



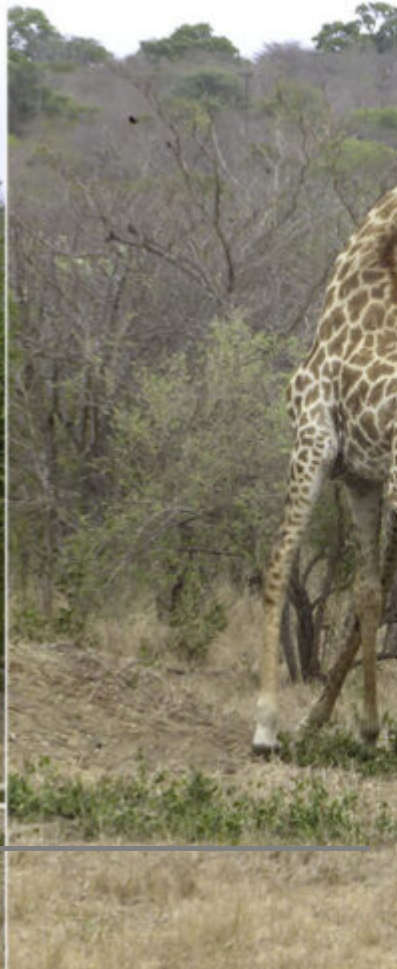
## Giraffes Like a Fair Fight

### Description

When male giraffes battle over territory or mating rights, things get nasty fast. The animals batter each other with their long necks and slash and stab, often fatally, with the hornlike ossicones on their heads. This all out form of fighting is not the only time giraffe spar. New research shows that when giraffes spar as a way of establishing social hierarchies they adhere to a strict code of ethics much like that of boxing.

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Like in boxing bigger giraffes do not pick on smaller rivals. Also, each giraffe has a preference as to whether it wings its neck left (southpaw) or right (orthodox) and they position themselves during sparring so that neither fighter has an advantage. When it is southpaw vs orthodox they go head to head: For two of the same its head to tail. Sometimes older males even act as referees, stepping in to separate the youngsters. Unless this is just behavior aimed at consolidating their own social standing. The author notes that their study covered only a small number of giraffes at the Mgalakwena River Reserve in South Africa. The study author, Jessica Granweiler, from the University of Manchester, explains "Maybe there is more respect in my population because they see each other quite often".

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We have giraffes on our reserve which divide up into several smaller groups leading to some aggressive moments between the dominant males guarding the females and young. Giraffe behavior is often on full display around our waterhole near the lodge between the older male who favors our quiet corner and our trees and the younger, more dominant male.

If you like this, check out my other Safari Stories Featuring Giraffes

Photographing Giraffes. <https://photographafrica.blog/?p=3855>

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