

WELGEVONDEN IAN FINLAY

# WELGEVONDEN

*An African Wilderness Reborn*



IAN FINLAY

INTRODUCTION BY CLIVE WALKER



A substantial , hard cover, glossy coffee table book 267mm x 286mm, land scape format, 140 pages

Ian's book is the result of almost a decade photographing in Welgevonden in its varying seasons and moods.

*Clive Walker, in his introduction to the book, writes*

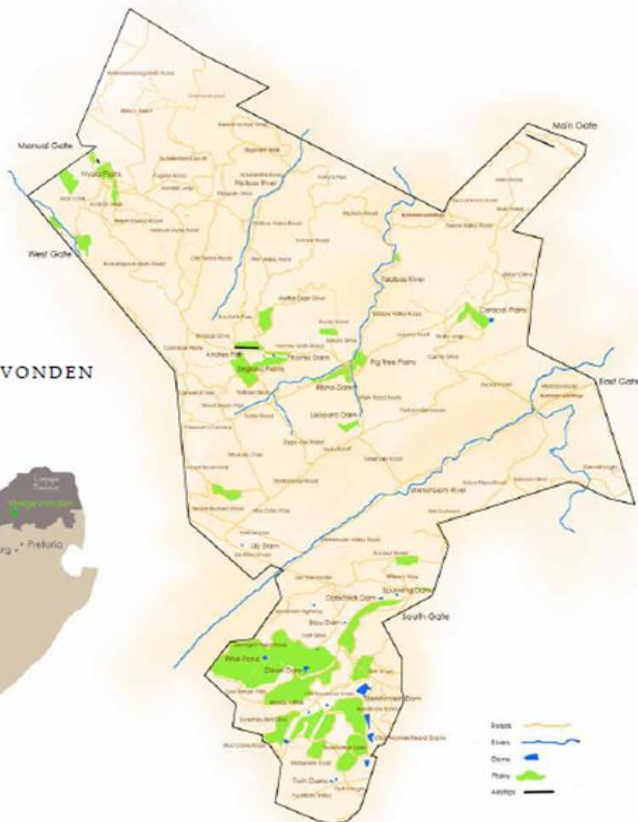
*“Within the pages of this gem of a book, Ian Finlay has produced the most stunning images to remind us of the beauty of nature and why we must take care of our world”.*

Look and feel....

WELGEVONDEN

*An African Wilderness Reborn*

## MAP OF WELGEVONDEN



## BEGINNINGS

IN THE 1960'S, PIENKES DU PLESSIS HAD A FARM in the Waterberg. He called his farm Welgevonden, which means 'well found' or 'well discovered'. He also had a vision. He dreamt of an area of the Waterberg brought back to its original state, with its wildlife returned – an African wilderness reborn. He planned to increase the area of Welgevonden by acquiring land from surrounding landowners. He would then remove traces of human activity from the landscape, and reintroduce the animals that had been lost.

As sometimes happens, Pienkes du Plessis was unable to complete what he set out to do. His vision would have failed were it not for an improbable event. In 1993 South Africa's leading investment bank, Rand Merchant bank, decided to provide the resources needed to realise the project. It was a decision that few banks would have been brave enough to justify to their shareholders, but it was a decision driven by a commitment to conservation. And so Welgevonden Game Reserve was born.

In the years since then, Pienkes du Plessis's vision has been realized. Today, some 37500 hectares are within Welgevonden's protection. As he envisaged, animals that had been lost have been returned. Elephants came back, as part of the first project in South Africa to translocate entire breeding herds. White rhinos were introduced, together with many other species. Plants and trees that were alien to the region were identified and removed. And in 1998, for the first time in almost a century, the most elemental sound of the bush was heard again in the Waterberg, when five lions were released in Welgevonden. Welgevonden had become the first reserve in the Waterberg to be home to the big five – elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard.

In addition to the wealth of its wildlife, Welgevonden's mountainous terrain is both very beautiful and very varied, dissected by deep valleys and kloofs, with areas of open woodland, hilltops which are typically flat plateaux, and rolling grassland plains. Over 400 kilometres of sand roads now traverse the expanse of the reserve; you can drive all day without ever revisiting your tracks. As you travel, the undulating landscape reveals new and spectacular views. The highest point in the reserve, in the southwest, rises to some 1672 metres. You cross many ephemeral streams, and five perennial rivers whose waters make their way north to swell the great Limpopo.



Stokastrom valley



*Orange-throated longclaw*



*Orange-throated longclaw*



*Copqi francolin*





*Blue cranes on the southern grasslands*

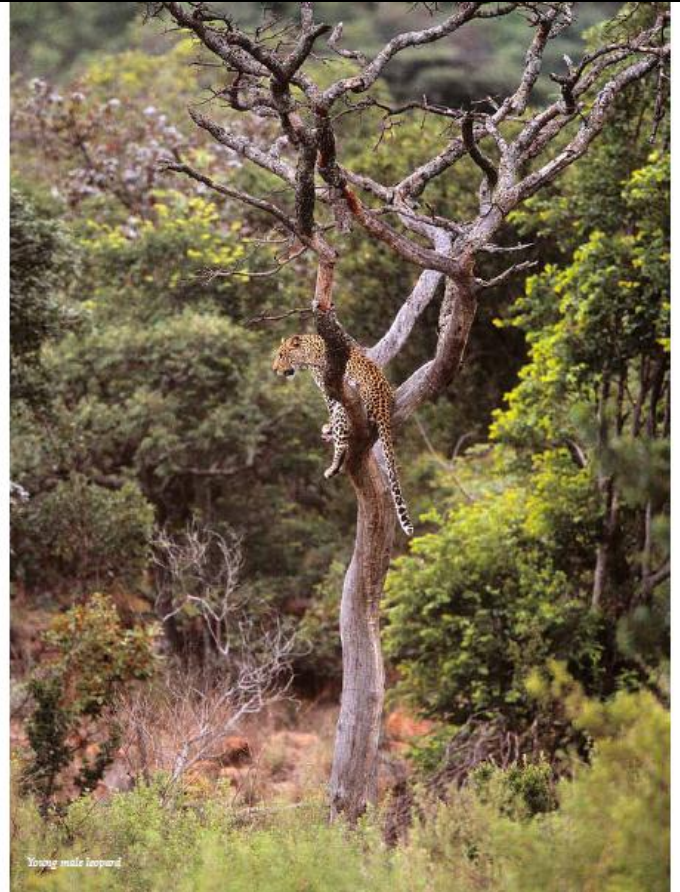


Cape bird

*Perhaps the most successful  
of Weigmann's species, the crocodile is so perfectly  
adapted for predation that it has not needed to  
evolve for millions of years.*



*The slender mongoose  
hunts alone, unlike other mongoose species,  
and is a highly effective predator.*



*Young male leopard*



*A raft of reeds  
provides a floating nest  
for a great crested grebe.*



*Lilac-breasted roller*





# WELGEVONDEN

## *An African Wilderness Reborn*

'I first saw Welgevonden one morning in early 1977. I had recently driven from Northern Kenya to the Cape of Good Hope, and had experienced many great wildlife reserves of east and southern Africa along the way. But in Welgevonden I discovered a natural world unlike any I had seen before – a landscape of extraordinary variety and beauty, of rugged escarpments, of secluded wooded valleys and clear streams, of summer waterfalls cascading down red stone gorges, of rolling grassland plains, of limitless views over folds of receding hills.'

I remember that morning seeing a group of white rhinos. Among them was a young one, inquisitive and playful . I knew that in my own lifetime, its species had stood on the edge of extinction. During 11,000 miles of travel through Africa, I had seen only two white rhinos. In that knowledge, to watch these great and ancient animals grazing quietly and safely in the Welgevonden landscape was somehow to sense the future of conservation in South Africa . '

'I decided that day that Welgevonden was a place in Africa to be. This book is the result '

Ian Finlay - Preface  
WELGEVONDEN  
An African Wilderness Reborn

The book will be available through retailers around South Africa, Ireland and the UK .

WELGEVONDEN  
*An African Wilderness Reborn*

Copies are available to land owners, and visitors to the reserve from

Welgevonden Main Gate

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Cost: R 320.00  
Suggested retail price : R 350.00

A limited number of books are available from mid November 2011

Extra delivery expected in January