

Semester Report 5

Bushwise Field Guides

Garonga

After the pressure of the previous semester, with the FGASA Level 1 Theory test and the practical drive evaluations, the last semester of the course was a lot more chilled. The first week was spent revising the Trails Guide module, going over all aspects relating to dangerous game, including weapon Handling and walking trails procedure. The students then wrote the last Bushwise test: Viewing Potentially dangerous game, as preparation for the FGASA Trails Guide Exam which was written on the first Saturday of the semester. Again, the students did not disappoint. Another 100% pass rate. In between the revising and preparing we managed to fit in a few game drives as well as completing the last few weapon handling assessments.

From the Sunday after the exam, the students started leaving Garonga to move onto their work placements, and by the following Friday there were only three left. Students had dispersed all over the country, including Northern Natal, the Waterberg and various parts of the lowveld.

During the week we kept busy with drives, some frogging at Big Dam and some birdwatching as the migrants had settled in. We had elephants around the house on a regular basis which kept the remaining students in high spirits.

Another highlight was a practical walking approach on dangerous game. We found 2 young bull elephant on drive, left the area and then approached on foot, giving the students some more practical experience in approaching big game.

The last week was spent cleaning up base, getting on with gardening and the odd game drive. On the Wednesday night we had a final braai out in the bush, and a couple of students spent the night on the sleepout deck. A fitting goodbye to a great 6 months.

Wayne Te Brake

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