

Nature Enthusiast Course



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF IMIRE

Imire was founded in the 1950s by Norman Travers, initially as a cattle, maize and tobacco farm. He longed for the presence of game and in the late 1970s branched out into game farming. He pioneered the integration of cattle ranching, farming and long term sustainable wildlife management. Like Noah, the animals came in two by two and within 10 years Imire had become a 10,000 acre conservancy, stocked with impala, waterbuck, kudu, eland and the rare sable antelope.

BLACK RHINO BREEDING AND RELEASE

Imire is internationally renowned for its black rhino breeding and release programme. In the 1980s, during a period of Zimbabwe's worst poaching, rhino numbers crashed from 10,000 to less than 1,000 in just a few years. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife moved the remaining wild rhino into the custodianship of private conservancies, called Intensive Protection Zones. Norman believed that Imire could successfully care for rhino, but was derided as a dreamer - how could rhino from the dry heat of the Zambezi Valley survive the bitter Wedza winters? However, he convinced sceptics by showing them proof of the rhinos depicted in the 700 year old bushman paintings on the conservancy. Imire's adopted rhino and their offspring have since thrived.

THE IMIRE RHINO

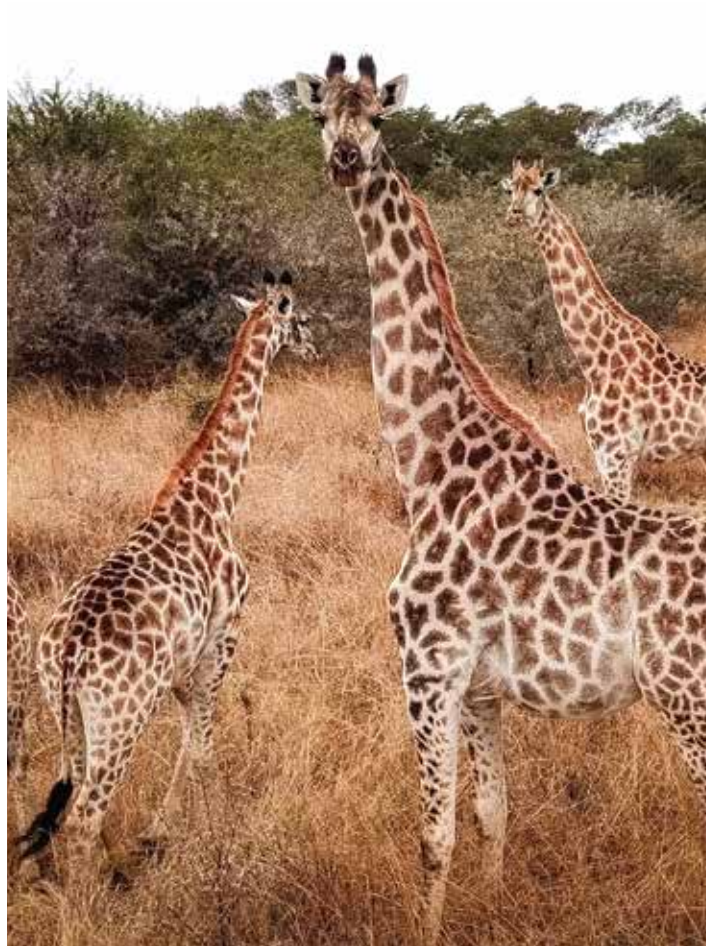
Imire were given seven orphaned baby black rhino in 1985. Noddy, Sprinter, Fumbi, Cuckoo, DJ, Amber and Mvu were aged between four and six months. Their parents had been poached in the Matusadona National Park in Northern Zimbabwe. Each of the seven calves were hand-reared on formula milk for eight years and raised as a semi-domesticated herd. Several in-depth studies were carried out by ecologists to ensure the rhino suffered no ill-effects from the new vegetation, climate and herding, since black rhinos are naturally solitary animals.

The seven original rhino bred very successfully at Imire, with 15 births in less than 20 years - a record given the rhino's notoriously slow speed of reproduction. Over the next 15 years, 11 rhino were successfully returned to the Matusadona National Park where they were monitored by National Parks and a team of volunteer student vets. The Matusadona release programme was stopped in 2000 due to a lack of funds and today this ancient animal once again faces extinction in the wild.



WILDLIFE AT IMIRE

Imire is home to four of Africa's famous 'Big Five' including elephant, rhino, buffalo and lion as well as zebra, giraffe, warthog, crocodile and fourteen species of antelope.



As well as the famous big animals there is much more to discover at Imire with over 250 species of birds including local rarities such as Copper Sunbird, Little Bittern and Melanistic Gabar Goshawk. There are also healthy populations of peculiar nocturnal animals including hyenas, honey badgers, African civet, the illusive aardvark and bushbabies.

Imire is the only conservancy within the Wedza district and therefore offers a plethora of regionally unique flora and fauna. The first ever record of a particular mushroom (*Psilocybe Cubensis Imire*) in Zimbabwe was found on Imire!

NATURE ENTHUSIAST COURSE

Our Nature Enthusiast Course is the perfect opportunity to gain knowledge and appreciation of the natural world while enjoying all that Imire has to offer. You will be living in the heart of Zimbabwe surrounded by nature including iconic African wildlife such as black and white rhino, elephant, buffalo, giraffe and zebra. You will become part of the Imire family, learning our history, immersing yourself in our beloved wildlife, witnessing amazing animal relationships and bettering your understanding and knowledge of the wildlife which surrounds you.

This is a once in a lifetime experience for people of all ages and backgrounds. You may want to start a career in wildlife conservation or simply have a desire to learn more.

WHAT MAKES OUR COURSE UNIQUE?

The length of our course – our six week course is designed to allow you to go into much more detail than other courses. Without strict time constraints we are able to delve much deeper into each subject revealing the many wonders of the natural world.

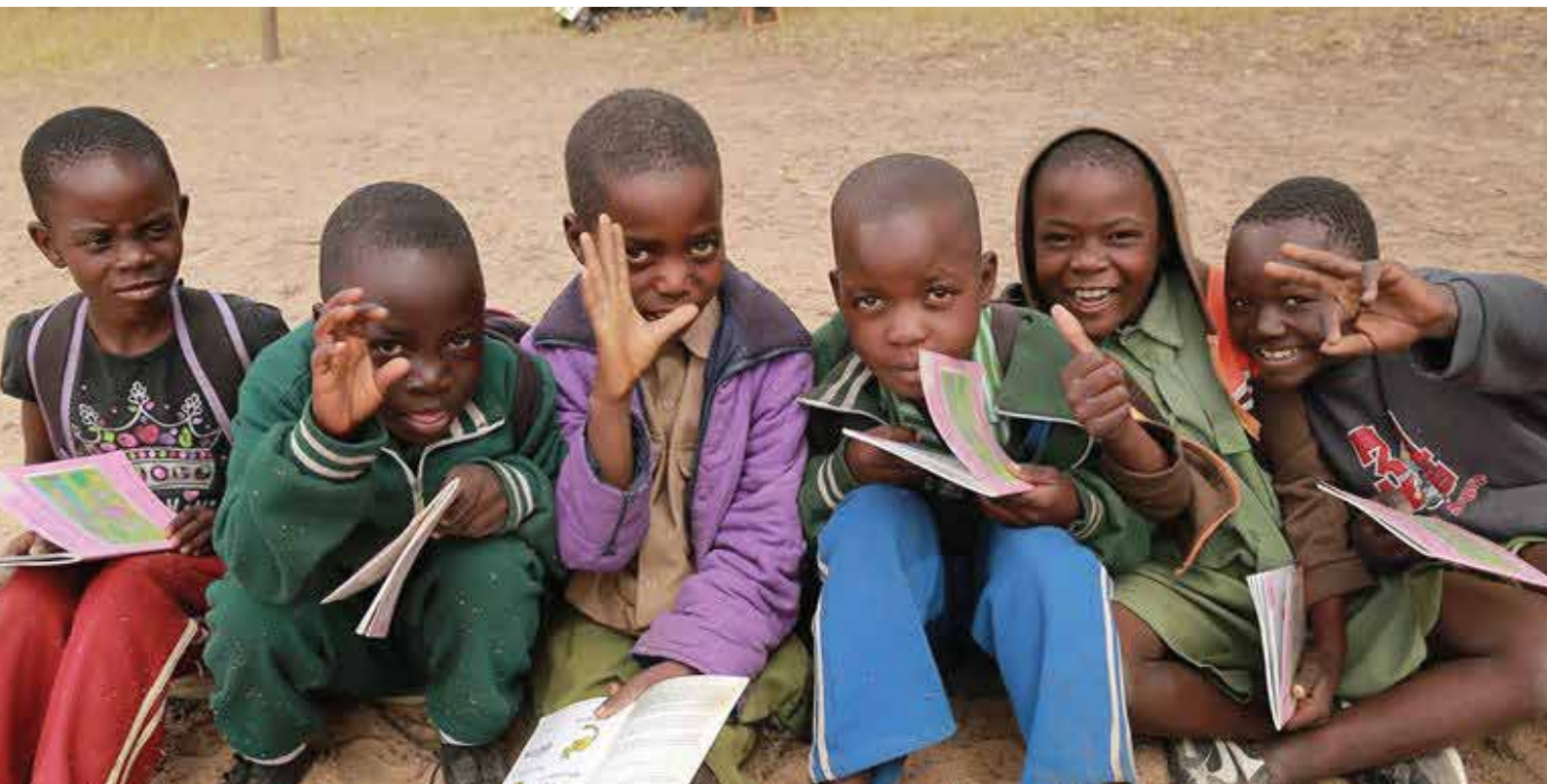
Number of people on course – we have limited our first two courses to a maximum of 10 students which allows for a lot of personal one-to-one training and guidance.



Course facilitators – the course will be run by Sam Turley and Vera Castro who both have guiding and scientific backgrounds, holding a BSc in Zoology and Biology respectively. They will not only guide you through your course, their academic backgrounds ensure they are able to facilitate meaningful and long term research projects, which you will be a key part of. Throughout the course we have also arranged specialist guest speakers and guides, who are experts in their fields to give you the ultimate learning experience.



Community – at Imire we believe that you can't conserve wildlife without involving the local community. We are lucky enough to be surrounded by schools and as part of our community outreach project you will teach local conservation club students about the importance of conservation and how they can make a difference.



The course is accredited by FGASA (Field Guide Association of Southern Africa) - once you have completed the course you will be certified by FGASA as an internationally recognised Nature Enthusiast.

Scientific research – There is no other Nature Enthusiast course which facilitates meaningful research quite like us at Imire. As part of the course we have designed each topic of study to include a research project. For Example – If you're studying mammals we will go out into the reserve and track our rhinos using telemetry. Over time our data will then be mapped revealing our 'rhino hot spots'. This will allow us to focus our anti-poaching resources into those areas and better protect our rhinos and the vegetation on which they rely on. Another example – if you're studying birds we have set up a bird ringing scheme. This involves catching birds using a mist net and applying a specially designed ring which doesn't have any negative effect on the bird. Each ring is unique to that particular bird so if it's caught or photographed again we can ID individuals. This allows us to better understand movements and migrations, monitor particular species, measure breeding success, understand population declines and ultimately conserve our bird species. Whether you're thinking about a career in conservation or simply want to learn more, being involved in research projects will prove as invaluable experience for your CV.



WHAT DOES THE COURSE INCLUDE?

All of our subjects are designed to achieve the highest level of learning possible. We combine classroom learning with practical, in the field studies to ensure you reach your full potential.

During your 6 week course you will cover the following subjects:

- Introduction to Zimbabwe and Imire
- Astronomy
- Geology
- Weather and Climate
- Ecology
- Taxonomy
- Botany – Wild Flowers, Trees and Grasses
- Arthropods (Insects)
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Fish
- Birds
- Mammals
- Animal Behaviour
- Conservation Management
- Historical Human Habitation
- Bush Survival Skills (Sleep Out)
- Tracking Skills
- Basic Weapon Handling
- Photography
- Scientific Studies such as Grass Surveys, Telemetry Tracking, Camera Traps
- Fish and Amphibians Surveys and much more...



Below is an example of a typical day, each of which will focus on a different subject. Please note that some subjects have more to cover and may stretch over multiple days. These times and activities are dependent on weather conditions (and other factors) and can/will be amended at short notice by the instructor.

DAY 15	MAMMALS
05:30 - 06:00	Wake up, coffee, rusks
06:00 - 09:30	Mammal Lecture
09:30 - 10:30	Breakfast
10:30 - 12:30	Field Exercise - Game Drive focusing on Mammal Diversity
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 17:00	Field Research - Micro Mammal traps and Camera Traps
17:00 - 19:00	Self Study and Workbooks
19:00 - 20:00	Dinner
20:00 - 21:00	Relax around the fire

LEISURE TIME

In your free time you can go fishing, bushwalk with the Anti-Poaching Unit or relax by the dam at the Wilderness Camp with a beer after a hard day's work! You may also have the opportunity to go horse riding in the bush (extra cost).

If you would like to arrange a driver to take you into Harare to visit the markets and shops, we can arrange a private taxi for \$100 per car each way (costs shared between students). Speak to Vera to organise this. There is no reliable public transport from the reserve to Harare.

ACCOMMODATION

Your home away from home is the Wilderness Camp, a beautiful camp situated in the wild side of the reserve near Chiwawe Dam, which allows an intensive learning in a diverse ecosystem. Wilderness Camp is in an idyllic spot with bar, braai area surrounded by pristine African bush. You will be sharing a twin en-suite safari-tent style accommodation with the most beautiful landscape in the whole reserve.

We are lucky enough to have a borehole at Imire with fresh spring water for drinking. You will receive three home-cooked meals a day during your stay, made by our expert cooks, Tarisai and Oscar, served buffet style. Dietary requirements can be catered for, please let us know before you arrive!



BOOKINGS

PROJECT PRICING 2021 - \$5400 - NOW \$3,999!

1ST COURSE – 4th April - 17th May 2021

Prices are in US Dollars. All bookings are subject to an additional \$40 administration fee. Please note that items on your final bill e.g. drinks from the bar, t-shirts, books, additional transfers etc are subject to VAT charged at 15%. VAT will be added to your bill at the end of your stay.

The price includes:

- Shared safari-tent style accommodation
- All meals (3 meals a day) while you are on the project and drinks (tea, coffee, juice, water) excluding fizzy and alcoholic drinks
- Training costs
- Transport between training locations
- Harare International Airport transfers on arrival and departure (every SUNDAY)
- Nature Enthusiast Manual and Workbook
- Laundry and housekeeping
- 24-hour support from our on-site volunteer managers
- Full orientation upon arrival

The price excludes:

- Personal travel & excursions (outside the Nature Enthusiast Course)
- Purchase of curios and any items of a personal nature
- Snacks, fizzy and alcoholic drinks (over 18's only) from our bar
- Reference books outside those that are provided
- Visas
- Flights
- Insurance

HOW DO I BOOK?

Email us your dates and we'll check availability. Once your dates are confirmed we will send you a questionnaire, booking form and medical form to complete and send back once you have organised your flights and travel insurance. In addition you will receive an invoice for your payment.

Unless otherwise agreed, a 50% deposit is required to secure your place. Once this is received into our bank account, your place is confirmed. Full payment is due 60 days before your course start date. If a booking is made less than 60 days before your start date, 100% of the fee must be made immediately.

Should you wish to cancel, then your initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days prior to your project start date. We will make any refunds back into your bank account, less any bank charges applied by our bank.

If you cancel within 60 days of your start date and have paid the full amount for the course, then the refund is as follows:

- 31-60 days prior to course start date - refund of your initial deposit. You may transfer the remaining balance paid onto a new booking with a start date within 1 calendar year of the original or first project start date. If you have only paid a deposit, then no refund is available.

- Less than 30 days prior to course start date - no refund of any monies paid. You may transfer your money to a new booking with a start date within 1 calendar year of the original or first project start date.



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