



Favorite Moments from my September 2019 Safaris

## Description

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Hyenas can hunt and catch their own food, but they also steal as a means to an easy meal

My favorite part about leading safaris in South Africa is the pleasure, awe, and delight in the eyes and faces of my guests when they have wildlife encounters that exceed all expectations. Some guests are not expecting how close we can get to the animals and the behaviors we get to experience first hand.

My favorite moments while on safari are not the perfect photos, but the times when we get to be special observers into the lives of wildlife or see something completely unexpected.

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A male leopard on patrol after dark in Sabi Sands

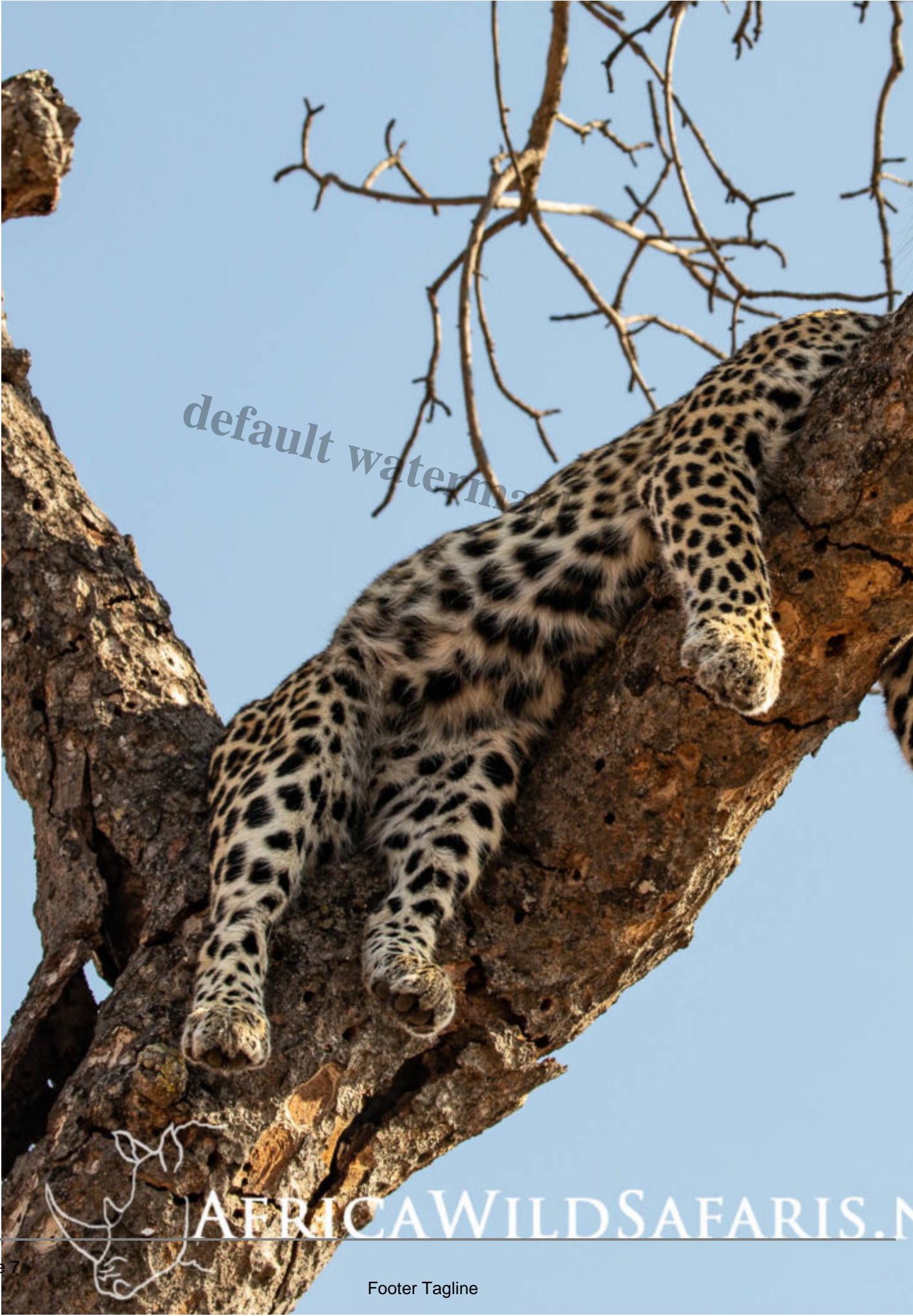
## Leopards Being Awesome & Humorous

We spend 3 nights in the wildlife rich Sabi Sands Reserve. The rivers and trees make this a favorite habitat for leopards. The rangers and guides have some to know many of the resident and itinerate leopards in the area and can recognize and tell histories of many of the cats.

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Leopards are very comfortable climbing and sleeping in trees , as this female demonstrates



While on an evening game drive we see leopards traveling within their territory on patrol to mark or defend it or moving into good hunting areas. Watching the big males walk with strength in the steps and alert eyes is very exciting: will they run across an other male trespassing or stalk vulnerable prey animals in the dark?

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Leopards have favorite trees they use to eat in peace from those who would steal their kill or to secret it away for later when they have eaten their fill. As with all cats, they are experts at getting comfortable for

long naps. Looking directly into the eyes of these top predators is something you do not forget and it challenges us to capture this feeling in our photographs.



## A Busy Watering Hole at Kruger National Park



Juvenile elephants play while the adults drink and bathe

Kruger is a huge park and has a high degree of biodiversity . September is still dry season so watering holes are popular spots for all wildlife. Mid morning we stopped at a spot overlooking a large watering hole. Zebra, waterbuck, and impala were at the shores or drinking as we scanned the water for hippos. We spotted saddle billed storks, vultures drinking, and watched a large kudu male and his harem visit for a drink. Then at the far left a family of elephants approached with the matriarch marching in the lead with ears flared in a display of determination and domination. Behind her were juveniles, other females, and a few very young ones. They lined up at the water's edge to drink and we could observe that the littlest ones were so young they could not yet drink using their trunk but rather had to kneel down to drink by mouth. The adults soon ventured into the water to bathe and apply mud while the young ones broke out into wrestling and tumbling in the water. As they were leaving, just to show who is in charge, the elephants mock charged some zebra to scare them away.

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elephants chase zebras away from the watering hole

This was a prime example of the magic of Kruger Park where sometimes you just sit at a nice spot and see the wildlife come to you and play out their daily dramas.

## Lions, Hyenas, and Cheetahs

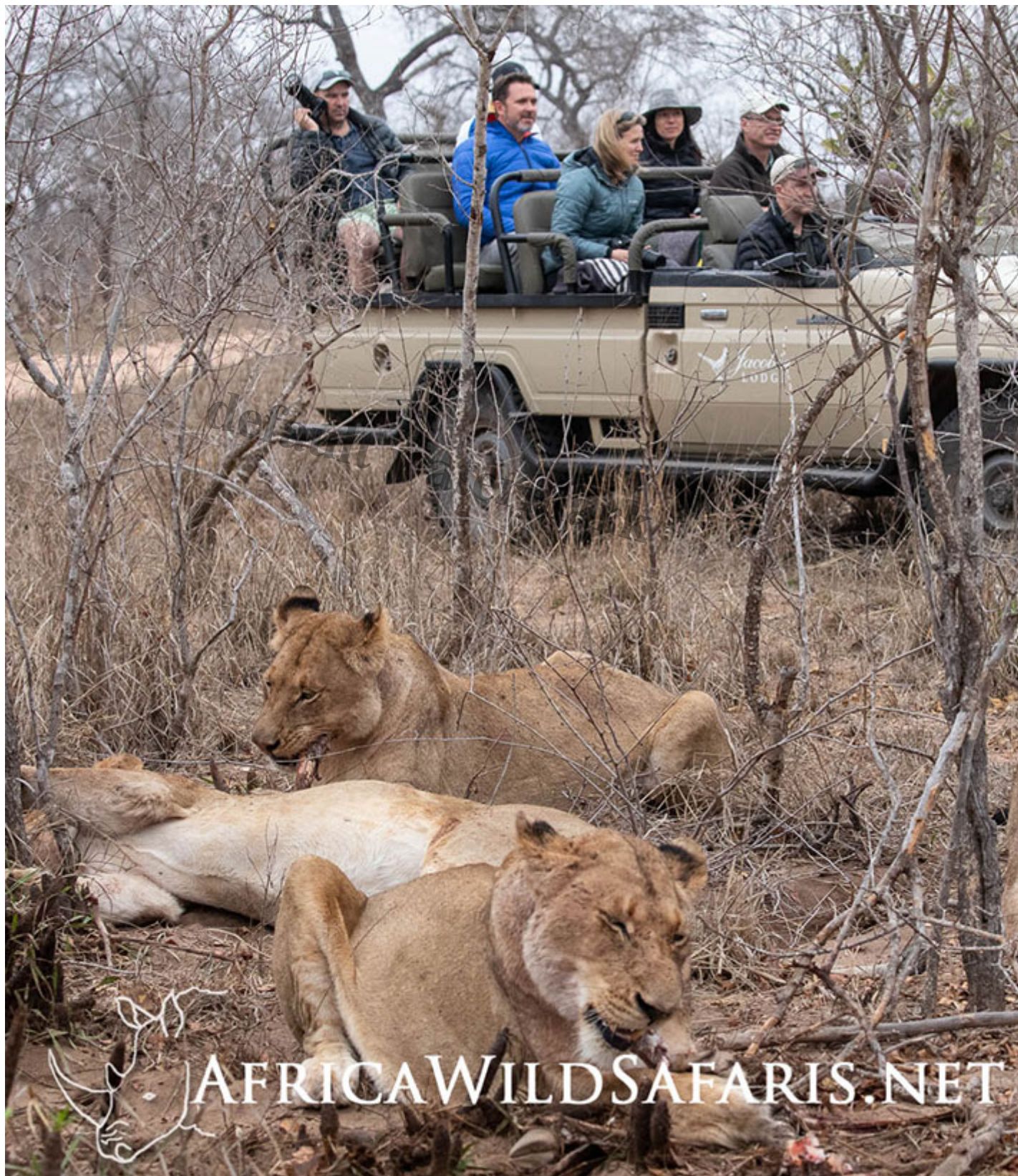


Young hyenas at the den

Seeing predators in action or at rest is always exciting and shows us how predators and prey both play their role in the environment. We can learn so much by watching them in action and at rest. Everything we note about them informs our photographs and makes the memories of these encounters more vivid.



Two cheetah brothers survey their hunting grounds in the morning light







As with any cat, lions know how to get comfortable for their frequent naps; this time on an old termite mound

**Being Surprised by what we didnâ€™t expect to see**



Kori Bustard: one of the largest birds in the savanna

With nature, anything is possible and you never know what you will see. This seems to have become more a rule since many of the fences between Kruger Park and the private reserves have been taking away.



A male hippo making a territorial display



A white backed vulture joins storks and other vultures at a carcass



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An oxpecker sits on the head of a white rhino picking off parasites

We are always excited to see white and black rhinos still in the wild and not confined to small, guarded properties as in so many places.

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## White Rhinos in an alert stance

There are also common species that present to us in such a way as to make us see them differently and make a nice image.



Usually calm zebra suddenly break into a gallop and bring a sense of excitement to a wide angle image.

After so many years I am still amazed, thrilled, and humbled by the wildlife we encounter in our area of South Africa. It is so exciting to see my guests be surprised by their first safari adventure.

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