

Inside Noah's Ark

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Tales Of The Grassland

Pilanesberg National Park is world-famous for its magnificent disease-free lions —prime predators that kill anything they can catch.

Unfortunately male lions also kill cubs and the rare and endangered animals so carefully bred and protected in the park. So Gus van Dyk invites Dr. Jon Grinnell, one of the world's great experts on lion communication, to Pilanesberg.

While Van Dyk works with the reserve's threatened rhinos and wild dogs, Grinnell tapes and plays back roars to the prides. He hopes to learn enough of the language of lions so that — irony of ironies — he can use Pilanesberg's lions to protect both the park's cubs and its rare and endangered animals.

2. Tales of the Desert

Gus van Dyk leaves Pilanesberg to manage the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, Southern Africa's newest and largest wildlife sanctuary. His job is to help heal the damaged Kalahari ecosystem, return this part of the Kalahari Desert close to its wild state and make Tswalu one of the finest wildlife reserves in the world.

Among his problems are escaping cheetah and sable antelope, traumatized wild dogs, a badly gored rhino calf and bull antelopes that keep trying to kill their own sons.

3. More Tales of the Desert

The last documentary in the trilogy starts as an adventure. Gus van Dyk flies two uncaged, sedated, black-maned Kalahari lions across South Africa on the floor of a small plane to inject fresh blood into the inbred Tswalu prides. If the lions wake, they'll have to be killed to protect everyone on board.

As the story progresses it expands to cover endangered black rhino and cheetah and sounds a grim warning: That we humans are blindly destroying the last of Africa's great wildlife, leaving only "islands of conservation" frozen in time and place, for our children.