



**DISCOVER
EDEN** A LEARNING
ADVENTURE

2025

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BIG 5 EXPERIENCE PROGRAM DATES

14 June to 30 June / 05 July to 21 July /
02 August to 18 August

PROGRAM COST

\$3 590 - US Dollar / €3 250 - Euro

Please note: We use the US Dollar as our base currency as such the EUR price may change at any time due to exchange rate fluctuations.

Only 8 spaces are available in each group, to give you the best experience possible! We work on a first come first served basis, so book early to avoid disappointment!

PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

ABOUT THE BIG 5 EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The Discover Eden Big 5 Experience is designed for ecology and conservation students who want to get to grips with large mammal conservation and reserve management in Africa. Positioned in two of the top southern African destinations for conservation, with a focus on large mammals and predators, this course gets you up close and personal with some of the deadliest animals on the planet.

Our students get to interact with some of the top Big 5 professionals in South Africa, learning in a hands-on program that goes way beyond the tourist experience. The itinerary is multi-faceted to get you exposed to a range of skills that are essential tools for the modern-day conservationist. The course includes topics such as animal rehabilitation, animal capture, reserve management, ecology, ornithology, herpetology and more.

Food, accommodation, and ground transport are all included in this package.

Please note: Due to the unpredictability of nature and the weather, the days and activities stated below may be switched around or substituted to give you the best experience possible.

COURSE OUTLINE

DAY 1 ARRIVE AND ORIENTATION

Your friendly Discover Eden guide will fetch you from **OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg Airport)**. From there, we make our way to Hoedspruit, where our learning experience kicks off. Based in the bushveld, this is the perfect base to start the trip!



DAY 2 REPTILE HUSBANDRY

Spend the day completing a **reptile husbandry course** - learning how to handle, identify and work with reptiles. Learn about habitat use, **animal handling**, husbandry, reptile physiology, enclosure design and enrichment, and more.



DAY 3-4 GAME CAPTURE

Learn about how conservation has changed in the last few decades. The focal point here is learning about game capture techniques, including **chemical immobilization, mass capture, aerial darting from a chopper, and more.**



DAY 5 ANIMAL REHABILITATION

Today is an exciting day. We work alongside the team from a large **animal rehabilitation centre**, learning about the challenges and costs involved in getting animals back into the wild. Get behind the scenes, including the **clinic work, quarantine facilities**, and how to take care of baby animals coming into rehab. In the afternoon, visit the local vulture restaurant to see if you can identify ex-rehab birds by their patagial tags or rings.



DAY 6 CONSERVATION NPO DAY

An impactful morning learning about how dogs are used in **anti-poaching** efforts to conserve Africa's wildlife. Learn how the dogs are trained and deployed into key conservation areas. Spend the afternoon learning from a local NPO about how **collected snares are turned into amazing jewellery to raise funds for conservation.**



DAY 7 DEPART FOR KRUGER

Do you have what it takes to dart from the sky? **Test your skills - participate in a darting exercise from the chopper!** After landing safely, we travel to the world-famous **Kruger National Park!** Transition between provinces and see the habitat changes as you drive. The trip takes you through several towns and rural areas, giving you a glimpse into **life in South Africa.**



DAY 8-9 KRUGER

Spend time interacting with top ecology and veterinary staff who live and work in this iconic game park. Learn, ask, absorb. Learn about the interactions of people and animals. **What are the issues facing the park**, what threatens this conservation haven? **Game drives** will help us see if we can complete the Big 5 for your list!



DAY 10 TRAVEL TO A BIG 5 RESERVE

Today, we head into an amazing space, integrating into a Big 5 Conservation Area at the cutting edge of saving wildlife. We kick off our time here with a spectacular game drive to orientate around the reserve.



DAY 11 TRACKING & GAME COUNTS

Today will be a field outing that will include learning about **spoor identification**, behavior, tracking, dung middens, feeding and home ranges of large mammals. **Set up camera traps** to observe animals remotely and finish the day with a **vehicle-based game count**.



DAY 12 TELEMETRY & MONITORING

Spend the morning learning telemetry skills and then go track **collared animals** to test your ability. After lunch learn about analysing camera trap data, and cap off a busy day with a **night drive to monitor nocturnal animals**.



DAY 13 MANAGING BIODIVERSITY

Enjoy a bush walk with trained ecologists in the Zululand bushveld discussing conservation management. Learn about the impact of soil erosion and assist in control measures to address it.



DAY 14 BIRDS & ALIENS

Spend the morning learning about birds and how we study them. This could include a **bird ringing session**, tips on bird ID and some atlasing. Learn about the ecological issues caused by rampant alien plants and assist in removing some of them from **key biodiversity areas**.



DAY 15 CONSERVATION INTERVENTION

Today is a special day, we get to participate in an **active conservation intervention**. This could take the form of collaring one of the cats, **assisting with a rhino capture**, or an animal translocation. Finish off the day with your last game drive in Africa!



DAY 16 TRAVEL TO PRETORIA

Finish off our time in the African bush with a **game count on foot** before we sit back and enjoy the scenic drive to Pretoria, where you will be spending one more exciting day of conservation.

DAY 17 PANGOLIN CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE HOSPITAL TOUR

In the morning, learn all about these **charismatic animals that are facing major threats from animal trafficking**. Tour the animal hospital and see the current patients in their care. Late morning, we will take you back to OR Tambo International airport (Johannesburg Airport), where you will start to make your way back home. We are sure this experience will benefit you throughout your career and will never be forgotten.

