

WILDBTRAX
E X P L O R A T I O N S
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
BOTSWANA

African Wildlife & Community Conservation Research Expedition





Introduction

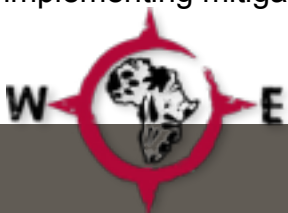
Wildtrax Explorations (Wildtrax) envision a younger generation that is familiar with the challenges and nuances of conserving natural resources and cultures. Their international experiences should generate perspectives that allow them to create interdisciplinary solutions to develop a sustainable society. Wildtrax programs inspire people to take action in making a difference within themselves and their surroundings through learning and experiencing the complex interactions between humans and nature.

Following our vision, we have teamed up with one of the top wildlife monitoring organizations in Africa, **Wildlife Africa Conservation Team (Wildlife ACT)**, who's mission is to save our planets' endangered and threatened wildlife and wildlands from extinction. Both entities identify science and education as key components to the sustainable utilization and management of wildlife resources; thus, our collaboration achieves a comprehensive research program in the Okavango Delta Region of Botswana.

Our Vision is to provide students with a learning platform to develop through our dynamic research projects focused on biodiversity monitoring, adaptive management and the human-wildlife interface.

The Expedition

Make your text books come alive as you traverse the length of the Okavango Delta World Heritage Site via boat, one of the most iconic wilderness areas on the planet rich with wildlife. Along the way encountering elephant, lion, buffalo, hippo, crocodile and more while wild camping on the islands. Transitioning from boat to land you will make your way around the edge of the Delta, gaining a different perspective of the wildlife and flora of the system. From here you will follow the waters as they flood down the Boteti river and disappear into the famous Kalahari basin. You will see how this precious life-source provides during the dry season, before making your way to the wet season wildlife ranges of the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, where you will explore one of the largest salt pans in the world. You will have numerous learning engagements en route to understand this dynamic system and hands-on experiences throughout to help you learn several field research methods for monitoring biodiversity and implementing mitigation strategies for Human-Wildlife Coexistence.





Overview

Throughout the 3-week course, you will be gaining valuable field experience while meeting and learning from many different researchers, NGOs, and wildlife managers. The course will equip you with the ability to apply appropriate research techniques to field studies. Overviews of wildlife ecology, behavior, conservation and research theory are included throughout the course, coordinated by Wildtrax Explorations. The course includes both scientific and social aspects to data collection to prepare you for your interactions with wildlife, communities and different cultures. You will have a workbook to guide your learning while also have training sessions on many different research and monitoring methodologies so you fully understand their applications, along with completing mini-field projects using the skills you have acquired.

These diverse experiences provide the foundation concerning the interface of ecology and wildlife management. Scientific principles and human dimensions are used to explain current strategies and techniques for managing natural and cultural resources. Our curriculum

focuses on how changes in land use and resource availability in Botswana's ecosystems can be managed to assist local communities while conserving biodiversity. Experiencing the socio-political and ecological variables in Botswana will give you an understanding of how culture and ecology interact to aid successful conservation efforts. This comprehensive program is designed to ensure that today's students are prepared to deliver a better tomorrow for people and wildlife.



Journey with purpose...



Objectives

The overall objectives are to equip students with adequate knowledge of various wildlife management and conservation issues in Africa and to attain proficiency in field research methodologies. Through field-based, experiential learning opportunities in the Okavango Delta & Kalahari Basin Ecosystems, the aim of the course is to train future conservationists in understanding and applying research in the field.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the functional heterogeneity of the ecosystems in Northern Botswana and how they drive ecological processes and wildlife migrations along with the threats to the system
- Learn valuable wildlife management and conservation principles
- Understand the challenges facing wildlife conservation & community based natural resource management
- Develop advanced field research techniques and associated skills
- Understand the social aspects of conservation science
- Gain appreciation of long-term sustainable conservation management projects
- Develop competency working in small groups toward a common goal





The Expedition

Day 1: Arrive into Maun, Botswana, the gateway to the Okavango Delta

Day 2 – 8: Embark on a Trans-Okavango adventure via boat, traversing the entire Delta and camping on pristine wilderness islands along the way. During this time, students will be learning how to conduct bird and herbivore transect surveys, predator spoor surveys, dragonfly bio-indicators studies and understanding fish survey methodologies.

Day 9: Full day cultural submersion in Maun with Bonty of Tharientsho Storytellers. The aim of the cultural induction program is to improve understanding of African and specifically Batswana culture. This understanding will highlight how learning local culture can help researchers and conservationists to maintain and improve rapport during field work and reduce cultural misunderstandings/distrust or miscommunication.

Day 10 – 13: Journey around the edges of the Okavango Delta's unspoiled wilderness in the Khwai Community's Wildlife Management Area and Moremi National Park via safari vehicle. Here you will meet with villagers to learn about community natural resource management strategies, receive lectures from the Botswana Predator Conservation Trust on wild dog, cheetah and lion research and further develop your research methodology skills and understanding of animal behavior.

Day 14 – 16: Students will follow the Delta's floodwaters down the Boteti River, where it disappears into the Kalahari sands. This is an area where humans and wildlife coexist and compete for resources, causing many issues with elephant crop raiding and livestock depredation from predators. Students will have the opportunity to learn from two great experts in the field, Elephants for Africa focusing on the human-elephant interface and mitigation strategies and Oxford University's WildCRU focusing on the human-lion interface, initiating a Lion Guardian program.

Day 17 – 20: Change of scenery from the dry season resource of the Delta waters to the wet season resources of the Makgadikgadi Pans, one of the largest saltpan systems in the world. Although you will be visiting the pans during the dry season, you will gain an appreciation for the vital role it plays in the functional ecosystem of northern Botswana. Here you will learn about the migratory routes, corridor systems and the effects of fences throughout Botswana. Here you will also have a play day in the vast pans full of Meerkat adventures, quad biking, horseback safaris and more.

Day 21: Depart for your home country...or carry on exploring Africa with the help of Wildtrax!





Field Research Methodologies Training

Functional Ecosystems and Wildlife Conservation Challenges at the Community Interface in Africa

Research methodologies are focused on those which are applicable to the conservation priorities identified by Botswana's Dept. of Wildlife & National Parks, which include **Biodiversity monitoring** and **Human-Wildlife Coexistence**. Students will have the opportunity to interact with, learn from and develop relationships with different wildlife conservation organizations and specialists focused in these fields. Organizations like Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), Botswana's Predator Conservation Trust, Elephants for Africa, National Geographic's Into-the-Okavango research team and Wildlife ACT all work within Botswana and have projects in the regions you will be visiting. The skills you will acquire throughout this expedition will be used throughout your lifetime, from everyday life skills to your future career development.





Skills Gained

We expect you to learn, understand and practice each of these survey methodologies to acquire these skills:

1. **Herbivore Survey Methods:** Strip/Line & Spoor Transects & Point Counts
 - € Identify and determine ungulate herd demographics
 - € Identify Spoor among different herbivore species
 - € Complete large herbivore transects & enter data
 - € Identify habitat types within the study areas by identifying different types of grass, shrub and tree species
 - € Develop an ethogram & collect focal and scan behavior observations
2. **Predator Survey Methods:** Spoor transects and camera trapping
 - € Create a predator identikit (Identify species, sex and age of predators)
 - € Conduct a predator spoor (animal tracks) transect
 - € Determine coordinates with GPS
 - € Use ArcGIS and make a simple map for leopard territories (optional)
3. **Bird Surveys:** Terrestrial point counts and wetland continuous counts, vulture nest monitoring
 - € Learn to identify different species of birds from sight and sound
 - € Conduct a bird survey for BirdLife Botswana
4. **Camera Trapping:** Grid survey and predator identification
 - € Set up a camera trap, collect photos, review & enter data
 - € Determine species richness and large herbivore and predator abundance of an area using camera trap (Optional)
5. **Community:** Wildlife co-existence monitoring
 - € Learn about human-wildlife co-existence data collection and mitigation strategies
 - € Interact with and learn from communities living within wildlife areas
6. **Work and interact with a research team, learning about logistics, data input and management**





Field Sites & Accommodation

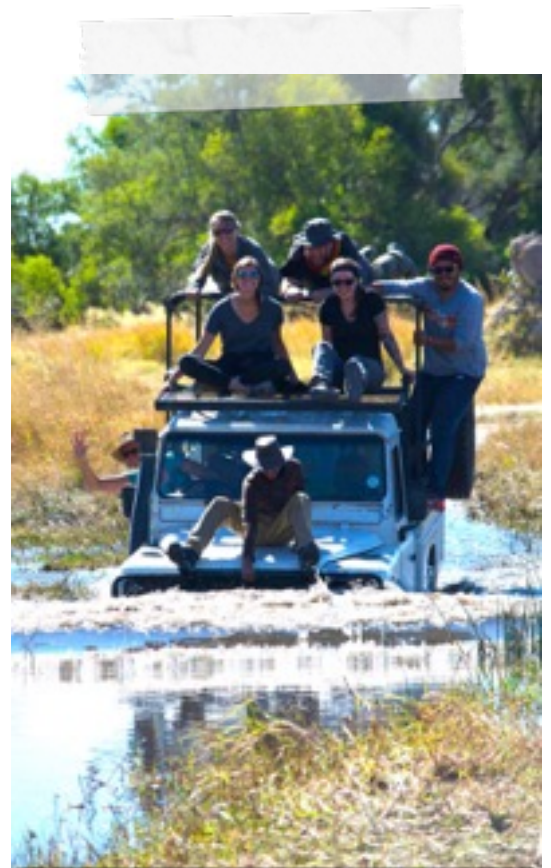
MAUN

On arrival into Maun, Botswana, student's will stay at a gated campsite in twin dome tents. There are male and female communal bathrooms with basins, showers and toilets. Hot water is provided via solar geysers. Communal laundry facilities are available to students with detergent for washing clothes provided.

EXPEDITION CAMPS

Throughout the expedition, each student will stay in a shared twin dome tent with a mattress and cot. The wilderness camps will have male/female long drop toilets and bucket shower facilities. Meals will be prepared by an in-house chef in an open communal tent dining area. The fire is burning every night under the magnificent African skies full of bright stars, the Milky Way, and you will be able to spend you evenings listening to the sounds of the bush!

***Locations of the field sites and amenities might change depending on the location of research**





Costs*

DATES

Arrive into Maun, Botswana July 22 and depart Aug 11, 2018

COSTS

\$4,900

Included: Student participation fees cover orientation, lectures & course materials, accommodation, transportation, 3 meals a day while you are at the Wildlife ACT camps and participation on the projects research and monitoring activities and training.

Excluded: Luxury food items, including soda drinks, alcohol, sweets and chocolate are for your own account. Food at restaurants excluded. All travel costs to Maun, Botswana, are for students to cover.

The following additional activities are included:

- TransOkavango boat trip
- Game Drive into Moremi National Park
- Game Drive Khwai Community's Wildlife Management Area
- Cultural Immersion Day
- Makgadikgadi Pans Excursion



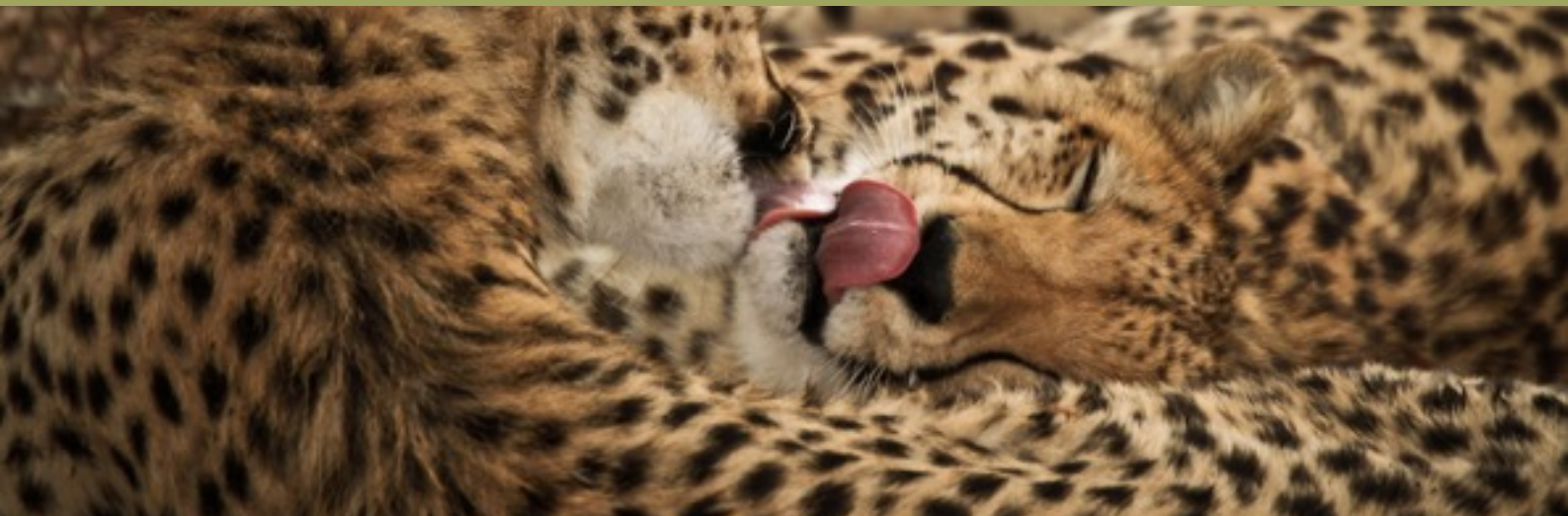
Journey with purpose...

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www.wildtraxexplorations.com





Journey with Purpose...



Jordana Meyer
Skype: jordana.meyer
Email: info@wildtraxexplorations.com
www.wildtraxexploations.com