

Like pioneers, over the years, the Hannsens have donned boots and leather hats and rolled up their sleeves to remove swathes of thorn bushes with their bare hands. While antelopes, elephants and other animals clear out the brush in the wilderness, cattle ranches are being surrounded by dense, tall undergrowth. Predators such as cheetahs need open landscapes to hunt so the Hannsens are restoring this landscape, already having cleared several hundred hectares using tractors.

**EPISODE 3:
THE PRIDE OF THE EASTERN CAPE**

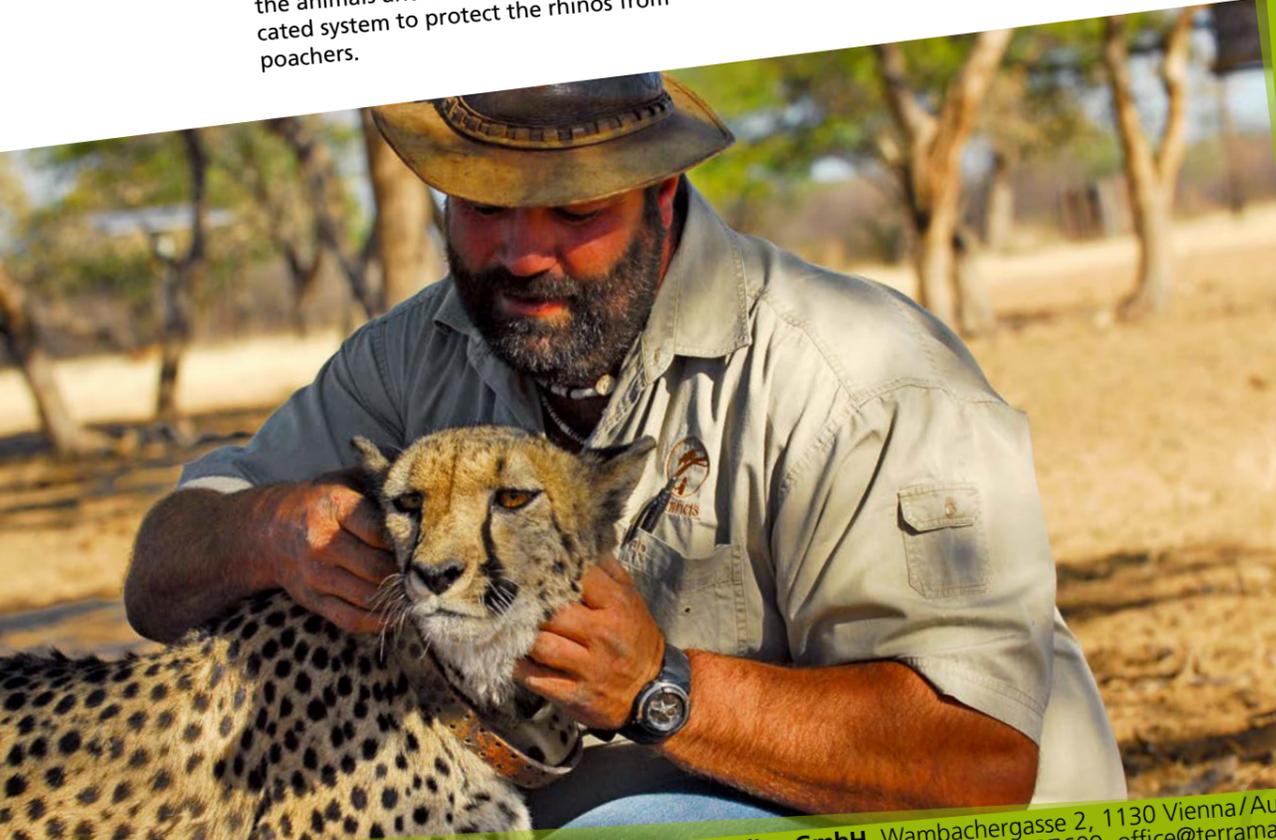
The private Shamwari Game Reserve is 70 kilometres from Port Elizabeth in Eastern Cape province, standing on property once occupied by run-down farms and depleted grasslands. Businessman Adrian Gardiner purchased the site, restoring the 25,000 hectares to its original wilderness state and the landscape now looks like it did 200 years ago—stretches of savannah, green hills, rivers and towering cliffs. In the 1990s, there was virtually no wildlife left but now Shamwari is home to several lion prides, rhinoceroses, elephants and large herds of antelopes.

Biologists, veterinarians, ecologists and rangers manage the reserve, counting the animals and developing a sophisticated system to protect the rhinos from poachers.

Shamwari also runs breeding programmes for the endangered Cape mountain zebra and for African buffalo. Farmers were shooting the mountain zebras to stop them grazing land used by their cattle, until there were only two dozen left. Thanks to dedicated conservationists, over a thousand mountain zebras now live in reserves such as Shamwari, in an enclosed area of thousands of hectares, protected from predators. Imported cattle plagues eradicated most of the buffalo in South Africa and the buffalo in Shamwari are particularly valuable because they are free from illnesses such as foot and mouth disease. Only healthy buffalo are sold and placed in other reserves.

The Shamwari team also cares for orphaned and wounded wildlife. Young cheetahs, antelopes, elephants and rhinos are treated and, if possible, released into the wild.

The restoration of the Shamwari reserve is not complete. Non-native plant species have to be removed regularly, and new animals are introduced, such as servals—small elegant wildcats once extinct in southern Africa. They were taken from a reserve near Kruger Park; the rangers in Shamwari have since released several dozen of them back into the wild. Reintroducing servals improves the ecological balance in this recreated wilderness.



NATURE

**BACK TO PARADISE
WILDLIFE HAVENS
IN AFRICA**



3 x 53 min.

Written and directed by Harald Pokieser

4K, 5.1 and Stereo

Executive producers: Sabine Holzer, Andrea Gastgeb



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios

Africa—a wonder of nature, famous for its many wild animals, including rhinoceros, elephants and lions—yet also known for their drastic decrease in numbers.

But it's not all bad news. In co-operation with national parks, bold entrepreneurs are establishing private nature reserves and with the help from biologists, ecologists and other experts, they are trying to save the African wilderness and the animals that live there. These are stories of success—and of hope.

EPISODE 1: SAVING THE GIANTS

The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, in the vast wilderness at the foot of Mount Kenya, is a legend of ecology and conservation—not just in Kenya but throughout Africa. Famous for fabulous lodges and exciting safaris, its true mission is to protect rhinoceros.

Poaching has reduced Kenya's black rhinoceros from 20,000 to 650 in just a few decades. Since 2007, the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, founded by Lewa, has taken in a hundred rhinoceros from other national parks and fitted them with transmitters. Another 70 rhinos live in Lewa's territory and now Lewa and Ol Pejeta care for nearly half of Kenya's rhinoceros. A team watches the animals around the clock, checking on their health, observing births and monitoring the calves' development.

Experts at Lewa also monitor large elephant herds that wander into the sanctuary, and Grévy's zebras—a rare species which, unlike plains zebras, does not live in herds. Biologists in the sanctuary want to know why lions prefer these zebras as prey, so they fitted a dominant male lion, 'Mufasa', with a collar transmitter, and monitor how a pride of 22 lions hunt. They also monitor a group of hyenas.

Large elephant herds trample through the sanctuary to Mount Kenya and back, along a corridor cleared for them at great expense and effort, with financial assistance provided by organisations from Kenya and abroad. The old migration routes had been blocked off by settlements and farms.

Unlike many other nature reserves, Lewa works closely with local residents, running training programmes to highlight the need to protect natural habitats and wildlife. The Massai bring their cattle into the sanctuary to graze, with each family agreeing with the sanctuary's management how many cattle may graze and where.

EPISODE 2: MISSION BIG CAT

Namibia, the desert paradise on Africa's south-west coast, protects its wildlife in legendary national parks such as Etosha. But as the wilderness continues to shrink with the expansion of cattle ranches, dedicated individuals are helping to preserve Namibia's natural treasures.

Tammy, Donna and Wayne Hannsen are siblings who have, over the last two decades, transformed their 50,000-hectare cattle ranch into a nature reserve and established the Africat Foundation, dedicated to protecting cheetahs and lions. Their Okonjima Farm is now a wildlife paradise. Giraffes strut around between metre-high termite hills and zebras can be seen grazing, while a family of squealing wild boars passes by and ostriches race against oryx antelopes.

Part of the site is used for tourism which finances the rest of the reserve, where 29 cheetahs, four leopards, four lions and a pack of wild dogs live in an area measuring 22,000 hectares. More than a dozen cheetahs will be freed into the wilderness over the next few years, as will three young wild dogs, hopefully to be accepted by a pack of wild dogs that have settled around the farm.

Tammy Hansen, an expert on big cats, works off the farm in the western part of Etosha National Park. She studies the lions that attack cattle and goats on surrounding farms—which is why lions are often shot or poisoned on the outskirts of Etosha. Tammy works with park experts, developing ways to resolve the conflict between farmers and the big cats.

