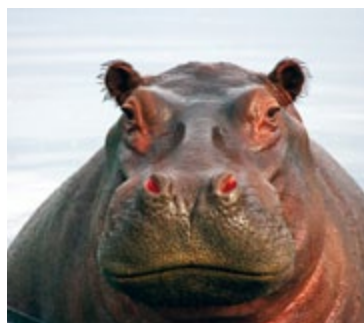


wild africa - big cat conservation with ben britton



trip highlights

- Once in a lifetime 'hands on' opportunity to assist in tracking, darting and collaring lion or leopard
- Trip escorted by Ben Britton from Nat Geo Wild
- Riding and walking with an elephant at the Elephant Whispers Ultimate Interaction
- Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre and visiting 'Jessica the Hippo'
- Boat trip to view the spectacular Kadashi Tufa Waterfall and famous 'Three Rondavels'
- Viewing Africa's 'Big Seven' at the Mashatu Game Reserve - the African elephant (largest Mammal), the lion (biggest cat), giraffe (tallest), the baobab tree, the eland (largest antelope), the ostrich (largest bird), and the kori bustard (heaviest flying bird).



Trip Duration	10 days
Grade	Adventure touring level
Activities	Adventure touring, Game Viewing, Assisting with 'tracking and collaring'

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our 'Wild Africa' Big Cat Conservation with Ben Britton'. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!!

why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to remote and challenging destinations, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and seamless operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience in Africa. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics, our vehicles and equipment are the best available on the market. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by a guide whose knowledge and passion for wilderness and wildlife will add a unique dimension to your trip. Their experience and enthusiasm ensures that we maintain the leading edge in adventure travel and therefore providing excellent value for money. Itineraries are well planned and include numerous visits to national parks. Most meals and excursions are included in the tour price. This itinerary offers the best value-for-money in southern Africa. Our group size is small (8 people). Given our local knowledge, experience and excellent leadership, we are quite sure that this tour will be a trip of a lifetime.

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trip dates

2012 21 May - 30 May

trip cost

Joining Sydney Trip cost based on 8 full paying passengers: \$8995

options & supplements

Single Traveller: \$10095

Single travellers are required to pay a single supplement when joining this adventure. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Flights with SAA are based on a special 'V' Class fare. If we are unable to confirm and ticket fares in this class by ticketing deadline, a higher class may be booked and a surcharge may be applied.

The tour price is based on two people sharing a room. If you are travelling as a single, then we will do our best to twin share you with someone of the same gender unless you specify on your booking form that you would like to occupy a single room. In case of the latter, or if we are unsuccessful in matching you up with another traveller, the single price will apply.

the trip

On this trip of a lifetime, in the company of Nat Geo Wild presenter Ben Britton, you will travel to the Northern Tuli Predator Project in Botswana and assist in their ongoing research project by assisting with tracking, darting and collaring a lion or leopard. Running for nearly five years, the Northern Tuli Predator Project focuses mainly on the study of lions and leopards, but other large carnivores such as the spotted hyena and brown hyena are also incorporated. Currently there are 5 male leopards collared and two male lions. The predator project is becoming well established with seven GPS-radio collars deployed, 25 digital camera trap units, a Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle and various other high standard equipment for both office and fieldwork purposes.

BACKGROUND TO THE LION STUDY

The number of studies done on what the impact of safari hunting has on lion population dynamics is still few and far between. Social factors are probably the most influential to lion group dynamics, but there are environmental patterns and processes that influence the distribution of groups through space and time. There is a growing need to know how consumptive utilization influences lion population dynamics. Previous studies have shown that safari hunting could negatively affect lion reproduction, behaviour, and overall population demography. It is thus important to understand how lions react, in terms of movements, behaviour, reproduction, and home range size, to these pressures in order for wildlife managers and researchers to better understand and manage their populations.

This trip offers a unique opportunity to participate alongside Ben Britton and the staff at the Northern Tuli Predator Project in Botswana to assist with their ongoing work and research into these beautiful predators.

We hope you can join us on this extraordinary adventure!

about your leader

Ben Britton

As the face of Nat Geo Wild in Australia and New Zealand, Ben Britton gets closer to creatures great and small every day for a living. Currently featuring in a series of locally produced vignettes alongside IJ the capuchin monkey, Bailey the Albino Burmese python and Jackson the alligator, Britton deciphers the mysteries of animal behaviour for viewers. Passionate about wildlife, Britton believes strongly in conservation through education. He has appeared in a number of documentaries and on various television programs throughout his 20 years of professional experience in animal husbandry and wildlife conservation that have taken him across the world, from reserves in Africa to sanctuaries in Asia.

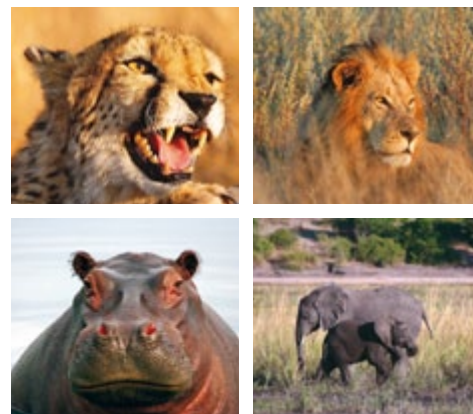
In addition to his on-air role, Britton is the Director of Wild Animal Encounters, an outreach program providing educational talks, displays and demonstrations of both native and exotic animals to the general public.

Previously Ben worked as a zookeeper in some of the leading zoological institutions both in Australia and overseas, including Sydney's Taronga Zoo and the Australian Reptile Park. During this time he gained valuable experience working with a wide variety of animal species from Elephants to Echidnas, and everything in between. With his easy-going affability, Britton is well versed in communicating wildlife conservation messages in entertaining ways through the media. He featured as the resident wildlife expert on Mornings with Kerri-Anne for three years and has appeared on numerous free-to-air and subscription television programs including Sunrise, Sydney Weekender, The Big Arvo, Saturday Disney, Make Me a Supermodel, The Today Show, Animal Hospital, Burke's Backyard, A Current Affair, Totally Wild and Australia's Next Top Model.

Ben is thrilled to be sharing his knowledge and insight into Africa and some of its rare and endangered animals with you. We hope you can join him!

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at a glance

DAY 1	DEPART SYDNEY/ARRIVE JOHANNESBURG
DAY 2	TRANSFER TO HAZYVIEW
DAY 3	VISIT MOHOLOHOLO REHABILITATION CENTRE, JESSICA THE HIPPO AND BLYDE RIVER DAM CRUISE
DAY 4	TO MASHATU (BOTSWANA)
DAY 5	PARTICIPATION IN THE NORTHERN TULI PREDATOR PROJECT (DAY 5-8). MEET MR ANDREI SYNMAN THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER
DAY 6	DARTING AND COLLARING
DAY 7	MONITORING MOVEMENTS OF COLLARED PREDATOR
DAY 8	MORNING AND AFTERNOON GAME DRIVES AT MASHATU
DAY 9	TRANSFER ACROSS THE BORDER TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR DEPARTURE
DAY 10	ARRIVE SYDNEY

additional deposits required

what's included

- Return economy airfare from Sydney to Johannesburg with South African Airways including taxes valued at around \$500 (departure from other capital cities available on request. Flights must be paid in full by 27th January 12)
- 8 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 8 dinners
- All transportation as listed in the itinerary
- Dinner in the Caesar's Palace Complex
- First Aid Kit
- Transfer ex Peermont Metcourt to Rissington Inn
- 1 nights accommodation at Rissington Inn in superior rooms
- Afternoon elephant interaction & ride
- Transfer to Raptors Lodge via Moholoholo Rehab Centre, Jessica the Hippo & Blyde Dam Cruise
- 1 night accommodation at Raptors Lodge in standard rooms on B&B basis
- BBQ dinner catered by Juan
- Transfer to Mashatu
- 5 nights accommodation at Mashatu Tented Camp on full board basis with game drives & nature walks
- Transfer ex Mashatu to OR Tambo International Airport
- Mineral water whilst in vehicle
- Toll fees
- \$625 contribution towards cost of the tracking collar (included in your trip cost)
- Trip Escorted by Nat Geo Wild Presenter Ben Britton

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

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fast facts

Countries Visited:

South Africa & Botswana

Visas:

Please check visa requirements with your reservations consultant*

Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

Private Groups:

Private group options are not available for this trip

Singles:

Single travellers who are unable to be matched with another single traveller of the same gender, must pay a single supplement on this trip.

Leader:

Expert local leader

Brochure Reference:

Journeys of Discovery

*Ask our staff for more information

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Depart Sydney/Arrive Johannesburg

This morning you will make your own way to Kingsford Smith International Airport. You will meet Ben Britton at the airport and check in for your South African Airways / Qantas Airways code share flight to Johannesburg.

DEPART: SYDNEY on SA7701 at 1000

ARRIVE: JOHANNESBURG on SA7701 at 1605

Please check in at least two hours prior to your departure time.

After collecting your luggage, you will make your own way to the Emperors Palace courtesy shuttle service, (black and gold in colour) and transfer by road to the Peermont Metcourt Hotel for your overnight accommodation(classic rooms). Tonight you will join Ben Britton and local guide Juan Kraukamp for a welcome dinner in the Caesar's Palace Complex.

meals: D

DAY 2 Transfer to Hazyview

After breakfast, you will be met by your guide and transferred by road to Hazyview for your overnight accommodation at Rissington Inn (superior room). You will be met at approximately 12 noon in the lobby of the Rissington Inn by your Elephant Whispers Driver/Guide for your Elephant Whispers Ultimate Interaction. You will learn about their important role as ambassadors for the African elephant. You will also have the opportunity to ride on the back of your elephant as well as have the experience of walking with your elephant as well - a truly unique experience. After your Elephant Interaction, your Guide will transfer you by road back to the Rissington Inn where you will have the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

meals: B,D

DAY 3 Visit Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre, Jessica the Hippo and Blyde River Dam Cruise

After breakfast, you will be met by your guide and transferred by road to the Raptors Lodge for your overnight accommodation(standard rooms). En route you will visit the Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre, Jessica the Hippo and a enjoy a cruise on the Blyde River Dam.

Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre is nestled in a picturesque setting at the base of the Drakensberg escarpment in the Limpopo Province Lowveld of South Africa. Moholoholo has become a haven for the rehabilitation and care of abandoned, injured and poisoned wildlife. Wildlife is brought to the center from all corners of South Africa, and once healthy enough are re-introduced into their natural environments. Those creatures that cannot be returned to the wild due to the nature and extent of their injuries, are cared for at the center and are used to educate the many people who visit us each year, both from across South Africa and abroad. Another important function of the center is breeding. This Centre is a non-profit organization, relying completely on the support of the public.

Jessica the Hippo made herself a member of a South African family. Jessica has formed a bond with humans after she was found washed up by flood water when she was just a day old and has been with the family ever since.

On your boat trip you will visit the spectacular 200 m 'Kadishi Tufa Waterfall' which is one of Africa's largest active Tufa Falls and feast your eyes on the dam wall and famous 'Three Rondavels'.

This evening, you will enjoy a BBQ dinner prepared by Juan your guide.

meals: B,D

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responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website www.worldexpeditions.com

trip grading

Although there is no commitment to extended walking on this journey we nonetheless want to keep the 'accent on the active'. We therefore advise that any physical training you complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect. Active participation in camp set up and some chores are encouraged for this trip.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

DAY 4 To Mashatu (Botswana)

After breakfast, you will be met by your guide and transferred by road across the South Africa/Botswana border to Mashatu Tented Camp. In the afternoon you will enjoy a game drive (time permitting) and will have an introduction to Mashatu with your Nat Geo Wild escort Ben Britton.

Mashatu Tented Camp is nestled in the remote northern area of the Mashatu Game Reserve in the Tuli Block of Botswana. The camp sleeps a maximum of 14 guests in eight twin tents. Although rustic in character every facility is provided. The tents are insect-proofed, have comfortable beds and each has an en-suite shower and W.C. facility. There is an open sided thatch deck where meals are served and a traditional boma for intimate campfire dinners. This camp also contains a plunge pool.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Principal Researcher - Mr Andrei Snyman

Running for nearly two years, the Northern Tuli Predator Project focuses mainly on the study of lions and leopards, but other large carnivores such as the spotted hyena and brown hyena are also incorporated. Currently there are 5 male leopards collared and two male lions. Andrei Snyman, who manages the carnivore project, is currently finishing with his MSc degree, which focuses on the lion component of the project. This degree will then be followed up by a PhD – which will shift its focus to the leopard component. This predator project is becoming well established in the sense that there are seven GPS-radio collars deployed, 25 digital camera trap units, a Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle and various other high standard equipment for both office and fieldwork purposes.

Background to lion study:

The number of studies done on what the impact of safari hunting has on lion population dynamics is still few and far between. Social factors are probably the most influential to lion group dynamics, but there are environmental patterns and processes that influence the distribution of groups through space and time. There is a growing need to know how consumptive utilization influences lion population dynamics. Previous studies have shown that safari hunting could negatively affect lion reproduction, behaviour, and overall population demography. It is thus important to understand how lions react, in terms of movements, behaviour, reproduction, and home range size, to these pressures in order for wildlife managers and researchers to better understand and manage their populations.

The primary objectives of this study were to investigate:

1. How consumptive utilization affects lion social structure and population dynamics?
2. What is the current status and social structure of the lion populations of NTGR?
3. What are the movement patterns of these lions in relation to each other and after the removal of a group member?
4. What are the home range sizes and averages? Do the lions move in relation to each other, or do they utilize the whole reserve?

It is important to note that there will need to be a degree of flexibility with the programme whilst at Mashatu as we can never guarantee when we will find the predator, and on which exact day we will do the collaring. While it is extremely unlikely, we cannot guarantee 100% that an animal will be collared. The following is a guide only.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 5 Participation in the Northern Tuli Predator Project (Day 5-8). Meet Mr Andrei Snyman the Principal Researcher

Today, along with Ben Britton, you will meet Mr Andrei Snyman, the Principal Researcher of the Northern Tuli Predator Project, to begin tracking and locating the predator (either lion or leopard) to be darted and collared on Day 6. You will also enjoy a lunchtime talk by Ben on the background to filming with Nat Geo Wild, including what happens behind the scenes!

meals: B,L,D

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important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

DAY 6 Darting and collaring

Today will be an absolute once in a lifetime experience. You will assist Andrei and Ben in the darting and collaring of the chosen predator (lion, leopard or cheetah). A GPS radio collar will be placed on the animal as part of the ongoing predator research at Mashatu.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 7 Monitoring movements of collared predator

You will monitor the movements of the collared predator, as well as undertaking an afternoon game drive to view Mashatu wildlife. During the day guests will transfer to Mashatu Main Camp for a talk by Andrei on the benefits of the research programme and how the Australian Museum Members purchasing the collar has assisted the Northern Tuli Predator Project.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 8 Morning and afternoon game drives at Mashatu

Final day of game viewing at Mashatu with morning and afternoon drives.

meals: B,L,D

DAY 9 Transfer across the border to South Africa for departure

After breakfast, time permitting, you will enjoy a short game drive before being transferred across the Botswana/South Africa border to OR Tambo International Airport in time to check in for your onward flight to Sydney.

Depart JOHANNESBURG on SA7700 at 1815

Please check in at least two hours prior to your departure time.

meals: B

DAY 10 Arrive Sydney

Arrive Sydney on SA7700 at around 1405pm.

meals: NIL

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

suggested extensions

- Namibian Explorer
- Victoria Falls

country information

South Africa is a huge and diverse nation covering the entire Southern Tip of the African continent. The Rainbow Nation is home to an incredible diversity of peoples who are working on forging a new future a decade after the fall of the Apartheid regime. The land is as diverse as the people, from the postcard perfection of Cape Town and the Table Mountain to the rugged splendour of the Orange River and the teeming metropolis of Johannesburg.

climate

Southern Africa experiences a generally dry climate. In and around Johannesburg - There is a summer rainy season from November to March. The dry season from April to October includes the winter, when rain is rare and the nights can be very cold. Days are usually clear, warm and sunny and nights can get frosty in June and July. In and around Cape Town, the rain falls through winter (April to October) with a dry, warm summer (November to March).

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a typical day

While you are at Mashatu guests will join Ben and the research team plus the specialist wildlife veterinarian to begin tracking the chosen predator (lion, leopard or cheetah) this will get underway at first light after a quick tea and coffee. Depending upon where the carnivore was last seen will depend on our far we travel within the reserve, approx 1 to 2 hrs, then once we find the animal we need to get close enough to dart him. The research team will position our vehicles to give the vet the best chance of getting a dart in to the animal, normally within 20 to 30m. Once the vet is close enough he will take the shot, whilst all this is going on guests will remain within the vehicle at all times and will be asked to stay quiet and still.

Once the animal has been successfully darted, it may run off or stay close, we need to track the animal and stay close to it so we can monitor it. The drug takes around 10 to 15min to take effect, once the animal looks like it is immobilised the vet will approach the animal to ensure it is asleep. Once the vet gives the all clear, the research team and guest will be allowed out of the vehicle to approach the cat. Guests can stand by and assist the research team with assessing the animals health and attaching the new collar, checking the animals teeth, claw, weight etc. Once the cat's procedure is complete guests can have their photograph taken with the cat and research team on location, then once all the guests are safely back in the vehicle the vet will administer the reversal drug to wake the animal back up.

When the cat is fully awake we will monitor him for 30 minutes or so before leaving him and returning to Tent Camp. Later that day and on the following days we will track the cat with it's new collar to see how it is doing and to ensure the collar is working properly. Guests will be provided with special log in details so that on their return to Australia they will be able to log in and still track the cat via the internet, as the collar lasts for 2 yrs it will provide guests with an opportunity to monitor the cats movements long after the trip to Africa has ended.

what you carry

In your daypack you will need to carry extra clothing (depending on the location and weather), a rainjacket, water bottle, film and camera gear, valuables and personal items such as sunscreen, lip-eze etc.

equipment required

Specialist gear required include comfortable walking shoes and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

wildlife

The wilderness areas of Africa are populated by large numbers of wild and potentially dangerous animals. The trip aims to view these animals in their natural habitat, uncontrolled by fences. Your experienced guides will make every effort to ensure the safety of the group at all times. Please be aware that all safari travel, including vehicle safaris in the proximity of wild animals is never entirely without risk. By travelling into wild areas in search of wild animals, all participants accept that they are choosing an adventure that includes an element of risk and this is an inherent aspect of the enjoyment of this style of travel.

what's not included

- Meals/drinks other than stated in the itinerary
- Optional activities
- Meals not mentioned
- Bottled water, aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
- Tips, portorage, visa and travel insurance

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- Cable car crossing at Pont Drift if Limpopo River in flood (BWP35 p/p)
- Border fees

subscribe to our e-newsletter

To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter! You can do this on line through our website, www.worldexpeditions.com or contact our office.

trip availability

On this exclusive tour there are only limited places available (8 only). If you would like to join this amazing trip, please contact us immediately to check availability and to avoid disappointment.

how to book

To book a World Expeditions trip, you will need to complete a booking form which is found at the back of our brochure or can be downloaded from our website www.worldexpeditions.com. On completion, fax or post the form to your nearest World Expeditions office along with your non-refundable deposit. World Expeditions has access to competitive airfares. Call your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent for assistance with your travel arrangements including flights, travel insurance and additional accommodation.