

Things that growl in the night

COMPILED BY
SAM REINDERS



HANNES LOCHNER
Next to my bed:
*Whatever You Do, Don't
Run* by Peter Allison
iPod playlist: Anything
by Cloud Cult

► Night stalking

"With a camera mounted on the side of my vehicle, I followed a male leopard cub down the road. I parked about 100 m ahead and waited for him to walk past. I took this shot with a remote, sitting comfortably (and safely!) behind the steering wheel."

HOW? Nikon D3S, 16mm lens, shutter speed 30 seconds, aperture f4.5, ISO 6400, manual mode, with a flash.

Regular readers will remember Hannes Lochner's portfolio in *go!* #68. At that stage he was a year into a nearly three-year project to document the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park... at night!

More than 100,000 km and hundreds of thousands of photos later, the result is his third and most ambitious book to date, *The Dark Side of the Kalahari*, of which these shots make up a small part.

Most times Hannes just had the moon and a camera flash to see what he was doing, which made it impossible to get close enough to the carnivores of the Kgalagadi using a traditional long lens. Instead, he relied heavily on remote cameras that he set up close by and triggered from his vehicle.

This kind of close-up photography has its benefits: You can sit in the safety of a vehicle so there's less chance of being eaten by a lion and you can place the camera in such a way that you get a unique, hyena's-eye view of the world. You can also set the rig to trigger automatically when an animal arrives, which captures fresh, unexpected moments.

On the down side, remote photography is a game of luck. You have to know your subject intimately and set up your gear in a way that will deliver the best results (and not be destroyed in the process). "Getting the focus right involves a little guesswork," says Hannes. "Sometimes I'll set up a camera about 20 times and get no useable shots, but the more I do it, the luckier I seem to get."

For another angle on life in the desert after dark, Hannes strapped a camera low down on his vehicle. This worked really well because lion cubs and hyenas often surrounded him at night, sniffing and nibbling on everything they could reach.

You can buy a remote for your camera at most good photo shops. Put your camera on a tripod in your garden and practise on the critters that visit!

A leopard is perched on a rock in the foreground, looking towards the left. The background is a dark night sky filled with numerous stars and several bright, streaking shooting stars. The leopard is illuminated by a soft light, possibly from a flash, making it stand out against the dark background.

Written in the stars

“Over the course of two years I spent hours and hours following one specific leopard, who I named Luna. I had lots of time to experiment while I waited near her den for her or her cubs to do something. This is the result of one of those experiments. To get the shooting-star effect, I zoomed out with the shutter open and fired the flash at the last moment to light the leopard. There’s a kind of magic at night in the Kgalagadi that you battle to find anywhere else.”

HOW Nikon D3S, 130 mm lens, shutter speed 30 seconds, aperture f4, ISO 3200, manual mode, with a flash.

✔ Tomato sauce with that?

"I spent quite a lot of time at hyena dens during my time in the Kgalagadi. It's great to sit there and see what the parents drag back. Takeaways can be anything from animal horns, ostrich eggs and leftover kills to tsamma melons, feathers and random pieces of wood. The cubs will nibble on just about anything – in this case the horns of a blue wildebeest."

HOW? Nikon D3S, 16 mm lens, shutter speed 1/800 second, aperture f4, ISO 400, manual mode, with a flash.



▲ Here's looking at you, kid

"I spent many nights with a pride of lions in the Kij Kij part of the park. There were six cubs in the pride and every evening they would walk around my vehicle and chew on the tyres and bull bar. I strapped a camera behind the bull bar and managed to capture some interesting close-ups. The cubs usually got bored after about a minute or two, so I didn't have very long to get it right. Once they were done using my vehicle as a chew toy they went back to irritating mom and dad."

HOW? Nikon D3, 16 mm lens, shutter speed 1/60 second, aperture f14, ISO 1600, aperture priority mode, with a flash.





► **Storm hunting**

“During the rainy season it’s fantastic to be a wildlife photographer in the Kalahari. Huge storms make for dramatic clouds and haunting skies. This owl was hunting bugs in the road then flying back and forth to deliver them to the chicks in its nest. I set up my camera, exposed for the storm, added a little fill flash to light the owl and hoped for the best.”

HOW? Nikon D3S, 16 mm lens, shutter speed 13 seconds, aperture f4.5, ISO 1600, manual mode, with a flash.



The Dark Side of the Kalahari will be available in July. Pre-order a copy for R550 from hanneslochner.com