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# NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

PERSONALISED, UNIQUE SAFARI ADVENTURES ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA  
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## Welcome to the RAW Newsletter – MAY 2026

The rains have eased, and the veld — the African term for bush terrain — is experiencing a much-needed revitalising boost. With abundant food and water now available, wildlife is flourishing as the circle of life plays out across the African landscape. This creates exceptional game-viewing opportunities in certain areas, although the thickening bush, brought on by the rains, can make spotting animals slightly more challenging. Yet this seasonal renewal also brings new life. For example, the impala — often nicknamed the “McDonald’s of the bush” by safari guides because of its abundance and popularity among predators — can see population increases of between 10% and 20% after a strong rainy season.

Elephant populations also benefit during these favourable conditions, with numbers capable of increasing by as much as 7% annually. The abundance of food supports higher predator numbers too, strengthening the natural balance of the ecosystem. Cheetah and wild dog populations, in particular, are showing encouraging growth, while lion and leopard numbers remain relatively stable. Southern Africa continues to lead the way in wildlife conservation, thanks to some of the world’s most successful protection programs. However, these efforts still rely heavily on tourism funding to remain sustainable.

Tourism across the region is gradually recovering after the Covid-19 pandemic, although visitor numbers have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. South Africa, for example, welcomed around 15 million visitors annually before Covid, while current figures in 2025 sit at just over 10 million. Even so, the upward trend continues year on year, making Southern Africa one of the fastest-recovering long-haul tourism destinations globally. Beyond its wildlife, the region offers one of the world’s most diverse travel experiences — combining dramatic landscapes, rich cultures, unforgettable safari encounters, and, for now, excellent value for money.



# Tiny Tusks, Big Attitude: Baby Elephant Tries to Evict Tourists from Kruger

A recent safari moment in Kruger National Park captured the attention of wildlife lovers around the world after a baby elephant playfully charged toward a group of tourists. The young calf, trying its best to appear fierce and intimidating, rushed toward the safari vehicle while the tourists laughed nervously at the adorable display. According to reports and videos shared online, the tiny elephant's mock charge was more entertaining than threatening, with guides calmly monitoring the situation while the rest of the herd stood nearby.

The incident highlighted the curious and energetic behaviour often seen in young elephants. Wildlife experts explained that baby elephants commonly imitate the defensive behaviour of adult herd members as part of learning survival skills in the wild. In the footage, the calf appeared determined to protect its space and show confidence, although its small size and playful movements made the moment look more cute than dangerous. At one point, an adult elephant seemed to step in, almost as if reminding the youngster to settle down while the safari guide carefully kept a safe distance.



While many viewers found the video heartwarming, the event also served as a reminder that wild animals should always be treated with caution and respect. Even young elephants can behave unpredictably, especially when surrounded by protective adults. Safari operators in South Africa continue to stress the importance of following safety rules and allowing wildlife to move freely without disturbance. The encounter in Kruger became a viral example of how unforgettable—and sometimes unexpectedly funny—close encounters with Africa's wildlife can be. You can view the video here

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/szaL4NnR6XM>

## South Africa's Floral Magic

South Africa is home to one of the most extraordinary botanical regions on Earth — the Cape Floristic Region. Despite being the smallest of the world's floral kingdoms, it boasts more than 9,000 plant species, nearly 70% of which are found nowhere else on the planet. This remarkable biodiversity has made the region internationally renowned for its unique vegetation, particularly the iconic fynbos biome. Proteas, ericas, and restios dominate the landscape, thriving in nutrient-poor soils and harsh climatic conditions while supporting a rich variety of bird and insect life. Among these floral treasures, the king protea stands proudly as South Africa's national flower and one of the country's most recognisable natural symbols.



Each year, as winter rains sweep across the arid landscapes of the Northern Cape, one of nature's most spectacular transformations begins. The normally dry and dusty plains of Namaqualand erupt into vast carpets of wildflowers, covering the countryside in brilliant shades of orange, yellow, purple, pink, and white. Millions of blooms appear almost overnight, drawing visitors from around the world eager to witness the phenomenon. Namaqua daisies, vibrant vygies, flowering aloes, and rare bulb species dominate the scenery during the peak flowering season, which typically occurs between August and September. The intensity and timing of the blooms vary each year, depending on rainfall patterns and temperatures, making every season unique.

This floral spectacle has become one of Southern Africa's most celebrated natural attractions, contributing significantly to tourism in destinations such as West Coast National Park and Namaqua National Park. Photographers, botanists, hikers, and nature enthusiasts gather annually to experience the dramatic contrast between the region's rugged, semi-desert terrain and its sudden explosion of colour and life. Beyond its visual beauty, the flowering season highlights the ecological richness and resilience of South Africa's landscapes. These extraordinary blooms remain not only a symbol of the country's biodiversity, but also one of the continent's greatest natural wonders.

# Safari News Headlines

- **South Africa Reports 16% Drop in Rhino Poaching as Conservation Efforts Strengthen** – This marks a significant victory for conservation efforts across the country as increased anti-poaching operations, stronger law enforcement, and community-driven conservation programs have all contributed to protecting one of Africa’s most iconic species. While challenges remain, the encouraging figures highlight growing progress in the fight to safeguard rhino populations for future generations.
- **Botswana’s Luxury Safari Industry Booms as High-End Tourism Surges in 2026** - High-end tourism continues to surge into 2026 as increased demand for exclusive, low-impact safari experiences is driving investment in premium lodges and private reserves. This boom highlights the country’s growing reputation as one of Africa’s leading luxury wildlife destinations.
- **Greater Kruger Reopens Strongly After Flood Damage as Safari Tourism Recovers** - Greater Kruger has reopened strongly after recent flood damage, with safari tourism showing a steady and encouraging recovery. Conservation areas and lodges have worked to restore access routes and infrastructure, allowing wildlife experiences to resume across the region. The rebound highlights the resilience of both the ecosystem and the tourism industry, which remains vital to local conservation efforts and communities. The image below shows the devastation caused by these floods.

