



# Track record

On every game drive, beach walk and bushveld hiking tour you'll see spoor if you look for it. And it is possible to take striking photos of tracks.



## Follow the spoor

### Fanie Venter

Panasonic Lumix DMC-F28  
(settings: F4.5, 1/200 sec,  
ISO 100)

"I took this photograph earlier this year on a 4x4 trip at Boegoeberg Eco Resort near

Groblersshoop in the Northern Cape. I love to take photographs when I go camping, especially of the sunrise and sunset – and anything else I've never seen before, like these little tracks. We saw them everywhere in the veld, also on a sand bank near

the river, where I snapped this picture.

"I'm not sure what kind of animal made the track, but I suspect it's a type of beetle. The biggest challenge was to find a spot that didn't have bird tracks too."

## Picture of the month

crop the photo slightly: on the right to cut out the incomplete bird track and at the bottom so the bug spoor runs into the bottom right corner, as it does in the top left corner.

### From a lower angle

Pictures taken from above may be good to identify animals, but if you want to tell a story, it helps to photograph animal tracks from a lower angle.

Take, for instance, this picture of fresh lion spoor in the Kgalagadi. We're not sure *what*



**Villiers says:** Because I'm always looking for big cats in southern African game reserves, I spend a considerable amount of time looking for spoor. I love photographing tracks, because the pictures remind me of the exciting searches.

I seldom, however, encounter beautiful pictures of the spoor of small creatures, so Fanie's picture caught my eye.

You can photograph spoor either directly from above or from a lower angle.

### Directly from above

Most people, also Fanie, in this case, photograph spoor from



above. This makes it easy to get the entire spoor or set of tracks in focus, because they're all the same distance from the camera lens. This is also the best angle for identification purposes.

The most important thing is to get your composition right. Fanie succeeds here with flying colours. Firstly, he took the trouble of finding a patch of sand where no other tracks or objects spoil the scene. Then he placed a beautiful S curve, which divides the frame in two, in such a way that something quite simple becomes striking and looks beautifully balanced.

The only thing I'd still do is to

went there, but we can see *where* it went, because from this angle we can see both the road and the desert background.

When photographing spoor from a low angle, look very carefully at where your focus is. I usually choose a fairly shallow depth of field (between F5 and F8 for an SLR camera) and focus on the middle of the spoor.

**Tip:** Photograph spoor early in the morning or late in the day, when the sun sits low on the horizon and casts a shadow inside the tracks. As the sun moves higher in the sky, they fade away in photos. 