

# 1. Resume~CurriculumVitae

Full Name: **Vernon Stephan Swanepoel**

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## **2. Personal Details**

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- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/Namibnat>
- Personal Websites: <http://sandcurves.com/> and <http://africanbushstories.blogspot.com/>
- Date of Birth: 1972-07-05
- Nationality: South African
- Nationality of Primary Passport: British
- Languages: English (with passable Afrikaans and a little Swahili)
- Post Box 86554, Eros, Windhoek, Namibia
- Country of residence: Namibia
- Marital status: Married (with two children)

## **3. Primary School**

I did my primary schooling partly in South Africa, and partly in Kenya. Please ask me for more details should you require them.

## **4. High School**

- 1986-1992 Rift Valley Academy, <http://www.rva.org/> (Kijabe, Kenya)  
American system

Schooling: I excelled in mathematics, really enjoyed biology and science in general.

Sports: Rugby throughout my time there, two years on the school first team. I also did a great deal of distance running, and ran some road races. I was also involved in fitness and weight training and was the weight-room (gym) monitor for a couple years (normally all the weight-room monitors were teachers.)

Activities: School yearbook staff for one year. Involvement in a community project with orphans in the Rift Valley. A serious interest in nature. We had access to the Great Rift Valley and the Mau Escarpment. At home my parents worked in the Kaisut desert, and so my interest in nature was diverse.

## **5. University**

- 1993 Rhodes University, <http://www.ru.ac.za/>, Grahamstown, South Africa (BA HMS, first year).

I dropped out of university after completing my first year. I had a growing interest in nature and nature conservation and wanted to study in that direction.

## **6. Technikon**

- 1995-1997 Port Elizabeth Technikon, <http://www.nmmu.ac.za/>, Saasveld Campus, George, South Africa (National Diploma in Nature Conservation)

I studied at Saasveld for three years, and still have two subject remaining to get my diploma.

## **7. Other Training**

- Inkwaze Ranger Training: I did six weeks inhouse guide training with CCAfrica (now &beyond, <http://www.andbeyond.com/>), at Phinda Private Game Reserve in 2001. This training included all aspects of lodge guiding, covering vehicles, presentation skills, walking and game drives, first aid, rifle handling (using a .375 rifle), guest hosting and dealing with high profile game.
- Nath (Namibian Academy for Tourism and Hospitality, <http://www.nathnamibia.org/>) Ornithology course. This was a short course in basic birding, bird guiding and some history of ornithology and bird conservation in Namibia.
- Nath First Aid. I have kept my Level 1 First Aid current, and most recently completed the course with Nath at the end of 2009.

## **8. Work Experience**

- January 2011 - present: General Manager of Windhoek Ground Handling office for andbeyond (<http://www.andbeyond.com/>)
- May 2010 - December 2010: Owner/manager of Frantic Naturalist Tours and Safaris CC.
  - Unsuccessfully trying to start up a small safari company or local booking agent.
- July 2008 – May 2010: Freelance Tour Guide & Web Design
  - I did a variety of tours around Namibia for various companies, including some specialist birding tours and working as a 'host' on Andbeyond Private Hosted Journeys.

- I also worked on various website, both for myself and for others. I already knew HTML and some CSS, and learned some PHP, JavaScript and most of all, Python and Django Web Framework.
- January 2004 – June 2008: Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge (now called Sossusvlei Desert Lodge, [http://www.andbeyondafrica.com/luxury\\_safari/namibia/sossusvlei/and\\_beyond\\_sossusvlei\\_desert\\_reserve/](http://www.andbeyondafrica.com/luxury_safari/namibia/sossusvlei/and_beyond_sossusvlei_desert_reserve/))
  - I worked as a guide, head ranger (head guide in Andbeyond parlance) and assistant manager.
  - During that time the lodge was very highly rated, and remains one of the top lodges in Namibia on Tripadvisor.com
  - I contributed a number of sightings for the Wildwatch.com website and to various publications on things relating to the area we worked in and the lodge.
- November 2002 – December 2003: CCAfrica (now Andbeyond) Expeditions, Windhoek, Namibia
  - I worked as Operations manager for the Windhoek office.
  - The work involved various aspects of managing vehicles and equipment, and to a certain extent, staff) of the very complex tour operation they were running at the time. The tours included on trip with a team of seven staff preparing mobile camps as the tour moved around the country.
- December 2000 – November 2002: Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge, CCAfrica, Namibia.
  - I worked as head ranger
  - Guiding and managing the guides at Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge
- May 2000 – November 2000: Afro Ventures, Swakopmund, Namibia
  - I worked as the operations manager's assistant.
  - This involved all aspects of getting tours on the road, mostly dealing with equipment and vehicles.
  - I was also very involved in large event set-ups in the desert (such as desert dinners for large groups) and often managed all the movements for these groups, such as hiring buses, drivers, times and so on. We did various set-ups for all sorts of groups, including camping for a large film crew in various locations.
  - I carried on guiding at that time, but did mostly day tours in and around Swakopmund and Walvis Bay.
- February 1998 – February 2000: Afro Ventures
  - I worked as a tour guide. I did mostly camping tours all around Namibia. I also did a few day tours in Swakopmund.
- January 1997 – July 1997: Percy Fitzpatrick Institute for African Ornithology (<http://www.fitzpatrick.uct.ac.za/>), University of Cape Town, South Africa
  - This work was a part of my in-service training for a diploma in nature conservation from Saasveld.
  - We worked on a number of aspects of Ornithology, including starting a project studying basic breeding biology of Red-winged Starlings.

- We also worked in a vegetation project in the Karoo, looking at ecosystem dynamics in the Nama Karoo biome.
- We set up a display on seed-dispersal at a Museum in Prince Alfred, South Africa.
- July 1995 – December 1995: Addo Elephant National Park (<http://www.sanparks.org/parks/addo/>), South Africa
  - I worked as a student conservator at Addo, mainly working at Zuurberg (north of the main park.) I was involved in all aspects of conservation in the park, as per my diploma in-service training requirements.
  - I had a great opportunity to learn about Hippo management, as there were constant problems with hippos in the Sundays River. A great deal of my time was spent with an operation to capture the hippos that had escaped the park and return them.
- Various other odd jobs, such as managing a nursery, selling compost, delivering pizza and running a donut shop.
- In 1992 I finished High School in Kenya in July, and had a few months to kill before the academic year would start in South Africa. I worked with my parents project in Northern Kenya, helping them with building of a literacy center, laying out a new school, assisting with medical emergency trips and various management jobs in their organization. They work with the Rendile people in Northern Kenya, who are nomadic pastoralist people who speak a language similar to Somali.
- I did the same kinds of jobs for my parents throughout my childhood during the holidays, which gave me a good grounding in management.

## **9. Family**

I have a wife and two young boys and live in Windhoek, Namibia with them.

## **10. Interests**

- Nature
  - I have a strong general interest in the natural world. I have special interests in birding and arid ecology.
- Computers
  - Various aspects, including Linux and open source software, programming, web development (especially scripting dynamic pages)
- Fitness
  - I enjoy keeping in shape, especially weight training, which I do at home.
- And others:
  - I would like to learn to fly light aircraft at some point in my life.