BROTHERS SAFARIS WILDLIFE IMMOBILISATION AND CONSERVATION COURSE FOR VETERINARY STUDENTS

May, June, July & August 2011

This course is intended to give Veterinary students the opportunity to gain some technical knowledge involved in wildlife veterinary practice in South Africa and the immobilisation of wildlife, and uses theory and practical to achieve this aim. Students will receive lectures on a wide variety of topics, and will also be given practical demonstrations and opportunities to practice certain skills.

While the topics are intended to be very practical, this course will not turn a Veterinary student into a “Wildlife Vet”, and this is not the intention. The knowledge and experience gained during this course should highlight some of the issues facing Wildlife Vets and Conservation in Southern Africa, and the knowledge needed to successfully work in this industry. However, this knowledge and the broad basics will naturally serve as a sound base for future wildlife work anywhere in the world.

Day 1, Thursday

Arrival day – all delegates must arrive at Port Elizabeth airport by 2.30 pm. At 2.30 pm you will be met by Brothers Safaris representative at the “Information Desk” of the airport, in the terminal, and transferred to Amakhala Game Reserve, to the north east of Port Elizabeth (approximately 1 hour drive). Check in to your tented camp and spend the afternoon relaxing/acclimatising.

Since most delegates fly into Johannesburg, we suggest connecting to Port Elizabeth (PE) on flight BA 6241, departing Johannesburg at 11h10 and arriving at PE 12h50 - this is probably the best compromise between reliable airlines and cost. Should anyone need assistance booking this or another connecting flight, or want a quote, please advise us. Early arrivals/activities/travel can be facilitated by Brothers Safaris at an additional cost. Late arrivals at Port Elizabeth will have to pay for their own transfer to Amakhala Game Reserve.

Enjoy a short course introduction/overview, before dinner in camp.
Overnight at our camp and enjoy a good night’s rest.
(During your stay there will always be staff on the premises should you need any assistance)

Amakhala Game Reserve is owned and run primarily by families that have been there for some five generations. Their ancestors were Frontier Settlers who settled in the Eastern Cape to farm sheep and cattle on the wild and often hostile Zuurveld. Today they are still there, in the now historic and hospitable Frontier Country, but today they run a Private Game Reserve. The reserve is home to a variety of species, including lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, buffalo, cheetah, giraffe, zebra and numerous other antelope species. The vegetation and landscape are awe inspiring and the time spent in this reserve of almost 7000 hectares will teach you a great deal about African wildlife.

The tented camp is newly renovated and all units are en-suite and will either sleep two or four delegates per room (at times our partner Dr William Fowlds will be running one of his courses simultaneously). The camp is based inside Amakhala Game Reserve and the central area offers amazing views over the reserve. The large tents have conventional single beds, electric blankets for the chilly winter nights, electricity, cupboards, etc. and are built on permanent platforms. Dedicated camp staff are always on hand to sort out any niggles and you can expect good wholesome cooking from the camp chef.

Day 2, Friday

After breakfast at 8.00 am, we will start with some introductory lectures at 9.00 am, Dr Peter Brothers:

- “An Introduction to the wildlife of Southern Africa – the basics”
- “The role of the Wildlife Veterinarian in South Africa”
- “Capture and immobilisation methods – the big picture”
- “Immobilisation First Aid”
- “Helicopter safety”

Break for lunch at 1.00 pm.

Enjoy some leisure time after lunch before heading out at around 3.00 pm for a game drive (wildlife viewing) on Amakhala Game Reserve with one of the local guides. All game drives on the reserve will be guided in an open game viewing vehicle giving you a true safari experience while learning about the various species. This is the first of many excursions into the bush to learn more about African Wildlife, and especially the species that occur here.

Return to the camp early evening after looking for some of the nocturnal species on the way back. Enjoy dinner in camp at 7.00 pm before enjoying another good night’s rest.
Day 3, Saturday

Breakfast at 7.00 am is followed by lecture sessions in camp throughout the day, starting at 8.00 am, with tea breaks and a lunch break. Guest lecturers, specialists in fields that are relevant to the aims of the course, will be brought in to lecture during the course.

Today’s lectures are crucial to understanding wildlife immobilisation. These lectures are presented by a specialist in this field, Dr Peter Buss (wildlife veterinarian currently with Veterinary Services for South African National Parks and based in the Kruger National Park; ex zoo vet, and ex faculty of Veterinary Science, Pharmacology Department) and will focus on:

- The physiology and pharmacology of wildlife immobilisation
- Species specific considerations for immobilisation – drugs and techniques

Lunch is at 1.00 pm and there will be several tea breaks too.

Enjoy dinner in camp at 7.00 pm – tonight is the night for a traditional braai….

Day 4 - Sunday

Breakfast at 7.00 am is again followed by lecture sessions in camp during the morning, starting at 8.00 am and ending at 10.30 am. Today’s lectures are again presented by Dr Peter Buss and will cover the remainder of the above topics not yet covered.

Enjoy lunch at 1.00 pm.

Enjoy some leisure time after lunch before heading out at around 3.00 pm for a game drive (wildlife viewing) on Amakhala Game Reserve with one of the local guides.

Dinner is back at the lodge at 7.00 pm and some wildlife DVD’s will be available for viewing after dinner.

Day 5, Monday

Early morning breakfast before setting out for the day’s veterinary work.

This morning’s work is likely to involve antelope immobilisation and relocation, and be carried out on Amakhala Game Reserve/nearby.

Lunch back at the lodge, or a packed lunch, pending the day’s work.

After lunch we’ll review the morning’s practical session and then have a lecture on various dart gun systems and darts, and after the lecture spend time loading darts with water and firing them at a target.
Enjoy leisure time in camp before dinner.
Enjoy some DVD’s/social time in camp.

**Day 6, Tuesday**

Early morning breakfast before setting out for the day’s veterinary work. This morning’s work is subject to confirmation nearer the time.

**Lunch** back at the lodge, or a packed lunch, pending the day’s work.

After lunch we’ll review the morning’s practical session and then have some leisure time to review lectures and activities covered to date.

You head out at around 3.00 pm for a game drive (wildlife viewing) on Amakhala Game Reserve with one of the local guides.

Enjoy leisure time in camp before dinner.
Enjoy some DVD’s/social time in camp.

**Day 7, Wednesday**

Breakfast at 7.00 am in camp before heading to nearby Addo Elephant National Park where we’ll spend the day, starting at 9.00 am. Our visit will include a game drive in the park, a visit to the boma (wildlife holding) facilities in the park, and possibly a talk on the park by one of the SAN Parks staff members/veterinarians. This will give delegates an insight into a different wildlife management system and a different habitat too.

**Lunch** is at the park restaurant and for delegates own expense (budget approximately R50-120, depending on your taste/hunger level!). There will also be some leisure time to explore the park shop and buy some souvenirs/mementos to take home.

In the afternoon we participate in the SAN Parks tick research project which is vital to understanding the dynamics of tick born diseases in the area. Learn about tick collection methods and physically assist with/carry out collection drags. This activity is subject to the tick project still running in 2011, and we may have an alternate activity this afternoon.

**Return to camp** late afternoon/early evening for an evening in camp. Enjoy dinner in camp at 7.00 pm.

Deep within the shadows of the dense valley bushveld of the Sundays River region of the Eastern Cape lies the Addo Elephant National Park. Here, the evenings are punctuated by the strident howl of the black-backed jackal, and the francolin’s call heralds each new dawn. Safe from relentless persecution in the past, the grey leviathans of the bush now roam in peace. The original Elephant section of the park was proclaimed in 1931, when only eleven elephants remained in the area - today this
A finely tuned ecosystem is sanctuary to over 450 elephants, Cape buffalo, black rhino, a variety of antelope species, as well as the unique flightless dung beetle, found almost exclusively in Addo. And their Addo has only just begun, with plans to expand the 164 000 ha Addo National Elephant Park into a 360 000 ha mega-park. In addition, plans include the proposed proclamation of a 120 000 ha (296 500 acre) marine reserve that includes islands that are home to the world’s largest breeding populations of Cape gannets and second largest breeding population of African penguins.

**Day 8, Thursday**

After early morning tea and coffee we head out on a **morning game drive** at 7.00 am today, to experience the wildlife at a different time of the day…..

Return to the lodge for **brunch** at 10.00 am (on days where we have brunch we basically have two big meals with some snacks in between).

Brunch is followed by a lecture on **wildlife diseases**, starting at 11.00 am – Dr Peter Brothers.

Enjoy another **afternoon game drive** on Amakhala at 3.00 pm, before **dinner at 7.00 pm**.

**Day 9, Friday**

After early morning tea and coffee at 7.00 am, we head out on a short **morning game drive** before stopping at the river for a **river cruise**…..

We enjoy a **bush breakfast** at an amazing spot after the river cruise….

After brunch we have a **lecture back in camp at 12.00 am on the history of wildlife/conservation issues in the area** – Dr William Fowlds.

Head out mid afternoon on a **game drive** in search of the species you may not yet have encountered, and to learn more about the **behaviour of the various wildlife species** by spending time monitoring them. You will also been shown how **telemetry** works (if not done yet) and spend time tracking some of the animals being monitored on the reserve.

**Return to camp** early evening for dinner at 7.00 pm, followed by an astronomy talk by one of your guides – talk subject to confirmation.

**Day 10, Saturday**

After morning tea and coffee at 7.15am, **half the group** will head out on a **morning bush walk** today, to experience the wildlife and environment on a totally different level….. You will be guided by a specialist guide on this activity.
The other half of the group will enjoy a lie in/some leisure time, and have their turn to walk on Sunday.

**Enjoy brunch for everyone back in camp at 10.30 am.**

After brunch we head to a nearby beach to spend the rest of the day – weather permitting, or stay on the reserve to catch up on any missed lectures, or to just enjoy leisure time/alternate activities.

We return to camp late afternoon for dinner at 7.00 pm and to enjoy some DVD’s/social time in camp.

**Day 11, Sunday**

After morning tea and coffee at 7.15am, the second half the group will head out on a morning bush walk today, to experience the wildlife and environment on a totally different level….. You will be guided by a specialist guide on this activity. The other half of the group will enjoy a lie in/some leisure time.

**Enjoy brunch for everyone back in camp at 10.30 am.**

After brunch there will be some talks on the flora and environment of the reserve. This is important to understand the bigger conservation issues that face wildlife.

After the talks its time for some leisure time and then another afternoon game drive where you will have the chance to again observe behaviour of the various wildlife species by spending time monitoring them, and can again practice your telemetry/tracking skills.

Return to camp after sunset for dinner at 7.30 pm, and relaxation time in camp.

**Day 12, Monday**

After breakfast at 7.00 am we spend the morning being lectured by Dr Jennifer Gush, The Director of the Conservation Centre on Amakhala and a PhD graduate in marine life.

Dr Gush’s lectures will cover topics such as:
- Overall look at the oceans of the world
- Conditions under which marine life live
- Special characteristics of the oceans surrounding southern African
- Some examples of marine research in this area
- Examination of the big marine spp in the southern African systems
- How vet practices operate in the marine system

We enjoy lunch in camp at 1.00 pm and after lunch we head to the nearby Aids Orphanage to learn more about the plight of these children in the context of the HIV pandemic in South Africa. Donations of clothes or financial contributions would be
much appreciated. **Purchases for items they need can be facilitated in advance through Brothers Safaris purchasing these goods on your behalf, and students handing such purchases over on the visit day.** This saves on packing space and ensures we purchase **relevant items** for the children.

Arrive back in camp late afternoon and enjoy an early **dinner at 6.30 pm.**

After dinner we head out on a **night drive to explore Amakhala by night**, in search of those elusive nocturnal species…..

**Day 13, Tuesday**

Its early breakfast again today, and then we head back to Port Elizabeth for a **boat cruise on the ocean** to apply some of the knowledge gained the previous day – weather permitting. If we are lucky we could encounter **dolphins, whales, penguins and various seabirds on route**….

**Lunch** is back at the marina – for your own expense (budget approximately R70 for this).

After lunch there will be a **few hours to catch up on shopping/telephone calls, etc**, before we head back to the peace of the camp. On route back we will visit the Orphanage craft shop to support their work.

Arrive in camp late afternoon/early evening and enjoy **dinner at 7.00 pm**, followed by leisure time.

**Day 14, Wednesday**

Early morning breakfast before setting out for the day’s **veterinary work**. This morning’s work is subject to confirmation nearer the time, but will probably be with some of the larger mammals, such as black rhino….

**Lunch** back at the lodge, or a packed lunch, pending the day’s work.

Late morning or early afternoon we’ll have a theoretical presentation on **helicopter safety and darting**, followed by a **practical helicopter session darting a target with a paintball gun/similar**. This will give you an excellent idea of what is required when darting from the air! **Please note that this exercise carries a weight restriction for safety reasons.** Anyone weighing more than 100kg should please speak to Dr Brothers in private before this exercise.

After ridding yourself of some of the adrenalin, we’ll cover any remaining **lectures/topics of interest** that have not yet been addressed, or enjoy another game drive.

We enjoy **dinner back in camp** at 7.00 pm, before another night of leisure.
Day 15, Thursday

Early morning breakfast before setting out for the day’s veterinary work – subject to confirmation.

Lunch back at the lodge, or a packed lunch, pending the day’s work.

This afternoon you will be given a written exam on the course material as a means of self evaluation – the exam is typically out of 150 marks and written over a maximum of 2 hours, and covers both theory and practical aspects covered on the course. While all activities on the course are obviously optional, course delegates are encouraged to participate in all of them, including the exam.

Enjoy a game drive and sundowners in the bush for the last time before returning to the lodge for dinner and to overnight.

Day 16, Friday

After breakfast we check out at 10.00 am and transfer back to Port Elizabeth airport for your flight to Johannesburg International Airport, in time for connecting flights home/to your next destination. Do not book a flight leaving Port Elizabeth before 12h30 to allow enough check in time. If returning to Johannesburg, we suggest flight BA 6242, departing at 13h25, arriving in Johannesburg at 15h05, which gives enough time to make further connecting flights/international flights. Should anyone need assistance booking this or another connecting flight, or want a quote, please advise us.

Please do not book flights departing Johannesburg before 6.30 pm tonight.

*** END OF SERVICES ***

Cost per person sharing:
ZAR 27 500-00 per delegate sharing on the above basis.
Single supplements apply where/if available.
This cost is based on a minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 14 participating.

The course cost includes meals and accommodation as indicated above, all land transfers in a comfortable air-conditioned mini-bus or game viewer vehicles, guides and lecturers as above, all practicals and lectures as above, all tours and activities as above, Park entry fees, VAT and Government Tourism levies.

Not included are flights (international and domestic), drinks, meals as indicated for your own expense above, optional additional activities, items of a personal nature, gratuities (budget on approximately R400-00 over the duration of the course), travel/medical insurance (compulsory and we have details of a good policy which covers you here in SA, should you need assistance with this) and pre- and post-
course activities (we have a leisure department that can assist with all travel arrangements in Africa).

Course dates:

1. 26 May – 10 June 2011
2. 16 June – 1 July 2011
3. 07 July – 22 July 2011
4. 28 July – 12 August 2011

Please Note:

1. This course is accredited by the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) for Continuing Education/Continuing Professional Development purposes for Veterinarians. Each formal contact hour equates to one CPD point in the SAVC system. Accreditation for 2010 pending.

2. Due to the nature of wildlife and the situations in which we work, as well as the working conditions for people involved with wildlife, and weather conditions, it is often necessary to amend the itinerary and plans as we go along. There is also never a 100% guarantee of what work will be successfully completed, although we obviously select work and situations that have a very likely chance of being completed/successful. Ultimately course delegates will be expected to be flexible and understanding, and will also have to share duties during immobilisation and hands-on work throughout the course, in order to give everyone maximum exposure and practical experience since there will obviously not always be multiple animals at each immobilisation. Your understanding in this regard is much appreciated.

3. While we do have an enormous amount of fun, this is a course intended to educate you in many of the veterinary aspects related to wildlife and you should be aware that many of the days are long, and work filled. Safety of course delegates and patients is an obvious priority and delegates will be expected to co-operate with, and adhere to, instructions issued in this regard. We reserve the right to refuse access to situations if it is deemed that a student is not satisfactorily adhering to such instructions.

4. Meals are provided as indicated and dietary requirements such as vegetarians and allergies will be catered for, as far is possible under these circumstances. We unfortunately cannot accommodate each delegate’s preferences for food which are not related to ethical/medical reasons.

5. Limited telephone access & internet (for email only) will be available while in camp for communication back home. These costs are for your own account. When in town/other areas, telephone access will occasionally be available. Emergency contact numbers for the camp and our staff are available prior to your arrival.
6. **Weather** at this time of the year can be extremely variable, **please come prepared**. Temperatures can range from freezing to over 20 degrees Celcius, and we may encounter rain. Please use the link on our website for more information.

7. Course delegates will be expected to sign an **indemnity** on arrival, as well as an **adherence to camp/course rules** form. These are available for viewing prior to booking, on request. The camp/course rules are to ensure everyone’s safety and enjoyment during the course. Delegates are expected to be courteous and tolerant to staff and fellow course delegates.

**Please note the following regarding the darting/immobilisation procedures:**

While every endeavour is made to locate and dart the animal in question, factors such as severe weather conditions or illness involving the animal, unable to locate or approach the animal close enough due to bush conditions, failure of the animal to come to a bait, etc. which are all unpredictable, may prevent the darting from going ahead. Every effort will be made to ensure that the client participates in the darting procedure, or similar, as laid out in the itinerary, but the animal’s welfare will not be compromised at any stage, and a procedure may have to be aborted and the animal revived in certain circumstances. This may shorten the procedure/down time, and hence the close up experience for the client. Brothers Safaris, its staff, and appointed agents will not be held liable for any losses incurred by a client as a result of such situations, and accept no responsibility whatsoever. Every endeavour is made to ensure the health and safety of all our clients, but any procedure with a potentially dangerous wild animal and veterinary drugs is of such a nature that certain circumstances may be beyond our control. Should any such situation arise which leads to death or injury due to any reason whatsoever, Brothers Safaris, its staff, and appointed agents, will not be held liable for any losses incurred as a direct, or indirect, result of such a situation, or our actions in such a situation.

V: PSB 20 Aug 09