



### **SEMESTER 1. COURSE 2nd half of 2008**

The new group of 15 students arrived on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of July. One student came later that week. We are fortunate to have a very diverse group with students from the U.S. the U.K., Austria, the Netherlands, Australia and South Africa. The students were put through the safety procedures and registration. Camp rules were explained and each of them explained why they signed up for this year at the welcome braai. The town trip to Hoedspruit for uniforms went well and they even managed to get the Traffic numbers for the drivers license within an hour. Cool! We finished the week off with an interesting class by Ilze on First Aid. The atmosphere in the first semester was excellent and the students were more than ready for the first gamedrive, bushwalks and classes. We did a lot of walks around our beautiful campus area to get used to all the new smells, new vegetation, sounds and animals. Situational awareness is extremely important as a fieldguide. The more time you spend in the bush on foot the better you get.

The students themselves enjoyed the walks and started to do walks themselves around campus in safe groups as there is sometimes the odd leopard on the campus. We were very surprised to suddenly see a female Cheetah with 3 cubs. It was an excellent surprise and in the rest of the semester we saw them often. The introduction course to snakes at the reptile park proved to be a huge success and the students came back inspired by the experience. The gamedrives in Makalali were of high quality. We easily found elephant, lion and even leopard. The rhino's were more elusive.

On one of our first gamedrives in Makalali we were looking at four young male cheetahs resting in the tall grass when suddenly they took off. We heard the alarm sounds of a honeybadger that was harassed by the curious young cheetahs. The honeybadger ran for safety and managed to get into its hole. We got a firstclass view of it and decided to hang around the cheetahs longer. It was an amazing afternoon!

In the second week the students met Sean, our senior instructor and went through a Bush survival skills class where a lot of practical exercises were done. The students tried to make a fire without matches. This was not easy. Rifle handling and practical shooting was also on the agenda. After a day on rifle theory and getting used to hold, clean and handle the heavy .375 rifle we went to Mica for a day of practical rifle training and experience were we had a lots of fun. The test in Orientation skills and Reptiles came to a surprise for some and not all made the 75% that was needed to pass. They did better on next test on Vehicles and Rifles. Mark took the students for a long bushwalk in Makalali where they tracked lion and found a elephant herd. A very smooth semester has finished and all preparation by the Bushwise staff has paid off. Thanks Mark, Ilze, Rosemary, Lucy and Sophie!

### **Bushwise Field Guides**

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