

# Tracking course at Samara

A one year full-time tracking course, under the guidance of a master tracker, is being held at the Samara Game Reserve. Soon, 16 “soon to be tracking” students will be completing the course, whose sessions focus on interpreting animal behaviour from the tracks seen as well as lessons in conservation ethics, ancient culture and personal leadership,

Tracking in the Karoo has been a traditional method of locating animals, birds and reptiles for many years. Originating from the time of the Khoisan, tracking was used to follow and locate the animals, primarily as a source of food for themselves. Although the hunt was not always successful, the tracking method was. Thus the need for trained and qualified trackers came about.

The SA College of Tourism Tracker Academy is a partnership between the SACT, Samara and renowned senior tracker, Alex van den Heever, who holds the highest qualification for a guide in South Africa as he is one of only 18 senior trackers. His passion in tracking has given him the unbelievable opportunity of tracking jaguars in the Amazon jungle, bears in California and the black-maned lions of Botswana.

## The master tracker

The person leading and training the trackers at Samara is master tracker Karel “Pokkie” Benadie, who is one of only two master trackers in South Africa. He has highly developed veld and tracking skills and has had a thesis published on the Black Rhino. A rare individual with extraordinary talent, ex the Karoo National Park, he is also an expert on medicinal plants.

The programme at Samara endeavours to contribute significantly to the preservation of indigenous knowledge in South Africa by creating passionate African naturalists. Samara's aim is to empower the custodians of Africa's wilderness to preserve the continent's last remaining wild areas. The accredited African naturalists will bring authenticity and accuracy to environmental education, anti-poaching, eco-tourism, research and conservation. The one-year full-time intensive tracking course, led by three experienced trainers, is the first of its kind in southern Africa. The course focuses on developing tracking competency, conservation and life skills, including literacy and positive health.

The aim of the Tracker Academy is to go beyond the “identify and follow” to a greater understanding of the wildlife eco-systems.

For more information, go to [www.samara.co.za](http://www.samara.co.za), email or telephone +27 (0)49 891 0558.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>