cattle in Eretshe village are in communal herds.

PARTNER : CLAWS



There are currently **ONLY 20,000 - 25,000** lions left in Africa. Their biggest threats are:

1. Habitat loss
2. Human/wildlife conflict
3. Bushmeat hunting and illegal trade.

ERETSHA PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN STATIONARY

Following a recent meeting with Eretsha village elders and community members, the lack of education in the area was identified as a priority. The local school was visited and the urgent need for basic stationary was identified.



To start off our support for the school, Mapula Lodge donated the following:

200 PENS
200 PENCILS
200 NOTEBOOKS

We hope this will continue regularly!

GOING MOBILE

A Natural Selection mobile safari is about adventure. Real, rugged adventure, with the dust swirling and the hyena howling in parts of Botswana and Namibia that most travellers miss. Our mobiles offer the freedom to move to the best locations, following the game to hidden, unexplored corners, and all in the company of an exceptional guide. So, what are you waiting for? Abandon all thoughts of a traditional lodge and try your hand at camping in style in some of Botswana and Namibia's most pristine and game-rich wildernesses...

BOTSWANA

In Botswana, we have partnered with mobile safari company Wilderness Dawning, a mere 23 years after their first ever safari! At Wilderness Dawning, the emphasis is firmly on unique and outstanding experiences. Their guides are experts in their field, spending a huge amount of time inside Botswana's parks and reserves, looking for the best places to take you and show you the Africa they know and love.

NAMIBIA

In Namibia, our partners are Namibia Tracks and Trails. Founded in 1986 by Karl Heinz Gruttemeyer, NTT has spent the last 30 years organising mobile and fly-in safaris to some of the most remote corners of Namibia. A true family business, there are no less than three generations involved today (plus a few others) and every single person is committed to the preservation of this vast, beguiling land, just as we are.





NAMIBIA

HOANIB VALLEY

KAOKOLAND —

In a country jam-packed with vast and beautiful landscapes, Kaokoland may just be the most incredible of them all. Deep in north-western Namibia, the area is a melee of towering mountains, sand dunes, and huge expanses of desert, scattered with unique wildlife and nomadic Himba settlements. It's also one of Namibia's most remote and wild environments, and one that not many will get the chance to discover in a lifetime. Activities will reveal stately, desert-adapted giraffe, the icons of the region, as well as elephant, rhino and lion, and although parts of the land have been designated 'concession areas' tourism is still limited, making a visit to this unspoiled corner even more memorable.

HOANIB VALLEY CAMP



HOANIB VALLEY CAMP

Kaokoland, Namibia

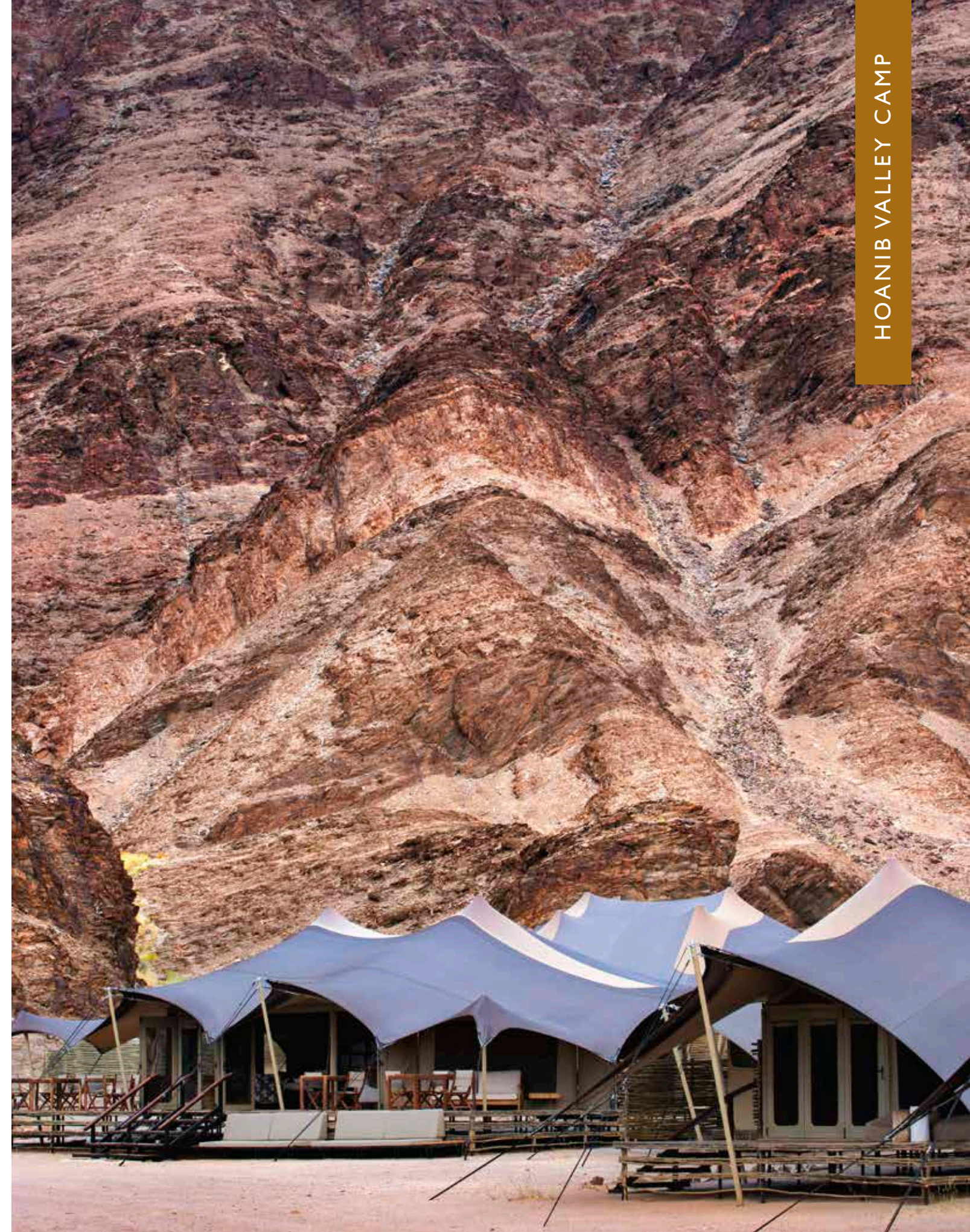
A joint venture between Natural Selection, the local communities and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, the world's only Africa-wide giraffe conservation organisation, Hoanib Valley Camp is an elegant, intimate affair that immerses you into the wilds of the desert. The six rooms blend seamlessly with the environment, offering a simple aesthetic that matches the rugged landscape down to a tee. Days are spent tracking desert-adapted elephant and, of course, giraffe, before retiring to your veranda to marvel at the magnitude of the surroundings (G&T in hand).

DON'T MISS

- Spending time with the local Himba people and learning a little of their fascinating way of life.
- Tracking black rhino on foot through the sandy riverbeds (*with stays of three nights or more*).
- Delving deeper into the world of giraffe conservation with one of the expert guides.

ONE MORE THING :

True to the ethos of Natural Selection the camp is filled with locally-sourced items, from the beautiful hand-sewn cushions to the woven baskets and carved tables.



OPINION :

Giraffes

— Written by : Pippa de Bruyn

For Rebecca Davis, it all started with the giraffes. 'There are now so few giraffes in the world that almost all of them could fit into FNB Stadium if they were human sized,' she announced at the launch of Self-Helpless, her hilarious book about the search for meaning and happiness in the absence of alcohol. 'Look at this magical, implausible creature.' Davis pointed to the baby giraffe projected onto the screen behind her. 'I admit I haven't taken any direct steps to prevent their extinction, but when the last one goes I will feel a heavy sense of personal shame. What kind of assholes let giraffes cease to exist?' she turned back to the audience. 'Us.'

I'm with Davis. The thought of a world without giraffes is depressing. But perhaps not surprising. Almost a third of all assessed species on the planet – a whopping 26 000 – are facing extinction. According to Yuval Noah Harari, author of *Sapiens*, we are ecological serial killers, frail-looking but deadly apes that have already unleashed two waves of extinction on the world, the first in the wake of the foragers, the next with the arrival of farmers. The current 'Third Wave Extinction' is merely the final genocide of everything unfortunate enough to share the planet with us, bar that which we cannot eat, or pet.

It is question time and a man has raised his hand. 'But why giraffe?' he asks. While Davis rifles back to the photograph of the cute baby giraffe I slink back to the bar and quietly comfort myself with another glass of free Sauvignon Blanc. Why giraffe? Because it's pretty, darn it, the leggy supermodel of the African plains. (Efficiency has no bearing on what we choose to love: I will happily squash a creature with 4000 separate lenses in each eye, bringing its 20 000 wing beats per minute

to an abrupt halt, yet gaze adoringly at the relatively clumsy hummingbird.)

Two weeks later I'm in the Kruger. Minutes from main camp we encounter a journey of giraffe. 'OMG,' I exhale with all the reverence I usually reserve for lion and leopard. They gaze back, all long-lashed liquid eyes a-top those ridiculously long necks, implausible as rhino. 'So special,' I murmur. 'You know, given that they are on their way to becoming extinct.'

'Rubbish,' my guide snorts.

I assure him that this is a matter of record: in 1985 an estimated 155 000 roamed wild; the latest estimate is 98 445 – a population drop of almost 40%, which is why the IUCN changed its classification from 'Least Concern' to 'Vulnerable' in December 2016. My guide remains incredulous. 'I'm not a scientist,' he admits, 'but in 20 years of guiding I have never noticed, not even the slightest decrease.' A few days later I am at Dulini. My guide there is equally scathing. 'The official giraffe number for Kruger is around 8000, and I swear about 5000 of them are right here in Sabi Sands,' he jokes. 'Who conducted this research,' he asks. 'And where?'

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation is based in Windhoek, Namibia. I try to time a trip to meet with the Julian Fennessy – the world's foremost giraffe expert and reputed 'giraffe whisperer' – but he is in Niger, translocating a breeding herd of critically endangered West Africa giraffe from Kouré to the Gadabeji Game Reserve. I meet his wife and co-director, Stephanie, in a café on Sam Nujoma Drive. She is brusque, businesslike. There is a lot of ground to cover. We start with Julian's current mission. Niger might be the second least developed country in the world, she explains, but after the West African

giraffe population dropped to 49 in the 1990s, they became the first and only country in the world with a national giraffe conservation policy. This was developed with the support of GCF, who also employs three part-time staff in Niger. The results are remarkable: the population has grown to 550, despite sharing grazing with the livestock of subsistence farmers of Kouré. If Julian can successfully translocate a breeding herd to the safety of the Gadabeji reserve, this recovery might be further assured. As Uganda Wildlife Authority warden Tom Okello states emphatically in the Attenborough-narrated 'Giraffes: Africa's Gentle Giants', a documentary about the GCF's translocation of 20 Nubian giraffe to a safer part of Murchison Falls National Park: 'You should not keep all your eggs in one basket.'

Julian and Steph, who have a tail hair from the first giraffe they tagged in their wedding rings, met in Namibia in 1999. Both worked for the Desert Research Foundation; Stephanie, who has an MSc in Environmental Engineering and Sustainable Infrastructure, on the interaction between community, livestock and wildlife. Having spent countless hours collecting data on desert-adapted elephant and giraffe interaction, Julian decided to complete his masters on the subject. 'But when he started looking for existing research, he found very little on the giraffe.' Stephanie shrugs. 'No one had given the giraffe much attention.' Having discovered the holy grail of scientists – uncharted subject matter, and a bizarre gap in the conservation market – Julian was advised he should consider upgrading his degree. This he duly did, spending another two years in the field before finally graduating with a PhD in Biological Science from the

OPINION (Continued) :

University of Sydney in 2005. Employment offers in Australia and East Africa followed, but none utilizing Julian's speciality. Then, in 2008 Julian was approached by an investor who wanted to donate a sum of money to the WWF, specifically for giraffe research. We told him there was no way to ring-fence this. 'No one puts money into a private bank account, so we decided to set up a non-profit charity, and launched GCF. For the next four years we worked on it in our spare time, and in 2002 we were asked to collect DNA samples of wild giraffes for an American zoo programme. It was the first scientific data collection based on DNA samples. We revived this programme in 2012, and the Senckenberg BiK-F in Frankfurt agreed to analyse the samples. The results have been very interesting indeed.'

It was the botanist, physician, and zoologist Carl Linnaeus – a Swede who incidentally never set foot in Africa; 'too hot', the reputed excuse – that classified the tallest living terrestrial animal as one species, Giraffa camelopardalis, in 1758. But when Julian studied the genetic data, the differences were such that he co-authored a paper, published in Current Biology, proposing that there are in fact four separate species. It's a hypothesis that has since been hotly contested in the fractured and fractious world of conservation academia, and while the Fennessys are sticking to their dartguns, for now the Linnaeus classification – one species; nine subspecies – still holds in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). What is not contested is that the giraffe is in trouble, and that it was Julian, co-founder and co-chair of the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group, who signaled the alarm back in 2016.

'To put some perspective on this, there are about 400 000 to 450 000 elephant in Africa – more than four times the number of giraffe. In the past 30 years, giraffe have disappeared from seven African countries. Some subspecies are down to 600. This makes it the most threatened large mammal in the world.' According to the research, more than 50% – around 52 000 – of all giraffe are found in South Africa. Namibia's population is smaller but also growing, particularly in the northwest, where GCF has collaborated with safari outfit Natural Selection to open a camp in the remote valley where Julian first started his research. Guests at Hoanib Valley Camp assist in data collection, and 1.5% of the camp's turnover is invested in GCF. But it is still early days (the camp opened in May) and Steph's sense of urgency is palpable. 'GCF is a science-based organisation that has been working across 14 countries for more than two decades. We are still learning about their grazing range, their social and familial bonds, their lifespan. But we cannot keep researching – by the time we know enough it may be too late. Our focus is increasingly on the endangered populations occurring in East and West Africa. We work closely with wildlife authorities and governments, and have pioneered translocations to develop satellite populations. This is expensive. GCF innovations such as World Giraffe Day [21 June, longest day/night of the year] and Adopt-a-Giraffe programme are attempts to diversify income. At this stage the Hoanib Valley Camp is doing a great job of raising awareness. 'You are going there tomorrow?' Stephanie looks wistful. 'You are going to love it. It's located in one of the most special places in the world.'

'This is a long way to go for a corpse,' grumbles the New Yorker. By his own admission, not a patient man. We are gliding through the Hoanib riverbed, following up on a report that came through last night of a dead giraffe near Dubis. There was rain two weeks back; thick flakes of clay coat parts of the riverbed; for a minute the rich, dank smell of mud perfumes the air, the reed-fringed banks an outrage of green against the barren brown wall of rock. Our guide Mwezi identifies the small jewels that cross our path – two Madagascan bee-eaters; a flock of pale-winged starlings; high above, an Augur buzzard – then slides the Cruiser to a halt. Two elephant bulls, sparring. 'Arnold and Oscar,' he says quietly. 'Born in 1985 and 1996.' He reads out the GPS co-ordinates for me to capture. The two bulls flap their ears, dust drifting as they mock charge and tussle with each others trunks. A bit like watching Ollie Reed and Alan Bates wrestling in Women in Love.

'Giraffe, 12 o'clock.' I am delighted. Do they have names, I ask. A kind man, Mwezi does not laugh, just gently points out that there are about 5000 desert-adapted giraffe roam this valley. Embarrassed, I change tack. Is it true, as Adam Rutherford claims in The Book of Humans, that when male giraffes start necking they are engaging in sexual behaviour? I expect Mwezi to snigger, but he nods sagely. 'I have seen giraffes do this for hours. They say it is done to show dominance, but there is much friendliness.'

When we finally find the dead giraffe it's impressively ghoulish, the soft flesh from its face and tail chewed off by hyenas. Mwezi pulls on a pair of latex gloves, takes a blood sample, measures the ossicones, takes photographs. He hopes we will be able to identify the giraffe back in camp, where

there are hundreds of photographs on file. Cause of death? Mwezi shrugs. It looks to him like it fell, then struggled to get up. We take our agility for granted. On the way back to camp sharp-eyed Mwezi spots a movement in the bush. A tawny-eyed lioness, her gaze regal, sprawled in the shade. We stop in the baking heat to experience the full-frontal awe of her, when another lioness comes padding across the riverbed. By sheer luck we have run into two of the 150-odd desert-adapted lions thought to live in this arid 52 000 km² rangeland. 'Listen, she is calling her cubs,' Mwezi whispers, and sure enough, the two appear next, trotting across the riverbed. Nervously they stop to peer at the vehicle; their mother watches, impervious to our presence. Mwezi tells us that their father was killed two weeks ago – poisoned by livestock farmers. One of seven killed since 2016, he was the last male in the valley. 'Maybe a nomadic lion will come, looking for new territory. But as long as the farmers do not receive enough compensation for their livestock, the poisoning will continue.' We watch in silence as the lionesses clamber up a steep rock face to scan the valley for prey, their noble golden heads outlined by the sun.

On our last night we elect to stay in and watch the light soften the valley directly in front of Hoanib Valley Camp. In a country not short of spectacular locations, this one is pretty hard to beat: six enormous and elegantly appointed tents arranged in a semi-circle on either side of an elevated mess tent, all discreetly tucked into the shadowed lee of a rocky mountain. Before us the valley lies dusted in gold, fine threads of grass pixilating into a furry carpet out of which mounds of metamorphic rocks rise, striated with quartz, mica, feldspar. It is a fiercely mineral world, Namibia, and its stark

beauty touches some primal chord in all of us. As the valley softens into darkness we sip our wine around a burning fire, smoke curling up into the pinpricks of light. My mind keeps turning back to the lionesses, their hunt for life in this barren land. The wine loosens my tongue. I finally ask whether the desert lion is not more deserving than the giraffe, given the limited conservation resources. The question is met with howls of outrage. It seems it is not just Rebecca Davis who admits that 'the imminent extinction of other, less majestic creatures left me cold'. Someone says the giraffe is her spirit animal, and we must each look after our own. I wander away from the fire, but not too far, fearful of getting lost. Peering dimly at the ground, I encounter a dung beetle. It moves unerringly, rolling its turd in a straight line across this vast gravel plane, navigating its way by the light of the stars. It has a job to do, and it knows the way.

Stay at Hoanib Valley Camp
from N\$ 8,800 pppn
in a double room.



AT THE CAMPFIRE WITH... MWEZI BUPILO

“ Anyone who’s visited Hoanib Valley Camp in Namibia will be familiar with the faces of the extraordinary desert-adapted giraffes that we’re working to save, alongside the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF). Another face that former guests will almost certainly recognise is that of giraffe-guide extraordinaire, Mwezi Bupilo.

We caught up with him around the camp fire and here’s what he had to say about growing up in Namibia, conservation and becoming a guide...

I have lived in Namibia all my life, but I haven’t always been a guide! Home for me is Lyanshulu, a village in the Zambezi region of Namibia, previously known as the Caprivi Strip. After completing my grade 12 in 1999, I stayed at home to help my parents look after their cattle as well as assisting in other household work. I was also employed by the Ministry of Education, where I taught adults rudimentary writing and mathematics. Then, between 2006 and 2007, Lianshulu Lodge, which is situated in Mudumu National Park near my village, began to introduce their guests to a communal cultural experience. I became a local village volunteer guide and their lodge-based guides began motivating me to become a field guide. I learnt a lot from those guides...

Now, after several years of guide training, I work as a guide at Hoanib Valley Camp. It’s one of the most remote corners of the country, where the desert landscapes and the wildlife meet. The Hoanib River provides incredibly unique wildlife and

the area’s geology is amazing. The night sky is also just wow!

My favourite animal up here is probably the desert-adapted elephants, but I also love being involved as a researcher for the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. I’m proud to work at the world’s only giraffe research camp and to be one of their researchers. The GCF is the only NGO in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation of giraffes in Africa and guests have the opportunity to assist me with the ongoing research in the area. Whenever we see a giraffe on a nature drive, we collect data – taking photos of each animal, ideally on both sides, for identification purposes. Each giraffe has a unique spot pattern, much like our fingerprints, so we can individually identify them. GPS coordinates are recorded for each sighting, as well as the age, sex and the number in the herd. If time allows, we can ID the giraffes we saw when we return to camp. I particularly enjoy doing this with the guests. Our data contributes to the ongoing dataset of the GCF.

I love teaching guests about the plight of giraffes in the wild, and explaining about the special adaptations of the Angolan desert giraffe. Guests often don’t realise how difficult life is for the giraffes (and for the other animals in the Hoanib) until they see the harsh environment for themselves. They are often surprised to learn that giraffe numbers are so low, and that they are in trouble. I love being able to help with their conservation.

”

DID YOU KNOW THAT GIRAFFE ARE UNDER THREAT IN AFRICA ?

GIRAFFE ARE LISTED AS VULNERABLE ON THE IUCN REDLIST OF THREATENED SPECIES, WHICH MEANS THEY ARE **VULNERABLE TO EXTINCTION**.

THE LATEST RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THERE ARE 4 DISTINCT SPECIES OF GIRAFFE IN AFRICA, EACH AS GENETICALLY DIFFERENT AS POLAR BEARS AND BROWN BEARS. THESE FINDINGS ARE GROUND BREAKING AND WILL HELP MAKE BETTER DECISIONS WITH REGARDS TO FUTURE GIRAFFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT.

IN THE AREAS AROUND THE NATURAL SELECTION CAMPS, THERE IS 1 SPECIES OF GIRAFFE (SOUTHERN GIRAFFE)

1

2

WHY ARE GIRAFFE UNDER THREAT?

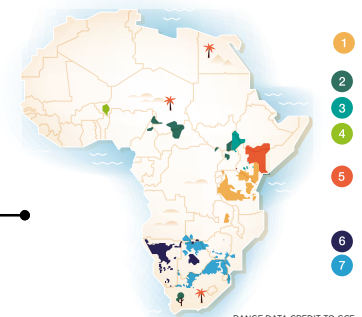
As Africa develops, numerous environmental challenges cause conflict between people and animals. In addition, the human population continues to grow and people take up more and more space, ultimately leaving less for the giraffe.

HOW MANY GIRAFFE ARE LEFT IN THE WORLD?

Latest estimates by GCF and IUCN indicate that giraffe numbers have plummeted by almost **40%** in the last three decades. There are now less than **100,000** left in the wild - which is officially fewer than the number of elephants!

-40%
<100,000

WHERE ARE THE GIRAFFE?



1
2
3
4
5
6
7

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) is the only NGO in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild throughout Africa.

WHO IS GCF?

HOW DOES NATURAL SELECTION FIT IN?

In the Hoanib Valley, a remote corner of northwest Namibia, we at Natural Selection have partnered with GCF and the local communities to build Hoanib Valley Camp, an elegant and intimate desert camp. GCF’s research not only focusses on the desert-adapted giraffe in the area, but also helps to monitor elephant and other wildlife and environmental conditions.

HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO GIRAFFE CONSERVATION AT HOANIB VALLEY CAMP?

1. The guides in camp are a key part of GCF’s long-term conservation research of the desert-adapted giraffe in northwest Namibia. By simply going on game drives with them, you are contributing to the conservation of the giraffe!
2. By contributing your photos of the giraffe you encounter, you are helping the GCF ID them and better understand giraffe movements and social networks.
3. Whilst in camp donate to GCF through the Natural Selection Conservation Trust, or directly to GCF using the QR code here.

Natural Selection Conservation Trust
Bank Gabarone, Maun
Branch: 202067
Account: 8001049551
Swift: BGLIBWGX



Photograph kindly donated by Lola Peacock

AT NATURAL SELECTION, WE DONATE 1.5% OF OUR GROSS REVENUE TO CONSERVATION AND DIRECTLY TO OUR CAREFULLY SELECTED AND DEDICATED CONSERVATION PARTNERS LIKE GCF.



SKELETON COAST —

North-western Namibia is the kind of raw and rugged wilderness that many places claim to be but so few actually are. Located along the western Atlantic Coast, the Skeleton Coast is a hauntingly picturesque region, described by many as the ultimate journey to the 'end of the earth'. Its beaches are strewn with whale bones and the wrecks of hundreds of ships, whilst the interior is an uninhabited desert of rolling, endless sand, mountains, picturesque plains, clay castles and desert-adapted wildlife. And if you are lucky, you could even encounter brown hyena, jackals and lion hunting Cape fur seals on the beaches.

—
SHIPWRECK LODGE



SHIPWRECK LODGE

Skeleton Coast, Namibia

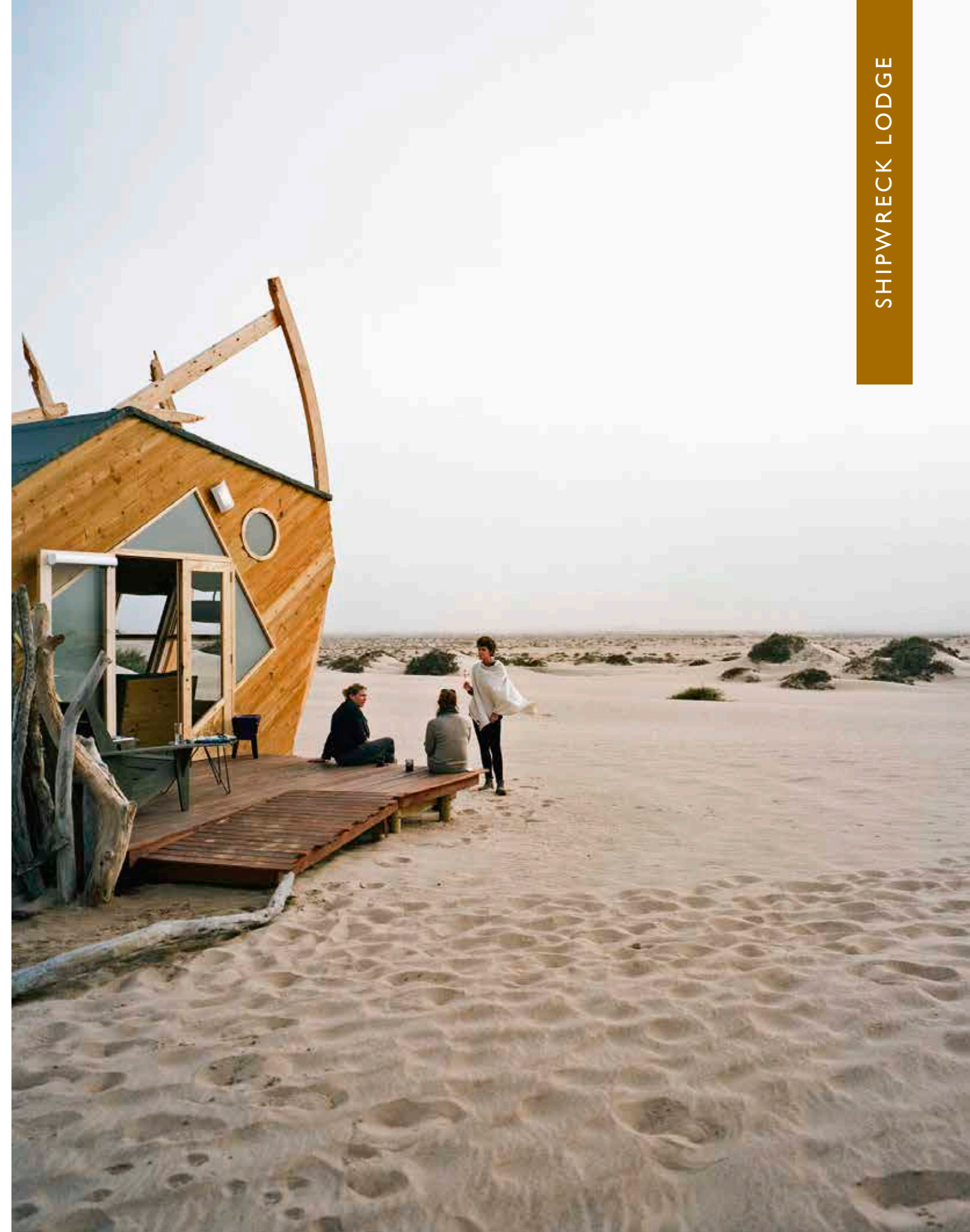
Uniquely designed around the enigmatic shipwrecks that line the Skeleton Coast, there's nowhere on the continent quite like Shipwreck Lodge. The interiors of the cabins offer a respite from the harsh environment and a place to relax and reflect, and the location of the lodge is equally as spectacular: built on a piece of land between the Hoarusib and the Hoanib Rivers, it's the only lodge within the Skeleton Coast National Park, an area that contains irreplaceable wildlife habitat for species of the highest conservation importance.

DON'T MISS

- Breakfast atop the sand dunes as the sun peaks over the horizon.
- A day exploring the features of the area, from the geographically-remarkable Clay Castles to the shipwrecks that line the coast.
- Exploring the dunes by quad bike, the wind in your hair and the landscape whizzing by.

ONE MORE THING :

For a true desert adventure, combine Shipwreck Lodge with some time at Hoanib Valley Camp and really get under the skin of this remarkable corner of Namibia.



ETOSHA HEIGHTS PRIVATE RESERVE

Founded in 1999, Etosha Heights is one of the largest private reserves in Namibia, sharing a 65-kilometre border with the famous Etosha National Park. The reserve offers 60,000 hectares of unspoiled wildlife, landscapes, and tranquillity; truly a place to reconnect with nature and escape the modern stresses of life. Wildlife-wise, you'll find lion, cheetah and many of Namibia's fascinating desert species, but the reserve is probably most famous for its strong population of both black and white rhino.

SAFARIHOEK LODGE



SAFARI HOUSE



ETOSHA MOUNTAIN LODGE



SAFARIHOEK LODGE

Etosha Heights Private Reserve, Namibia

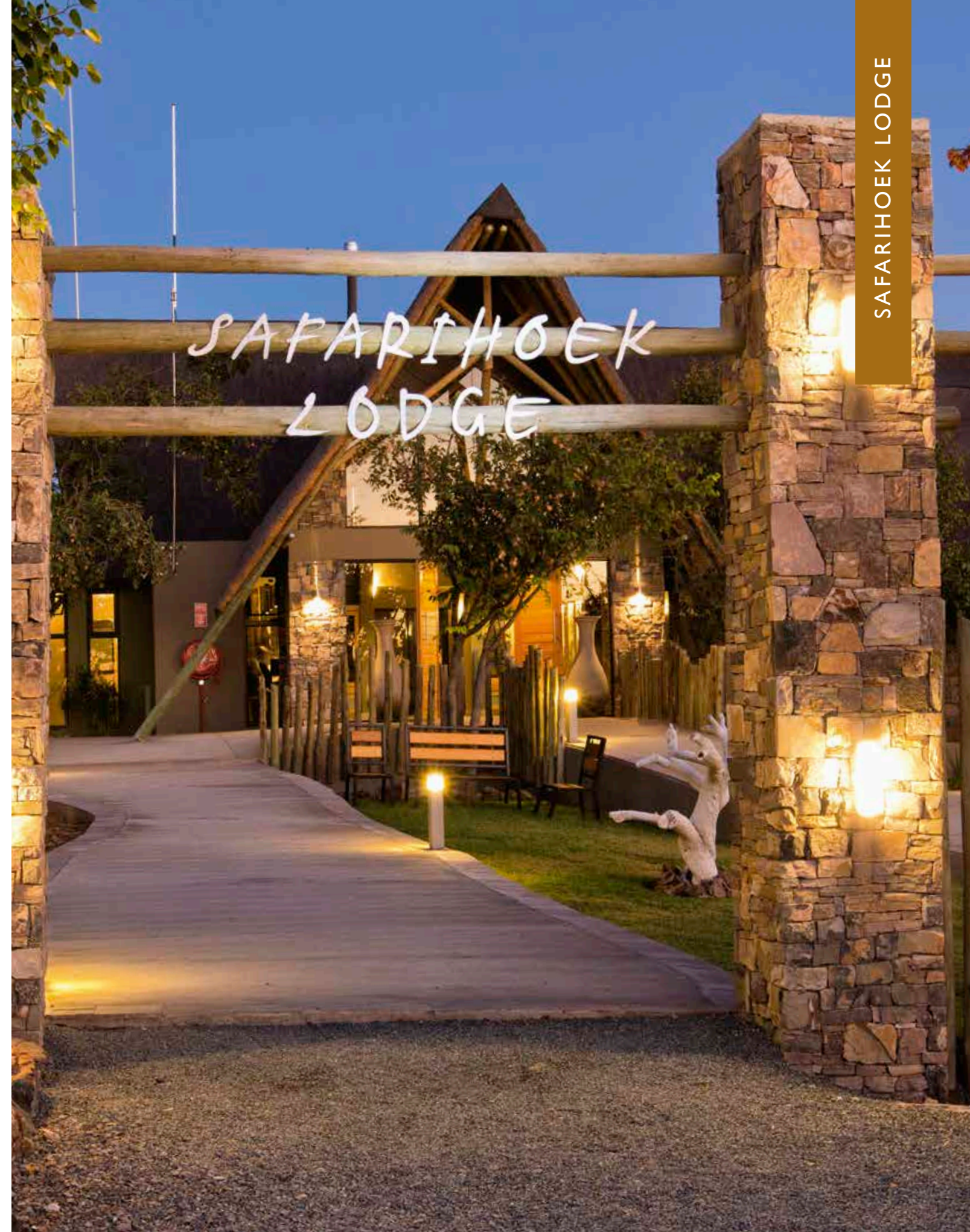
Perched on top of a hill overlooking the plains of Etosha Heights below, Safarihoek is a classic Namibian lodge with some the best views in the business. Gaze at them from the veranda of your air-conditioned chalet, the swimming pool at the main area, or retreat inside to the bar and restaurant to watch the wildlife ambling by. This is a place of silence and solitude, and a rare opportunity to be at one with nature and the animals that thrive here.

DON'T MISS

- Spending time in the unique photography hide. Not just for photographers, it offers camera-busting close-ups of Namibia's extraordinary wildlife.
- Searching for the elusive rhino that call the reserve home – the moment you come nose-to-horn with one of the majestic creatures is a moment you'll remember for the rest of your life.

ONE MORE THING :

Access to the Etosha Heights is carefully restricted (to humans, not animals!), making for exclusive and totally private wildlife experiences free from tourist crowds and bulging 4x4s.



SAFARI HOUSE

Etosha Heights Private Reserve, Namibia

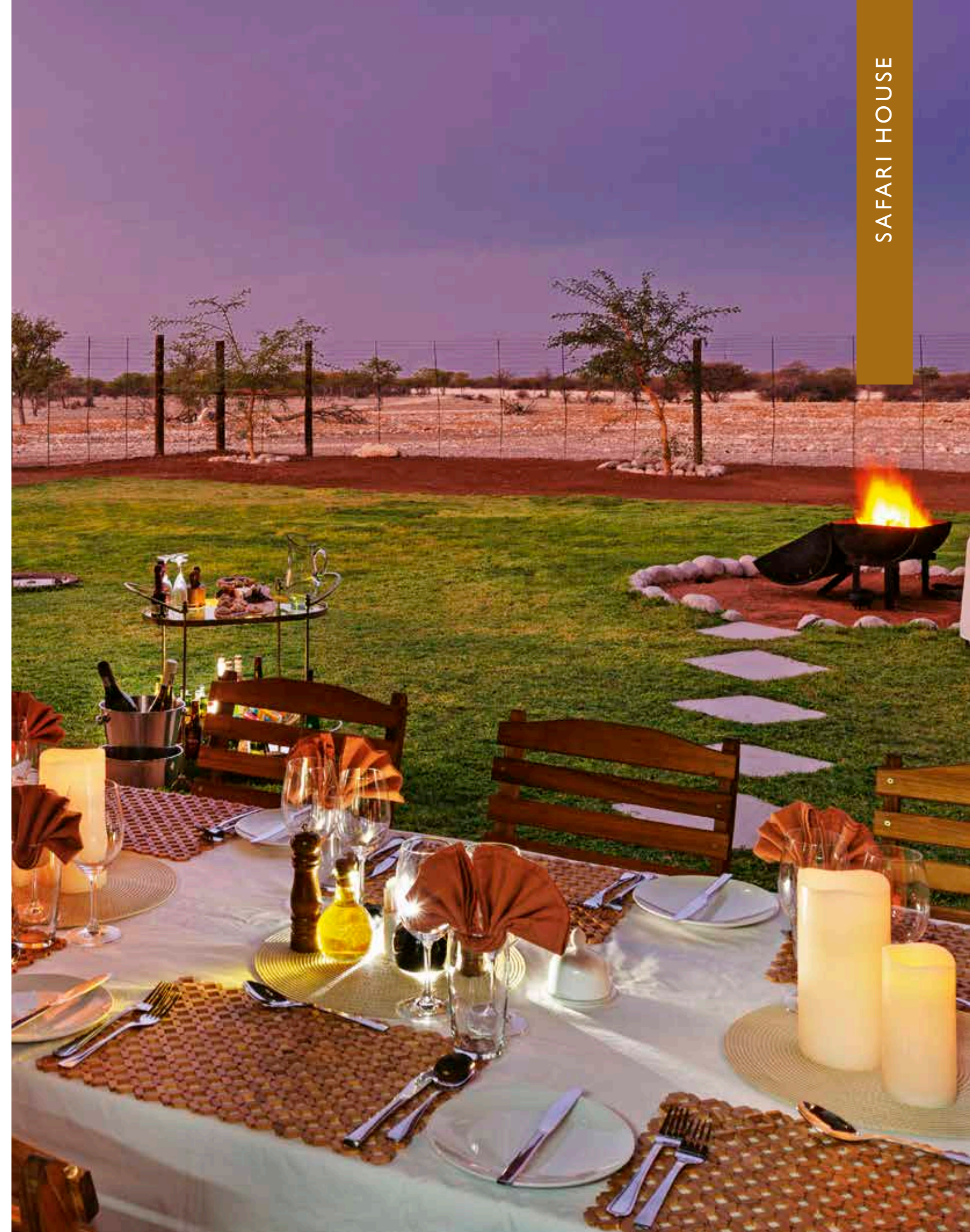
Located on the Etosha Heights Private Reserve, just next to Safarihoek Lodge, Safari House is an exclusive-use, traditional Namibian farmhouse that we've given the Natural Selection treatment. Expect three, ensuite bedrooms and a fully-equipped kitchen, dining room and indoor sitting area as well as a large garden and swimming pool. Perhaps the biggest luxury on offer at Safari House, however, is freedom. With a private guide and vehicle all to yourself, it's a safari that's 100% on your terms, whether you want to look for big game early in the morning or simply take it easy.

DON'T MISS

- Game drives in the reserve, looking for the elusive black and white rhino amongst large concentrations of plains game.
- Making the most of your 'home from home' in the heart of the bush. Call upon your private chef to whip up something to eat and all you have to do is sit back and relax.

ONE MORE THING :

With a fully-fenced garden and swimming pool area, private guide and vehicle, and a chef, the house is the perfect spot for families to safari as they please – and keep the little ones happy!



ETOSHA MOUNTAIN LODGE

Etosha Heights Private Reserve, Namibia

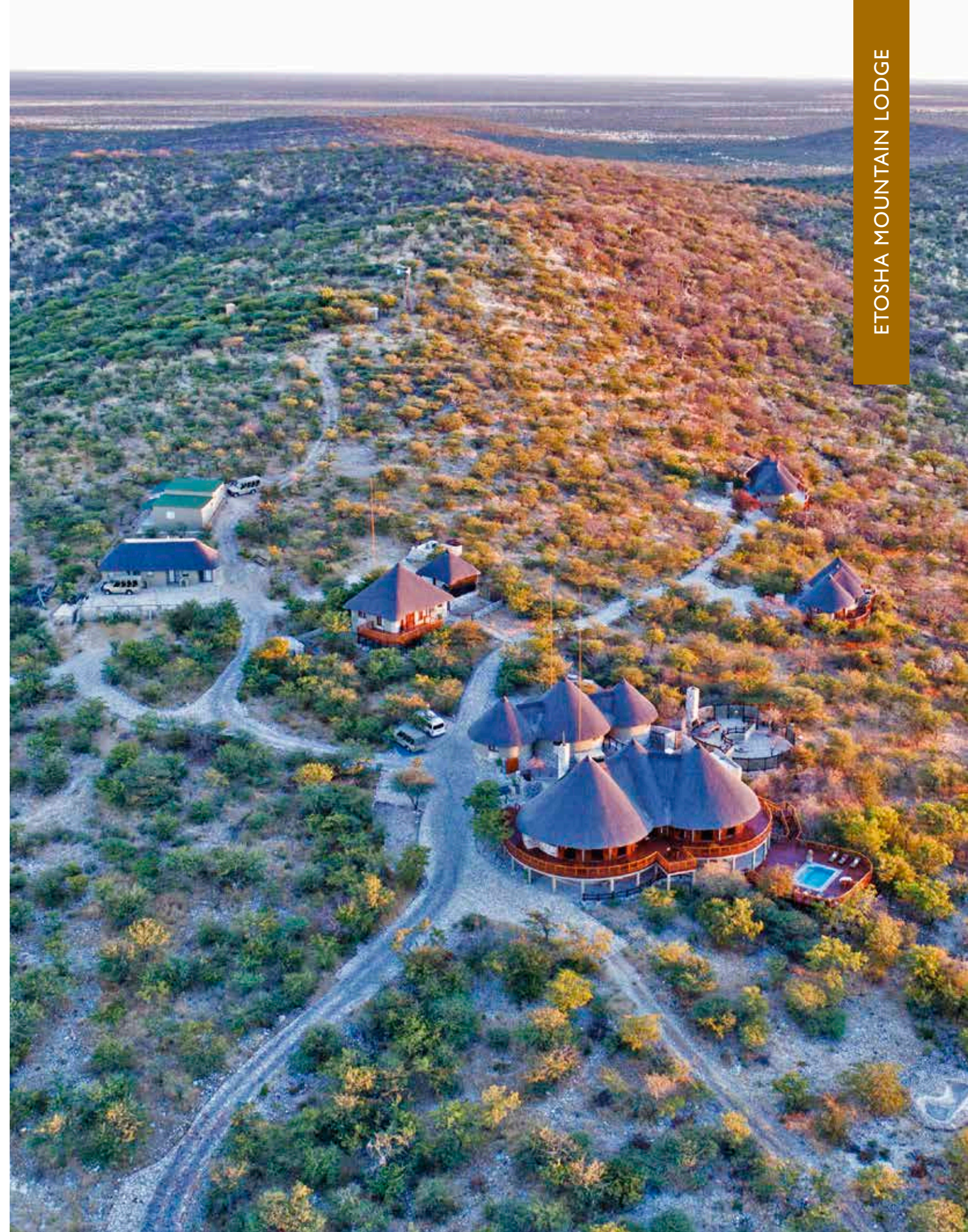
Traditional yet relaxed, cosy yet comfortable, Etosha Mountain Lodge is an affordable base in the heart of Etosha Heights. A bright and breezy 'lapa' area is the feature of the lodge, and under the thatch you'll find the restaurant and bar as well of plenty of sitting areas, just waiting for a sundowner cocktail. There's also a well-stocked wine cellar, a curio shop and a swimming pool. And no matter where you choose to relax, the panoramas stretching ahead are magnificent; think dramatic skies, vast plains, and wildlife wandering to and fro, right in front of your eye.

DON'T MISS

- The plethora of activities, from morning and afternoon game drives and rhino tracking to night drives.
- Sitting next to the waterhole watching the birds flitting backwards and forwards and waiting for the rhino to come down for their evening drink. Magical.

ONE MORE THING :

Staying at Etosha Mountain Lodge is a great way to enjoy peace and that comes from staying in a private reserve – at an extremely reasonable price.



COMING SOON

KWESSI DUNE LODGE – NAMIBRAND NATURE RESERVE

Photo credit: Paul van Schalkwyk Photography

Located just south of the iconic dunes of Sossusvlei, the NamibRand is an extraordinary private nature reserve, established to protect and conserve the wildlife of this corner of the Namib Desert. At over 200,000 hectares, it's one of the largest private reserves in southern Africa – and one of the most striking. Think vast swathes of savannah, gravel plains dotted with tiny inselbergs, and pockets of green vegetation all backed by the enormous, blood-red mountains that have undoubtedly made the area famous. In March 2020, we will be opening Kwessi Dune Lodge, a stylish, canvas-and-thatch camp run entirely from solar power, in the heart of the NamibRand. With game drives, walks, quad bikes, trips to nearby Sossusvlei, scenic helicopter flights and hot air balloon-ing, we're bringing a touch of Natural Selection character to the desert. Just how we like it!

KWESSI DUNE LODGE





WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN NORTH-WESTERN NAMIBIA

WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON IN NORTH-WESTERN NAMIBIA



1.

ANTI-POACHING IN ETOSHA HEIGHTS

PARTNER : Etosha Heights special rangers

An anti-poaching camp and team has been established in Etosha Heights Reserve to protect the rhino population and to prevent illegal hunting along the boundaries. The dedicated rangers go through intensive training and are dispatched 24 hours a day.



2.

LION MONITORING IN ETOSHA HEIGHTS

PARTNER : Etosha Rand Lion project

The project is working towards best practices for managing lions in reserves in Namibia, including Etosha Heights. Whilst data on the lions in Etosha Heights has been collected for years, it is now being culminated into this targeted project. Natural Selection guides and guests assist with data collection at lion sightings.

3. DESERT LION CONSERVATION

PARTNER : The Desert Lion Conservation Project and IRDNC

The lions in northwest Namibia are a uniquely desert-adapted species that survive in exceptionally challenging conditions: a water-stressed desert environment with a highly variable prey base. What this means, however, is that the livestock of local herders often becomes an opportune meal for the lions, and human-wildlife conflict in the area is rife. Natural Selection is funding a new automatic monitoring and early warning system run by the Desert Lion Conservation Project and IRDNC.

DID YOU KNOW :

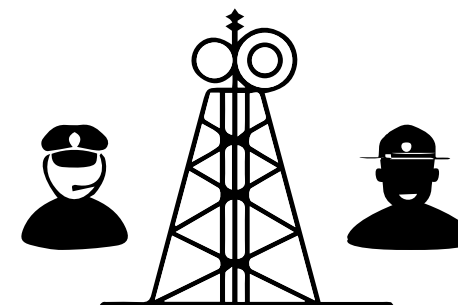
- The cold desert nights have made these lions grow woolly coats, and they're leaner than their counterparts in more plentiful areas.
- The Namibian big cats cool themselves by panting and actually sweat through the pads of their paws.

The desert lion population was down to a mere **20** individuals in **1998**. It went up to **150** in **2015** and has since declined to the current estimated population of **120**. **89%** of the mortality of adult lions in the region is due to the consequences of conflicts with the farmers and local communities. **25** lions fitted with satellite and GPS collars. **2** EWS logger towers erected. **4** rapid response units deployed **12** lion rangers trained and deployed covering **20,000** sq km and **8** community conservancies.

4. VHF RADIO COMMUNICATION TOWER

PARTNER : Elephant and Human Relations Aid (EHRA)

Namibia Tracks and Trails just completed installing a VHF radio communication system in northwest Namibia to assist communications between ourselves, EHRA and local police in the event of any wildlife crime.



5.

DESERT-DWELLING GIRAFFE CONSERVATION

PARTNER : Giraffe Conservation Foundation

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) are the foremost experts on giraffe and the only organisation in the world focusing on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild across Africa. Recently, GCF have identified four distinct species of giraffe whereas before there was thought to be only one, a finding which has elevated the conservation status of some giraffe populations to Critically Endangered. In northwest Namibia, numbers of the Angolan giraffe have increased over the past years, yet the population continues to face extreme environmental conditions and other threats. Together, GCF and Hoanib Valley Camp have created a strong consistent presence in the area that instills awareness around this iconic African animal.



6.

THE KHOMAS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (KEEP)

PARTNER : Giraffe Conservation Foundation

Few projects are more exciting than those that open up the world of nature and conservation to eager young minds, and this one does exactly that. The KEEP programme focusses on urban primary schools within impoverished areas, and addresses the need to connect these children to nature and to develop an interest in the environment and in becoming responsible members of local and global communities. Integrated with the national school curriculum, the programme includes hands on experience in the bush, allowing the beauty of Namibia to captivate these young minds. The impact and excitement from the young participants is almost tangible! It also includes a healthy snack and sandwich for children whilst in the field.

During the **3** years, over **6,600** students and **200** teachers have participated in KEEP. In **2019**, KEEP has already hosted **524** learners from **6** different schools.

SOUTH AFRICA



DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE

— Undoubtedly one of the most glorious coastal reserves in Africa, De Hoop's extraordinary beauty and blissful seclusion led ex-President FW de Klerk to choose the location for his 'Camp David.' The reserve is also famous for some of the best whale watching on the planet when, from June to November, Southern Right whales and their offspring flock here in their hundreds from Antarctica. It's not simply whales either and you'll also spot sizeable pods of dolphin and all sorts of marine life in this, the ultimate location for a fabulous, land-based, marine safari.

LEKKERWATER BEACH LODGE

De Hoop Nature Reserve, South Africa

Lekkerwater Beach Lodge (translated literally as ‘the place of good water’) offers a homely and comfortable beach experience in a magical setting. The seven rooms are located right on a six-kilometre stretch of beach, complete with stunning rock pools and fish life. Activities-wise, there are walks with experienced naturalists, an array of fynbos to be discovered, a plethora of marine life to be explored, and a rare vulture breeding colony to be spotted (and that’s without mentioning the whales!).

DON'T MISS

- Chatting with one of the guides and learning a little more about the rich and multi-layered history of this fascinating country.
- Dinner on the beach with your toes in the sand, the stars sparkling overhead and a glass of South Africa’s finest.

ONE MORE THING :

The variety of beach activities will keep even the most active entertained at De Hoop – but if you simply want to pull up a chair and watch the ocean from your between your toes on your bed, that’s fine too.



HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Are you interested in the conservation projects that have been highlighted in the magazine? This is our summary of what they are and how much Natural Selection has donated (up to July 2019). If you would like to make a donation, please visit the project and donation page on the Natural Selection website <https://naturalselection.travel/conservation/>

100% of your donation will go towards the project of your choice. All US donations are tax deductible.

PG	CONSERVATION INITIATIVE	COUNTRY	NATURAL SELECTION PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION	AMOUNT FUNDED BY NS CONSERVATION TRUST AND LODGES (USD)
50	MAKGADIKGADI CONSERVATION INITIATIVE	Botswana	Round River Conservation Studies, Okavango Research Institute	128 000
51	COACHING FOR CONSERVATION	Botswana	Coaching for Conservation	19 000
50	ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB AT MOREOMAOTO VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL	Botswana	Elephants for Africa Meno a Kwena Camp	2 000
28	LIVING WITH WILDLIFE IN MAKGADIKGADI	Botswana	Elephants for Africa Meno a Kwena Camp	2 000
51	CATTLE WATERING POINTS ON WESTERN SIDE OF MAKGADIKGADI	Botswana	Meno a Kwena Camp	8 000
28	HERBIVORE AND BIRD SURVEYING	Botswana	Khwai Private Reserve, Round River Conservation Studies	23 000
29	KHWAI VILLAGE SUSTAINABLE GRASS HARVESTING	Botswana	Khwai Private Reserve	10 000
28	LEOPARD POPULATION DYNAMICS AND CONSERVATION IN KHWAI	Botswana	Botswana Predator Conservation Trust Okavango Research Institute University of New South Wales	50 000
31	KHWAI VILLAGE PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN SUPPORT	Botswana	Khwai Private Reserve, Feed A Child, Singakwenza	19 000
31	SUPPORTING VULNERABLE RESIDENTS OF KHWAI VILLAGE	Botswana	Khwai Private Reserve	11 000
59	COMMUNAL HERDING FOR LIONS ALONG THE OKAVANGO PANHANDLE	Botswana	Communities Living Alongside Wildlife Sustainably (CLAWS)	30 000
59	ERETSHE PRIMARY SCHOOL SUPPLIES	Botswana	Mapula Lodge	1 000
59	MAPULA ELEPHANT SHUTTLE	Botswana	EcoExist and Mapula Lodge	41 000
51 & 59	GLOBAL VISION 20/20	Botswana	Vision 2020 and 4x4outfar, Meno a Kwena and Mapula Lodge	3 000
88	DESERT LION CONSERVATION	Namibia	The Desert Lion Conservation Project	10 000
89	DESERT-DWELLING GIRAFFE CONSERVATION	Namibia	Giraffe Conservation Foundation	5 000
89	THE KHOMAS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (KEEP)	Namibia	Giraffe Conservation Foundation	21 000
88	ANTI-POACHING IN ETOSHA HEIGHTS RESERVE	Namibia	Etosha Heights Reserve	128 000
88	LION MONITORING	Namibia	Etosha Heights Reserve	6 000
			TOTAL DONATED	517 000

*Please note that all USD amounts are based on a six-month average exchange rate and have been rounded to the nearest thousand. All were correct at the time of printing.

COMING SOON

AN ADVENTURE TO ANGOLA

The Okavango: From Source to Sand

Natural Selection has teamed up with the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project, the 2019 Rolex Explorer of the Year awardees, along with their explorers and scientists to create a customised flying safari through Angola and Botswana. The safari will follow the path of central Africa's great rivers from their source in the Angolan Highlands to where their waters dissipate into the sands in the Makgadikgadi Pans of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana.



Each itinerary will be private and customised for small groups of two to eight guests and will include three or four nights in the Okavango-Zambezi Water Tower source lakes region and two nights in the Cubango Game Reserve, then through the Caprivi, the Okavango Delta and finally onto the Boteti River on the edge of the Makgadikgadi.

The safari will either be conducted in a Pilatus PC12 aircraft or a Cessna Caravan. Please contact us for details.

The trip is best experienced between May and October.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY

Anja Denker
Colin Bell
David Crookes
Dook
Elsa Young
Francois Lanting
George Turner
Janaina Matarazzo
Kostadin Luchansky
Martin Harvey
Michael Poliza
Michael Turek
Micky Hoyle
Nick Rabjohn
Olwen Evans
Paul van Shalkwyk
Peter Pickford
Rachel Laing
Sarah Laird
Silverless
Stevie Mann

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

Brad Cuzen
Jemima Sargent

PAPER DETAILS

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CONTACT DETAILS

www.naturalselection.travel
reservations@naturalselection.travel
Maun: +267 684 6636
Windhoek: +264 61 225 616
Cape Town: +27 21 001 1574
Johannesburg: +27 11 326 4407



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