



LESSONS IN CONSERVATION
SERVING TO SAVE

MBULUZI GAME RESERVE EXCURSIONS

With the children arriving in groups of up to 50 learners, we will need to divide the excursion up into different phases and different groups

PHASE 1 – ARRIVAL

- All children arrive at Mbuluzi Game Reserve (MGR) offices and are given a safety briefing by Mbuluzi staff.
- The children are then divided into two groups (Team Red and Team Green) of up to 25 learners, and are allocated their team leaders.

PHASE 2 – POACHING AND SNARING

- Both teams are then escorted to an area close to the MGR, offices where all of the snares collected in the reserve have been displayed.
- Here, one of the MGR staff will demonstrate how a snare works, and go over some of the issues surrounding snaring and poaching as a whole.
- The children will then split up into their colour teams and will then be divided again, making groups of about 12 students (Red Group 1, Red Group 2, Green Group 1, Green Group 2).
- In these smaller groups, they will discuss solutions to the snaring/poaching problem at large, a major issue in this area, to be presented to their classmates at a later stage.

PHASE 3 – GAME DRIVE, BIRDING CHALLENGE & THE ART OF TRACKING

- Both colour teams travel down to the Savannah Research Centre (SRC), having a chance to look for some animals along the way.
- Team Red will remain at SRC and be reminded about the basics of bird identification.
- The team will then be broken into their smaller groups again and begin the “birding challenge”

Birding Challenge:

- Pictures of 10 common bird species in the area will be printed and displayed close to the habitat type that they are associated with.
- Red Group 1 will begin at the bird labelled 1, while Red Group 2 will begin at the bird labelled 10. Once the groups have successfully identified the bird, a clue will be revealed, guiding them to the next habitat type and their next bird.
- Red Group 1 will finish at bird number 10, while Red Group 2 will finish at bird number 1.
- *We would like to make this a competition, but ensure each team member is involved (this is where the facilitators come in).*

Both Team Red and Green will then meet at the SRC for a short break with juice and biscuits (if catered for). Team Green will begin the birding challenge, while Team Red will embark on “the art of tracking.”

The art of tracking:

- Team Red will walk from the SRC down the road, and bump into one of the MGR anti-poaching team members. They will explain what they do on a daily basis, and the importance of tracking both humans and animals in their job.
- The team will then be broken up into Red Group 1 and Red Group 2, with Red Group 1 being led to the start of a simulated leopard trail laid down prior to their arrival.

- Along this trail will be tracks, scratch marks, scent marks and even the occasional vocalisation and alarm call – with the goal of ultimately tracking down the leopard.
- At the same time, Red Group 2 will slowly walk up to small watering hole and spend their time observing the tracks and signs around the area - led by the anti-poaching member. This will be a time to ask questions to the MGR team about what it really means to be employed in conservation and some of their daily duties.

PHASE 4 – PRESENTATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- All children will return to the SRC and have a few minutes to run through the presentations they created about some solutions to the poaching problem in the area.
- Each group will then have a few minutes to present their work and field questions.
- The LiC team and teachers will share some concluding remarks before everyone goes back to the MGR offices for departure.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Pen and paper x4 (one for each small group)
- Pictures of 10 common birds printed and laminated with answers
- Clues to next habitat type in birding game
- Pins/prestick to put up the pictures
- Bird books x2 (youth books if possible)
- Leopard track mould
- Water bottle to simulate urine
- Knife to simulate scratches
- Tracks and signs book (optional)