

This month, Alex corresponds with Delaney Jardine, a 9-year-old South African girl who lives on a game reserve. The two talked about the importance of protecting wildlife.

Dear Delaney,

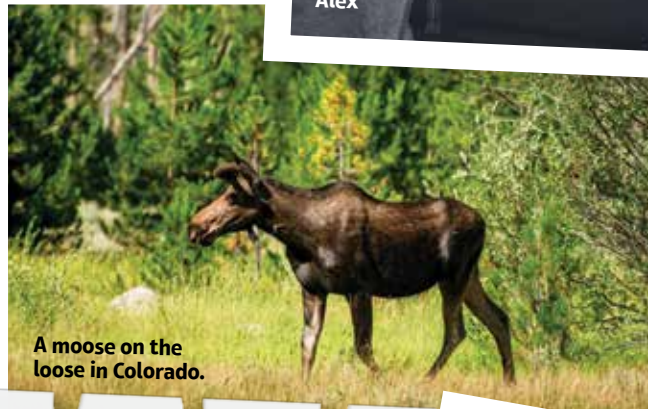
Hi, I'm Alex. I'm curious to know more about life in South Africa. What is your school like? What do you like doing in your free time?

I hear you live in a wildlife sanctuary. What kind of animals do you see?

There are lots of wild animals here. I see deer and elk some mornings just outside my window. There are also moose nearby. We have to be very careful about bears and make sure our garbage is locked up. Otherwise, they are tempted to come into neighborhoods looking for food. Do you have any interesting stories about living at a wildlife sanctuary?

Hope to hear from you soon,

Alex



A moose on the loose in Colorado.



Alex

Dear Alex

My name is Delaney. I am 9 years old. I live in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve. My parents work at a lodge called AndBeyond Kirkman's Kamp. I have been living in a game reserve my whole life. As a baby, I lived in Phinda Game Reserve and moved here when I was seven.

I go to a small school for all the reserve kids called Sabi Sands School. It's for pre-school to grade 6. I am in grade 3 this year.

We have traffic going to school. However, it's not the same as you might be used to. Our traffic means elephants or lions in the road. We let them go by before we drive on.

Delaney



Living in a Big Five Game Reserve means that we see a lot of wildlife. We are lucky to see elephants, leopards, hyenas, impala, warthog, and wild dogs right outside our front door. Just yesterday we had a big leopard by our swimming pool. These are dangerous animals so we have to be very careful.

My mom taught me how to crochet. I have made blankets for myself and a baby blanket for my teacher who is having a baby soon.

Do you have wildlife parks where you live? What do you like to do in your spare time?

Can wait to chat more,

Delaney



Delaney's big crochet project



Delaney's neighbors!

Hi, Delaney,

It seems like a very unique life to live in a game reserve, especially the "traffic" you encounter. How many students are at your school?

Do you have any unusual stories about encounters with wildlife? Can you explain what you mean by Big Five Game Reserve?

We have many National Parks and state parks that help preserve animals native to this area—bear, elk, deer, and wolves.

We also have an old military facility that was converted into a park called the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. It protects bison, prairie dogs, coyotes, and all kinds of birds.

There is also the Wild Animal Sanctuary that rescues hundreds of exotic animals especially big cats from abusive and harmful living conditions.

Crocheting sounds fun. My grandmother teaches a crocheting class, but I haven't learned yet. She taught me how to sew.

In my spare time, I like to exercise. I go to the gym with my dad. I also like to play games. Minecraft and Animal Crossing are my favorites.

Talk to you soon,

Alex



Hi, Alex

We have about 40 students in our school. I have three friends my age. Because our school is so small, grades 3 and 4 share one classroom. Art and reading are my favorite classes.

A Big Five Game Reserve means we have lions, elephants, leopard, buffalo, and rhino. The original term used to mean the five hardest animals to hunt. Our game reserve protects them now. One of the things we have done recently to protect rhinos from poaching is to dehorn them. A team of professional vets, game rangers and helicopter pilots do this. It doesn't hurt them. Horns are made from keratin, which is the same as fingernails and hair. I was lucky enough to help twice. There doesn't seem to be any bad effects on the rhinos' behavior.

I also love to play Minecraft as well as Red Ball 4. Can't believe we both play Minecraft and we live on opposite sides of the world.

Chat soon,

Delaney



Delaney helps with the dehorning of rhinos.



Dear Delaney,

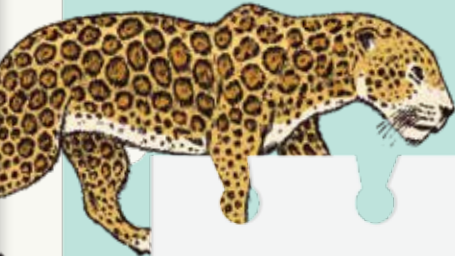
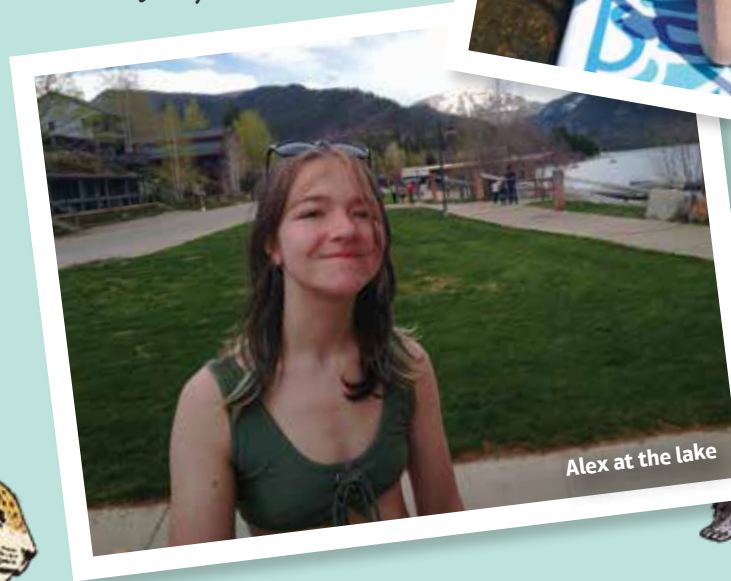
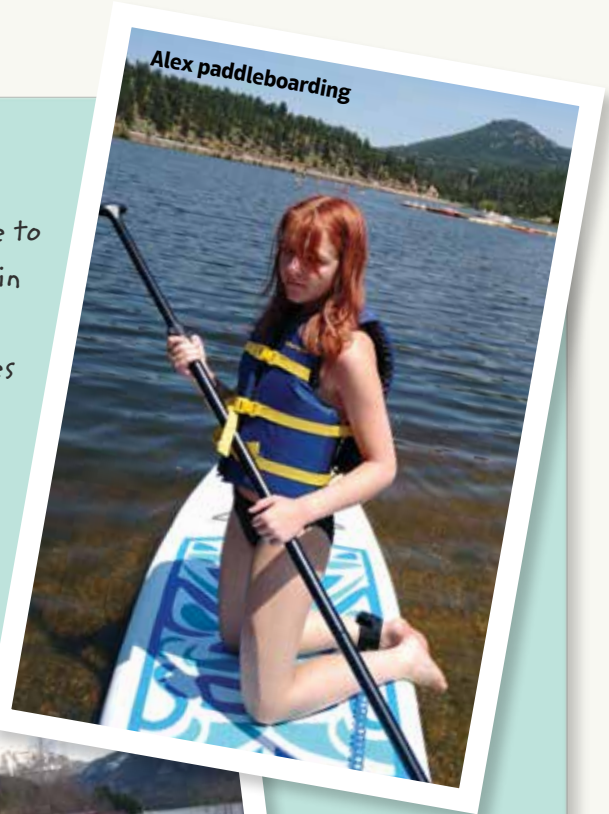
That must have been an incredible experience to help with the rhino dehorning. Are you interested in working with wildlife when you grow up?

Art has always been one of my favorite classes too, especially digital art.

There is a small lake nearby where I go to paddleboard. I grew up skiing and hope to try out for my high school's ski team. Do you have a favorite sports?

It has been fun talking to you,

Alex



Hello, Alex,

I haven't really thought about what I want to do, but protecting wildlife would be an awesome job.

Our school just had its 6th birthday celebration. All the parents were invited to see students' art on display. My friend's dad bought one of mine.

It can get extremely hot here in summer. Our winters are not very cold. I have never seen snow. It must be so cool to be able to play in it. I hope that one day I will learn how to ski.

I enjoyed talking to you,

Delaney

