

# BOTSWANA RHINO REINTRODUCTION PROJECT – 2014 UPDATE

2014 has been a milestone year at Wilderness Safaris. After literally years of discussion, fundraising and logistics planning, a significant number of Critically Endangered black rhino were translocated from various parks in South Africa to northern Botswana.

The operation was more than just successful. Indeed, the moves have been hailed by rhino managers as an example of a well-run operation that had the wellbeing of the rhinos as the top priority. Every aspect of the operation was meticulously planned and required the integration of people from a number of different organisations and countries. To mention a few, the project team from Wilderness Safaris worked closely with Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Defence Force, and Anti-Poaching Unit, as well as SANParks (South Africa) and North West Parks and Tourism (South Africa), all with the indispensable political support of both Ministers of Environment in South Africa and Botswana.

Performed in a high-security environment, using the best veterinarians, immobilisation techniques, transport equipment and conservation experts, the move was not only without stress to the animals, but the release into the wild took place under a carefully-planned protocol designed to maximise the potential for the animals to settle into their new home, which also meant increased opportunities for natural breeding in the wild.

It is now several months since the final release took place, and our managers report that every rhino has settled in, home ranges and territories are being established and even signs of early mating have taken place. These are markers of a successful undertaking. One of the first rhino released, who was heavily pregnant at the time, has settled into an ideal area of food, water and cover and is expected to produce a calf before the end of this year – an event we await with excited anticipation.

## Six Countries Summer Special

Running for the fourth consecutive year, this highly competitive Special offers a great degree of flexibility and reduced rates at no less than 28 of our camps in Botswana, Congo, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Guests have the chance of seeing Africa at an extremely special time of year, as many species give birth to their young and the surrounding landscape is at its most lush. This explosion of new life results in amazing wildlife-viewing conditions, with regular predator sightings and excellent birding opportunities. The offer is valid from 1 November 2014 until 31 March 2015 (excluding the festive season). Please contact your Journey Specialist for more information.

HIGHLIGHTS



pg 2

Wild dog dens



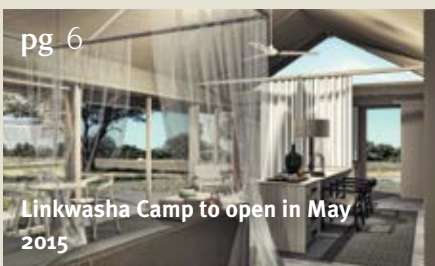
pg 3

Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp is open!



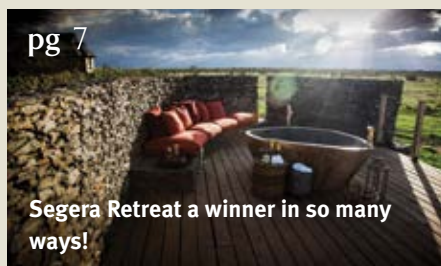
pg 5

Stunning upgrades to Shumba Camp



pg 6

Linkwasha Camp to open in May 2015



pg 7

Segera Retreat a winner in so many ways!



pg 7

Bizarre Odzala wildlife



## A BUMPER YEAR FOR WILD DOG DENS IN OUR BOTSWANA CONCESSIONS

In any given year, we are usually lucky enough to record around four packs of wild dog denning in our Botswana concessions, but this year we logged seven different packs – one at **Abu**, one at **Chitabe**, one at **Vumbura** and no fewer than four packs in the **Linyanti Concession**.

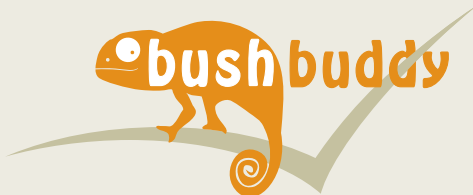
Classified as an Endangered species, African wild dog populations have been dwindling. Currently estimated at only 1 400 mature individuals, populations continue to decline as a result of ongoing habitat fragmentation, conflict with human activities, and infectious disease.

Northern Botswana and its surrounding areas (including Hwange and Kafue) are home to some of the largest and most important populations of wild dogs in Africa and this year's denning season only serves to confirm this, as well as the vital role that ecotourism plays in protecting this species.



## DEDICATED TO OUR YOUNGER GUESTS

Wilderness Safaris Botswana, which welcomes children from six years old and upwards, is thrilled to announce that our current Bush Buddy programme in this region is expanding. With six key staff members who have been trained in childcare and the educational aspects of looking after children in the bush, guests can now relax completely in the knowledge that their children are being entertained, as well as being gently encouraged to learn about and fall in love with wildlife and the environment.



## THE GREEN DESERT – SUMMER AT KALAHARI PLAINS CAMP

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve comes alive in the summer months! The first rains of the season may fall in November and depending on how much is received the desert springs to life, with annual grasses responding almost overnight and attracting concentrations of springbok and gemsbok to the pans and valley floors. This summer we expect this annual event to be even more spectacular following a large fire that ravaged the area in early October; Kalahari Plains Camp is perfectly situated to access the green carpet of life that will no doubt cover the area over the next few months.



## EXPLORING FROM BRAND NEW GOMOTI TENTED CAMP

Gomoti Tented Camp in the community-owned Santawani Concession, Okavango Delta, is the latest addition to the Wilderness Safaris Explorations suite of camps. Not only is the area known for its diversity and wealth of wildlife but a new community partnership in the area allows us to continue our proactive 4Cs philosophy. Guests of the Great Wilderness Journey, which explores northern Botswana, will enjoy this superb location and traditional rustic safari camp.





## HOANIB SKELETON COAST CAMP IS OPEN!

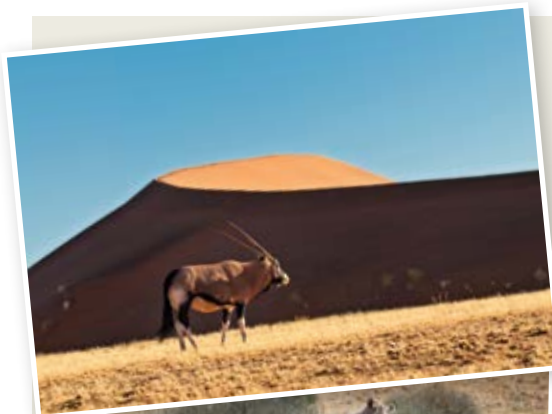
On 1 August, the much-anticipated Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp opened, and the first few months of operation have been a huge success. As one of the most remote areas of Namibia offering unusual diversity, guests have been thrilled at the promise of something new every day. Guests have explored the dramatic rugged landscapes, dry riverbeds, soft sand dunes and a series of phenomenal oases in search of remarkable desert-adapted wildlife, as well as taken scenic flights (weather permitting) that revealed the wonders of the harsh Skeleton Coast with its enormous seal colonies and fascinating shipwreck remains. Everyone has enjoyed this new camp as a luxurious base from which to enjoy such a wild, dramatic landscape.



## NORTH-WEST NAMIBIA – A TRUE WILDERNESS

The Kaokoveld region of north-west Namibia, one of the wildest and most desolate areas in the world, is characterised by valleys and dry riverbeds that carve their way through deep gorges and ancient geological features. The rivers are ribbon-like oases that push through the most desolate of terrains and attract wildlife. Each of our camps in this region offers very different experiences; these are just some of the highlights:

- **Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp** – Explore the dramatic Skeleton coastline, desert oases and moon-like landscape with fascinating desert-adapted wildlife.
- **Damaraland and Doro Nawas Camps** – Learn more about desert-adapted elephant and local communities and cultures.
- **Desert Rhino Camp** – Track some of the world’s last free-roaming black rhino on foot with Save the Rhino Trust (SRT).
- **Serra Cafema** – Discover the surreal contrasts between desert and river and interactions with the local semi-nomadic Himba people.



## NEW EXPLORATION: DESERT DUNE SAFARI

Launching in 2015, **Desert Dune Safari** promises to be a fabulous Exploration that replaces the Great Namibian Journey. Still beginning at the iconic red dunes of Sossusvlei and including tracking desert-adapted black rhino at Desert Rhino Camp, this exciting new safari also takes in the dramatic coastline of the Skeleton Coast.

Guests are also able to continue to Serra Cafema on the Kunene River or to Ongava Game Reserve near Etosha as an add-on.





## ROCKTAIL – WHAT LIES BENEATH

The magic of Rocktail Beach Camp is felt from the moment of arrival, from warm and inviting shores to the lush forest trails and the friendly people. However, dive into the immaculate ocean with a tank on your back and you enter another world, one of unspoilt reefs and diverse colourful sea life.

Our dive sites are rated amongst **the top 10 in the world** and sightings of white-tip reef sharks, ragged-tooth sharks and green turtles are just some of the fascinating creatures seen regularly on our reefs. From tiny Spanish dancers and curious potato bass to breaching humpback whales and maybe even a whale shark, guests are blown away by the wealth of life beneath our waters... and, if diving is not for you, snorkelling is just as rewarding!



## TURTLE TALES OF ROCKTAIL

Turtle season is upon us once again and the excitement is palpable at Rocktail Beach Camp. From **mid-October to mid-March** every year, the enormous, Endangered leatherback and loggerhead turtles lay their eggs on our secluded beaches, and a few months later tiny hatchlings run the gauntlet for the ocean. This sight must rate as among the most moving wildlife experiences anywhere in the world.

Since 1995, Wilderness Safaris has been involved in the Maputaland Sea Turtle Project run by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, which includes patrolling the beaches and monitoring of the turtles that nest and hatch. Over this period the population of both species has grown significantly and our guests are able to experience the rare and special sighting of nesting females or even hatchlings scrambling for the ocean.



## LATEST FROM WILDERNESS TOURING CAPE

Wilderness Touring has increased its Cape Town fleet, bringing the total to 15 vehicles and reducing the average age of the fleet to below one year. What's more, we have enabled the fleet with complimentary Wi-Fi access, subject to availability.



While most people still relish the opportunity of disconnecting from technology while they are on holiday, the option of being in touch with family and friends to share their experience is now there.

## AN ACTIVE CAPE TOWN OPTION

Cape Town offers guests a fantastic opportunity to get out of the vehicle without missing any of the highlights of the Cape. Cycling through Cape Point National Park or the breathtaking winelands is becoming increasingly popular as are the various hikes on the world-famous Table Mountain.

Kayaking to the penguins at Boulders Beach is a fantastic way to burn off a few kilojoules and the surfing at Muizenberg enthral veterans and novices alike.





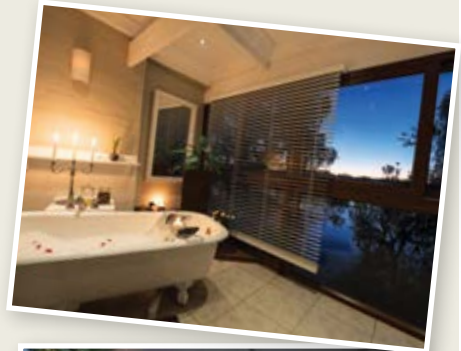
## STUNNING UPGRADES TO SHUMBA CAMP

The newly-rebuilt main area and refurbished rooms at Shumba offer guests the most luxurious way to experience all that the Busanga Plains has to offer. Spotted lazing around and investigating the new deck, even the lion seem to approve!



## THE RIVER CLUB – ANOTHER SUPERB RENOVATION

The rooms at The River Club have been completely modernised without losing all the charm of the ‘old’ River Club. Tin roofs replace the thatch, while the front of each room is now glass, maximising the generous view in comfort. All the interiors have been replaced or renovated while the upstairs bathroom now has a shower, hand basin and toilet. The main bathroom is downstairs where you can still luxuriate in a beautiful bubble bath.



## TOKA LEYA AND THE RIVER CLUB’S IMPORTANT COMMUNITY TIES

Community involvement is a vital component of all ecotourism and it is no different in the greater Livingstone area where both Toka Leya and The River Club have long-term engagements with the nearby villages of **Sinde** and **Simonga**. Aside from employment and Children in the Wilderness (CITW), our engagement here has led to informative village visits for guests at both camps, which have raised both awareness, and meaningful contributions, facilitated through CITW, that have greatly assisted the communities.

In the past year, two solar pumps, four water tanks and two water troughs were donated to Sinde while the Simonga Health Post has been connected to an important water source that delivers 50 000 litres of clean water to 4 000 inhabitants. Other innovative donations were that of solar study lamps made to students in Simonga School’s top class and 11 solar-powered computers to Twabuka Community School in Sinde Village.





# ZIMBABWE

## LINKWASHA CAMP TO OPEN IN MAY 2015

Linkwasha Camp is the next exciting development for Wilderness Safaris. Set in a private concession in the south-eastern corner of Hwange National Park Linkwasha Camp's eight tents, including a family room, are being built to scenically look out over a productive waterhole. This luxurious Classic Camp will welcome its first guests in May 2015.



\*Artist's Impression

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT HWANGE CAMP



Linkwasha Camp

With three camps in private concessions in the south-eastern sector of Hwange National Park, which camp do you choose? Each camp is unique in its setting, offering and style and therefore caters for the many diverse guest experience requirements. While our Journey Specialists will be able to assist you with the decision, here is a quick overview to help:

**LINKWASHA CAMP** – Highest level of luxury, exclusivity and remoteness; exceptional service and guiding; outstanding wildlife experience; good access to the wildlife-rich Ngamo Plains.

**LITTLE MAKALOLO** – Small and intimate; fantastic log-pile hide for outstanding game viewing; waterhole in front of camp attracts a plethora of elephant and other wildlife.

**DAVISON'S CAMP** – Productive area of the park; affordable; convivial and laid back; viewing platform in camp that overlooks a thriving waterhole.



Little Makalolo



Davison's Camp



Ruckomechi Camp

### Further Afield

**RUCKOMECHI CAMP** – Set in the picturesque Mana Pools National Park on the banks of the Zambezi, Ruckomechi offers some of the most beautiful 360-degree views in Africa, fantastic diversity of wildlife and an enormous array of exciting activities.

## ORIGINAL ZIMBABWE CAMPAIGN RESULTS IN INCREASED DEMAND

It has been exciting to see the growing numbers of visitors that have been flocking back to Zimbabwe since the launch of the Original Zimbabwe campaign. Under the umbrella of this campaign, Camp Hwange, Changa Safari Camp, Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge, The Hide Safari Camp, Meikles Hotel, Singita Pamushana Lodge, Victoria Falls Hotel, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge and Wilderness Safaris camps have joined forces in enticing guests back to this spectacular country offering wonderful wildlife-filled safaris, dramatic landscapes and friendly people.



Add to this affordable rates, easy international access and the best professional guides in Africa, and Zimbabwe is an excellent choice for the enthusiastic safari traveller.



## SEGERA RETREAT, A WINNER IN SO MANY WAYS!

Segera Retreat is the only hotel in Africa to make both the UK and USA **Condé Nast Travellers' 2014 Hot Lists** of the editors' favourite new places to stay. It was selected as one of the **'Best Way-Out-There'** hotels that celebrates both the destination and journey. Segera is not just about the exploring Kenya's remarkable Laikipia Plateau, but also the inner journey of wellness, luxury, fine organic dining and bespoke service, while you watch wildlife from the comfort and privacy of your villa. Segera was also chosen by the **Robb Report** for its prestigious "Top 100 Resorts."



Removing all remaining fences from Greater Segera has reopened ancient migration routes and has led to significant increases in the local game populations. Predator sightings (especially lion, hyaena and wild dog) have also increased as the herds have returned.

## NORTH ISLAND – 10 YEARS AT THE TOP AND STILL IMPROVING

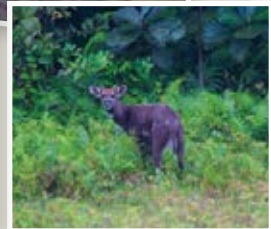
Now in its eleventh award-winning year, North Island continues to set the standard for private island hideaways. Well known for its "barefoot luxury" concept, the guest offering has been further enhanced during 2014 with the latest softs and décor refurbishment reinforcing the sense of place and delivering unparalleled levels of sophistication and comfort. Exclusivity and privacy, along with impeccable bespoke service, have seen North Island assert its position as an icon of sustainable idyllic escape and relaxation with purpose. This has been recognised in the latest **Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Awards** with North Island being voted second best hotel in Africa and the Middle East, and third best overall in the world.



## ODZALA'S BIZARRE WILDLIFE

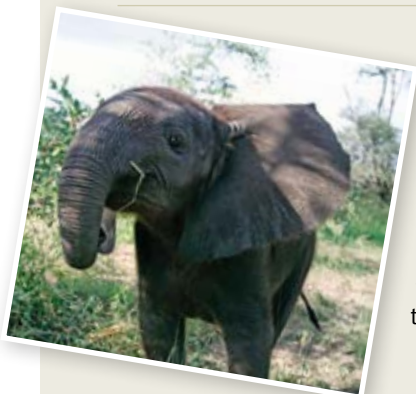
Tracking habituated groups of western lowland gorillas continues to be a real highlight for our guests visiting Odzala Wilderness Camps. Depending on where the groups are found each day and the vegetation of their surroundings, sightings vary from intimate and spectacular, to challenging and cryptic, but the experience leaves no-one unmoved. There is more life here than just gorillas though, and some of the more secretive and elusive creatures are beginning to reveal themselves to our patient (and intrepid) guests.

Lord Derby's anomalure – a bizarre type of flying squirrel – has glided right across the main Ngaga deck on occasion, while night walks have revealed elegant needle-clawed galago, Demidoff's dwarf galago and even, on one really exciting night, a long-tailed pangolin! At Lango, two young western sitatunga have begun to call the camp home, as has a water chevrotain who has been seen sporadically at night right from the elevated decks in camp. Bongo make occasional appearances in the bai too. A troop of guereza colobus are regular visitors to camp, while boating on the Lekoli River has produced regular – if usually fleeting – sightings of a host of diurnal primate species such as moustached monkey, agile mangabey, grey-cheeked mangabey, putty-nosed monkey and De Brazza's monkey.



## NALEDI REUNITED WITH THE ABU HERD

The 24th of May was a big day at Abu Camp as it was the day that our elephant calf Naledi was reintroduced to the herd. Although the herd's other youngsters, Warona and Paseka, initially viewed her with some reservation, the rest of the herd accepted her calmly, leading to a peaceful reunion. Quickly forgetting her handlers with whom she had spent months, Naledi slotted back in where she belonged immediately and has since been charming guests with her mischievous and energetic behaviour. After a sad start to the year with the tragic death of her beloved mother Kitty, Naledi's future is as bright as the star after which she was named.





## AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE IUCN

We are extremely proud to announce that in July our very own Dr Sue Snyman, Group Community and Culture Manager and Programme Director for Children in the Wilderness, was elected as Vice Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) **Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS)**.

Sue's 17 years of ecotourism experience and her important PhD (Resource Economics) work examining the socio-economic impact of high-end ecotourism in remote, rural communities adjacent to protected areas are already greatly assisting the Group in supporting sustainable tourism in protected areas.



## 2014 NEDBANK TOUR DE TULI: A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The 2014 Nedbank Tour de Tuli was the best yet, raising a record-breaking R2.5 million for Children in the Wilderness (CITW). In August, the 10th edition of the event saw 340 participants cycle across over 250 km of challenging and remote terrain in Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Once again the tour lived up to its reputation as one of southern Africa's premier mountain biking events; indeed, it won the inaugural **We Are Africa Innovation Award** for Most Original Itinerary and was defined by We Are Africa as a "surprising, amazing itinerary that leaves you speechless and challenges the traditional expectations of travel in Africa."



## NEW WEBSITES

Launched towards the end of last year, the Wilderness Safaris site has been a hit. So much so, that we took it on ourselves to upgrade the look and feel and user-friendliness of our multi-language sites to be more in line with the company site. Our six languages include **French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German and Russian** and can be accessed by clicking on the relevant nation's flag at the top right hand corner of the website: [www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com).



[www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com)

## NEW WILDERNESS WILDLIFE TRUST WEBSITE

In order to appreciate the variety of all 150 important conservation projects that our Wilderness Wildlife Trust has been involved with, we have given its website a fresh new look and feel. Launched in October, the new site allows for easy navigation and functionality which has been welcomed by all who have set eyes on it – [www.wildernesstrust.com](http://www.wildernesstrust.com).



[www.wildernesstrust.com](http://www.wildernesstrust.com)