

SEMESTER 1 COURSE 1st half of 2009

The new group of 16 students arrived on Thursday the 8th of January. We are fortunate to have a very diverse group with students from the U.S. the U.K., Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany. The students were put through the safety procedures and registration paperwork. Camp rules were explained and each of them explained why they signed up for this year at the welcome braai. They also did a driving assessment in the first week to make sure we have students that can work with a manual gear.

All students took a trip to Hoedspruit to get their uniforms and to get their Traffic numbers and thereafter a theory class at the driving school as the first step in the process to get their PDP licenses.

All students enjoyed the First Aid course presented by Robin.Thilo (our German student) helped us a lot at the First Aid training, as he was a professional paramedic.



First aid training

The atmosphere during the first semester was vibrant, full of expectation and the students were more than ready for their first gamedrive, bushwalks and classes. However we focused this semester on health & safety, camp rules, gamedrive procedures, course structure plus survival and navigation so more gamedrives and trails will have to wait until next semesters.

Between classes we often walked around in the campus grounds and it is amazing what you will find there. All those small things makes a difference to the walk. Especially now after all the rain we had this season every little corner of the bush is teeming with life. The wildflowers that can be found flowering are very interesting.

The introduction course to snakes and reptiles, again for our safety, at the reptile park proved to be a big hit again and most of them want to do the advanced handling course later in the year as this is an option for them.

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Snake handling at the Reptile park

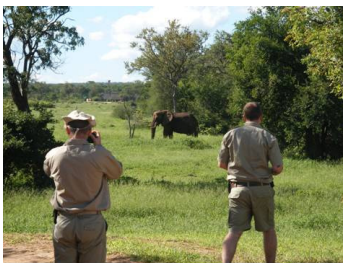
The days and nights are very hot and humid. Excellent reptile weather! We only had three or four snakes around the rondavels and that is a good manageable average. Frogging in the evening at our dam proved to be a first for all the students and the noise these frogs make is eardeafening. In between all this we managed to visit our other Bushwise campus at Garonga and got to know the students there a little bit better. Soon we will go there again for a braai evening and socializing evening. The students first have to go through the Bushwise exams but are all keen to learn and study long hours. Even the students that are here for only 6 months are as motivated as the rest. This makes the job fun. Thanks guys! It was a good but busy start and the preparation by the Bushwise staff has paid off.

Cheers,

Robin

January 2009 Garonga campus report.

The course started on the 8th of January. 12 new students to embark on an experience that will certainly change the way they see nature and the bush. The first day they were welcomed with 2 Elephant bulls at the farmhouse.



First aid and health and safety were the first skills to be covered.

The first week they started training in communication and reptile theory and a visit to town to get the uniforms. The learners then did the Khamai snake course and a great deal of learning was enjoyed.

The next weeks were filled with great game viewing : Elephant on a daily basis and Cheetah on a zebra kill was certainly a highlight, as were the evening visitors to the farm

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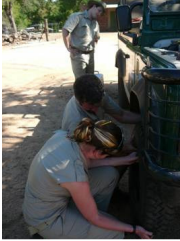
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house: Enormous solifugues seeking prey items at the lights were insects are attracted to, giant stick insects and the chorus of Toads and frogs from the pool resonated every night.

The theory subjects covered were Navigation, Vehicles from Mark were greatly received, Navigation and surviving skills like getting food and water from the bush were enhanced by doing all the practicals in the bush.



Learning about vehicles

The week ended with the first assessments on Reptiles and radio communications and ethics of guiding.

The first semester was filled with 1st time experiences for all: Astronomy on evenings, frogging in our pool and hyaena walking the fence perimeter.

We also have started our 1st reserve project of alien plant clearing and work has begun on our farmhouse gardens. Hard work, intense learning and serious fun filled semester. Now we are off for our first week of well earned rest.

Sean Robertson

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