



# EXPERIENCE AFRICA

## June 2011

This Newsletter is intended to inform the 4x4 and outdoor leisure community. WE AIM to promote the off- road camping lifestyle. If you are incorrectly subscribed or do not like our Newsletter please click on the UNSUBSCRIBE BUTTON at the end of this newsletter and your name will automatically be removed. Using the UNSUBSCRIBE button will prevent our server from sending any further newsletters to you in the future. Some browsers does not display the UNSUBSCRIBE button and which case you should delete the newsletter and in the subject bar of the reply to email **just type "Unsubscribe"** and we will manually remove your name from our email list.

Problems viewing this newsletter or the images? Download a pdf-version from our website <http://www.ngonyamarentals.co.za/> under the heading: News & newsletters.

**In this issue:** Editor's notes; Olives in Darling...; Courses, Tours; Generally Speaking; Service Division; For Sale & Wanted and more



Zebras at Dusk at Rietvleidam Nature Reserve

### Editor's notes.....

We were quite active during May 2011 as we visited the Cradle of Humankind Festival near Magaliesburg, did a portion of the Magalies Meander where we had a Mother's Day Lunch at a "Kaasmaakerij" and then we had a trip down to the Cape via Upington where we did a couple of the routes on the Raptor Route of the Kalahari. We also visited the Carpe Diem raisin factory in Upington. The cherry on top of our culinary experience was the springbuck pie and a Gordon bleu springbuck

steak at Molopo Lodge in Askham. We visited the Augrabies Waterfalls where the flooding of January 2011 was still visible and from there we passed Pofadder and Springbok in Boesmanland. In Darling we visited Evita's Perron and did an olive tasting – see our story below.



Ox wagon at Three Sisters– taken in May 2011 by Loftus Viljoen.

Our return trip was the direct one and we picked up the most amazing stories of Three Sisters in the Karoo when we stayed over at the Three Sister Guest Farm.

When we were young we would have chosen the most direct route down to the Cape and then drove it all the way from Pretoria stopping only for fuel and to stretch our legs – doing it this way you seem to have blinkers on and only focussing on the road ahead and forgetting that there are scenery on your right as well as on your left. As the years strolled on we became wiser and stopped and paused to observe and to relax as we continue our journey. A journey does not mean that you have to rush from point A to point B.

Even a trip to attend a wedding in the Cape needs planning: you need to check your vehicle, plan for fuel [how many litres of diesel do you expect to use? Where are the refuelling stops? What is the expected cost for fuel? Etc....etc...], plan for your overnight stays and meals or points of interest as they all involve the amount of money you need to budget for. Then you need to look at your equipment for emergencies and your photography equipment and where and how you are going to pack it. A simple trip has become a fully fledged planning exercise as if we were going on safari.

Our journey was to travel from Pretoria to Yzerfontein in the Western Cape but notwithstanding the urge to travel the direct and shorter route to our destination we decided to take the alternative route via Upington in the Northern Cape. This route is only a couple of hundred kilometres longer but also gave us the chance to look at a major part of the Flower Tour that one of our members, Keith Fraser, wants to undertake during August 2011 [see more details about this tour below].



Autumn in the Magalies – picture by Loftus

Apart from the delight to stay over at friends in Upington our main objective was to do a couple of the segments of the Raptor Route in the Northern Cape. Despite very limited time available we managed to cover most parts of 5 of the 15 routes recommended by the Raptor Route Map which is freely available from the Northern Cape Tourism authorities. However finding birds of prey on the Raptor Route/s is like finding the Big Five – you need patience and time. Having a day and a half to our disposal was not enough time. You need to study the distribution and habitat of these birds if you really want to find and photograph them.

As we did our research for the Raptor Route we tried to contact the compilers of the Map only to learn with sadness that Mr Abrie Maritz the main co-ordinator of this Raptor project died last year and apparently this project has grinded to a standstill as there are nobody to continue the work. All our emails to the email addresses as provided on the Map remained unanswered. A phone call to Olifantshoek prior to our departure confirmed that there is nobody to continue the work of Mr Maritz. Abrie Maritz was a sheep farmer with a passionate love for conserving the birds of prey. We hope someone will pick up the strands and continue with this worthy project.



Our thanks to Mr Paul Loots of the Kalahari Guest House between Upington and Askham who invited us on his farm to take some pictures of the birdlife at his dam. In our next newsletter we will tell you more about the Kalahari and our recent visit there.



Activities at the Cradle festival May 2011 – © Loftus 2011

Now to come back to the inaugural Cradle of Humankind festival – Knysna has its oyster festival, Grahamstown has its arts festival, Oudtshoorn has its KKNK festival and then there are a couple of little known festivals all over the country like the snoek festival in Yzerfontein. The common theme of these festivals is that they relate to the activity as described in the type of festival – you do not go to a snoek or oyster festival to find that they are not serving snoek or oysters!

So when we were invited to the Cradle festival I was sceptical and apprehensive and asked myself “why another festival?” When I look at “shows” or “festivals” I look at what type of audience it will attract so if I want to attract people to the “Cradle of Humankind” why host a bicycle race, or a beauty pageant or sakkie-sakkie boere-orke or flea market? A hot-dog eating contest was cancelled due to lack of interest. I must admit that Cradle festival did not impress me and there was no link whatsoever to the Cradle of Humankind – even the tickets were sold for the “festival” were separate from the Maropeng Centre or the Caves [with a discount to visit it apart from the festival – this discount was also not properly advertised]. I must also say I was not aware of the festival until we were contacted by a magazine to go and look at the event – I also did not see any posters in Pretoria to promote the event. When I spoke to the competitors in the bicycle race their main concern were to compete and not to visit the Maropeng Centre or the Sterkfontein Caves and my opinion is that the organizers lost the plot. I managed to take a couple of nice photos of the “event” but had much more pleasure doing the Magalies Meander afterwards. The bottom line is that this “festival” did not have the “wow factor” nor did it excite me to visit it next year.



Bee en route to Cosmos flower on the Magalies Meander – © Loftus 2011

What I did enjoy was the flowering cosmos along the route to the Cradle and the autumn colours and the chance to visit Magaliesburg and surroundings again and to take some really nice pictures. In our next edition we hope to show you more of those photos.

Our main story for this month was supposed to be an article on The Kalahari Raptor Route but 3000 words and 20 photos and 21 pages later this article will in all probability be published in a travel/outdoor life style magazine.

In the June 2011 edition of Leisure Wheels you will find the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the series of article we have written on safari planning. Thanks to our Readers' for your kind comments.

Be on the lookout for our article on "Determining the price of your used off-road caravan/trailer" which will be published by Weg-Sleep soon. In terms of the new Consumer Protection Act there are pitfalls that you need to be aware of.

The new Adobe CS 5.5 [including Photoshop 5] is out and we were recently invited to attend a lecture on this by Adobe and Nikon in Midrand. We were amazed to see how creative you can be with this product [and even on our older version of Photoshop] – removing branches and unwanted grasses from a wildlife photo are always contentious and will not win you prizes but it will look better when you want your wildlife photo published. For our purposes our Photoshop 4 will still do the job we want it to do.

Before going on a safari we not only test and service our camping vehicles and equipment, but we also "test" our cameras and accessories, for example how are we going to charge our laptop and camera batteries – is the inverter working or is the 12volt deep cycle battery still okay? Or would various telephoto the lenses we use be sufficient for our purposes. During a trip last year to Chobe we lost the lens hood for our 300mm f2.8 Canon lens when it came loose from the lens while we were doing a boat cruise and it fell into the Chobe River. It was a mission finding a replacement hood and when we found one the retailers wanted R3000.00 for it. In the end we "manufactured" one for less than R100.00. For testing our cameras and photography equipment we went to the Rietvleidam Nature Reserve in Pretoria and below are a couple of photos we took there:



Photos above: Top the Cape Longclaw and above the White Fronted Bee Eater.



Springbuck Gordon bleu at Molop Lodge near Askham.

Maybe it is time to stop, pause, observe and enjoy places and nature as we pass through places/towns/villages as if we will not see them soon again.

Regards

Loftus

## Experience Olives in Darling

---



The mist was hanging leisurely in the air as we approached Darling Olives for an olive tasting on a mid May autumn morning. For me travelling inside South Africa was somewhat a rarity as most of my travels are safari related into Africa, but my curiosity got the better of me when I recently visited Darling in the Western Cape.

Darling is a small town on the west coast of South Africa between Malmesbury and Yzerfontein a couple of kilometres off the beaten track off the N7 between Springbok and Cape Town. The area is also fondly known as the Swartland. They do produce wines in this region too, but I had too little time to visit it, however, I did manage to fit in a visit to “Evita’s Perron” at the railway station.



Black olives ready for processing

Although I have never been to an olive tasting before I must admit that I know a little bit about olive oil and olive products as we regularly use it in our daily cooking.

The landmark for the olive farm was its building with its distinctive two towers which house the tasting room, sales area, offices as well as the oil presses and processing plants. Outside it has a shaded tasting area for the warmer or hotter days.

As we entered the building they were pressing a new batch of olives and a very distinctive grassy smell lingered in the morning mist and I was wondering if they were adding grass to the production process. The “grassy” nose to their products is one of their characteristics and we were allowed access to the pressing plant where

we could see for ourselves it was the pure product, and no, they did not add grass to the process.



Tasting olive oil as if it was like tasting wine did not go well with me and it was if was back at school in the Eastern Cape where cod liver oil was the cure for most ailments.



Normally when you eat green olives the pit tends to cling to the flesh but I was pleasantly surprised that the flesh parted very easy from the pit from the green olives and the black olives tasted just as good.



The olive paste [plain or with a peri-peri] is very good and I used it as a base on an avocado sandwich and I must say the two tastes do combine wonderfully.

We also tasted a salt, olive and rosemary rub and bought a couple of containers for home use. This rub will work very well on roasted leg of lamb or a pot roast.

At R10,00 per head for the tasting it was a bargain and we would recommend that you visit them should you be in the Darling area.

Apart from the olive tasting and the visit to Evita's perron Darling is also on the Swartland wine route wine route where you can do some wine tasting.

## Courses

---

Our next photography course will be in the second half of this year, and we have provisionally scheduled it for Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Due to a busy winter rental season we have rescheduled our "Bush Mechanics" course to Saturday 17 September 2011 [this is a week before the schools close for the spring break.]

## MAGALIESBURG – A PHOTO JOURNAL

---







## TRIP PROPOSALS 2011-2012

---

The tours we have on schedule still for this year is the Flower Trip below as well as our Photography Trip in September 2011. We are planning a short trip to the Kalahari in August.

Getting to places is becoming more and more expensive and where we were able to host trips for R750.00 not so long ago the costs have shot up incredibly. For example you can budget on R400.00 per person per day in the Botswana [and other] Parks, 4x4 vehicle costs [fuel, oil, wear and tear = 4000km at R5.31 per kilometre ("AA" calculations) for a 10 day trip] R2,124.00 per day; food and beverages, gas & cooking utensils & accessories R250,00 per person per day.

Currently we are planning a tour for a group of 12 persons to tour Botswana, Vic Falls, Caprivi, Etosha, Brandberg, Swakopmund, Sossosvlei and Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park for 20 days in **September** next year. Having toured with the core of this group before we are looking forward to finalize this trip.

### **NAMAQUALAND FLOWER TOUR & RICHTERSVELD:**



Augrabies storm damage of January 2011 still visible in May 2011

One of our members, Keith Fraser, has put a Flower Tour together for September 2011. Keith is a veteran explorer/adventurer and has done a couple of tours with us in Botswana and Zambia.

This tour is for a 11 days/10nights starting at Augrabies and ending there as well. For this trip a 4x4 [especially for the Richtersveld] and own camping equipment are essential. Rental of camping equipment is available. [Should you not have your own 4x4 or wish to join the group – please let us know so that we can see if we cannot arrange a seat with someone on a share expense basis





## PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR FOR 2011...

---

Our photography tour for April-May 2011 is postponed to 30<sup>TH</sup> September 2011-9<sup>th</sup> October 2011

### **CHOBE-VIC FALLS PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR:**

We will visit Chobe National Park and Victoria Falls. Spend a photography trip on a boat cruise on the Chobe River. We will visit Serondela, Kabula-bula, Puku Flats and many more interesting places inside Chobe. There are thousands of elephants and

buffalo waiting to be photographed. This tour is for novices and serious amateurs alike.

This is a self drive tour and we will be camping so you need your own camping equipment. The cost of this trip despite recent price increases at the various campsites is R9,000.00 per person. [This is the last trip that we are able to host below R850.00 per person per day!]



Further planned trips for this year is a trip to Central Kalahari as well as the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. If anyone cares to join us just give us a call.

### **Corporate events:**

Apart from having guides, chefs, recovery vehicles and the like for you we have a photo-journalist to cover your trip to cover your trip for you with a story of the trip and photo should you require it please give us a call.

## **Driving covers & canvas division!**

---

The African sun and climate is very harsh on off-road tent covers and driving covers. We found that the tent covers on most of the off-road caravans and trailers lasts only about two years and then need to be replaced. Getting replacement items from manufacturers is a time consuming exercise so we decided to begin our own division for repairs to canvas and tents.



Our canvas and tent repair division is up and running and initially we will concentrate on manufacturing or repairing for the rental caravans, trailers and camping gear. We are now able to manufacture stone guards for the most types of off-road caravans. We can even make stone guard covers for off-road trailers

We can help you with:

- New mosquito net for doors and windows
- Stone covers for the Brakhah, Xplorer and Commander off-road caravans
- Awning and shower tent covers – we also manufactured the lightweight aluminum frame that clips to the side of the caravan
- Mattress covers
- New awnings for the Brakhah [and other makes]
- Repairs and customized canvas works.

A Brakhah stone cover [ripstop] single will cost R1500.00 [plus VAT] and double R1750.00 [plus VAT] and a stone/driving cover for the Conqueror Commander will cost R1750.00 [plus VAT]. A double stone cover for the Conqueror Companion, see photo, will cost you R3,500.00 [plus VAT].

Please enquire about the prices for customized driving covers.

## Generally Speaking

---

### Talking ... conditions in neighbouring countries

Due to an outbreak of MFD some of our customers experienced seizure of their meat at the Botswana border posts and inside Botswana over the Easter period.

Unconfirmed reports also indicate that you will need yellow fever certificates if you want to go to Zambia – please check it out and make sure before you leave for Zambia. We tried to find out about this from the Zambian High Commission offices in Pretoria and they were unaware of this requirement.

The Makgadikgadi Pans are still wet so take care, however should anyone wish to visit this area we would advise you to phone the Kaing-O Community Trust on Tel/Fax: + 267 2979 612 e-mail [kubu.island@botsnet.bw](mailto:kubu.island@botsnet.bw) to find out whether it is safe to go there and book your campsite from them. They do provide guides to take you through the muddy areas.

### Talking ... finding us

Trying to find Portion 50/R Zwavelpoort on the GPS is difficult for many people – here are our GPS co-ordinates **S 25°49.017 E028°20.359** to get to our main gate. We are situated in Atterbury Rd East [between Ajax and Saal Street – the only entrance gate between these two streets. We are diagonally across from Mooikloof Estates entrance gate]. From the N1 & Atterbury Rd off-ramp we are 8 kms away. From the Atterbury Rd and Hans Strydom intersection we are 3 kms away.

## NGONYAMA SERVICE DIVISION:

Accidents do happen and this is how our caravan looked like after somebody in Botswana crashed into it near Khutse in December 2009. The customer we rented it from us also had some damage to his vehicle. Unfortunately we had to wait for the factory to reopen to get the replacement parts, but we can report that we were able to repair it to its former glory. Sometimes we do have to wait for spare parts or replacement parts but sometimes we just manufacture it ourselves.



Photo left: After accident Photo right: After our repairs [please note our new ripstop tent bags]

At our workshop we are able to offer you services like installations of the National Luna split charging system [with Brad Harrison plugs], the Anlof solar panel system for off-road caravans/trailers, electrical trailer plugs, bearings and brake shoes and more. We manufacture and fit skid plates for your off-road caravan or trailer.

We give a **3 month warranty** on our repairs.

Going through sand, dust, mud and water place immense strain on your 4x4 or caravan or trailer and we suggest that after cleaning it thoroughly to check the under carriage for damage. Jack up the wheels and turn it to see if there is any damage to the braking system or drums or bearings. Clean and re-grease it. It is always good to service your off-road trailer/caravan after a trip into the bush.

Off-road caravans and off-road trailers do take a huge amount of hammering, shocks and vibrations causing pop rivets, bolts and nuts etc. to come loose. Wheel bearings, shock absorbers and braking systems need to be checked, serviced and replaced where necessary – we replace dampers [on the coupler] at least once a year and shock absorbers at least every 18 months. Wheel bearing replacement depends on the terrain travelled, but you need to have them checked on every major service.

Our standard service cost only R650 for an off-road caravan and R550.00 for an off-road trailer [plus VAT] plus spares parts, if necessary. Our standard major service checklist covers about 50 different items. We have the staff and facilities to help you. Give us a call.

## For sale & wanted:

Sometimes used off-road caravans and trailer will move fast and sometimes it take time to sell it. We received a mint condition 2007 model Conqueror Conquest last month and knowing a person looking for one within two days it was sold for R80,000.00.

The 2009 model Supra 2 was also sold and we are looking for new stock.

One of the two 2004 models Brakhah off-road caravans we had for sale was sold and we have just received another one for R85,000.00.

We have a 2005 Model Jurgens Xplorer off-road caravan for sale for R95,000.00 [price reduced] and it will be available from end of July 2011.



If you want us to sell your off-road caravan or trailer give us a call.

**Wanted:** We have Readers looking for all types of off-road caravans.

**Wanted:** Limited time left! We are looking to rent off-road trailers and off-road caravans for 2011 – please give us a call if you are willing to rent out your off-road caravan or trailer.

We will advertise your off-road caravan or trailer but we need it to be on our floor so that we can show it to prospective customer

## CONTACT DETAILS:

Our current address is Ptn 50/R Zwavelpoort 373, Atterbury Rd East, Pretoria, South Africa. E-mail [info@ngonyamarentals.co.za](mailto:info@ngonyamarentals.co.za) . Telephone +27 +12-9963027 or our cell [mobile] phone is 08 444 10 333. Our fax number is **0865309658** . Web <http://www.ngonyamarentals.co.za/>

**TRADING HOURS:** Mon-Fri 08:00-16:00 and Sat 09:00-11:00. No pick up or drop off on Sundays.



subscribe

forward to a friend

unsubscribe

This mailing system may only be used for sending permission based email.

If you did not give permission to receive emails from this sender, [please notify us](#).

This email was sent to info@ngonyamarentals.co.za by info@ngonyamarentals.co.za | [Print / PDF version](#) | Read our [Privacy Policy](#).

Ngonyama Camper Rentals - Ptn 50/R Zwavelpoort 373, Atterbury Rd East Pretoria, 0081, South Africa