



Wilderness BOTSWANA Head of Conservation and Environmental Operations

WESLEY HARTMANN

Wesley's Wilderness journey began in 2023. His passionate commitment to conservation and protecting our iconic wilderness areas are perfectly aligned to his role of ensuring that ecosystem integrity is maintained throughout the region.

Wesley grew up and completed his schooling in Johannesburg, South Africa. After high school he broadened his horizons and travelled to the United States to complete a four-year undergraduate Biology degree at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. In his spare time, he worked as a university tour guide, where he enjoyed meeting new people from all walks of life and hearing their stories.

After graduating he returned home to South Africa and studied for his Honours Degree in Biodiversity and Ecology at Stellenbosch University, which saw him develop social networks for a herd of captive elephants. Continuing his research at the same institution, he applied for a Master's Degree in Applied Conservation Science.

His research took him to the Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi for 18 months. During his time in Malawi he contributed as a Field Scientist to an EarthWatch project, which saw citizen scientists assisting with ecological monitoring of the reserve. He loved his time in Malawi, and could often be found at the camp fire listening to and learning from both the local Malawians and tourists. Motivated and eager to progress, Wesley continued on to write up and successfully defend his thesis.

His career path then took a slight detour with a move to Bristol in the United Kingdom, where he trained to be a high school science teacher, whilst teaching at the same time, for three years.

A career highlight for Wesley was using his research to develop and publish protocols on how to operate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, for example drones, around elephants. Drone operators, both citizen and scientist alike, are able to easily access these protocols and ensure they are flying ethically around African elephants. Read his guidelines [here](#).

Wesley's Wilderness journey began in February 2023 as Wilderness Botswana Conservation Ecologist, and his impactful contribution to the business saw him promoted to Head of Conservation and Environmental Operations in the same year. His current focus is on initiating conservation projects paused during the pandemic, strengthening relationships with key stakeholders and NGOs, and implementing the Group's environmental best practice across Botswana. As he continues to explore how Wilderness can facilitate impactful partnerships, Wesley had this to say, "I am proud to be a part of the Wilderness family, and look forward to growing in my new role and making an even bigger impact. As we continue to protect the world's wilderness, it has become ever more apparent that co-operation and collaboration across all sectors and industries is required to ensure these spaces are conserved for future generations to come".

About Wilderness:

Founded over 40 years ago, Wilderness is a world-leading conservation and hospitality company, offering immersive journeys to a range of environments in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Wilderness is part of a global collective working to conserve the world's iconic unfenced, untamed and unpredictable wilderness areas. With more than 60 exceptional camps and lodges, Wilderness helps protect some 2.3 million hectares (6 million acres) of land across its eight African destinations. Its goal – to double that by 2030. Four decades on, the company's purpose is stronger than ever: To increase the world's wilderness, together.

www.wildernessdestinations.com