
PHOTO: Arthur Arkin

1998

## AFRICAN ADVENTURE

At the age of 15, **Dr Tammie Matson** (BAppSc hons 1 1999, PhD 2004) went on a safari with her father to Zimbabwe – it was an experience that would change her forever.

On her return to Australia she turned her life upside down to build a future in Africa. She originally enrolled in a Law degree at UQ but changed to Environmental Science so she could concentrate her studies on Africa.

"I returned again and again to Africa, first as a safari worker, then as a volunteer biologist and eventually as a wildlife researcher," she said.

"I would see with my own eyes how people with so much less than we have in Australia could be so incredibly happy with their lot in life."

After finishing her undergraduate degree in 1999, Dr Matson was offered an Australian Government scholarship to complete a PhD in Zoology. She traveled to Etosha National Park in arid Namibia to study the endangered black-faced impala.

In the harsh conditions she overcame the language barrier, and physical hardships to carry out her research.

"While impala are fairly widespread in Africa, very little is known about the endangered black-faced impala, which is endemic to Namibia," she said.

"My three-and-a-half year PhD project investigated the influence of environment on the black-faced impala in its semi-arid habitat as a basis for a management plan."

Dr Matson has lived in Namibia since 2000. She currently works as an environmental consultant for organisations including Wilderness Safaris, Save the Rhino Trust and the Namibian Professional Hunters Association, as well as running a research project on human-elephant conflicts.

In her new book *Dry Water* Dr Matson shares the daily delights, unexpected dramas and hair-raising adventures that have unfolded as she has lived alongside the animals of Africa.

## SEEDS OF SCIENCE PLANTED

An unique underwater experiment is attracting widespread attention for its adventurous researcher.

**Lloyd Godson** (BSc hons 2001) plans to live in an underwater habitat for two weeks with only plants for company.

Mr Godson said as the plants photosynthesised they would scrub the carbon dioxide he exhaled and provide him with fresh oxygen. He also plans to drink the water that condenses on the sides of his metal habitat, known as the BioSUB, and will recycle his liquid waste through a photo-bioreactor that will also provide some of his food.

"This is about trying to prove scientific concepts in an affordable way," he said.

*Australian Geographic* is funding Mr Godson's project after he won their $50,000 'Live Your Dream' Wildest Adventure Competition.

He said he hoped his adventure, which will take him to the bottom of a flooded quarry near Albury in southern New South Wales, would inspire others to live their dreams.

"I want to show other people, particularly kids, about the wonders of science," he said.

Mr Godson's two-week underwater adventure will be beamed into classrooms live around the country via a webcam and he will teach children about the physical and biological aspects of what he is doing.

This isn't the first time Mr Godson has called such a unique habitat his home. While studying at UQ he lived in a tent in his back garden rather than inside the house.

Mr Godson said he was looking forward to the challenge, which he hopes to complete later this year.

2001