

The Training Specialists  
since 1993

**EcoTraining**



Pioneer and Leader in  
Field Guide and Nature Training



**Professional  
Field Guide Course  
FGASA Accredited  
In 1 Year**



[www.ecotraining.co.za](http://www.ecotraining.co.za)



# 1 Year – Professional Field Guide

## Who can do this course? Anyone!

EcoTraining offers the following courses which have been designed to supply the South African safari industry with high caliber professional Field Guides. These courses are not only available to people wishing to enter the industry as field guides, but for anyone who wants to increase their knowledge of the African bush. So whether you've chosen a professional career linked to wildlife or nature or just finished school and are on your gap year, or if you've possibly taken a career break or are a regular traveller to the bush, this course is for you.

With our Field Guide Courses being accredited by FGASA who have THETA accreditation, this means we meet THETA standards. THETA is the Tourism and Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority of the South African government. These are the two bodies responsible for regulating standards within the guide training industry in southern Africa.

### International or Non South African Learners

If the learners is **not** taking up Field Guiding for a career which is mostly the case for our international learners, then writing and passing the EcoTraining tests and practical evaluations listed above is sufficient in order to complete the EcoTraining FGASA Level 1 and the EcoTraining Trails Guide FGASA courses and obtain the EcoTraining certificate

### South African Learners

For South Africans attending **for** FGASA accreditation purposes, in addition to writing the above EcoTraining tests, career learners can write the FGASA Level 1 theory exam and do the practical evaluation while on course with us. **Aim to obtain FGASA Level 1; FGASA Trails Guide and FGASA 2 Theory**

The course is structured to maximize the practical experience of our learners in the bush. Each day allows for hours of time spent in the field interpreting the ecology and enjoying a wildlife experience. Activities alternate between walks and driving.

Lecture time follows after brunch, which involves topical instruction (lectures) and discussion on the subject of the day (see list below). This is followed by time for self study for the learners.

Learner participation in the care of the camp, equipment and vehicle will be expected. Learners will be expected to pay attention to the needs of fellow learners and to work in teams at times.



## Why do this 1 Year course?

- You will live and walk amidst the spectacular wildlife of the African bush for approximately one year - for the first half of the year you will live and learn at our camps and for the remainder of the year you will work at an Ecotourism operation as a trainee.
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- Training at all 3 camps presents a constantly stimulating environment to learn in – you will be exposed to diverse ecological and geological terrains; landscapes; wildlife species; climates and more.
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- Our instructors with many years of guide training experience and time in the bush will also provide different ways of training and guiding which enhances your overall training experience.
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- For parts of the course you will train in our Kruger Camp in the Makuleke concession which is a highlight for all our learners. The Makuleke concession is not accessible to the ordinary tourist visiting the park. This area is certainly the wildest and most remote part of the Kruger National Park and offers varied vegetation, great wildlife viewing, the best birding in all of the Kruger National Park and is filled with folklore of the early explorers and ancient civilizations.



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## Course Locations – Greater Kruger National Park

Our Field Guide Training programmes, take place at our bush camps which collectively open the door to 66 000 hectares of stunning wilderness landscapes teeming with game, including (depending on which camp you are at) buffalo, elephant, rhino, lion and leopard as well as antelope and a huge diversity of birds. EcoTraining's accommodation facilities and game reserves are authentic, with as little clutter to dilute the relationship between nature and our learners as possible. We want them to co-existence, when sleeping we want learners to hear elephants browsing on leaves and nightjars call right outside the tents at night. EcoTraining stands for an honest, comfortable and safe experience. **It's all about the bush...**

### Course Location - Kruger Park Makuleke Camp

Our Kruger Park Camp is situated in the 24 000 hectare (59 305 acres) Makuleke concession in the far northern and most remote part of the Kruger National Park. The area is characterized by great biodiversity and a human history reaching into the remote past. Accommodation is in safari tents on wooden decks covered with thatch in the shade of huge Nyala trees. Each unit has a verandah overlooking the bush and has an en- suite bathroom with a flush toilet, shower and basin.

Most of the animals that are found in the Kruger Park can be viewed in this concession. Large herds of buffalo and elephant are not uncommon and the birding in this incredible part of the Kruger Park is unsurpassed. This camp is also unfenced in order to allow the animals free movement in their natural environment.



### Course Location - Selati Camp

Our Selati Camp is situated on the banks of the Selati River in the 33 000 hectare (81 545 acre) Selati Game Reserve to the west of the Kruger National Park. Camp accommodation is simple and rustic in dome tents with shared bathroom facilities and there is a communal area where learners gather for meals and lectures every day.

Selati is a good place for viewing lion, white rhino and elephant. General game is plentiful and you might even get to see the large herd of eland, as well as the rare sable antelope.

As is the case with our other two camps, the Selati camp is unfenced, and animals do on occasion wander through the camp. Learners have woken up in the morning to find the tracks of elephant, leopard or lion around the camp.

### Course Location - Karongwe Camp

Our Karongwe Camp is situated on the banks of the Karongwe River in the 9 000 hectare (22 239 acre) Karongwe Game Reserve, to the south-west of the Kruger National Park. Accommodation is in walk-in safari style tents with shared bathroom facilities. Karongwe is a good place for viewing leopard, lion and cheetah as well as elephant and white rhino.

As the camp itself is unfenced, we often have four-legged guests in the camp. Hyena make nightly patrols of the camp and are often seen by learners who choose to make one of the viewing decks their home for the duration of the course. Elephant, cheetah and lion have also made appearances on occasion.





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## Course Structure

**This is an abbreviated course structure and will be presented in more detail in documentation to follow.**

1. EcoTraining Level 1 including FGASA Field Guide 1 theory and Practical Assessment
2. Rifle handling training; driving experience; frogging, lion and elephant tracking on telemetry
3. FGASA Field Guide Level 2 Theory
4. EcoTraining Trails Guide including FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling, Trails Guide Theory and Trails Guide Back-up Practical Assessment
5. Tracking course
6. Basic Birding and Advanced Birding
7. Wilderness Medicine: Level 1 and Level 2
8. Encounters on foot
9. Navigation and Orientation

## Meals

- Wake-up to tea/coffee with biscuits and fresh fruit
- Enjoy a cooked breakfast, with cereals and fruit for brunch
- In the afternoon indulge with a few light snacks
- A balanced, warm plated



## Daily Programme

A typical daily programme at the camp follows a routine of **rising early, usually before sunrise**, enjoying hot coffee while you listen to the bush waking up and then leaving the camp for an outing into the wilderness.

The outings are extremely flexible and determined by the unpredictability of what is found during the outing in combination with the subjects that have to be covered. The outing could be a game drive following up on the roar of a lion heard during the night or a walk, learning about the plant species occurring in the area. It could be a walk following fresh elephant tracks, learning how to track the animal and finding it or it could be a game drive to a waterhole where animals come to drink.

Learners return to camp in the late morning for a hearty brunch which is followed by a lecture on the subject of the day. Study and rest time is then followed by afternoon tea and another outing into the wilderness until sunset, if walking, or until well after dark if doing a game drive.

Afternoon outings could include night drives looking for nocturnal animals such as owls, bush babies and leopards or it could be a walk looking for and learning how to identify interesting birds. It could be time spent studying the night skies or it could be a time for learners to test their 4x4 driving skills.

It is then back to the camp for dinner, stories around the campfire, discussing the day's experiences and wondering about tomorrow's adventures.

The emphasis is on practical day-to-day experiences in the bush. The daily outings are flexible and may focus on specific subjects such as animal tracks and tracking, birds, plant identification or animal behaviour, or may involve game viewing and learning about the ecosystem in general.



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## Course Rates

Please contact [enquiries@ecotraining.co.za](mailto:enquiries@ecotraining.co.za) for further information.

### Rate includes:

- Lectures
- Game drives
- Walks
- Activities
- Entry to Kruger Park (for Makuleke Courses)
- All FGASA registration, examination and moderation fees. (NB: This does not include examination re-writes and re-assessments. Students will be responsible for these costs and need to arrange this directly with FGASA.)
- DEAT registration
- SASSETA Competency Certification
- Wilderness Medicine Course
- 3 x sets of uniforms (shirts and shorts)
- EcoTraining T-shirt, cap and beanie
- Pick up at OR Tambo International Airport on the first day the course starts
- Drop off at OR Tambo International Airport on the last day the course ends
- Transfers between the camps
- Accommodation
- Meals
- Tea & Coffee

### Rate excludes:

- Transfers/transport to and from the camp, before and after time off
- Any accommodation before and after the course and time off
- Beverages
- Laundry





# 1 Year – Professional Field Guide

## Subjects Covered

### The Introduction to Guiding in the Natural Environment

#### Creating a Guided Nature Experience.

- Briefing for guided experiences.
- Communication and Presentation Skills.
- Orientation Skills.
- Finding Food and Water in the Bush and Basic Bush and Survival Skills.

#### Geology

Why the Study of Geology is Important for the Nature Guide.

#### Basic Ecology

- The Definition of Ecology
- The Major Components of an Ecosystem
- Levels of Organisation in Ecology.
- Food Chains
- Trophic Pyramid
- Symbiotic Relationships
- Predation and Competition.

#### Basic Taxonomy

##### Fish

- Definition
- Ecological Role
- Reproduction and Growth.
- Feeding Behaviour
- Locomotion
- Senses
- Pigment and Colour
- Neutral Buoyancy
- Lateral Line System.

##### Birds

- Identification.
- Characteristics, Passerines and Non-Passerines.
- Feeding and Nesting

#### Animal Behaviour

- Group Hierarchies
- Group Behaviour.
- Animal Behaviour
- Communication.
- Protective Behaviour.
- Territories and Home Ranges.

#### Astronomy

- Introduction to the Southern Skies and Astronomical Phenomena.
- Planets, Common Constellations and Prominent Stars.
- The Moon, The Sun, Eclipses and Their Effects on the Tides.

#### Weather and Climate

- The Main Causes of Weather.
- Wind and Clouds.
- Southern African Weather Patterns
- General Climate of Southern Africa

#### Botany and Grasses

- Nature and Classification of Plants
- Anatomy of a Tree.
- Tree and Shrub Identification
- The Uses of Trees and Shrubs.
- Grasses
- Ecology, Anatomy and Pollination of Grasses.
- Veld Types
- Grazing and Ecological Status
- Plant Succession.

#### Biomes of Southern Africa

##### Arthropods

- Class Insecta.
- Class Arachnida.
- Centipedes and Millipedes.
- Amphibians.
- Reptiles

##### Mammals

- Characteristics
- Foot Structure
- Digestive Systems.
- Orders.
- Statistics and Flagship Species

#### Conservation Management

- Fire.
- Bush Encroachment and Alien Plant Control.
- Erosion Control
- Road Maintenance.
- Animal Population Control
- Water Provision.



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## You could graduate with...

1. Field Guide FGASA Level 1 Theory (subject to 75% pass mark)
2. Field Guide FGASA Level 1 Practical assessment (subject to passing the theory and being deemed competent on a practical assessment)
3. SASSETA Competency Certificate – Rifle (qualification - rifle handling only)
4. Advanced Rifle Handling (Basic, Intermediate/back-up, Advanced/Lead)
5. FGASA Trails Guide Back-up (subject to passing the theory and ARH to at least Intermediate level and being deemed competent on a practical assessment)
6. FGASA Level 2 Theory - work book completed and exam written (75% pass mark)
7. Birding with Bruce Lawson (Lawson's Birding Academy)
8. Tracking qualification (Level 1, 2 or 3)
9. Wilderness medicine (Level 1 and 2)
10. Guiding experience logged towards FGASA Level 2 practical assessment





# The Training Specialists since 1993

## About EcoTraining

Established in 1993 with a mission to raise the standard of guiding in Africa, EcoTraining is the pioneer and leader of professional Field Guide and other nature training programmes. We aim to put the bush back into Africa for all those that are searching for the most authentic wildlife training and safari experiences.

### Our vision

EcoTraining aims to ensure that guides in Africa are of the finest standard and training. Critical to us is that the guides acknowledge that as important as wildlife knowledge is, even more key is the right philosophy and approach – to take the countless opportunities given to them each day to impart conservation principles to their guests on safari. Every person that a Field Guide guides can go back to their country and take the conservation message back to positively influence a greater community. EcoTraining realises the potential influence that guides may have on their guests. We are trying to make a difference and want to impact where we can.

### What will you learn and experience on an EcoTraining course

You will gain in-depth knowledge about nature, ecology and wildlife but that is only one aspect of the course. It is about absorbing nature, learning how to interact with the environment, and tuning you into the ecosystems. It's about becoming intertwined with the natural environment that sustains us. The bush is powerful and on course, you start to realize that the clutter of modern society's trappings becomes less relevant. There is a mental, emotional and spiritual shift to respect, consideration and sensitivity towards nature and your peers.

Along with learning about wildlife and nature... it is also a cultural interchange for our learners. The inter-human benefit of living and learning together in the outdoors for days tests one's social and emotional intelligence skills and provides you with a holistic life experience. It is a bonding experience in a few days participants learn about the natural environment, themselves and each other.

Learners who have attended our courses have returned to the "real world" with a different outlook on life. Some have taken this new outlook into their day-to-day lives and others, inspired by their time with us, have completely changed their lives and careers.

Because we respect and want to instill a respect in our guests for the environment, we do not take chances with nature. We have a 100% safety record since 1993 as we have and always will subscribe to two vital principals - safety and sensitivity. Sensitivity is exercised in relation to our entire environment which includes mankind.

**Have we forgotten that wilderness is not a place, but a pattern of soul  
where every tree, every bird and every beast is a soul maker? Ian**

