



Favorite Moments from May 2021 Safaris

Description

I would like to begin with a big thank you to my guests who were so excited to get back to travel in 2021. Many people may have thought it was too soon, but our safaris went to plan with very few troubles related to the pandemic. We were greeted by a tourism industry that was very grateful that we made the efforts.

As a reward we also experienced nearly empty flights, being the only ones at lodges, and very few other visitors in reserves such as Kruger. The wildlife for its part, was as good as it always is and we had great encounters with charismatic species and a few surprise encounters.

These are my favorite moments captured in images from my two May 2021 safaris

Wild Dog Stories



Over the last few years the number of encounters with wild dogs has greatly increased. They have really made a great comeback in our areas in and near Kruger National Park. This is a positive outcome from conservation and education efforts.



On this afternoon game drive we found a solitary wild dog female alone and acting a bit stressed. We watched and followed as she sniffed, called, and looked for her pack. After a while she found the pack, but needed to “pass the test” to be verified and allowed back into the pack. It was fascinating to watch the almost ritual behavior of smelling, showing submission, and introduction needed for her to be allowed back into the pack. Soon the whole pack was relaxing in the grass together.



Our guess was that she had been separated from the pack that morning during a group hunting strategy and it too this long to find her way back.

Unusual Sightings



We love the lions, elephants, leopards, and giraffe, but it is the less known and appreciated species which gives you the full picture of the biodiversity that exists in and around our area of Kruger. The park has the highest number of species due to its large size and the length of time it has been a wildlife sanctuary.

The ground hornbill is a large bird and has habitat loss issues. Conservation efforts have been slowly making an impact with their populations and our knowledge about them.

I am proud to report that every recent visit to Kruger we have seen ground hornbills. We always report the sighting to the Thunderbird research group so they can keep tabs on these study subjects.

Chameleons are common but hard to spot. The best chance to find them is at night, but it seems that only the old fashioned bulb torches can find them. The led bulbs don't make that nice contrast that helps you to see them. For this reason we are always happy to find one out in the daylight. This one was displaying an alarm coloration, probably because it felt nervous being on the ground and out of the trees. I made sure it crossed the street safely.



Born in the Spring

We were visiting South Africa in the late summer/early fall but some of the young born at the start of the rainy season at the beginning of the year were still in their juvenile state and giving us some very cute photo opportunities and sometimes a good laugh. The baby elephant was not in full control of his trunk and waved it around and tripped over it to our amusement.







An overconfident show off baby elephant was hilarious



Yes, we still see wild white rhinos “ and babies



Leopard of Sabi

Part of my safaris are spent in the Sabi Sands Reserve because they have the ecosystem leopards prefer: river basins and nice trees. The rangers in Sabi know each leopard and its movements which makes for great encounters and knowledge for my guests. We can photograph them in daytime or at night. Often we find them up trees with their kills.







ok, not a leopard, but a really great lion encounter in Sabi

Just as I am sad that a safari ends, I begin to look forward to the next one. My next safaris will be in May 2022 when I suspect things will look more like normal.





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