

AFRICAN INSIGHT

EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE



ACADEMIC MODULE: 2

THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK:

A Study of Ecology and Conservation Management Interventions



MODULE 2: THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK: A Study of Ecology and Conservation Management Interventions



Introduction

This is a 3 or 4-night module. Proclaimed a National Park in 1926 Kruger is nearly 2 million hectares; roughly the size of Wales. From north to south it is 320km, and east to west a mean width of about 65 kms. Most of the Park's western boundary borders onto private areas under conservation and therefore unfenced, allowing the free movement of game over an even greater area. The eastern boundary is the international border with Mozambique.

The Kruger National Park has a particularly rich faunal community, offering more species of wildlife than is found in any other African game sanctuary. It is truly the flagship of the South African National Parks, home to an impressive number of species: 336 trees, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 mammals.

Sighting the "Big Five" has become something of a quest for many people when on safari, and the Kruger has more than its fair share of these, with an estimated 1,500 lion, 12,000 elephant, 2,500 buffalo, 1,000 leopards and 5,000 rhino (black and white). It should certainly not be a pre-requisite of a safari to see these or even a priority, as there are plenty of other fascinating animals and birds in the African bush.

The Parks Mission is to:

- to maintain biodiversity in all its natural indigenous facets and fluxes
- to provide human benefits and build a strong constituency; and
- preserve as far as possible the wilderness qualities and cultural resources associated with the Park

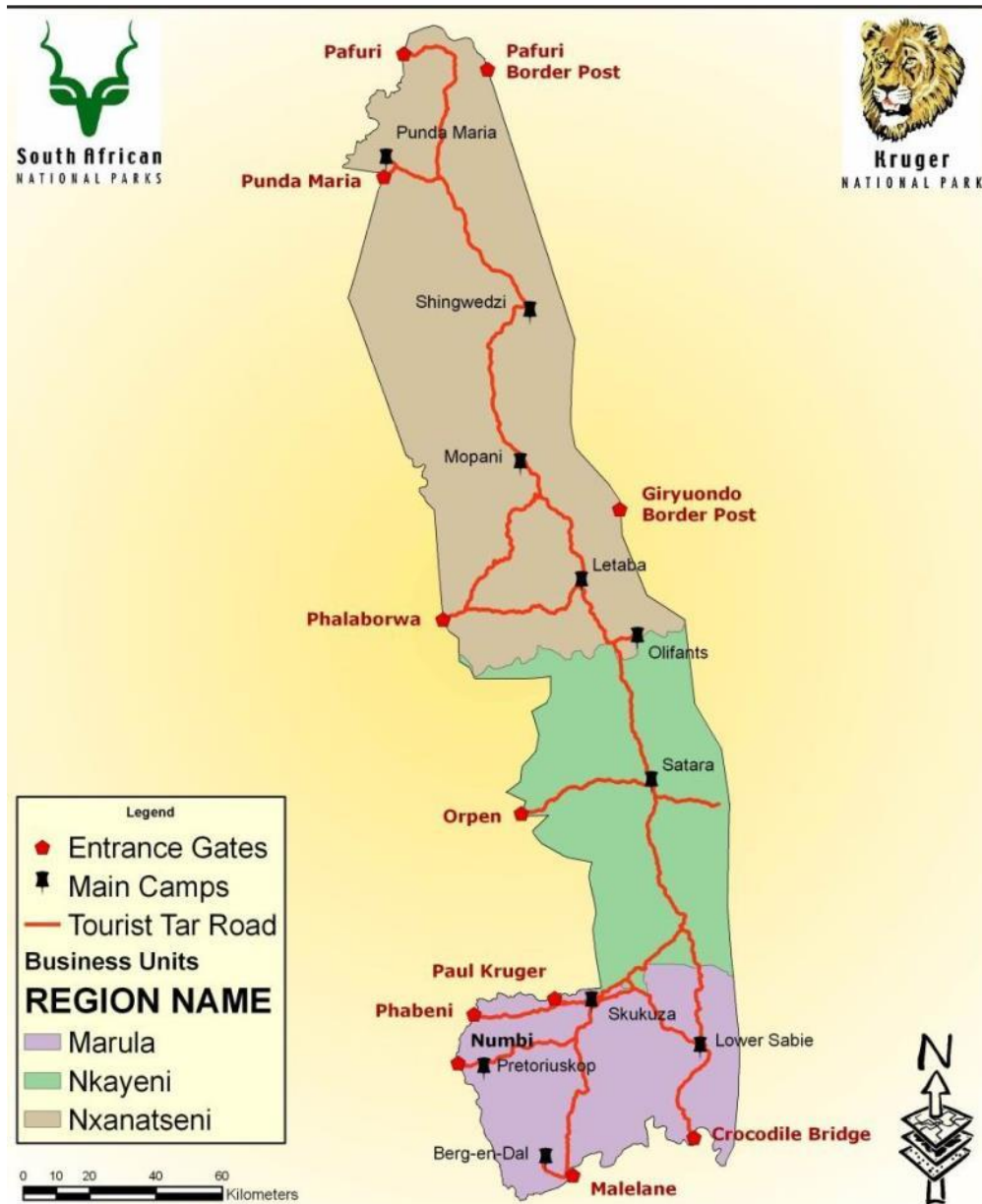
The aims of this module are:

(i) to identify and observe a wide range of wildlife in its natural habitat with the purpose of studying, through observation and discussion, a range of natural ecological principles and processes.

(ii) To gain understanding of the threats and challenges facing conservation managers in line with achieving the Parks Mission.



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Programme

If this module follows on from Module 1 it starts with a full day travelling through the Park, game viewing as we make our way to our base camp in the south western section. If it follows on from a Zululand Module most of the first day is driving to the Park.

The following days are set aside for game viewing. Game drives provide excellent opportunity for observing and identifying ecological processes and principles as they unfold. This leads to meaningful and memorable discussions. Some of these include:

- The principles of conservation biology and the importance of maintaining biodiversity.
- The principles of communication within a species and between different species.
- The differing forms of learning seen in animals.
- The advantages and disadvantages of different social structures.
- Behaviour, dominance hierarchies, social conflict and competition and avoidance mechanisms.
- Predator/prey relationships; capture and avoidance mechanisms.

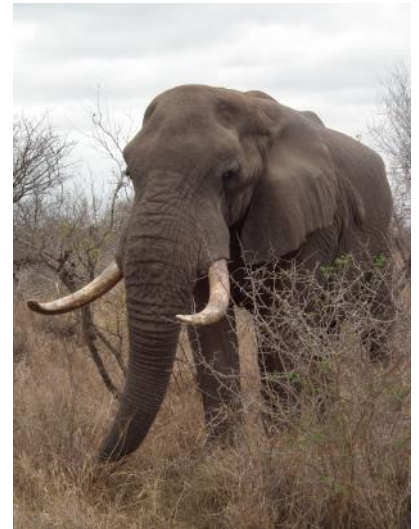
There is no other way of achieving the best out of this module but to do the 'time' out in the Park. Therefore these are long days, heading out of camp at first light and often arriving back in camp at sunset after the last activity.

During your stay there is also an opportunity to include a night drive to see some of the nocturnal wildlife and to go out on foot in big game country (see optional extras below).

Accommodation and Logistics

Our base in Kruger is one of the public 'rest camps' and our accommodation is permanent tents or bungalows (2 or 4 bed) with communal ablutions. Our catering is done by a private service provider and includes breakfasts and dinners, lunches are for own account.

On arrival we will swap our minibuses for 10 seater open game viewing safari vehicles. It is best to keep the same groups throughout the duration of the module to enable the facilitators to plan a structured experience that covers, over the full duration, all the aims of the module.



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Optional Extra:

All of the following need to be booked and paid for in advance:

Sun Set Drives: 3 hour game drive with a Park ranger returning to camp after dark. Participants will be expected to sign an indemnity form before departing.

Guided Bushwalks: 3 hour bushwalk in dangerous game territory with 2 qualified and armed rangers. Participants will be expected to sign an indemnity form before departing and be required to sign an official Indemnity form. A reasonable level of fitness and strict discipline is necessary to participate on this activity. African Insight and Kruger National Park reserves the right to restrict participation.

Meet the Experts: Either a full day (4 lectures) or half day (2 lectures) of professional presentations by Kruger National Park managers and researchers on a variety of current habitat and wildlife management issues. This is only available on weekends and for 2nd year BSc level groups and above.



Standard Includes and Excludes Apply

