



**DISCOVER
EDEN** A LEARNING
ADVENTURE

2023

discovereden.co.za

BOOK NOW

MORE INFO

BIG 5 EXPERIENCE PROGRAM DATES

16 June to 04 July / 07 July to 25 July /
28 July to 15 August

PROGRAM COST

\$3 490 - US Dollar / €3 490 - 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!

[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

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

DAY 2 ORIENTATION & RHINO CONSERVATION

Rhinos! Close to extinction and one of the focal species in the war to protect the **Big 5 in Africa**. In the morning learn all about these magnificent animals and the lengths conservation professionals go to protect them. A field outing will include learning about spoor identification, behavior, tracking, dung middens, feeding and home ranges. In the afternoon we go on our first **interactive game drive** – how many of the Big 5 will we tick off at our first attempt?

DAY 3 ELEPHANT INTERACTION

The first of two days learning and interacting with the **largest land mammal on the planet**, the mighty elephant. Get up close and personal with a small group of habituated elephants rescued from disaster. After lunch get to grips with **radio telemetry** techniques and hone your skills to track collared animals.

DAY 4 ELEPHANT RESEARCH

Spend the day assisting with the long-term research and conservation efforts on the reserve. The afternoon will be spent **searching for elephants from boat**, seeing how close we can get to these enigmatic beasts.



DAY 5 ST LUCIA

Today we visit the **world heritage site** – St Lucia estuary. An exploratory boat trip learning about **hippos, crocodiles**, estuary management and conservation, followed by some free time exploring local shopping markets.



DAY 6 HLUHLUWE

Do some **large animal population counts on foot** with trained ecologists in the Zululand bushveld. Learn about the ecological issues caused by rampant alien plants and assist in removing some of them from key biodiversity areas.



DAY 7 BIRDS & VEGETATION

Start off nice and early with a **bird ringing** (banding) session. Assist in putting up the nets, learn how to **handle the birds**, and release them after the team have ringed them and measured their biometrics. After lunch take part in some vegetation surveys, learning the importance and impact of vegetation management on wildlife reserves.



DAY 8 DEPART FOR KRUGER

Today 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. A **night drive** seals the day adding sightings to the trip.



DAY 9-10 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 11-13 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. Do you have what it takes to dart from the sky? Test your skills - **participate in a darting exercise from the chopper!**



DAY 14 ANIMAL REHABILITATION

Today is an exciting day. We work alongside the team from a large **animal rehabilitation center**, learning about the challenges and costs involved 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 and see if you can identify ex-rehab birds by their patagial tags or rings.



DAY 15 POACHING AND REPTILES

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 how to **handle, identify and work with reptiles**. Learn about habitat use, animal handling, husbandry, reptile physiology and more.



DAY 16 BIRDS OF PREY

Work with and learn from **top raptor experts** about the threats facing these charismatic predators of the sky. The day will be a mix of informative lectures and workshops interspersed with some valuable **field outings**.



DAY 17 TRAVEL TO PRETORIA

Sit back and enjoy the scenic drive to Pretoria where you will be spending the rest of the course. Leaving the African bush behind, we have one more **exciting day of conservation** ahead of us.

DAY 18 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 countries Biobank** in the afternoon as your last learning experience with us.



DAY 19 DEPARTURE

Today is a sad day as we have to say goodbye. After breakfast, 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.

