

KALAHARI DREAMING

WITH *Bernd Wasiolka*

Text **Annabelle Venter**
Photographs **Bernd Wasiolka**



The Kalahari is a vast and ancient desert system stretching across southern Africa that captured the imagination of a small boy in Bochum, Germany late in the last century. The word itself had a magical ring to it for Bernd Wasiolka, and it was a place he just had to come and explore for himself. A series of detours in life led him eventually to visit this place of his dreams in 2000, and finally to come and live and work there for three years, during which time he discovered a passion for wildlife photography.



A KALAHARI DREAM

This book is a culmination of those trips and years spent observing wildlife and it's environment for a doctoral thesis as well as for pure enjoyment. What a lucky combination! But as it's said, you create your own luck. The Kalahari he captures covers not only the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park which straddles South Africa and Botswana, but also large tracks of surrounding farmlands where his studies were focused. Here for his PhD, he studied the impact of land use on animal diversity in the southern Kalahari. 700 days of patiently waiting for the right light and animal activities went into gathering the images for this book.

Bernd's love of light shines through this work and I sense that he particularly enjoys the twilight cusp hours. Some images are so realistically dark that you have to tilt the page to fully appreciate the moment. Almost if one were to adjust one's eyes to the twilight. He appreciates a holistic view of the Kalahari enjoying the blue skies, wild stormy weather, changing seasons, small creatures and plants and not just the obvious big cats for which most people travel to this area.

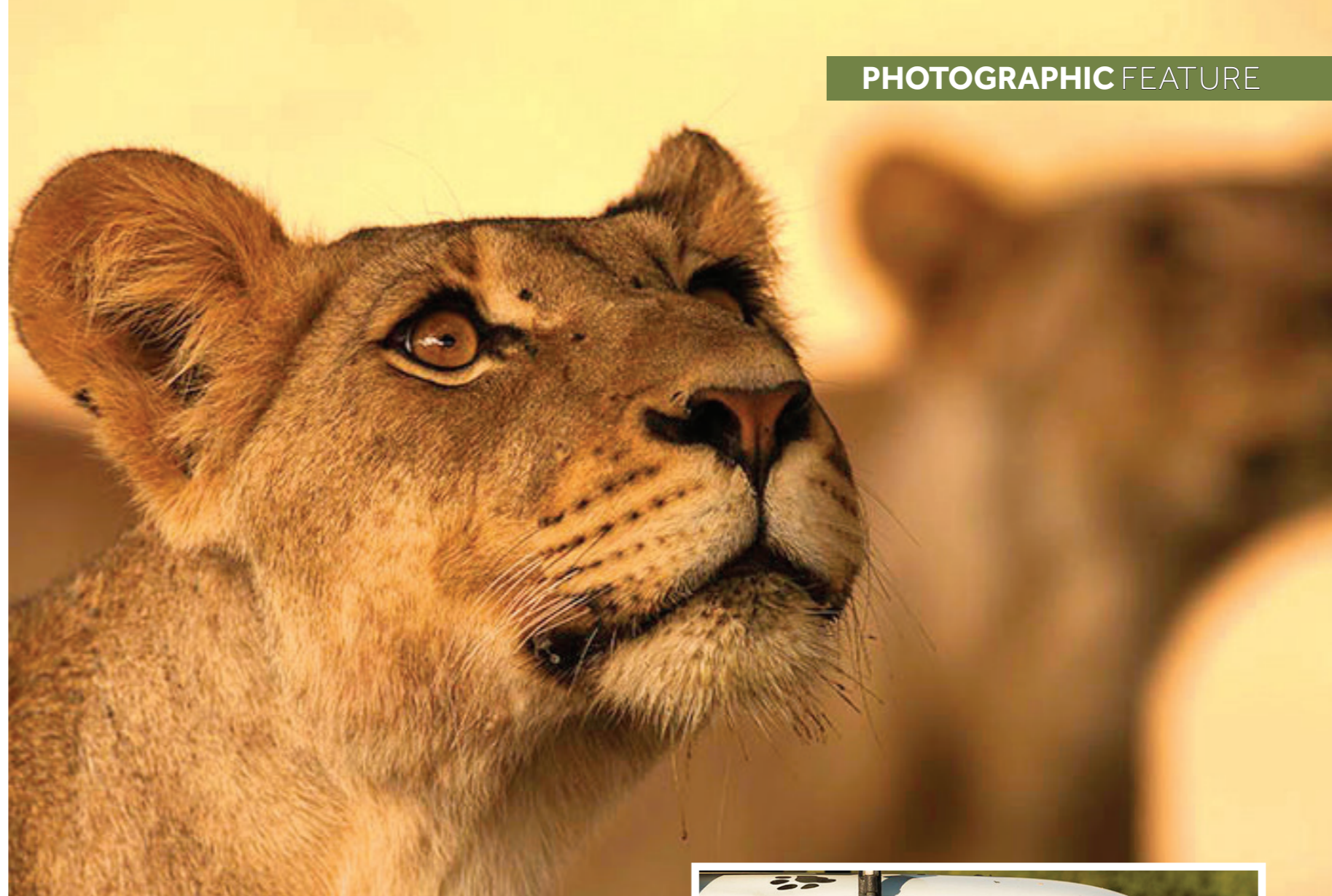
200 pages packed with a detailed photographic record of life in the Kalahari in a landscape layout, awaits the reader. Bernd has divided the book into sections entitled humorously appetizers, main course and dessert as though one were sitting down to a delicious feast, and the Kalahari doesn't disappoint. The main course in turn, highlights some of the daily antics and rituals of the Kalahari's inhabitants. Every image has a caption, some humorous others informative. As a photographer I always want to know where an image was taken while viewing the image, but perhaps I am alone in this preference. At the end of the book there is however a reference-guide to each image with location and camera details for those who wish to learn more.

Bernd has certainly captured the essence of the Kalahari in this book, showing the rich diversity of life in this parched and apparently barren land, yet so full of life. Glossing over the thumbnail images at the end, the orange sand dunes, blue skies, and variety of life really sum up this unique landscape.

Bernd has recently made the switch from scientist to full time wildlife photographer and is now exploring Etosha in northern Namibia. He uses Canon equipment but stresses that this is not as important as composition, capturing the critical moment, experimenting with light, breaking the rules, and above all an understanding of your subject. **TNN**



www.wildphotolife.com
www.wildphotolifeblog.wordpress.com



ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER
Bernd Wasiolka is a wildlife photographer with a background in animal ecology. Now based in Namibia, Bernd has travelled the world photographing the wilderness and animals of far off countries in Asia, Australia and Central America.

