



FGASA Field Guide  
courses

Wildlife conservation  
programs

FGASA accredited  
online courses



Endorsed &  
accredited by  
FGASA





## Welcome to Bushwise

Make the wild your workplace. A year from now, you could be guiding at a five-star luxury game lodge or working at a wildlife research base in an African reserve. Bushwise graduates have found professional placements in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as other locations across the world, like Patagonia.

Since its establishment in 2006, Bushwise Field Guides has trained over 1,000 students from within South Africa and around the world. We have built a reputation of excellence as a leading professional training provider in the safari industry.

Due to our standards of excellence and inclusive guide training, Bushwise graduates are in high demand in the safari and tourism industry. We have made it our mission to ensure our students have the necessary education, skills, confidence and experience to excel in one of the most rewarding and exciting careers in the world.

Since 2012 **100%\***

of South African graduates of the 50-week course were offered permanent employment.



\*Not including Covid-19 lockdown period when many companies had hiring freezes.





## Why join Bushwise?

Our graduates are some of the most well-trained field guides in the industry and are highly sought-after by lodges in southern Africa and abroad. You will join our other alumni who work at outstanding lodges and wildlife organisations such as Kapama Private Game Reserve, Africa on Foot, Karongwe Portfolio, Garonga Safari Lodge, Motswari Game Lodge, MalaMala Game Reserve, Singita and research bases around the world.

We also offer a practical Apprentice Trails Guide program for students joining our Professional Field Guide course. This will give you a head start on the practical requirements for your Apprentice Trails Guide qualification. This certificate is unbelievably valuable in the field guiding industry as it allows you to guide guests on safari walks through areas with dangerous animals.

## Hear from our alumni

### Tim Connelly

Head Guide Explora Hotel, Patagonia

"I have and will continue to recommend Bushwise because it is a great way to enter the guiding industry."

### Thabisane Ernest

Mala Mala Game Reserve, South Africa

"The advice and mentorship after I had finished the course has been very helpful during the beginning of my guiding career."

### Daneline Kruger

Kafue National Park, Zambia

"I wanted to get my FGASA and gain more experience in guiding and in return I gained so much more."

### Elliot Evans

INGWE Leopard Research, South Africa

"I am glad I did the course. I thought it was fantastic and there was nothing about it I would have changed."

### Anel Olivier

Majete Wildlife Reserve, Malawi

"Bushwise is a very down-to-earth organisation run by passionate staff willing to invest a lot of time into their students. The course was incredibly well planned, but also leaving space to change and adapt which is a necessity in the bush. The practical hands-on approach somehow makes it possible to cram an enormous amount of information and experiences into such a short time. It considers all aspects needed to become a great field guide and become fully adaptable and confident to live and work in the bush."







## Field guide courses

### Bushwise Professional Field Guide course | 23 weeks

Join students from around the world as you train to become a FGASA-certified Apprentice Field Guide. Go beyond FGASA knowledge as our experienced trainers, with over 100 years of collective experience, introduce you to additional knowledge and skills to make you a world-class safari guide. Your classroom and home for 23 weeks will be in one of our Bushwise campuses. Whether on the Greater Makalali Private Reserve or in the Greater Kruger National Park, you'll train in Big 5 territory and hear the sounds of the bush day and night.

The 23-week course is designed to combine field guiding theory with practical experience. You will be introduced to theoretical concepts in the classroom on campus by our instructors and trainers. Then head outside for safari drives and bush walks where you can see the concepts applied in the real world. Typically, you will have two training sessions a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Depending on the stage of the course, your schedule may vary. At the end of each week you will be assessed on what you have learnt. On weekends you are free to study and get some rest. Every four weeks you will have one week off to study and experience your surroundings. This adds up to four off-weeks throughout the course.

This course is open to those 18 years and older. There are certain placement restrictions for under 21s, due to regulations in South Africa around professional driving permits (PrDp). See placement section for more information.

Bushwise trainers have a combined over 100 years  
of experience in the industry.





## The course + placement | 50 weeks

After successfully completing the 23-week course, you are guaranteed a work placement as a professional field guide at a luxury 3 to 5 star game lodge. There are also a limited number of other wildlife conservation work placements available. These include wildlife research and monitoring, anti-poaching, ecotourism lodge management, animal rehabilitation and environmental education, wildlife conservation volunteer management and wildlife breeding, and reserve management. Opportunities may also exist to be placed throughout Africa and further afield. Graduates aged 18-20 can go on placement but will not be able to guide in a vehicle until they are 21 years old, when they can legally apply for a professional driving permit (PrDp).

### Some of our work placement partners include:

- Garonga Safari Lodge
- Africa on Foot walking safaris
- LEO Africa wildlife monitoring
- Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre
- Entabeni Safari Conservancy
- Siyafunda Wildlife & Conservation
- K9 Conservation anti-poaching services
- Senalala Safari Lodge
- Ivory Tree Lodge



After graduating from the Professional Field Guide course, Bushwise guarantees employment for South African students or 50% of your course fee back. We also offer Bushwise recruitment services to assist in your job search. Bushwise students are highly sought after in the industry – so we're confident you'll find your place.





## FGASA Apprentice Trails Guide (optional) | 14 days

After you've absorbed the theory knowledge from Bushwise's Apprentice Trails Guide qualification, it's time to get practical experience with rifle handling and walking in areas with potentially dangerous game.

Join our partner organisation Lowveld Trails Co. in the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve, a 53,000-hectare reserve that's part of the Greater Kruger National Park and known for its iconic white lion population. You will spend the first eight days at a tented camp, walking an average of seven hours a day. During this time, a FGASA-endorsed Professional Special Knowledge and Skills Dangerous Game (SKS DG) Trails Guide and Mentor will guide you through 75 hours of walking in a potentially dangerous game area. They will also deliver ten hours of one-on-one mentorship and guide you through 20 encounters with potentially dangerous game. These practical experiences are more than the minimum required by FGASA to be assessed for their Apprentice Trails Guide qualification, ensuring that you are fully prepared for the assessment phase. On day nine you will start a wilderness backpack trail during which you will camp out under the stars. These three days will function as your assessment. The program also focuses on additional valuable skills such as trail guiding techniques such as tracking, trailing and wildlife survival skills.





## Certificates and training included in 23- and 50-week course

### Certificates recognised across South Africa include:

- FGASA Apprentice Field Guide, NQF2 certificate
- CATHSSETA Nature Guiding, NQF2 certificate
- Basic Wilderness First Aid (Unit Standard 119567 NQF Level 1)
- SASSETA Firearm Proficiency certificate, including:
  - » knowledge of the firearm control act, unit standard: 117705
  - » handle and use of manually operated rifle or carbine, unit standard: 119651
  - » handle and use of manually operated rifle or carbine for business purpose, unit standard: 123519
- Cybertracker Track and Sign and Trailing qualification

### Training recognised across South Africa includes:

- FGASA Apprentice Trails Guide, NQF2 theory
- FGASA Field Guide, NQF4 theory
- FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH)

### Other certificates and training include:

- Bushwise Professional Field Guide certificate
- Bushwise birding specialist course
- Wildlife photography workshop
- Social media module
- Instruction and experience in viewing potentially dangerous animals
- Reptile orientation course
- 4x4 vehicle skills and basic vehicle mechanics training
- Survival skills and navigation training
- Ethical guiding principles training
- Game reserve management and anti-poaching principles
- Hospitality and hosting in a lodge environment
- Wine tasting and food pairing







## What else is included?

### Learning resources

- FGASA registration
- FGASA exam and assessment fee
- Training conducted by experienced long-term staff
- Online masterclasses led by industry experts

### Living resources

- Accommodation includes:
  - » Shared room in a bungalow or lodge-style housing
  - » Desk, cupboard and fan
  - » Pool
  - » Boma and braai area
  - » Space to exercise
  - » Social area
  - » Wi-Fi at no extra cost
  - » Library of field guiding books
  - » Communal or shared en-suite bathroom
  - » Limited laundry services
- Two sets of uniforms
- T-shirt, fleece jacket, cap and beanie
- All meals (except during off weeks)

### Support services

- Pre-departure support
- Welcome meeting
- Location orientation
- 24-hour in-country support
- 24-hour emergency phone
- Emergency support from Bushwise on-site staff
- Daily briefing
- Final feedback session
- Final day ceremony
- Visits by staff while on the work placement
- Access to our alumni program

### Activities

- Trips to the Kruger National Park
- Overnight sleep-outs under the stars in a wildlife reserve
- Guided safari walks
- Visits to nature reserves
- Entrance fees for excursions
- Assistance with booking other extracurricular activities





## What's not included?

The following services are not included in this program:

- Flights
- Medical and travel insurance
- Professional drivers permit and licensing costs and transportation (21 and older)
- Police clearance or background check fees
- Personal workwear such as hiking shoes and jackets
- International and domestic airport taxes
- Additional drinks and gratuities
- Recommended reference books
- Transport costs to the work placement
- Extra local excursions
- Meals, laundry and transport during free-time weeks during the course
- Accommodation, electricity, internet and meals during off-weeks and during the work placement portion of the program



### COVID-19 Safety

We follow the COVID-19 guidelines set by the South African Department of Education.





## Bushwise Safari Guide course | 60 days

Welcome to your wild career. This course is a condensed version of our Professional Field Guide course, designed to get you essential guiding qualifications and more in 60 days. Become a FGASA NQF2 qualified field guide, with additional qualifications in CyberTracker Track & Sign, Wilderness First Aid and Reptile Handling. You'll be more than equipped to enter this competitive industry.

You will spend 59 nights and 60 days in the pristine Limpopo bushveld. You'll gain invaluable in-person experience as you walk or drive through the bush – observing animal behaviour, identifying plant, animal and bird species while learning from the best. This course is focused on exposing you to as much real-world guiding experience and knowledge as possible in just two months.

### What's included?

- 59 nights' accommodation
- Meals (cereal, lunch and dinner)
- Tea/coffee and juice (freely available)
- 12-week FGASA Field Guiding online course
- FGASA apprentice theory exam
- FGASA assessment and moderation fees
- FGASA manuals, workbooks and study material
- Wilderness First Aid course
- Reptile handling course
- CyberTracker Track and Sign assessment
- Game drives and bush walks
- Classroom sessions
- Dangerous game experience
- Ethical guiding principles
- Access to qualified trainers and assessors
- Laundry (conditions apply)
- Free limited internet access

### What's not included?

- Flights
- Transfers to and from the Bushwise campus
- Medical and travel insurance
- Additional drinks and gratuities
- Recommended reference books
- Bushwise uniform
- Add-on courses: Bushwise birding week, Advanced Rifle Handling, Apprentice Trails Guide course, Cybertracker Trailing





## Wildlife Conservation program

### Wildlife Conservation program | 12-24 weeks

Experience conservation first-hand through our wildlife conservation programs at Karongwe Private Game Reserve (KPGR) near Kruger National Park, South Africa. Join other wildlife enthusiasts, budding conservationists, and nature-lovers as you monitor large predators and mega-herbivores on the reserve.

You'll join us for three to six months – living in the African bush, working with a research team, sharing meals around the fire, and gaining life-changing experience. Spend your days learning research techniques, gaining new skills and knowledge, and assisting with a variety of research projects.

#### Activities and research opportunities include:

- General predator and mega-herbivore monitoring including hyena, leopard, lion, cheetah, elephant, rhino and buffalo
- Monitoring their distribution, feeding ecology and competition
- Sustainability, distribution and sex, and age ratios
- Community outreach and environmental education
- Reserve work
- Leadership training
- Track and sign
- Birding identification and skills
- Camera trap research
- Southern African ecology

During the wildlife conservation program, you can earn a GVI Biological Survey Techniques certificate and complete the GVI Team Leadership course. You will also have free access to our online courses to prepare yourself for this incredible experience.

#### These courses are endorsed by the University of Richmond School of Professional Studies and are:

- Careers in sustainable development
- Leading teams for emerging leaders
- Specialisation in community development/wildlife conservation





## What's included:

### General

- 24-hour emergency desk
- 24-hour in-country support
- Airport pick-up (unless otherwise stated)
- All project equipment
- Food (except on long-term internship placements with partners)
- Safe and basic accommodation (usually shared)

### Pre-program training

- Group introductory call
- Welcome presentation
- Endorsed GVI specialisation course
- Endorsed leadership course

### Project work

- Sustainable project work
- Leadership responsibilities
- Data collection and research
- Real projects with partners

### Remote support

- Program training
- Remote internship supervisor (dependant on program choice)
- Remote academic internship supervisor (dependant on program choice)
- Remote career internship supervisor (dependant on program choice)

### Post-program

- Preferential recruitment on GVI positions
- Job portal access
- Endorsed careers course
- Career coaching sessions

### Certificates & achievements

- PDF reference – upon request
- LinkedIn reference and skills endorsement

## What's not included:

- Additional drinks and gratuities
- COVID-19: health and hygiene fee
- Extra local excursions
- Flights
- International and domestic airport taxes
- Medical and travel insurance
- Personal items and toiletries
- Police or background check
- Visa costs





## Online courses: program structure

### Nature Enthusiast FGASA online course | 8 weeks

Become an African nature and wildlife expert. Attend expert-led masterclasses, learn through engaging discussions and earn a certificate from the top-rated provider of field guide qualifications.

This is designed for anyone – high school students, new graduates, mid-career professionals with a bit of free time and a passion for nature, retirees, and citizen scientists. It is for self-enrichment and improving your knowledge in general, or for tipping your toes into the possibility of a wildlife career. The FGASA Nature Enthusiast online course is certified by the Field Guides Association of Southern Africa and aligned with the FGASA Apprentice Field Guide (NQF2) qualification.

On this course you'll complete the first 16 official FGASA modules. Topics include African mammals, plants, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects and fish. You'll also learn about African ecosystems, geology, climate and even astronomy. This online wildlife course goes beyond the basics, delivering additional NQF2 and NQF4 knowledge and preparing you for further training if you'd like to become a safari guide or conservationist.

As with all Bushwise courses, we cover so much more than the fundamentals. By attending our masterclasses, you'll gain specific insights into elephant, pangolin and vulture conservation. You'll also learn about innovative conservation strategies and how anti-poaching initiatives are run. Bring your specific interests to this course and ask our certified instructors for guidance. We're here to help you get the most out of your online course.





## FGASA Field Guiding online course | 12 weeks

Take your field guide training further by joining our FGASA Field Guiding online course. In just 12 weeks, you'll gain theoretical knowledge towards getting certified as an FGASA Apprentice Field Guide (NQF2). You'll be exposed to expert insight on real-life situations you might encounter. You'll also learn about the types of challenges that exist in the industry and get insider knowledge on how these situations are addressed.

This course is conducted through 21 live sessions, including lectures from industry leaders in conservation and safari guiding. Lectures cover the 16 official FGASA modules and skills of guiding, developing and conducting a guided experience, radio procedure, rifle handling knowledge and theory on viewing potentially dangerous animals. At the end of 12 weeks you will be eligible to write the FGASA NQF2 theory exam.

This is an excellent option for anyone considering a career as a field guide, but who needs the flexibility of an online course.





## Nature Enthusiast FGASA online course:

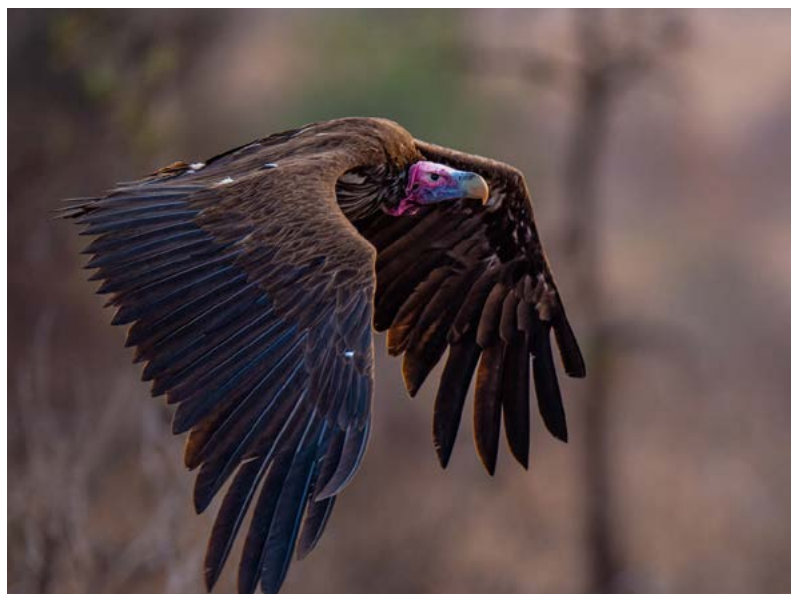
### What's included:

- 16 FGASA modules
- Live webinars and masterclasses
- Q&As and assignments
- FGASA registration fees
- The Nature Guide Learner Manual – Grant & Gillie Hine
- Apprentice Field Guide study guide and learner workbook
- Bushwise Nature Enthusiast certificate

## FGASA Field Guiding online course:

### What's included:

- The above 8-week Nature Enthusiast course
- Additional modules related to field guiding include: how to conduct a guided experience, rifle safety and use, radio procedures, and viewing potentially dangerous animals
- Bushwise Field Guiding online certificate
- FGASA registration fees
- FGASA examination and moderation fee







## Dates and fees for all Bushwise courses

### Annual start dates

Bushwise Professional Field Guide course  
(23 or 50 weeks): 7 January and 8 July

Bushwise Safari Guide course (60 days):  
Multiple start dates throughout the year

Wildlife conservation programs (12-24 weeks):  
Start dates every two weeks

Nature Enthusiast online course (8 weeks):  
Multiple start dates throughout the year

FGASA Field Guiding online course (12 weeks):  
Multiple start dates throughout the year

### Course fees

Provided on request.

### Apprentice Trails Guide practical add-on course

Please speak to us for more information on this  
add-on option and the pricing.





## Payment plans

### Plan 1

Secure your place with a deposit.  
Pay the first instalment 20 weeks before  
the course start date. Pay the second  
instalment 12 weeks before the start date.

### Plan 2

Secure your place with a deposit  
equalling 30% of the program fee.  
Pay the balance over six instalments  
(\*T&Cs apply).

## Student loans

Bushwise is recognised by most major South African banks including FNB and Standard Bank. South African citizens can apply for student loans to assist with the payment of course fees.





## Requirements

### General requirements for the field guide courses include:

- Age 18 and above
- Fluency in spoken and written English
- Matric/high school graduate (or equivalent)
- Full manual drivers licence

### Work placement requirements include:

- Meeting all the course requirements and pass the FGASA Apprentice Field Guide NQF2 exam
- Ages between 21 and 39 for guiding placement
- Ages between 18 and 21 for non-guiding placement

If you're over 39 years of age, you are welcome to join the 23-week course. However, if a placement is secured during your training, your booking can be extended.





# Contact us

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