



ZULULAND BEGINS TO FEEL LIKE UNSPOILED AFRICA AFTER THE N2 SNAKES ITS WAY LIKE A WRITHING BLACK MAMBA NORTHWARDS PAST HLUHLUWE AND MKUZE ON KWAZULU-NATAL'S NORTHERN REACHES. The green desert of the plantations becomes stretches of African bush and savannah, the landscape transforms to khaki, brown and green as far as the eye can see. Settlements and roadside garages give way to land without evidence of human clutter.

It's twilight and we have just entered the Pongola Game Reserve, headed for Nkwazi Lake Lodge. Along that short drive, game is in profusion. We see nyala, kudu, warthog in a muddy watergat, a pair of graceful giraffe, and an endless supply of ever-ubiquitous impala. I'd been thinking, based on my initial research, that I was headed for a place primarily aimed at fishermen, as the river and dam it feeds into are renowned as the premier spot in South Africa for tiger fishing. As someone who could barely catch a guppy in a fish tank, I had serious reservations.