



Kalahari confidential

Great wildlife photographs don't come easy; just ask Hannes Lochner. To get the shots on these pages, Hannes spent more than 800 days in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, drove more than 80 000 km and shredded six tyres. He spent most of his time camped at Rooiputs, on

the Botswanan side of the park, where there are no fences to keep the animals out.

"I had a favourite tree where I pitched my tent," he says. "I shared my camp with a family of Cape foxes and witnessed two kills: a cheetah catching a springbok and lions hunting blue wildebeest. Both kills happened

about 40 m from my tent."

All that time in the field paid dividends. Apart from the burning sunsets and sudden thunderstorms that the landscape is famous for, Hannes also captured the smaller details: rare interactions and split-second moments that other visitors to the park seldom get to see. Those

are the kinds of shots that require patience... lots of it.

"There are two things that make a good wildlife photograph," Hannes says. "It has to have feeling and it must tell a story. If you think you've got those two covered, you've succeeded."

– Jon Minster

📍 DESERT DRIVE-THROUGH

"Late one afternoon I spotted a pride of lions far away on a dune. They stalked a herd of gemsbok until it got dark.

"The next morning I found the same pride with red faces – their hunt had obviously been successful.

The whole time that I spent in the park I only saw lions actively hunting on about four occasions. The rest of the time they did what lions do best – sleep!"

HOW? Nikon D700, 600 mm lens, shutter speed 1/250 second, aperture f4, ISO 400.



◀ CAMEL THORN CROSSROADS

“This leopard caught a springbok and dragged it up a camel thorn tree, where there was also a sociable weaver nest. After feeding for a while, the leopard came down to lie in the sun. A couple of hours passed and he was ready for a second serving, but when he got to the base of the tree he bumped into a big Cape cobra coming down after dining on sociable weaver chicks.

“Leopard and snake eyed each other nervously for about 10 seconds before the snake retreated back up the tree into the nest. The leopard also decided to hold off for a while and went back to his spot in the sun.

“I had waited for about eight hours for something to happen, but those 10 seconds made it all worthwhile.”

HOW? Nikon D2X, 600 mm lens, shutter speed 1/180 second, aperture f4, ISO 200.



▲ A SCALY SNACK

“There’s always something going on in the Kgalagadi. When you get back to camp after your morning game drive, don’t put away the camera just yet...”

“I arrived back at Nossob one morning and this episode played out right in front of my tent. It took the yellow mongoose less than 30 seconds to kill the Cape

cobra. The ground squirrel, usually not a meat eater, decided to come over for an exploratory nibble. They fought over the snake for about a minute until the

mongoose overpowered the squirrel and dragged the snake down its burrow.”

HOW? Nikon D2X, 300 mm lens, shutter speed 1/1250 second, aperture f8, ISO 200.



◀ RAUNCHY REPTILES

“These puff adders aren’t fighting, they’re mating. It’s quite a rare thing to see and I was excited to witness it. The puff adder gives birth to live young and holds the record for the largest number of offspring of any snake – about 150 in a litter.

“I wanted to get as low as possible, so I put the camera on a beanbag and lay down on the ground.”

HOW? Nikon D2X, 300 mm lens, shutter speed 1/1 250 second, aperture f7.1, ISO 200.



▶ GREAT ESCAPE

"I spent about two months coming to this waterhole every morning to photograph two things: lanner falcons and jackals catching doves,

and sand grouse drinking water. It's very difficult to focus on a charging jackal, especially when it's coming towards you and there are about a

thousand doves taking off frantically in front of it. It took lots and lots of attempts, but eventually I got the shot I wanted. I like the tail feathers

stuck in the jackal's mouth. No breakfast this time!"

HOW? Nikon D700, 600 mm lens, shutter speed 1/2500 second, aperture f4, ISO640.

▶ I CHECK YOU

"This wildebeest calf was only about an hour old and was still very unstable on its legs. The whole herd was drinking and the calf wanted to join in, but it lost its balance and fell into the waterhole.

"Luckily mom swiftly came to the rescue. "I love the intense look on the adult's face and the calf's 'whatever' expression."

HOW? Nikon D700, 600 mm lens, shutter speed 1/250 second, aperture f4, ISO 400.

Look out for Hannes Lochner's new book Colours of the Kalahari, which will be released in June 2010.



◀ OUTFOXED

"There are no fences around the camps on the Botswanan side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, so the animals roam freely around the campsites. This family of Cape foxes had a den behind my tent, and at dawn the cubs would come out to play. One morning I was ready and waiting with my camera on a beanbag to get a ground-level shot."

HOW? Nikon D700, 600 mm lens, shutter speed 1/2 500 second, aperture f4, ISO 200.

