



**Wildlife Campus**

**20**  
YEARS  
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# Magazine

**Junior Anti-Poaching  
Course**

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a true  
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**The southern  
African python  
by ASI**

**What type of guide  
will you be?**

# WildlifeCampus

## What type of guide Will you be?



WildlifeCampus CEO  
Todd Kaplan

**In this feature, Garth Thompson explores types of guides.**

Guiding attracts a wide, diverse, and interesting group of people, those that have been in the industry for some time can quickly place guides into a number of different categories. We start this roll-call with the most ubiquitous of the species ...

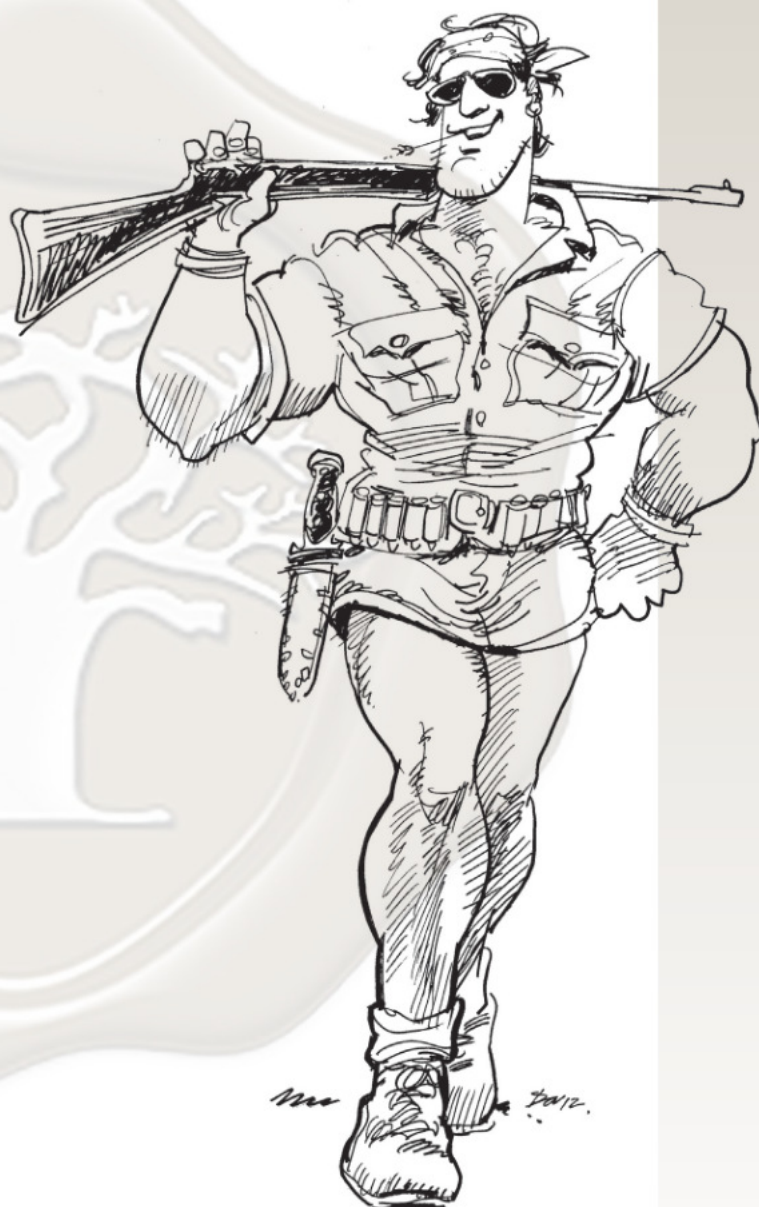
### The Macho Guide

These guides join the profession with a preconceived image. Sadly, wildlife guides are often compared with skiing instructors or well-tanned and muscled lifesavers! This image has been well earned by a large number of guides, many of whom appreciate the beauty of their clients more than that of the wildlife they are employed to present.

Who has not encountered the guide with the sleeveless khaki shirt open to expose a hairy, well-muscled chest on which hangs a lion-claw necklace attached to a leather thong? Over one broad shoulder rests a heavy-calibre rifle, almost an extension to the body. A Swiss army knife, Leatherman, and long bowie knife adorn a bullet-laden leather belt supporting a pair of khaki shorts, one size too small! From these short shorts extend a pair of powerful legs that reach down to character-filled Veldskoens or dusty Merrill's.

The right arm casually holding the shouldered rifle is home to at least five big elephant-hair bracelets, while its opposite twin is enveloped in a cluster of copper bangles, colouring the forearm with a dull, greenish hue. A cloth bandanna acts as a turban, holding in the thick curls tied back in a tight bun behind a noble head, while a subtle earring glints in the African sun. Unfortunately, the piercing eyes are hidden

by wraparound dark Oakley or green-tinted, gold-framed Aviator Ray Bans.



# What type of guide Will you be?

This is the image that many youngsters have of a 'professional guide'.

What a great job to show people lion, elephant and buffalo, and save and protect them from these highly dangerous animals. Cock your rifle and hold it at the ready when the big bull elephant shakes his head and stares over his shining tusks at your cowering clients! That night while seated around the campfire, they will praise you for having saved them from a life-threatening situation, and will ply you with copious drinks and 'more' in thanks for your heroic services!

This kind of guide will often say how much he loves the bush, can never go to town, can't cross the street because there are too many cars and people. Yet follow him on his time off and you will see him happily sauntering down the city's main street thoroughly engrossed in the latest Meme from his latest model iPhone, wireless earbuds firmly implanted as he heads towards his favourite trendy nightclub.

This is to not say that they don't fulfil the role, this is exactly the expectation of many lodge clients and lodge managers too. It's

however a short-term fix; such guides never last long in the industry.

They soon become bored with the outdoor life, the sun, dust and the same old boring animals. They grow tired of acting 'nanny' to a bunch of decrepit elderly tourists. Life wasn't as they expected it to be in tourism: those damned lions that everyone nags to see were far harder to find than expected; the last few close shaves with those old, retired 'dagga boys,' those lone cantankerous, aggressive, and unpredictable male buffalos are enough to spoil anyone's breakfast.

Eventually, they miss the trappings of city life, the gym, the fast food, the local sports club and their drinking buddies. Thoroughly disappointed that the majority of guests are not young, attractive coeds but rather well-off inquisitive older tourists happily spending their childrens inheritance.

Is this the type of guide you want to be ?

*Garth Thompson is one of the world's foremost field guides; author of the must-read Guides Guide to Guiding.*





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# A tribute to a true wildlife warrior

## Statement from Chengeta Wildlife:

*"It is with deepest sorrow and regret that Chengeta Wildlife confirms the death of Rory Young, our co-founder and CEO.*

*Rory was leading a wildlife protection patrol in Arly National Park, Burkina Faso on 26th April 2021 when they were attacked by terrorists which resulted in his death and that of two Spanish journalists who were capturing his efforts to protect precious wildlife."*



Rory Young, Co-Founder & CEO, Chengeta Wildlife  
(Image: Chengeta Wildlife Facebook page)

## A note from WildlifeCampus COO Eloise Acx

"I got to learn about Rory and his work in conservation back in 2013, shortly after I started with WildlifeCampus. I began reading his online blog, called "Anomie's Child". One of the very first articles on the blog was headed "How do you deal with animal poachers?". It immediately struck my interest, especially since one of my first tasks was to research the subjects I was working with and get to know everything I could about them.

It was the perfect introduction for this "newbie" to learn what poaching is all about, from a very balanced perspective. As I read more articles, I realised that not only was Rory an exceptional writer, but he had an incredible amount of knowledge to share with the world. His writing covered a vast amount of subjects ranging from "How to stop a charging buffalo" to "How do I become a person of great moral character?". I have followed Rory's writing ever since and truly appreciate the time he took to "put pen to paper" as they say.

However, we know that writing was just the tip of the iceberg of what Rory contributed to the world. His physical work in anti-poaching, ranger training, and wildlife protection/conservation was fundamental and the ripple effect of his work was far bigger than he could have ever imagined. He touched the lives of many of us without even knowing it.

We salute Rory, his family and the Chengeta Wildlife team for their dedication and contribution to conservation, worldwide. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Rory and the Spanish journalists David Beriáin and Roberto Fraile's friends and family. They will be sorely missed."

**For more info on Chengeta Wildlife click the logo below:**



# THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PYTHON



The Southern African Python (*Python natalensis*) is by far the longest snake in Southern Africa, reaching a maximum length of just under 6 m and sometimes weighing in excess of 65 kg. It used to be a subspecies of the African Rock Python (*Python sebae*) but is now recognised as a full species.

This species is widespread in Africa, extending from southern Kenya in the north, through Zambia into Angola, northern Namibia and Botswana. It occurs throughout Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In South Africa it is found in the north-eastern parts of the country, extending from the northern Eastern Cape through much of KZN into eSwatini (Swaziland) and into the Lowveld, northern parts of Gauteng and the North-west province.

## - DISTRIBUTION -



## - HABITS -

This snake is largely active at night but is fond of basking during the day. It is at home in water and can remain submerged for long periods – far longer than one hour. Juveniles are frequently found in trees where they feed on birds. Adults make use of rocky areas with crevices and caves to hide in or utilise abandoned burrows of mammals such as porcupines and aardvarks.





## - DIET -

Southern African Python's are ambush hunters, relying on their excellent camouflage to remain undetected. They feed largely on warm-blooded prey like small antelope, monkeys, game birds and dassies, but also take leguaans and even crocodiles.

Southern African Pythons are one of two snakes in Southern Africa with heat sensors. These heat sensors can easily detect minor changes in temperature, enabling the snake to accurately strike at warm-blooded prey in pitch darkness. The heat sensors are situated on the upper lip towards the front of the head.



## - REPRODUCTION -

A female python produces around 30 – 60 (but sometimes up to 100) eggs, which are roughly the size of a tennis ball. She often lays these eggs in an Aardvark hole and will coil around the eggs for the three months of incubation. During this time, she does not feed, but may leave the eggs to drink water or to bask in the sun at the entrance of the hole. If disturbed she is quick to disappear down the hole to protect the eggs.

Females go very dark in colour during the breeding season and will bask to warm up. At times they get their body temperature up to 40 degrees C, very close to their lethal temperature of 42 degrees C. The female then goes back down the hole to share the heat with the eggs and assist with incubation. Incubation temperature (in snakes) has no effect on the sex of snakes, as is the case in turtles, terrapins, tortoises, crocodylians and many lizards.



When the eggs hatch, the young measure 50-70 cm and they hang around the female for a week or two. They leave the hole to bask in the sun but if threatened they are quick to disappear down the hole and hide in the coils of the mother. They shed their skin within a day or two of hatching. Once they leave the hole, still with their bellies full of yoke, there is no further interaction with the female.

## - DANGER TO MAN -

Although not venomous, this snake has around 84 needle-sharp recurved teeth and is capable of inflicting a nasty bite that may require stitches. Attacks on humans are rare and in the past 100-odd years only one death has been reported in South Africa when a python killed (but did not swallow) a young man looking after cattle in Limpopo.

As a rule, pythons avoid people, but they do raid poultry runs and will feed on farm animals.

This snake is listed as 'Least concerned' in the Reptile Atlas but is protected in most provinces and adjacent countries under ToPS legislation. However pythons are often caught and killed for the traditional muti trade throughout Africa.

# Anti-Poaching

## *Junior course*

[Click here to try a free component](#)

For Juniors aged 10-15 years old, this course aims to provide you with the necessary skills and knowledge to help eradicate poaching, even at a young age. We explain poaching and anti-poaching, some of the different types of poaching and the ways we can help prevent it from happening. If you are a young conservationist who is keen to learn and make a difference, this course is for you! As a young person, you hold the key to positive conservation change, for future generations!

**Our Junior Anti-Poaching course sells for R 500.00**

Email [info@wildlifecampus.com](mailto:info@wildlifecampus.com) for more info or to request your invoice



# Our Course Payment Options

**Start your course(s) today\*  
and pay them off over  
easy monthly instalments.**

Find all the WildlifeCampus course combinations  
and payment options available by clicking [here](#)

E-mail: [info@wildlifecampus.com](mailto:info@wildlifecampus.com) for more information

\* Requires proof of payment for your first instalment

# Bushmeat Poaching

by Amy Holt  
WLC Student

## Connecting Poverty and Poaching



Most of us have heard of how the illegal trade in elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin scales, and other high-value products are threatening Africa's wildlife. However, the lasting impact of bushmeat poaching could pose a greater threat to both nature and us. **Bushmeat poaching refers to the illegal hunting of wild animals for subsistence or trade.** The current global pandemic is creating a huge strain on Africa, with lockdowns and the wider economic disruption increasing poverty and food insecurity across the continent, thus exacerbating the bushmeat crisis.

Communities living adjacent to national parks in Africa are often some of the most economically deprived, hampered by a lack of infrastructure and with already limited economic options.

Therefore, illegal hunting and the sale of bushmeat provides an opportunity for quick cash income for people with few alternative livelihood options. In most countries, the punishments for illegal hunting provide ineffective deterrents and do not reflect the value of the resource being destroyed. Furthermore, wildlife laws are poorly enforced due to inadequate investment and expertise in anti-poaching, and low conviction rates for illegal hunters.



Snare traps are commonly used when poaching because they are inexpensive, lightweight, simple to make, easy to set up, difficult for enforcement agencies to detect, silent and virtually impossible to escape. They typically comprise a noose attached to woody vegetation and placed where animals are likely to pass, such as along wildlife trails or close to water sources. Animals are caught when they put their head or leg into the snare and pull it tight as they keep moving. Snare traps can be made from natural fibre or nylon which, are used when targeting small mammals and birds; or wire which is used when targeting larger mammals, small antelopes and those animals upwards in size. The increasing prevalence of fencing, electricity, and telephone cables means that there is growing abundance of wire in rural areas, which is commonly stolen and used in making snares.



# Bushmeat Poaching

by Amy Holt  
WLC Student

## Connecting Poverty and Poaching

Snares are indiscriminate, frequently resulting in the collateral death of animals that are not the primary target. Further, the use of snares is the most wasteful method of hunting, as often animals are not collected from snares and left to rot.

Failure to address the problem of bushmeat poaching, will have dire consequences for biodiversity conservation, and will preclude the sustainable use of wildlife as a development option and have long-term negative impacts on food security. In savannah areas, those most threatened by bushmeat poaching are mammals (particularly ungulates), of which only 2% of species are resilient to the increasing hunting pressure. As primary consumers and grazers of the savannah, antelope help restore and maintain native grass species, as well as, being the main form of prey for predators. By removing prey, bushmeat poaching limits the abundance and distribution of apex predators, and thus their ecological role. A very common species found in the bush, the impala, is often targeted by bushmeat poachers due to their large population sizes. However, they act as a buffer for other low-density species and are favoured by their natural predators (e.g., lion, leopard and cheetah). Thus, if their numbers drop due to poaching, the knock-on effect on the ecosystem could be catastrophic.

Ultimately, excessive hunting drives trophic cascades, which disrupt ecosystem processes and services.



Bushmeat consumption is by no means sustainable. Often, bushmeat poaching causes the rate of extraction to surpass the natural regeneration rate. These depleted populations then threaten food security in the long-term as people come to rely on this unsustainable source of food.

Further, bushmeat is considered a virus sector and a cause of disease, including AIDS/HIV, Ebola, and likely the cause of COVID-19. In the Ebola crisis in West Africa, all bushmeat markets were closed, the curb on bushmeat hunting was short-lived. Once the Ebola crisis passed and temporary bans in West African countries were lifted, the need for affordable protein once more outweighed the perceived risk of zoonotic disease and bushmeat markets returned.

Indeed, bushmeat poaching is a complex issue that is closely linked to development.



# Bushmeat Poaching

by Amy Holt  
WLC Student

## Connecting Poverty and Poaching

Controlling the bushmeat crisis is likely to require interventions that are costly and thus dependent on the sourcing of adequate funding. Africa relies heavily on tourism to fund conservation, however, since 2020, the global pandemic has brought tourism to a standstill. Africa cannot be forgotten amidst a plethora of pressing issues. Yet, the support Africa receives to fund conservation and protect its natural heritage is inadequate. It has always been inadequate!

The loss of tourism has a knock-on effect for everything else. For people, the loss of tourism means the loss of funding. The loss of funding means jobs cannot be sustained. The loss of livelihoods means increased hunger and poverty. This increases bushmeat poaching, which, leads to civil unrest between local communities and game reserves. Bushmeat poaching also increases the risk of new zoonotic diseases emerging and it threatens security. For nature, the loss of tourism means the loss of funding. The loss of funding cripples the ability to conduct anti-poaching activities, compromising the ability to monitor the illegal wildlife trade and the bushmeat crisis. Iconic species (such as rhinos, lions, giraffes, elephants, etc.) will be lost, causing ecosystems to collapse which leads to the loss of life-sustaining services. Eventually, underfunded protected areas will be lost to development. The alteration of large areas of land will have increasing impacts on the climate. So when will someone intervene to stop this domino effect?

Until the very real problem of poverty is solved, the bushmeat crisis is likely to persist. Hence, conservation is as much about people, as it is about wildlife. Most conservation problems are embedded in complex socio-ecological systems, which generally lack clear solutions because each

problem is linked to other problems. Therefore, if the environment cannot be sustainably managed, then a stable economy and social cohesion cannot be achieved. Those in power continue to risk decisions that rank short-term benefits above long-term growth, leading to environmental collapse. This is not a cost of progress and not someone else's concern. Nor is it development, if the poor are getting poorer, as the rich get richer. A long-term perspective is vital. To invest in nature now, means we do not have to pay an even greater price later.

The ongoing global pandemic, is threatening decades of successful conservation work on the African continent, including efforts to tackle the bushmeat crisis. Thus, we stand at a critical juncture. Without vital funding, Africa stands to lose the natural heritage that makes it world famous, a tremendous loss which would inevitably ripple throughout the global community.



Special thanks to [KaiNav Conservation Foundation](#) for the images supplied for this article!

# Conservation Packages

Contribute towards anti-poaching and rhino rehabilitation efforts while saving on our special conservation packages!

25% of the fee for each package sold will be directly paid over to either of our three beneficiaries:

<b>The Care For Wild Africa Package</b>	<b>The GameWays Package</b>	<b>The Worldwide Experience Package</b>
<p><b>This package includes 3 online courses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Anti-Poaching</li><li>2. Wildlife Management</li><li>3. Capture Care and Management of Wildlife</li></ol>  <p><b>CARE for WILD •AFRICA•</b></p> <p><b>Price: R5000</b></p>	<p><b>This package includes 5 online courses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Anti-Poaching</li><li>2. Trails Guide</li><li>3. Game Guard Management</li><li>4. Capture, Care and Management of Wildlife</li><li>5. Intensive Wildlife Production</li></ol>  <p><b>Price: R6000</b></p>	<p><b>This package includes 4 online courses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Field Guiding</li><li>2. Marine Biology</li><li>3. Cultural Guiding (Choose any 1 of 9)</li><li>4. Human-Wildlife Conflict</li></ol>  <p><b>Price: R7000</b></p>

## Should you wish to purchase a special conservation package:

1. Make sure you are registered on the WildlifeCampus website as an online student.
2. Email [info@wildlifecampus.com](mailto:info@wildlifecampus.com) with your username to request an invoice for payment OR purchase via our online courses shop [click here](#).

*Terms and conditions:* Because these course packages have been so highly discounted, they sell for their cash price only. No monthly payment options are available on the above displayed packages.

# Not

# A happy hippo

By David Batzofin



It is often said that more people are killed in Africa by hippo than all of the Big 5 combined. Although this theory is now being questioned, experts believe that unreported crocodile attacks may account for many of the deaths. This large aquatic mammal is still a force to be reckoned with if encountered when out of its usual environment.

But this recent incident proved once again that even the experts can get it wrong when the animal concerned has not read the email.

We were halfway through an afternoon drive, having bumbled around the reserve without much luck when it came to dangerous game sightings.

"One final stop," said the guide, "I want to see if The Rock is in his dam".

The Rock in question was a resident hippo, not the well-known actor, who was given that name because of his general lack of movement when approached by game drive vehicles.

As we approached the small dam, we could see his back sticking out of the water, with his head beneath the surface, supposedly living up to his name...

As a result of his penchant for inactivity, our vehicle was able to get within a few meters of the edge of the dam, but, what we were not expecting was the fact that The Rock was about to break this stereotype and put on a display that lasted more than 20 minutes.

Bearing in mind that full-grown males can weigh in at 1500 kg, and even though they might have short stubby legs, on land they can attain speeds up to 30 kph. Today he decided to put on the most awesome display of power...



Wide-mouthed and with his head flailing from side to side, we sat in quiet awe of how an animal of this size could lift himself out of the water, going from submerged and placid to large and menacing in an instant.

# Not

# A happy hippo

By David Batzofin

Twice during this encounter, he charged our vehicle, but we remained stationary and therefore not a direct threat. So, the hippo saw it fit to not leave the safety of the water, despite his perceived aggressive behaviour and thus the stand-off was exactly that - with neither side backing down.

Coming towards us at full speed was an impressive sight and I was certainly glad that we were safely ensconced in a vehicle

I have to add that at no time during this encounter were we or the hippo in any danger.

Our ranger had parked the vehicle in the perfect position for us to witness this unexpected behaviour but without any undue stress on either the guests or the

hippo. And, if the need had arisen, we would have been able to leave without any complicated maneuvering.

This is how all game viewing should be accomplished...with calm and patience.

And finally, tired of the "game", the hippo submerged and vanished beneath the surface.

A truly memorable experience and one of the most exciting hippo encounters that I have had in more than 5 decades of bush adventures.

