

Dear Friends

Explore Nature is now in its third year of operation and we are excited to share with you how we have grown. The past couple of years have seen us build our website and establish our brand. As part of our growth we are excited to introduce the first edition of *Nature Explorer* which will be a periodic newsletter filled with inspiring safari experiences, memorable pictures, video links, future safaris, updates, news and more. Some of you have already "Explored Nature" with me over the last 15 years and experienced some of the true wonders of Africa. I hope you will be inspired to come and explore some of what Africa has to offer.



Below is just a taste of the highlights from the 2011 safari season which includes getting down and dirty camping wild in Botswana to living it up in luxury lodges in the Greater Kruger area in South Africa:

## What's News

Have you checked out **Explore Nature's website** with:

- interactive map of regions;
- information about each country and its highlights;
- video links; and
- upcoming safaris.

[www.explorenature.com.au](http://www.explorenature.com.au)

### 2012 Safaris:

- two places are available on a three week **birding safari** through Botswana and Namibia in September;
- availability in July and the first week of August for private guided safari; or
- let us assist you to customise and book your safari.

A safari to the Greater Kruger National Park including the renowned Sabi Sand Reserve and the stunning Thornybush Game Reserve produced fantastic birding and superb big cat sightings. We watched in amazement as a lioness charged in and leapt onto an old buffalo cow and battled for over an hour to take it down. The powerful cat took regular breaks where she would let her body go limp before resuming her tug-of-war with the buffalo.

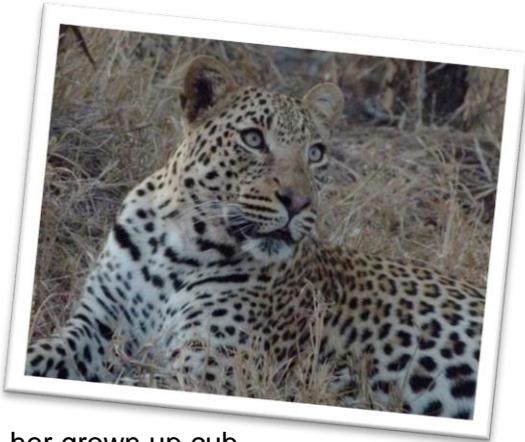
A visit to Elephant Plains Game Lodge in the Sabi Sands got off to a fantastic start with a leopard sighting in front of the chalets within minutes of arriving.

During our stay we had numerous leopard and lion sightings, including a male leopard we followed as he strolled toward one of the neighbouring lodges.

Incredibly he jumped up onto the deck of one of the guest rooms, sniffed around and brazenly headed on through the lodge (luckily most of the guests would have been out on morning game drive!).

The stunning Thornybush Game Lodge saw our superb big cat sightings continue, this time including several cheetah sightings. One cheetah unsuccessfully chased a herd of nyala in front of the lodge while we were having afternoon tea. With the great





views that many lodges offer one can have amazing sightings without even leaving one's room.

The pick of the sightings for us at Thornybush was an incredible encounter between a female leopard and her recently independent male cub feeding on a giraffe carcass. After the young male had fed we spent some time observing him before he headed off to rest in a nearby tree. The mother arrived a short time later, looked up at her cub, called to him briefly before heading to the carcass to also feed. When she finished she looked for who had since sleeked off into the darkening night. It was

her grown up cub,

the most incredible experience observing her sniffing around trying to locate her cub while gently calling, not wanting to attract the attention of any lions or hyenas. She followed his scent trail and became increasingly frustrated as her calls went unanswered. It was so quiet that we could hear her sniffing as she circled our open Land Rover. Click on the below link to view some of footage from this amazing sighting [youtube video link](#).

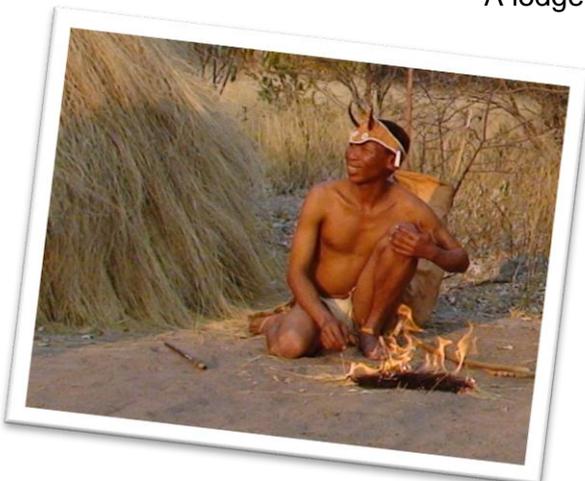
Over the course of three weeks our safari in Botswana saw us exploring some rough and remote areas with special wildlife experiences including tracking white rhino on foot at Khama Rhino Sanctuary; travelling by mekoro (dugout canoe) up channels in the Okavango Delta; visiting remote areas like Nxai Pan, Kubu Island and the vast unspoilt wilderness of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

Many nights were spent wild camping – for those with the right sense of adventure nothing beats setting up camp from scratch and taking everything out with you again.

Falling asleep in a tent to the sound of lions roaring in the distance reinforces just how untamed the bush is. Travelling off the beaten track produced special encounters with rarely seen animals like Aardwolf, Honey Badger and both Roan and Sable Antelope.



A lodge safari in Botswana had us visiting the serene Kalahari; bird-rich lagoons of Moremi Game Reserve, the vast unspoilt Makgadigadi Pans and the ever-popular Chobe Game Reserve. While staying at Dinaka Safari Lodge we spent an afternoon out on a walk with a highly knowledgeable and humorous San (Bushmen) guide who shared some of his ancient culture and amazing knowledge of the local fauna and flora.



On an early morning game drive in Chobe Game Reserve we spent an hour with a pride of lions around the remains of a giraffe carcass. The three young cubs were full of life, dwarfed by the enormous hollowed out giraffe

they used as a jungle gym. They quickly bored of playing on the huge carcass and tugging at the tough flesh with their baby teeth and went off to bother one of the two huge pride males. After a sharp rebuke the cubs sensibly went to pester mum instead. The lioness headed up a tree for shade with the three cubs in tow, trying out their climbing skills. It was truly a memorable experience watching them playing and interacting, completely oblivious to us on the safari vehicles watching them.

I hope you've enjoyed these stories as much as I have enjoyed reliving them - perhaps even inspired to "Explore Nature". Please feel free to forward onto your friends and family whom you think may enjoy the read.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone an enjoyable Festive Season and a safe New Year for 2012.

Martin

what we offer		
<p><b>Scheduled departures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Join a group of adventurers on a scheduled safari guided by Martin. Safaris can range in number of days, destinations and types of accommodation ie camping through to 5 star lodging.</li> <li>I currently have two places available on a birding safari departing on 4 September 2012 for three weeks predominately in Botswana and Namibia.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Private guided safaris</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private guided safaris are tailor made to suit your wishes. You choose where, when, how long and the type of accommodation. These exclusive safaris are</li> </ul>	<p><b>Booking Agent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those not wanting a privately guided safari we can share our expert knowledge to plan and book a trip of a life time.</li> </ul>
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