

How do grasses, elephants, thorns, predators and humans shape their world? Find out on this special safari, handcrafted for curious nature enthusiasts.

True Wild LLC is offering a truly unique opportunity to travel to Africa on safari to explore the wild savannas of Southern Africa with two experts in their fields - big cat conservationist **Dr. Quinton Martins** and maverick botanist and ecological thinker **Prof. William Bond**, joined by educator, **Liz Martins**.

Savannas are a major biome, famous for the incredible abundance of wildlife they support and for their critical role in prehistoric human evolution. Let William, Quinton and Liz take you on a novel, historic and visceral journey through the African Bush, absorbing the beauty and exciting wilderness and wildlife, while teasing out fundamental ideas about our natural world that will also give you insight to your own home.



Natural Curiosity: 13-day African Savanna Safari

6th – 18th December 2020 | \$12,800 p/p/sharing*

*Group size: min 8, max 12. Price is all inclusive (accommodation, food, drinks, activities, transfers between camps) but excludes all international travel, visas and insurance, which is your own responsibility. Singles in their own room will be charged an additional single-supplement rate and quoted separately.





Itinerary Overview

Our exploration begins in South Africa with an unusual visit to the Cradle of Humankind with an expert paleoanthropologist to guide us. This extraordinary World Heritage Site is the world's richest hominid site, home to around 40% of the world's human ancestor fossils. We will visit digs where the story of human co-evolution with big cats and open savannas unfolds. Our experience should ground us as to how humans fit into the ecological picture of the past and present. Here, William will also be introducing us to the open grassy landscapes of high Africa and point out some fascinating adaptations to this fiery ecosystem, including underground trees.

On Day 3 we go to Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana, part of the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area which measures almost 2,500 sq.miles in three countries – Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. This area was the centre of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe, an iron-age medieval kingdom with a flourishing trade with India and China. Archaeological evidence of this fascinating culture provides a glimpse into this past during our stay at Mashatu. Today, Mashatu is located in an expanse of wilderness and is guardian to the largest herds of elephant on privately owned land in Africa. It offers a diverse landscape of undulating mopane veld, wide open plains and craggy sandstone hills.

This ancient land, studded with baobab trees, is the perfect setting for our first wildlife adventure. At this time of the year, vegetation is sprouting, prey animals have newborn young, and predators are on the prowl. We stay at Mashatu's beautiful lodge for 4 nights.

On Day 7, we board private charter flights taking us to begin our exploration of the Okavango Delta, a vast oasis in the Kalahari desert and a remarkable World Heritage Site. We will stay at Mapula Camp for 3 nights allowing us sufficient time to enjoy this diverse system with permanent water channels, floodplains and wooded 'islands' which we will explore through varied activities, including mokoros (traditional dug-out canoes) and game drives.

On Day 10, your safari culminates in a 3-night stay at Camp Kalahari, visiting the extraordinary salt pans of Makgadikgadi, where you feel you have reached the ends of the earth. In this dry, harsh environment it is astonishing to see how life flourishes and with the seasonal summer rains that arrive at that time of year the place transforms. We have the unusual opportunity of observing habituated meerkats and of going for a walk with the San Bushmen to learn how people, too, have been able to live in this incredible landscape.



Group Leader: Dr. Quinton Martins

Dr. Quinton Martins is the Director and Principal Investigator of ACR's Living with Lions Project where he is studying the region's mountain lions to identify priority habitats and key wildlife corridors and to promote ecosystem conservation throughout the region. He is the former founder and CEO of the Cape Leopard Trust, a successful predator conservation NGO based in South Africa and is considered a leading expert on these leopards. Prior to his research work, Quinton spent 10 years as a specialist safari guide and safari camp manager and led wild-camping safari experiences throughout East and Southern Africa. His company, True Wild, brings all his experience together adding to his pursuit of conservation goals.



Special Guest: Prof. William Bond

Prof. Bond is an internationally recognized South African ecologist with broad interests in the processes most strongly influencing vegetation change in the past and present, including fire, vertebrate herbivory, atmospheric CO₂ and climate change. Prof. Bond is an emeritus Professor in Biological Sciences at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and retired Chief Scientist for the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) which monitors the impacts of climate change and other environmental concerns. William's research has been influential, and, amongst other marks of recognition, he was elected as foreign associate of the US National Academy of Science. William has an unusual ability to bring the world of plants and ecology to life for all people, so for the curious nature enthusiast he is a source of fascinating thoughts and insight. His driving curiosity is contagious, and he asks simple yet profound questions that reveal the landscape.



OUR MISSION

True Wild is a personalized safari agent specializing in Southern African Safaris. Our lives are dedicated to conservation and environmental education - to connecting people to nature and wild places in their own back yards and across the Earth. We see True Wild as an extension of this work and bring the same integrity and passion to handcrafting your safari as we do to conserving mountain lions in California, or leopards in Africa.

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