



# HESCIES



## HESCIES OVERVIEW

In this new day and age, it is becoming crucial to teach children from a young age about conservation. The youngsters of today are constantly engaged in a world of technology and therefore do not always get the opportunity to connect with what is going on around them.

Protecting nature is essential for maintaining sustainability for future generations. More and more animals, plants and natural ecosystems are becoming disturbed, endangered and extinct. There should be a balance between fauna and flora to have a healthy ecosystem.

The Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC) thought it good to launch the new HESCies Programme. This programme is designed to involve children in HESC's endeavors to "Ensure our Tomorrow". HESCies will have the opportunity to learn about nature and conservationist while having fun. At the end of the day, HESC aims to equip every HESCie to be a conservationist with the necessary skills to be a respected leader.

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge that I will do my best to respect my environment, superiors, family and friends at all times and to learn about nature and how I can work to preserve it."

## THE HESCIES CODE OF CONDUCT

### As a HESCie I promise:

- Not to trash the environment by littering;
- To leave only footprints behind;
- To put the safety of myself and my friends first;
- To be considerate towards my surroundings;
- To treat nature and the outdoors with respect; and
- To learn as much as I can about my environment.

## INTRODUCING THE MATRIARCHS

Lente Roode is well known in the wildlife and conservation circles of South Africa. In 1950, Lente Roode's father, Willie Schürmann, bought a 2000-hectare farm in the Hoedspruit district (in what was then called the Northern Province of South Africa), which today forms part of the Kapama Private Game Reserve and is situated close to the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

It was during her childhood that Lente developed a love for animals, the African bushveld and for the farm, which she to this day visits at every opportunity. This was the beginning of a life-long passion for conservation of the cheetah and all animal species.

As a child of six, Lente was given an orphaned cheetah cub after a neighbouring farmer shot the mother. They called her "Sebeka" and she soon became part of the Schürmann household. Together, Lente and her mother (a nurse) lovingly cared for the animal. Lente and her cheetah were inseparable. After completing her studies in education, Lente married Johann Roode in 1970.

In 1985, Johann and Lente bought their first farm on the border of her family's land in Hoedspruit. Lente then inherited her father's farm. She and Johann acquired more land by buying adjoining properties and their first farming venture was to ranch with a herd of Bonsmara cattle. Typical of Johann, this was done with great attention to detail. The battle with the predators continued and they eventually realised it was likely to continue ad infinitum. As time went by Lente developed a longing to be involved on the farm and to work with animals. The decision to change to game farming became inevitable. Further land was acquired and Kapama Game Reserve, 12 500 ha in extent, came into being.

As cheetahs were listed as endangered in the Red Data Book of the Mammals of South Africa at that time, the idea of establishing a cheetah breeding project on Kapama gradually developed. This facility would be tasked with breeding the species for possible reintroduction into the wild, as well as providing research opportunities to scientists in zoological and veterinary fields. It would also ultimately serve as an educational centre.

It was at this stage that Lente contacted Des Varaday – a well-known cheetah breeder whose facility was located near Middelburg in Mpumalanga Province – in the hope of acquiring a few cheetahs. Lente had known Des from childhood when he used her cheetah Sebeka in his book entitled "Gara Yaka", and as the subject for other detailed illustrations. Fate is an amazing thing. Des enquired of Lente whether it would be possible for her to take custody of all thirty-five of his cheetahs. His motivation was that he was getting too old to look after them and that he needed a suitable owner to take responsibility for them. Lente agreed.

The Department of Nature Conservation of the Transvaal facilitated the transfer of the animals from Varaday, in order for Lente Roode to continue the breeding programme on Kapama Game Reserve. With the help and guidance of the late Professor David Meltzer of the Onderstepoort Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria and Des Varaday himself, they planned and developed the infrastructure of what was to become the Hoedspruit Cheetah Project (HCP) within a year.

It took another year for the animals to settle properly into their new environment before the Hoedspruit Cheetah Project opened its doors to the public in 1990. Tourism, together with sales from the curio shop, helped to generate some of the income needed to run the Project on a day-to-day basis. The inclusion of other species into the Centre's breeding programme necessitated the name change from the HCP to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC).

## A ROODE

"Abraham Lincoln once described himself as an ordinary man with an extraordinary story."

Adine was born in Pretoria on 9 October 1973 to Johann and Lente Roode, joining sibling Bernard. She was schooled in Pretoria from 1979 to 1991 and showed a particular penchant for sports and photography. Adine almost certainly had wildlife in her blood from the word go. Her earliest memories of the bush are drawn from her family's many visits to the Kruger National Park and to MalaMala Game Reserve, one of South Africa's leaders in conversation after making the transition from a hunting to a photographic safari destination. Holidays were spent on her father's reserve where this feisty youngster earned her keep by doing jobs like checking the power supply on the fences, taking out tours of visitors at the HESC and eagerly assisting with veterinary duties.

She completed her tertiary education at The University of Pretoria, achieving a Bachelor of Commerce degree (Honours) in Accountancy.

Adine worked at her father's side in the business and inherited his sound business acumen and commendable attitude in resolving challenging situations favourably. It was from him that Adine learned that nothing worthwhile is easy. She would often hear him say, "The lift to success is broken. You will have to take the steps to achieve success."

Adine moved to Hoedspruit in 2000 and lived on the reserve until 2005. In this very patriarchal Afrikaans community, she learned a lot about vehicles, field management, game counts, moving game, water pumps – and how to let a man think something was his idea, probably the most difficult task of all for a 26 year old girl. She grew up fast during these character-building years.

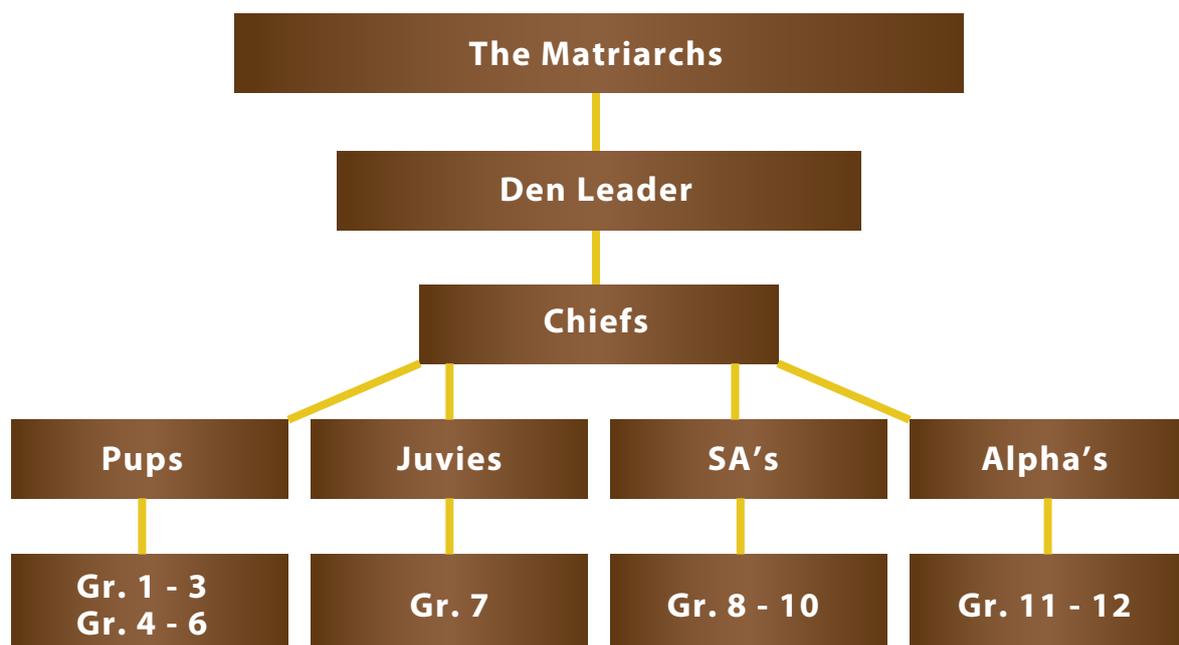
After the tragic and sudden loss of her father and mentor, the family restructured the business. Adine and her mother took over the management of HESC and started Camp Jabulani, which opened its doors in 2003. She worked alongside Lente for the preservation of the cheetah for future generations. Despite the controversial issue of elephant-back safaris, Adine has proved herself a true wild life visionary.

Adine then moved back to Pretoria to educate her children – at the same school she attended as a child. It was at that point that she took over the general marketing of Camp Jabulani, the five-star lodge that was built to support the elephants and HESC.

What really drives Adine in the world of conservation is the challenge to be part of God's Creation and to keep all living things alive. Says Adine, "If you work in nature, it is so much easier to feel and see a difference in what you produce. And it touches a very special place that I cannot possibly define! It also has ripple effects beyond just me and my immediate environment – this is really rewarding to know that I have been a part of something good and right."

Adine's lifelong goal is the preservation of vulnerable species.

## INTRODUCING THE PACK



## THE DEN LEADER:

A trained HESC staff member will be chosen to lead the pack of HESCies. This person will be responsible for coaching and mentoring the Chiefs. The Den Leaders will maintain the standards of HESC and HESCies and will focus on the following areas in order to do so:

- Support unit growth;
- Equip Chiefs with the necessary resources; and
- Meet with the Chiefs on a regular basis to capture their strengths and needs.

## THE CHIEFS:

The chiefs will be parents or community volunteers who will act as “teachers”. Each will be assigned to a group of learners and will be the particular group’s “teacher” until the day the group passes their Alpha Stage. Should you be interested in signing up to become a Chief, please click on link for the application form.

## THE PUPS:

The chiefs will be parents or community volunteers who will act as “teachers”. Each will be assigned to a group of learners and will be the particular group’s “teacher” until the day the group passes their Alpha Stage. Should you be interested in signing up to become a Chief, please click on link for the application form.

## THE JUVIES:

The Juveniles (also known as the Juvies) are learners currently in grade 7. As they are the leaders and the eldest in Primary School, so they will be in HESCies. The group name assigned to them when they were still pups, will remain the same. A specific curriculum will be formulated for the Juvies in order to teach them about conservation in their own understandable “language”. This curriculum will also focus more on equipping the learners with leadership skills.

## THE SAs:

The Sub Adults (also known as the SAs) are the youngest learners in High School, currently in grade 8-10 (as one group). The group name assigned to them when they were still pups, will remain the same. A specific curriculum will be formulated for each grade group in order to teach them about conservation in their own understandable “language”.

## THE ALPHAs:

The Alphas are learners currently in grade 9 and 10. As they are the leaders and the eldest in High School, so they will be in HESCies. The group name assigned to them when they were still pups, will remain the same.

A specific, more advanced curricula will be formulated for the Alphas in order to teach them about conservation and to equip them with adequate leadership skills.



## TRAINING AND PRACTICES

The HESCies Pack Leader, together with scientists and specialists from all over, will sit together with the Chiefs to create a curriculum for each Grade Year.

**A training guide for each of the following topics will be available soon:**

- Water (animals, plants, pollution, where to find, fishing, etc.)
- Air (animals, plants, pollution, clouds, weather, etc.)
- Survival (skills)
- Animals (identification, tracks and signs, etc.)
- Plants (identification, animals, medicinal uses, poisons, etc.)
- Anti-poaching (snare identification, leadership, safety, first aid, air-rifle shooting, etc.)
- World Conservation (learn about conservation efforts in other countries, why poaching, etc.)
- Endangered Species (why endangered, how to prevent, etc.)
- Veld Management (erosion, bush clearing, water supply, etc.)
- Adventures (practical adventures to equip with leadership skills, etc.)
- The Night Skies (astronomy, moon cycles, etc.)

## RESOURCES

An online registry and order form for resources for HESCies members will be available soon.

**The following will be available:**

- HESCie Uniform
- HESCie Badges
- Outdoor Equipment
- Training Guides
- Recommended Handbooks
- Identification Books

## SIGN UP

If you do not want to become a HESCie, but would like to help in any way, please contact us.

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