



THE SAFARI SCHOOL

Guiding Skills, Ethics, & Knowledge

Safari Guide Training for East Africa

This is an opportunity for East African safari guides, lodge naturalists, tour drivers, and nature enthusiasts to receive quality field guide professional development. Courses can be tailor-made to fit the requirements of the participants covering a host of different topics - from East Africa's paleontological record to bird identification; from correct use of binoculars to animal track identification - providing participants with a deeper understanding of East Africa's natural history. Each course is designed to equip guides and nature enthusiasts with the right tools to understand and interpret the natural environment for visitors in a safe and professional manner. Training can be conducted on-site at a particular camp or lodge, or in a central, convenient location for participants from various locations.

This training is endorsed by the African Field Guides Association (AFGA) and the Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association (KPSGA), and can be tailored to help prepare potential candidates for the KPSGA Bronze, Silver, or Gold level examinations. With a few additional arrangements, a Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) endorsed "55-day Apprentice Field Guide" course can also be organized.

The course will include both a practical element out in the field (on foot and/or in the vehicle) as well as classroom lectures, assignments, & assessments.

Modules Offered:

- *Guiding Skills*
 1. People skills and professionalism required in the industry
 2. The role of a guide on safari
 3. Effective communication, storytelling, and interpretation
 4. Vehicle positioning and guest comfort
- *Guiding Ethics*
 1. Ethical operations in the wilderness environment
 2. How to remain ethical under pressure
 3. Etiquette, cultural norms, and a code of conduct
- *Vehicles*
 1. Major mechanical components & function of a 4x4 vehicle
 2. Daily mechanical checks
 3. Daily equipment checks
 4. Basic 4x4 driving competency
 5. Troubleshooting & common mistakes to avoid
- *Geology*
 1. The importance of understanding geology for guides
 2. Rock types and associated soils
 3. East African Geological History & continental drift
 4. Geology & landforms of the local area (I tailor this to each camp/lodge)
- *Map Reading & Navigation*
 1. Major types of maps
 2. Map components, scales, legends, etc.
 3. Understanding and visualising contour lines
 4. Basic navigation using physical maps
- *Astronomy on Safari*
 1. Overview of the Universe & our place in it
 2. Visible Celestial Bodies & Constellations
 3. Mythology & Lore
- *Climate & Weather*
 1. The earth's atmosphere



2. Formation of weather patterns & cloud types
3. Weather patterns in East Africa
- *Taxonomy & Scientific Nomenclature*
 1. Basic taxonomy & phylogeny for guides
 2. The usefulness of scientific names in guiding interpretation
- *Biomes & Ecoregions*
 1. Defining biomes & ecoregions
 2. Ecoregions of East Africa
- *Ecology & Animal Behaviour*
 1. Defining ecology
 2. Ecosystem components, interactions, & relationships
 3. Animal relationships, social structures, & group behaviour
 4. Communication, survival adaptations, and territoriality
- *Conservation Management and History*
 1. East African conservation history & primary modern challenges
 2. Conservation & land management techniques
- *Trees and Grasses*
 1. Plant identification
 2. Anatomy of plants and leaf structure
 3. Ethnobotany – how we use plants
 4. Ecology of grasses
- *Reptiles and Amphibians (2 separate modules)*
 1. Reptile Taxonomy
 2. Basic reptile biology, reproduction, and external characteristics
 3. Reptile identification
 4. Amphibian calls, mating, and reproduction
 5. Amphibian identification & ecology
- *Arthropods (usually 3 separate modules)*
 1. Distinction between insects and other arthropods
 2. Basic insect ecology/biology
 3. Spiders - identification and biology
 4. Scorpions, ticks, and mites – identification and biology
 5. Centipedes and Millipedes – identification and biology
- *Mammals*
 1. Characteristics of mammals and basic taxonomy
 2. Foot structures and digestive systems
 3. Special adaptations
- *Birds & Bird Guiding (usually 2 modules)*
 1. Bird identification and characteristics
 2. Bird Guiding techniques & skills
 3. Setting up binoculars and correct use of field guides
 4. General behaviour and physical adaptations
 5. Breeding & nesting
 6. Trivia and peculiarities
- *Tracking and Signs of the Wild*
 1. Track & sign identification
- Navigating the digital environment
 1. Making the most of social media
 2. Citizen Science projects



Your instructor: Zarek Cockar is a highly-qualified field guide and trainer with over 17 years of safari experience in East Africa

- African Field Guides Association (AFGA) – Level 3 and certified Trainer & Assessor
- Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association (KPSGA) – Gold Level
- Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) – Field Guide (Level 2/NQF4)
- FGASA Back-up Trails Guide & Advanced Rifle Handling
- Cybertracker Track & Sign - Level 3

Past training clients: Kijabe Forest Trust (3x), Basecamp Explorer, African Encounter Travel, Naibor Camp, Campi Ya Kanzi, Asilia Africa (6x), EcoTraining (3x), Atua Enkop, Wildlife Works/Rukinga, Savage Wilderness, The Safari Collection (5x), Lentore Lodge, Kicheche Camps (5x), The Wilder Group, Enkewa Mara Camp, Mukutan Retreat, Tawi Lodge, Amazing Mara, Speke Holidays Uganda, Bushtops Mara & Serengeti (2x), Hemingways Ol Seki, Collection in the Wild, Segera, El Karama, Wilderness, Governors Collection, Nale Moru Tanzania, Singita Grumeti, & Nomad Tanzania.

Born and raised in Kenya, and having taken every opportunity to go camping, hiking, birding, or studying wadudu from a young age, I have developed a deep connection to East Africa's wilderness areas. Training courses with me are defined by my wide-eyed wonder at the natural world, from hopping through muddy puddles catching frogs to slowly roving a riverbank searching for an elusive leopard. When I am not guiding, training, or designing an itinerary from the office, I often pack a tent in the car and head off on safari with my family or friends.

Suggested daily schedule:

First Day:

- 11:00 am – Instructor arrival, check-in, and introduction
- 12:00 pm – Lunch
- 1:30 pm – Ice-breaker and get to know each other
- 3:30 pm – Tea Break
- 4:00 pm – field Activity (walk or drive)
- 7:00 pm - Dinner

Median Days:

- 6:30 am – Early morning field activity (walk or drive)
- 9:30 am – Breakfast
- 10:00 am – Lecture
- 12:30 pm – Lunch
- 2:00 pm – group discussion, assignments, or presentations by participants
- 3:30 pm – tea break
- 4:00 pm – field activity (walk or drive)
- 7:00 pm - Dinner
- 8:15 pm – campfire debrief/evening field activity

Final Week:

- Written, Oral, and field-based practical examinations

Syllabus & Classwork

The following theory components are recommended

- Classroom lectures coupled with a printed learner manual
- Quizzes twice a week
- 2 research assignments
- Final written exam

The following practical components are recommended

- Wildlife drives & walks led by the instructor
- Wildlife drives & walks led by the students
- Duty roster for students in charge of daily responsibilities (eg. Vehicle checks, etc.)
- Weekly field observation assessments
- 2 Oral presentations based on research assignments (see theory components above)
- Final practical assessment

NB: Budget for 1 day per lecture/module, an additional day for group presentations, one additional day for a written exam, and at least half a day per guide for a practical assessment at the end. For example, if we cover all 20 modules, and there are 8 participants, the course should take 26 days. This schedule and duration is flexible depending on the desired outcomes and budget. Operators may choose any set of modules they wish to focus on for their guiding team, and full practical assessments are not compulsory if not desired.

Unless otherwise arranged, the following lectures are mandatory as they set a basis for all others: Guiding Skills, Guiding Ethics, Taxonomy & Scientific Names.

Additional modules can be incorporated if required, such as a focus on individual species or groups (lions, elephants, raptors, etc.), or any other topic deemed pertinent.

Additional activities, such as sleep-outs, can also be incorporated to enhance the learning experience.

This proposal does not include a specific "Walking with Dangerous Game" or "Advanced Rifle Handling" component, although these concepts will be covered at various points throughout the syllabus if desired. These two components can be organized as a stand-alone course for participants of the highest competency at a later date.

Participation Certificates or pass certificates can be issued if desired.



Costs:

- Instructor fees: **Get in touch for this year's costs.** Large groups or specialist training may require an additional instructor who will have their own set daily fees.
- Student materials: **Get in touch for the cost depending on what the training manual includes**

These costs are **inclusive** of the following:

- My instruction & full-time availability throughout the course
- Lectures & PowerPoint presentations
- Projector
- White board & markers
- A physical reference library (textbooks, field guides, etc.)
- An extensive digital library of PDFs, diagrams, scientific papers, popular science articles, etc. for the guides to keep
- 1 Student Learner Manual (textbook) per student
- 1 additional resource guide of study material for the group

These costs are **exclusive** of the following:

- Instructor transport to & from training location
- Training transport logistics (game drive vehicle, etc.)
- Instructor room & board at training location
- Instructor conservation fees at training location (Park, Reserve, Conservancy, Ranch, WMA, etc.)
- Notebooks, pens, binoculars, field guides, etc. for each student
- 1 Student Learner Assignment Workbook per student (additional \$18 per student) if desired
- 1 "*East African Animal Behaviour Brief*" book per student (\$18 per student) if desired
- Additional printing costs, eg. exams, which can potentially be printed at host's cost in situ.

Students are expected to have their own notebooks, pens, & binoculars. Operators/Lodges/Camps are expected to provide suitable vehicles for wildlife-based activities, unless prior arrangements are agreed upon.

contact@zarekcockarsafaris.com | +254 735 046262 | +254 718 763968

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