

Student Safaris

Field Course in Southern Africa

Max. number of students: 20 per tour

Credits: 3 ECTS

Admission requirements

BSc or MSc Student of Wageningen University

Content

This Field Course named 'Student Safaris' provides field experience in conservation issues, ecology, wildlife, and plants in different countries of Southern Africa. The course focuses on the importance of wildlife conservation and understanding actual conflicts concerning protection of wildlife species and their habitats. The field course provides a deeper understanding of the structure and functioning of animal communities, population control, translocations, wildlife diseases, and animal behaviour. During the course, students will encounter a large diversity of endemic mammals, birds, invertebrates, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. From experts in the field, students will learn more about wildlife conservation, doing ecological research, and the management of national parks during visits of protected areas, special reserves, NGOs and research institutes. To facilitate an understanding of conservation on Southern Africa, students will prepare presentations that will be giving on site. These presentations will mainly focus on biodiversity, conservation, human-wildlife conflicts, and ecology in certain areas and habitats. The course will provide a unique opportunity for students to learn new skills and concepts. It also enables students to orient themselves on a potential research internship or research project and will trigger them to evaluate their ambitions and further steps in their academic career. All students receive a certificate after completion of the course.

Learning outcomes

This course enables students from different disciplines to gain experience with wildlife conservation in the field and knowledge about wildlife, habitats, flora, and the applicability of all of these in conservation management and ecological studies.

After successful completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- critically discuss and evaluate challenges and problem in conservation and management of wildlife species
- understand species distribution and adaptation to specific climate regimes and resource availability
- understand the major physiological and behavioural adaptations of animals in different habitats and ecological systems
- describe different strategies aimed at prioritizing areas for conservation and effective management
- discuss human-wildlife conflicts on an academic level

Guidance

The guides that accompany the students during the complete trip have years of experience with overland travels in Southern Africa. Therefore, they have a varied general knowledge on the nature, culture, geological background, and natural history of all the locations. The guides also stimulate students in reflecting on their career aspirations, give them some life experiences and flexibility when working in developing countries. Qualified local guides and game rangers are arranged at all specific sites and they offer essential knowledge of the park, nature, and animals present. Preparation of the course and final reports will be evaluated by the course coordinator, while the oral presentations, plenary discussions, and overall participation will be evaluated by the local guide.

Teaching format and grading

The course consists of one week preparation (field trip and oral presentation), three weeks in the field, and one week finalising the report. All activities are mandatory and include:

- Oral presentation in the field
- Plenary discussions
- Writing a final group report based on the acquired knowledge
- Overall motivation and participation

The students who successfully complete the course will receive a 'pass'.

Materials

Relevant literature, including primary and review articles, will be used as background materials to the presentations and discussions.

Dates and application

- South Africa and Swaziland (SA): 12-31 July 2019
- Botswana-Zimbabwe (SABoZi): 9-28 July or till 1 August 2019

If you want to apply or would like to receive more information on the field course, please send an e-mail to studentsafaris@gmail.com