

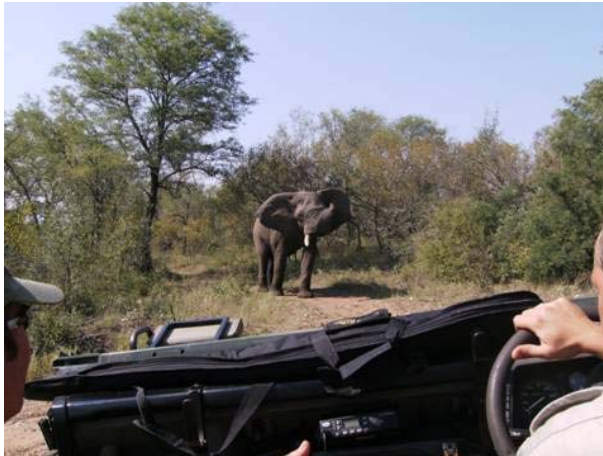
Semester 4. Course 1st Half Of 2008

All students arrived back for a semester filled with exams as we are coming to an end of the course. We decided to do a sleep-out first in the birdhide of Makalali overlooking a dam. It is getting winter now and the nights were getting much colder so the students took their thickest cloths and sleeping bags with. It is always an awesome experience to look at the stars at night and listen to the sounds of the bush. We saw lots of eyes staring at us when we used the spotlight always guessing if they were lioneyes as we often heard them roar around us. Scary!

In the beginning of this semester the last three students had to go do their drivers test. We were so happy when all three passed. Now all students have the much needed South-African drivers license. Yes! We had a big party after this. All to do now is apply for the PDP. A big thank you for all the staff of Bushwise assisting in this and a big well-done to the students! We visited a big Baobab tree near Gravelotte. This is a good tradition at Bushwise after three quarters of the course.



The FGASA level 1 theory exam was coming up soon but first four students had to do their FGASA level 1 practical exam on an assessment drive. They all passed without too much difficulty even though the standards are high and the checks are thorough on guest empathy, driving skills, entertainment level and knowledge of the bush. The four students did a good drive and it's a good start as the practical FGASA level 1 exam is not an easy one to pass. Next exam was the FGASA level 1 theory exam. All students were very nervous on the morning of the exam. We received the papers from FGASA on time and all was ready for the big day. The exam nerves were too much for one student but all others passed with a very good pass rate. Now this exam was "out of the way" the remaining eight students were up for their FGASA level 1 practical exam. They also passed and it is interesting too see that everyone has a specific style doing a gamedrive focusing on very different things.



Elephant Bull sniffing the air, Makalali

During the assessment gamedrive other students would prepare a hosting diner and evening for the students coming back from drive. One group raided their family cupboard back home for this and nice table ornaments suddenly popped up on the table. The other group decided to combine the diner with African bush stories. Awesome!



Table set-up at hosting practical

At the end of the course the "Simulated Charge" rifle handling exam was up. The "Simulated Charge" is the final exam for Advanced Rifle Handling and when the student passes this he/she can work as back-up rifle. Guest awareness and rifle handling skills under time pressure are essential. Controlling the guest dynamics during the charge and focusing on the charging "animal" proved too much for most of the students. Next semester we will have to work on this more.



Simulated charge practical, Bushwise campus

This semester was very interesting for the Bushwise staff as we can see which students are pulling through to make it as fieldguides. It is also a very fulfilling semester for the students as they can show their newly learned skills and take a next step to a new career as a guide. It proves that your attitude towards life and the people around you is the most important decision you make to enjoy yourself.