

MEDIA RELEASE - 9 March 2004

<< back >>

KNP GUIDES SAVE TOURIST'S LIFE

Kruger National Park reported that two field guides, Gordon Ramsden and Mphadeni Nthangeni, saved the life of a British tourist after an elephant attacked him and a group of predominantly foreign tourists on a day walk in the wilderness area on the banks of the N'waswitshaka River about 15 kilometres from Skukuza this morning.

"It was a normal walk," said Gordon shortly after the incident, "I briefed my guests completely and started to walk in a northerly direction when I saw a breeding herd of elephants fairly close to us."

To be on the safe side, Gordon and his back-up guide, Mphandeni re-briefed the tourists on elephant behaviour and requested that they stick close to the guides. The group was then able to view the herd for about five minutes before the herd moved on.

"I was busy telling the guests about elephant behaviour when, out of nowhere, an elephant charged us from behind. The group split up and six of the tourists came with me while the rest went with Mphandeni. The elephant came past me and brushed two of the tourists before turning around on one of the tourists," he explained.

"At that moment, I thought I was dead," said Mr John Anslow from Stafford , United Kingdom , "I was lying on the ground with the elephant virtually on top of me and then I heard the shots and the elephant slumped to the ground on my right."

A bullet from one of the guides' rifles penetrated the brain, instantly killing the pachyderm before it could kill Mr Anslow.

"I owe my life to the quick action of the KNP guides and am relieved that they are so well trained," Mr Anslow concluded.

Dr Freek Venter, HOD Conservation Services for the Kruger National Park , said:

"This is a reminder of the necessity of our field guide's training and competency in their field."

All that was left on the scene when KNP rangers and officials inspected the site at around 10:00 was the elephant carcass and a peeked cap left by one of the tourists with the inscription "USS Kitty Hawk - Don't Tread on Me".

... Ends

Notes to editors/journalists:

- KNP guides are extensively trained in rifle handling, animal behaviour and other bush skills before they are allowed to take guests into the bush.
- KNP has conducted wilderness trails like the above for the last 26 years and there has never been an incident where a tourist has been either seriously or fatally injured.
- It is unknown at this stage why the elephant attacked the group as this is not normal behaviour. However, it is believed that the elephant - a lactating cow - might have recently lost her calf.
- Mr Anslow was taken to the doctor shortly after the incident but was discharged as his injuries were very slight.



Quick action by KNP guides Gordon Ramsden and Mphadeni Nthangeni saved the life of at least one tourist today after the group they were leading on a day walk from Skukuza was attacked by an elephant.



KNP guide Gordon Ramsden shows a hat left by a tourist with the inscription "Don't Tread on Me". The hat was left on the scene after the group he was leading was charged by an elephant.

Issued by:

Raymond Travers, Media Relations Practitioner, Kruger National Park . Contact: Tel: 013 735 4116, cell: 082 908 2677 or email: raymondtr@parks-sa.co.za

Enquiries:

William Mabasa, Public Relations and Communications Manager, Kruger National Park . Contact: Tel: 013 735 4363, cell: 082 807 3919 or email: williamm@parks-sa.co.za.