

The unexpected sighting

It was a beautiful spring morning when we set out on our safari. With the morning starting out just as I like it – with a stunning sunrise lighting up the sky in a series of breath-taking colours.

We set out to look for hyena's and anything else that we could find, as we have already seen the Big 5 (Which if we are being honest is one of the main reasons why most people come to Africa and on Safari's). The guests were extremely happy to look for things that we have not yet seen, no matter if it was big or small. Knowing that there was an occupied Hyena den site - with one big female and two youngsters that has been active for about a month - that is where we would start, not knowing if they will be there or not – as Hyena's are predominantly active at night.

As we started to get closer to the Den site, the eagerness on the vehicle grew, not knowing what we would find, if the Hyena's would be there or not. Unfortunately, when we got there the Hyena's were not out and about, most likely sleeping within the den site. However, little did we know that we would end up finding something that was very much unexpected...



With almost all the trees not having much green to them and everything looking a bit pale and dull after the dry winter months, we noticed something colourful in an extremely dull, seemingly dead tree, a snake - just catching some morning sun. At an average length of 1.2 - 1.5m; with enormous, brilliantly emerald green eyes; a short stubby head and a colour variation that is far greater than any other South African snake - A Boomslang.



At first there was confusion from the guests as to why my Assistant Guide, Selby and I got so excited but when they saw the snake that we were pointing at, the excitement on the vehicle grew

immensely. We then got off to go have a closer look not getting too close or underneath the Boomslang, as they are extremely venomous. Having a potent haemotoxic venom that causes severe internal bleeding and bleeding from the mucous membranes and may result in a fatal haemorrhage if untreated. Although their venom is extremely potent, they are extremely shy snakes and seldomly bite.



The Boomslang has no English name but translated directly from Afrikaans it literally means 'Tree snake' which is where they live. These snakes rely on cryptic colouration to camouflage themselves in vegetation, hiding from its own predators like birds of prey and other snakes. They actively hunt chameleons and other tree-living lizards, birds, nestlings, eggs and frogs, seldomly taking small mammals as well.



I can't recall who on the vehicle was more excited, my guests, Selby or myself, but we were fortunate enough and enthusiastic to have seen the Boomslang catching some morning sun. It was most definitely a very rare and unexpected sight to see.

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