



Bushwillow - Youth Nature Training and Wilderness Adventure Courses



Bushwillow Youth Nature Training and Wilderness Adventure Courses offer the unique opportunity for children to spend **seven days** living in a South African Private Game Reserve, **learning about Nature** and enjoying all of the **adventure** and **experiences** that only this privileged exposure imparts.



The camp is situated in the **Klaserie Private Nature Reserve**, a pristine expanse of wilderness unfenced from the Kruger National Park, and home to all naturally occurring wildlife. All animals are free-roaming and wild. The area is possibly best known for being the nucleus of the unique recessive gene resulting in the rare variant "white lion". But aside from lions, leopards, elephants and all other "high profile" species, probably its most valuable element is the **uninhibited access to wild African Bushveld** with all of the great **lessons, experiences** and unscripted **adventures** on offer.



In a world where our natural wildlife areas are rapidly dwindling under the consumptive pressures that human development is placing upon them, it is becoming not simply an option, but rather an obligation and responsibility that the curators of this heritage have first-hand exposure to it so as to engender a tangible association with what is truly wonderful about the Great Outdoors of Africa and its associated wildlife.

The emphasis of the courses is to get **back to basics....**



The courses are an opportunity for self-development and to broaden the horizons of exposure to include that which **only a physical African wilderness experience can offer.**

Small, intimate groups of **no more than ten** students receive the unparalleled opportunity of foundation-level Youth Nature Training and Wilderness Adventure. Learning the basics of what it takes to be a **Game Ranger in Africa** – the challenge of learning, interpreting, understanding, and being able to experience the intricacies and wonder of the wild African Bushveld. Every participant leaves having exercised the vestiges of their sensory awareness and with a **broader knowledge and appreciation of Nature** – not to mention unforgettable memories.





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It is an opportunity to learn about various aspects of plants, birds, animals and their behaviour and associated symbiotic links. Participants are taught basic survival and tracking skills, as well as how to shoot (using an air-rifle and compound bow), develop handling skills and follow critical safety guidelines.

They experience how it feels to view wild animals on foot, learn the ancient art of tracking that is rapidly being lost in a technological whirlwind, and how to approach or extract from various encounters when pitched against the sensory acuity of their quarry.

Students learn how to safely and sensitively handle and observe frogs, snakes, scorpions and spiders, and dispel the many phobic associations with these creatures.

They hike through the bush, learn how to navigate themselves in the wilderness, how to set up a camp-site and the safety and sensitivity aspects associated with "rough" camping in areas where wild animals occur.

At night they learn about the stars, constellations, planets and the moon that punctuate the dark sky in an unforgettable blanket of brilliance.

These indelible experiences and lessons will be a life-long gift to your child, the community in which they grow up and our Earth, that they will learn to respect and conserve. It is a learning environment not biased by athleticism, aesthetics, material positions or perceived intelligence – it is simply experiencing Nature as a human being, where the playing field is level....





Youth Courses (Grade 8 to 11, ages 13 to 17)

- **Game-drives**
 - Undertaken on an open Land Rover where animals are viewed up-close and learnt about, presenting the most effective method of observing and interpreting animal behaviour.
- **Game walks**
 - Ranging from general Nature appreciation and exposure, to tracking and approaching big game on foot.
- **Back-pack trail**
 - Navigating to various supply drop-off points, ending in a “rough” camp out night in the bush, sleeping on a thin mattress under the vast African night sky. Skills such as navigation and learning to use a map and compass are developed, as well as finding direction by using Nature’s orientation methods.
- **Tracking**
 - Basic Track & Sign recognition and skills related to tracking big game.
- **“Bush lane”**
 - A simulated sequence involving how to deal with potentially dangerous game on foot in a contact situation - walking through the bush, armed with a pellet gun/paint-ball gun and encountering hidden targets that simulate an engagement with a dangerous animal, and how you deal with it!
- **Wildlife knowledge development activities – students divided into teams**
 - Birding Competition (“Big Birding Day” – 12 hrs)
 - Plant I.D Competition
 - Arthropod collection and I.D
 - Frogging session (collection and I.D)
- **Bush-craft**
 - Making fire in five different ways
 - Making tools and rope from bark and branches
 - Finding and accessing water in the bush
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- **Weapon-handling**
 - Learning techniques and guidelines on the safe and effective use of a rifle (air-rifles) and a compound bow-and-arrow
- **Reptile course (**optional extra)**
 - Undertaken through a local Reptile park - Learning about snakes, spiders and scorpions
- **Animal rehabilitation centre (**optional extra)**
 - Visiting a nearby centre where an opportunity is presented to observe some of the more secretive or critically endangered species and be exposed to the arena of human-animal conflict, and what might be done to make a positive contribution to conservation and wildlife rehabilitation



Course Details:

- **Dates:** Dates may be investigated according to demand
- **Accommodation:** Permanent tents (pictured below) 2 to 4 sharing, with separate ablution blocks fitted with hot and cold running water and flush toilets
- **Location:** Based in the north-eastern section of Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, an iconic wildlife destination on the western edge of the Kruger National Park.

Included in each course:

- 3 wholesome meals a day (any dietary requirements should be discussed in advance);



snacks, coffee, tea,

hot chocolate and cordial juice

- All activities, courses and equipment use
 - Students will spend at least one night camping out in the middle of the bush and should equip themselves accordingly for that (see equipment check-list)
- Return transfers from White River to Diepkloof Camp in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve (one scheduled trip each way)
- Two branded shirts (will form a useful uniform addition to use during daily activities)
- "Bushwillow Memories" DVD including photographs and notes

Extra's **not included** in Course fee:

- Any travel or transfers excluding the scheduled return trip between White River and The Tented Camp
- Any beverages additional to what is offered as "standard"
- Any emergency medical expenses will need to be covered by individual Medical Aid Schemes

Equipment Requirements

- **Neutral colored clothing**
- **Jacket**
- **Hiking boots**
- **x-Trainers (or similar casual, comfortable footwear)**
- **Binoculars**
- **Camel-bak (or similar) day-pack with water bladder**



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- ****Small tent for sleep-outs**
- ****Sleeping bag**
- ****Lightweight camping mattress**
- **Headlamp - Petzl E-Light**
- **Torch – LED Lenser or similar light-weight hand flash-light**
- **Sunscreen**
- **Insect repellent**
- **Water Bottle**
- **Toiletries (personal)**

**** These articles may be supplied on a rental basis if required**

Course Facilitator:

Courses are facilitated and run by Alan Yeowart, who has been involved in the field guiding industry since 1996. For the last 9 years he has been with the world-acclaimed safari brand, Singita, where he headed up the group's Field Guide and Tracker Training and Development Programme for all of Singita's properties. He is one of seven people to have attained the coveted Field Guides' Association of Southern Africa ("FGASA") **Scout** qualification (Specialised Knowledge and Skills dealing with Dangerous Game & Senior Tracker) and is one of the most highly regarded trainers of field guides and trackers in the country at present. His family owns a property in the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, and his many holidays there engendered a love and respect for the bush. Alan is now in a position to share his extensive skills, knowledge and love of the Bush with your children in an innovative package designed to significantly enhance their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of our Wildlife heritage.

Qualifications:

- ❖ FGASA Qualification – Scout; Level 3, SKS (DA); SKS (Birds)
- ❖ Cyber Tracker Qualification – Senior Tracker and Evaluator
- ❖ FGASA Assessor
- ❖ Advanced Weapons Handling Assessor
- ❖ FGASA Executive Committee ('05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10)
- ❖ FGASA Mpumalanga South Regional Committee Chairman 2009, 2010
- ❖ First Aid Level 3