

The Training Specialists  
since 1993

**EcoTraining**



Pioneer and Leader in  
Field Guide and Nature Training



**Trails Guide**

**Course**

**FGASA Accredited**

**In 28 days**



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



# 28 days – Trails Guide

## Who can do this course?

This course has been designed to supply the safari industry with high calibre professional Back-up Trails Guides. This course has been specifically developed to cater for those students who have completed our Level 1 course or other equivalent qualification and wish to be trained in trails guiding and logging encounters. The course is not only available to people wishing to enter the industry as qualified back-up trails guides, however, it is also available to people wishing to gain further experience or anyone who wants to increase their knowledge of the African bush while walking. It is not necessary to have passed the EcoTraining Level 1 exams or to have written FGASA Level 1 to attend this course.

The aim of this course is to develop and practice skills and knowledge learnt on the Level 1 course. The Maku-ke Trails Guide Course is conducted in a true wilderness area and therefore provides a more authentic Trails Guiding experience. This course provides grounding to conduct bush walks in big game country and has an emphasis on safety. The majority of time will be spent on foot and learners will be expected to show leadership and decision-making skills while being responsible for the group in the field. Learner participation will be expected and encouraged at all times.

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.

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.





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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.



## 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 meal finishes off the day for dinner

## 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 Content

- Introduction to Trails Guide course
- Navigation and Orientation
- Tracks and tracking
- Survival and Bush Skills
- Walking in big game country
- Situational awareness
- Approaching dangerous game
- Dangerous animal knowledge & behaviour
- Animal behaviour
- Pre-Trail Briefs/Checks
- What a Trails Guide carries in a backpack
- Birding & bird identification
- Geology
- Ecology
- Historical human habitation
- Conservation ethics
- Weapon handling, safety & ballistics
- Wilderness concept
- Radio procedures

### Tests, presentations and assessments:

- 2 x Theory test (mid & end)
- 1 x Field Observation (mid)
- 1 x Track & Sign (end)
- 1 x VPDA Scenario
- 1 x Navigation/Location Theory test
- 1 x Bird Identification (slide & sound)
- Course Activity Preparation (throughout the course)
- Hospitality - Boma Dinner Assessment
- Rifle Handling Assessment (optional)
- EcoTraining Practical Assessment
- FGASA Trails Guide Exam (where applicable)
- FGASA Advanced Rifle Handling Assessment (where applicable)
- FGASA Trails Guide Practical Assessment (where applicable)



## Course Rates

Please contact enquiries@ecotraining.co.za

### Rate includes:

Qualified & Experienced Instructors

Lectures

Game drives

Walks

Accommodation

Meals

Tea, coffee and cordials

✓ Further details on request or registration



# 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**

