

AFRICAN INSIGHT

EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE



AFRICAN INSIGHT ACADEMY: COURSES GAME RANGER



COURSE: GAME RANGER

Introduction

This 10 day Game Ranger Course offers a unique opportunity to learn a variety of skills from experienced rangers that will enhance your knowledge and appreciation of wildlife, conservation and the African bush. The course incorporates unique opportunities for participants to engage in practical hands on activities whilst being immersed in the African bush.

Somkhanda Game Reserve

When the Gumbi Tribe won a successful land claim over a substantial tract of prime Zululand bushveld, the result was the consolidation of a number of privately owned game and hunting ranches into a 12000ha game reserve. This magnificent Zululand wildlife reserve, being ideal habitat for white and black rhino, was identified by the Black Rhino Range Expansion Project as being suitable for the introduction of a founder population of this rare and endangered species.

African Insight operates an exclusive concession over the entire reserve to develop a range of wildlife experiences that contributes to the financial sustainability of the reserve as well as aiding in the collection of vital scientific data on the fauna and flora required to inform the reserve's management. A variety of ongoing research and conservation management projects makes Somkhanda an ideal location for a ranger training programme.

Rhino and elusive leopards are currently the only members of the Big 5 on the reserve with plans in motion to reintroduce elephant and buffalo in 2016. The reserve is home to comprehensive range of all the common game that historically occurred in this region. This unique situation affords the opportunity for participants, encounter amazing wildlife whilst enjoying a hands on experience.

Our base for this course is a traditional tented safari camp situated on a secluded location in the reserve away from the tourism hub. The camp is supplied with running water communal showers and eco-loos. Practical working clothes, a comfortable pair of walking shoes and a pair of binoculars are essential equipment for this experience.



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Programme

Day 1: Arrive at King Shaka international airport

An African Insight representative will meet you on arrival at Durban's King Shaka International Airport. Participants must land no later than 12h00. The road transfer to Somkhanda Game Reserve is a 4 hour drive. Upon arrival at Somkhanda we settle in and have a brief introduction to the Ranger Course as well as an overview of the itinerary for the next few days.

The evening will be spent around the camp fire which provides the perfect opportunity to get to know one another.

Days 2 - 8: Somkhanda Game Reserve

Participants will take part in daily 3 hour Bush Walks during which an overall understanding of some of the basic skills sets which a Game Ranger is required to master will be learned, such as:

- Tracking, signs and spoor identification
- Basic Bushveld Ecology
- Mammal Biology and identification
- Bird Identification
- Tree and plant identification
- Orientation and Bush Navigation

Being able to identify plants and animals is an ongoing process which opens a door that provides fascinating insight into traditional local culture and mythological significance of various species of plants and animals. However it is also important to learn identification techniques and how this information affects management decisions.

The rest of the day will be spent learning the practical ranger and game reserve management skills through hands on involvement and discussion. These include:

- Determining carrying capacity
- Game capture and other population control measures
- Eco-tourism vs hunting in conservation Veld management
- Wildlife monitoring techniques
- Management of endangered species
- Wilderness survival skills and first aid
- Poaching and counter poaching techniques
- Weapon handling and shooting (optional)
- People and conservation

Generally we include a daily sunset game drive before dinner, which allows us the opportunity to venture further into the reserve. We ensure that all participants operate safely in the bush and rangers carry a rifle with them on bush walks. A good ranger is an expert in animal behaviour and how to deal with dangerous game; they know what signs to look out for to avoid any confrontation without having to use their rifle, although the ability to handle one is essential in ranger training.

The bush environment, unlike the city, has no artificial light, making star gazing a popular activity when enjoying an evening braai or a sleep out. Dinner will generally be enjoyed around a camp fire in camp or on a sleep out in the bush. Clear nights offer the perfect opportunity for star gazing.

Conservation is defined as the wise use of natural resources and as a result may include harvesting of the resource, therefore we will include a live demonstration of an animal dissection/necropsy with a special focus on wilderness survival and animal appreciation.

There will be a focus on Community Conservation and a member of the local Gumbi Community will provide an insight into life in the community bordering the reserve. This will be followed by a session on the advantages and disadvantages of living in close proximity to protected areas and the future of community conservation.

Day 9 Wrap up and Evaluation

After breakfast, there will be an optional evaluation where the participants will be assessed on all the modules covered during the week, including, but not limited to:

- Bushveld ecology
- Mammal biology and identification Geology
- Animal behaviour
- Bird identification
- Tracking and spoor identification of game
- Dangerous game and their behaviour
- Basic fire arm handling and theory of 4x4 driving
- Snake and insect identification
- Astronomy

After lunch we have a final wrap up and feedback session followed by a final afternoon Sunset Drive.

Day 10 Depart

After breakfast, we transfer back to Durban airport for your return flight home or for those opting to see more of South Africa's wildlife we continue onto the TEMBE ELEPHANT PARK or KRUGER PARK 3 night post course add-on trips.



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Cost per person sharing

ZAR13, 650

€ 1040

\$ 1165

£ 875

INCLUDES:

- Accommodation in Mobile Tented Camp
ablutions (showers & flush toilets)
- Guides / facilitators
- Transport (Durban airport return)
- All meals except lunch on days 1 & 10
- Entrance fees

EXCLUDES:

- Refreshments
- Additional / optional activities
- Lunch on Days 1 & 10
- Items of a personal nature

Starting Dates

The reserve is remote and therefore participants arrivals are coordinated to save on transport costs. Arrival is at Durban International airport and the transfer to Somkhanda Game Reserve leaves at 10h00. Overnight accommodation arrangements can be made on request).

Transport is provided to departing participants back to Durban International Airport and will drop off at 15h00.

2017

05 – 18 April

19 June – 2 July

21 Aug – 03 Sep

