



## Pre-Departure Information

BOTSWANA WILDLIFE SAFARI



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# Reminders Before You Go

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## WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

## PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Passport Photocopy:** Scan\* a COLOR copy of your passport photo page and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send us a high quality photocopy by mail (immediately upon reserving your trip).
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

*\*If you are scanning documents to email, we suggest a maximum resolution of 300 dpi.*

## PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Extra Services:** Request any Extra Services (hotel nights, transfers, extensions) with your WT office contact using the Extra Services Request Form sent with your confirmation packet.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** or e-mail us at: [info@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:info@wildernesstravel.com).

# Travel Information

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## PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Africa. We recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. In addition, to enter South Africa (even if you are only in transit through a South African airport), your passport must contain at least three completely blank visa pages. This is an important official requirement, and you can be denied entry to South Africa or other southern African countries if you do not have the correct number and type of passport pages. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (the service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express**. Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

### **The following documents are required when travelling to Africa with children under the age of 18:**

In addition to a valid passport, children under the age of 18 are required to travel with an unabridged birth certificate. If they are not traveling with both of their parents, a notarized letter of consent from the non-traveling parent(s) is also required.

Even though it is possible that a copy of the birth certificate would suffice in some countries, the authorities worldwide have become stricter about this requirement so we recommend that you bring an original birth certificate. If you have questions about entry requirement details for child travelers, please contact the relevant embassy or consulate.

## VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for Botswana, but do need a visa for Zimbabwe. Please bring \$30 USD per person cash to purchase this visa at the border. If you hold a non-US passport, please contact the Zimbabwe Consulate to check the visa process.

If you plan to extend your trip to South Africa or overnight in South Africa: US citizens (US passport holders) visiting the Republic of South Africa for 90 days or less for tourism purposes do not need visas. Visitor visas will be issued at the port of entry in South Africa. PLEASE see the strict passport requirements under PASSPORT, above.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

## MONEY

US cash is the best currency to bring to Botswana. Bring your funds in new small bills (no \$100s because of the prevalence of counterfeit currency). Travelers checks are rarely accepted and are NOT recommended. Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted in all but the more remote areas. Diners and American Express are often not accepted.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, airport taxes, entry fee (see above), Zimbabwe visa (see above), any meals not included in the trip itinerary, and for personal items such as snacks, phone calls, etc. Beer, wine, spirits, and sodas are complimentary at our private campsites but not at the hotels.

To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards abroad, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card in a foreign country.

## TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides and safari staff for outstanding service. Please find a suggested range of reference below:

\$100-120 USD per trip member for the safari staff (drivers, cooks, etc.—this is a pooled tip; the Trip Leader will facilitate this)

\$90-110 USD per trip member for the Trip Leader

\$85-95 USD per trip member for the assistant Trip Leader

\$20 per trip member for the lodge staff at Xugana Lodge

Tipping for the Trip Leader and assistant Trip Leader is not formally organized. If you would like to tip them, we suggest that you do so toward the end of the trip. The Xugana Lodge has a staff tip box where you can drop tips anytime you like while there.

## SPECIAL DIETS

Please reach out to us directly to discuss any dietary restrictions or concerns you may have. We can easily make arrangements for most diets, but please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or logistical limitations can make it difficult or at times impossible to accommodate all requests. With this in mind, please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a special diet, and any food allergies in particular, so we can do our best to meet your needs.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Telephone

The international dialing code for Botswana is 267, for Zimbabwe 263. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

### Email & Internet Access

Although it can be spotty at times, internet access is available at our lodges and hotels, but not at camps.

## ELECTRICITY

Botswana has 220-volt current. Bring a converter and plug adapter kit for appliance use at hotels. Plug adapters for South Africa and Botswana are usually three round pins. You can purchase plug adapters online from travel suppliers such as Eagle Creek or Magellan, or on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Battery chargers: Each safari vehicle carries a power strip with US plug adapters for guests to charge their electronics while on safari.

# Medical Information

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The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**.

## INOCULATIONS

Entry requirements are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. It provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

### Yellow Fever

Proof of Yellow Fever inoculation is required for entry into many African countries if you are arriving from an "endemic yellow fever zone" country (most of sub-Saharan and western Africa and South America). For most travelers, a single dose of yellow fever vaccine provides long-lasting protection and a booster dose of the vaccine is not needed. However, some travelers may require a booster dose. Also, certain countries might require a booster dose of the vaccine; visit the CDC Travelers' Health link (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>) for information on specific country requirements. Have proof of the shot recorded in your International Health Card and carry the card with your passport. Health officials at borders often (but not always) request proof of the shot. For current information, refer to the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm).

Please note: According to the CDC, people 60 years or older may be at increased risk for serious adverse events following vaccination, compared with younger persons. This is particularly true if they are receiving their first yellow fever vaccination. If you are over 60, please discuss this with your physician. If you are advised to decline the vaccine, please get a written waiver from your physician or travel clinic in case you might need it during the visa application process.

### Polio

People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

### Hepatitis

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

### Tetanus Booster

A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

### Typhoid

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna, a course of four capsules, one every other day for a week, with full effectiveness reached in a week. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

## MALARIA PREVENTION

Malaria is a serious but preventable disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. All travelers are urged to take antimalarial medications, available only by prescription. Please discuss antimalarial medication with your doctor, who will explain various antimalarials and their side effects and recommend a regimen for you. In addition to medication, a further precaution against malaria is to wear long sleeves and long pants at dusk. Thin clothing should be sprayed with insect repellent, especially around the elbows and ankles. Use repellent containing DEET.

If, after returning from your trip, you have a persistent fever with chills, muscle aches, and headache, report to your doctor the possibility of exposure to malaria.

For further malaria information, consult your doctor or the **CDC Malaria Hotline**: 888-232-3228.

## STAYING HEALTHY

At our safari camps, our camp crew is well trained in hygienic practices. Filtered drinking water is provided and is safe to use. A basin of fresh washing water is put at your tent before meals so you can wash your hands before eating. In hotels, don't brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water. Don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. When in doubt, ask your Trip Leader for guidelines.

# Helpful Information

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses**, with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

### Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

### Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to [wtphotoblog@gmail.com](mailto:wtphotoblog@gmail.com) or tag us [@WildernessTravel](#) on social media.

### Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

## BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

## VICTORIA FALLS EXTRAS

At Victoria Falls, your meals, drinks, and extra services can be charged to your room and paid for with a credit card (the hotel adds a surcharge to any credit card sale). For shopping in markets and shops at Victoria Falls, US dollars are strongly preferred. Some shops will take credit cards, but no shops accept traveler's checks. Optional activities at Victoria Falls are typically paid for in US cash (although some activities can be paid by credit card, you should be prepared to pay in US cash). Cost of activities ranges from \$50 to \$200 per activity per person.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We offer background information on Botswana on our [website](#).



# Packing List

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## THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

## WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** .

## LUGGAGE

- Medium-sized soft sided bag (frame and wheels are OK). Note you are only allowed one checked bag per person. Be mindful of baggage weight limits—44 lbs. total, including your carry-on.
- Daypack for camera gear, water bottle, and personal items needed during the day.

**A note regarding duffel bags:** the Johannesburg Airport will not allow soft bags for check-in that do not have any flat surfaces or that have long straps or grips. Most duffel bags should be fine, but in the unlikely event that the airline won't accept your bag for check-in it is very easy to have it wrapped in plastic so there is one flat side. You can get your bag wrapped at a Johannesburg (or Cape Town) airport-approved baggage wrapping station. The cost is approximately R70 ZAR (South African Rand) or \$5 USD per bag.

Should your main luggage, including a daypack, weigh more than 44 lbs., we recommend bringing a separate small, soft-sided bag that you can leave with our safari main office staff in Maun, with a few articles of clothing, that will get you under the weight requirement for the internal air portion of the trip. That bag will be driven to camp to meet you after you visit the Okavango Delta, and you may have all luggage with you for the remainder of the trip.

## LUGGAGE STORAGE

There is a left luggage storage facility at the Johannesburg airport, located in the basement level below the International Arrivals Terminal 2. It costs approximately \$10 per 24-hour period to store a bag of any size. If you use this facility, give yourself plenty of time at the airport to collect your bag (at least two hours is recommended) as you will have to wait for your bags on the carousel as well as stand in the passport line on arrival.

## NOTES ON CLOTHING

On safari, most people wear shorts and a T-shirt during the day and long-sleeved shirts and long pants in the evening. If you are sensitive to the cold, bring a warm layer for early morning and late-night game drives, when riding in an open vehicle can feel cold. It is preferable that your daytime clothing be in neutral colors such as khaki, bush green, and darker colors to blend in with the surroundings. White and bright colors tend to scare away the animals. For city and hotel attire, we suggest skirts or slacks for women, slacks and shirts for men. No jackets are required for men.

### Laundry

Our camps offer laundry service at no extra charge (please note that for cultural reasons, the staff does not launder underwear). Due to the limited availability of water, we can only do laundry once in each camp (not daily).

## CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only; we encourage you to pack as lightly as possible.

- Sturdy walking shorts
- Light cotton or quick-drying synthetic pants
- Long-sleeved shirts
- T-shirts
- Fleece jacket for cool evenings
- Gore-Tex jacket/windbreaker for cold morning and early evening game drives
- Underwear/socks; synthetics dry faster
- Sports bra for women (for bumpy game drives)
- Sleepwear or lightweight long underwear
- Shade hat with wide brim, preferably with chinstrap
- Warm hat/gloves for early morning and early evening game drives
- Walking or running shoes
- Tevas or rubber thongs (for showers and boats)
- Bathing suit
- City/hotel attire

## SAFARI EQUIPMENT

- Strong flashlight or headlamp, with spare batteries
- Binoculars
- Camera, spare batteries, spare flash cards
- Field guides
- Good quality sunglasses with case
- Plastic bags to organize items within duffel and protect them against dust
- Personal toiletries

## PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Soap, shampoo and conditioner are provided in camp. Should you have a preferred brand, feel free to bring it along.
- Sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol, Tylenol PM for sleeping
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent. Repellents with DEET are recommended. DEET content of about 30-35% is ideal (higher DEET content is not recommended). Wipe DEET off your hands before touching plastic surfaces (such as binoculars) because it can damage plastic.
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing (at least 60% alcohol to be effective)
- Post-insect bite cream (antihistamine)
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. "Liquid band-aids," such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl and cold remedy such as Sudafed
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Pepto-Bismol tablets for diarrhea, heartburn, indigestion
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Converter and plug adapter kit for using small appliance (hairdryers, etc.) at Xugana Lodge and Victoria Falls hotel only. There is no electricity at camps.
- Reading/writing material
- Travel clock
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

# Reading List

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## ESSENTIAL READING

### **The Wildlife of Southern Africa**

*Vincent Carruthers*

2008, 310 PAGES

With 1,200 color illustrations by a range of experts, this compact field guide includes all the birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, fish and plants that a traveler is likely to encounter in southern Africa.

### **Cry of the Kalahari, Seven Years in Africa's Last Great Wilderness**

*Mark & Delia Owens*

1992, 384 PAGES

The story of a family thrown out of Botswana for its stance on conservation. While their approach to conservation is controversial, there's no doubt that the Owens are dedicated to the wildlife of Southern Africa and are very good writers.

### **The Safari Companion**

*Richard Estes*

1999, 459 PAGES

An invaluable encyclopedic guide to Africa's mammals by a noted scientist, this perennial bestseller includes black-and-white drawings, an overview of each animal group and in-depth information. Written with the typical safari-goer in mind.

### **Botswana, the Bradt Safari Guide**

*Chris McIntyre*

2018, 528 PAGES

With comprehensive coverage of history, flora, fauna and practicalities, this fourth edition presents Okavango, Chobe, the Kalahari and other popular destinations in detail.

## ALSO RECOMMENDED

### **Botswana Adventure Map**

*National Geographic Society*

2012

Waterproof and tear-resistant, this double-sided travel shows parks, preserves, roads and towns at a scale of 1:1,100,000.

### **Culture Smart! Botswana**

*Michael Main*

2007, 168 PAGES

A concise, well-illustrated and practical guide to local customs, etiquette and culture.

### **The Scramble for Africa**

*Thomas Pakenham*

1992, 738 PAGES

Absorbing and meticulously researched, this in-depth history of the Victorian land grab in 19th century Africa includes excellent portraits of the egomaniacal personalities who overran the continent.

### **Whatever You Do, Don't Run**

*Peter Allison*

2014, 288 PAGES

Allison spins captivating tales of wildlife, camps and the life of a safari guide into a hilarious, slyly informative introduction to Botswana.

### **Safari Planning Map, East & Southern Africa**

*Mark W. Nolting and Duncan Butchart*

2016

This large-scale, colorful map covers the top safari countries and important wildlife reserves of East and Southern Africa. With enlargements of key regions like Northern Tanzania, Southern Kenya and Northern Botswana to Victoria Falls, the map includes information on planning your safari and climate graphs.

### **Africa, a Biography of the Continent**

*John Reader*

1999, 816 PAGES

With the ease of a practiced journalist, Reader weaves a masterful and lively tale of the continent, from ancient cultures to modern times. Both authoritative and informal, this is a splendid introduction to all of Africa.

### **Twenty Chickens for a Saddle**

*Robyn Scott*

2009, 464 PAGES

Haphazardly schooled by her free-spirited mother and left to roam the bush, Scott writes with warmth and candor of her unconventional upbringing in Botswana, commenting on her Grandpa Ivor (personal pilot to the first president of Botswana), physician father's work, unfortunate pets, siblings and adventures.

### **Mating**

*Norman Rush*

1992, 480 PAGES

This comic novel evokes daily life in Botswana and skewers the notion of well-intentioned academics at large in the developing world. The description of a trek from Gaborone to the Kalahari is terrific.

**The Double Comfort Safari Club**

*Alexander McCall Smith*

2011, 211 PAGES

Infinitely patient Precious Ramotswa and her prickly secretary (make that assistant detective!) Grace Makutsi, head to the Okavango Delta where there have been several unexplained and troubling events including the demise of one of the guests.

**500 Common Bird Calls in Southern Africa**

*Doug Newman*

2013, 152 PAGES

Accounting for each species of southern African songbird, their songs, similar-sounding species, favored habitats and ranges, this reference is ideal for the voyaging birder. Includes a CD of bird calls.

**Birds of Botswana**

*Peter Hancock*

2015, 400 PAGES

This companion to Botswana's diverse birdlife presents every species recorded to date, with more than 1,200 color illustrations, detailed species accounts, seasonality and breeding bars and distribution maps.

**Newman's Birds of Southern Africa**

*Kenneth Newman*

2012, 528 PAGES

This commemorative 10th edition celebrates the late author with a fully revised and updated version. Edits were done by his daughter, Vanessa Newman, to reflect the latest research, taxonomy and common names.

**The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals**

*Jonathan Kingdon*

2015, 544 PAGES

This stunningly-illustrated, comprehensive field guide by a leading authority includes over 500 of Kingdon's exquisite color paintings. Fully revised and updated with more than 1,100 species.

**Relentless Enemies**

*Beverly Joubert*

2007

Beautifully filmed at Duba Plains in HD, this National Geographic documentary captures the drama, power and beauty of the lions and water buffaloes of the Okavango. 90 minutes.

Revised: March 02, 2022

**Big Five of Africa**

*Gerald Hinde*

2009, 143 PAGES

Award-winning wildlife photographer Gerald Hinde's stunning photographs celebrate Africa's lions, elephants, leopards, rhinos and buffalos. Brief but informative text introduces each animal but the photographs (rightly) are the main focus. Size: 8 x 8 inches.

**African Wildlife**

*James Kavanaugh*

2018

A laminated foldout guide illustrating almost 150 species of African animals, designed for quick reference in the field.

**Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals**

*Jonathan Kingdon*

2005, 272 PAGES

A conveniently compact edition of Kingdon's gloriously illustrated Field Guide to African Mammals. The guide includes abbreviated information on identification, distribution, ecology and conservation status and 480 outstanding color illustrations and maps.

**Southern African Wildlife, A Visitor's Guide**

*Mike Unwin*

2011, 292 PAGES

A popular photographic guide to the mammals, birds, reptiles and habitats south of the Zambezi. With 300 color photographs and illuminating text.

**Wildlife of Southern Africa**

*Martin B. Withers*

2011, 272 PAGES

This Princeton Pocket Guide, featuring 400 color photographs by Withers and co-author David Hosking, covers all the birds, mammals, lizards and insects you are likely to encounter.