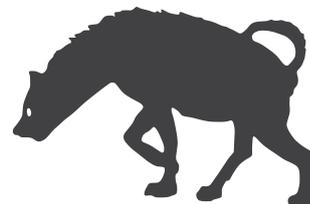


SA COLLEGE FOR TOURISM

# TRACKER ACADEMY



## INTRODUCTION

Tracker Academy is a training division of the SA College for Tourism (SACT) which operates under the auspices of the Peace Parks Foundation. The SACT is chaired Mrs. Gaynor Rupert. The Academy trains disadvantaged rural people in traditional skills of wildlife tracking. Our training programme is accredited by CATHSSETA (Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority). Tracker certificates are endorsed by FGASA (Field Guides Association of Southern Africa).

Tracker Academy is the first ever specialist tracker training school to achieve formal accreditation in South Africa.

## VISION AND MISSION

Tracker Academy's overarching vision is to restore indigenous knowledge in Africa.

Our mission is to empower tracker graduates to become ambassadors for the African wildlife conservation industry by bringing authenticity and accuracy to environmental education, wildlife protection, eco-tourism, monitoring and research.

It is our absolute focus to continually improve the standards of tracker training and assessment techniques by engaging in rigorous peer review and steadily deepening our training efforts. Tracker Academy aims to prove that ancient tracking skills are relevant in modern conservation management efforts.

## TRADITIONAL TRACKING SKILLS

Due to rapid urbanisation and the legacy of apartheid's of forced removals, traditional tracking skills have fast disappeared. Wildlife tracking is an indigenous art form that evolved for reasons of human survival. It has often misrepresented as an unexplainable and mystical skill possessed only by a privileged few. This misconception has delayed the formal adoption of the skill as a valuable conservation skill that can be professionally trained and assessed.



## ANIMAL TRACKING FACTS

Animal tracking is a measurable skill that can be trained to a high degree of competence, and objectively assessed.

Tracking skills are required for use in eco-tourism, wildlife protection, environmental education and animal monitoring and habituation programmes.

Approximately 2500 trackers are employed in South Africa.

Permanently employed trackers remain in their jobs five times longer (average) than their guide or research colleagues.

There is a severe lack of genuine tracking skills in the wildlife protection sector of the conservation industry.

Skillful trackers provide safety and contribute to the authenticity of an African safari experience.

The San people living in the Kalahari and the Tsonga and Shangaan people living in southern Mozambique and North-Eastern Mpumalanga and Limpopo represent the last two strongholds of genuine tracking skills in southern Africa.



## TRACKER ACADEMY QUICK FACTS

The Tracker and Lead Tracker qualifications are formally accredited tracker training programmes in South Africa.

Tracker students log over 900 hours of practical tracking experience during the course of training.

Tracker Academy became a finalist in the international Tourism for Tomorrow Awards' People category, awarded in China in 2014.

Graduates Robert Hlatshwayo, Norman Chauke and Innocent Ngwenya are the first three formally accredited African tracker assessors in South Africa.

Since 2010, Tracker Academy has graduated 168 professional trackers of which 88% are permanently employed throughout the conservation industry in southern Africa.

Tracker Academy has established projects in Brazil, Chile, Rwanda, Malawi and Botswana to assist conservation agencies with eco-tourism and research outcomes.

In May 2015, Tracker Academy was recognised by an external moderator as a CATHSSETA Centre of Excellence, by achieving a score of 3.7 out of a possible 4 audit points.

The Tracker Manual 'animal tracks and signs' field guide was published in 2016 by Struik Nature and is available in most leading bookstores.

# TRACKER ACADEMY COURSES

## I. TRACKER SKILLS PROGRAMME (NQF2 / 69 CREDITS)

One-year training programme accredited by CATHSSETA.

The first six-month semester of the course is conducted at Samara game reserve in the Eastern Cape Karoo semi-desert biome. Thereafter the students transfer to Londolosi game reserve in the Sabi Sands to complete the second semester in the bushveld biome. Consequently, students are exposed to the vast diversity of South African wildlife.

A third yearlong training programme is run at Tracker Academy's Tswalu Kalahari Reserve campus.

FGASA tracker levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Advanced Tracker) are trained and evaluated. Certificates achieved are based entirely on student results.

The programme includes modules on hunter-gatherer techniques, specialist birding (Joe Grosel), medicinal plants, alarm calls, conservation ethics, ecological literacy (Dr Ian McCallum) first aid, presentation skills (Ian Thomas) and basic weapons competence (SASSETA).

Three CATHSSETA unit standards covered in the Tracker Skills Programme include:

**Unit standard 8460** - Track animals and identify spoor using easily recognisable spoor – 40 credits

**Unit Standard 8440** - Conduct a guided nature experience in a limited geographical area - 21 credits

**Unit Standard 252462** - Identify and monitor local wildlife – 8 credits

The programme is designed to fulfil industry needs in which tracking skills are essential. Practical tracking skills remain the core focus of the course. Students are trained in the practical application of tracking for defined conservation management outcomes and eco-tourism.

It is important to note that the unit standards above provide the student with a basic minimum accreditation. Tracker Academy far exceeds the said standards to ensure its graduates are equipped with the skills necessary to make a material difference in their jobs.

## COST OF BURSARY

Tracker Academy provides training bursaries to 24 tracker students per annum. The direct cost of the training is R120 000 per student. Candidates are required to cover their own transport costs and pocket money for the year's study. The bursary covers all training, food, accommodation, learning materials, uniforms, assessments and field trips.

## 2. LEAD TRACKER SKILLS PROGRAM (NQF4 / 65 CREDITS)

### **8 week program accredited by CATHSSETA**

Lead Tracker is Tracker Academy's most advanced qualification. It is aimed at expert trackers who have worked in the conservation industry for a minimum of 10 years, and who have demonstrated a consistent and supreme level of animal tracking skill. Successful candidates must provide evidence of an active and tangible contribution to the current knowledge and skill of animal tracking.

Two CATHSSETA unit standards covered in the Lead Tracker Programme include:

Unit Standard 8518 – Track animals and identify spoor using moderately difficult spoor (50 credits)

Unit Standard 335797 – Conduct a guided experience to view potentially dangerous animals (15 credits)

Each tracker student is assessed following two lion or leopard trails, a separate animal and bird sign assessment as well as alarm calls. Assessments for approaching potentially dangerous game on foot as well as weapons handling is also conducted.

The programme allows for experienced veteran trackers to receive formal (national) recognition for their tracking skills.

### **COSTS OF BURSARY**

Tracker Academy co-sponsors 8 x Lead Tracker candidates per annum at a total cost of R25 000 per student. Candidates are required to cover their own transport costs.



The following are endorsed by Tracker Academy to conduct training and assessment:

Karel Benadie  
Renias Mhlongo  
Innocent Ngwenya  
Ian Thomas  
Norman Chauke  
Robert Hlatshwayo  
Alex van den Heever

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