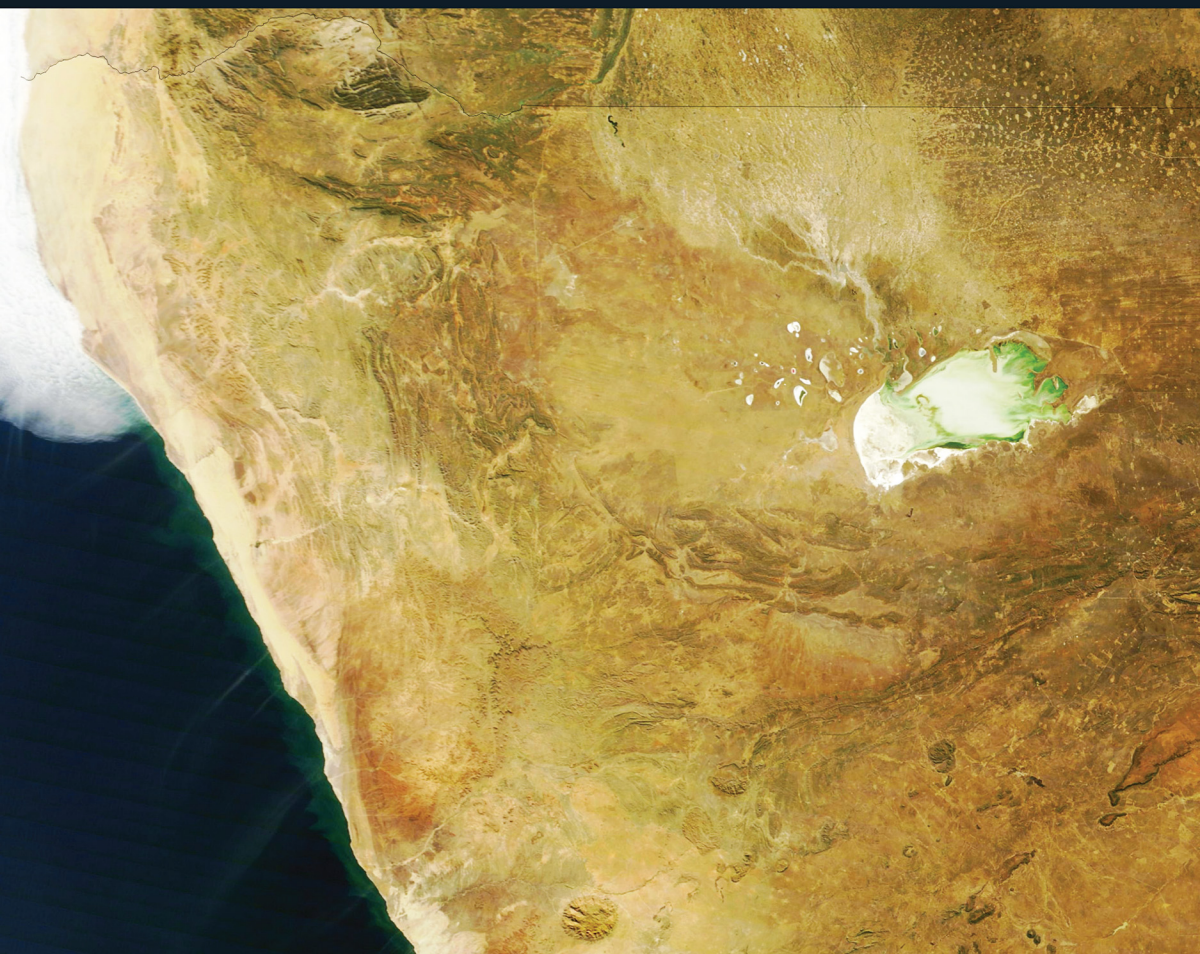


Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast

Conservation Histories, Policies and Practices in North-west Namibia

Edited by Sian Sullivan, Ute Dieckmann,
and Selma Lendelvo



ETOSHA PAN TO THE SKELETON COAST

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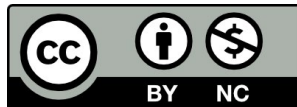
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Note on orthography

Throughout the text we include terms from a range of languages, mostly signalled by italics.

The Khoekhoegowab language spoken in ‘Etosha-Kunene’ by Nama, Damara/ǀNūkhoen, Haiǁom and ǁUbun deploys four click consonants signalled by the following symbols: ǀ = the ‘tutting’ sound made by bringing the tongue softly down from behind the front teeth (dental click); ǁ = the clucking sound familiar in urging on a horse (lateral click); ! = a popping sound like mimicking the pulling of a cork from a wine bottle (alveolar click); ǂ = a sharp, explosive click made as the tongue is flattened and then pulled back from the palate (palatal click).

We use modern orthography for ethnic identifying terms such as *omuHerero* (sing.) *ovaHerero* (pl.), *aaWambo*, etc., unless when quoting directly, in which case we use the terms as written in the quoted text.

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Arthur Hoole is Canadian and has enjoyed a long and diverse career in park planning, wildlife conservation and environmental assessment. Early on he completed park planning assignments in Canada's Banff National Park, Kluane National Park Reserve, and the Yukon and Nahanni National Park Reserve, among many other protected area planning and resource management projects in Western Canada. He then worked internationally, as a national parks advisor in Antigua and Barbuda, West Indies, followed by five years living in Zimbabwe as an advisor on natural resource management policies and programmes. These assignments engaged him with Indigenous and local communities and his work focused on Indigenous and local community governance in resource management and conservation. This experience culminated in his doctoral research interest in Namibia and the Etosha-Kunene region. He completed his PhD at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, much inspired by his principal advisor Professor Fikret Berkes.

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Dennis Liebenberg is a conservationist who has been the operator of the Etendeka Tourist Concession since 1991. His driving motivation is sustainability, which manifests in the way he has developed tourism on the concession. During the very high rainfall years of 1999 to 2011, he witnessed the rapid die-off of important evergreen trees through over-browsing, particularly the Ringwood tree and the Shepherd's tree which are winter flowering trees, important for pollinators and key components of the ecosystem in the north-west of Namibia. When Kahingirisina Maoveka (lead author, Chapter 9) applied to do her field studies at Etendeka, Dennis took the opportunity to ask her to record what was happening to these trees in the concession.

Kahingirisina Maoveka is originally from Botswana but now lives in Namibia. In 2013 she became a student at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), where she studied for a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resources Management in Nature Conservation, during the course of which she pursued research at Etendeka Mountain Camp. Currently she is a student at the

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Abbreviations

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
ACLRA	Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act
AD	Anno Domini (after the birth of Christ)
ADMADE	Administrative Management Design
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AGG	Auxiliary Game Guard
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK)
ALWG	African Lion Working Group
BAB	Basler Afrika Bibliographien
BAD	Department of Bantu Administration and Development (Pretoria)
BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BP	Before Present
CAMPFIRE	Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCFN	Community Conservation Fund of Namibia
CENR	Center for Environment and Natural Resources
CGG	Community Game Guard
CITES	UN Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLRA	Communal Land Reform Act
CONINFO	Conservation Information system, Namibia
CNN	Cable News Network
CRR	Community Rhino Ranger
CSO	Civil Society Organisation

DAS	Desert Adventure Safaris
DEA	Directorate of Environmental Affairs
DEC	Damara Executive Committee
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)
DLCT	Desert Lion Conservation Trust
DNC	Department of Nature Conservation
DRA	Damara Regional Authority
DRFN	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
DRWS	Directorate of Rural Water Supply
DSD	Division of San Development
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EHA	Etosha Hai om Association
EHRA	Elephant-Human Relations Aid
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIF	Environment Investment Fund
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
ENP	Etosha National Park
ESS	Environment and Social Safeguarding
EW	Early Warning
EWS	Early Warning System
EWT	Endangered Wildlife Trust
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEL	Greater Etosha Landscape
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency / German Society for International Cooperation)
GN	Government Notice
GPS	Global Positioning System
GPTF	Game Products Trust Fund
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
GSWA	German South West Africa

HEC	Human-Elephant Conflict
HLC	Human-Lion Conflict
HWC	Human-Wildlife Conflict
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
ICEMA	Integrated Community-Based Ecosystem Management
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICWE	International Conference on Water and the Environment
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
IRDNC	Integrating Rural Development and Nature Conservation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau / German Development Bank
KLMG	Kaoko Land and Mining Company / Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft
KNP	Kruger National Park
KPP	Kunene People's Park
KREA	Kunene Regional Ecological Assessment
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
LIFE	Living in a Finite Environment
LINGS	Local Institutions in Globalized Societies
LLF	Legacy Landscapes Fund
LRC	Legal Resource Centre (South Africa)
LRP	Lion Rangers Programme
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development
MBI	Market-Based Instrument
MCA-N	Millennium Challenge Account – Namibia
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MCD	Marginalised Communities' Division
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
MGEPESW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MLR	Ministry of Land Reform
MLaR	Ministry of Lands and Resettlement

MLRR	Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
MWCT	Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism
NACSO	Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
NAM-PLACE	Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative
NAN	National Archives of Namibia
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NCRST	National Commission for Research, Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLP	National Land Policy
NLT	Namibian Lion Trust
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
NNPC	Namibian National Planning Commission
NPF	National Patriotic Front
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRMP	Natural Resources Management Programme
NRWG	Natural Resources Working Group
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
NSC	Namibian San Council
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
NWR	Namibia Wildlife Resorts
NWT	Namibia Wildlife Trust
OPL	Ombonde People's Landscape
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPP	Ombonde People's Park
OVP	Office of the Vice-President
PA	Protected Area
PDM	Peoples' Democratic Movement
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
POSCCIN	Poverty-Oriented Support to Community Conservation in Namibia
PTO	Permission to Occupy
RCC	Road Construction Company
RMS	Rhenish Missionary Society
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADF	South African Defence Force

SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANF	South African Nature Foundation
SCNP	Skeleton Coast National Park
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDP	San Development Programme
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SMS	Short Message Service
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPAN	Strengthening the Protected Areas Network
SRT	Save the Rhino Trust
SWA	South West Africa
SWAA	South West African Administration
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TA	Traditional Authority
TAA	Traditional Authorities Act
TOSCO	Tourism Supporting Conservation Trust
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSD	United Nations Sustainable Development
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCF	Veterinary Cordon Fence
VHF	Very High Frequency
WASP	Water and Sanitation Policy
WB	World Bank
WPA	Water Point Associations
WPC	Water Point Committees
WW1	World War 1
WW2	World War 2
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Preface

*Kletus Likuwa*¹

It is noteworthy that this book detailing conversations on conservation comes at a time when Namibia remains greatly worried about environmental and biodiversity destruction, worries expressed through the international community and under the auspices of the United Nations. The need to conserve and use environmental resources sustainably so as to reduce poverty and hunger amongst communities is also clearly paramount in the contemporary moment. This book is thus a welcome addition to our knowledge on histories of conservation in Namibia, spanning colonial to post-colonial periods.

The authors neatly detail the destruction of biodiversity by early European hunters and traders, and the exploitation and impoverishment of Africans in this process, a sad reality that occurred even before the formal establishment of colonial or imperial control over Namibia by Germany in 1884. The authors further show how this exploitation of natural resources continued until 1907 when Game Reserve No. 2 was established, parts of which were later gazetted as the Etosha and Skeleton Coast National Parks during the South African colonial administration in former South West Africa.

The authors revisit and examine the colonial fortress approach to conservation, when humans were separated from animals, and the massive social, economic, and psychological impacts these actions had upon African communities, as well as upon the continent's ecology as a whole. Discussions about, for example, the history of the removal of Hai||om from Etosha in the 1950s, and the efforts to resettle them in reallocated commercial farms after Namibia's Independence, detail a nexus between the colonial devastation of community livelihoods and the marginal attempts by the post-colonial state to redress colonial imbalances. Indeed, the multiple displacements documented in this book—caused by conservation as well as other historical dynamics in north-west Namibia—make visible the significant social challenges faced by conservation praxis in the present.

The concept of anachronism seems appropriate here in this study of the history of conservation. Anachronism in history refers to perceived or actual chronological inconsistencies between historical and present arrangements, a perspective that certainly reflects the complexities between present needs and past circumstances documented in this volume. At the same time, and as foregrounded in this book's engagements with transformations, change and continuities in conservation approaches in Namibia, the study of the past remains crucial to understand the factors and forces shaping conservation and community concerns in the present.

The authors further emphasise that, despite changes from fortress conservation towards a community-inclusive conservation approach, it is still necessary to ensure that externally imposed forms of conservation should promote equal benefit-sharing without regard to race or ethnicities.

The book provides an opportunity for readers to explore the conflicting or harmful actions of, for example, giraffe herbivory on key tree species and the wider effects this may cause on biodiversity generally; the human impacts of waterpoint establishment possibly contributing to plains and mountain zebra hybridisation; the politics of water infrastructures in community conservation, often associated with elephant impacts in north-west Namibia; the use of technology such as GIS or SMART technologies in tracking lions and reducing human-wildlife conflicts; how community members such as young people living near national parks understand biodiversity and its benefits;

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and how communities continue to seek affirmation of their heritage and environmental knowledge, as well as access to local resources under current conservation regimes.

This book links the past to the present and future, presenting as the core aim of conservation efforts the hope that formerly excluded Africans can obtain improved benefits; such as income from tourism, or access to resources for sustenance and exchange. The book presents research that successfully answers the question permeating all conversations in the volume, namely: 'how can the conservation of biodiversity-rich landscapes come to terms with the past, given historical contexts of social exclusion and marginalisation?'

This volume presents examples of historical exclusions and exploitations of African communities during historical colonial conservation development, and the transformations to processes and policies since Namibia's Independence that have aimed to address these imbalances through Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) projects. The authors show that financial and institutional challenges continue to impede some conservation efforts, to the detriment of formerly marginalised communities and their fragile gains.

The book raises central issues in conservation that could contribute to policy reforms and practices that are mutually beneficial to both humans and wildlife. It also shares conversations derived from various stakeholders of diverse backgrounds, weaving these divergent observations and experiences into a coherent narrative of conservation histories in Namibia.

The knowledge shared in this book presents an opportunity to shape a new way of thinking about conservation transformations which will improve the practice of stakeholders in the conservation spectrum. A particularly important aspect raised by some authors is the heritage dimension, which is linked to the desire of a community to replicate past best practices, and to retain the material and spiritual use of their natural resources within the reformed post-colonial conservation environment.

This link between past and present observations and experiences of community members highlights the implications for present conservation practices, pointing towards new directions for conservation efforts. The notion of past, present and future entanglements of multiple conservation histories raises the further question of how educators or scholars should teach the contested heritage and histories of conservation at secondary and tertiary levels, and how these issues could impact on curriculum reforms to conservation histories and heritage studies.

Centrally, the book posits critical and plural thinking around issues of land and local resources ownership, as well as equal benefit-sharing within conservation approaches. It offers an immense contribution to knowledge on conservation practices in Namibia and beyond.

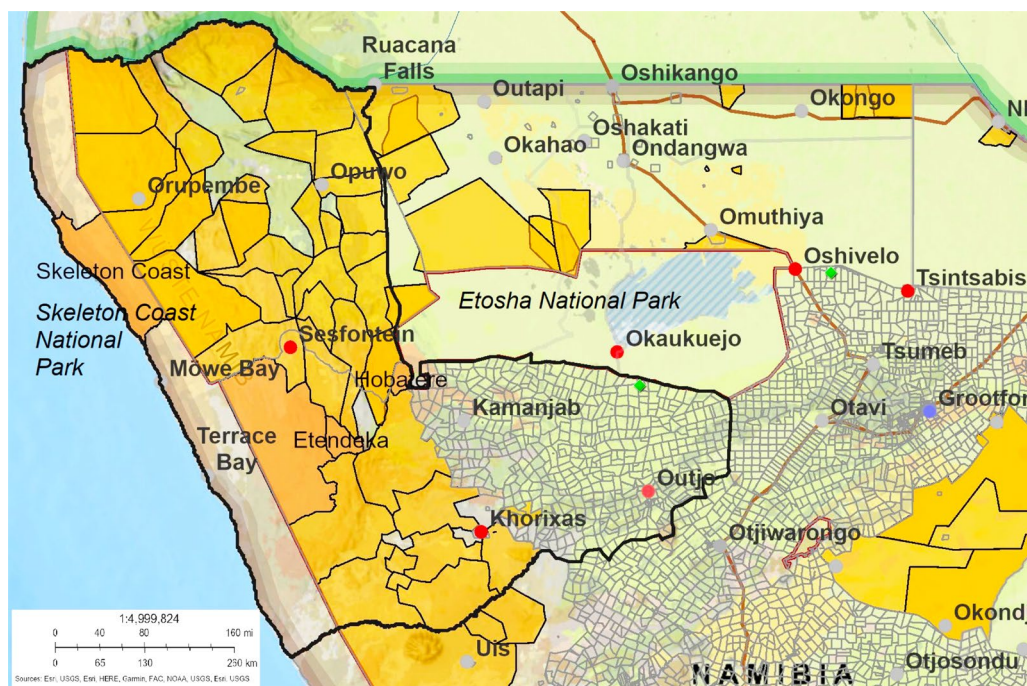
Any ardent seeker of knowledge on conservation practices should take the opportunity to read and become informed by the arguments presented in this book, and thereby become empowered to make informed choices regarding their practices in the conservation arena. I heartily recommend it to academic and other audiences as an addition to our knowledge on conservation histories and transformations in Namibia.

Etosha-Kunene conservation conversations: An introduction

Sian Sullivan, Ute Dieckmann and Selma Lendelvo

Abstract

This introductory chapter describes how the Etosha-Kunene Histories research project, for which this edited volume forms a key contribution, addresses the challenge of conserving biodiversity-rich landscapes in Namibia's north-central and north-west regions, while reconciling historical contexts of social exclusion and marginalisation. This edited volume, originating from an international workshop held in July 2022, explores the intricate interplay between local and global events shaping the “Etosha-Kunene” conservation landscape. The workshop featured diverse participants from Namibian institutions, international universities, and various conservation organisations. Our discussions emphasised the complex histories and contemporary dynamics of conservation policies, highlighting the tension between biodiversity protection and social equity. The volume is organised into five parts: historical policy analysis, post-Independence conservation approaches, ecological management issues, the impact of historical contexts on contemporary landscapes and communities, and lion conservation within Community-Based Natural Resource Management frameworks. This work aims to contribute to sustainable and inclusive conservation practices that honour both the region's natural and cultural heritage.



Map of “Etosha-Kunene”. The pale orange areas are conservancies on communal land; the darker orange areas are tourism concessions; the hatched areas show the boundaries of freehold farms held under private tenure; the solid black line is the boundary of Kunene Region. Etosha National Park (ENP) is in the centre, and the pale shaded areas in the west constitute the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP). The green markers are the Hai||om resettlement farms Seringkop and Ondera, to the south and east of ENP respectively. © Ute Dieckmann, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Introduction

How can the conservation of biodiversity-rich landscapes come to terms with the past, given historical contexts of social exclusion and marginalisation? This question anchors the Etosha-Kunene Histories research project,¹ for which this edited volume forms a key contribution. The volume brings together presentations shared in an international online workshop held in July 2022 and entitled “Etosha-Kunene Conservation Conversations: Knowing, Protecting and Being-with Nature, from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast”, complemented by additional relevant contributions.²

Our aim with this workshop was to support an in-depth, cross-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder conversation about conservation histories and concerns, focusing on the variously connected “Etosha-Kunene” areas of north-central and north-west Namibia. This regional focus stretches from the resettlement farm of Tsintsabis to the east of Etosha National Park (ENP), westwards to the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) along the Atlantic Ocean, as shown in the above map. These national parks and their neighbouring conservation designations comprise shifting, overlapping and contiguous territories that are also home to diverse Indigenous³ and historically marginalised peoples. In bringing together an array of perspectives on this specific region, we emphasise the complex historical and contemporary weave of ‘local and global events and processes’⁴ that have worked together to create “Etosha-Kunene” today as a globalised conservation and cultural landscape.⁵

Participants in our July 2022 workshop came from diverse backgrounds in relation to the Etosha-Kunene regional focus of our project. In Namibia they included the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), the Lion Rangers Programme, Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), the University of Namibia (UNAM), Ongava Research Centre, Gobabeb Namib Research Institute, Etendeka Mountain Camp and Tsintsabis Trust. We also welcomed colleagues from Oxford Brookes University, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Aberdeen, Universität Hamburg, School for Field Studies—Kenya Programme, the University of Göttingen, and the University of Wageningen; as well as Etosha-Kunene Histories project researchers at Bath Spa University, the University of Cologne and UNAM. The present volume represents this diversity. It also follows an established praxis in “Namibian Studies” of bringing together work by authors at different moments of their academic and professional careers.⁶

As acknowledged by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030, this is a global moment saturated with simultaneous losses in biological, linguistic and cultural diversities.⁷ SDG15 concerning Life on Land thus aims to ‘ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems’ (SDG15.1), in part through protecting globally agreed ‘key biodiversity areas (KBAs)’.⁸ Listed KBAs include Etosha National Park (ENP) and the Hobatere Tourism Concession on ENP’s western boundary. Ecosystem and biodiversity protections, however, can sit uneasily with other SDGs, such as SDG10 aiming for equitable development and reduced inequalities alongside political inclusion, irrespective of differences such as ethnicity, sex, age and gender identity (SDG10.2).

1 www.etosha-kunene-histories.net

2 Full workshop programme online here: <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/post/workshop-programme-with-abstracts>

3 Different perspectives exist on whether or not the term Indigenous should be capitalised. Here we follow arguments for its capitalisation in order to emphasise that the term ‘articulates and identifies a group of political and historical communities’ with shared experiences of colonialism and displacement: as expressed, for example, by *Sapiens*—an anthropology magazine of the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the University of Chicago Press (<https://www.sapiens.org/language/capitalize-indigenous/>). We also respect the choice of some authors to depart from this convention.

4 Miescher *et al.* (2023: 22)

5 Sullivan *et al.* (2016: 10)

6 See, for example, Miescher & Henrichsen (2000) and Lenggenhager *et al.* (2023)

7 Moseley (2010), WWF (2018)

8 See www.keybiodiversityareas.org

To respond to these potential sources of complexity and friction, we aimed for our workshop to provide a platform for a conversation on conservation policies and practices in “Etosha-Kunene”, taking historical perspectives and diverse natural and cultural histories into account. Weaving the manifold histories, knowledges and practices of diverse actors together with various historical and contemporary conservation policies and practices will, we hope, contribute positively to future conservation aspirations and practices for the region.

The territory we are calling “Etosha-Kunene” stretches from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast, and has been subjected to a long history of nature conservation initiatives. In 1907, “Game Reserve No. 2” was established by the former German colonial state of Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1884–1915) as one of three Game Reserves (*Wildschutzgebiete*) in which access to so-called “game” animals was restricted—on paper at least, given the enormous land areas involved and the difficulties of policing these areas. Game Reserve No. 2 stretched in varying configurations from the current ENP to the Kunene River in the north-west and the Atlantic Ocean in the west, with diverse peoples living in this area. During the time Namibia was formally governed by South Africa (1920–1990), various boundary changes took place for political and ecological reasons.⁹ Etosha National Park in the east (declared a National Park in 1967), and SCNP along the Atlantic Ocean in the west (declared a National Park in 1971), were established according to a model of fortress conservation, i.e. protecting nature *from* people. Commercial hunting and tourism concessions were also created in the space between these two formal conservation territories. Conservation policies and practices in these colonial and apartheid periods are reviewed in detail in Chapters 1 and 2.

After Namibia gained Independence in 1990, the government addressed the legacy of colonial conservation politics through several governance reforms. Being part of remaining communally-managed land, areas west and north of ENP became deeply woven into Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) approaches through the establishment of communal area conservancies, community forests and contractual arrangements with tourism concessions and investors.¹⁰ In these communal land areas, the emphasis has instead been on protecting nature *with* people—as reviewed in Chapter 3. Numerous conservancies and community forests west and north of ENP are now present in Etosha-Kunene, where Indigenous and local Namibians are encouraged to become aligned with externally sourced entrepreneurial investments in lodge developments, eco-tourism, trophy hunting, commercial wildlife butchery, and the harvesting of indigenous plants as primary resources for commercial products.

Conservancies are additionally now tapping into and becoming subjects of new conservation arrangements called People’s Parks or People’s Landscapes, as permitted in the draft Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill (2017) (see Appendix). In north-west Namibia, these have included a “Kunene People’s Park” proposed in the late 2000s (but not formalised),¹¹ and an “Ombonde People’s Landscape” involving communal area conservancies immediately to the west of ENP.¹² The area between ENP and the west is also the focus of a new ‘Skeleton Coast-Etosha Conservation Bridge’, through which the area is being framed explicitly as a ‘conservation hotspot’.¹³ Implemented by Namibian NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) WWF Namibia¹⁴ and Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC),¹⁵ this conservation project has been granted funding of USD 50 million over 50 years through a newly formed Legacy Landscapes Fund led from Germany. Situated in a context of controversial calls to allocate half the earth to conservation,¹⁶ as well as so-called “30x30” proposals that 30% of the planet should be protected

9 de la Bat (1982), Berry (1997)

10 Sullivan (2002), Lendelvo & Nakanyala (2013), Hauptfleisch *et al.* (2024)

11 KREA (2008), MET (2009)

12 Denker (2022), Tipping-Woods (2023)

13 LLF, WWF, IRDNC (2024)

14 <https://www.wwfnamibia.org/>

15 <https://www.irdnc.org.na/>

16 Wilson (2016)

for conservation by 2030,¹⁷ these global initiatives are clearly playing out through intensifying conservation designations in Namibia's north-west.

In the east of Etosha-Kunene, characterised by the commercial farming area under freehold land tenure, Indigenous Khoekhoegowab-speaking Hai||om (frequently named “Bushman”) were provided with a number of resettlement farms.¹⁸ Here, the establishment of conservancies and community forests is currently not an option for Indigenous communities. Instead, resettlement within an agricultural development dictum is taking place, affirming boundaries between nature and people/livestock, and between the ENP and the farming sector (see Chapters 2, 4 and 16).

In sum, Etosha-Kunene bears witness to manifold, changing, continuing and parallel nature conservation policies and practices over the last 120 years—as distilled in the Appendix on conservation legislation and policies. Conservation designations through the area have shifted radically and continue to be fluid and dynamic. Conservation policy and legislation has also changed in order to support these various designations, as have the key actors and organisations operating in the business of conservation. Amidst this complexity, our position is that recognising the diversity of histories, cultures, and natures in this internationally valued region will support conservation laws and practices that connect natural and cultural heritages in Namibia (and beyond). Part I of this volume thereby engages with the ‘weight of history’¹⁹ shaping new conservation proposals and their outcomes.

How this book is organised

This book is organised into five parts. The first provides an historical backdrop for the book's detailed case studies, focusing on environmental and conservation policy and legislation, and their implications. The second provides a series of case studies investigating post-Independence approaches to conservation, with the third focusing on Etosha-Kunene ecologies and related management issues. Part IV explores how historical circumstances have shaped contemporary conservation and cultural landscapes, and the final part addresses the specific complexities of conserving predators—in this case lions (*Panthera leo*)—in combination with Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). We close with a concluding chapter that weaves together the threads of these contributions to consider present challenges in realising conservation in north-west Namibia. The remainder of this introduction summarises these parts and chapters to clarify the matters of concern explored throughout this volume. We also include short abstracts at the start of each chapter so that they can “stand alone”.

Part I, entitled Conservation Histories in Etosha-Kunene, engages in depth with histories of environmental and conservation policy and legislation, as these have played out in Etosha-Kunene. It is built around three extended chapters by the book's editors,²⁰ intended to set the historical scene for the detailed case material comprising the book's remaining chapters.

In Chapter 1, on ‘Etosha-Kunene, from “pre-colonial” to German colonial times’ (Sullivan, Dieckmann, Lendelvo), we outline pre-colonial²¹ and German colonial structuring of the area, leading in the early 1900s to the institution of formal “game laws” and “game reserves” as key elements of colonial spatial organisation and administration. We provide an overview of the

17 For different perspectives on ‘30x30’ see <https://www.campaignfornature.org/news/category/30x30> and Eisen & Mudodosi (2021).

18 Dieckmann (2011), Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

19 Kalvelage *et al.* (2023)

20 These historical chapters draw closely on an iteratively updated chronology online at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp1-historicising-etosha-kunene>

21 We do not intend to obscure the complexity of African experience, histories and contexts by using this term to denote the period prior to formal German colonial annexation of the territory, although we are aware that its use is controversial (Táíwò 2023).

complex factors shaping histories and dynamics prior to formal annexation of the territory by Germany in 1884. We summarise key Indigenous-colonial alliances entered into in the 1800s, and their breakdown as the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 decimated indigenous livestock herds and precipitated enhanced colonial control via veterinary measures and a north-west expansion of military personnel. A critical and collaborative Indigenous uprising in the north-west in 1897–1898—known variously as the Swartbooi or Grootberg Uprising—was met by significant military force, disrupting local settlement and use of the area stretching from Outjo towards the Kunene River.²² It resulted in the large-scale deportation of inhabitants of the area who were brought to Windhoek for mobilisation as forced labour for the consolidating colony. An intended effect was to clear land poised for appropriation by German and Boer settler farmers.

In the wake of the later genocidal colonial war of 1904–1908 that seized land and livestock from African populations, in 1907 the German colonial administration proclaimed an area of north-western Namibia as one of three Game Reserves in German South-West Africa. This area, stretching from Etosha Pan in the east, north-west to the Kunene River bordering Angola, and west to the Atlantic Coast, was not an “untamed wilderness”. Instead, it was inhabited by an array of Indigenous peoples speaking different languages: Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara/!Nūkhoen, Hai||om, Nama and !Ukun; otjiHerero-speaking ovaTjimba, ovaHimba and ovaHerero; and oshiWambo-speakers (AaNdonga, Aakwaluudhi and Aakwambi) especially north of Etosha Pan. The pre-colonial and early colonial situation was highly dynamic, in terms of mobility, shifting affiliations and alliances, as well as the effects of early colonisation, trade, exploration and missionary activities. The proclamation of Game Reserve No. 2 can be seen as the beginning of a long and varied history of formal colonial nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene, whose shifting objectives, policies and practices had tremendous influence on its human and beyond-human inhabitants.

We follow this early history with an overview of conservation policy and legislation and its impacts, from the territory’s post World War 1 administration from Pretoria, to the formalisation of an Independent Namibia in 1990. In Chapter 2 on ‘Spatial severance and nature conservation: Apartheid histories in Etosha-Kunene’ (Dieckmann, Sullivan, Lendelvo), we trace the history of nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene during the times of South African government. In the initial phase, nature conservation—or rather, “game preservation”—was not high on the agenda of the South African administration, which focused instead on white settlement of the territory, implementing a settlement programme with extensive support for (poor) white South Africans to settle in “South West Africa”. This settlement programme implied a continuous re-organisation of space. The border between the protected “Police Zone” where settlement could take place in the southern and central parts of the territory, and the north of the country where Indigenous people remained, became drawn on to maps of the country and known as the “Red Line”.²³ Native Reserves of the German administration were retained and new Native Reserves were established all over the country, in part to provide a labour pool for the colony. The focus of the administration changed after World War 2. White settlement of the territory had almost reached its limits and the potential of tourism and the role of nature conservation for the economy was given more attention. Nature conservation became institutionalised and “scientised”,²⁴ the concept of fortress conservation becoming the dominant paradigm. Its implementation led to the removal of local inhabitants from their former land, among them Hai||om who had long been living in the south-eastern part of Game Reserve No. 2 (also see Chapters 4, 15 and 16). Shifting boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2—reflecting diverse colonial interests (e.g. settlement, “native” policy, nature conservation)—characterised the 1950s to the 1970s. Part of Game Reserve No. 2 became Etosha Game Park in 1958 and finally ENP in 1967, which, at its current size, was eventually completely fenced in 1973. The arid area along

²² Schnegg (2007)

²³ Miescher (2012)

²⁴ Joubert (1974), Botha (2005)

the coast was proclaimed as SCNP in 1971. The previously dominant focus on game preservation was broadened, and, with the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967, the more holistic concept of nature conservation was institutionalised and legislated.

During the 1960s, however, appointment of the Commission of Enquiry into South-West Africa Affairs (known as the “Odendaal Commission” after its Chairman “Fox” Odendaal) changed the direction to some extent. The Odendaal Plan, comprising the Commission’s recommendations, was mostly concerned with the implementation (and justification) of redistributing land under an apartheid (“separate development”) system, and put little consideration into the intra-dependence of (socio-)ecological systems.²⁵ Its recommendations entailed “perfecting” spatial-functional organisation with neat boundaries between “Homelands” for the various local inhabitants, the (white) settlement area and game/nature. Land, flora and fauna, and humans of various backgrounds, were treated as separable categories to be sorted and arranged according to colonial needs and visions. The new arrangement imagined ENP as a fenced island within the wider colonial system. This dismembering had unforeseen effects, e.g. increase in animal diseases, the collapse of the ungulate population in ENP, and concerns regarding the sustenance of wildlife in Kaokoveld (northern Kunene Region). The removal of humans from their former lands and beyond-human companions, which had started decades before the Odendaal Plan was implemented, combined with new concentrations of people as the Homeland areas became established. Some outcomes included complex situations of dependency on the administration, social and economic impoverishment, as well as new opportunities in some cases. This complexity was the legacy bequeathed to the new Namibian government at Independence in 1990.

In Chapter 3, on ‘CBNRM and landscape approaches to conservation in Kunene Region, post-Independence’ (Lendelvo, Sullivan, Dieckmann), we review how national post-Independence policy supporting CBNRM has played out in Etosha-Kunene.²⁶ We also highlight a new impetus towards a “landscape approach” for conservation in communal areas, supported by emerging national policy—the Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill—which includes the possibility of establishing “contractual parks” (see Appendix), currently more often “People’s Parks” or “People’s Landscapes”. We review this emerging landscape conservation approach, drawing on interviews by Lendelvo with stakeholders and local people living and working in communities adjacent to ENP.

Communal land immediately to the west of ENP—comprised of the Kaokoland and Damaraland Communal Land Areas (Communal Land Reform Act, 5 of 2002)—is currently divided into a series of communal area conservancies, inhabited by pastoralist populations relying additionally on varying combinations of horticulture, gathering and hunting, and waged employment (see Chapters 5, 6, 7, 13, 14). The legal community conservation approach in Kunene Region is primarily based on agreed-upon boundaries for land designated as conservancies and community forests with local members. A new donor-funded impetus towards creating larger connected conservation areas that broaden access and benefits from natural resources is now noticeable. For example, and as noted above, there have been proposals in the past to establish a Kunene People’s Park that would connect the Hobatere, Etendeka and Palmwag Tourism Concessions,²⁷ although these were never formalised. Proposals for a People’s Park were reignited in 2018 with international support from conservation donors and the British royal family.²⁸ Present proposals for an Ombonde People’s Landscape and other landscape level initiatives are being implemented by the MEFT with the support of the Environment Investment Fund (EIF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and other agencies. Chapter 3 reviews the emerging landscape conservation approach, focusing on the Ombonde People’s

²⁵ Heydinger (2021)

²⁶ Sullivan (2002), Kimaro *et al.* (2015)

²⁷ KREA (2008), MET (2009)

²⁸ See <https://www.irdnc.org.na/women-for-conservation.html>; <https://www.irdnc.org.na/seen-on-the-banks-of-the-Hoanib-River.html>; <https://twitter.com/kensingtonroyal/status/1044861632436994048>

Landscape, comprised of the southern parts of Omatendeka and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies which sit in the Damaraland Communal Land Area. Drawing on interviews with stakeholders and local people in these two conservancies, the chapter explores “human-wildlife conflict”, climate change and integrated management of natural resources in conservancy land areas zoned for different types of use.

In Part II on the ‘Social lives of conservation in Etosha-Kunene, post-Independence’, we follow our historical overviews in Part I with a series of detailed case studies of how approaches to conservation have played out in Etosha-Kunene after 1990. The chapters here focus on the shifting land designations, boundaries and memberships constituting conservancy governance and resettlement farms for those displaced in part through the establishment of areas protected for nature conservation. In doing so, they tease out the complexities at play as communal-area and displaced residents have adjusted to, and engaged with, new post-Independence resource management circumstances. Critical here is how an array of state and non-state actors and organisations—including NGOs, donors, private sector investors, the MEFT and other government ministries—intersect with and determine possibilities and constraints for local circumstances.

In Chapter 4 on ‘Hai||om resettlement, legal action and political representation’, Ute Dieckmann explores the destiny of Hai||om after they were evicted from Etosha in the 1950s.²⁹ Differently to communities further west, Hai||om were not provided a “Homeland” through implementation of the 1964 recommendations of the Odendaal Commission, but instead were left without any land. They became landless farm labourers and often, after Independence, township dwellers, with very little means of subsistence (also see Chapters 15 and 16). A few found employment within ENP, which entailed a more secure life and, for the men at least, continuous, although severely changed, access to their former land. Since they did not live in designated communal areas, Hai||om had no opportunity to establish conservancies after Independence. Recognising the fate of the Hai||om in around 2007 at the time of the centenary celebrations of ENP, the government commenced some efforts to compensate them by purchasing several farms for their resettlement in the vicinity of the park. Since 2008, at least eight farms, seven of them bordering ENP in the south, were bought for the resettlement of Hai||om. Initially (around 2007), one of the primary target groups for resettlement was the Hai||om community still residing within ENP, of whom only a minority were employed. However, most of the Hai||om residents in ENP resisted their relocation at the start, fearing they would lose all access to the park, i.e. their ancestral land, once they had agreed to be resettled on the farms.

In 2015, with years of preparation and initiated by Hai||om still living in Etosha, a large group of Hai||om from various areas, dissatisfied with the resettlement approach by the government, launched a legal claim to parts of their ancestral land (mainly ENP).³⁰ Chapter 4 outlines these developments, paying attention to the rather ambivalent role played by the Hai||om Traditional Authority (TA). The chapter draws on long-term field research with Hai||om as well as employment by an NGO in Windhoek, supporting San and other marginalised communities. It also looks at recent developments and argues for the inclusion of Hai||om cultural heritage in the future planning and implementation of nature conservation and tourism activities in the Etosha area.

In Chapter 5 on ‘Environmentalities of Namibian conservancies: How communal area residents govern conservation in return’, Ruben Schneider examines how residents in communal areas in north-west Namibia experience, understand, and respond to their conservancies. Schneider offers a theoretically nuanced analysis drawing on philosopher Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality—i.e. practices of government or the ‘conduct of conduct’,³¹ working specifically with

²⁹ Dieckmann (2003, 2007)

³⁰ Koot & Hitchcock (2019), Dieckmann (2020)

³¹ Foucault (1991)

its ‘environmentality’ variant, i.e. the art of government in relation to environmental dimensions.³² Schneider thereby frames conservancies as localised global environmental governance institutions, which aim to modify local people’s behaviours in conservation- and market-friendly ways.³³ Based on year-long ethnographic fieldwork across four conservancies in Kunene Region, the chapter reveals how local communities culturally demystify, socially re-construct, and ultimately govern a global, neoliberal(ising) institutional experiment in return. It highlights divergent ways in which local people experience the pivots of the conservancy system characterised by benefits and a sense of ownership over natural resources. Confirming stark experiential discrepancies and distributional injustices, the chapter positions itself against a simplistic affirmation of the conservation dictum that ‘those who benefit also care’.

In contrast, the chapter argues that experiences of neoliberal incentives like ownership and benefits are a limited predictor of local conservation practices. The extent to which local people cooperate or resist conservation does not only depend on the global modes of governance that conservancies aim to localise, but are critically shaped by the local structures, desires, and agencies through which they operate on the ground. In the context of Namibian conservancies, this ‘friction’³⁴ between global and local ways of seeing and being in the world produces novel, hybrid environmentalities characterised in part by what political scientist Jean-François Bayart calls ‘the politics of the belly’.³⁵ Examining the nature and effects of this hybrid environmentality, the chapter explores how communal-area residents seek to opportunistically work the conservancy system to their maximum advantage. This situation highlights an accountability gap within conservancies which not only entrenches local inequalities but effectively transfers frictions between global and local environmentalities to the community level where they have the potential to develop into protracted intra-community conflicts. Importantly, though, any resources “captured” by communal area residents and negotiated within the membership of conservancies, can be understood as “leftovers” from dominant processes of resource appropriation and capital accumulation by more powerful state, NGO and private sector networks and investors. To conclude, the chapter argues that conservancies might no longer displace, but instead promote alternative environmentalities that may reflect Indigenous beliefs, intrinsic values, and non-dualistic ontologies (as considered in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15).³⁶ To the extent that neoliberal logics remain, the chapter calls for additional oversight, support, mediation and, if necessary, re-regulation of conservancies. As forewarned by both Foucault³⁷ and Elinor Ostrom,³⁸ if inequality is to be opposed, neoliberal environmentality has to be kept in check, irrespective of whether it works through global or local networks.

In ‘The politics of authority, belonging and mobility in disputing land in southern Kaoko’ (Chapter 6), Namibian researcher Elsemi Olwage continues the theme of how conservancies in Namibia’s north-western communal rangelands have been entangled with contestations over land and territory, since their onset and mapping from the late 1990s.³⁹ The focus of this chapter concerns the interwoven politics of authority, belonging and mobility in shaping “customary” land-rights in southern Kaoko. Olwage argues that ancestral land-rights need to be understood as a social and political rather than a historical fact, and one which is relationally established and re-established in practice, over time, and at different scales. The chapter draws on research conducted from 2014 to 2016 comprising a situational analysis of a land and grazing dispute in southern Kaoko, in and around Ozondundu Conservancy, north-east of Sesfontein. It shows how persons and groups

32 Luke (1999), Fletcher (2010, 2017)

33 Sullivan (2006)

34 Tsing (2005)

35 Bayart (2009)

36 Sullivan (2017), Dieckmann (2021a, b), Sullivan & Ganuses (2021)

37 Foucault (2008)

38 Ostrom (1990)

39 Also see Sullivan (2003), Pellis *et al.* (2015)

were navigating overlapping institutions of land governance during an extended drought period, in a context shaped by regional pastoral migrations and mobility. Olwage unpacks the politics of authority and belonging in integrating newcomers and migrating households within places, and illustrates the range of social, spatial, legal, political, normative, and discursive practices that different groups and persons drew on to legitimise, de-legitimise or contest such integration. She shows how conservancies and state courts have become key technologies mobilised to re-establish the interwoven authority and land-rights of particular groups. This development is connected with a post-Independence shift towards more centralised state-driven land governance, deeply rooted political fragmentation within most places, and land-grabbing by some migrating pastoralists. The chapter concludes by arguing for the importance of engaging socially legitimate occupation and use rights, and decentralised practices of land governance, towards co-producing ‘communal’ tenure and land-rights between the state and localities. This emphasis is critical for evidence-based decision-making and jurisprudence in a legally pluralistic context.

Chapter 7 by Diego Menestrey Schwieger, Michael Bollig, Elsemi Olwage and Michael Schnegg shifts from land and boundaries to consider the management of water in Etosha-Kunene. ‘The emergence of a hybrid hydro-scape in northern Kunene’ starts from the position that political ecology approaches, and recent theories on institutional dynamics, often neglect the materiality of infrastructures linked to resource management and its social-ecological implications. Specific technologies in a particular landscape have deep histories and “contain” sediments of past local-state engagements and place-based practices. This has been the case in north-western Namibia, where a unique ‘hydro-scape’ has emerged. Before the 1950s, the area was characterised by a scarcity of permanent water places and sources. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, the then-ruling South African administration drilled hundreds of boreholes in the region as part of its apartheid “homeland” policy and “modernisation” impetus.⁴⁰ Initially, local leaders and traditional authorities rejected the idea of water development through borehole drilling; many felt that once such a complex and expensive infrastructure was operational, the state was there to stay as the guarantor of the basic hydro-infrastructure for vast herds of livestock. The state’s representatives were blamed vociferously for the colonial state’s cunning way of luring people into such entrapping dependencies. Despite this situation, the state financed a burgeoning drilling programme. These water infrastructures—boreholes with different pumping technologies, such as wind and diesel pumps—were the medium for the state to root its power and presence in the region.

Since 1990, the independent Namibian state continued the borehole-drilling programme, especially as part of its drought-management approach. From the 1990s onwards, responsibility for maintaining the above-ground infrastructure of boreholes was transferred to local pastoral communities. The idea was that self-reliant communities would manage these boreholes sustainably and that the state would only become involved once major underground repairs were necessary. This “handover” process had to follow state-prescribed institutional designs to construct local institutional structures through which the boreholes could be collectively and sustainably managed. Hence, after establishing an entirely new hydro-infrastructure, the state expanded its reach by implementing the social infrastructure of this hydro-scape along with global blueprints for the sustainable management of communal goods. In the end, however, the material infrastructure opened the door for national and global governance regimes which increasingly permeated communities as the state began to “withdraw” through community-based management policies. These blueprints are not implemented verbatim by local agents, however. The result is a dynamic bricolage of institutions shaped by different practices, power relations, norms, and values. Nowadays, local communities reliably maintain water supply, but not always on an equitable basis for all users.

40 Bollig (2020: 162–70)

In the final chapter of Part II, Likeleli Zuvee Katjirua, Michael Shipepe David and Jeff Muntiferer turn to research with young people in north-west Namibia to ascertain their perceptions and understandings of “wildlife”. Chapter 8 on ‘Eliciting empathy and connectedness toward different species in north-west Namibia’ seeks to better understand how young members of communal-area conservancies in north-west Namibia know and perceive the value of selected indigenous fauna in these areas, alongside domestic livestock. It is set within a context in which tourism in Namibia is understood to greatly contribute to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with Namibia home to animals whose value is linked with their contemporary scarcity. Such species include black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*)—monitored and celebrated through organisations and campaigns such as Save the Rhino Trust and the Rhino Pride Campaign—as well as lion (*Panthera leo*) (considered in more depth in Part V), and oryx (*Oryx gazella*), all of which draw tourists to Namibia. Whilst these wild animals need to be protected at a global level, nationally they are also “Namibia’s pride”, notably being pictured on Namibian bank notes.

Geographically these animals are located in areas lived in by communities and managed as communal area conservancies. As outlined in Chapters 3 and 5, conservancies are intended to protect these animals whilst also catering and caring for the communities around them. One of the most important factors in protecting and preserving animals in conservancies is the participation of community members, for which awareness and knowledge about the importance of different animal species and their rarity needs to be shared and exchanged. In the survey ‘Connectedness with Nature Experience’ reported on in this chapter, the aim was to understand the experience young community members have with wild animals (indigenous fauna), in comparison to domestic animals. The animals used in the survey were rhinos, lions, oryx and goats (*Capra hircus*). The survey was intended to illustrate and illuminate how young community members understand the importance of these animals, and how they can benefit from them by assisting in their protection.

In Part III we engage more closely with Etosha-Kunene Ecologies to consider complex ecological factors and dynamics for conservation praxis and management. The focus here is also extended in Part V through three chapters focusing on lion ecology, monitoring and CBNRM in Namibia’s north-west.

We open Part III with a focus on vegetation and herbivory. Chapter 9, by Kahingirisina Maoveka, Dennis Liebenberg and Sian Sullivan, is entitled ‘Giraffes and their impact on key tree species in the Etendeka Tourism Concession, north-west Namibia’. It reports on a study that researched the impacts of browsing giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*) on the important pollinator trees *Maerua schinzii* (ringwood tree) and *Boscia albitrunca* (shepherd’s tree) within the Etendeka Concession area. Historically, giraffe populations have been amplified here through translocations designed to enhance tourism. The concession is located in mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) savanna, semi desert and savanna transition vegetation zones. Due to browsing by giraffe, *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* trees develop a distinctive shape with only a small, round canopy of leaves above a very high browse line. Giraffe are selective browsers, and the tallest land animal. Direct observation of giraffes feeding in the field indicates that they browse on leaves and twigs at different heights, depending on how high they can reach, with males browsing on tall trees and females seeming to prefer to bend their necks down to browse on lower trees and shrubs. The study also explored five different techniques to protect *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* from further browse damage by giraffes.

Chapter 10 by #Kibagu Heinrich Kenneth |Uiseb, entitled ‘Are mountain and plains zebra hybridising in north-west Namibia?’, focuses on interactions between two animal species critical to the ecosystems of Etosha-Kunene. Against a background of biodiversity loss due to anthropogenic changes to the environment, with human impacts observed from the modification of ecosystems to the extinction of species and the loss of genetic diversity, this chapter considers how human alteration of the physical landscape can affect gene flow by influencing the degree of contact between groups

of individuals of a species. Large herbivore species are increasingly restricted to fenced protected areas, a situation that limits their opportunities for dispersal and access to natural water sources. This restricted movement may lead to genetic consequences including the disruption of gene flow, inflation of “inbreeding”, and the loss of rare alleles supporting local adaptation and genetic fitness. Many protected areas located in Africa make use of artificial water points to provide water for wildlife in the dry season, which may alter wildlife distribution as some herbivores no longer need to migrate and become localised. This localisation can cause rapid population increase of water-dependent species such as zebra, increasing competition with more vulnerable low-density species and altering interspecies interactions.

Namibia's large protected area of ENP is home to two zebra species: mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*) (specifically the subspecies *E. z. hartmannae*) and plains zebra (*E. quagga*) (specifically the subspecies *E. q. burchellii*). Mountain zebra are restricted to dolomite ridges in the far western section of the park while plains zebra occur throughout the park. Fenced in 1973, artificial water points were also established from the 1950s to improve the wildlife-viewing experience for tourists. There are now over 100 perennial watering points in the Park, including artesian springs, contact seeps and 55 boreholes. Park boundary fences erected in the 1970s and extending to over 850 km also block wildlife dispersal beyond the park boundaries. Historically, the overlap in range of the two zebra species was limited, as plains zebra confined their movements to the southern and eastern edges of the Etosha Pan during the dry season, and to the open plains west of the Pan during the rainy season. Mountain zebra in the park are restricted to the rocky and mountainous western section of the park, and the west of the park into the escarpment, with plains zebra occurring at a higher density throughout the park compared to mountain zebra. Artificial provision of perennial water sources throughout the park has led to plains zebra expanding their range to overlap extensively with the mountain zebra range in the west. The extended overlap in range of these two previously geographically separated species in Etosha creates a potential conservation problem in the form of hybridisation between the two species. This chapter reviews what is known about the hybridisation of these two species, and considers implications for conservation and for future research.

Chapter 11 by Michael Wenborn, Roger Collinson, Siegfried Muzuma, Dave Kangombe, Vincent Nijman and Magdalena Svensson focuses on a key species for conservation in Etosha-Kunene, namely elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). Entitled ‘Communities and elephants in the northern highlands, Kunene Region, Namibia’, the chapter considers a unique population of this species dwelling specifically in the northern highlands between ENP and SCNP. These highlands are a remote, arid, mountainous landscape where elephants co-exist with rural communities. There is minimal published research on this population of elephants. As part of the authors' extended scoping for a research project on this population of elephants, they consulted with game guards from 10 conservancies in 2021 and 2022 on their knowledge of elephant populations: also carrying out analysis of Event Book data on human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidents reported in Orupupa and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies.

The community conservancy model has had much success in shaping local attitudes in Kunene Region and increasing the perceived value of wildlife (see Chapters 3 and 8). The findings from the consultation indicate, however, that these successes are being eroded by the increasing competition between local people and wildlife over resources, particularly in the context of drought years in north-west Namibia between 2013 and 2020 (also see Chapters 5 and 6). There was a particularly high loss of livestock during the droughts of 2018–2019, after which many local people in the highlands set up vegetable gardens as an alternative livelihood. The authors' consultations with game guards and analysis of Event Books have shown that this has increased incidents of HEC and brought some incidents nearer to villages, which is negatively impacting local attitudes to elephants. Many game guards employed by conservancies have worked here for 10 to 20 years and have detailed local ecological knowledge. We conclude that there is a strong case for

expanding the roles of game guards to strengthen the protection of the elephants in the northern highlands. Part of this effort would include training them as elephant rangers to guide tourists in the area, an assumption being that this would increase revenue to community conservancies and help enhance local perceptions of the value of wildlife.

In Part IV we return to historical circumstances, taking a deeper dive into the histories shaping present issues, opportunities and concerns for specific conservation areas across Etosha-Kunene. In ‘Historicising conservation and community territories in Etosha-Kunene’, we work from west to east across the area, engaging with varied cultural histories linked with these areas: the northern Namib that from 1971 has been designated as the SCNP (Chapter 12); the creation of the Palmwag Tourism Concession and implications for diverse local inhabitants (Chapter 13); what it means to live next to Etosha National Park (Chapter 14); experiences and consequences of eviction from ENP for Hai||om (Chapter 15); and the specific histories of Hai||om in connection with the resettlement farm of Tsintsabis to the east of ENP (Chapter 16).

In Chapter 12 on ‘Cultural heritage and histories of the Northern Namib / Skeleton Coast National Park’, by Sian Sullivan and Welhemina Suro Ganuses, we outline Indigenous cultural heritage and histories associated with the Northern Namib Desert. This chapter draws on two principal sources of information: 1) historical documents stretching back to the late 1800s; and 2) oral history research with elderly people who have direct and familial memories of using and living in areas now within the Park boundary. The research shared herein affirms that localities and resources now included in the Park were used by local people in historical times, their access linked with the availability of valued foods, especially *Inara* melons (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) and marine foods such as mussels.⁴¹ Memories about these localities, resources and heritage concerns, including graves of family members, remain lively for some individuals and their families today. These concerns retain cultural resonance in the contemporary moment, despite significant access constraints over the last several decades. Suggestions are made for foregrounding an understanding of the Northern Namib as a remembered cultural landscape, as well as an area of high conservation value; and for protecting and perhaps restoring some access to sites that may be considered of significant cultural heritage value. Such sites include graves of known ancestors and named and remembered former dwelling places. The material shared here may contribute to a diversified recognition of values for the SCNP with relevance for the new Management Plan⁴² that will shape ecological and heritage conservation practice and visitor experiences over the next 10 years.

Chapter 13 by Sian Sullivan, entitled ‘Historicising the Palmwag Tourism Concession, north-west Namibia’, moves slightly eastwards from the area considered in Chapter 12. The chapter focuses on a tourism concession area comprising more than 550,000 hectares of the Damaraland Communal Land Area (as delineated in the Communal Land Reform Act, 2002) in Kunene Region. To the west of this concession lies the SCNP. Otherwise, the concession is situated within a mosaic of differently designated communal lands to which diverse qualifying Namibians have access, habitation and use rights: namely, Sesfontein, Anabeb and Torra communal area conservancies on the concession’s north, north-east and southern boundaries, with Etendeka Tourism Concession to the east (see Chapter 9). Established under the pre-Independence Damaraland Regional Authority led by Justus ||Garoëb, Palmwag Concession lies fully north of the veterinary cordon fence (VCF), or ‘Red Line’, that marches east to west across Namibia. In the 1950s, however, the Red Line was positioned further north with part of the current concession comprised of a commercial farming area for white settler farmers, the expansion of which was associated with evictions of local and Indigenous peoples. The iterative clearance of people from this area also helped make possible the

41 Sullivan & Ganuses (2022)

42 MEFT (2021)

1962 western expansion of Etosha Game Park (see Chapter 2), and then the establishment of a large trophy-hunting concession between the Hoanib and Ugab rivers in the 1970s.

The Palmwag Concession today is particularly celebrated for sustaining the largest population of black rhino (*D. b. bicornis*) outside a protected area, an artefact of a colonial history in which imported firearms aided the removal of these animals throughout southern and central Namibia.⁴³ Tourism establishments now hosted by the concession are amongst those supplying income to the various communal area conservancies on the concession's boundaries. The area also continues to be considered critical as part of a connected conservation landscape and wildlife 'corridor' extending west from the iconic conservation territory of ENP towards the Skeleton Coast. Drawing on archival research, interviews with key actors linked with the concession's history, and heritage mapping with local elders through much of the concession's terrain, this chapter places the concession more fully within the historical circumstances and effects of its making. In doing so, competing and overlapping colonial, Indigenous and conservation visions of the landscape are explored for their roles in empowering specific types of access and exclusion. Envisioned, commodified and marketed today as a wilderness and 'Arid Eden', the chapter opens up ways that local and historical constructions of the landscape intersect with, and sometimes contest and remake, this vision.

Chapter 14 by Arthur Hoole and Sian Sullivan on 'Living next to Etosha National Park: The case of Ehi-Rovipuka', considers in depth the implications of being park-adjacent for ovaHerero pastoralists now living in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. Drawing on Hoole's PhD research in the mid- to late-2000s, the chapter focuses on three dimensions. First, some aspects of the complex and remembered histories of association with the western part of what is now ENP are traced, via a 'memory mapping' methodology with ovaHerero elders.⁴⁴ Second, experiences of living next to the park boundary are recounted and analysed, drawing on a structured survey with 40 respondents. Finally, extensive local knowledge of wildlife presence in and mobilities through the wider region is documented, and its relevance considered for conservation activities today. Although the research reported here was carried out some years ago, circumstances in Ehi-Rovipuka have changed rather little. Whilst the park boundary now prevents mobilities into western Etosha, peoples' histories of utilising, moving through, being born and desiring to be buried in the western reaches of the park remain.

In Chapter 15, "Walking through places": Exploring the former lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha', Ute Dieckmann engages with differing conceptions of the land that has become the protected area of ENP. Etosha National Park is Namibia's 'flagship park' and premier tourist attraction. By tourists, Etosha might be perceived either as an untamed wilderness or a large zoo; for scientists, it might represent an excellent research opportunity to test zoological hypotheses; and for farmers on the border farms, it might be a source of nuisance, its wildlife causing continuous trouble and at times economic loss. For Hai||om, Etosha represents part of their former lifeworld; an ecology of which they were an integral part. Their ancestors lived across the region alongside other Khoekhoegowab- and San-speaking peoples before the major immigrations of Bantu speakers to this area during the last 500 years of the second millennium.⁴⁵ White settlers increasingly occupied the surrounding area with the result that nearly all the land (south of the Red Line) formerly inhabited by Hai||om and others was occupied by settlers in the 1930s. The game reserve became the last refuge where Hai||om were able to practise a largely hunting and gathering lifestyle. Until the 1940s, Hai||om were regarded as 'part and parcel' of the game reserve. All in all, between a few hundred and one thousand Hai||om lived in the park until the early 1950s when they were evicted (for historical contextualisation see Chapters 2, 4 and 16). In the first half of the 20th century, they were mainly

43 Sullivan *et al.* (2021)

44 Hoole & Berkes (2010)

45 Suzman (2004: 223)

living from hunting and gathering, with some families keeping a few head of goats or cattle, combined with occasional seasonal work and temporary employment.

Drawing on a cultural mapping project in which Dieckmann was involved, combined with oral history and archival research, this chapter explores the lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha and their relations to the land, to other humans and to beyond-human inhabitants, prior to eviction. Tim Ingold's 'meshwork'⁴⁶ is drawn on as a suitable concept for capturing Hai||om's being-in-Etosha as being-in-relations. The picture emerging from the research is that of a dense web of land, kinship, human, animals, plants and spirit beings, an integrated ecology and an almost forgotten past which should, in line with this publication's aim, be acknowledged by and integrated into future nature conservation policies and practices.

Chapter 16, entitled 'History and social complexities for San at Tsintsabis resettlement farm, Namibia', by Stasja Koot and Moses ||Khumûb, continues with the theme of the eviction of Hai||om from ENP in 1954. After this event, many Hai||om San became farm workers. Having lost their lands under colonialism and apartheid to nature conservation and large-scale agriculture, most remained living in the margins of society at the service of white farmers, conservationists or the South African Defence Force (SADF). After Independence in 1990, group resettlement farms became crucial to address historically built-up inequalities by providing marginalised groups with opportunities to start self-sufficient small-scale agriculture (see Chapter 4). This chapter critically addresses the history of the Tsintsabis resettlement farm, just over a hundred kilometres east of ENP, where at first predominantly Hai||om (and to a lesser degree !Xun) were "resettled" on their own ancestral land, some as former evictees from ENP. The authors analyse the history of Tsintsabis in relation to two pressing, and related, social complexities at this resettlement farm, namely: 1) ethnic tension and in-migration; and 2) leadership. The chapter argues that the case of Tsintsabis shows the importance of acknowledging historically built-up injustices when addressing current social complexities. As with Chapters 4, 6, 12, 13 and 15, the chapter emphasises the importance of doing long-term "ethno-historical" research about resettlement so as to be able to better understand the contextual processes within which it is embedded.

In Part V, on 'People, lions and CBNRM', we return to the contemporary complexities of CBNRM highlighted in Parts II and III to consider specifically the frictions that may arise as increasing predator populations—considered a conservation success—may impinge on human settlement and livelihoods. In this section we share three chapters by authors working with and for Namibia's Lion Rangers Programme,⁴⁷ demonstrating how responses 'on the ground' are being developed and enacted to deal with this conservation complexity.

In Chapter 17 on 'Integrating remote sensing data with CBNRM for desert-adapted lion conservation', John Heydinger explains how Global Positioning System (GPS) data on lion movements can contribute to community-oriented conservation. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) takes place at the intersection of protecting and being-with nature (as also outlined in Chapters 3, 5 and 6). CBNRM of the desert-adapted lions presents an array of cultural and scientific challenges to local communities living alongside lions, often colliding with CBNRM principles. Among the most significant challenges to lion conservationists is rigorously monitoring lion movements in unfenced landscapes. Within the semi-arid and arid environments of north-west Namibia, monitoring challenges are compounded by low levels of information relevant to lion habitat-use and movement ecology in dryland areas. Technological advances in remote sensing, however, are creating new ways for researchers and wildlife managers to monitor wildlife and other natural resources. Drawing on remote sensing data collected via satellite-GPS collars affixed to lions, and via trail cameras placed in designated core wildlife areas within communal

46 E.g. Ingold (2011[2000])

47 <http://lionrangers.org/>

conservancies and government concessions, Heydinger discusses how remote sensing methods of carnivore monitoring are contributing to lion conservation on communal lands in Kunene.⁴⁸ He emphasises how these data are being incorporated into the Lion Rangers Programme, a CBNRM initiative in which trained community conservationists take responsibility for monitoring lions and managing human-lion conflict on communal lands. The goal is to integrate technologically sophisticated movement data with CBNRM principles and historically informed perspectives (including in Heydinger's other research⁴⁹), so as to catalyse community-centred management of lions on communal lands, and contribute to sustainable livelihoods and *in situ* lion conservation.

Chapter 18 by Matilde Brassine concerns the 'Lion Rangers' use of SMART for lion conservation in Kunene'. SMART is a Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool used to enable rapid collection and transfer of patrol data in order to assess Ranger activities in the field and monitor wildlife movements on an ongoing basis. In north-west Namibia, a small population of desert-adapted lions continues to survive alongside livestock farmers and communities living in conservancies, often resulting in human-lion conflict (HLC) in a context where livelihoods are already strained due to prolonged drought in the region, as well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁰ Recognising the urgent need to mitigate this conflict, in 2017 the MEFT drew up a strategy on a way forward in the form of the Human Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia (NW Lion Plan). The formation of the Lion Rangers Programme is part of this strategy. Lion Rangers are Community Game Guards selected by their communities and employed by their conservancies to monitor desert-adapted lions, and to prevent and respond to HLC incidents. They work closely with their communities to provide education and awareness about lions and lion movement. The SMART system was first implemented into the programme in September 2021. This chapter discusses how the SMART system supports decision-making regarding lion conservation and management at a community-level.

Uakendisa Muzuma in Chapter 19 closes this trio of chapters on community approaches to lion conservation in his discussion of 'Relationships between humans and lions in wildlife corridors through CBNRM in north-west Namibia'. Protected areas (PAs) are considered essential for conserving large carnivores. Large carnivores also exist outside PAs, however, and have shared landscapes with humans for millennia. Namibia's CBNRM programme has achieved some successes via tourism, the provision of meat for consumption, and hunting, its aim being to encourage the coexistence of wildlife and rural communities on communal land. Because the programme is built upon human-wildlife coexistence, however, human-lion conflict (HLC) is also present. This has been a pressing challenge, particularly regarding people's coexistence with dangerous animals such as lions (as documented for elephants in Chapter 11). Although the CBNRM programme has achieved initial success, less emphasis has been placed on understanding how humans, livestock and wildlife use shared landscapes. From a wildlife conservation perspective, one current cause for concern is the lack of monitoring of human settlement and livestock movements into areas zoned for wildlife in communal area conservancies (also see Chapters 3 and 6). This chapter discusses current research on remote sensing of lion and goat movement using satellite-GPS collars, focusing on understanding goat movement ecology within wildlife areas as designated by conservancies and their leaders. Information collected on goat movements within wildlife areas will be used to better manage the shared landscape in the perceived 'corridor' between ENP and SCNP. The research shared here thus focuses on the 'lion-goat space' to contribute to evidence-based goat spatial habitat use in communal area conservancies, so as to ensure appropriate deployments of HLC mitigation measures.

48 Also Heydinger (2023)

49 For example, Heydinger (2021)

50 Lendelvo *et al.* (2020)

Our concluding chapter on ‘Realising conservation in Etosha-Kunene’, by Ute Dieckmann, Selma Lendelvo and Sian Sullivan draws attention to some of the main threads forming the fabric of this volume. Etosha-Kunene is a region with both a shared history, which manifested itself in the proclamation of Game Reserve No. 2, and specific local cultural-ecological histories and dynamics. The regional research conveyed in this volume reveals changes through time in both nature conservation politics and practices in Namibia generally, and in Etosha-Kunene in particular. While at the turn of the 19th century, “game preservation” became necessary due to the reckless exploitation of wildlife by especially (but not only) European men interested in their own economic profit and prestige (Chapter 1), the conservation focus broadened during the course of the 20th century to include flora and fauna in conservation initiatives (Chapter 2). At the same time, human inhabitants became increasingly seen as detrimental to conservation efforts culminating in the “fortress conservation” model being employed in Etosha-Kunene with disastrous effects for former human inhabitants. This volume documents some of these historical processes and their effects (Chapters 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

With Independence, the politics of nature conservation moved away from the fortress conservation model to include local inhabitants in conservation management (Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 17, 18, 19). This process was not without pitfalls, however, with human-wildlife conflict being one of the challenges (Chapters 11, 17, 18, 19), institutional arrangements another (Chapters 5, 6, 7).

This volume also reveals stories of belongings, alongside negotiations about belongings, inclusions and exclusions. Be it zebras (Chapter 10), elephants (Chapter 11), lions (Chapters 17, 18, 19), livestock (Chapters 2, 8), Khoekhoegowab-speaking communities (Chapters 4, 12, 13, 15, 16), otjiHerero-speaking communities (Chapters 6, 14), hunters (Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15), or incoming settlers (Chapters 6, 16), our volume reveals a constant querying of who belongs where and when, and who has the power to decide (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).

This question of belonging is connected with the histories of shifting boundary-making and fencing. Boundaries of game reserves were defined on paper and on maps, and the boundaries of Etosha National Park were erected as fences in the landscape (Chapter 2). Boundaries were used to restrict mobility, to separate people from wildlife, and to disentangle constructed categories of people from each other, as well as to disconnect livestock north of the Red Line from livestock south of the Red Line. They were also used to claim land as private property, with recently instituted legal systems used to keep others out. Boundaries restricted access and dismembered socio-ecological systems.

We started our introduction with the question: how can the conservation of biodiversity-rich landscapes come to terms with the past, given historical contexts of social exclusion and marginalisation? We hope this volume will contribute to finding answers, by highlighting the complexities that need to be taken into account, and by describing practices already being enacted.

Our overall aim for this volume is thus to assist with generating ideas for the future design of conservation initiatives that more fully consider and integrate historical and cultural knowledge and diversity. We hope that the original detail shared in this volume, as well as the original combination of contributions in the book, is relevant for those involved with conservation and development work in Namibia, especially its north-west, whether they are conservation practitioners, academics in disciplines ranging from history to environmental science, policy-makers, or people living in the area. Many contributors to the book are directly involved in this world: we hope that they and their colleagues find the book of value in terms of bringing together material and reflections on the complex issues shaping “Etosha-Kunene”. Beyond Namibia, we also hope this book appeals to individuals and organisations involved with conservation more widely. Our volume provides a detailed and unusual combination of analyses regarding different dimensions of conservation circumstances: from historical contexts, to analysis of legal cases, to remote sensing. We hope this combination of analyses is relevant to conservation scholarship, policy and practice, particularly given that north-west Namibia is a focus for iterated conservation effort and concern, for the reasons laid out in this book.

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PART I

CONSERVATION HISTORIES IN ETOSHA-KUNENE

1. Etosha-Kunene, from “pre-colonial” to German colonial times

Sian Sullivan, Ute Dieckmann and Selma Lendelvo

Abstract

We outline “pre-colonial” and German colonial structuring of “Etosha-Kunene”, leading in the early 1900s to the institution of formal game laws and game reserves as key elements of colonial spatial organisation and administration. We review the complex factors shaping histories and dynamics prior to formal annexation of the territory by Germany in 1884. We summarise key Indigenous-colonial alliances entered into in the 1800s, and their breakdown as the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 decimated indigenous livestock herds and precipitated enhanced colonial control via veterinary measures and a north-west expansion of military personnel. A critical and collaborative Indigenous “uprising” in the north-west in 1897–1898—known variously as the Swartbooi or Grootberg Uprising—was met by significant military force, disrupting local settlement and use of the area stretching from south of Etosha Pan towards the Kunene River. It resulted in the large-scale deportation of inhabitants of the area, who were brought to Windhoek for mobilisation as forced labour for the consolidating colony. An intended outcome was the clearance of land for appropriation by German and Boer settler farmers, a process that also contributed to establishing a massive game reserve in Etosha-Kunene in subsequent years. The proclamation of “Game Reserve No. 2” in 1907 can be seen as the beginning of a long and varied history of formal colonial nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene, whose shifting objectives, policies and practices had tremendous influence on its human and beyond-human inhabitants.

1.1 Introduction¹

Part I of this volume provides an overview of historical circumstances that left their mark on the peoples and landscapes of “Etosha-Kunene” as a connected area of north-central and north-west Namibia. There are many ways in which we could disaggregate and periodise the history of environmental policy and nature conservation for this area. In this chapter—the first of three considering historical and contemporary factors shaping this broad area (see Chapters 2 and 3)—we focus first on the mid- to late-1800s (Section 1.2). Here we trace some of the complex shifts through multiple interactions and events that rather unexpectedly led to state colonisation by Germany through the territory’s formal annexation in 1884 (Section 1.3). This highly disruptive period of colonial reorganisation saw the emergence of the first colonial state efforts towards formal “game preservation” through various state laws, and the gazetting of a Game Reserve that included a very large part of Etosha-Kunene. For ease of reference, Figure 1.1 shows the locations of most of the places mentioned in this chapter.

1.2 Etosha-Kunene, prior to German colonisation

Given our emphasis in this volume on histories of conservation and conservation policy, we focus here on the growing impact of firearms and hunting on indigenous fauna, or so-called “game”

¹ Acknowledgements: We are grateful to Dag Henrichsen of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien for very helpful comments on a draft version of this chapter.

North America, and increasingly from Germany. Figure 1.2 shows the extent of travel in north-west Namibia undertaken by a selection of these actors.³ These individuals were interested in commercial opportunities, especially cattle for trading, ivory from elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) feathers, animal hides and guano found along the coast. They aimed to develop transport routes that would support their interests, and increasingly to acquire land and labour for their own commercial activities.

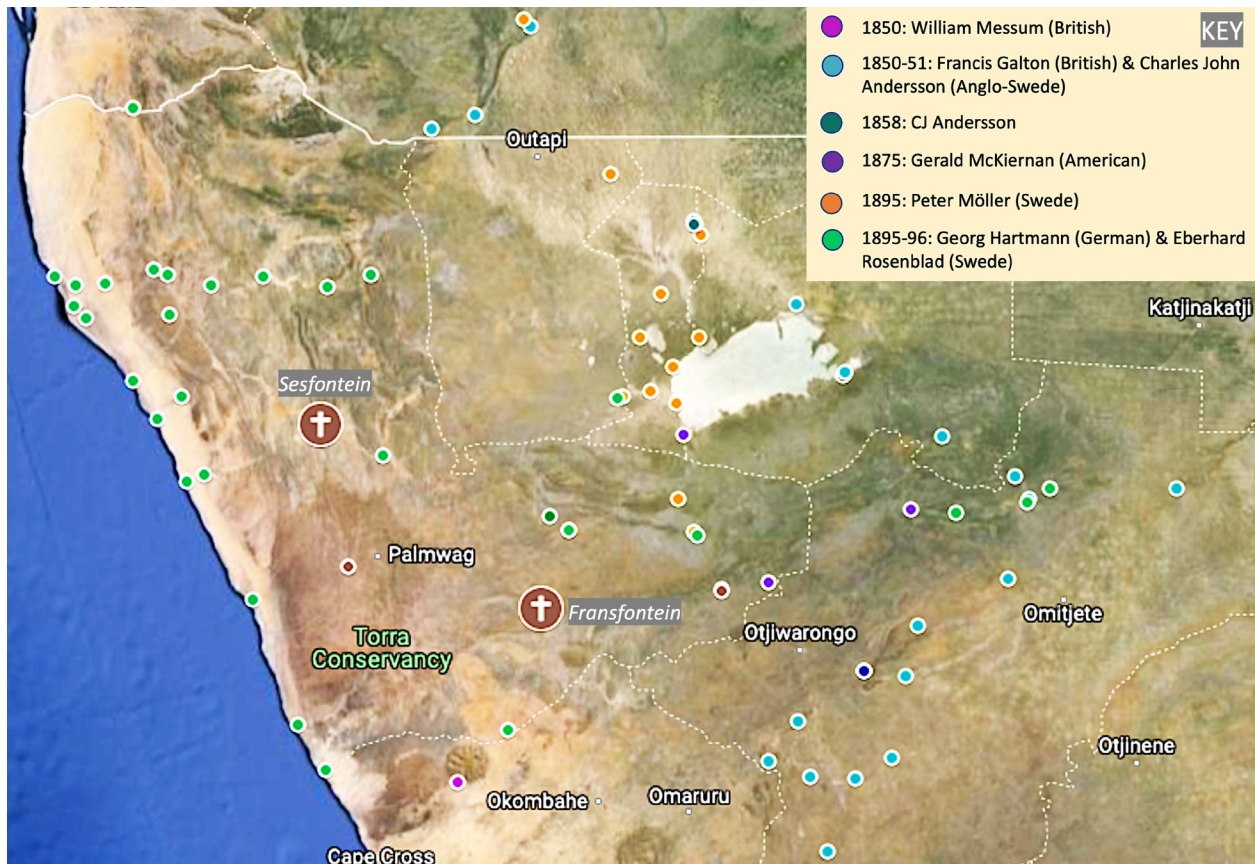


Fig. 1.2 Selected colonial journeys through Etosha-Kunene, prior to 1900. Prepared by Sian Sullivan using Google Maps: Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics. Full annotated map linked at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>, © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

These colonial-era travellers and traders were also curious about the natures and cultures they encountered. The collection of “natural history” specimens for review by growing scientific establishments in the metropole formed a focus of their efforts; as did the documentation and mapping of the peoples they encountered (Section 1.2.2). Whilst providing significant sources with which to understand early historical contexts, these narratives also need to be read carefully for the instrumentalising, objectifying and colonising assumptions they convey. In the latter part of the 1800s (building on earlier missionary enterprise in southern and central areas of the territory), expansion of especially the Rhenish and Finnish missionary societies occurred in conjunction with commercial and colonial acquisition in Etosha-Kunene.

The mid-1800s in southern Africa were already shaped by concerns regarding environmental damage and the decline of populations of species encountered in these lands (see Table 1.1 below)—especially associated with the decline of fauna due to commercial hunting.⁴ In 1850, at the Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) station at Otjimbingwe to the south of Etosha-Kunene, Francis Galton—a British explorer and later founder of eugenics—observed, for example, that hunter and trader Hans Larsen had in the preceding seven years ‘utterly shot off all the game’ in the Swakop (Tsoaxau) River area; and had also ‘shot a great many lions out of the Swakop’, making it ‘a much

3 Their journeys and observations have been mapped from the narratives they wrote at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>

4 Wallace (2011: 60–61); also Henrichsen (2011: 30)

safer place than it used to be to drive cattle in'.⁵ Referring to lions, Galton commented on 'how in a short time one or two guns would entirely exterminate them'.⁶ Indeed, in this pivotal mid-1800s moment, the introduction of firearms had an immense impact on wildlife in the territory that over the following 150 years would be governed as Deutsch-Südwestafrika, South West Africa, and formally as Namibia after 1990.⁷

These declines notwithstanding, in the mid-1800s Galton and his travelling companion—the Anglo-Swede Charles John Andersson—were able to observe large populations of diverse fauna as they travelled north-eastwards from the Swakop River towards Etosha Pan. In May 1851 they reached Otjikoto lake to the south-east of the Pan, finding 'wildlife in large numbers, although rhinoceros was rarely encountered'.⁸ They were apparently the first Europeans to record the existence of Etosha Pan, later forming the focus of Namibia's flagship protected area, Etosha National Park (ENP) (see Chapter 2). They saw a glimpse of Indigenous socioeconomic complexity in this area when they reached Omutjamatunda, now well-known as the tourism resort of Namutoni but then an important Ndonga (Ovambo) cattle-post and source of salt for trade north of the Kunene River:

[w]e got water at Otchando, and came to the first Ovampo cattle-post at Omutchamatunda [Namutoni]. Travelling on, we arrived suddenly at the large salt-pan of Etosha, which is about 9 miles across from N. to S., and extends a long way to the W. [...] This lake is impassable in the rainy season, but was perfectly dry when I saw it, and its surface was covered over in many parts with very good salt.⁹

Galton and Andersson were travelling in the company of Ndonga traders from north of Etosha Pan who in these years regularly exchanged 'iron spearheads, knives, rings, iron and copper beads' for Herero cattle further south; they also acquired copper mined by 'the San community living in the Otavi area to the southeast of Etosha Pan'.¹⁰ Ovambo of north-central Namibia additionally traded cattle, iron and copper items—and later muzzle-loading guns acquired from Portuguese to the north—for ostrich egg shells and ivory with ovaTjimba in the west: oral history refers to cattle-posts of Ovambo¹¹ kings in Kaoko in the north-west, probably drawing in raided cattle.¹² At Namutoni, Galton and Andersson observed 3–4,000 head of cattle, as well as springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) and zebra (*Equus quagga burchellii*), with Andersson giving an impression of lushness:

there is a most copious fountain, situated on some rising ground, and commanding a splendid prospect of the surrounding country. It was a refreshing sight to stand on the borders of the fountain, which was luxuriantly overgrown with towering reeds, and sweep with the eye the extensive plain encircling the base of the hill, frequented as it was not only by vast herds of domesticated cattle, but with the lively springbok and troops of striped zebras.¹³

Galton illuminates the broader new impacts of European trade in the territory at this time, estimating that some 8–10,000 head of cattle, and many more small stock, were being sent overland annually to the Cape.¹⁴ A significant rise in commercial hunting was also unfolding in these years, particularly for ivory traded northwards following 'the dissolution of the [Portuguese] government monopoly of the ivory trade' in 1834.¹⁵

5 Galton (1890[1853]: 35, 38–39)

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39

7 See Sullivan *et al.* (2021) for a detailed account of how the introduction of firearms decimated black and white rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis* and *Ceratotherium simum*) in the territory.

8 Rookmaaker (2007: 126–27)

9 Galton (1852: 151)

10 Siiskonen (1990: 76–79, 82–83, and references therein)

11 Note that authors use 'Ovambo' and 'Ovambo' to refer to oshiWambo-speaking peoples of north-central Namibia. 'Ovambo' is often used in older texts.

12 Siiskonen (1990: 84–85), Engoombe Kapeke in Bollig & Mbungu (1997: 202), Bollig (1997: 22), Rizzo (2012: 42)

13 Andersson (1861: 183–84)

14 Galton (1890[1853]: 68–70); also Lau (1994[1987])

15 Siiskonen (1990: 82)

By the 1860s, game stocks in southern Angola were depleted, encouraging interest south of the Kunene River.¹⁶ Kaokoveld in the north-west of the territory now known as Namibia supplied ivory to traders from the east in these years.¹⁷ The scale of hunting is illustrated by a figure of over 700 elephants estimated to have been shot by Canadian trader and ‘big-game hunter’ Frederick Green, between 1854 and 1876.¹⁸ Owambo kingdoms in north-central Namibia were also engaging in commercially oriented ivory hunting, with a rule that one of each pair of tusks hunted should become the property of the relevant king, such that leaders could accumulate ivory.¹⁹ By the late 1800s, entrepreneurial interest in ‘cattle, ivory, ostrich feathers and copper from the interior’ led to ‘[r]epresentatives of various merchant houses’ negotiating ‘concessions’ with local people, involving ‘[n]umerous traders of diverse nationalities’.²⁰

This hunting-based entrepreneurial activity was highly dependent on the specialist knowledge of local guides and hunters, with specific local actors in this enterprise having significant impacts on later historical developments in the territory. German missionaries Carl Hugo Hahn and Johannes Rath, travelling together with hunter Frederick Green, deployed Hai||om “Bushmen” as guides in the 1850s;²¹ and the American trader Gerald McKiernan, travelling in the area between 1874–1879, also reports that Hai||om acted as guides, trackers and messengers for elephant hunts.²² Swedish trader Axel Eriksson employed ‘Hottentot’²³ and Griqua hunters’, spending ‘some years as an elephant and ostrich hunter’, and making ‘a good profit out of it’.²⁴

The life of Vita “Oorlog” (i.e. “war”) Thom (also “Harunga”²⁵) is illustrative here. Born in 1863 into ‘the matrilineage of a prominent Herero family at Otjimbingwe on the Swartkop [Swakop] River’ with a Tswana father²⁶ called Tom Bechuana (a guide of Galton’s),²⁷ Vita Thom became involved in commercial hunting in central and northern Namibia with Andersson and Eriksson.²⁸ In 1917, he recounted to Major Charles N. Manning, the first Resident Commissioner of Owamboland in the immediate post-German colonial period, that:

[w]hen old enough to shoot I went with my father [Tom Bechuana] under [Frederick] Green the hunter elephant shooting on OKOVANGO [sic] RIVER thence ONDONGA under OVAMBO Chief KAMBONDE where we met hunter [Axel] ERICKSON [Eriksson] known as KARAVUPA. My father had been with Green and Missionary Hahn at Ondonga before when Chief NANGORO tried to kill them [in 1857].²⁹ Erickson, my father and I went to OVAKUANYAMA country and Green went South again.³⁰

16 Rizzo (2012: 41), Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63)

17 Rizzo (2012: 41)

18 Wallace (2011: 66)

19 Hayes (1998: 181)

20 JHA Kinahan (2000: 19); also Henrichsen (2010: 98)

21 Hahn & Rath (1859: 299–300)

22 McKiernan (1954: 59–60)

23 This term is considered derogatory (Elphick 1977: xv). No offence is meant by its occasional inclusion when quoting directly from historical texts, in which the term denotes a specific ethnic and cultural identity for Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples, usually pastoralists known today as Nama or Khoe/Khoikhoi. It is included only when quoting directly from historical material, with the intention of drawing into focus the past presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples who are often marginalised or negatively presented in work concerning north-west Namibia.

24 Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: 61); also Rizzo (2012: 33, 37)

25 *Ibid.*, p. 53

26 Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 14), Rizzo (2012: 54)

27 NAN ADM 156 W 32 General Kaokoland report [and ‘Manning Map’] by Major Manning 15.11.1917: 2.

28 Rizzo (2012: 53–54)

29 Vita Thom is referring here to a serious skirmish with the AaNdonga Chief Nangolo who deployed warriors with bows and arrows to prevent their departure. Men accompanying Hahn at the rear of their party were attacked; Green shot dead a warrior who appears to have been the brother-in-law of Chief Nangolo; the party was nearly encircled, retreating only when the use of firearms and especially Green’s elephant rifle put their attackers to flight, causing a number of Nangolo’s men fall, including his son (Lau/Andersson 1987: 90–93; Siiskonen 1990: 99–100).

30 Statement taken by Major C.N. Manning at “Zesfontein” (Sesfontein), Kaokoveld, in the presence of Lt. Olivier (the officer in charge of the expedition and patrol who previously was an official of native affairs for three years in the Transvaal), Manning Diary Notes 23, 26.8.1917, 2nd M.C. from Native Chief Vita, alias OORLOG or ORO, on 19.8.1917, National Archives of Namibia.

Sometime later Tom Bechuana and his son Vita Thom left Otjimbingwe due to conflicts between Nama/Oorlam³¹ and ovaHerero leadership in central Namibia, travelling northwards³² where they would have a strong effect on local politics (also see Chapter 7).

In the 1870s, hunter James Chapman is known to have made ‘several hunting trips to Kaoko and western Owambo’,³³ whilst Transvaal Boers (“Trekboers”³⁴) moving into Kaoko also participating in commercial hunting.³⁵ In these years prior to formal colonisation (see Section 1.3) influential traders such as Charles John Andersson and Frederick Green took advantage of divisions between different Indigenous “groups”. In the 1860s, for example, they enlisted ‘Herero aid to end Oorlam-Nama control over the trade routes’, shifting the balance of power ‘from among local pastoralists to the traders themselves’, who ‘established permanent trading centres to exploit the country’s resources’ from which they made ‘enormous profits’.³⁶

In the late 1870s, William Coates Palgrave, Special Commissioner for the British Cape Colony to “Damaraland” and “Great Namaqualand”, makes reference to ‘competing claims for Kaoko by Swartbooi and Herero leaders in central Namibia’.³⁷ “Damaraland” in these years was a commonly used name for the swathe of central Namibia into which ovaHerero pastoralists had moved in the late 1700s from southern Angola and north-east Kaokoveld.³⁸ By 1876, commercial European hunters and traders were known to travel from Kaokoveld in the west to Ongandjera in the Uukwambi area of ‘Owamboland’.³⁹ Kamaherero, the ovaHerero leader based in Okahandja, stated in this year a wish that all hunting should cease whilst Palgrave was absent in the Cape because ‘[p]eople go into the hunting veldt, and live there permanently, and so drive away all the game, and we suffer in consequence’; although Palgrave resisted this proposal.⁴⁰

In the presence of Palgrave, Kamaherero and other ovaHerero captains—with the help of English trader and prospector Robert Lewis⁴¹—mapped their claim to a huge area of the territory, minimising the presence of Indigenous Sān, Damara/!Nūkhoen and Nama: see Figure 1.3. They reportedly ‘set aside a tract of country for a “Reserve” for the Government’,⁴² including ‘the whole Kaokoveld and the west coast as far [south] as the level of Rehoboth, as well as part of Ovamboland’.⁴³ In doing so, they indicated that these lands were not considered central for ovaHerero livelihoods at this time, given relocations south by *ovahona* (wealthy herders)—such as the well-known Mureti who moved to the Omaruru area in 1861.⁴⁴ Palgrave reports that the inhabitants of the so-called ‘Damara

31 Oorlam Nama were Khoekhoe/Nama who in the Cape Colony had acquired horses, firearms, wagons, the Dutch language and Christianity (Lau 1994[1987]; Dederling 1997; Wallace 2011).

32 Rizzo (2012: 54)

33 *Ibid.*, p. 36

34 In the wake of the abolition of slavery in the 1830s and the new freedoms of “coloured” peoples of the Cape (under Ordinance 50 of 1828), several thousand “Trekboers” ‘abandon[ed] their farms and settlements in the Cape to embark on their famous Great Trek’: some pushed into Nama lands south of the Orange/Gariep [!Garib] River, contributing to the movement of Nama northwards over the Orange (Olusoga & Erichsen 2010: 23); others moved east to the Transvaal, and in the 1870s trekked west across the Kalahari towards present-day Grootfontein in Namibia, and thence to north-west Namibia and southern Angola (Rizzo 2012: 37).

35 *Ibid.*

36 JHA Kinahan (2000: 19) after Lau (1994[1987]: 143); also Siiskonen (1990) and Henrichsen (2011: 128–29)

37 Reviewed in Rizzo (2012: 29)

38 Historically, the ethnonym “Dama-ra” is based on an exonym, i.e. an external name for a group of people, “Dama” being the name given by Nama for darker-skinned people generally (with “-ra” ‘referring to either third person feminine or common gender plural’ (Haacke 2018: 140). Since Nama(qua) pastoralists were often those whom early European colonial travellers first encountered in the western part of southern Africa, the latter took on this application of the term “Dama”. This usage gave rise to a confusing situation in the historical literature whereby the term “Damara”, as well as the central part of Namibia that in the 1800s was known as “Damaraland”, tended to refer to cattle pastoralists known to themselves as ovaHerero. The terms “Hill Damaras” (also “Berg-Dama”, “*!hom* Dama” and the derogatory “klip kaffir”) and “Plains Damaras” (also “Cattle Damara” and “*Gomadama*”) were used to distinguish contemporary Damara !Nūkhoen (i.e. Khoekhoegowab-speakers) from speakers of the Bantu language otjiHerero.

39 Siiskonen (1990: 123, 176)

40 Stals (1991: 45, 48)

41 Henrichsen (2010: 101)

42 Stals (1991: 49)

43 Esterhuysen (1968: 17); also Stals (1991: 49–50), Henrichsen (2011: 325)

44 Stals (1991: 36)

Reserve’ area on Figure 1.3 ‘consist of Berg Damaras, Bushmen and Namaquas’: estimating ‘Berg Damaras’ [≠Nūkhoen] to number around 30,000, of which half live in ‘the Reserve’; ‘their claims to the land [...] disregarded by the Namaquas as well as by the Hereros’—although Okombahe was ‘granted to them by the Hereros’ around 1873 ‘upon the urgent representations of the missionaries’.⁴⁵ Palgrave observes that ‘there are already in Damaraland a number of people [Europeans] who wish to hire land [e.g. in the ‘Damara Reserve’] and only wait for some guarantee that the terms of their leases will be respected’.⁴⁶ Palgrave estimated the different population groups in ‘Damaraland’ as follows: ‘Herero or Cattle Damaras’ 85,000; ‘Houquain or Berg Damaras’ (≠Nūkhoen) 30,000; ‘Bushmen’ 3,000; ‘Namaquas’ 1,500; ‘Bastards’ (Basters) 1,500; ‘Europeans and other Whites (not including Boers) 150.’⁴⁷ Swartbooi/‘Khau-goas [||Khau-|gôan] or Young Red Nation’ under Abraham Zwartbooi, defined as ‘pure Namaquas’, were estimated at 1,000.⁴⁸

The growing power and influence of Europeans was also contested and attacked. For example, in 1864 a miner, hunter, and trader called H. Smuts working for Andersson—as well as white hunters Robert Lewis and J. Todd—were robbed in Kaokoveld by an Oorlam Nama individual known as ‘Sammel’ (Samuel) and associates.⁴⁹ Formerly a subject of Jonker Afrikaner—the Oorlam leader who dominated politics in central Namibia in the mid-1800s—Sammel had become established ‘on a high mountain called Otjironjupa⁵⁰ situated about 80 miles NNE of Otjimbingwe’, as recounted in the journal of the Swedish traveller and hunter Thule Gustav Een.⁵¹ By the 1870s, however, the balance of power was shifting towards European traders. Boer and Portuguese traders and hunters in Kaoko and southern Angola, with firearms and ox wagons, started to crowd out the African/Oorlam presence.⁵² When Catholic missionary Carlos Duparquet reached western Etosha in 1879, he thus met ‘numerous [commercial] hunters at places such as Otjivazandu [Otjovasandu] and Ombombo’⁵³ (see Chapter 14).

Alongside hunting and trading influences was a growing interest in establishing mission stations in the north. In late July of 1857, for example, trader and hunter Frederick Green, in the ill-fated expedition to Ondonga mentioned above, included Rhenish Missionaries Hahn and Rath who were seeking ‘new mission fields’ beyond ‘Damaraland’.⁵⁴ The Trekboer presence had become increasingly significant in these years, with around one hundred Afrikaner Dorstland/Thirstland trekkers travelling with ox wagons through Nyae Nyae in the Kalahari towards Angola, via Kaokoveld springs such as Kaoko Otavi.⁵⁵ Their circumstances were often vulnerable. In 1879, Trekboer Gert Alberts led a small mounted party down the valley of the Hoarusib River to the sea in an attempt to collect supplies gathered in response to an appeal by trader Axel Eriksson: becoming the first white men to traverse the Kaokoveld from east to west.⁵⁶ In this decade ‘business with ivory [and cattle] from the northern areas both to Mossamedes and to Walvis Bay flourished’, although ‘traders complained that there was no longer enough ivory and cattle to buy in Owambo’.⁵⁷ A published return of 40,000 lbs of gunpowder and 300,000 cartridges shipped through Walvis Bay in 1879–80 illustrates the scale of inland hunting:⁵⁸ “game” was considered exhausted in central

45 Palgrave (1969[1877]: 50–51)

46 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

49 Rudner & Rudner (2004: 61–62)

50 Presumably Otjozondjupa (Waterberg), also known as !Hos.

51 Rudner & Rudner (2004: 61–62)

52 Bollig (1997: 15)

53 Rizzo (2012: 36)

54 Hayes (2009: 242)

55 Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 41), Suzman (2017: 82)

56 Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 41–42)

57 Rizzo (2012: 40, 42–43), the latter point based on McKittrick (2002: 55); also see Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63) referencing Siiskonen (1990)

58 JHA Kinahan (2000: 19) drawing on Cape of Good Hope (1881: 101)

Clearly colonial-era activity caused observable damage to wildlife populations in these years, providing impetus for the establishment of formal conservation policy in the Cape Colony (and elsewhere): see Table 1.1.⁶¹ Although opposed by Kamaherero, in August 1878 Palgrave introduced ‘hunting and trading licences to defray the proposed expenses of the [Cape Government Walvis Bay] magistrate’: initially welcomed by traders on the understanding that ‘they would be protected by government’.⁶² These rising concerns and accompanying legislation provide additional context for the later impetus to formalise state wildlife protections in Deutsch Südwestafrika, as considered in Section 1.3.3.

Table 1.1 Emerging formalisation of environmental concern and associated protection policies in the Cape Colony and elsewhere, mid- to late-1800s.

Year	Cape Colony	Elsewhere	Source
1820s		Zulu leader Shaka sets aside a game reserve in Umfolozi district of Zululand	Carruthers 1995: 7
1822	Proclamation 21 March 1822 brings in ‘sophisticated hunting restrictions’, providing ‘for certain closed seasons, special protection for elephant, hippopotamus [<i>Hippopotamus amphibious</i>] and bontebok [<i>Damaliscus pygargus</i>], restrictions on killing pregnant and immature animals, [and] stringent anti-trespassing provisions’; and an ‘embryonic’ state game reserve is established at Groenekloof near Malmesbury		Carruthers 1995: 8
1846	Ordinance passed for preservation of the Cape Flats and Downs (led by Austrian surgeon and unpaid ‘Cape Botanist’ Dr Ludwig Pappe)	In the Transvaal, legislation permits white settlers to hunt for own consumption	Carruthers 1995: 7
1851		A report presented at the British Science Association annual meeting highlights the economic consequences of tropical forest destruction, stimulating colonial conservation efforts	Grove 1988: 27
1850s	The first ‘Conservancies’ are set up for forests in the George region of the Cape		Grove 1988: 25
1856	State game reserve established at Knysna		Carruthers 1995: 8

⁶¹ See, for example, the Palgrave Commissions in Stals (1991).

⁶² Esterhuysen (1968: 21–22)

1858	Government Notice 263 is issued concerning the 'Preservation of Elephants and Buffaloes', formalising 'a latent (and mainly urban) interest in the protection of the remaining isolated population of large mammals in the South Cape forests, which had been heavily reduced by ivory hunting'	The first hunting legislation is passed for Transvaal as a whole ('Law for the improved regulation of the hunting of elephant and other wild animals in the South African Republic), intended to 'ensure a sustainable yield and thus to perpetuate the economic welfare and security of the state', whilst also controlling and restricting 'African access to wildlife'	Grove 1988: 27 Carruthers 1995: 12
1858	First state Game Reserves established in Africa, in the Knysna and Tsitsikamme forests		Grove 1988: 27
1862	Serious drought affects the Cape, coinciding with appointment as second Cape Colonial Botanist of John Croumbie Brown (from Scotland) with strong views and Scottish Romantic proclivities towards environmental conservation		Grove 1988: 28
1864		G.P. Marsh publishes <i>Man and Nature</i> , 'widely held to have stimulated the initial growth of the conservation and national park movement in the United States'	Grove 1988: 32
1870		Law Number 10 of 1870 in the Transvaal creates the context for state gamekeepers to be employed when local demand required this, to police the law and with powers of arrest and to collect fines; more restrictions imposed on African hunters, and trapping outlawed	Carruthers 1995: 13
1876		The Whitehall government (UK) seeks to 'obtain information on existing models of game and wildlife protection legislation' from all colonies and some non-colonial territories, with involvement by Kew Gardens, Cambridge University and the British Association, stimulating 'centralised encouragement of conservation ideas'	Grove 1988: 32

1880		In Natal a ‘Commission to enquire into and report upon the extent and condition of the forest lands in the colony’ publishes a report surveying conservation literature and methods throughout the colonies, making interventionist recommendations on several fronts, especially regarding ‘the rapid gazettement of forest reserves and the promotion of exotic-tree planting policies’	Grove 1988: 33
1886	The Cape Act for the Preservation of Game becomes the first Cape Colony legislation for game conservation		Mackenzie 1988: 56
1888	The Cape Colony Forest and Herbage Preservation Act no. 18 is modified as the Forestry Act no. 22 to become ‘the most comprehensive form of conservation legislation passed in British colonies during the nineteenth century’		Grove 1988: 26
1891		The Cape’s Act for the Preservation of Game (1886) is extended to the British South Africa Company (“Rhodesia”) by Proclamation of the High Commissioner	Mackenzie 1988: 56
1894		Pongola Game Reserve established in the Transvaal	Carruthers 1995: 19

1.2.2 Cataloguing and Mapping

Alongside the processes of commercialisation and extraction documented in Section 1.2.1—with their corresponding impacts and causes for concern—the mid- to late-1800s were notable for the time, energy and resources devoted by many travellers to Etosha-Kunene to tracking down, killing and preparing natural history specimens for collections later housed in museums elsewhere, often in their home countries. Charles John Andersson’s first collections, for example, ‘including about 500 bird-skins and 1 000 insects’,⁶³ were brought by Galton to England in 1852. More insects were donated to the South African Museum in 1860, and the rest of his collections are housed in Swedish museums and the Nottingham Museum in the UK.⁶⁴ Swedish trader Axel Eriksson created a large collection of bird specimens from the territory, mostly donated to the municipal museum in his home town of Vänersborg, which as a result hosts the world’s largest exhibition of Namibian birds.⁶⁵ A large collection of insect specimens was also donated by Eriksson to the South African Museum in Cape Town, and a large number of bird skins collected by him are currently housed in Uppsala’s

⁶³ Rudner & Rudner (1974: 188)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 188–89

⁶⁵ Rudner & Rudner (2006), Johansson (2007)

1.2.3 Khoekhoegowab and otjiHerero speakers in north-west Namibia, mid-to late 1800s: Revisiting the “*ovaKuenta* wars”

A key characterisation of north-west Namibia from the 1850s onwards is of ‘marauding bands’⁷² of Oorlam Nama commandos with firearms—referred to with the otjiHerero exonym *ovaKuenta*⁷³—raiding the livestock of ‘Bantu-speaking pastoralists of Kaokoland’.⁷⁴ Vita Thom, the Tswana-Herero guide to European hunters mentioned above, thus reports to Manning in Sesfontein in 1917:

before my sons were born (about 30 years ago? CNM. [i.e. late 1880s]) an OVATSHIMBA named MUHONA KATITI being driven out from Kaokoveld by Hottentots came to me in Angola with his people for protection. He had nothing and I gave him cattle and small stock also a blanket. He wears no clothing like us. I got Portuguese authority for him to live near me. He got rich and left me to go to TSHABIKWA in Angola.⁷⁵

This period of the 1800s, and how it is understood and conveyed, arguably remains a determining factor into contemporary times, underlying frictions arising in the context of post-Independence conservation praxis in Etosha-Kunene.⁷⁶ For this reason, this history will be considered in some depth here. It also provides critical background for the emergence of Indigenous resistance in the north-west as German colonisation took hold in the 1890s, as outlined in Section 1.3.2.

In around the 1700s (i.e. seven to 10 generations from the mid-1990s, assuming 25 years per generation), oral history reported by anthropologist Michael Bollig indicates that otjiHerero-speaking peoples began trekking westwards down the Kunene River, reportedly prompted by drought.⁷⁷ They were migrating from a hill in southern Angola called Okarundu Kambeti: moving into hills on either side of the Kunene⁷⁸ that, like the Orange River, is referred to as !Garib by Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples.⁷⁹ Cattle and sheep are described as coming from the north, and goats from the south, the pastoral economy including hunting, gathering—especially of *Hyphaene petersiana* palm fruits, *Cyperus fulgens* corms (*ozoseu*) and honey—but without agriculture until the end of the 19th century,⁸⁰ perhaps following interactions with immigrating Trekboers. Bollig states that ‘these early migrants did not enter an unpopulated area or an area only thinly populated by foragers (presumably of Khoisanid origin)’, but according to oral testimony ‘met with other pastoralists [...] rich in livestock and culturally akin to themselves’.⁸¹ In current strategies to claim “Kaokoveld”, it is asserted that this ‘pre-Kuenta War society was dominated by *ovahona* (rich and powerful men) such as Kaoko’—reportedly ‘the giver of the name for the entire region’—as well as ‘Kaupanga and Mureti in northern and eastern Kaokoland, Tjikurundjimbi in the western parts and Nokauua in the southern parts’; although there were reportedly ‘few *ovahona*’ and ‘many people had few livestock’.⁸² Cattle raiding was a known feature of the regional livestock economy. A significant raiding event remembered in oral histories with pastoralists of north-east Kaokoveld is recorded as the ‘War of the Shields’: cattle were seized by oshiWambo-speaking ‘Ovahuahua’ from the north, the raids named as such because these warriors ‘protected their bodies with shields against the arrows of the Herero’.⁸³

⁷² Owen-Smith (1972: 32–33)

⁷³ Wilmsen (1989: 92), Bollig & Mbunguha (1997), Rizzo (2012: 47), Heydinger (2023)

⁷⁴ Bollig (1998: 164)

⁷⁵ Statement taken by Major C.N. Manning at Zesfontein, Kaokoveld from Native Chief Vita, 19.8.1917, National Archives of Namibia.

⁷⁶ Sullivan (2003), Pellis (2011), Pellis *et al.* (2015), Mumbuu (2023)

⁷⁷ Bollig (1997: 13)

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Welhelmina Suro Ganuses pers. comm., Swakopmund, 27.9.2023.

⁸⁰ Bollig (1997: 13–14)

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

⁸² *Ibid.* See Friedman (2014[2011]: chs. 8 & 9) for a detailed discussion of competing ancestral claims and associated genealogical narratives informing establishment of the Kaoko, ovaTjimba and Vita Thom Royal House Traditional Authorities in contemporary times. Also see Chapters 6 and 7.

⁸³ Bollig (1997: 15), Katjira Munionbara in Bollig & Mbunguha (1997: 221). Elsewhere, the descriptor “Battle of the Shields” refers to ovaHerero conflict with Tswanas using shields, who moved east to west into territory that had

This regional herding and raiding economy becomes shaped in the mid- to late 1800s by northwards moving Indigenous Swartbooï (!Khaugôan) and Topnaar (!Gomen) Nama, often framed very negatively in contemporary literature. Echoing to some extent a 1953 narrative by popular author Lawrence Green, in 1972 well-known conservationist the late Garth Owen-Smith writes, for example, that:

[i]n the Herero/Nama wars of the last century, most of the Kaokoveld natives (Herero) lost their cattle and became known as the OvaTjimba. [...] In the second half of the nineteenth century, marauding bands of Topnaar and Swartbooï Nama came to Sesfontein where they settled after driving out the Herero and subjugating the Damara [≠Nūkhoen]. In the following years the once considerable herds of cattle, belonging to these Nama, have been depleted by disease and drought and today they rely largely on crops irrigated from fountains at Sesfontein and Anabib [Anabeb].⁸⁴

Recent analyses often repeat this description, for example:

as early as the 1850s, Oorlam commandos engaged in bloody stock raids in Kaokoveld, where the arid and rugged environment kept ovaHerero pastoralists decentralised and thus unable to mount a common defence. These raids pushed Kaokoveld ovaHerero as far north as Portuguese Angola [from where they had moved, some decades previously]. Among these raiders were the Swartboois who having moved north from near present-day Swakopmund, desired access to the large ovaHerero cattle herds.⁸⁵

The so-called “ovaKuenta” actors in these events tend to be standardised as ‘the Swartboois of Franzfontein and the Topnaar of Sesfontein’.⁸⁶ ‘Access to the Kaokoveld’ is stated to have been controlled from the 1850s ‘well into the 1890s’ ‘by the well-armed Swartboois and Topnaar commando groups from their settlements at Sesfontein and Fransfontein’, these commandos also ‘preying upon elephants and trading ivory’.⁸⁷ This violent raiding economy is described as being led from Sesfontein in particular, focusing on key places such Kaoko Otavi further north.⁸⁸ OtjiHerero-speaking pastoralists were reportedly pushed into an ‘exodus’ across the Kunene, and a retreat into a foraging ‘Tjimba’ lifestyle in the Baynes Mountains,⁸⁹ ‘later returning to NW Kaokoland in 1920 as the Himba pastoralists’.⁹⁰ As ‘refugees’ requesting assistance north of the Kunene, from where ovaHerero pastoralist families had previously moved into Kaokoveld, they were named ‘Ovahimbe’ meaning ‘beggars’, the term now used as the ethnonym ‘Ovahimba’.⁹¹ Others reportedly moved southwards to Omaruru and Waterberg, or eastwards to Owambo.⁹² The consolidating and militarised power of the Tswana-Herero Vita Thom and his associates in the raiding economy of southern Angola and north-east Kaokoveld constituted an additional factor, stimulating later movements south-westwards by otjiHerero-speaking pastoralists.⁹³

been claimed by ovaHerero, after 1820 and prior to Jonker Afrikaner (Kakuuoko) becoming established in the vicinity of Windhoek (A. Kaputu in Heywood *et al.* 1985: 91–92).

84 Owen-Smith (1972: 32–33), Green (1953[1952]: 38–39, 46)

85 Heydinger (2023: 90–91); also Bollig (1998: 164, 2009: 330) and Owen-Smith (2010: 52)

86 Hartmann (1897: 137), Bollig (1997: 11, 13). Note that the place name tended to be spelt ‘Franzfontein’ during the German colonial period, but ‘Fransfontein’ later on.

87 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63); also Bollig (1997: 15–16)

88 Rizzo (2012: 33)

89 Bollig (1997: 16)

90 Powell (1998: 21) after Owen-Smith (1972: 32), Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 57–58) and Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 14)

91 Bollig (1997: 16–17)

92 Rizzo (2012: 50–51)

93 *Ibid.*, p. 54. Oral history interviews by S. Sullivan and W.S. Ganuses confirm this particular narrative. Ruben Sanib and Sophia |Awises (Mai Go Ha, 24.10.2014) described how ‘Oloxa’ [Oorlog/Vita Tom] chased otjiHerero-speakers southwards from a place they referred to as ≠Gâi≠gâisoma ‘behind Opuwo’. Negotiations with the Nama leadership in Sesfontein led to those fleeing Oloxa to settle at ≠Gubitas west of Sesfontein, now referred to in otjiHerero as Otjindagwe. The late August Kasaona (≠Gubitas/Otjindagwe, 11.11.2015) confirmed that: ‘[s]o they run because of the war. There was war among them and others they are related to. That’s why they run from that place to Otjindagwe. [...] when they came here they already knew some Nama people (*kuenta*) in this place and they were accommodated in this place by Namas. [...] they were given settlement in this place by Namas—their forefathers, grand, grand-fathers. They came with livestock, large livestock [cattle]’.

NB: All oral histories reported in this chapter were carried out by S. Sullivan and W.S. Ganuses.

Without doubt, raiding occurred and was on occasion very violent. At the same time, this period of history did not only involve vicious “Oorlam Swartbooï and Topnaar Nama” and victimised “Kaoko Herero”. We revisit these histories to convey their more variegated nature: how this period is understood and represented remains relevant for conservation in north-west Namibia today.

As a starting point, consider a site of multiple graves south of Sesfontein in the land area known by Damara/ǀNūkhoe as Aogubus, crossing the northern parts of today’s Etendeka and Palmwag Tourism Concessions (see Chapter 13). Oral history identifies these graves as those of ǁKhao-a Dama (ǀNūkhoe) individuals reportedly shot by Nama alongside an ovaHerero man called ‘Buku’, hence the name of the site ‘Bukuba-ǀnoahes’: see Figure 1.5.⁹⁴ In contrast, close to this site is a substantially marked grave of an Aogubu Damara/ǀNūkhoe man called ǀŪsegaib: a prominent person who lived here with his three wives close to the spring known as ǀAogu-ǁgams: see Figure 1.6. He was looking after goats belonging to Nama living in Sesfontein who came and built this large grave, bringing the pastor from Sesfontein to officiate at the burial.⁹⁵ Clearly circumstances and alliances were highly dynamic, comprising both violence and respectful reciprocal arrangements. Fluidity and complexity is similarly reflected in a tale of the heroic actions of ǀNūkhoe warrior Tua-kuri-ǀnameb. He is famed for chasing down and attacking ovaHerero kidnappers of ǀNūkhoe children at the spring ǀNaos, which now feeds the settlement of ǀGubitas/Otjindagwe, west of Sesfontein: see Video 1.1.



Fig. 1.5 Site of around 10 graves near Bukuba-ǀnoahes in the Aogubus land area, south-east of Sesfontein, reportedly of ǁKhao-a Dama individuals. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.2.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 1.6 Ruben Sanib stands at the well-marked grave of the Aogubu Damara/ǀNūkhoe man ǀŪsegaib, who herded livestock for Nama of Sesfontein near the spring of ǀAogu-ǁgams south of Sesfontein, now in the Palmwag Tourism Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.2.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

94 As reported in oral history interviews with Ruben Sanib, Bukuba-ǀnoahes, 22.2.2015, and Julia Tauros, Sesfontein, 19.5.2019.

95 Summarising Ruben Sanib, Bukuba-ǀnoahes, 22.2.2015.



Video 1.1 Ruben Sanib recounts the heroic actions of #Nūkhoe warrior Tua-kuri-#nameb at sites that are part of the story. Video by Sian Sullivan (2015), at <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/7e9ca87f>, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

As historian Lorena Rizzo writes, this period is characterised by ‘Kaoko’s instability and its shifting materiality as a territory and socio-political space’, with mobilities blurring ethnic, geographical and economic colonial boundaries.⁹⁶ There are sources of complexity here that are worth making explicit: they have a bearing on contemporary concerns and biases as they play out today in conservation proposals and interventions in Etosha-Kunene. Indeed, excluded from most contemporary accounts of this period is the complexity of historical circumstances that shift the identities of those raiding in the north in the mid- to late 1800s, and add context about why later Swartbooi and Topnaar raiding occurred.

For example, the northwards migration by Topnaar and Swartbooi Nama occurred later than the 1850s and may for some have constituted *a return* to the north and to prior connections, rather than in-migration to an unknown area (as detailed in Chapter 12). If there were raids taking place this far north in the 1850s, they are unlikely to have been carried out by Swartbooi or Topnaar Nama specifically. Earlier Oorlam Nama raiding activity in north-east Kaokoveld was enacted by Oorlam leader Jonker Afrikaner who had form for raiding ovaHerero cattle in central Namibia (and vice versa).⁹⁷ In 1857, for example, ‘Afrikaner Oorlams supported by the Rooinasie’—not Swartbooi or Topnaar Nama—undertook ‘raids into Kaoko’.⁹⁸ In 1860, Jonker Afrikaner led an expedition of 40 wagons on a ‘raiding expedition to Ovamboland’, reportedly removing ‘20,000 head of cattle’ and reaching lands north-west of Etosha Pan where ovaHerero resided.⁹⁹ These events no doubt contribute to assertions by ovaHimba in archive documents of an ‘Ovambo-Hottentot’ war that prompted southwards movements of ovaHerero from north-east Kaokoveld to central Namibia.¹⁰⁰ In these years, however, ǀKhaui-ǁgōan/Swartbooi Nama were located in southern and central Namibia at a time in which Andersson’s trading activities (led from Otjimbingwe) were ‘bring[ing] him into direct conflict with the Namaland chiefs and especially the sovereign, Jonker Afrikaner’, who claimed a monopoly on the cattle trade in central Namibia.¹⁰¹

In fact, in the 1860s Swartbooi were the only Nama faction to ally with ovaHerero leader Kamaherero against Oorlam Nama leader Jan Jonker Afrikaner.¹⁰² This alliance strengthened when Andersson recruited ovaHerero, including from the Kaokoveld, to attack Jan Jonker and his followers.¹⁰³ In 1864, and with 2,500 men and a “national flag” designed with Thomas Baines from England, Andersson marched to Rehoboth to ‘join forces with the Swartbooi commando

⁹⁶ Rizzo (2012: 3–7, 15–16)

⁹⁷ Lau (1994[1987]: 42)

⁹⁸ Stals (1991: 80); Lau (1994[1987]: 117)

⁹⁹ Siiskonen (1990: 101); also Henrichsen (2011: 88)

¹⁰⁰ NAN SWAA 2513 A552 Minutes of meeting held at Ohopoho from 7 to 16.4.1952: 3, 5.

¹⁰¹ Lau/Andersson (1987: 104), Henrichsen (2011: 132). In 1855, for example, Swartbooi were negotiating a contract with a prospector for the potential mining of copper in the Rehoboth area, south of Windhoek, hundreds of kilometres away from the Kaokoveld (Lau/Andersson 1987: vi-vii).

¹⁰² A son of Jonker Afrikaner. Jonker had died in 1861.

¹⁰³ Lau/Andersson (1987: 99, 104), Wallace (2011: 69)

[...] to attack the Afrikaners and their allies’, provisioning themselves from ‘Bergdamara’ *werfts* (settlements) along the way.¹⁰⁴ This historical Swartbooi-Herero alliance appears to be absent in the “Kaoko literature” on Swartbooi attacks on ‘Kaoko Herero’;¹⁰⁵ even though in 1876 Kamaherero iterates to Palgrave that ‘[t]he Rehoboth people [Swartboois] were always our friends and allies’.¹⁰⁶ Having fought against ‘their immediate neighbours’ (Jan Jonker Afrikaner and !Oaseb—leader of Kailkhaun/Red Nation Nama), the Swartboois fled Rehoboth, trekking towards Otjimbingwe on the Swakop River: ‘just outside Rehoboth, they were surprised by an Afrikaner commando, had their cattle taken, their wagons burnt and several people wounded and killed’.¹⁰⁷

As a consequence of this Swartbooi-Herero alliance, Swartbooi were forced to flee |Anhes (Rehoboth) under attack by a commando led by Jan Jonker Afrikaner;¹⁰⁸ the Afrikaners having previously also acted to prevent alliance-building between Topnaar Nama of the !Khuiseb and Swartbooi Nama of Rehoboth.¹⁰⁹ The latter eventually settled at Salem on the Swakop River, described in 1866 by Een as:

now an abandoned mission station inhabited by a Namaqua or Hottentot tribe under a chief with the name Svartberg [Swartbooi], the only Hottentot tribe living in peace with the Damara [Herero] people.¹¹⁰

From Salem they moved north to !Am-eib in the Erongo mountains (Figure 1.7), where Abraham Swartbooi (!Ábeb !Huisemab) was the Swartbooi leader at the time of William Coates Palgrave’s commission to the territory in 1876.¹¹¹ They make it known that,

[t]hey desire to move into the Kaoko country, but are not allowed to do so by the Damaras [Herero], who are afraid of permitting the growth of a Namaqua power on their northern frontier; certain as they are that the Zwartboois would be joined by many of the others [*sic*] Namaquas.¹¹²

Given the lack of water at !Am-eib, the Swartboois speak of a desire to move to ‘Zesfontein’, with Palgrave trying to persuade them to stay at !Am-eib on the grounds that the Cape government will construct a dam for water provision—a promise that does not appear to have been met.¹¹³



Fig. 1.7 Swartbooi Nama huts at !Am-eib at the Erongo/!Oe#gā mountains in 1876. Source: photograph 2685 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

104 Lau (1994[1987]: 133, and references therein); also see Henrichsen (2011: 217)

105 Owen-Smith (1972: 32–33), Bollig (1998: 164, 2009: 330), Heydinger (2023: 90–91)

106 Stals (1991: 52)

107 *Ibid.*, p. 134 and references therein; also Wallace (2011: 61)

108 Lau/Andersson (1987: 104), |Uirab (2007: 21–22)

109 Köhler (1969: 110)

110 Rudner & Rudner (2004[1872]: 37)

111 Palgrave (1969[1877]: 25, 73), Lau/Andersson (1987: 100, 104). Abraham was the son of Willem Swartbooi and Anna !Abes, m. to Sara |Hoa|aras and |Kuris, and father with |Kuris of Lazarus Swartbooi—see |Uirab (2007: 21–22).

112 Palgrave (1969[1877]: 25, 75); Stals (1991: 65)

113 *Ibid.*, p. 222

Regarding Topnaar Nama who became key actors in the Sesfontein area in the late 1800s: the chronicle of Otjimbingwe for 1864 documents that Topnaar living in the !Khuiseb valley joined forces with the Swartbooi, heading northwards with missionary Johannes Böhm, settling first at !Am-eib, south of the Erongo/!Oe#gā mountains (Figure 1.7),¹¹⁴ where Damara/#Nūkhoen also resided.¹¹⁵ !Gomen Topnaar from south of the Walvis Bay area relocated northwards under their chief |Uixab, half of their group staying ‘in their original territory’ (i.e. !Gomes/Walvis Bay).¹¹⁶ It was reportedly only around 1880, when water at !Am-eib became scarce, that the Swartbooi and the Topnaar moved northwards reaching Okombahe (!A#gommies), Anixab, Otjitambi and Fransfontein. They also moved into Angola, via the eastern Kaokoveld and the Kunene River crossing that became known as Swartbooisdrift, and back again to settle at Otjitambi near Kamanjab in the late 1870s.¹¹⁷ It is in the 1880s that reportedly ‘groups led by Petrus and Abraham Zwartbooi carried out numerous raids from the Brandberg and Otjitambi against Herero in north-western Hereroland and the Kaokoveld as far as the Kunene’: in ‘an attempt to compensate for poverty, loss of power and loss of autonomy’ in a context of expansionary ovaHerero and their cattle-herds.¹¹⁸

Simultaneously, this was a moment when an escalating dynamic of “Herero-Nama” raiding across complex and dynamic alliances broke out.¹¹⁹ In the second week of August 1880, a Nama cow reportedly went missing from Gurumanus [!Gurumâ!nâs] water-hole, west of Rehoboth, where ovaHerero and Nama cattle-posts were situated; leading to ovaHerero beating a Nama they suspected of stealing, and precipitating an armed clash in which ‘Namas got the upper hand, killed most of the cattle-herders and abscond[ed] with nearly 1,500 head of [ancestral holy] Herero cattle’.¹²⁰ On hearing this news in Okahandja on 24 August, Kamaherero reportedly ‘gave instructions that all the Namas in Damaraland were to be killed in revenge’: 20 were allegedly killed that night in the Nama village at Okahandja; a few days later ‘an estimated 200 Namas had been killed by the Hereros’.¹²¹ A heavy struggle followed between Jan Jonker—fleeing Windhoek for Rehoboth—and ovaHerero in the Auas mountains, with Windhoek attacked by ovaHerero, partially destroying the mission station including the home of Rev. Schröder.¹²²

These and other events precipitated withdrawal of the Cape Government from the “Transgariiep” (i.e. the territory north of the Orange River or !Garib) and an intensification of conflict in the region. Swartboois at !Am-eib made attacks on Otjimbingwe, being joined by Topnaars at Rooibank under Piet Haibeb, and making the mobility of incoming traders very unsafe.¹²³ In 1880 Kamaherero reported to Palgrave that ‘Kaoko Damaras’ (ovaHerero) have killed ‘some [of] Zwartbooi’s people’ in the vicinity of Sesfontein;¹²⁴ in 1883 Swartboois reportedly attacked a number of Herero cattle-posts;¹²⁵ and missionary Riechmann, based at Fransfontein from 1891, reports raids from Otjitambi in the 1880s to Owambo in the north and ovaHerero in the south.¹²⁶ Damara/#Nūkhoen in west Namibia also suffered in these troubled times. Hundreds are reported to have fled to Omaruru from 1879 due to starvation following drought-induced death of their cattle,¹²⁷ and at times multiple Damara/#Nūkhoen were reportedly killed by ovaHerero.¹²⁸ These losses surely played a role in their

114 In Köhler (1969: 111), also Palgrave (1969[1877]), Stals (1991)

115 As documented through a visit to them by Galton and Andersson in 1850 (Galton 1890[1853]: 50).

116 Vigne (1994: 7)

117 Köhler (1969: 111); also Otto Charles |Uirab, Acting Chief of the Swartbooi Nama Traditional Authority, pers. comm., meeting with S. Sullivan and W.S. Ganuses, Fransfontein, 18.9.2023.

118 Henrichsen (2011: 171, 174), translated by Sullivan from German with the help of Deepl Translate.

119 Drechsler (1966: 21)

120 Esterhuysen (1968: 29 and references therein)

121 *Ibid.*

122 *Ibid.*

123 *Ibid.*, p. 31

124 Stals (1991: 328, 336)

125 Esterhuysen (1968: 36)

126 Riechmann (n.d.: 2)

127 Henrichsen (2011: 187)

128 Palgrave 1880 in Stals (1991: 329–30)

submission to recruitment as indentured labourers to households and farms in the Cape Colony from 1879 into the 1880s.¹²⁹

This is the context in which Jan Petrus |Unuweb |Uixamab of the !Gomen/Walvis Bay Topnaar became established as “kaptein” in Sesfontein, having succeeded his brother Hendrik Anibab |Uixamab, successor to his father |Uixab who died in the south before they moved northwards.¹³⁰ Jan |Uixamab’s arrival in Sesfontein attracted ‘people from the surrounding areas, as the emerging settlement offered new economic opportunities’, causing a centralisation of people in Sesfontein.¹³¹ ‘Intensification of agricultural production’ (including of tobacco), accumulation of livestock, and the appropriation of water and grazing resources generated employment in herding and in newly established gardens; and ‘[y]oung men were enrolled into commandos, with which they engaged in raids and hunting trips and supervised herds’.¹³² Integration was combined with territorial expansion, through ‘intermarriage and participation in the stock economy through loans and the inheritance of cattle’, as well as through herding at stock-posts in the broader landscape.¹³³ Rizzo reports from interviews with Herero associated with Sesfontein that forced coercion is rarely mentioned, although she also argues that Oorlam organisation of the Sesfontein economy involved ‘enforced patronage and loyalties’.¹³⁴

In the 1880s and into the 1890s the Nama population in Sesfontein expanded to close to 500 including dependents (as estimated by missionary Riechmann, based in Fransfontein), a pattern mirrored in Warmquelle and Otjitambi: thriving garden economies established in Sesfontein and Fransfontein complemented Nama herd concentrations in these areas.¹³⁵ Plaits of tobacco (called *!nora*) were used to barter for small stock and sometimes cattle;¹³⁶ aromatic *sâi* plants were collected by Damara/!Nūkhoen in especially the Sirib mountains west of Sesfontein (Figure 1.8) for trade elsewhere; and Damara/!Nūkhoen were recruited to collect *#ao-haib* (*Caroxylon* sp. formerly *Salsola*) to make soap for washing the fabric clothes worn by the Nama (Figure 1.9). Franz |Haen ||Hoëb of Sesfontein provides a flavour of these circumstances:

in the past people used to cook with this plant (*#ao*) to make soap for washing [...] they burnt the plant and took the ash to mix with cow fat, and they cook it and when it is ready for cutting they put it out, and when it is cool then they cut it with the knife into pieces and use this soap for washing the clothes. [...] In the past it was only Nama people who have the material clothes that need washing. !Nūkhoen just help, and learn from the Namas how to make the soap. They carried the wood [of *#ao*] and they bring this wood and they cook that soap for the Namas. And the Nama people gave them food for this work. At that time !Nūkhoen were only wearing skins which do not need washing with soap.¹³⁷



Fig. 1.8 Sirib mountains west of Sesfontein/!Nani|aus, where aromatic plants were once gathered for *sâi* (perfume). Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 21.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

129 Henrichsen (2008: 63–64); see Stals (1991: 357)

130 van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 41), Vigne (1994: 8)

131 Rizzo (2012: 32, 107)

132 *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 45, 107

133 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33

134 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46

135 *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 60, and references therein

136 *Ibid.*, p. 46

137 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, Dubis, 9.5.2019.



Fig. 1.9 #Ao-haib (*Caroxylon* sp., formerly *Salsola*) in the Hoanib River west of Sesfontein, formerly used to make soap for clothes washing. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 21.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

It might be argued that accounts of historical Nama viciousness and ovaHerero victimisation in the Kaokoveld start with two biases that linger in contemporary conservation engagements in Kunene. The first is a perspective of ovaHerero historical presence and Nama/Khoekhoegowab absence in the north-west, permitting the singular narrative outlined above of Herero displacement by incoming Nama ‘hordes’.¹³⁸ A number of sources, however, indicate the presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples in north-western parts of Namibia prior to the mid-1800s, their lasting legacy being the numerous Khoekhoegowab names for rivers and springs throughout the region: Hoanib, Hoarusib, Gomadom, Sechomib, Khumib, !Uniab, ||Huab and !U#gab for the westward flowing ephemeral rivers whose dense vegetation and subsurface water offer lifelines in this arid landscape; and Puros, Auses, Dumita, Gantias, Sarusa and Kai-as for places where springs made it possible for people to live and access important food and forage plants in this dryland area.¹³⁹ Indeed, wide-diameter (around 4 m) circles of hut anchor stones with a central fireplace and room divider have been found near the !Uniab river mouth (now within the Skeleton Coast National Park, SCNP) and dated to *ca.* 1,000-1,300; these are consistent with Nama/Khoe reed-mat hut construction¹⁴⁰ (as discussed in Chapter 12). Review of sources and oral history research also indicates the historical presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking #Nūkhoen as well as Hai||om in many localities in Etosha-Kunene, contributing to the presence of Khoekhoegowab names throughout the area.¹⁴¹

The second connected bias is an almost complete absencing of Damara/#Nūkhoen and ||Ubun histories in Etosha-Kunene, despite the presence of these peoples, sometimes in large numbers, as indicated in many historical sources.¹⁴² Some academic analyses of “the Kaokoveld” seem to downplay the histories and perspectives of Khoekhoegowab-speakers.¹⁴³ As an example, Bollig and Heinemann-Bollig write that,

ephemeral rivers of the western Kaokoveld have Damara names (*Hoanib, Hoarusib, Huab, Khumib*), despite the fact that mainly Himba or Tjimba settled along them (perhaps with the exception of the Huab [||Huab]). [Georg] Hartmann already used these river names. Since there was no Damara population

¹³⁸ Owen-Smith (2010), Bollig (2020), Heydinger (2023)

¹³⁹ Sullivan (2022)

¹⁴⁰ Blümel *et al.* (2009: 136), J Kinahan (2020: 263)

¹⁴¹ Dieckmann (2007a), Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021a), ||Garoes (2021)

¹⁴² Reviewed in Sullivan & Ganuses (2020)

¹⁴³ Bollig (2020)

settled along these rivers at the time, it is possible that the travellers’ Damara servants had entered these names in the travelogues.¹⁴⁴

The Georg Hartmann mentioned here was a key actor in the circumstances of north-west Namibia under German colonisation, as considered in more detail in Section 1.3.1. He may indeed have deployed ‘Damara servants’ on his expeditions from Otavi to the Kaokoveld in the 1890s, but archival sources show that he definitely relied heavily on the knowledge of ‘Swartbooi Nama’ who guided him through this remote area and shared with him the known names of rivers and places in the region. For example, in a report by Hartmann to the colonial administration, which was building up to a suppression of the resistance by diverse Indigenous Africans in the so-called Swartbooi/Grootberg Uprising of 1897–1898 (see Section 1.3.2), it is a Johannes Swartbooi, based in the areas of Otjitambi and Fransfontein, who is named as a lead guide for Hartmann’s Kaokoveld expeditions.¹⁴⁵ Multiple other sources document the presence of Khoekhoegowab-speakers in these areas of the north-west in the late 1800s, as reviewed in Chapters 12 and 13.

Indeed, historical and oral history sources indicate that a southwards movement of Nama pastoralists prior to the so-called “ovaKuenta wars” of the late 1800s was itself precipitated by ovaHerero south-eastwards migration into central Namibia in around the late 1700s, reportedly stimulated by poor rains in Kaoko.¹⁴⁶ This expansion impacted Nama and Damara/#Nūkhoen residing in these areas, cutting off ‘[t]he more northerly Toppners [#Aonin] [...] from all communication with those about Walfisch Bay’.¹⁴⁷ Thus, ‘[a]t the beginning of the 19th century the Topnaar are said to have reached the mouth of the Swakop (tsoa-xou-b)’, their migration perhaps ‘related to the advance of the Herero into the Kaokoveld’.¹⁴⁸ accounts that iterate similar observations by Captain James Edward Alexander in 1837,¹⁴⁹ and anthropologist Winifred Hoernlé in the early 1900s:¹⁵⁰ discussed further in Chapter 12.

The erasure and delegitimising of the histories of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples in some analyses of Namibia’s north-west contribute to contemporary marginalisation of Khoekhoegowab-speakers in Etosha-Kunene. It is arguably a reason why their concerns in relation to current conservation and land designations remain poorly understood or engaged with (see Chapters 3, 12 and 13).¹⁵¹ In sum, German colonisation enters the scene at a time of immense fluidity and change in Etosha-Kunene, the implications of which reverberate into the present.

1.3 German colonisation

In the early 1880s, German businessman Adolf Lüderitz announced his intention ‘to establish a trading-post along the South West African coast’, simultaneously requesting ‘German protection’, confirmed by Imperial Chancellor Bismarck in 1884.¹⁵² Lüderitz’s representative, 20-year-old Heinrich Vogelsang, agreed a land purchase from Captain Josef Fredericks of Bethanie encompassing Angra Pequena Bay (now Lüderitz in !Nami+gûs Constituency) and adjoining territory: later extended down to the Orange River, this large area becoming known as “Lüderitzland”.¹⁵³ Following a complex series of negotiations between Germany and Britain, in 1884 Germany annexed the

144 Bollig & Heinemann-Bollig (2004: 270, italics in the original)

145 Dr Hartmann’s report to Lt. Ziegler [with instruction from von Lindequist to send to Berlin], Marked secret, 13.12.1897, NAN-ZBU 440 D IVf, vol. 1: 45–49. All NAN-ZBU 440 D IVf documents were transcribed from German Kurrent handwritten texts by historian Wolfram Hartmann, translated into English by Sian Sullivan with the help of DeepL Translator, the translations being checked by Hartmann.

146 Galton (1852: 144)

147 *Ibid.*, p. 157, ||Garoes (2021)

148 Köhler (1969: 106); also see Moritz (1992: 5)

149 Alexander (2006[1838], vol. 2: 72–74, 102)

150 Hoernlé (1925); also see Budack (1983: 5) and Vigne (1994: 6)

151 Sullivan (2003), Pellis (2011)

152 Esterhuyse (1968: 47, 52); also Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 38)

153 Esterhuyse (1968: 39–40)

territory, with some exceptions such as the Walvis Bay enclave claimed by Britain.¹⁵⁴ This new colonial state impetus had significant implications for land and society in Etosha-Kunene. Land, “natural resources” and people became incorporated into commercial enterprises linked to increasingly militarised state protection. The first German *Schutztruppe*—Protectorate troops of the German Colonial Company for South West Africa—arrived in the late 1880s and were reinforced in subsequent years.¹⁵⁵ Many *Schutztruppe* personnel derived from distinguished military families and Prussian nobility, and were later incorporated into the colony’s ‘land police’ (*Landespolizei*).¹⁵⁶

In this section we first outline processes of state incorporation, as these played out in Etosha-Kunene through treaties permitting commercial access to resources, as well as through intensified hunting and missionary activity. We then look at the radically disruptive impacts of rinderpest in the late 1890s, and its links in Etosha-Kunene to Indigenous resistance and the militarised suppression that ultimately made possible colonial appropriation of formerly inhabited lands. We conclude by considering the emergence of formal state policy regarding so-called game, and the establishment of “game reserves” in the wake of these disruptions.

1.3.1 State colonial incorporation: Treaties, hunting, missionaries

At the end of January 1885, an agent of Lüderitz called Waldemar Belck left Walvis Bay for ‘the Kaokoveld’, holding conferences at Otjitambi—a big waterhole south-east of Kamanjab—with the Swartbooi captain Cornelius Swartbooi (|Hôa-|arab !Âbemab¹⁵⁷) for ‘the purchase of their territory’,¹⁵⁸ also claimed by Kamaherero.¹⁵⁹ Belck was joined by Ludwig Kock who had recently obtained ‘a very favourable mining concession from Jan Jonker [Afrikaner]’ further south.¹⁶⁰ On 19 June, Kock “bought” ‘the Kaokoveld from Cornelius Swartbooi’, excluding Okombahe (!A#gommes/‘Nattbout’) and its grazing lands [which in around 1873 had been allocated to ‘Berg Damaras’], for R200, with R10 to be received by the Swartbooi for ‘every mine worked in the territory’:

[t]he border went from Omaruru to the mouth of the Omaruru River, along the coast as far as Cape Frio, from there to Swartboois Drift on the Kunene River and then via Nattbout [Okombahe/!A#gommes] and Ameib [!Am-eib] to Omaruru.¹⁶¹

German scientist Waldemar Belck also conducted anthropometric measurements at Otjitambi.¹⁶² Kock subsequently went ‘to the section of the Topnaar tribe living at Sesfontein under Captain Jan Uichamab [|Uixamab]’, receiving on 4 July ‘a declaration from them in which they relinquished their claim to the Kaokoveld and acknowledged the contract of sale with Cornelius Swartbooi’, from which would be excluded Sesfontein and its grazing lands ‘which would remain the Topnaars’ private property’: the Topnaars received R100 for their rights, again with R10 for ‘every mine worked in the territory’.¹⁶³ Lüderitz thus acquired ‘the right of development and utilisation of all mineral resources’ for the ‘coastal strip’ from 22°S (around the mouth of the Omaruru/||Eseb River) to Cape Frio, ‘while the captains reserved control over their places of residence and their pastures’.¹⁶⁴ As Rizzo writes, these treaties are the first written official documents through

154 *Ibid.*, pp. 46–62

155 *Ibid.*, p. 128, Drechsler (1966: 69, 95)

156 Gordon (2009: 39), Muschalek (2020[2019])

157 |Uirab (2007: 22)

158 Esterhuyse (1968: 95). Rizzo (2012: 32) writes that Belck finds Otjitambi occupied by Topnaar (!Gomen) and Swartbooi families under Jan |Uixamab’s (!Gomen) leadership.

159 Henrichsen (2010: 104)

160 Esterhuyse (1968: 94)

161 *Ibid.*, p. 95

162 Förster *et al.* (2016: online)

163 Esterhuyse (1968: 95); also Rudner & Rudner (2007: 170)

164 Rizzo (2012: 63–64); also see Hesse (1906: 98), Esterhuyse (1968: 107), Rudner & Rudner (2007: 170)

which the north-west Oorlam Nama leadership formally expressed their claim to the north-west,¹⁶⁵ subsequent to Kamaherero’s claim expressed to Palgrave in 1876, as per Figure 1.3. This 1880s process involved negotiation of ‘a detailed territorial outline of the region’, later drawn on in the establishment of colonial companies intended to control extractive possibilities, see Figure 1.10 below.¹⁶⁶ The Swartbooï/|Uixamab “sale” of rights to this large area of the north-west was contested by Herero Captain Manasse at Omaruru, in a meeting at Okahandja with Dr Göring of the colonial administration:

[a]fter he had learnt of the sale of the Kaokoveld the previous July, Manasse had put his objections to this to the Kaiser. Although the territory was not being inhabited by the Hereros at that moment, it was [considered] Herero land and neither the Topnaars nor the Swartbooï Hottentots had any right to sell it. Dr. Göring tried to settle the matter by reprimanding Cornelius Swartbooï. He pointed out to the Swartbooï captain that he and his tribe had only settled at Otjitambi in the Kaokoveld in 1882 and therefore did not own the territory [although see Section 1.2.3 for background here]. It would have been much better if they had first obtained the permission of the Hereros at Omaruru before they had sold the territory. In the same breath Dr. Göring strongly advised Cornelius Swartbooï to place himself under German protection.¹⁶⁷

By 1887, and under the leadership of Cornelius, the Swartboois had settled in Fransfontein where, from December 1891, they were joined by RMS missionary Heinrich Riechmann.¹⁶⁸ Riechmann tells of people he calls ‘Bergdamara’ (i.e. #Nūkhoen) living in the larger area around Fransfontein who ‘were resettled to Tsumamas, a fountain about 25kms east of Fransfontein [... also with] good soils for gardening and plenty of water’.¹⁶⁹ In the early 1890s, the RMS established a mission station at Tsumamas/Otjimbuima under missionary Friedrich Kremer especially for so-called ‘Bergdamara’ who came from *werfts* (dwelling places) in all directions: this was abandoned soon after for ǁGaub near Otavi, established as the future station for those settled at Tsumamas.¹⁷⁰ In the mid-1880s, the director of the Botanical Museum of Zurich (Hans Schinz) journeyed through German South West Africa (GSWA),¹⁷¹ similarly encountering a number of ‘Bergdamara’ huts at ‘Otjovasandu’ (also #Khoabendus): he reports the area as rich in open water pools and pasture, with large antelope herds, springbok especially, caught in snares attached to trees and consumed alongside veld foods; a ‘Bergdamara’ bringing him a fur bag filled with berries.¹⁷² In 1893, some groups of ‘Bergdamara’ (around 200 people) led by their leader !Naruseb [!Nauriseb¹⁷³] arrived at Okombahe from Sesfontein, complaining that |Uixamab’s people made war on them, and asking those at Okombahe to accommodate them.¹⁷⁴ In the late 1800s both Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein and Cornelius Swartbooï of Fransfontein wrote to the Rhenish Mission Society (RMS) requesting missionaries (on which more below).¹⁷⁵

Further east, William Worthington Jordan, a “mixed race” trader from the Cape, and Kambonde (son of Ndonga king Kampingana), reached an agreement with regard to a 25,000 km² concession of land for Trekboer in Angola associated with Jordan: the concession stretched between Grootfontein, Otavi, Etosha Pan (with Okaukeujo and Ombika as the western boundary), and the Waterberg.¹⁷⁶ Kambonde and his father ceded to Jordan a piece of land of around 957 geographical square

¹⁶⁵ Rizzo (2012: 63–65)

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Esterhuyse (1968: 107)

¹⁶⁸ Riechmann (n.d.), |Uirab (2007: 22), Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 12), Rizzo (2012: 68)

¹⁶⁹ Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 12), Schnegg (2007: 251–52)

¹⁷⁰ Moritz (2015: 9)

¹⁷¹ Kranz (2016: 78)

¹⁷² Schinz (1891: 140–41)

¹⁷³ As recorded in interviews in Sesfontein with Nathan #Ūina Taurob (1995–96), Philippine |Hairo ǁNowaxas (1999) and Ruben Sanib (2015–2019).

¹⁷⁴ Köhler (1959: 35)

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68

¹⁷⁶ Dieckmann (2007a: 48, and references therein)

miles in the south-east corner of Ondonga's area, reportedly against the payment of 25 muskets, a "salted horse" (i.e. a horse with resistance to sickness¹⁷⁷), and a cask of brandy.¹⁷⁸ This "Republic of Upingtonia" was proclaimed in 1885 with 46 Boers signing an agreement as citizens of the new Republic, and the land subdivided by Jordan although he 'retained the mineral and trading rights for the whole area'.¹⁷⁹ The farmers here had to cope with "Bushmen" attacks on a daily basis,¹⁸⁰ with at least two Upingtonia settlers (Todd and du Toit) being shot.¹⁸¹ Like Manasse in relation to the Kaokoveld, when Kamaherero heard about the Upingtonia contract he also laid claim to the area, but without success.¹⁸² In June 1886, Jordan was murdered in Ovamboland by '[p]eople of the chief Nehale of Ondangwa' (Kambonde's brother), rumoured to have acted on behalf of Kamaherero; after which the Republic of Upingtonia was dissolved and the area placed under German protection.¹⁸³

In 1895 a Johannes Kruger was appointed by German governor Leutwein as 'Captain of the natives' of Grootfontein—namely 'Bushmen and Damaras and of all people who lived at Ghaub' [||Gaub]—who were required to recognise German sovereignty.¹⁸⁴ At !Naidaus south of Etosha Pan, German Captain von Estorff re-negotiated a 'protection treaty' (*Schutzvertrag*) with a 'Captein Aribib', incorporating environmental permissions and restrictions:

[t]he Bushmen cede to the German government the entire territory to which they believed up to now to have claimed. It extends from the area of Outjo up to the area of Grootfontein. The northern limit is the Etosha Pan. The southern limit is formed by the northernmost werfts of the Hereros. In return, the German government promises to provide the Bushmen with security and protection from everyone. The Bushmen may not be driven away from the waterhole !Naidaus, where they are presently. They are also entitled at all times and everywhere on their former territory to collect veldkos. In return, they promise not to oppose the settlement of German farmers, but to be of assistance to them and to remain on good terms with them. In particular they promise not to set grass fires. Captein Aribib vows to remain always loyal to the German government and to meet its requirements with good will. He receives, as long as he fulfils this obligation, an annual salary of 500 marks. For every grass fire noted in the area described in paragraph 1, 20-50 marks will be deducted.¹⁸⁵

In 1893 the German colonial company for South West Africa (*Deutsche Kolonial-Gesellschaft für Südwest-Afrika*) transferred the rights it had acquired from Lüderitz (in 1885) to Hirsch and Co., later the Kaoko Land and Mining Company (*Kaoko Land und Minen Gesellschaft*, KLMG), reportedly for £45,000.¹⁸⁶ The KLMG's commercial rights were considered to involve the land depicted in Figure 1.10a—an area now lodged in popular consciousness as "Kaoko" or "Kaokoveld",¹⁸⁷ although this 'Kaoko identity' does not necessarily match Indigenous framings of this territory (see Chapter 13).¹⁸⁸ The company was represented by surveyor Dr Georg Hartmann in strategic alliance with German colonial governor Leutwein.¹⁸⁹ Hartmann thereby became a key actor in the fate and fortunes of

177 Vandenberg (2010: 245)

178 Mouton (1995: 52); also Dieckmann (2007a: 48) drawing on Gordon (1992: 41)

179 Dieckmann (2007a: 48); also Mouton (1995: 52) and the detailed fictionalised account by historian W.A. de Klerk (1977)

180 Gordon (1992: 41)

181 Dieckmann (2007a: 48–49, and references therein)

182 *Ibid.*

183 *Ibid.*, p. 49 drawing especially on Mouton (1995: 54) and Schinz (1891: 352); also Gordon (1992: 41)

184 Union of South Africa (1918: 148), Gordon (2009: 38)

185 ZBU W II.2043, cited by Gordon (1989: 145), original reproduced in Friederich (2009: 54–55). Also see Dieckmann (2007a: 66). According to Gordon (1998: 146) Aribib was later (1904) shot near Namutoni on the instructions of Owambo Chief Nehale, for killing ovaHerero at Namutoni during the German-Herero war, 1904–1908. Friederich, drawing on the memories of an elderly Hai||om man, Jan ||Oreseb, explains instead that an #Arixab, seemingly the same person, was first chased by ovaHerero because he had supported the Germans in the war, and was eventually struck dead by the Herero (Friederich 2009: 59). Although a recipient of a pension from the German government, Aribib reportedly later joined the rebellion against expanding colonial rule (Rohrbach 1909: 142). For further discussion see Chapter 15.

186 Esterhuysen (1968: 92–93), Owen-Smith (1972: 29)

187 Hartmann (1897: 118)

188 Sullivan & Ganuses (2021a), Sullivan (2022)

189 Esterhuysen (1968: 202), Bollig & Heinemann (2002: 271), Rizzo (2012: 63–64)

the peoples of this area. His first ‘Kaoko-Feld’ expedition in 1894 travelled from Otavi to Otjitambi, along the Hoanib River to ‘Seßfontein’, and then to the coast; returning southwards on the gravel plains across the !Uniab and ǀHuab rivers to a meeting point at Sorris-Sorris east of the Brandberg; then back to the limestone concession area of the South West Africa Co., south of Etosha (also see Chapter 12).¹⁹⁰ His second expedition to investigate ‘a route for transporting copper by rail from the Otavi area to the coast, and to explore the coast for a suitable harbour’,¹⁹¹ as well as to examine ‘the whole coast of the ǀUgab-river north of Cape Cross to the Kunene mouth for guano and landing sites’,¹⁹² involved military personnel who in 1897–1898 were deployed to suppress insurgency in the north-west (see Section 1.3.2).

Hartmann’s north-west expeditions drew attention to the prolific indigenous fauna and spectacular scenery of the area. On reaching the Kunene River via the Marienfluss, he writes:

[t]he enormous abundance of game in the whole northern area was remarkable, it is a true El Dorado for the hunter for all antelope species up to the rare rooibuck [impala, *Aepyceros melampus*] and waterbuck [*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*], one sees ostrich herds up to 100 animals; the elephant appears in herds, the giraffe [*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*] in smaller troops, and the isolated rhinoceros. The traces of lions are numerous, they only clear the field where the elephant appears, and they move with the big antelope-herds which move around to the good grass-grazing pastures in the country.¹⁹³

Eberhard Rosenblad, a Swedish navy captain who accompanied Hartmann’s second Kaokoveld expedition in 1895–1896 confirmed that:

[t]he further north we went, the more plentiful became the supply of game. We encountered giraffe on several occasions. Here they occurred in herds, and then we had our fill of their delicate marrowbones. Gemsbok [*Oryx gazella*] were also plentiful.¹⁹⁴

Rosenblad describes hunting elephant on a moonlit night, near Kaoko Otavi:

[w]hen the elephants had finally had enough water inside as well as outside and prepared to move off, we selected the two biggest ones for sacrifice. They were shot behind their shoulders and did not get very far before they collapsed. [...] When we reached the dead animals, we found that our booty consisted of two big males, but that their teeth—in this country the hunters usually use this word instead of “tusks”—were broken and also otherwise damaged.

As the method of hunting that we had had to employ on this occasion was unsporting and could be regarded as unnecessary slaughter, we decided never to use it again. It is a different matter when you encounter the animals in daytime and in the open veld.¹⁹⁵

The infrequent references by Hartmann and Rosenblad to their local guides suggests that they rendered somewhat invisible the presence of these key local actors, bringing to the fore their own agency and instrumentalising surveillance of the Northern Namib and the ‘Kaoko-Feld’. The presence throughout the north-west landscape of local peoples is similarly glossed over (as well as strongly racialised). Nonetheless, Hartmann notes numerous peoples in these areas: ‘Berg-Damara’ in mountainous areas of the ‘southern part of the Kaoko-Feld’, as well as ‘numerously at the Brandberg, on whose plateaus small independent tribes still live, practising small animal husbandry (sheep and goat breeding), and [also] north to the |Uni!āb [!Uniab] and Franzfontein’; ovaHerero in the north-eastern Kaokoveld, their relatives migrating south-eastwards; and ‘Zwartboois’ and ‘Toppnaers’ Nama at Fransfontein and Seßfontein, feared by northern ovaHerero but who ‘rendered outstanding services’ as guides and ‘[a]t my instigation [...] recognized German patronage in 1894’.¹⁹⁶

190 Hartmann (1897)

191 Rudner & Rudner (2007: 6)

192 Hartmann (1897: 128)

193 *Ibid.*, p. 134

194 Rosenblad (2007[1924]: 85)

195 *Ibid.*, pp. 89–92

196 Hartmann (1897: 136–37)

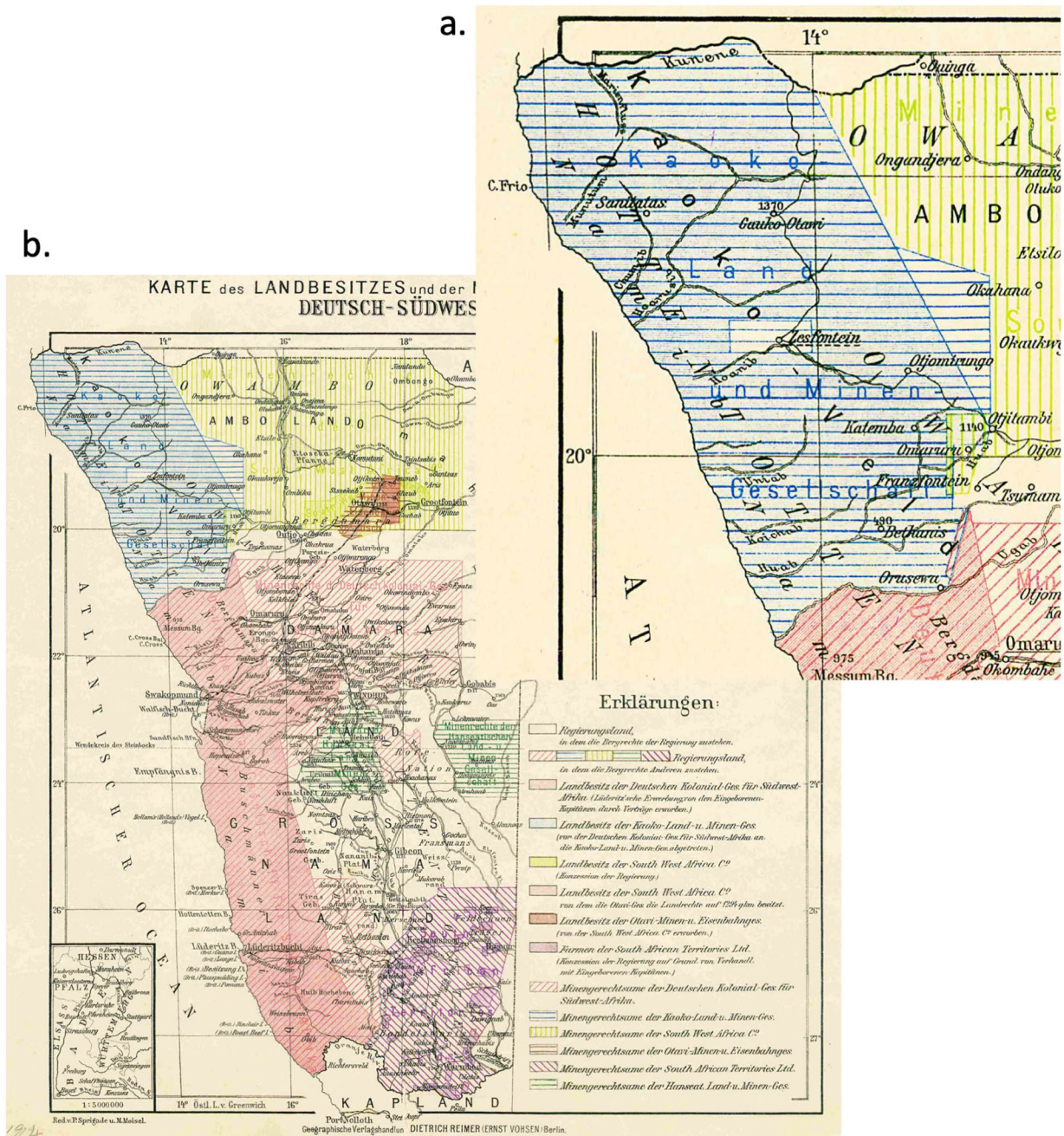


Fig. 1.10 'Karte des Landbesitzes und der Minergerechtsame in Deutsch-Südwestafrika' (Map of Land Ownership and Mining Rights in German South-West Africa), by Max Moisel and Paul Sprigade 1914, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz: a) detail of the Kaoko Land und Minen Gesellschaft area; b. full map. Source: Public domain image, via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karte_des_Landbesitzes_und_der_Minergerechtsame_in_Deutsch-S%C3%BCdwestafrika.jpg, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Indeed, in the vicinity of Sanitatis north of Sesfontein, Hartmann and Rosenblad were 'visited by the important chief Jan Ugamab [Uixamab], who arrived from his headquarters at Zesfontein accompanied by about 40 of his subjects'.¹⁹⁷ The area 'south of Etosha, which was still full of elephants and other wildlife' is described as 'only inhabited by bushmen and few mountain-Damara'.¹⁹⁸ The German Colonial Handbook (*Deutsche Kolonial-Handbuch*) first published in 1896 provides an illuminating description of Nama settlement in the north-west in this year:

¹⁹⁷ Rosenblad (2007[1924]: 89–92)

¹⁹⁸ Hartmann (1897: 136–37)

[t]he mat houses of the Zwartbooi Hottentots, of which there are about 450, form a wide circle around the spring [at Franzfontein]. The water is bright and clear, free of any bad taste; it is a little warm at the spring, but cools down quickly. The surrounding area is rich in bushes and trees to the south, east and west, and there are several small springs, some of which are good pastures. The view is limited by a low mountain range. Franzfontein offers a good passage through the mountains on the way north. A gate leads to Otjitambi (copper mine), inhabited by Zwartboois people, and to Zesfontein, the six-spring place, where a part of the Topnars, belonging to the Hottentots of the Walfischbai, is currently staying.¹⁹⁹

A feature of colonial encounters with African peoples throughout Etosha-Kunene in the 1890s is the increasing use of photography to provide a visual record, with accompanying narratives illustrating how colonial actors sought to understand and delineate ethnic identities and to link these with specific localities. Figure 1.11 provides one set of images and their locations from this decade, including: ‘ovaTjimba’ in the far north-west of what is now Kunene Region; so-called ‘Bergdamara’ [!Nūkhoen] close to the west of Etosha Pan; so-called ‘Bushmen’ [Hai||om] north of Etosha Pan; ‘Swartbooi Nama’ [!Khou-|gōan], south of Etosha Pan; and so-called ‘Seebushmaner’ [!Ukun] at the Hoanib River mouth.²⁰⁰

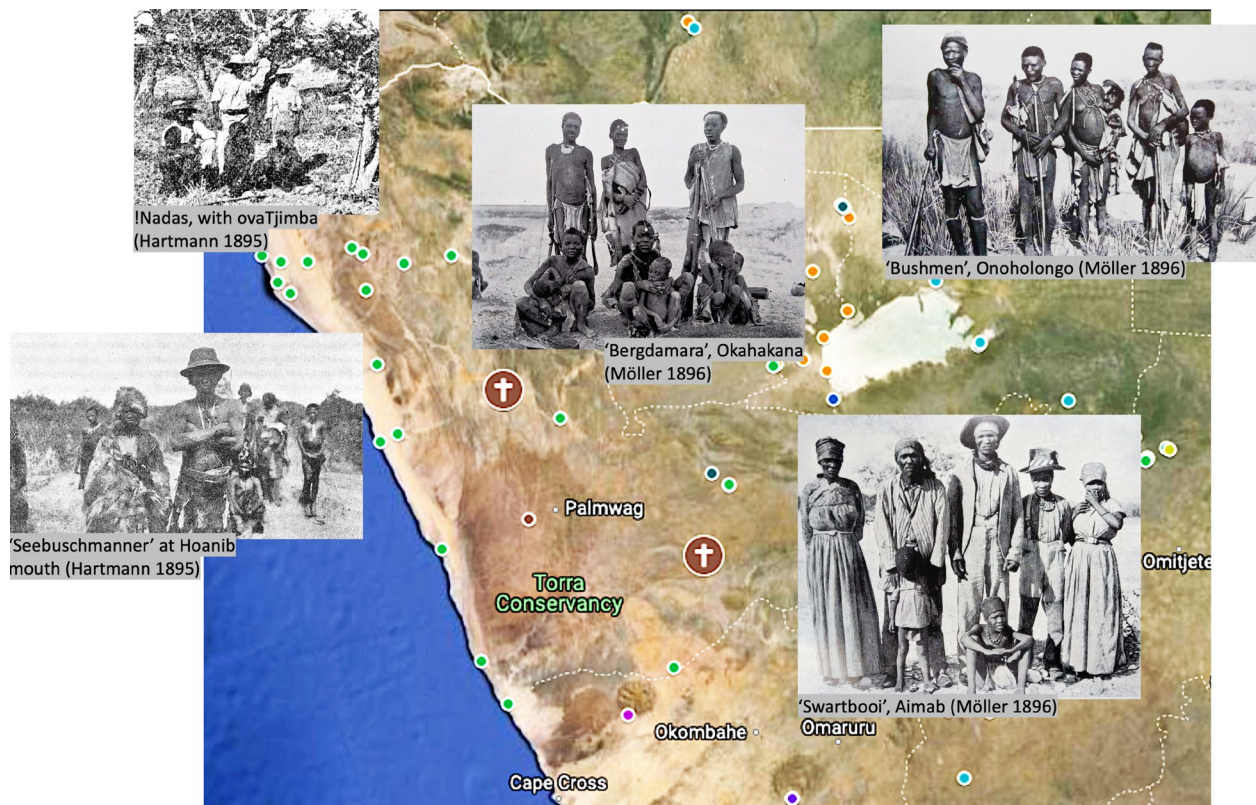


Fig. 1.11 Photographed encounters with diverse peoples across Etosha-Kunene in the 1890s. Sources: Hartmann (1897: 123, 129) and Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: opp. 147, 162), out of copyright. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan using Google Maps (the coloured dots represent selected colonial travellers' journeys, see Figure 1.2): Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Already in the mid-1880s, the German colonial government was also attempting to fix the northern boundary with Portugal, ‘yet neither country had any jurisdiction over the Ovambo’,²⁰¹ whilst borders between Kaokoland and the western Owambo kingdoms (Uukwaluudhi, Uokuolonkadhi, Ongandjera) remained open.²⁰² As had occurred in the 1860s further south (see Section 1.1.3), in the 1880s and 1890s, European hunters and traders became increasingly concerned about competition

199 Fitzner (1896: 214–15)

200 Hartmann (1897: 123, 129), Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: opp. 147, 162)

201 Rudner & Rudner (2007: 8)

202 Bollig (1998: 166)

from Oorlam Nama also seeking to exploit the wildlife resources of the north-west. In the late 1800s, Axel Eriksson had a hunting camp south of the Kunene River and, like KLMG surveyor Dr Georg Hartmann in 1900, reports large Portuguese hunting parties crossing the Kunene into Kaoko,²⁰³ competing with Oorlam hunters.²⁰⁴ In these years Mossamedes, the most important harbour on the southwest Angolan coast, was the main outlet for ivory from north-western Namibia.²⁰⁵ The '[s]cope and scale of Oorlam involvement in the underground trade [in southern Angola] would trouble the SWA colonial administration in the making',²⁰⁶ encouraging moves towards its suppression. Between 1885 and 1907 Angola Boers took part 'as volunteers in ten expeditions against [so-called] insurgent natives', playing 'an important part in the subjugation of the remote territories of Angola to Portuguese authority'.²⁰⁷ In 1890 Angola Trekboers fought Petrus Swartbooi and associates, and in a 'final clash' in 1893 Nama in Angola were 'soundly defeated and did not venture to cross the Kunene again': reportedly 37 Nama and two Trekboer were killed in this event.²⁰⁸ Conflict such as this is perhaps a contributing factor that explains why David Swartbooi of Otjitambi signed a protection treaty with the German colonial government (Figure 1.12), even though his captaincy was not recognised by all, with Lazarus Swartbooi considered the leader at Fransfontein.²⁰⁹

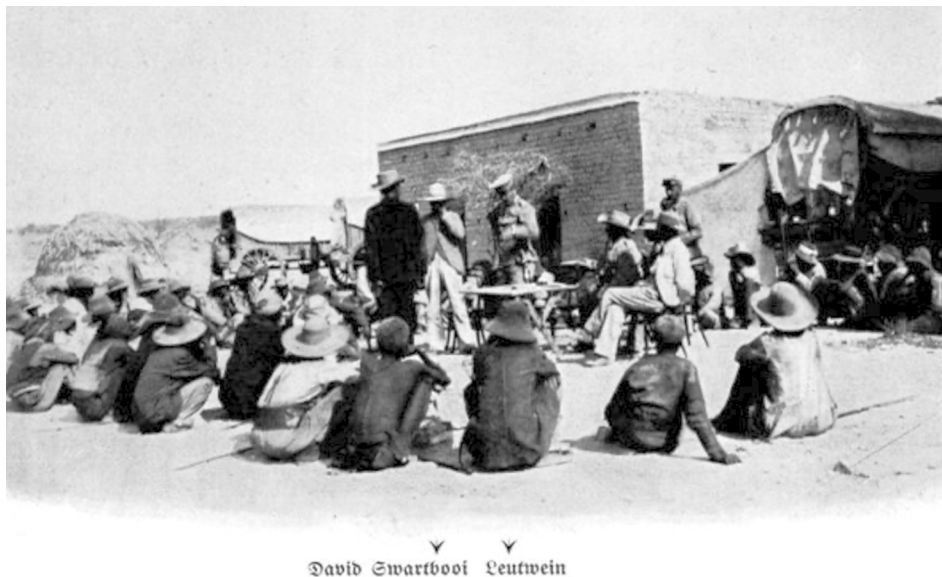


Fig. 1.12 'Negotiation with the Swartboois and Topnaars September 1895', Outjo. Source: Leutwein (1906: 66, out of copyright).

These are the dynamic colonial circumstances into which the critically disruptive 'agent' of rinderpest appeared in 1897,²¹⁰ precipitating heightened colonial control, intensified Indigenous insurgency, militarised colonial response, and ultimately systematic appropriation of land and livestock.

203 Rudner & Rudner (2006: 192) in Rizzo (2012: 40)

204 Wadley (1979: 13) after Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: 33)

205 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63) referencing Siiskonen (1990: 148)

206 Rizzo (2012: 43)

207 Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: 181)

208 *Ibid.*, p. 179

209 Rizzo (2012: 64-65), GSWA (n.d.: 414)

210 cf. Kalb (2022: 90-97)

1.3.2 Rinderpest, colonial control and Indigenous resistance

The rinderpest epidemic arrived in the Horn of Africa in the late 1880s, ‘possibly carried by Indian cattle imported into Eritrea by the Italian colonists’.²¹¹ In June 1896, an import ban ‘on all ruminants and their products’ was ‘issued by German military command’, beginning attempts to halt this highly contagious disease, which affected cattle and other cloven-hooved animals such as buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and large antelope like eland (*Taurotragus oryx*) and kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*).²¹² Rinderpest is described as spreading ‘through the country “like a tempest”’: German authorities estimated that ‘50% of the country’s cattle herd perished within the first six months of the panzootic and over the next year up to 90% mortality was reported among Herero herds in the central highlands’.²¹³ The death of some 90% of cattle in southern Angola pushed pastoralists further into the Portuguese colonial economy, including working as mercenaries with Trekboers as the Portuguese sought to contain rebellions of oshiWambo-speaking peoples in southern Angola.²¹⁴ This is the context in which leaders such as Vita Thom enhanced their regional power to become powerful headmen and raiders of livestock in the north-west in the early 1900s,²¹⁵ stimulating south-westerly movements of ovaHimba from north-east Kaokoveld (as documented in Section 1.2.3).

Following a conference on the rinderpest crisis convened in late August 1896 by the British Cape Colony at Vryburg (British Bechuanaland, now Botswana),²¹⁶ a “defense line” or *Absperrline* was established to control movement of livestock between northern “native” areas and southern and central European settlement areas.²¹⁷ This cordon consisted of a chain of military outposts, some of which became permanent after the pandemic ran its course, a situation with lasting effects for Indigenous inhabitants.²¹⁸ The ‘northern district’ centred on Outjo, where a military station had been established by Leutwein in 1895,²¹⁹ officially charged with controlling the spread of rinderpest and trade in livestock.²²⁰ The four most north-western stations were located from west to east at Tsawisis in the west, Omaruru on the ǀHuab River, Kauas-Okawa/Okaua, to Okaukuejo (the largest station), from which it ran along the southern margin of the Etosha Pan towards the next station at Namutoni: see Figure 1.13.²²¹ A roughly 30 km neutral zone or ‘no go’ area was proclaimed north of the line, ‘defined by the specific water holes that were banned from use’²²²—the clearance of which echoes to this day in visions of this area as a ‘wildlife corridor’ rather than a livestock-herding and inhabited area (see Chapters 3, 13 and 14). Additional ‘military outposts along the east-west axis at Grootfontein, Otavifontein, Naidaus, and Fransfontein’, began to ‘sever any alliance between the Owambo and Herero regions’.²²³ Fransfontein, which by this year had a mission congregation under missionary Riechmann of 460 people or half the Swartbooi of the area, was thus positioned *inside* the Police Zone. Sesfontein, which had gained the young evangelist Nicodemus Kido (also ‘Gaseb’) after a visit by missionary Riechmann—as well as most of ‘Kaoko’—was beyond this ‘red line’.²²⁴

211 Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 98–99)

212 Miescher (2012: 22); also Mackenzie (1988: 48)

213 Rohde & Hoffman (2012: 278)

214 Bollig (1998: 164)

215 *Ibid.*, Friedman (2014[2011])

216 Miescher (2012: 20)

217 *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 19

218 *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 33

219 Rudner & Rudner (2007: 169, and references therein)

220 Rizzo (2012: 66)

221 Miescher (2012: 23–33), also Rizzo (2012: 59)

222 Miescher (2012: 26)

223 *Ibid.*, p. 22

224 Rizzo (2012: 59, 69)

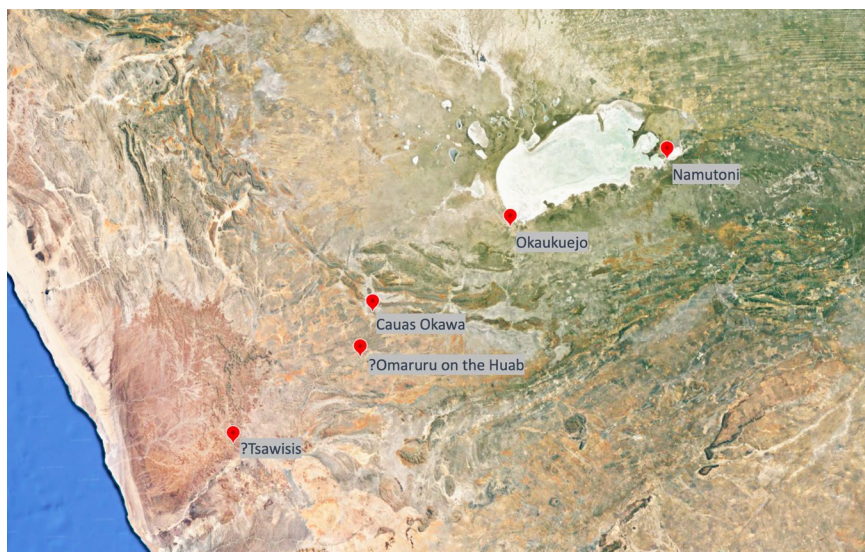


Fig. 1.13 The most westerly veterinary stations in the 'cordon' (red markers) established between November 1896 and February 1897. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, using Google Maps: Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The establishment of these militarised veterinary posts sparked a process of separating indigenous herds north of this line from the herds of emerging settler farmers in the south of the country (see Chapter 2). Local support and 'auxiliary troops', and especially local knowledge of waterholes, were essential for the siting of outposts along the cordon, and was garnered especially from leaders such as David Swartbooi of Fransfontein, the 'Bushman chief' Johannes Kruger at llGaub, the ovaHerero chief Kambazembi at Waterberg, and traders such as Axel Eriksson.²²⁵ It is reported that 50 Swartbooi men played an important role along the cordon 'because of their "great influence on the Bushmen and Bergdamara of these regions"'.²²⁶ Outpost guards 'were instructed to maintain the "neutral zone" along the cordon, keeping it free of humans and animals, including killing all wildlife found in the zone'.²²⁷ According to Deputy Governor von Lindequist, the northern parts of the protectorate (beyond this cordon) were to 'be treated as foreign territory',²²⁸ excepting Sesfontein, for which the intention was to include this 'former centre of power' within the cordon.²²⁹

These military posts proved unpopular with local leaders and herders, who resented being controlled and told where they were permitted to move. Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein, for example, 'refused to support the cordon's construction' and 'rejected the suggestion that he, his followers, and their livestock should temporarily leave Sesfontein and move south near Fransfontein'; also refusing 'to provide more than vague assurances that they would move their herds north to Warmbad (Warmquelle), south of Sesfontein'.²³⁰ In Fransfontein 2,685 head of cattle were inoculated but it is unclear how many belonged to the RMS and how many to African Christians.²³¹ 'Divide and rule' practices deployed by the colonial authorities—specifically the replacement of David Swartbooi, Captain of Fransfontein, 'by his old rival Lazarus Swartbooi'²³²—exacerbated tensions in the region. Although herds may have survived through retreat to remote areas, the 'devastating toll' of the pandemic is suggested by residents of Sesfontein remembering, 50 years later, 'the destruction of their herds'.²³³

²²⁵ Miescher (2012: 25)

²²⁶ Deputy Governor von Lindequist quoted in Miescher (2012: 25)

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25

²²⁸ Quoted in Miescher (2012: 25)

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.* Clearly, they were being requested to remove their herds from the "neutral zone" north of the new cordon posts, meaning that prior to this instruction their herds must have been spread throughout this area. Also Rizzo (2012: 59)

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 67; Drechsler (1966: 101)

²³³ Miescher (2012: 33), after van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 53), based on interviews conducted in 1947.

Rinderpest was a gift to the consolidating colonial government.²³⁴ The decimation of indigenous herds and the associated disintegration of African societal organisation opened the door for state appropriation of territory and livestock, facilitated by militarised state power. After initial successes, African resistance to colonial authority led by ‘a regional coalition of Herero and Oorlam leadership’²³⁵ along the western cordon was defeated through an increasingly militarised campaign. Led by individuals such as Captain Ludwig von Estorff, who had gained knowledge of the area through being part of Hartmann’s second Kaokoveld expedition described in Section 1.3.1, this campaign stretched from Outjo to Sesfontein (see Figure 1.14). Hartmann himself submitted an advisory report to the colonial administration in December 1897, in which he supported an escalating military campaign to suppress the Swartbooi and their associates. As indicated in Section 1.2.3, it is clear from this report that he had been guided through the Kaokoveld in the mid-1890s by a Johannes Swartbooi in particular, who is mentioned repeatedly in Hartmann’s report.²³⁶ Archive sources also show that at the very beginning of unrest in the area in late 1897, colonial leaders were articulating a clear desire for more land and access to water sources throughout the region: providing an ultimate reason for the disproportionate crushing of Nama and others in the area—whose main initial crime was the theft of horses and donkeys from the 4th Field Company of the administration stationed at Fransfontein.²³⁷

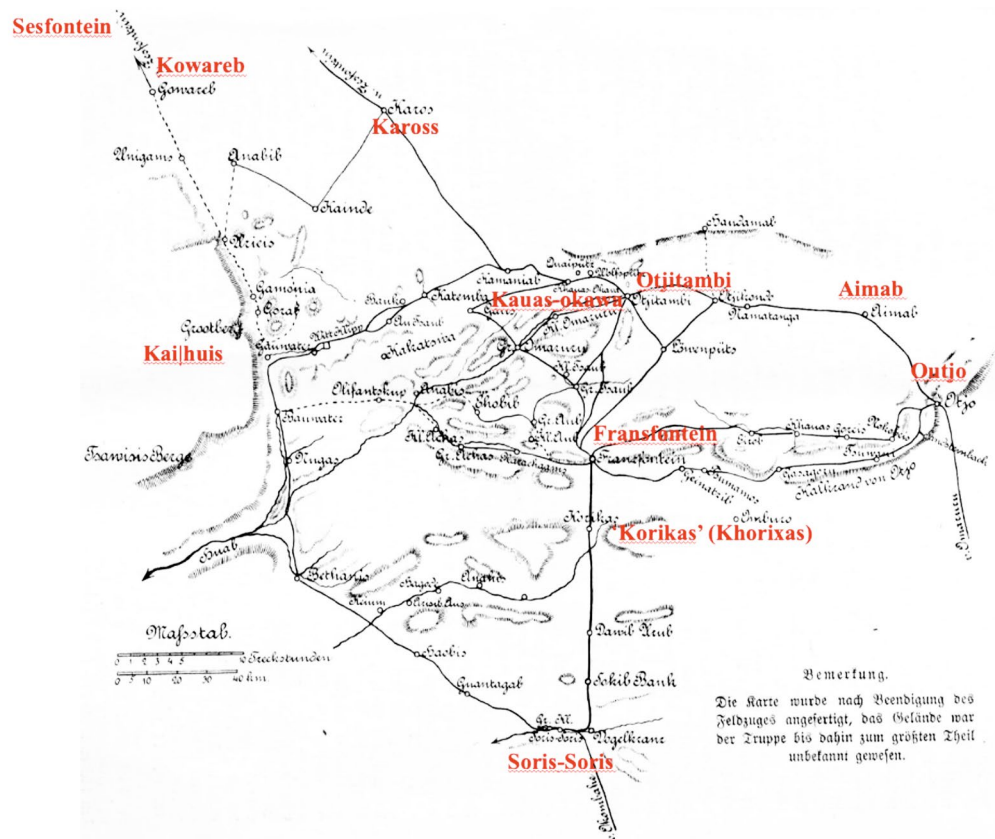


Fig. 1.14 Map of the area stretching from Outjo to Sesfontein connected via the Swartbooi / Grootberg Uprising and colonial military response in 1897–1898. Source: GSWA (n.d.: 417, out of copyright), adapted by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

²³⁴ Drechsler (1966: 98)

²³⁵ Rizzo (2012: 66). Finnish missionary Rautanen reportedly intervened to prevent Owambo kings, including Kambonde, from participating in this ‘Swartbooi and Topnaar’ uprising (Eirola 1992: 82–84 in Rizzo 2012: 66).

²³⁶ Dr Hartmann’s report to Lt. Ziegler [with instruction from von Lindequist to send to Berlin], Marked secret, 13.12.1897, NAN-ZBU 440 D IVf, vol. 1: 45–49.

²³⁷ ‘[...] the Swartbooi Hottentots, after having shown themselves to be unreliable for some time, stole a number of horses and donkeys from the 4th Field Comp. at Franzfontein during the night of Dec. 2-3 with hostile intent against the Government’, von Lindequist to Otjimbingwe District Admin., 8.12.1897, NAN-ZBU 440 D IVf, vol. 1: 13. Also see Schnegg (2007)

In this colonial ‘theatre of war’, the German military campaign mobilised ovaHerero allies (who later became prominent victims of ‘genocidal escalation’²³⁸) to crush one of the first Indigenous wars against the colonial government in a mountainous area of north-west Namibia known today as “Grootberg” (Kai | Uis), i.e. “Big Mountain”. As recounted by Friedrich von Lindequist (governor of the colony from 1905), reporting Captain von Estorff’s description of the support received in building towards military engagement here:

[f]rom the people of the chief captain Samuel Maharero and Manesse of Omaruru, I have mustered about 100 men as quickly as possible. In Omaruru I intend to gather them all and then ride towards the theatre of war.²³⁹

The uprising involved a complex, multicultural alliance of peoples:

I learned from the spy that the Kaisib detachment, composed of Topnars-Swartbois [Nama] and Bergdamaras [†Nūkhoe], was about 35 men strong, well armed (partly with 88 weapons) and with several other weapons.²⁴⁰

[and]

According to the latest news from Omaruru, the Herero leader Kambatta,²⁴¹ who lives on the border of the Kaokofeld, has gone over to the enemy with about 70 men, but allegedly few rifles.²⁴²

In the course of this particular military and imperial campaign, diverse autochthonous Africans allied with and were mobilised against each other. The uprising met with a devastating defeat at the so-called “Battle of Grootberg” (Kai|uis) of 26 February 1898, a locality now crossing the Etendeka Tourism Concession and †Khoadi-llHôas Conservancy areas of north-west Namibia. Some German military personnel lost their lives, as did those participating in the uprising; local leaders and fighters were executed;²⁴³ and hundreds of people were deported to become forced labourers in the new colonial capital of Windhoek—intentionally opening previously inhabited lands for appropriation by settlers. By 1901, 39 settler farmers (11 German, eight ‘Transvalers’, seven ‘Capelanders’ and seven Englishmen) were reported for Outjo District.²⁴⁴ Indeed, in 1895 governor Leutwein had already articulated an aim ‘to expropriate the Zwartboois entirely in favour of the Kaoko-Land- und Minengesellschaft’.²⁴⁵

After this defeat ‘[s]ome coalition forces withdrew to Sesfontein, and others fled to Owambo or surrendered to the German military’.²⁴⁶ The former leader David Swartbooi was deported to Windhoek; and in August 1898 Jan |Uixamab, leader at Sesfontein, surrendered in Outjo and handed over most of his weapons.²⁴⁷ More drastic punishment was avoided due to limited military resources, but |Uixamab was forced into a protection treaty (*Schutzvertrag*) with the German colonial government, charged 1,000 head of small stock, and requested to hand in all arms and ammunition owned by himself and followers.²⁴⁸ The KLMG began selling farms to German and Boer settlers with Jan |Uixamab of Sesfontein ‘selling’ 4,000 hectares constituting the farm Warmbad

²³⁸ Häussler (2019: 183)

²³⁹ NAN-ZBU D IVf, vol. 1: 157–59, von Lindequist to Foreign Office 2.2.1898, relaying combat report from Captain Von Estorff of 5.1.1898: 159.

²⁴⁰ NAN-ZBU D IVf, vol. 1: 189–91, Officer [Hauptmann] Kaiser to Imperial Provincial Government, Windhoek, 3.2.1898 [received 19.2.1898]: 191.

²⁴¹ A Kambatta is recorded as part of the ovaHerero leadership at Omaruru in the 1870s (Stals 1991: 223).

²⁴² NAN-ZBU D IVf, vol. 1: 159, as above.

²⁴³ For example, ‘I humbly inform the Imperial Governorate that Swartboi Hottentott Kuton was shot today after having been sentenced to death’, NAN-ZBU 440 D IVf, vol. 1: 189–91, as above, p. 189.

²⁴⁴ Kruger (n.d.: 15, 37) in Dieckmann (2007b: 162)

²⁴⁵ Quoted in Drechsler (1966: 91)

²⁴⁶ Miescher (2012: 33)

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33, Rizzo (2012: 64, 67)

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

(Warmquelle) that was later taken over by Carl Schlettwein.²⁴⁹ Sesfontein became a priority for a military station—Sesfontein Fort, now a high-end lodge run by a German investor—despite being located ‘nearly 150 kilometres northeast of the [veterinary] cordon’.²⁵⁰ In 1902 the population of Sesfontein was reportedly reduced to 120 people, mostly women and children, although ‘the station commander conceded that he neither knew how many people lived in Sesfontein’s surroundings, nor what their economic activities consisted of, beyond growing maize and wheat in the local gardens’.²⁵¹ Letters from RMS evangelist Nicodemus Kido in Sesfontein report ‘cases of women being forced into sexual relations with German military personnel’,²⁵² and the Nama leadership reportedly began advising people to ‘start hiding in the field during the day and stay away from the military station’.²⁵³

More than 500 people were deported to Windhoek from the Fransfontein Swartbooi community where they were used as forced labour (see Figure 1.15); and 25 men ‘identified as followers of [ovaHerero leader] Kambatta’ were charged in Omaruru ‘as war traitors and sentenced to forced labour for several years’.²⁵⁴ The fortunes of the people of Outjo District in around 1901–1904 were further impacted by smallpox and prolonged drought.²⁵⁵



Fig. 1.15 Captured Swartbooi Nama in Windhoek in 1899: Captain Christian Swart is thought to be the man standing on the right (Hartmann 2005: 33). Photo by August Engelbert Wulff, 1899. Source: Übersee-Museum Bremen, P00092), <https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/1101015>, CC BY-SA.

A key representation of African habitation in the years immediately following this uprising nonetheless provides some indication of the diversity of interspersed peoples occupying Etosha-Kunene—see Figure 1.16: ‘Topnaars (Aonin, Gomen)’ and ‘Zwartboois (Kaugoan)’ stretch from ‘Zesfontein’ towards ‘Outjo’; ‘Owatjimba’ are placed north and east of ‘Zesfontein’, with ‘Owaherero’ in a separate band from Karibib to Waterberg; ‘Bergdamara’ are grouped throughout the area from north-west of ‘Zesfontein’ southwards towards Okombahe and east towards ‘Gaub’; ‘Buschmanner’ are positioned south and east of Etosha Pan; and different Owambo groupings are mostly north of Etosha.²⁵⁶

249 *Ibid.*, p. 65. At the time of writing (2024), the Schlettwein family continue to own the farm Otjitambi which is run as a hunting lodge, from where trophy hunting safaris into Torra Conservancy further west took place until recently.

250 Miescher (2012: 34); also Külz (1909: 115), Rizzo (2012: 25)

251 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26

252 *Ibid.*, p. 70; interview with Emma Ganuses, Sesfontein, 14.4.2023, plus multiple other personal communications. Also see Sullivan & Ganuses (2021b)

253 Hawaxab (2019: 1)

254 Rizzo (2012: 67)

255 Kruger (n.d.: 38), Rohde & Hoffman (2012: 278)

256 Weule (1910) in Lebzelter (1934: 107), also quoted in Inskip (2003: 62–63)

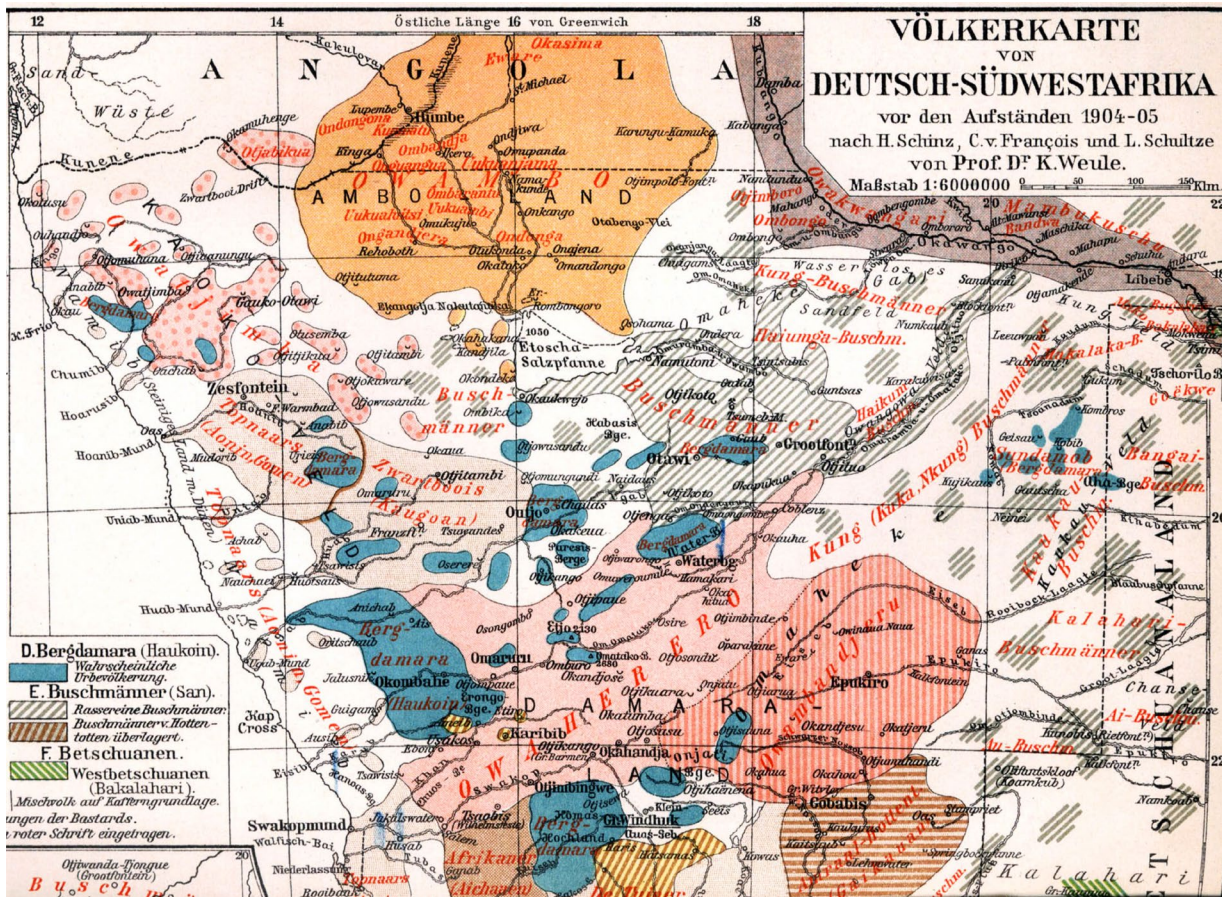


Fig. 1.16 Detail from 'Map of nations (Völkerkarte) for Deutsch-Südwestafrika before the uprisings of 1904-05', by Prof. Dr. K. Weule in Meyer (1909: no page number, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The so-called Swartbooi/Grootberg Uprising and its aftermath in the late 1890s prefigures escalating rebellion against colonial rule in the early 1900s, clearly linked with settler appropriation of land south of the 1897 veterinary cordon. Travelling through this consolidating "Police Zone" in 1903, Paul Rohrbach—appointed to lead a Settlement Commission for the German colony—clarifies his intent as the 'precise task of helping to found the beginnings of a piece of German-national history of development of the present in this still *history-less* country'.²⁵⁷ He observes a settler farmer making a first attempt at constructing wire fencing for his farm, writing of the 'evidence of German struggle for the ploughable, home-bearing soil', and of attempts by white settlers and traders to acquire land and cattle from ovaHerero who had themselves appropriated the central pastures of the territory 100 years previously from so-called 'Bushmen and Klippkaffern [Damara/!Nūkhoen]'.²⁵⁸

Capturing the spirit of settler colonialism in this moment, Rohrbach writes of 'the joyful feeling of witnessing how the advancing German settlement is boldly and vigorously taking possession of this truly new and promising land', and also of land speculation in the Grootfontein area by the South West African Company.²⁵⁹ Rohrbach's celebration of the achievements of settler farmers on their vast farms—including former members of Schutztruppe protection forces as well as new settlers from Germany—was disrupted, however, by increasing resistance to land appropriation and colonial control.²⁶⁰ Rebellion by Bondelswarts Nama in the south began in 1903 following the murder of Bondelswarts *Kaptein* Jan Christian by a Lieutenant Walter Jobst: following this incident,

²⁵⁷ Rohrbach (1909: 1, 29), emphasis added. All Rohrbach translations from German to English are by Ute Dieckmann.

²⁵⁸ Rohrbach (1909: 3, 18, 26, 35-36, 38). Also Union of South Africa (1918: 110), IlGaroes (2021)

²⁵⁹ Rohrbach (1909: 42, 49)

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55

Jobst, his sergeant and another soldier were gunned down.²⁶¹ Leutwein responded by declaring war on the Bondelswarts Nama, demanding military reinforcements from Berlin and heading a *Schutztruppe* force of 500 men to Warmbad where this initial ‘Bondelswarts uprising’ of October was crushed.²⁶² Attacks on settler farmers in the northern areas of Grootfontein and Namutoni—by ‘wild Kungbush people’, ovaHerero and ‘Ovambos’—increasingly characterise Rohrbach’s narrative into 1904.²⁶³

By mid-January 1904 the so-called Herero uprising had begun, leading to a massive colonial war in 1904–1908 that—through an ‘extermination order’ issued by incoming Governor Lothar von Trotha in October 1904—developed genocidally.²⁶⁴ In February 1904, northern Owambo troops from Ondonga attacked the German *Schutztruppe* police station at Namutoni to the east of Etosha Pan.²⁶⁵ Later in the year Witbooi Nama in southern Namibia, who, under severe pressure, had allied with the German colonial military,²⁶⁶ also joined the war.²⁶⁷ These circumstances are repeatedly evoked by Rohrbach (and others) as a justification for seizing land and cattle in increasingly punitive ways (as had happened from prior to the rinderpest epidemic²⁶⁸), so as to compensate white settler farmers for losses caused by Indigenous contestation of consolidated colonial rule.²⁶⁹ Indeed, in the context of the warfare of 1904–1908, Rohrbach’s role shifted to the leadership of a new Compensation Commission to oversee compensation for settler losses, mostly from land and livestock acquired from Africans.²⁷⁰

In a substantial act of ‘so-called primitive accumulation’,²⁷¹ Ordinances in 1907 issued by the colonial government in the wake of this escalating conflict thus made provision for ‘the colonial state to appropriate vast parts of formerly African-owned land and stock’.²⁷² In this context, and echoing suggestions outlined above, the RMS urged the colonial government ‘to forcefully remove the Zesfontein community to Fransfontein in order to raise the number of residents [at Fransfontein] and hence to guarantee the continuity of the mission work’.²⁷³ This call prefigures a proposal decades later by ecologist Ken Tinley to remove Nama and other Khoekhoegowab speakers from the Hoanib valley to Fransfontein so as to create a protected area that would connect Etosha Pan with the coast (considered in more detail in Chapters 12 and 13).²⁷⁴

The scale of the impact of the 1904–1908 colonial war can be seen in estimated population reductions of 81% ovaHerero, 57% Damara/#Nūkhoen and 51% Nama.²⁷⁵ Today, forensic scrutiny of historical military orders and texts for evidence that would meet contemporary United Nations definitions of the crime of ‘genocide’—itself positioned alongside, and differentiated from, ‘crimes against humanity’, ‘war crimes’ and ‘ethnic cleansing’²⁷⁶—drives a heated discourse of recognition and reparation in international law. An expanding literature in Namibian history and historiography debates details of colonial military strategy and intent, iteratively revising prior interpretations.²⁷⁷

261 Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 120–21)

262 *Ibid.*, p. 122, Silvester *et al.* (1998: 5)

263 Rohrbach (1909: 32)

264 *Ibid.*, pp. 159–61, 165–66, 177–78, Bley (1998), Häussler (2019: 187)

265 Rizzo (2012: 22); see also Külz (1909: 121) and Rohrbach (1909: 99–102)

266 Esterhuyse (1968)

267 Rohrbach (1909: 177–78)

268 Drechsler (1966: 94)

269 Rohrbach (1909: 114–16, 127, 132–33, 148–49, 150)

270 *Ibid.*, p. 189

271 Marx (1974[1867]: 667)

272 Odendaal Report (1964: 67); also Sullivan (1996: 14), Silvester *et al.* (1998: 17), Schnegg & Pauli (2007: 12), Kössler (2008: 234), Gordon (2009: 33, 41), Rizzo (2012: 21–22)

273 Rizzo (2012: 70)

274 Tinley (1971: 5)

275 Union of South Africa (1918: 34–35)

276 See <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

277 For example, Drechsler (1986), Lau (1995[1989]), Bley (1998), and multiple chapters in Zimmerer & Zeller (2008[2003]) and Hartmann (2019)

In the wake of this colonial war, further appropriations were enabled, shifting land and livestock to the growing colonial settler economy. Sesfontein's 'tribal property' (*Stammersvermögen*), for example, was expropriated with some financial compensation,²⁷⁸ due to alleged involvement by the Topnaar leadership of Sesfontein in uprisings associated with the colonial wars further south.²⁷⁹ A meeting took place in Sesfontein of a commission appointed to estimate 'the value of the community's possession in large stock, which the German colonial authority intended to confiscate', 'for sale at auction in Outjo to local European farmers'.²⁸⁰ Having lost the land of Sesfontein to the German government, on the basis of regular lease payments the 'Sesfontein community' was granted right of residence²⁸¹ to the 31,416 ha 'farm Zesfontein' for use by the 'Topnaar Swartbooi Hottentot' for grazing purposes: this is the origin of the restricted '10km radius from the waterhole Zessfontein' visible on multiple maps and land designations until Independence in 1990.²⁸² Fransfontein experienced similar treatment:

land and cattle was [sic] confiscated, the community was allowed to keep 2ha of garden land and a maximum of 500 piece of small stock, five mission evangelists were allowed to keep their large stock, and the district commander reserved the right to determine where people would be allowed to reside and to work.²⁸³

Simultaneously, shortages of labour meant that by 1907, police and military patrols 'were rounding up Bushmen and allocating them to farmers as laborers', as well as to mines: 'a military patrol from the Waterberg rounded up some fifty Bushmen in the vicinity of Tsumeb and transferred them to the mines as laborers'.²⁸⁴ Settler farm(er)s in Grootfontein and Outjo districts subsequently became the focus of stock thefts and murders by 'Bushmen', combined with attacks on Owambo migrant workers moving between these districts and north-central Namibia: a series of events that became known as the 'Bushmen plague', the 'Bushman Danger' or the 'Bushmen problem'. Between 1909–1914, police with soldiers thus 'undertook more than 400 Bushman patrols in the Grootfontein, Outjo, Rehoboth, and Maltahohe districts, covering some 60,000km²'.²⁸⁵ The punitive measures towards those living relatively independently of the emerging colonial state and speaking a language characterised by click consonants have led to anthropologist Robert Gordon describing these attacks as a forgotten Bushmen genocide.²⁸⁶

It is in the aftermath of these disruptions during the first two decades of colonisation that the colonial state introduced formal policy and legislation to govern wildlife in the territory.

1.3.3 Legislating colonial game preservation

Alongside and in the wake of the transformations outlined above in allocating and governing land, the German colonial state began to institute formal wildlife protection from commercial hunting alongside the establishment of Game Reserves. It is in these years that an increasing impetus towards strategies of purification, determining what should and should not mix, became part and parcel of formal governance: imperfectly separating people from nature, livestock from wildlife, and black from white (as considered further in Chapter 2).

In the post-Swartbooi/Grootberg Uprising years, commercial hunting was carried out increasingly by Europeans:

²⁷⁸ van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 37)

²⁷⁹ Rizzo (2012: 21, and references therein)

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20, and references therein.

²⁸² van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 37), Fuller (1993: 66)

²⁸³ Rizzo (2012: 27)

²⁸⁴ Gordon (2009: 33)

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; also Gordon (1992: 58)

[o]nly when the power of the Swarthboois and Topnaar communities was broken by the German colonial forces did Kaokoveld’s plentiful game become accessible to professional hunters operating mainly from southern Angola.²⁸⁷

In 1900, Georg Hartmann wrote in a secret report that informants in Sesfontein told him of ‘Portuguese hunters, who usually spent several months (August to November) at Otjijandjasemo, a significant water-place in northern Kaoko’ (south-east of Okongwati): they would ‘enter the region with their ox-wagons or would cross the Kunene on horseback’, depending on the water level.²⁸⁸ Well-armed and ‘supported by large numbers of African carriers and guides from southern Angola and from Kaoko’—not least through an alliance between the Sesfontein Oorlam leadership and the ovaHerero leader Kakurukouje²⁸⁹—they ‘would shoot up to 100 elephants all over the area and collect their loot at Otjijandjasemo’.²⁹⁰ In the early 1900s, Angolan Trekboers hunting ‘in small groups of usually less than ten well-armed hunters’ conducted elephant hunts on horseback, and shot around 300 hippos ‘along the lower Kunene’ for lucrative hippo-hide sjamboks (whips), leading to the almost complete demise of this population.²⁹¹ They reportedly came down as far as the Hoanib River to hunt elephant; although the ‘names chiselled out on stones in the Khowareb Schlucht’ in 1916 could also be by Union of South Africa military personnel in World War 1.²⁹²

Already in 1886 Dr Göring, first appointed Imperial Commissioner for ‘the SWA Protection territory’, warned about ‘reckless hunting’ caused by demand for ostrich feathers, hides and ivory.²⁹³ In 1892 the German colonial administration began to restrict ivory exports from south-west Africa’s coastal harbours.²⁹⁴ Regulations for commercial hunting were also issued in this year, such that anyone wishing to hunt with horses, draught animals or pack animals had to purchase an annual permit; with the hunting of female and young animals (for elephants and ostriches) prohibited, and an annual closed season set for ostriches (from 1 August to 31 October, extended to 31 November in 1896).²⁹⁵ In 1902, the first government ordinance for controlling hunting was proclaimed—Ordinance Concerning the Exercise of Hunting in German South-West Africa Protected Areas (*Verordnung betreffend Jagd der Ausübung der Jagd in Deutsch-Südwest Afrika Schutzgebiete*)—reportedly signed by Governor von Estorff.²⁹⁶ Joubert writes that,

[c]ertain areas were closed to hunting (these areas were claimed as game reserves by Governor von Lindequist in 1907 [see below]), and it was furthermore illegal to set any form of traps or snares. The Territory was divided into districts (later to become magisterial districts) and each district had an official known as a District Chief. This District Chief had the authority to enforce hunting seasons of varying duration for various game species depending on circumstances in his district every year.²⁹⁷

As historian Marie Muschalek documents, hunting and nature protection laws were enforced in these years by policemen (the *Landespolizei*), who were also encouraged to acquire hunting licences for supplementing their diet with meat, and for gaining proficiency in aiming at moving targets.²⁹⁸

These regulations were intended to protect so-called game as a ‘financial resource’, and made provision ‘for the potential establishment of game reserves, if the hunting regulations were not

287 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63)

288 In Rizzo (2012: 39)

289 In 1900 Lieutenant Franke presented Kakurukouje / Kasupi with a gun that became known as *ombandururwa*, making him the agent for German administration in Kaokoland (Bollig 1997: 26, 1998: 170; Miescher 2012: 33); reportedly in the hope of encouraging him to venture to southern Angola in order to convince other Herero (Himba or Tjimba) to cross the Kunene into German South West Africa (Bollig & Heinemann 2002: 278; Rizzo 2012: 50).

290 In Rizzo (2012: 39–40, 49–50)

291 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63–64) referencing von Moltke (2003[1943]: 222, 289, 331, 43)

292 Schoeman (2007: 14), Duncan Gilchrist, pers. comm., 2024

293 Esterhuyse (1968: 108)

294 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63)

295 von François (1899: 107), Joubert (1974: 35), Miescher (2009: 98)

296 Joubert (1974: 35)

297 *Ibid.*

298 Muschalek (2020[2019]: 101, 87–88, and sources therein)

sufficient'.²⁹⁹ Indeed, travelling in the vicinity of Namutoni and Etosha Pan in late 1903, Paul Rohrbach observed that '[t]he whole southern side [of Etosha Pan] is to become a game reserve'.³⁰⁰ Subsistence hunting continued to be allowed for Indigenous peoples—and in any case was very difficult to control—within what was understood to be “their territories”. At the same time, colonial actors such as Rohrbach were already elevating colonial-settler relationships with wildlife over African practices.³⁰¹

In 1909, some amendments were made to the 1902 game/hunting ordinance, making:

provision for the Governor to give permission for any of the protected game to be shot for “economic or scientific reasons”. A general closed hunting season from “November to the end of February” also came into force, although the District Chief still had the authority to shorten or lengthen the hunting season according to conditions in his district. One also had to obtain the permission of landowners to hunt on their land.³⁰²

Overall, though, this ordinance remained in force until the occupation of the territory by South African forces in 1915 in the context of World War 1, when E.H.L. Gorges was appointed Governor of the Military Regime,³⁰³ and technically it was still in force until the new Union of South Africa legislation of 1921 (see Chapter 2).

It is in the wake of the German colonial war that a series of three ‘Game Reserves’ (*Wildschutzgebiet*) were proclaimed,³⁰⁴ through Proclamation No. 88, issued on 22 March 1907 by the Imperial Governor of Deutsch Südwestafrika, Dr Friedrich von Lindequist.³⁰⁵ Economic motivations were clearly articulated in the explanatory paper for establishing the Game Reserves:

[e]verybody knows how much economic value game has in the country. In some cuisines, only game is served as fresh meat. Also the utility value of the skins for blankets and for making straps and whips is known to everyone. Unfortunately, it is impossible to make statistics, but if one wanted to calculate the many hundredweights of game captured in the country every year on the basis of average slaughter prices, it would be estimated to be more than 200,000 m [marks]. If you take this sum as an annual pension, the capital involved would mean a fortune of many millions of dollars that we have in our game stock. We all receive this pension free of charge from the country, and so our wildlife provides a very significant part of our common wealth, which every inhabitant of the reserve should be scrupulous about protecting, as it is in the interest of every individual. [...] The benefits that the game reserves would bring to the country would be as follows: centres would be created where game would have to be moved from the grazing areas there and would be brought to farms where it could be shot and exploited. African game is very variable and so the supply of game from the reserves could be extended to areas far from the reserves. [...] The reserves indicated as 1-3 include areas which, for the most part, are not, or temporarily not, suitable for farming. Farms which are located within the reserves or which would later be sold, for example, enjoy the exemptions of § 7.³⁰⁶

Of interest here is the emphasis on game as an economic resource: the focus was on possibilities for translocating game to settler farms ‘where it could be shot and exploited’, with a converse emphasis on keeping game reserve areas free of farming. Of the proclaimed reserves, Game Reserve No. 2 (Figure 1.17)—at the time, the largest conservation area in the world—stretched from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast in the north-west, and included Kaokoveld (today’s northern Kunene Region); thereby removing the option of settlement by white farmers in this area.³⁰⁷ Hunting was prohibited in the Game Reserves ‘without written permission of the district office’; vehicle traffic was also

299 ZBU MII C1 in Dieckmann (2007a: 74); also Bridgeford (2018: 12)

300 Rohrbach (1909: 57)

301 *Ibid.*, p. 67

302 Joubert (1974: 35)

303 *Ibid.*

304 Botha (2005: 174)

305 Bridgeford (2018: 12)

306 ZBU MII,E.1, in Dieckmann (2007a: 75–76)

307 Bollig (1997: 19). Game Reserve No. 1 was located north-east of Grootfontein including ‘protected game in the Omuramba Omutako’ and Game Reserve No. 3 was south of the Swakop River and east of the British enclave of

prohibited.³⁰⁸ Lieutenant Adolff Fischer, commander of Fort Namutoni at the time, became the first warden of Game Reserve No. 2,³⁰⁹ reporting in 1912 that lion were heard here again after their decline due to hunting.³¹⁰ It was later noted that,

[i]nitially, the definition of Etosha's boundaries made little impact on the movement of wild animals, except for the legal nicety that after crossing a mapped line they were not protected. Physically the boundaries consisted of surveyed points and, later, cleared fire-breaks along some of them. Migratory herds were therefore unrestrained in their movement along traditional routes.³¹¹

It is also unlikely that the diverse African peoples living throughout so-called Game Reserve No. 2 had any idea ‘that they were now inhabiting the world’s largest protected area’,³¹² or that their mobilities were initially affected in any significant way by the Reserve’s proclamation specifically.



Fig. 1.17 Boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1907. Map: © Ute Dieckmann, data: Proclamations NAN, Atlas of Namibia Team 2022. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

At this time, the presence of Haillom in the eastern parts of Game Reserve No. 2 was tolerated with the suggestion that more Bushmen from outside the reserve could be settled near Namutoni: the prohibition of hunting in this area applied only to hunting with guns, but not to the use of bows and arrows.³¹³ Diverse otjiHerero- and Khoekhoegowab-speaking residents also remained in the north-west part of the Game Reserve, as well as south of its southern boundary (see Chapters 13 and 14), as directly observed in the comprehensive tour of 'Kaokoveld' by Major Manning in 1917.³¹⁴ As Eugene Joubert writes, 'nature conservation' was clearly 'actively practised' during this period of German occupation, through 'the formulation of hunting laws and the proclamation of game reserves'.³¹⁵

Walvis Bay (Bridgeford 2018: 13), later becoming the Namib Game Reserve (Botha 2005: 182), and now the Namib-Naukluft National Park.

308 Bridgeford (2018: 12)

309 Dieckmann (2007a: 75), and references therein; also Berry (1980: 53)

310 Bridgeford (2018: 12)

311 Berry (1997: 4)

312 Bollig (2020: 109)

313 ZBU W II B.2, 15.10.1908 in Dieckmann (2007a: 77)

314 Discussed in detailed in Hayes (2000), Rizzo (2012) and Sullivan (2022: 5–7)

315 Joubert (1974: 36)

1.4 Brief conclusion

The shift from pre-colonial circumstances to colonisation and colonial land control—including for conservation—was clearly very dramatic. By the beginning of World War 1, Indigenous Namibians had been radically disembedded from the land, murdered in droves, or otherwise transformed into a proletariat that laboured for the new colonial regime.³¹⁶ Indigenous fauna had been very negatively impacted through commercial hunting primarily by colonists, facilitated by the availability of firearms. The management and governance of so-called game throughout the territory had been appropriated by the state, and placed into the hands of militarised police. These are the circumstances taken up by the incoming British Protectorate and South African administration after 1915, as considered in detail in Chapter 2.

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2. Spatial severance and nature conservation: Apartheid histories in Etosha-Kunene

Ute Dieckmann, Sian Sullivan and Selma Lendelvo

Abstract

We review conservation policy and legislation and its impacts under the territory's post-World War 1 administration from Pretoria, prior to the formalisation of an Independent Namibia in 1990. We trace the history of nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene during the times of South African government. In the initial phase “game preservation” was not high on the agenda of the South African administration, which focused instead on white settlement of the territory, requiring a continuous re-organisation of space. After World War 2, the potential of tourism and the role of “nature conservation” for the economy was given more attention. Fortress conservation was the dominant paradigm, leading to the removal of local inhabitants from their land. Shifting boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 characterised the 1950s up to the 1970s: part of Game Reserve No.2 became Etosha Game Park in 1958 and finally Etosha National Park in 1967, which in its current size was completely fenced in 1973. The arid area along the coast was proclaimed the Skeleton Coast National Park in 1971. Alongside these changes, new allocations of land following the ideal of apartheid or “separate development” were made, “perfecting” spatial-functional organisation with neat boundaries between “Homelands” for local inhabitants, the (white) settlement area and game/nature. Land, flora and fauna, and people of various backgrounds were treated as separable categories to be sorted and arranged according to colonial needs and visions. A new impetus towards participatory approaches to conservation began to be initiated in north-west Namibia in the 1980s, prefiguring Namibia's post-Independence move towards community-based conservation.

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, in 1907 the German colonial administration proclaimed a large area of north-west Namibia, which we are calling “Etosha-Kunene”, as one of three Game Reserves in German South-West Africa. This area was by no means an “untamed wilderness” but rather inhabited by Indigenous groups speaking different languages, with a diversity of animal and plant species, waters, soils, and so forth. The proclamation of Game Reserve No. 2 can be seen as the beginning of a long and varied history of colonial nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene with shifting objectives, policies and practices that had tremendous influence on its human and beyond-human inhabitants.

In this chapter, we trace the history of nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene during the post-World War 1 South African administration of “South West Africa” (SWA), formally from 1920–1990. In the initial phase (Section 2.2), nature conservation was not high on the agenda of the South West African Administration (SWAA). The focus changed gradually from the 1950s when white settlement of the territory had almost reached its limits, and nature conservation and its potential for tourism and for the economy were given more attention (Section 2.3). During the 1960s, the appointment of the Commission of Enquiry into South-West Africa Affairs (called the Odendaal Commission after its Chairman Frans Hendrik “Fox” Odendaal) changed the direction to some extent (Section 2.4). The Odendaal Plan entailed perfecting spatial-functional organisation with neat boundaries between “homelands” for the various local inhabitants, the (white) settlement area and “game”/nature. This re-organisation of space and its partly unforeseen effects necessitated more “nature management”

and “game farming”, and led to increasing economic dependency, especially of those who were not allocated a “homeland” (e.g. Hailom). “Kaokolanders” (ovaHimba, ovaHerero, ovaTjimba, Dhimba, and others¹) and oshiWambo-speakers retained access to former “Reserve-lands” (which were expanded in the case of “Kaokoland”). The new “homeland” of Damaraland (re)connected several former “Native Reserves” (Okombahe, Otjohorongo, Fransfontein, Sesfontein) inhabited by Damara/#Nūkhoen, ovaHerero and Nama. All were subjected to heavy restrictions on mobility and property ownership.

Chapters 1 and 2 thereby provide an outline of colonial histories and legacies, the re-organisation of spaces, and the reshuffling of human and non-human inhabitants in Etosha-Kunene, comprising the conservation legacy Namibia faced after Independence in 1990, as considered in Chapter 3.

2.2 1915 until the 1940s: The initial phase of South African administration—spatial organisation, settlement and game preservation

2.2.1 Spatial organisation: The red line, “native reserves” and settlement

German administration in SWA was terminated during World War 1 by the peace treaty of Khorab in 1915, when South Africa imposed martial law on the former German colony.² The German Proclamation of 1907 regarding game reserves was repealed by Ordinance 1 of 1916, which amended and reconfirmed the borders of Game Reserve No. 2.³ Alongside this ordinance, Proclamation 15 of 1916 decreed that no person can ‘cross the line marking the Police Zone [i.e. the southern and central parts of the territory under formal colonial government] without permission’.⁴

After the German surrender in 1915, a large number of people classified as ovaHimba, ovaHerero, ovaTjimba and Nama under the leadership of Vita Thom and Muhona Katiti (see Chapter 1) returned with their cattle from southern Angola to the Kaoko area,⁵ causing disruption and the dislocation of local communities. Subsequently, Major Charles N. Manning, the first Resident Commissioner of Ovamboland, undertook two administrative journeys into north-west Namibia in 1917 and 1919, continuing the pre-existing German impetus of government and control based on a typical suite of statecraft technologies. These included: reducing the availability of firearms;⁶ controlling the hunting of game; demarcating ethnic groups and identifying political leaders associated with them;⁷ and controlling movement and trade.⁸ Part of his mission was to disarm inhabitants of the area and to make ‘it clear that local hunting and trading in game products were to be unacceptable’.⁹

In 1920, South Africa was granted a League of Nations Mandate to administer South-West Africa, providing a safer foundation for the administration’s future policy. The administration was now less dependent on international opinion and could follow its actual colonial interests and the requirements of a settler economy. With the change of government, the Kaoko Land and Mining

1 Friedman (2014[2011])

2 Dierks (1999: 93)

3 Dieckmann (2007a: 119)

4 Silvester *et al.* (1998: 3)

5 Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 14), Bollig (1997: 19)

6 *Ibid.*, p. 22

7 Rizzo (2012: 16)

8 See discussion in Hayes (2000), Rizzo (2012) and Sullivan (2022). Manning’s journey is mapped and annotated on the map linked here: <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>

9 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 66)

Company (*Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft*, KLMG, see Chapter 1) was formally nullified:¹⁰ '[o]nly four farms had been surveyed and sold and they were never occupied'.¹¹

The border of the Police Zone became clearly defined in the Prohibited Areas Proclamation 26 of 1928. Established under German colonial rule initially as a cordon of military-veterinary stations to control human and livestock mobilities following the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 (Chapter 1), by 1907 it was represented as blue line on a map,¹² becoming a red line drawn on maps of the South West Africa Administration (SWAA).¹³ Henceforth, the Police Zone border became known as the Red Line which,

physically mark[ed] the transition between "white" European southern Africa and the "black" interior, between that which was "healthy" and that deemed "diseased" [...] the line drawn between what the colonial power defined as "civilization" and what it considered "the wilderness".¹⁴

The Red Line was 'reinforced by a chain of police outposts placed at intervals along its length'.¹⁵ For Kaokoveld in the north-west, regulations were administered from Ondangwa and 'enforced by numerous police patrols into the area'.¹⁶ The Red Line functioned increasingly as a veterinary border,¹⁷ not only separating settlers from "natives", but also aimed at keeping livestock populations on both sides apart from each other.

In addition to the Red Line from east to west, other measures for the spatial segregation of inhabitants were established. A Native Reserves Commission (the body responsible for developing segregation as policy) was set up in 1920, recommending that:

(i) the country should be more clearly segregated into black and white settlement areas; (ii) squatting on white farms should be prevented; (iii) there should be more efficient control of the reserves; (iv) reserves which were recognized by German treaties should be maintained but the temporary reserves established during the military period should be closed; (v) new reserves (which did not disturb "vested rights") should be established; and (vi) further land should be earmarked for further extension of these reserves.¹⁸

A few "native reserves" had been established by the German administration, but the number was now extended with reserves set up in most of the settler farming districts. In Etosha-Kunene, the German "native reserves" of Sesfontein and Fransfontein were retained, with some farms north and north-west of Outjo serving as reserves in the 1920s and early 1930s. The farm Aimab, for example, was used as an "Ovambo reserve" until the 1920s,¹⁹ and Otjeru, originally including several farms, was also an Ovambo reserve from German times until the late 1930s.²⁰ In the 1930s, these reserves were dissolved²¹ and their inhabitants had to move to Fransfontein, native reserves in other districts, or outside the Police Zone, unless they took up regular employment.²² In 1923, three native reserves were established in Game Reserve No. 2, in the north-east of Kaokoveld near the Kunene River, with different 'chiefs of Kaokoland's pastoral population': namely (from west to east)

¹⁰ Hayes (1998: 173)

¹¹ Rizzo (2012: 16). This nullification apparently caused 'a major lawsuit against the South African government in the high court of the Völkerbund in Geneva' (Bollig 1997: 23); also Hesse (1906)

¹² Miescher (2009: 84 and map)

¹³ Miescher (2012: 2)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Bollig (1997: 28)

¹⁷ Details in Miescher (2009: ch. 4)

¹⁸ Emmett (1999: 101)

¹⁹ NAN, LAN 579, 1379, Klein Omburo nr. 148, Outjo: General File, 18.8.1920, Magistrate, Outjo, to Secretary, Windhoek, in Dieckmann (2013: 259)

²⁰ Established for oshiWambo-speaking people, although other language groups stayed there too—for more details see Miescher (2006), also Miescher (2009: 236ff)

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Schnegg (2007: 258)

Kakurukouye, Vita Thom and Muhona Katiti.²³ The Native Reserves Commission also defined the conditions for movement between native reserves, farms and urban areas. The reserves provided a necessary source of labour for settlers. Bushmen were not assigned any land, because the Native Reserves Commission considered ‘that “the Bushmen problem [...] must be left to solve itself”, and “any Bushmen found within the area occupied by Europeans should be amenable to all the laws”’.²⁴

The native reserve policy south of the Red Line was closely connected to the settlement policy. Since the early 1920s, South Africa was interested in relocating poor white South African citizens to its new colony, and therefore set up a settlement programme offering extraordinarily favourable conditions: munificent provisions for loans, low minimal capital requirements and help with transportation into the area.²⁵ New laws to regulate the flow of labour and control the Indigenous population were imported from South Africa.²⁶ The Masters and Servants Proclamation (no. 2 of 1916 and amendments) aimed at the ‘systematization, formalization and centralization of labour relations’,²⁷ and the Vagrancy Proclamation (25 of 1920 and amendments) made it an offence for black people to move around in the Police Zone, unless they could show ‘visible lawful means of support’, set at either 10 cattle or 50 small stock.²⁸

At the end of the 1920s, about 1,900 Afrikaners who had earlier trekked from South Africa to Angola (see Chapter 1), were offered the possibility to move to South West Africa. The majority were first resettled in the so-called Osire Block, east of Otjiwarongo, but in 1937 many of them moved to the Gurugas Block in the north-west of Outjo District (now in Kunene Region),²⁹ where farming conditions were better.³⁰ This resettlement happened despite the fact that in the mid-1930s, the Land Settlement Commission had to admit that the generous settlement policy, initiated in 1920 and offering extensive aid to the farmers, was largely responsible for the unsound position in which the farmers often found themselves, as they had often overcapitalised their operations and lived beyond their means. Therefore, from 1935 onwards, farms were usually allocated for a period of one year without financial support, the capability of a farmer to manage the land during the first year being decisive for prospective tenure.³¹

The Annual Report on Land Resettlement of 1937 stated that:

[t]he rate of progress of land settlement at present cannot be maintained much longer, as most of the land suitable for settlement purposes has been disposed of. There are un-surveyed areas in the Outjo, Swakopmund, Maltahöhe and Warmbad districts which it is proposed to cut up into farms during the course of this year, and these holdings will be made available for settlement purposes. When these have been disposed of there will remain very little land for further settlement.³²

Despite the concerns stated in the report, more land was made available until the early 1960s in the Outjo and Grootfontein districts through shifting the police zone and Game Reserve No. 2 boundaries and de-proclaiming Game Reserve No. 1 (see Section 2.3.2):³³ the north-westerly extension of the settler farming area is reviewed in Chapter 13.

Increasing settlement had severe consequences for local inhabitants in Etosha-Kunene, both north and south of the Red Line. Many were driven from their land south of the Red Line in order to make space for white settlement.³⁴ At the end of the 1920s, for example, a major portion of

23 Bollig (1997: 24, 26), Bollig & Heinemann (2002: 280), Rizzo (2012: 3)

24 In Gordon (1992: 91)

25 Silvester *et al.* (1998: 14)

26 Dieckmann (2007a: 117)

27 Emmett (1999: 76)

28 Dieckmann (2007a: 125)

29 NAN LAN 1/1/89 53, Vol IV, Dieckmann (2007b: 162, 2013: 260)

30 Dierks (1999: 105)

31 Emmett (1999: 94f)

32 LAN 1/1/89 31, 53 Vol. III, cited in Dieckmann (2013: 260)

33 Kambatuku (1996), Sullivan (1996), Dieckmann (2013: 260)

34 Bollig (1997: 7, 25)

southern ‘Kaokoland’ Herero were forcibly removed from an area around Okavao situated today within Etosha National Park (ENP), north-westwards to Ombombo in the south-eastern part of Kaokoveld,³⁵ so as to make the Police Zone border impenetrable for people and livestock:³⁶ see Chapter 14. In total, 1,201 people were removed, together with 7,289 cattle and 22,176 sheep and goats.³⁷ In the SWA Annual Report of 1930 it was thus reported that,

[c]hanges in regard to the settlements of natives have recently been carried out in the Southern Kaokoveld. Scattered and isolated native families, particularly [but not only] Hereros, have been moved to places where it is possible to keep them under observation and control. With few exceptions, these natives are well satisfied with the new localities. They also realize the advantage of being controlled by one chief. [...] All stock has been moved north over a considerable area in order to establish a buffer zone between the natives in the Kaokoveld and the occupied parts of the Territory which remain free of the disease [lungsickness].³⁸

Strict boundary controls in the north-west protected the commercial farming areas, such that any move into the Kaokoveld required ‘a pass from the local administration’ and ‘Kaokolanders’ had to apply for passes to the police post at Swartbooisdrift/Tjimuhaka on the Kunene River: these applications were sent on for approval ‘to the office of the Native Commissioner at Ondangwa’, with movement of livestock across international and internal boundaries prohibited.³⁹

Further east, in the Outjo and Grootfontein area, the so-called “Bushman problem” that began under the German colonial regime (see Chapter 1) continued to trouble the administration: a number of proclamations were either newly enacted or amended to better handle the problem. Proclamation 11 of 1927 sought to prevent squatting by limiting the number of people allowed to reside on a farm to five ‘native families’.⁴⁰ The Vagrancy Proclamation (32 of 1927) was also amended,⁴¹ and prison terms for vagrancy were *inter alia* increased from three to 12 months. The Arms and Ammunition Proclamation was revised to include Bushman bows and arrows under the definition of firearms, making their possession henceforth illegal (by Government Notice 2 of 1928); yet this proclamation seemed to lack the necessary precision for extensive implementation. No fees for licences were ever fixed, nor did Bushmen ever bother to apply for licences.⁴² During the 1930s and 1940s, discussions about where to resettle the Bushmen took place with different suggestions of “Bushman reserves”. One suggestion was of a “Bushman reserve” overlapping Game Reserve No. 2, with the Assistant Secretary of the Administration suggesting the establishment of a reserve for Bushmen should go hand in hand with maintenance of the Game Reserve, and that Bushmen should have access to game. It was thought that if Bushmen were allowed to roam and hunt over portions of the Game Reserve, it might provide a solution to the “problem” of the Bushmen’s nomadic lifestyle,⁴³ although in 1941 this initiative was dropped.

Yet, the idea of keeping “natives” and settlers in separate areas was not only impeded by the mobility of local inhabitants with or without livestock, but also due to the grazing needs of settler farmers with their livestock, especially during periods of drought. In the 1930s, the South African Administration contemplated settling white farmers in the “neutral zone” north of the Police Zone border,⁴⁴ from which local inhabitants had been progressively cleared since the early days of establishing a militarised veterinary cordon during the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 (see Chapter 1). In the early 1940s, the administration started awarding grazing licences north of the

35 Heydinger (2021: 11, 21) citing Hoole (2008)

36 Bollig (1998: 166, 2006: 59)

37 Bollig (1998: 166, 170)

38 NAN SWAA (1930: 14); see discussion in Sullivan (2022: 16)

39 Bollig (1997: 25)

40 Dieckmann (2007a: 125)

41 NAN SWAA A50/27, 1927, Proclamation no. 32.

42 Gordon (1992: 129–30), Dieckmann (2007a: 125–26)

43 SWAA A 50/67, n.d. (mid of 1940), in Dieckmann (2007a: 144)

44 Bollig (1998: 166)

Red Line for which farmers could apply (see Chapter 13).⁴⁵ Farmers were not only dependent on sufficient grazing but also on cheap farm labourers. Ovambo and other migrant workers coming from the north strongly rejected farm labour due to poor wages, rations and bad treatment as well as the need to split up into smaller groups. They were therefore mostly channelled to mines, railway construction and the Works Department, at least prior to the depression in the early 1930s.⁴⁶ Bushmen and Damara/!Nūkhoen living in the settlement area had to fill the farm worker gap.

2.2.2 Nature conservation and Game Reserve No. 2

As can be seen, the settlement programme was the focus of the South African administration up to the 1950s, with nature conservation playing a relatively minor role.⁴⁷ Joubert comments on the years from 1915–1947 that,

virtually no progress was made regarding conservation as a whole. Various Ordinances were proclaimed but enforcement in the vast area of SWA was virtually impossible, especially since no officials directly responsible for nature conservation existed.⁴⁸

Nature conservation during this period mainly implied “game preservation” and was embedded in the whole colonial enterprise, meaning that the history of nature conservation needs to be read in conjunction with these other measures of spatial-political organisation. Sometimes interests related to nature conservation had to be negotiated with other branches of colonial administration due to contradicting objectives; sometimes interests went in the same direction and initiatives taken were mutually dependent.

In 1921, the Union’s first Game Preservation Proclamation (13 of 1921) for South West Africa was issued, based on the legislation of the original German administration of 1902.⁴⁹ This Proclamation made the South African police responsible for regulating hunting and game protection,⁵⁰ as had also been the case in the German colonial period (see Chapter 1).⁵¹ The proclamation was repealed and replaced in 1926 by Game Preservation Ordinance (5 of 1926).⁵² The list of protected game species was extended,⁵³ hunting on crown land ‘with exception of dignitaries and officials on duty in rural areas’ became prohibited, and hunting restrictions on settler farms were applied.⁵⁴ In 1928, the Prohibited Areas Proclamation mentioned above re-proclaimed Game Reserves Nos. 1, 2 and 3 and defined their borders.⁵⁵ The post of Game Ranger of Game Reserve No. 2, up to that date assumed by a Captain Nelson, was abolished and the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland, Carl Hugo Linsingen (“Cocky”) Hahn (son of the Rev. Carl Hugo Hahn mentioned in Chapter 1), took over and acted as a part-time Game Warden.⁵⁶ Through border changes of Game Reserve No. 2, 47 farms in the south-east of Etosha were either created or existing farms cut out of the game reserve (see Figure 2.1).⁵⁷ Only in 1935 was private farm ownership within the boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 finally terminated (with one exception—a small piece of land close to Okaukuejo).⁵⁸

45 Levin & Goldbeck (2013: 14); also Kambatuku (1996), Sullivan (1996)

46 Emmett (1999: 176, 188)

47 Joubert (1974: 35), Botha (2013: 235)

48 Joubert (1974: 36)

49 *Ibid.*, p. 35, Germishuys & Staal (1979: 113)

50 Bridgeford (2018: 14)

51 Muschalek (2020[2019]: 101)

52 Joubert (1974: 35), Germishuys & Staal (1979: 113)

53 *Ibid.*, p. 113

54 Botha (2005: 179)

55 NAN SWAA A511/6 Game Reserves–Boundaries and Fencing (1927–1954): Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 1928, second schedule: Definition of Game Reserves.

56 Dieckmann (2007a: 145–46)

57 *Ibid.*, p. 145

58 *Ibid.*, p. 75, Berry (1980: 53)



Fig. 2.1 Map of the Game Reserve No. 2 boundary in 1907 (brown border) and 1928 (blue border), with the police zone border of 1937 (red), freehold farmland in this year (shaded in brown) and main roads (brown lines). © Ute Dieckmann, data: Proclamations NAN, Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Although the focus in the context of nature conservation during these years was mainly on wildlife, in 1937 the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (19 of 1937) was gazetted, including for the first time the protection of plants (other than *Welwitschia mirabilis*, which had been protected since 1916).⁵⁹ Combining flora and fauna, this legislation implied that the administration had started to move towards a more holistic approach of “nature conservation” embedded in global discourses.⁶⁰ World War 2, however, stopped any further developments in this regard for almost a decade.

The south-eastern area of Game Reserve No. 2, where Hai||om continued to be accepted as inhabitants, was called Namutoni Game Reserve, Etosha Game Reserve or Etosha Pan Game Reserve in the 1920s until to the 1940s: according to Miescher the name was streamlined to Etosha Pan Game Reserve in 1948.⁶¹ Officers from the respective police stations reported on this area in their monthly reports. In the 1920s, around 1,500 Hai||om were estimated to be living around Etosha Pan.⁶² At the time, the boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 were not marked well, let alone fenced. In these years, a number of Hai||om from Etosha Game Reserve were employed in the Bobas mine near Tsumeb, or as seasonal workers on farms.⁶³

Some problems with regard to the frontier situation and the control of mobility had already been noticed in the early years of the South African administration. For example, the game warden of Namutoni remarked in 1924:

[s]tock thefts on the border of the Reserve and Outjo district have been going on for some years. Bushmen residing for a certain period of the year in the district of Outjo cross over to the Reserve for a time, they are all over the country, even entering the Kaokoveld.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Joubert (1974: 36)

⁶⁰ In 1933, colonial powers had agreed upon the ‘Convention Relative to the Preservation of Fauna and Flora in their Natural State’, one of the first nature conservation agreements for Africa. The Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom were among the signatories (van Heijnsbergen 1997: 16).

⁶¹ E.g. see NAN NAO 33/1; Miescher (2009: 312). To avoid confusion about these various names we consistently use the term Etosha Game Reserve when referring to this area in this period.

⁶² Lebzelter (1934: 83)

⁶³ SWAA 50/26, 20.8.1926, in Dieckmann (2007a: 155)

⁶⁴ ADM 128 5503/1, 30.1.1924, in Dieckmann (2007a: 145)

Hunting by Hai||om within Etosha Game Reserve was generally not regarded as a problem, as indicated in game warden reports in 1926: '[t]he amount of game shot by Bushmen is by no means decreasing the game'.⁶⁵ Certain limitations were officially in place: no firearms, no dogs, no shooting of giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*), eland (*Taurotragus oryx*), impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) and 'loeffelhund' (bat-eared fox, *Otocyon megalotis*),⁶⁶ although hunting with rifles occasionally took place.⁶⁷ Hai||om in the reserve were also in possession of livestock but there was uncertainty among the officers about how much livestock was allowed: it was decided then that "Bushmen" should not keep more than 10 head of large and 50 head of small stock per person within the reserve.⁶⁸ In October 1937 the monthly return of Namutoni reported 84 cattle, eight donkeys (excluding 40 donkeys of an Ovambo man at Osohama) and 92 goats in the vicinity of Namutoni, with two men reported to have 20 and 23 head of cattle, exceeding the allowed number of 10 head of large stock per person.⁶⁹ In 1939, the number of livestock of Hai||om at only three waterholes in the vicinity of Namutoni, within the game reserve, was reported to be 98 cattle, four donkeys, and 204 goats. The Station Commander asked the men to reduce their stock, which reportedly took place afterwards.⁷⁰

The separation of game from livestock had evidently not yet taken place. The Red Line ran along the southern edge of the pan, while the southern border of the game reserve—marking also the northern border of settlement—was situated further south. Hai||om were partly integrated into the colonial system and in general not regarded as "proper Bushmen". Lebzelter observed in the 1920s:

[t]hese people usually dress in European rags, use Christian names without actually being proselytised, but are always ready to dance for distinguished guests in their traditional clothes and have their picture taken. They are well on the way to becoming saloon bushmen and are gradually getting into the tourist business [...]⁷¹

Ironically though, they were portrayed as 'the African Bushmen' and 'the most primitive race on earth' by the Denver African Expedition,⁷² which visited the Etosha area from September 1925 until January 1926. The expedition's members claimed to have discovered 'the missing link' in the Hai||om residing there, making a film called 'The Bushman' and taking around 500 still photos.⁷³

Indeed, the number of Hai||om living in Etosha Game Reserve in the years before World War 2 is not clear. The monthly and annual reports were written by people responsible for different areas (e.g. Namutoni or Okaukuejo), which also included land outside the Game Reserve. Additionally, the accounts given are based entirely on estimates, since the officers were lacking detailed knowledge of Hai||om living in their areas.⁷⁴ The only 'complete' accounts for the Game Reserve were given in Hahn's annual reports. In 1942, for example, he estimated around 605–770 'Bushmen' to be living in Etosha Game Reserve.⁷⁵

Beyond the area of Hai||om habitation, in these years thousands of "Kaoko pastoralists", as well as Khoekhoegowab-speaking Puros Dama, !Narenin, ||Ubun and Nama, were also living within and moving through the Kaokoveld part of Game Reserve No. 2 (see Chapters 6, 12, 13 and 14). In the late 1930s to 1940s, Africans including 'BergDama' (Damara/#Nūkhoen) were repeatedly and forcibly moved out of the western areas between Hoanib and Ugab Rivers,⁷⁶ although inability

65 SWAA A50/26, 20.8.1926, in Dieckmann (2007a: 151)

66 NAO 33/1, 17.9.1928, in Dieckmann (2007a: 151)

67 *Ibid.*, p. 152

68 NAO 33/1, 10.8.1929, 17.10.1929, in Dieckmann (2007a: 153)

69 NAO 33/1 Monthly Return October 1937, in Dieckmann (2007a: 154)

70 *Ibid.*, p. 155

71 Lebzelter (1934: 82) in Gordon (2002: 221, 228, Gordon's translation)

72 Gordon (1997: 1)

73 Gordon (2002: 216)

74 Dieckmann (2003: 49–50)

75 NAO 11/1, Annual Report of the Native Commissioner Ovamboland 1942.

76 Miescher (2012: 152)

to police this remote area meant that people moved back as soon as the police presence left:⁷⁷ see Chapters 12 and 13. OvaHerero connections with landscapes to the west of Etosha Pan were also disrupted (see Chapter 14).⁷⁸ Correspondence in 1928 by Hahn to the administrator of SWA provides some indication of Hahn's thinking regarding the connections between local inhabitants, and conservation and tourism visions for Kaokoveld. Predating by some five decades proposals in the 1980–1990s for local people and ex-'poachers' to become 'Community Game Guards' (see Chapter 3), Hahn travelled in this year to the Kunene River in the vicinity of Ruacana Falls, designating 'the old and experienced Ovahimba hunter headman Ikandwa as an informal warden' to support 'the replenishment of game'.⁷⁹ Historian Patricia Hayes writes that Hahn:

wanted to transform the area into a sanctuary, which would offer "fine opportunities for tourists and sportsmen to shoot trophies under special licences and instructions". This tied in with wider objectives of policing cattle movements in the area and an attempt to stabilise groups in reserves in northern Kaokoland to act as a buffer with Angola. Hahn argued that the administration should proclaim it a reserve and protected area, and run it on similar lines to the Kruger National Park. It was capable of surpassing the best game reserve in South Africa [Kruger] and creating "a real tourists' paradise in SW [i.e. South West Africa]". Game was disappearing elsewhere except in the Namutoni Reserve (Etosha), but "the flat and almost colourless country is not in any way to be compared with the wonderful variety and grandeur all along the Kunene".⁸⁰

The idea to develop Game Reserve No. 2 or parts thereof along the model of the Kruger National Park had thus already started during the early phase of the South African Administration. In the 1930s, when tourism began to increase in the area around Etosha Pan, the idea was iterated for the Etosha Game Reserve. Hahn reported for the tourist season of 1937 that around 500 visitors had visited Okaukuejo:

[t]hese people [visitors] arrive there dusty and thirsty and there being no facilities for them to camp, they simply squat on his [the police sergeant stationed there] doorstep, with the result that out of sheer humanity he had to offer them a cup of coffee or tea, and some even ask for it. [...] As there is such a tremendous increase of visitors annually, I consider the time has come for the Administration to consider suitable camping provisions at this place [...] It is evident from the number of Union and foreign visitors visiting the pan, that its existence is becoming more and more known, and people who have visited the Kruger Park expect to find the same facilities here as exist there, consequently there is great disappointment when they come here.⁸¹

World War 2, however, put the realisation of any further development of the Game Reserve on hold.

2.2.3 Post-World War 2: Change of policy, reserves and settlement

After the war, extensive provision was made for the support of war veterans. Ex-soldiers were given land and could qualify for additional loans for such things as building houses and to purchase breeding stock. Part of Etosha Game Reserve was cut off and made available for settlement and the Police Zone border was shifted⁸² in order to provide more farmland for white settlers; boreholes were drilled and grazing licences could be obtained by interested settlers. A large amount of land in the western part of Outjo district—formerly one huge farm of 247,346 ha—was made accessible to settlers. Aruchab, as the farm was called, had been allotted to the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Company in 1924, which used it for cattle. In the second half of the 1940s, the farm land was

⁷⁷ Sullivan & Ganuses (2020: 309–11)

⁷⁸ Hoole (2008)

⁷⁹ Hayes (1998: 183–84), drawing on NAN A450 Vol. 14 4/1, Big Game in Ovamboland by C.H.L. Hahn, undated.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ NAN SWAA A 511/10 Etosha Pan Game Reserve Tourists Facilities, District Commandant, Omaruru, to the Commissioner SWA Police, 11.7.1938.

⁸² Proclamation 375 of 1947, Miescher (2009: 279–80)

surveyed and divided into about 40 farms, most of them allotted immediately afterwards.⁸³ Apart from the World War 2 ex-soldiers, settlers from the southern regions of Namibia moved to the district since the south had suffered from enduring drought.⁸⁴ Settlement and game conservation were at times in conflict. For instance, and in stark contrast to later policies, the Chairperson of the Game Preservation Commission reportedly responded to a request that game on white farms be declared the owner's property that this was 'preposterous', and that the mostly Afrikaner farmers 'would simply destroy game'.⁸⁵

Policy and practice regarding Game Reserve No. 2 also changed noticeably, probably due to reasons that included: the take-over by the National Party in South Africa and its policy of apartheid; an increasing interest in tourism; and a broader approach to nature conservation including the role of national parks. South African historian William Beinart notes that the concept of a National Park changed in the southern African context after World War 2, to increasingly denote land set aside for animals and plants and free of human habitation:

[i]nitially, the settler concept of a national park could allow for continued occupation by picturesque "native" people. But particularly after the Second World War, [...] a national park came to mean a preserve for plants and animals free of human habitation. [...] most of the people were removed and the park became a preserve for rangers, scientists and mostly white visitors.⁸⁶

This concept also found its way to Namibia but was not yet implemented in Etosha-Kunene, where thinking about how to deal with human inhabitants and protected areas remained ambiguous.

In 1947, Kaokoveld was proclaimed a native reserve (the Kaokoland Reserve) (expanding the three reserves in the north of the territory established with separate headmen in 1923—see Section 2.2.1), but remained part of Game Reserve No. 2 for the time being.⁸⁷ From this time onwards, Kaokoveld was administered from Opuwo (Ohopoho). Developments regarding tourism centred for the next decades on the area around Etosha Pan. In the same year, Andries A. Pienaar, an author of adventure stories set in the wild (known as Sangiro), was appointed as the first full-time additional Game Warden for South West Africa (additional to his role as the Secretary of State). He was supposed to write a book in order to promote the wildlife of the territory.⁸⁸ Stationed in Otjiwarongo, he was in charge of Game Reserve No. 2 which previously had been managed by the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland.⁸⁹

In 1948, and in a context in which Kruger National Park in South Africa had reached saturation point during peak tourism periods, a National Publicity Conference adopted a resolution for the 'developments of smaller National Parks', in which the conference urged the National Parks Boards, the SWAA, the Natal Provincial Administration, the Union Government Forest Department and the Orange Free State Provincial Administration:

to develop national parks (other than the Kruger National Park and the Hluhluwe Game Reserve, which are reasonably developed) so that they may be made accessible to tourists and thereby increase their knowledge and love of wild life.⁹⁰

Soon afterwards in 1949, an article on the 'Etosha Pan Game Reserve', prepared by an officer of the SWAA for a publisher in Johannesburg, stated:

83 Dieckmann (2013: 260)

84 *Ibid.*

85 Botha (2005: 174, 180)

86 Beinart (1989: 156)

87 Rizzo (2012: 1); also Owen-Smith (1972)

88 Berry (1997: 7)

89 de la Bat (1982: 14), Bridgeford (2018: 15)

90 NAN SWAA A 511/10 Etosha Pan Game Reserve: Tourist Facilities, South African Publicity Association to the Secretary of S.W.A., 22.1.1948.

[p]erhaps one should also mention the Bushmen, although nowadays they are no longer classed as “game”! They certainly fit into the picture and help to give to the Etosha Pan something of the atmosphere of the old wild Africa that is fast disappearing everywhere [...] ⁹¹

This idea to promote the ‘Bushman’ in Etosha as the ‘old wild Africa’, however, was not pursued further. ⁹²

Also in 1949, a Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen was appointed to ‘go into the question of the preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa thoroughly and to recommend what action the Administration should take in the matter’. ⁹³ This commission was not directly linked to nature conservation or the Etosha Game Reserve but rather more generally to ‘Bushman’ control and spatial segregation. Its impact on Hai||om was tremendous. P.J. Schoeman, who later became Game Warden of SWA, was a member (see Section 2.3.1): his ideas and involvement were crucial for developments to come. ⁹⁴ The establishment of the commission was motivated in the following way:

[w]hat the Administration wanted was to create conditions where the Bushmen would be able to lead their ordinary lives with a sufficiency of the necessities of life available for them, and where they would be given every opportunity to preserve their separate identity and thereafter to work out their own destiny with the sympathetic help of the Administration. ⁹⁵

Moreover, the commission was asked to make ‘a survey of vagrant Bushmen in the Police Zone and to make recommendations for placing them in Reserves’. ⁹⁶ The proposal of a ‘Bushman reserve’, already discussed in the 1930s, ⁹⁷ was on the agenda again, but now against the background of the apartheid system in South Africa. In their preliminary report, the commission again suggested a ‘Bushman reserve’ overlapping the Etosha Game Reserve, proposing a location south of ‘Ovamboland’, including the Etosha Pan and to its west: areas not regularly used by Hai||om due to the lack of permanent water. ⁹⁸

The investigations during two journeys of the commission led to the following description of Hai||om given in the report under the heading ‘Who are the Bushmen’:

[a]t all the places where the Heikum Bushmen were questioned, they informed us that before even the Europeans came to the territory they had already intermarried with the Ovambos, Damaras and Hottentots [Nama]. All that has remained Bushman amongst them is their wonderful folklore, their mode of livelihood (game and veldkos), their bows and arrows and a few tribal customs, amongst others, burial ceremonies, feast of the first fruits and the initiation ceremonies for girls. ⁹⁹

The ideal underlying these considerations and conclusions was evidently that people must be neatly sortable into clear-cut categories: a concept that had already led early explorers and colonisers to try and impose conceptual order upon a foreign and confusing human world, as discussed in Chapter 1. For Hai||om, it seems that an idea of purity counted against their “preservation”. Although the category “Bushman” is now often construed as a ‘myth’, ¹⁰⁰ the message underlying the commission’s description above is self-evident. Hai||om were not considered to be “prototypical Bushmen”, with the investigations concluding that it would not be worthwhile ‘to preserve either

91 NAN SWAA A511/1, 9.5.1949.

92 Dieckmann (2007a: 188). Later, however, this idea played out in the construction of ovaHimba as representative of an ‘old wild Africa’ (see, for example, Jacobsohn 1998[1990]).

93 NAN SWAA A 267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa, 1950: 2.

94 Dieckmann (2007a: 189)

95 NAN SWAA A 267/11/1. 1956. Native Affairs-Bushman Reserve. The justification for the appointment of the Odendaal Commission in the 1960s is strikingly similar to this emphasis on preserving separate identities (see Section 2.4).

96 NAN SWAA A 267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa, 1950: 2.

97 Dieckmann (2007a: 135–44)

98 NAN, map: San reserves proposed by the ‘Kommissie vir die Behoud van die Boesmanbevolking in Suidwes-Africa 1950’. Windhoek 1951.

99 NAN SWAA A267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa: 5-6.

100 Gordon (1992), Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000)

the Heikum or the Barrakwengwe [Khwe] as Bushmen’: ‘[i]n both cases the process of assimilation has proceeded too far’.¹⁰¹

2.3 1950s until 1969: The professionalisation of nature conservation, local inhabitants and shifting borders

The attention the administration placed on game, nature and the potential of both for tourism, increased gradually. By the 1950s, white settlement of the territory had almost reached its limits with environmental outcomes (for e.g. soil degradation in some contexts) becoming obvious,¹⁰² leading to game preservation/nature conservation being increasingly institutionalised and professionalised.¹⁰³ During this period, the general concept of a Game Reserve was refined, implying certain limitations mainly regarding hunting. The concept of Game Parks (later also covering National Parks) was also legalised and implemented, and the question of human habitation within protected areas was re-considered. All these efforts continued to be entangled in diverging and changing ideas from various sides as to how to develop the territory. In this section we focus first on changes in direction towards “nature conservation” (Section 2.3.1), followed by an elaboration of legal boundary changes in Game Reserve No. 2 leading to the establishment of Etosha National Park in 1967, again with further boundary changes (Section 2.3.2).

2.3.1 The institutionalisation of game preservation/nature conservation and the (incomplete) severance of people from parks

In 1951, Ordinance 11 on Game Preservation was issued, providing for the establishment of a Game Preservation and Hunting Board to advise the SWA Administrator. The ordinance included the appointment of game wardens as honorary or public service officers,¹⁰⁴ and involved regulation of hunting on freehold (white) farms including restrictions on the amount of game that could be taken, the length of the hunting season and penalties for infractions; although Article 27 allowed the administrator ‘to permit visiting dignitaries “to hunt any game in open season”’.¹⁰⁵ It appears ‘that Africans were generally allowed to utilise wildlife resources in their communal areas’ until restrictions were imposed by this Ordinance.¹⁰⁶

During the same year, hunter, writer and anthropologist P.J. Schoeman—a member of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa (see Section 2.2.3)—succeeded Pienaar (who had not managed to publish a book on wildlife), as Game Warden.¹⁰⁷ In 1952, Schoeman employed the painter and artist Dieter Aschenborn as an assistant game warden, stationed in Okaukuejo.¹⁰⁸ In 1953 he also appointed Bernabé de la Bat from the Cape, as a biologist to be stationed in Okaukuejo.¹⁰⁹ One can regard this moment as the start of a “scientification” of conservation efforts in Namibia. Amy Schoeman writes about de la Bat:

[t]he history of formal conservation in Namibia revolves largely around one man, Bernabe de la Bat, who was appointed biologist and then chief game warden in Etosha in the early fifties. De la Bat orchestrated the birth of the country’s first official conservation body and served as its director until the 1980s. With remarkable vision, courage and foresights, he created a rich legacy of game parks, reserves

101 NAN SWAA A267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa: 6.

102 Botha (2013: 237–38)

103 Joubert (1974), Botha (2005)

104 Bridgeford (2018: 16)

105 Botha (2005: 180)

106 *Ibid.*, p. 185

107 Berry (1997: 7)

108 Dieckmann (2001: 138–39)

109 de la Bat (1982: 15)

and resorts on which conservationists could build in the years to come. He also laid the cornerstone for tourism in Namibia.¹¹⁰

Also in 1953, however, P.J. Schoeman reported that tourists expressed more and more concern that the game in Etosha had decreased and become wilder, partly due to adjacent farmers' hunting activities, partly due to the increase in tourists, and partly due to dogs owned by Bushmen who were still allowed to live in the game reserve at this time.¹¹¹

In 1954, Game Warden Schoeman provided the first *Annual Report of the Division Game Preservation of S.W.A.*, covering the period between April 1953 and March 1954.¹¹² Schoeman starts his paragraph on Game Reserve No. 2 with the introductory sentence 'this area is also known as Etosha Pan Game Reserve',¹¹³ apparently ignoring the fact that Kaokoveld was also officially part of the Game Reserve (see Figure 2.1), but illustrating the focus of the administration in the 1950s. The report provides further insights into developments during this time, including the diverging interests of the different branches of the administration, and its author's opinion about lions (*Panthera leo*) and Hai||om as well as game numbers in the reserve. Schoeman mentions in this report that one of the first challenges he had to address was the intended northwards shift of the Red Line to 'deep in the Etosha pan'. He expressed the opinion that if the Red Line was moved according to plan,¹¹⁴ the actual bush area, which the wildlife needed for sheltered breeding time, as well as some of the best permanent waters between Okaukuejo and Namutoni, would be cut out from the game reserve. Schoeman noted that:

[i]t came down to the fact that a choice would have to be made between the interests of a number of farmers who would be able to get nice farms, and the preservation of the Etoshapan game reserve as something really worthwhile, because without such an ideal breeding place and good waters, the pan lost its "heart and womb".¹¹⁵

Reportedly, the Administration decided in favour of the game's future. After this decision, Schoeman started with development of the game reserve, establishing a rest camp at Okaukuejo (as decided in 1952), fire breaks, more boreholes, and so on.

In his report, Schoeman estimated that around 100 lions were living permanently in the Etosha Pan Game Reserve and noted with concern that lions were being poisoned on farms around Etosha. He hoped that with research and management the number of lions in Etosha might increase up to 1,000 in the next five years. He reckoned there was space for at least 3,000 lions in Etosha and stressed that they were essential for controlling the numbers of zebra (*Equus quagga burchellii*) (see Chapter 10) and wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*). Schoeman emphasised in the report that management (i.e. shooting/culling) was necessary to keep a balance between the different species; otherwise zebra and wildebeest would dominate. In fact, Schoeman was 'responsible for the controversial culling of large numbers of Burchell's zebra and wildebeest in the Etosha area' on the grounds that they were destroying vegetation.¹¹⁶ Remarkably, while not permitting Hai||om to hunt, his recommendations included the suggestion to shoot zebra and wildebeest to feed the

110 Schoeman (2007: 50)

111 NAN SWAA A 511/1, Game reserves general Game Reserve No. 2, 1953–54, Schoeman to the Secretary of SWA, 4.9.1953. See, for example, the chapter on 'Namutoni, the Etosha Pan and Okaukuejo' written by a visitor in these years by Newton (n.d.: 138–39).

112 NAN SWAA A 511/1 Game Reserves General, 18.5.1954 to 5.1956. Jaarsverslag van die Afdeling Wildbewing van S.W.A. (April 1953 to March 1954), henceforth NAN SWAA 511/1 Annual Report (1953–54).

113 NAN SWAA 511/1 Annual Report (1953–54: 2)

114 Reading Miescher's analysis of the Lardner-Burke Commission at the end of the 1940s, the Red Line was supposed to be kept along the southern border of Etosha Pan, but the area south of it was suggested to be de-proclaimed as a game reserve and opened as farmland (Miescher 2009: 276). Presumably Schoeman referred to these recommendations in favour of the settlers' land demands.

115 NAN SWAA 511/1 Annual Report 1953–54, translation from Afrikaans by Ute Dieckmann.

116 Bridgeford (2018: 16), de la Bat (1982: 15)

employed Bushmen and if necessary the lions too,¹¹⁷ a recommendation followed until at least the early 1960s. Read in the context of nature conservation developments at the time, his ideas suggest that the Etosha ecology increasingly had to be managed and “tamed”.

Under the subheading ‘Bushman in the game reserve’, Schoeman considered that around 500 Hailom were living in the game reserve in 1953, a fact that was about to change. He further reported that:

they all have dogs, and continue hunting with poisoned arrows. Their favourite settlements are in the bush areas between Okaukuejo and Namutoni, around the game’s drinking places. [...] at one time or another in the past they were granted permission to hunt zebras and blue wildebeest, but after an investigation by the Police and Game Conservation it was found that their favourite game were eland, hartebeest [*Alcelaphus buselaphus caama*] and gemsbok [*Oryx gazella*]. And these species are far too rare in the game reserve to be exterminated by Bushmen.¹¹⁸

There seems a certain irony in Schoeman’s attitude towards lions on the one hand and Bushmen on the other. Lions were welcomed, due in part to their ability to control the number of game in the reserve, while Hailom were to be removed as ‘game exterminators’. Schoeman’s statement above can be certainly read as a justification for later decisions to evict Hailom from Etosha.

In 1953—the same year the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen presented their recommendations with regard to the fate of Hailom residing in Etosha—the administration took the decision to expand and develop the game reserve as a sanctuary for game and for tourists.¹¹⁹ Shortly after, in 1954 the Hailom were evicted from the game reserve and had to choose to either move to Ovamboland or seek employment on the farms in the vicinity.¹²⁰ A few were allowed to stay and found employment at the police stations and, later, the rest camps in the park, but they were no longer allowed to stay in their old settlements close to the waterholes (also see Chapters 4, 15 and 16). Schoeman’s 1953–54 annual report reads that,

[i]n 1953, Sergeant le Roux of Namutoni and Dr. Schoeman asked the administration to remove these idlers and game exterminators [the Hailom living in the reserve], from the game park—with the exception of the few who are employed by game conservation and the police [...] It was immediately heard by the Administration, and in 1954, there were only a few groups left in the less accessible parts of the game reserve. However, there is a danger that some of the Bushmen who work on adjoining farms will from time to time run away to their hunting paradise, to hunt free again and cause wildfires. Wildlife conservation would greatly appreciate it if the necessary arrangements could be made by the Administration, in collaboration with the Police, to have such Bushmen arrested.¹²¹

A similar development took place regarding |Khumanin Damara/#Nūkhoen in the Khomas Hochland west of Windhoek. They had been removed in various steps from the de-proclaimed native reserve Aukeigas (!Aollaexas) since the 1930s to create space for Daan Viljoen Game Reserve as a weekend resort for white citizens of Windhoek.¹²² Indicating a growing use of ideas about conservation and recreation to justify evictions, in the 1950s more |Khumanin were evicted from Aukeigas and relocated several hundred kilometres away to the farm Sorris-Sorris in today’s Kunene Region on the Ugab (!U+gab) River; purchased by the administration to enlarge the Okombahe Reserve.¹²³

¹¹⁷ NAN SWAA 511/1 Annual Report 1953–54.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ NAN SWAA A 511/1, Game reserves general Game Reserve No. 2, 1953–54, 9.11.1953.

¹²⁰ Dieckmann (2007a: 186–204). See Dieckmann (2003) for a detailed description of the eviction process. The factors leading to the eviction were not only related to concerns about game populations and the tourist economy. Evidently, people who have been deprived of their former livelihoods and land are more likely to become willing workers than those who can continue to pursue a variety of livelihood strategies. White farmers in the vicinity were in urgent need of cheap farm labourers. Furthermore, the Etosha Game Reserve functioned as a buffer zone separating the Police Zone in the south from the “native areas” in the north (Miescher 2009).

¹²¹ NAN SWAA 511/1 Annual Report 1953–54, translation from Afrikaans by Ute Dieckmann.

¹²² Sullivan & Ganuses (2020: 307–8)

¹²³ Köhler (1959), First (1968: 35–6, 146)

This was a significantly more marginal area in terms of rainfall and productivity, and many of the promises for state assistance remained unmet.¹²⁴

The image of an “untamed wilderness”, highly appealing for tourists, henceforth excluded people, and the area around Etosha Pan was chosen to represent this image. Paradoxically, however, when employed for Kaokoveld this same idea seemed to include local inhabitants, namely ovaHimba.¹²⁵ In Etosha as well as other areas, people and game apparently had to be separated for the sake of game preservation.

For Kaokoveld, the situation was more complicated, being at the same time part of Game Reserve No. 2 and a Native Reserve administered by the Department of Native Affairs.¹²⁶ The problem caused by this ambiguous status became evident in a discussion that took place during the 1950s. A 1956 article published in the *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, entitled ‘Slaughter of game in Africa’s Largest Reserve Alleged’, followed a museum expedition to game reserves in South Africa, in which Dennis Woods, member of the Western Province branch of the Wildlife Protection Society of South Africa, took part. In the article his concerns were quoted, firstly about miners and prospectors causing ‘indiscriminate killing of wild animals’ in Kaokoveld, and secondly, about the ‘6000 Natives with herds of cattle’ that were living in the northern part of Kaokoveld where most of the game could be found, ‘more than they could ever need or use’.¹²⁷ Woods also wrote a letter to the Administrator of SWA with a copy of their report to the Chief Native Commissioner (Mr. Allen), saying that:

[i]t would seem to us that if South-West Africa is ever to have a National Park, Game Reserve No.2 in its entirety would be the ideal area, and it would be the one way of really safeguarding Kaokoveld for all time¹²⁸ [...] [t]he Kaokoveld Reserve is the best part of the only worth-while Game Reserve left in South-West Africa.¹²⁹

The Chief Native Commissioner, in his reply, responded politely to the various concerns, stating:

I would ask you to remember that the Kaokoveld is in the first place a Native Reserve and it is the duty of our officials to protect the Native inhabitants against the depredations of lions and other carnivora. I can, however, assure you that these officials limit themselves to such protective measures and have no intention of undertaking any wholesale destruction of these animals.¹³⁰

It becomes evident from this correspondence that: 1) the Kaokoveld was highly valued in terms of wildlife by some people; 2) the nature conservation lobby was becoming stronger; and 3) the status of Kaokoveld as both game reserve and native reserve became increasingly problematic for the administration—a situation to be solved during the 1960s (see Section 2.4 and Chapter 13).

In 1955, the Game Preservation Section was established, and biologist de la Bat became the Chief Game Warden equipped with a clerk and 28 workers. According to Amy Schoeman, this signified the end of the game protection era, and the beginning of ‘the holistic approach of conservation of Namibia’s natural assets’.¹³¹ although the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance of 1937 mentioned above suggests some prior moves towards a more holistic approach. Additionally, the SWA Publicity and Tourist Association was established in order to promote SWA as a tourist destination, resulting in an increasing number of tourists. Development in the fields of both conservation and tourism thus gained momentum.

124 Oral history interview by S. Sullivan and W.S. Ganuses with Meda Xamses, 19.4.1999.

125 For example, Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988)

126 NAN SWAA 511/1, 1956-58, de la Bat.

127 NAN SWAA A 511/1, correspondence and copies, 1956. This expedition forms a key focus of South African author Lawrence Green’s 1953 book *Lords of the Last Frontier* which popularised the Kaokoveld.

128 NAN SWAA A 511/1, D.H. Woods, Rondebosch, C.P. to the Administrator, S.W.A. Windhoek, 22.11.1956.

129 NAN SWAA A 511/1, D.H. Woods, Southern Life Association, Rondebosch, C.P. to R.J. Allen, Chief Native Commissioner, Department of Native Affairs, Windhoek, 18.10.1956.

130 NAN SWAA A511/1, Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek to D.H. Woods, 6.11.1956.

131 Schoeman (2007: 51)

Writing in this vein of an amplified conservation “movement”, in 1957, F. Gaerdes—a member of the Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments established in 1948—wrote an article for the SWA Annual entitled ‘Nature Preservation and the works of the Monuments Commission in SWA’. This article is revealing regarding the concept of nature conservation and its leadership by the “white man” in these years:

[t]he present is shaped by the past. Therefore we cherish the historical tradition embodied in the monuments which bear witness to our past. Primitive nature with her riches of plant and animal life forms part of this heritage. In many parts of the world it has of necessity had to yield to the demands of an expanding and increasing population. This process of cultivation, and the necessary impoverishment of wild life which it entails, cannot be halted, however much we may regret the loss of the irreplaceable. Not only scientists and naturalists [...] have felt concern. The longing to experience nature where she still bears her original face, is alive in many people. Out of their need was born the concept of nature preservation which has gained increasing acceptance over the last 50 years. [...] The nature preservation movement originated in Europe and North America, from there it spread to other continents. *Primitive people are not concerned about nature preservation, and it was left to the white nations to spread the idea all over the globe.* The initiative of European settlers created exemplary parks in many parts of Africa which are gaining a growing international reputation among scientists and nature lovers. [...] In South West Africa too, the idea is gaining ground that the preservation of nature is not merely a hobby-horse of utopian eccentrics, but a duty which the community owes to posterity.¹³²

It seems a reversal of facts runs through this statement: “white nations”, i.e. mostly European traders, settlers and colonists, had been responsible for the large-scale decrease or extermination of game all over the world, including in SWA (see Chapter 1), but were now rhetorically enthroned as the champions of nature preservation.

While Gaerdes still talked about “preservation”, however, in this same year Chief Game Warden de la Bat recommended the change of name from game preservation or protection to game *conservation*. Following growing international usage, he considered the term conservation to be more comprehensive than preservation or protection, which only referred to the safeguarding of so-called “game” from human destruction. He suggested the Section of Game Preservation be renamed Section of Game Conservation, and that the change of name should also be applied in any new legislation.¹³³ This suggestion was implemented shortly after. Already in 1954, the Parks Board had started operating although ‘without any proper legal status’,¹³⁴ confining itself mainly to the recommendation on the game reserves, while the Game Preservation and Hunting Board attended to matters concerning game outside the reserve.¹³⁵ Thus, the Game Preservation and Hunting Board and the Parks Board were operating alongside each other for four years before the merging of both institutions was formalised with Ordinance 18 of 1958 (Game Park and Private Game Reserves Ordinance), the first Annual Report of the Parks Board stating:

[p]rovision is also made for the fusion of the Game Preservation and Hunting Board with the Parks Board so that all matters concerning game may be dealt with by one board.¹³⁶

The Parks Board included at least five members: ‘civil servants from agriculture, police, native affairs, the chief game warden and members of the farmers’ and hunting associations’.¹³⁷ Its aims and functions were:

- a) To advise the Administrator on the control, management and maintenance of game parks and private game reserves in South West Africa;

¹³² Gaerdes (1957: 41, emphasis added)

¹³³ NAN SWAA A511/1 Game Reserves General 1956-58, 7.3.1957, Hoofwildbewaarder, Okaukuejo to Hoof Algemene Afdeling, Windhoek.

¹³⁴ NAN NTB 1/8 N13/2: Jaarverslae van Afdeling, Parks Board of South West Africa Annual Report 1.4.1957 to 31.3.1958 (First Report).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Bridgeford (2018: 16), Joubert (1974: 36)

- b) To investigate and report on all such matters concerning the preservation of game as the Administrator may refer to it;
- c) To make such recommendations to the Administrator as it may deem fit regarding the preservation of game and any amendment to the game preservation laws of the Territory;
- d) To meet in Windhoek at least once every year;
- e) To perform and exercise such further functions, powers and duties as the Administrator may by regulation prescribe to the Board.¹³⁸

Ordinance 18 of 1958 defined 'Game Parks' including 'Etosha Game Park'; allowed for establishing Private Game Reserves; and provided for the official appointment of the Parks Board, defining its duties and members. The regulations for Game Parks (Section 5) were much more comprehensive than for Private Game Reserves. For example: entry and residence, the possession of firearms, and killing, injuring or disturbing animals in Game Parks, were not allowed without written permission; the introduction of animals and the chopping, cutting or damaging of trees were also prohibited. In Private Game Reserves, according to section 16(1), 'no person, except the owner, may hunt any game or other wild animal or bird in any area which has been declared a private game reserve [...] except under and in accordance with the written permission of the Administrator and on such conditions as he may impose in each case'.¹³⁹ A major part of the ordinance focused on establishing the boundaries of Etosha Game Park around Etosha Pan, as a specific designation of Game Reserve No. 2 (see Figure 2.2 below, and discussion in Section 2.3.2). De la Bat reported that shortly after,

[w]e came to an agreement with the late Chief Kamonde to proclaim that part of the Andoni Plains which fell into his area, as his private game reserve. He saw to it that the wildebeest were undisturbed as long as he lived. Today [1982] there was none left and a border fence divides this vast plain which once teemed with game.¹⁴⁰

In 1963, the Game Preservation Section was upgraded to the fully-fledged branch Nature Conservation and Tourism under the directorship of de la Bat¹⁴¹ who moved from Okaukuejo to Windhoek as the first director of the branch. The purpose of the branch was:

to extend activities in the field of nature conservation and to include, in addition to game parks, also fresh water fishing, public resorts, the protection of plants and trees, the development of nature reserves and regional services in connection with nature conservation.¹⁴²

In this year, the staff of Etosha Game Park consisted of a Chief Game Ranger, '16 Europeans, two Coloureds, 9 Bantu and 31 Bushmen',¹⁴³ the classification and sequence of these categories reflecting the apartheid-era thinking of the time.

In 1965, a permanent research section under the Director of Nature Conservation and Tourism was established and Hym Ebedes became the first wildlife veterinarian (also due to the discovery of anthrax in Etosha in 1964), with Ken Tinley and Eugene Joubert appointed as ecologists.¹⁴⁴ For the first time, the SWAA White Paper on the activities of the different branches of the Administration of South West Africa included a subsection on research, reporting *inter alia* about experiments with immobilisation drugs, the transfer of specific animals to or in-between game parks and studies in diseases and parasites.¹⁴⁵ A direct census to determine the distribution of the black rhinoceros

138 NAN Ordinance 18 of 1958; NTB 1/8 N13/2: Jaarverslae van Afdeling, Parks Board of South West Africa Annual Report 1.4.1957 to 31.3.1958 (First Report).

139 *Ibid.*

140 de la Bat (1982: 18). If true, this fact of there being no wildebeest remaining in the area would no doubt have been due to a variety of reasons.

141 Bridgeford (2018: 17), Schoeman (2007: 52)

142 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1963–64: 57)

143 *Ibid.*, p. 58

144 Berry (2007a: 84)

145 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1965–66: 63)

(*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) was carried out by Joubert in the western part of the game reserve. Joubert writes that,

[t]he study makes public disturbing information. The situation with regard to rhino is much more critical than was generally expected. The distribution of the black rhino, which used to occur throughout most of Suidwes, was now limited to the northwest corner. The total population of black rhino in 1966 were ninety animals. What was also disturbing, however, was the spread of these animals. Only 17 percent were within the amended limits of the Etosha National Park as suggested by the Odendaal Commission [see Section 2.4]. The other 83 percent were on private land or in communal or intended communal territories. It was clear that drastic steps were needed to ensure its survival.¹⁴⁶

In 1967, the Nature Conservation Ordinance (31 of 1967) was proclaimed, providing a long-term policy consolidating former legislation and amended many times since its proclamation. It defined the powers and duties of the Nature Conservation and Tourism Branch and contained chapters on wild animals, game parks, indigenous plants, inland fisheries, protected and specially protected game, game birds and several other important subjects such as the issuing of licences, the establishment of a Nature Conservation Board (replacing the former Parks Board) and the repeal of laws.¹⁴⁷ With the exception of protected species, the ordinance provided ownership of game to 'owners or occupiers of a farm' if the game was 'lawfully upon such farm and while such farm is enclosed with a sufficient fence'.¹⁴⁸ It thus permitted farmers to hunt on their farm throughout the year without a licence, except for protected game.¹⁴⁹ It also allowed these farmers 'with the written permission of the Administrator to lease his hunting rights to any competent person'.¹⁵⁰ As Botha notes,

[this] rapidly led to the commercialisation of game hunting and farming in SWA and served as a spur to the embryonic tourist industry in the country. Trophy hunting became an increasingly lucrative enterprise and the number of game farms featuring game animals and the spectacular landscapes of the country multiplied. Many farmers, even those that did not contemplate converting their farms into private game reserves, bought game animals made available by the Department of Nature Conservation from stocks considered superfluous to the reserves.¹⁵¹

The exploitation of game as an economic resource became increasingly important for settlers, since cattle farming had turned out to be more challenging during the 1960s due to drought and the termination of the heavily state-supported settlement programme.¹⁵²

By now, the concept of nature conservation had formally replaced the concept of game conservation,¹⁵³ and the strong link with tourism was set in the formalisation of the Nature Conservation and Tourism Branch, still visible in Namibia's current Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT).

2.3.2 Shifting borders, confusing spatial organisation and naming

The professionalisation of nature conservation, the growing significance of tourism, and the ideal of the people-and-parks divide were accompanied by shifting borders and an often-confusing spatial reorganisation during the 1950s and the 1960s. The Police Zone border was shifted 10 times between 1947 and the early sixties, mainly to provide further farmland for white settlers, but also due to interests of the mining industry, tourism and veterinary concerns.¹⁵⁴ Game Reserve No. 2 was

146 Joubert (1984: 12) (translation from Afrikaans by Sian Sullivan, with the help of DeepL Translate). For more details on the circumstances and management of black rhino in Kaokoveld during these years see Sullivan *et al.* (2021: 12–14).

147 NAN, Nature Conservation Ordinance 31 of 1967, Chapter 1.

148 *Ibid.*, section 7

149 *Ibid.*, section 9

150 *Ibid.*, section 12

151 Botha (2013: 246)

152 *Ibid.*, p. 244

153 See also Schoeman (2007: 52)

154 See Miescher (2009: 286ff.) for a detailed description of these shifts. Previously Etosha Pan itself served as a border restricting animals from moving further south, as Dieter Aschenborn explained to Ute Dieckmann in an interview

changed significantly in size and shape and in 1958 a new legal entity, the Etosha Game Park, was created and extended (as noted in Section 2.3.1).

Ideas concerning a south-western extension of Game Reserve No. 2 emerged in the mid-1950s. The Chief Game Warden, de la Bat, reported in around 1957 that,

during 1956 the Parks Board of South West recommended that an additional nature reserve between the Hoab [||Huab] and the Hoanib rivers south of the Kaokoveld be created as a refuge for rhinos [...], mountain zebras [*Equus zebra hartmannae*] [...] and elephants [*Loxodonta africana*] and that it should be considered as an extension of the Etosha game park and that the Executive Committee has accepted these proposals and practical implications are currently being further investigated. The animals that are abundant in this area are relatively rare or absent in the Etosha Game Reserve.¹⁵⁵

On 18 July 1956, the Executive Committee approved the following recommendations from a commission that had previously been asked to investigate damages caused by elephants, rhinos and giraffes on farms in the northern areas of SWA:

[t]he Commission feels satisfied that the natural shelter and protection offered to the elephants and the rhinos by the nature of the area between the present red line and the Native Area in the North and the Sea to the West is sufficient insurance for the survival of these giant animals of the jungle, provided the following steps are taken:-

- i) this area must be declared a nature reserve and no one may be allowed to shoot anything there.¹⁵⁶
- ii) this area must be declared as an extension of the Etosha game park but especially with a view to the protection of elephants, rhinos and mountain zebra.¹⁵⁷

The Surveyor General was shortly after supplied with the report of the commission and requested to furnish a point-to-point description of 'the proposed new Nature Reserve':¹⁵⁸ in fact an extension of Game Reserve No. 2. He pointed out that there was a gap between the suggested new south-western portion and the old game reserve in the recommendation of the commission. He suggested:

[u]nless there are reasons which have not been disclosed I would like to suggest that the northern boundary of the new reserve be made to coincide with the southern boundary of Game Reserve No. 2. There will then be no big gap between the two.¹⁵⁹

In doing so he was recommending that the Sesfontein Native Reserve should be included in Game Reserve No. 2. However, the Chief Native Commissioner and his department were not in favour of 'any further portions of the Kaokoveld Native Reserve or the Sesfontein Native Reserve being included in the Game Reserve'.¹⁶⁰

In 1958, the respective legislation was enacted. With Ordinance 18 of 1958, issued on 18 July, the south-eastern part of Game Reserve No. 2 was designated as Etosha Game Park with Kaokoveld remaining as both part of Game Reserve No. 2 and the Kaokoland Native Reserve—as established in 1947. Ordinance 18 reads:

2. The area defined in the first schedule to this Ordinance and known as game reserve No. 2, but excluding that portion which falls within a Native Reserve [i.e. the Kaokoland Reserve of 1947], is hereby declared a game park, to be known as the Etosha Game Park, for the propagation, protection and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, historical or other scientific interest for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the Inhabitants of the Territory.¹⁶¹

(10.4.2001). Namutoni and Okaukeujo were control posts during that time. Apparently, in the late 1940s and 1950s, diverse plans were discussed, and decisions were taken but the formalisation of these decisions in the form of ordinances took place sometime later (Miescher 2009: 382).

155 NAN SWAA A 511/1, 1956–1958. de la Bat.

156 A somewhat ironic statement given that soon afterwards a much larger landscape around this specific area became a trophy hunting concession (see Chapter 13).

157 NAN SWAA A511/6, vol. 4 Game Reserves: Boundaries and Fencing 1958-1959. Secretary to Administrator, 26.8.1958.

158 *Ibid.*

159 *Ibid.*

160 *Ibid.*

161 NAN, Ordinance 18 of 1958.

The boundaries of Etosha Game Park as defined in this ‘first schedule’ are marked in purple in Figure 2.2.

Soon afterwards (3 September 1958) in Government Notice 247 of 1958,¹⁶² the Administrator redefined the boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2, which thereby became extended for 250 km south of the Hoanib River to the Ugab (!U+gāb) River along the Red Line. It is important to note that this area had been iteratively emptied of former inhabitants—for example, through a north-west expansion of the commercial farming area in the 1950s (see Chapters 12 and 13). At least until the 1990s, however, people concentrated in the Hoanib valley villages would return to areas south of the Hoanib to collect foods such as *sâun* and *bosûi* (*Stipagrostis* spp. grass seeds and *Monsonia umbellata* seeds gathered from harvester ant nests) and honey. Elderly inhabitants of Hoanib valley settlements have detailed memories of dwelling places, springs and graves throughout this area.¹⁶³ In this game reserve expansion, the Kaokoland and Sesfontein Native Reserves were retained where thousands of people were living (see Figure 2.2). During this time, there was neither infrastructure nor nature conservation personnel in the south-western portion of Game Reserve No. 2 to implement this redefinition: it is likely that local people had no idea about these boundaries and designations, a situation that echoes today in new boundary-making activities for conservation (see Chapter 3). In retrospect, de la Bat commented on the south-western extension of the reserve:

[i]n the course of time it became clear that Etosha [Game Park] was not big enough to accommodate rare and threatened species such as black rhino, mountain zebra and black-faced impala, migratory big game like eland and elephant and the influx of wildlife from adjacent areas where it was being harassed. In 1958, the Parks Board under the chairmanship of Simmie Frank made a calculated move. We agreed to the deproclamation of Game Reserve No. 1, north-east of Grootfontein, provided that the unoccupied state land between the Hoanib and Uchab Rivers to be added to Etosha. In doing so, we exchanged valuable farming land for a mountainous and desert area but we practically doubled the size of Etosha, safeguarded game migration routes and obtained a corridor to the sea. The new park extended from the Skeleton Coast to the Etosha Pan, nearly 500 kilometres inland.¹⁶⁴

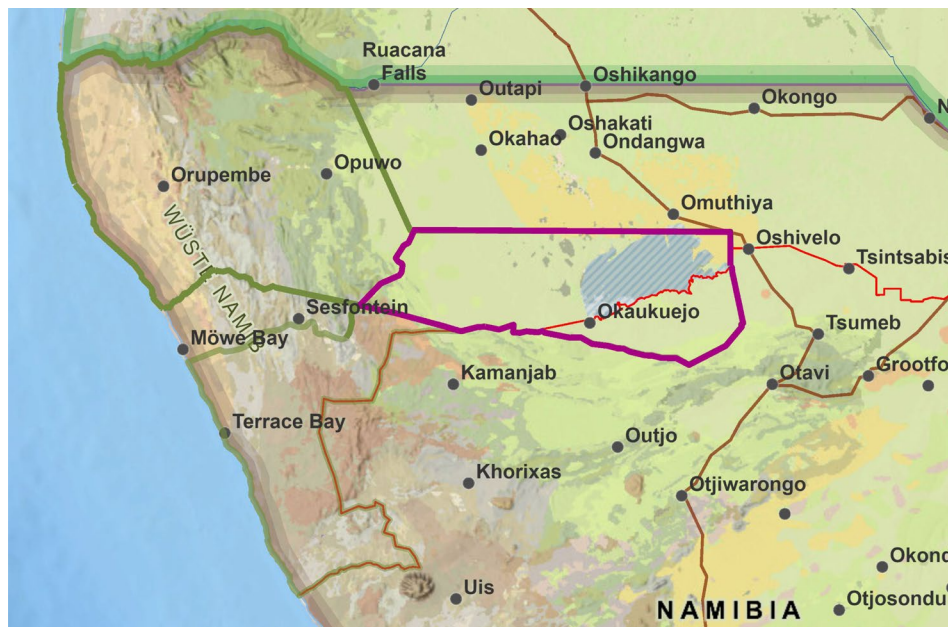


Fig. 2.2 Map of Etosha Game Park (purple contour) and Game Reserve No. 2 (green contour) in 1958, with the ‘red line’ of 1955 (red) and main roads (brown lines). Note that the southern boundary of Game Reserve No. 2 (in green) overlaps with the veterinary control boundary in red. © Ute Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958; Government Notice 247 of 1958; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

¹⁶² NAN SWAA A511/6, vol. 4 Game Reserves: Boundaries and Fencing 1958–1959.

¹⁶³ Sullivan (1998, 1999); Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021, 2022)

¹⁶⁴ de la Bat (1982: 19)

In 1962, with Government Notice 177, Etosha Game Park was itself extended across part of the 1958 south-west extension of Game Reserve No. 2 (Figure 2.3):

to a point where the western boundary line of the last mentioned farm [Werêltsend] intersects the southern side of the road from Welwitschia [Khorixas] to Torrabaai; thence westwards along the southern side of the road to Torrabaai [close to the Koigab river] to the low-water mark of the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁶⁵



Fig. 2.3 Map of Etosha Game Park in 1962 (blue contour) and Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 (green contour) (for which Government Notice 20 of 1966 retains the 1958 boundary); with the 'red line' in 1955 (red) and main roads (brown lines). Again, the southern boundary of Game Reserve No. 2 (in green) overlaps with the veterinary control boundary (in red). © Ute Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958; Government Notice 177 of 1962; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

With this change, tourist spots along the coast were included in Etosha Game Park. The SWAA White Paper on the Activities of the Different Branches of the Administration of South West Africa for the Financial Year 1962–1963 notes:

[t]he Etosha Game Park's boundaries were extended during the year up to the sea coast by the proclamation of part of the Game Reserve 2 as a game park. The popular fishing and holiday resort at Unjab [!Uniab] mouth [presumably Torra Bay] now falls within the game park.¹⁶⁶

Torra Bay (south of !Uniab mouth) came under the direct supervision of the newly established branch of Nature Conservation and Tourism, yet changes to come impeded the development of the resort:

it was now decided first to determine the resort's future popularity, as all the farms in that vicinity (from which most of the visitors always come) are now being bought up as a result of the implementation of the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission, and Torra Bay will eventually be cut off from the rest of the game reserve by a Bantu area.¹⁶⁷

As alluded to in this quote, the extension of Etosha Game Park up to the coast was very short-lived as new plans entered the stage during this same year (as clarified in Section 2.4).

Further east, the Red Line south of Etosha Pan was shifted through Government Notice 222 of 1961, moving it southwards from along Etosha Pan to the border of Etosha Game Park and the

¹⁶⁵ Government Notice 177, 15.9.1962.

¹⁶⁶ NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1962–63: 15)

¹⁶⁷ NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1964–65: 49–50)

settler farms.¹⁶⁸ Here, the reality of the Red Line on maps gradually became reality on the ground in the form of fences which impeded the mobility of both animals and people in and out of Etosha Game Park.¹⁶⁹ The game-proof fence along the southern boundary of Etosha Game Park had been gradually erected during the 1950s reached up to Otjovasandu in the west in 1963,¹⁷⁰ although it needed continual repairs due to damage by wildlife, mainly elephants.¹⁷¹

Government Notice 20 of 1966 entitled 'Prohibited Areas Proclamation 1928: Redefinition of the Boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2'¹⁷² delineated a coastal strip of around 20 miles to the west of the Sesfontein and Kaokoveld Native Reserve areas (Figure 2.4). Although the stated boundaries do not in fact include this coastal strip within Game Reserve No. 2 it appears that this was the intention, as indicated in a map published by Giorgio Miescher's for 1966.¹⁷³ The stretch of land around Sesfontein, which had been excluded from the Game Reserve in the 1958 definitions, thereby became an island surrounded by the Game Reserve, followed soon after by proclamation of the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) in 1971. This new boundary further consolidated the already restricted local access to the Northern Namib, where diamond prospecting and mining had been taking place since at least the 1950s¹⁷⁴ (see Chapter 12).



Fig. 2.4 Map of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1966 (green contour) showing the excluded 'native reserve' area around Sesfontein (brown contour), the 'red line' of 1955 (red) and main roads (brown lines). © Ute Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958, Government Notice 20 of 1966; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

With Nature Conservation Ordinance 31 of 1967, Etosha Game Park became Etosha National Park,¹⁷⁵ initially retaining the 1962 boundaries of Etosha Game Park (see Figure 2.3) and adding a small corner of land in the north-east (see Figure 2.6 in Section 2.4.1). Chapter 3 of Ordinance 31 of 1967 iterates Ordinance 18 of 1958, with some adjustments:

[t]he area defined in schedule 7 to this ordinance and known as the Etosha Game Park is hereby declared to be a game park to be known as the Etosha National Park for the propagation, protection

168 Miescher (2009: 382)

169 *Ibid.*, p. 322

170 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1963–64: 58)

171 *Ibid.*

172 NAN Government Notice 20 of 1966.

173 Also Miescher (2009: 284b)

174 Mansfield (2006), Schneider (2008: 225), Sullivan & Ganuses (2022: 128)

175 According to Berry (1997: 4), the Etosha Game Park officially received the status of a National Park in 1967 by an Act of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, historical or other scientific interest and for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Territory: Provided that it shall be in the Administrator's sole and final discretion to determine whether and when prospecting or mining activities are in the national interest.¹⁷⁶

Evidently, the socio-ecological organisation of space was in constant flux during these years. The established entity of Game Reserve No. 2 was retained but transformed in size and shape, and new entities were created—Etosha Pan Game Reserve becoming Etosha Game Park, then extended to the south-west, then becoming Etosha National Park. There was little time, however, to implement these new legal entities with infrastructure, personnel and boundaries. They remained ideas in the minds of responsible administrative representatives, written down in Government Notices, and at times put on maps. This also explains why several published maps diverge from one another in the delineation of these entities.¹⁷⁷ In any case, the 1967 boundaries of Etosha National Park were also short-lived, as explained in Section 2.4.

2.4 The 1960s until 1989: Odendaal and the alleged “optimisation” of spatial separation

Starting in the early 1960s, another initiative began which was to “perfect” the spatial-functional organisation of the colony. Beinart notes that:

[b]oth colonial and African practices saw land as to some extent divisible by its function. But colonial ideas, drawn from an industrialised and capitalist Europe, laid far more stress on rigid spatial division between lands set aside for different purposes.¹⁷⁸

The Odendaal Plan epitomised this rigid spatial division between lands assigned to different purposes. As South African anthropologist Lesley Green writes,

Apartheid South Africa, which took modernist divisions to the extreme, relied on the twin project of creating the nature reserve and the native reserve, with the former justified as the protection of nature, and the latter as the protection of culture [...]¹⁷⁹

In this section we document the new recommendations for expanded “homelands” in Etosha-Kunene and their perceived implications for conservation.

2.4.1 The Odendaal Plan and uncertainty in the 1960s

In 1962, a Commission of Enquiry into South-West Africa Affairs was appointed and Frans Hendrik “Fox” Odendaal, Administrator of Transvaal, became its chairman, leading to its colloquial name, the Odendaal Commission. The official purpose was:

[t]o enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare and the social progress of the inhabitants of South West Africa, and more particularly its non-White inhabitants, [...] the attention of the Commission is particularly directed to the task of ascertaining—while fully taking into consideration the background, traditions and habits of the Native inhabitants—how further provision should be made for their social and economic advancement, effective health services, suitable education and training, sufficient opportunities for employment, proper agricultural, industrial and mining development in respect of their territories, and for the best form of participation by the Natives in the administration and management of their own interests.¹⁸⁰

176 NAN Nature Conservation Ordinance 31 of 1967, section 37(1).

177 For example, compare the maps in Miescher (2009, 2012), Berry (1997, 2007b), Dieckmann (2007a) and Heydinger (2021)

178 Beinart (1989: 158)

179 Green (2020: 162)

180 Odendaal Report (1964: para. 1(i, ii))

The commission sought to implement apartheid in Namibia based on justifiable “scientific” grounds using *Volkekunde*, understood as the Afrikaner version of cultural anthropology. As Gordon points out, ‘Afrikaner anthropology has played a significant role in the legitimization and reproduction of the apartheid social order on two levels: as an instrument of control and as a means of rationalizing it’.¹⁸¹ The appointment of this commission was also due to increasing international criticism of South Africa’s politics and its mandate to rule SWA. In 1960, Ethiopia and Liberia had instituted proceedings against South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in a case regarding the continued existence of the League of Nations Mandate and its duties and performance as mandatory power;¹⁸² charges that were dismissed in 1966 on technical grounds.¹⁸³ As Heydinger notes, ‘South Africa sought to invoke its right to rule South West Africa while showcasing the benefits of separate development and state planning’.¹⁸⁴

The Odendaal Commission handed in their report at the end of 1963 to the Prime Minister of South Africa, Hendrik Verwoerd, commonly regarded as the architect of apartheid.¹⁸⁵ The report claimed:

[t]he population of South West Africa is characterized by its ethnic diversity. In the course of many decades of the country’s history, various ethnic groups have settled as separate peoples in certain areas of the present Territory. In spite of internal strife and wars, which were particularly fierce in the southern part of the country during the previous century, the respective groups all retained their individual identity and are still distinguishable as such in the present population. The distinct population groups are the Bushmen, Damara, Nama, Whites, Basters and Coloureds, as well as the various Bantu people which can be divided into five different groups, namely the Herero, Kaokovelders, Ovambo, Okavango and the East Caprivians. There is also a smaller group (consisting mainly of Bantu) which amongst others includes the Tswana. These separate population groups are distinguished from one another by their different languages, cultures and physical appearance, and to a large extent also according to the areas in which they have settled and now live.¹⁸⁶

The Odendaal Commission helped to constitute social categories.¹⁸⁷ Evidently, these categories were somewhat arbitrary, lumping together language, culture, physical appearance, and area, at times quite selectively using one or another criterion, according to convenience in each case. English, Afrikaans and German groups were lumped together as Whites; Nama were transferred from the Department of Bantu Affairs to the Department of Coloured Affairs; ‘the Bushmen’ remained within the ambit of Bantu Affairs, although it was mentioned that they belonged to “Khoisan” peoples.¹⁸⁸ It was admitted that ‘the Bushmen’ consisted primarily of three groups—the ‘!Khung’, ‘Heikum’ and ‘Barakwengo’—and that their languages differed from one another.¹⁸⁹ The awkward category ‘Kaokovelders’ clearly makes reference to the cultural diversity of a geographic area, the inhabitants of which were described as ‘closely related to the Herero as far as origin, language and culture are concerned’.¹⁹⁰

One justification for “separate development” referred to alleged hostilities between these “groups” and their own alleged ideas about “development”:

[t]he Commission gained the impression, supported by evidence, that various population groups harbour strong feelings against other groups and would prefer to have their own homelands and communities in which they will have and retain residential rights, political say and their own language, to the exclusion

181 Gordon (1988: 536)

182 See <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/47>

183 Heydinger (2021: 20)

184 *Ibid.*, p. 8

185 Kenney (2016)

186 Odendaal Report (1964: para. 104)

187 Gordon (2018: 105)

188 *Ibid.*, p. 106, Odendaal Report (1984: para. 106)

189 *Ibid.*, para. 106

190 *Ibid.*, paras. 128–129

of all other groups.¹⁹¹ [...] The Commission is therefore of the opinion that one central authority, with all groups represented therein, must be ruled out and that as far as practicable a homeland must be created for each population group, in which it alone would have residential, political and language rights to the exclusion of other population groups, so that each group would be able to develop towards self-determination without any group dominating or being dominated by another.¹⁹²

Accordingly, the recommendations in the report centred around the recommendation to divide and organise the country in eleven separate homelands with the white homeland having a special status (see Figure 2.5 for north-west Namibia):

[f]or all the foregoing reasons the Commission's conclusion is that the upliftment and development of the non-White groups and their contemplated homelands is a task of direct handling in all its facets by the Central Government of the Republic of South Africa, and that, largely in view of the implications involved, only the proposed White area in South West Africa should be administered by an Administrator, Executive Committee and Legislative Assembly.¹⁹³

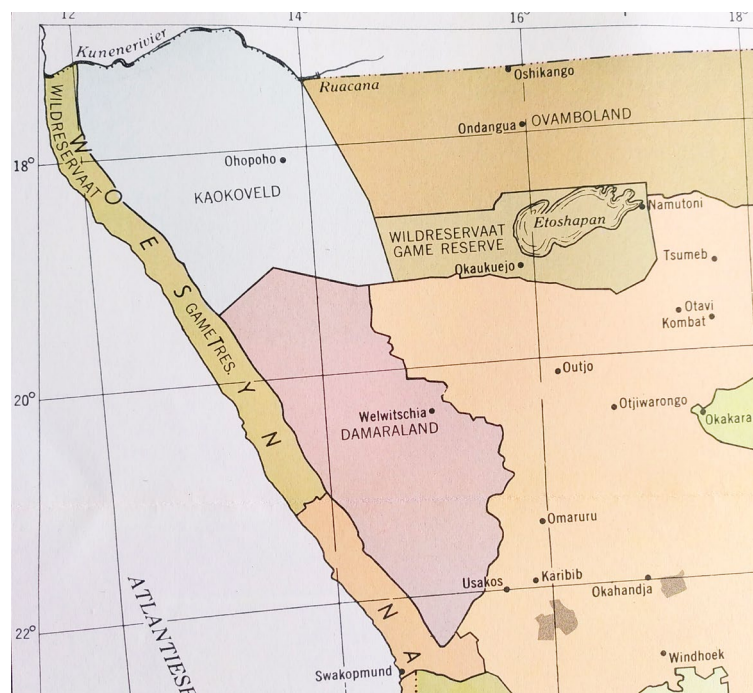


Fig. 2.5 'Proposed Homelands' for north-west Namibia. Source: Odendaal Report (1964: Figure 27, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

These suggestions entailed a substantial transformation of the administration of SWA. It also entailed massive changes to the organisation of socio-ecological space and a reshuffling and uprooting of local communities. With regard to Etosha, it foresaw a reduction in size of over 70% from its predecessor, Game Reserve No. 2.¹⁹⁴ It should be noted here, however, that Kaokoveld and the land that became part of the south-west extension of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 (later included as the western Torra Bay extension of Etosha Game Park in 1962), was mainly a 'game reserve on paper',¹⁹⁵ inhabited at the time and historically by a diversity of people (as documented in Chapters 6, 7, 12, 13 and 14). The envisaged separation of people from people on the basis of actual and constructed ethnicity was reportedly grounded in the need for improved population control in light of increasing local resistance towards South African rule.¹⁹⁶ It also perpetuated and "perfected"

191 *Ibid.*, para. 187

192 *Ibid.*, para. 190

193 *Ibid.*, para. 214

194 Schoeman (2007: 52)

195 Joubert (1974: 41)

196 See also Gordon (2018: 100–3)

the functional division of space in the territory, mostly focusing on human inhabitants, although including paragraphs on ‘natural resources’, Game Reserves and Nature Reserves, ‘Etosha Game Reserve’, ‘wildlife conservation’, and several pages on ‘veld foods’ comprising plants, insects and ‘game’.¹⁹⁷

The ambiguous status of Kaokoveld, being simultaneously part of Game Reserve No. 2 and the Kaokoland Native Reserve, was to be solved once and for all:

[a]s practically the whole of the Kaokoveld is at present a proclaimed game reserve, and since the Commission has in its recommendations in regard to Homelands recommended that the Kaokoveld, as expanded, should become the permanent Homeland of the Kaokovelders, and since the Commission is of the opinion that a Homeland as a whole should not be a proclaimed game reserve but that only a small part of it should continue to exist as such, it recommends:

(i) That the existing Kaokoveld Reserve be deproclaimed, except for an uninhabitable desert strip, 20 miles wide, known as the Skeleton Coast, and running parallel to the west coast boundary line from the Kunene River in the north to the southern boundary of the Kaokoveld to be contiguous to the Game Reserve further south; and further

(ii) That those parts of Game Reserve No. 2 which it is proposed to add to the Kaokoveld, Ovamboland and Damaraland, be deproclaimed as a game reserve.¹⁹⁸

With the new Homeland of Damaraland to the south of Kaokoveld, the Odendaal Commission proposed to connect the fragmented Native Reserves of Sesfontein, Fransfontein, Okombahe and Otjohorongo:¹⁹⁹ see Figure 13.12 in Chapter 13. In doing so, the Commission reflected prior mobilities, habitation and uses of land between these areas (see Chapters 1, 12 and 13).

These recommendations were not fully implemented in the 1960s, as the South African government waited for the judgement of the ICJ, which dismissed the charges against South Africa only in 1966.²⁰⁰ This was certainly one reason why the 1960s were characterised by uncertainty, confusion and conflict which partly hampered straightforward “development” in any direction, as illustrated by the following points:

- Kaokoveld remained a “native reserve” and part of Game Reserve No. 2 in the 1960s. For the sake of “development”, however, hundreds of boreholes were drilled to support the pastoralist practices of the inhabitants, transforming the ecology of the area significantly (see Chapter 7);²⁰¹
- uncertainty existed about the coastal resort of Torra Bay as freehold farms inland, where users of the resort for fishing were located, were bought up in order to create ‘the proposed Bantu homeland’ of Damaraland, making Torra’s status as a nature resort questionable;²⁰²
- the exact boundary between Etosha Game Park/Etosha National Park and the Kaokoveld homeland was fiercely debated during the 1960s as a reaction to the Odendaal’s recommendations (see Chapters 13 and 14);²⁰³
- and the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967, which re-confirmed the 1962 south-western borders of Etosha National Park up to the west coast,²⁰⁴ was eventually overturned by the Odendaal recommendations.

Figure 2.6 aims to illustrate these conflicts and diverging ideas prevalent in the 1960s. The blue contour shows Etosha National Park as of 1967, legalised as a National Park three years after the Odendaal Commission’s recommendations were published, mapped against the then envisaged,

197 Odendaal Report (1964: paras. 70–92, 100–101, 1208–1210, 1339, 1516)

198 *Ibid.* para. 1516

199 *Ibid.*, paras. 337–351

200 NAN, LUKS, 2.6, Vorderingsverslag oor Skakelkomitee-Aangeleenthede tot 12.2.1965: 12, in Heydinger (2021: 20)

201 For a detailed analysis of this development, see Bollig (2020: chapter 7)

202 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1965–66: 61)

203 Heydinger (2021: 17ff)

204 NAN Nature Conservation Ordinance 1967, Schedule 7.

but only later implemented homelands of Kaokoland²⁰⁵ and Damaraland. It becomes clear that these different development and conservation plans precluded straightforward “progress” in any direction during the 1960s.

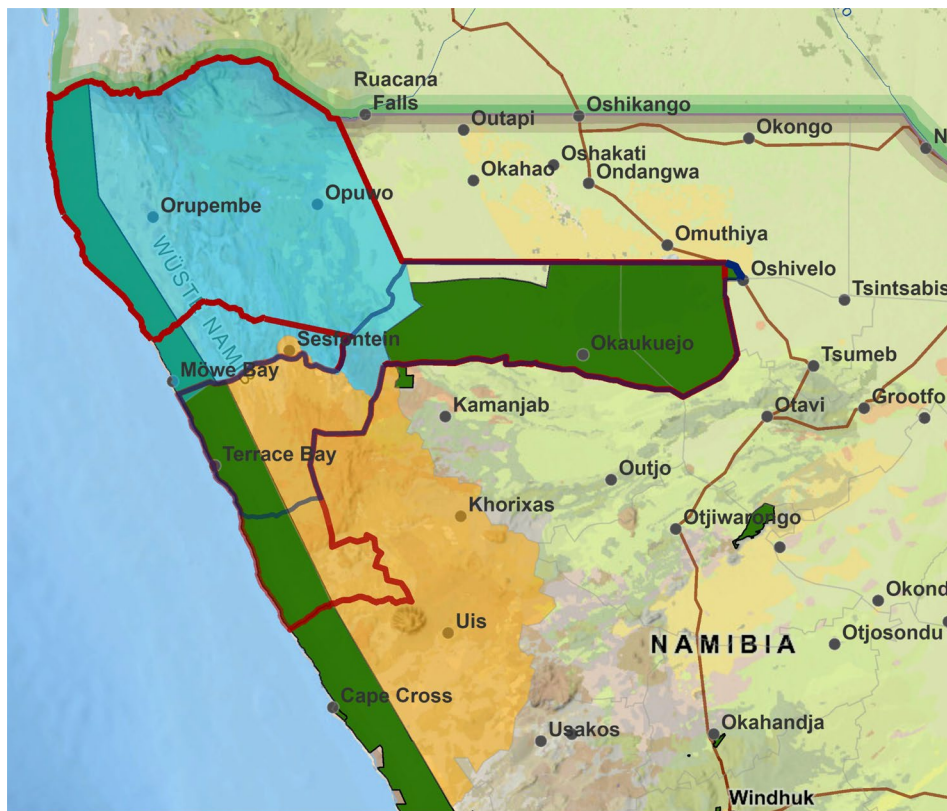


Fig. 2.6 Map of the borders of Etosha National Park in 1967 (blue), the borders of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 (red), the Kaokoland and Damaraland ‘homelands’ as implemented in the early 1970s (light blue and light orange respectively), and currently protected areas (green). © Ute Dieckmann; data: NAN; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.4.2 The implementation of apartheid and spatial-ecological development in the 1970s and 1980s

In 1968, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution formally terminating the mandate of South Africa to administer SWA, which was instead to come under the direct responsibility of the United Nations.²⁰⁶ South Africa, however, continued to implement its apartheid politics in the country, enacting the Odendaal Plan and the creation of homelands with the Development of Self-Government for Native Nations in the South West Africa Act 54 of 1968.²⁰⁷

According to the recommendations, Damaraland (4,799,021 hectares) included 223 government-bought white-owned farms (1,872,794 hectares) (see Chapter 13); 1,290,000 hectares of the short-lived 1958 south-west extension of Game Reserve No. 2—part of which was included in Etosha Game Park in 1962 and Etosha National Park in 1967; and 94,876 hectares of the south-eastern corner of Kaokoveld (outside the formerly designated Kaokoveld Native Reserve), initially included in Damaraland but later added to Kaokoland.²⁰⁸ As noted, Damaraland thus reconnected several native reserves inhabited by mixed populations of Damara/#Nūkhoen, ovaHerero, ovaHimba,

²⁰⁵ Although named ‘Kaokoveld’ in the Odendaal Plan’s map of proposed homelands, subsequently the Kaokoveld homeland became named ‘Kaokoland’, bringing this name into alignment with the names of the other homelands such as Damaraland. See, for example, the listings here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantustan> and text here <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaokoland>

²⁰⁶ See www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1da18.html

²⁰⁷ See https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/sites/www.un.org.dppa.decolonization/files/decon_num_9-1.pdf

²⁰⁸ Odendaal Report (1964: paras. 338–40)

Nama and ǀUubun (namely Okombahe, Otjohorongo, Fransfontein and Sesfontein).²⁰⁹ It also became the homeland for Damara/ǀNūkhoen living in other parts of the country (e.g. ǀKhomeanin from Khomas Hochland).²¹⁰ Displacements within the area also took place. The reallocation of the south-east corner of Kaokoveld from Damaraland to Kaokoland resulted in the settlement of Warmquelle/ǀAexaǀaus east of Sesfontein becoming part of Kaokoland: Damara/ǀNūkhoen living there had to move southwards to Kowareb, located in Damaraland.²¹¹ In the early 1970s a population of ‘Riemvasmakers’ living in the Upington area of South Africa were also relocated to Ward 11 around Bersig in Damaraland—on the grounds that they were linguistically connected with Damara/ǀNūkhoen—this area later becoming Torra Conservancy (see Chapter 3).²¹² Major parts of the redistributed western extension of Game Reserve No. 2 (Etosha Game/National Park 1962/67) were subsequently established as a trophy hunting concession and later as the tourism concessions of Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere (see Chapter 13).

The Kaokoveld, already a “native reserve”, was re-organised: a strip at the coast considered uninhabitable was cut off for the ‘Skeleton Coast Game Reserve’ (804,000 ha); the Kaokoveld area of Game Reserve No. 2 (256,435 ha), as well as the European-owned Farm Kowares (15,531 ha), were added to Kaokoland (also comprising almost 5 million ha).²¹³ The Odendaal Report recommended boreholes as key to economic development in the Kaokoveld,²¹⁴ contributing to the ‘hydrological revolution’²¹⁵ documented in detail in Chapter 7. The consequent change in pastoralist mobility patterns is asserted to have caused a shift in vegetation structure through increasing dry season grazing near boreholes, promoting annual grasses over perennials.²¹⁶ Declining numbers of predators through strychnine and rifles issued to headmen in the 1960s and 1970s,²¹⁷ reportedly contributed further to the degradation of rangelands as stock owners could now leave their cattle to roam freely.

Unsurprisingly, the Odendaal Plan created a furore among conservationists—nationally and internationally—for disregarding ecological systems.²¹⁸ As Heydinger points out,

[i]n transforming Etosha’s boundaries and de-proclaiming Kaokoveld’s game reserve status, Odendaal was also set to alter the region’s ecology, with negative outcomes feared, particularly for rare species such as black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) and mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*).²¹⁹

In the years to come, ecologists and conservationists, both from within and outside of government, suggested alternative plans for dividing or re-arranging “Etosha-Kaokoveld”. In the late 1960s, a Committee for the Enquiry into Nature Conservation and Tourism-problems in Bantu (sic) areas in Southwest-Africa (*Komitee van Ondersoek na Naturbewaring en Tourisme-probleme in Bantoegebiede van Suidwes Afrika*) was mandated to conduct research into the potential for nature conservation in Kaokoveld and Ovamboland, and to explore the tourism potential of those areas.²²⁰ De la Bat was part of this commission, which argued for the integration of the northern homelands into a wider tourism and conservation strategy for the territory, highlighting the immense potential of these areas on the grounds that they ‘still had abundant wildlife and comparatively low human population numbers’.²²¹ Recommendations included the development of nature conservation legislation for

209 Sullivan (1996, 1998)

210 Odendaal Report (1964: paras. 344–45); Sullivan (1996) documents experiences of qualifying Damara/ǀNūkhoen moving to the ‘homeland’ from elsewhere in Namibia.

211 Sullivan (2003: 81)

212 Sullivan & Ganuses (2020: 316–17)

213 Odendaal Report (1964: para. 326)

214 *Ibid.* para. 1228, ii

215 Bollig (2020: 153ff)

216 *Ibid.*, p. 188

217 Owen-Smith (2010: 464) in Bollig (2020: 188)

218 de la Bat (1982: 20)

219 Heydinger (2021: 12)

220 Bollig (2020: 204)

221 *Ibid.*

these homelands which should serve the conservation of wildlife and flora and at the same time ‘preserve local traditions [...] for the benefit of local inhabitants’,²²² as well as establishing game parks within these homelands. This idea was not completely new. As mentioned in Section 2.3.1, Chief Kamonde in Ovamboland had already proclaimed part of the Andoni Plains as his private game reserve at the end of the 1950s.²²³ The commission regarded especially the Kaokoveld as of particular touristic potential and highlighted prospects for trophy hunting in the area.²²⁴ The report was not followed by any action in line with the recommendations, however, leading to growing concern and a series of conservation recommendations for the area that had briefly comprised the Etosha Game Park extensions, as reviewed in detail in Chapter 13.

Not only were people moved around in this period, but animals were subjected to increasingly intense conservation management practices, a key technique being translocation. A game capture unit was established in 1966 and the translocation of rare or endangered (as well as other) species began,²²⁵ with game capture and sale also becoming an economic enterprise, as can be read in the SWAA White Papers in the section on Nature Conservation. In 1971, for instance, the game capture team in Namibia caught and translocated in total 364 animals, 145 black-faced impala and ‘the last remaining black rhinos in the farming areas were taken to safety in the Etosha National Park’.²²⁶ In 1972, 85 elands and some giraffes were transferred from the Mangetti area to the Waterberg Plateau Park, two rhinos to Etosha and seven mountain zebras to the game park area of the Hardap Recreation Resort, while 250 animals (springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*), gemsbok and plains zebras) were captured and sold to farmers. In 1975, 34 roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) were translocated from Etosha National Park to Waterberg Plateau Park, 58 black-faced impala were captured at Otjovasandu (in the west of Etosha National Park) and released either at Ombika or Namutoni (in the east of the park). In 1976, the game capture unit concentrated on operations on freehold farmland in order to supply game to settler farmers: 862 animals were caught and sold for a total value of R24,750,00.²²⁷ In 1977, sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*), tsessebe (*Damaliscus lunatus lunatus*) and reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum arundinum*) not present in other SWA game reserves or parks were caught, enduring a three-month quarantine period in Caprivi (now Zambezi Region) before being transferred to Etosha where they were subjected to another three-month quarantine.²²⁸ In 1978, a total of 1,326 animals were captured, less than half of them sold or ‘given by the Administration to other bodies as a gift’, while the remaining animals were transferred to other localities.²²⁹ In 1979, it was reported that,

[t]here are now approximately 150 black rhinoceros and 100 black-faced impalas in Etosha. The future of these two rare game species is now assured in Southwest Africa.²³⁰

These displacements were not always completely successful. In the translocation of 55 rhino to Etosha National Park from the western areas sleighted to become “homelands”, five animals were lost overall between 1967 and the early 1970s; perhaps connected with difficulties in estimating

222 *Ibid.*, and references therein

223 de la Bat (1982: 18)

224 As discussed in Bollig (2020: 206)

225 Schoeman (2007: 52)

226 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971 Section on Nature Conservation). These translocations were enacted on the assumption that the redistribution of commercial farms in the west to Damara farmers following Odendaal would lead to increased poaching. Somewhat ironically, since Independence black rhino have in fact been translocated back onto communal land in the west, with more poaching incidents seemingly now taking place on protected areas and freehold rhino custodian farms than on communal land. See discussion in Sullivan *et al.* (2021).

227 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971, 1972, 1975, 1976, Section on Nature Conservation). South African rand (ZAR) was the national currency at this time, until Namibian dollars (NAD) were brought in after Independence, although pegged to the rand.

228 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

229 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1978, Section on Nature Conservation)

230 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1979, Section on Nature Conservation)

accurate doses of anaesthetic and antidote.²³¹ The translocation process must have been arduous for the animals. In 1971, for example, it was reported that:

[t]he use of helicopter proved imperative because of the rough terrain and sparse scattering of the rhino and black-faced impala. Drop-nets were used for the first time in catching the impala and springbok and injuries were reduced substantially. For the transportation of the black-faced impala over very bad roads and in hot weather, fans were installed in large crates with power units on top. This method contributed considerably to the successful translocation from Enyandi in Kaokoland to Otjovasandu.²³²

Although the mortality rate decreased considerably over the years due to improved capture techniques and drugs, in 1978, it was still reported that the ‘average mortality for the year’s capture operations was 5,3%’.²³³

Fences around ENP disrupted large-scale migration routes, especially of plains zebras and wildebeest (see Chapter 10), leading to an unforeseen collapse of the ungulate populations in the park.²³⁴ Berry reports that successive aerial censuses of Etosha, together with water-hole and ground counts:

showed conclusively that by 1987 some large herbivore species had declined drastically in numbers: Burchell’s zebra from 22000 (1969) to 5000; wildebeest from 25000 (1954) to 2600; gemsbok from 5000 (1982) to 2200; and eland from 3000 (pre-1960) to 250.²³⁵

The mechanisms causing these changes in numbers were manifold and the dynamics only partly understood, a major factor being the restrictive fencing completed around ENP in 1973. This enclosure made human management more necessary than ever before. More artificial water places and roads were constructed;²³⁶ these were important factors for increasing levels of anthrax,²³⁷ which again was followed by a growing number of predators taking advantage of the vulnerable game. Heydinger sees the ultimate cause of the large-scale decimation of ungulate populations in the Odendaal recommendations,²³⁸ although the exact relationship between the fencing of the park and the Odendaal Plan is unclear.

The “game-proof” fences prevented the migration of ungulates, but they were not such an insurmountable obstacle for elephants who regularly visited neighbouring commercial farms or “homelands”. This caused considerable trouble and laid another time-consuming task on the shoulders of nature conservation officials; fence breaks ‘occurred faster than they could be repaired’,²³⁹ and elephants were ‘driven back to the game reserve time and time again but had returned to the farms just as regularly’.²⁴⁰ In 1971, for example, officials had to drive back 111 elephants and shot three ‘obdurate troublemakers’; in 1977, 1,841 breaks caused by elephants on the park’s northern boundary were repaired; nine elephants were shot on farms while 102 were driven back to Etosha.²⁴¹ The broken fences also offered an opportunity for lions to exit the National Park, ‘causing havoc among the farmers’ stock’.²⁴² Farmers on freehold land often put an end to these incursions by shooting the lions: in 1970, for instance, 87 lions were shot by farmers; in 1974, 44 lions were shot; and in 1977, 56 lions were shot and 25 were driven back to Etosha.²⁴³ This was

231 Joubert (1984: 13–14), Ebedes (2007: 57–58), Sullivan *et al.* (2021: 12–14)

232 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971, Section on Nature Conservation)

233 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1978, Section on Nature Conservation). This percentage refers to all game capturing operations, not only those which were translocated to the Etosha National Park; in total 1,326 animals.

234 Heydinger (2021: 25)

235 Berry (1997: 9)

236 *Ibid.*, p. 8

237 Heydinger (2021: 26)

238 *Ibid.*

239 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

240 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1978, Section on Nature Conservation)

241 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971; 1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

242 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

243 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971; 1974; 1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

a considerable loss of animals, bearing in mind that there were around 400–500 lions in Etosha over the years. Although Hu Berry, the biologist in Okaukuejo during those years, considered the number too high,²⁴⁴ killing by farmers might not have been the best solution for population control.

The fencing also raised concerns with regard to available grazing in the park. In 1971, research was begun to study the vegetation in the park in order to determine the carrying capacity for grazing management, deemed as important ‘especially once the Park has been full [sic] fenced in’.²⁴⁵ Reportedly, animals were sometimes also captured in one area and moved to zones with better grazing.²⁴⁶ In 1977,

grazing was reasonable in the sandy veld but poor in the lime areas. According to grazing capacity stipulations it has been established that the winter grazing areas are generally overgrazed. The grazing capacity of the system is + 4000 large stock units, which is much lower than the present burden.²⁴⁷

The SWAA White Papers for the 1970s also provide an idea of the importance of game to the economy, as direct revenues to the Administration, as income for game dealers and as income to farmers. In the section on the annual developments of nature conservation, a paragraph on ‘Game Farming’ is included with income estimates provided for levies, hunting licences, game sale, sale of carcasses, sale of hides, income from trophy hunting, income from skins and huntable game shot for own use. Reading these reports, it becomes evident how important game farming was for settler farmers on freehold land, following the 1967 Nature Conservation Ordinance which established the legal framework for farmers to capitalise on game. The 1971 SWAA White Paper notes that:

[m]ore and more profits are being derived from the administration’s policy that game should have a direct monetary value for the farm owners. Farmers thus netted an estimated income of R 186 600,00 throughout the year from the sale of live game, game carcasses [sic], hunting licence fees and trophy hunters. The value of hides or venison used by the farmers themselves is not included in this figure.²⁴⁸

In 1977, it was reported that the national income of commercial farmers from their game had exceeded 5 million rand for the first time.²⁴⁹ It is worth noting that farmers on freehold land could also apply for permits to shoot ‘protected or specifically protected’ game in order ‘to conserve grazing, to maintain the correct sex ratio or to protect live-stock and property’.²⁵⁰ In 1971 and 1972, for instance, permits for shooting 4,449 and 3,091 head of game were issued to protect grazing.²⁵¹ As mentioned above, a major area of communal land to the west of ENP, including land that had been part of the short-lived western extension of Etosha game reserve from 1962, was also designated for trophy hunting (Chapter 13).

To the north-west of Etosha National Park, the newly created Kaokoland homeland was characterised by a decline of wildlife in the 1970s to the early 1980s,²⁵² linked with a major drought from 1979–1982.²⁵³ Authority over nature conservation in the homelands remained with the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (BAD) in Pretoria.²⁵⁴ Bollig claims that:

[t]he revocation of game park status [game reserve?] and the endorsement of homeland status resulted in a situation in which the emergent homeland Kaokoland, had no applicable legislation on conservation whatsoever. Formally, homeland authorities would have to establish a new legislation for

244 de la Bat (1982: 16)

245 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971, Section on Nature Conservation)

246 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1974, Section on Nature Conservation)

247 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1977, Section on Nature Conservation)

248 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971, Section on Nature Conservation)

249 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1977, Section on Nature Conservation). This tremendous increase was not only due to an increase in numbers and prices but also due to the inclusion of estimations about income from game skins and the estimated value of the game shot for personal use.

250 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1979, Section on Nature Conservation)

251 NAN AP 5/6 E. SWAA White Paper (1971; 1972, Section on Nature Conservation)

252 Bollig (2020: 203, 221)

253 *Ibid.*, p. 203

254 Owen-Smith (2002: 2)

the Kaokoland in the long run, but for the time being conservation was transferred to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development. In the early 1970s a number of South African homelands did indeed establish legislation on conservation but in northern Namibia [i.e. Kaokoveld] this did not happen.²⁵⁵

Poaching and legal hunting became serious problems there.²⁵⁶ SWAPO had also opened a western front in Kaokoveld and the administration handed out thousands of rifles to local residents.²⁵⁷ Yet, not only local residents equipped with rifles by the administration contributed to the decline of wildlife, but also top-level politicians and local white administrative and military staff were engaged in poaching.²⁵⁸

With Odendaal, spatial functional separation was completed in Namibia as a whole and in Etosha-Kunene in particular, at least on paper and maps: neatly defined “homelands” (“Damaraland” and “Kaokoland”) for diverse population groups of African background and their livestock; settlers of European background and their livestock in the respective freehold farming area south-east of the homelands; and game kept within ENP and eventually through tourism concessions established in the 1980s by the Damaraland Regional Authority (see Chapter 13). Certainly, the reality on the ground differed from the ideas in the minds of the architects of this spatial functional separation and from the boundaries on maps. Human mobility between these areas continued to take place, game continued to exist in areas designated as homelands, and tourism concession areas were established in homelands.

What is important, however, is that land, flora and fauna, and humans of various backgrounds, were treated as separable categories to be sorted and arranged according to colonial needs. The intra-dependence within socio-ecological systems was largely disregarded by the South African government. The new arrangement imagined ENP as a fenced island within the wider colonial system. As described, this “dismembering” had unforeseen effects. Yet, the 1980s also saw the first ideas of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) being experimented with in north-west Namibia, to later become the dominant paradigm for communal areas in independent Namibia, as considered briefly below and in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.5 The 1980s: First steps towards community-based nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene

The history of CBNRM in Namibia owes much to the initiative of a number of individuals concerned about the decline of wildlife in Namibia’s north-west. In 1981, control over nature conservation in the homelands was transferred from BAD in Pretoria to the Directorate of Nature Conservation (DNC) in Windhoek, with the late Chris Eyre appointed Senior Nature Conservation Officer in Khorixas.²⁵⁹ In 1982, the NGO Namibia Wildlife Trust (NWT) was formed by the late Blythe Loutit, the late Ina Britz, and other concerned conservationists (including botanist Dr Pat Craven), ‘to help the nature conservation authorities bring poaching in the country’s north-west under control’.²⁶⁰ They had the support of the Damara Regional Authority (DRA), the Peoples’ Trust for Endangered Species, and the Wildlife Society of South West Africa, with financial resources committed by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT, South Africa) under the leadership of Clive Walker. The late Garth Owen-Smith, who became one of Namibia’s most famous conservationists, was employed by the Trust to direct the field operations from NWT’s field base at the farm Werêltsend,²⁶¹ south of the

²⁵⁵ Bollig (2020: 202–3) referring to Lenggenhager (2018)

²⁵⁶ Bollig (2020: 222–27)

²⁵⁷ Owen-Smith (2010: 377) in Bollig (2020: 223)

²⁵⁸ Ellis (1994), Sullivan (2002), Owen-Smith (2010: 367–406) in Bollig (2020: 224)

²⁵⁹ Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 45), Hearn (2003: 13)

²⁶⁰ Owen-Smith (2010: 3, 6)

²⁶¹ Jacobsohn (2019: 6)

vet fence on the Torra Bay road, working between 1982–1984 with, most notably, Peter Erb, Elias Hambo, Bennie Roman, Johan le Roux and Sakeus Kasaona.²⁶²

This Trust, which later formed the basis for Namibia's well-known and successful Save the Rhino Trust (SRT),²⁶³ was thus formed 'by a group of conservationists alarmed by the wilful slaughter of game species in Namibia' who, 'as a first step'²⁶⁴

had worked out a programme of protection for the large mammals of the desert regions, in particular the elephants, rhinos, giraffe and mountain zebra occurring outside proclaimed game reserves in the Kaokoland and Damaraland tribal areas. As Senior Field Officer, Garth was responsible for determining the status and distribution of the endangered species and for spearheading an anti-poaching campaign.²⁶⁵

The Trust worked on the basis of four principles that have formed a basis for subsequent 'community-based conservation' activities in the region (see Chapter 3):

1. To create an awareness of the need for good conservation among all residents of Kaokoland and Damaraland.
2. To train suitable inhabitants of Kaokoland and Damaraland in conservation so that in the future they might play an active professional role in the conservation of the region.
3. To assist the local government conservation officers in controlling illegal hunting in the region.
4. To promote a better understanding of the ecology of this unique region.²⁶⁶

A foundation of the Trust's work was cooperation with local headmen *vis-à-vis* poaching, leading to the establishment of an Auxiliary Game Guard (AGG) system, which later became known as Community Game Guards (CGG), and formed the basis of a network of Rhino Rangers²⁶⁷ and Lion Rangers established in post-Independence conservancies (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19).²⁶⁸ Margaret Jacobsohn, who later co-founded Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) with Owen-Smith, articulates their approach as follows:

[c]onservation could be and should be relevant to Africans. If wildlife was valuable to people they would look after it. Instead, they were alienated from it by colonial conservation laws which gave ownership of wildlife to the state. [...] Conservation (back in the 1980s) was a white man's game, and wildlife, even though it was one of Africa's most valuable resources, was less important than people's domestic stock and crops.²⁶⁹

Jacobsohn considers the auxiliary game guard network to have played 'a pivotal role in ending the poaching crisis in both Kaokoland and adjoining Damaraland'.²⁷⁰ In 1985, however, Owen-Smith lost his funding and thus his job with the NWT, reportedly 'because the colonial authorities claimed he was "a dangerous Swapo supporter who was confusing the communities"'.²⁷¹ Evidently, the new ideas about conservation were not in line with the government of the time; crossing "ethnic" boundaries, these ideas also crossed political lines. Still, with funding from the EWT, the Department of Nature Conservation took over the auxiliary game guard network, although reportedly with limited enthusiasm.²⁷²

262 Owen-Smith (2002: 3)

263 <https://www.savetherhinotrust.org/>

264 Owen-Smith (2010: 411 ff.)

265 Reardon (1986: 17). Mitch Reardon was a South African journalist and friend of Owen-Smith, who travelled with Owen-Smith in Kaokoveld.

266 Owen-Smith (2010: 343–44)

267 See, for example, Sullivan *et al.* (2021) and references therein.

268 Owen-Smith (2010: 415–20)

269 Jacobsohn (2019: 7–8)

270 Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 44)

271 Jacobsohn (2019: xiv–xv)

272 Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 44, 2019: 22)

In 1987, following an approach by Jacobsohn who was conducting archaeological research in Puros, the then Director of EWT (Dr John Ledger) visited the north-west to evaluate circumstances there, after which he secured further small funding for Owen Smith's work in the north-west. Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn started a small pilot eco-tourism project at Puros, the 'Purros Pilot Project', with three components:

- a tourist levy paid to the Purros community by tour operators, charged on a per head basis and paid directly to the community for their role as caretakers of wildlife;
- a craft market drawing for example on local materials such as palm fronds used in basketry, with the impacts of harvesting monitored by local women;
- a 'Conservation Committee' established to represent the interests of the community, distribute the tourist levy and as a forum for discussion of any problems related to tourists and tour operators.²⁷³

An underlying principle here was to create 'an incentive for the local community to become involved in the CGG Program' by channelling benefits from wildlife conservation and increased tourism 'back into the hands of the Purros community', so as 'to broaden the Purros community's economic base and thereby change their attitudes towards wildlife'.²⁷⁴ This "sustainable use" principle has remained foundational to Namibia's post-Independence consolidation of CBNRM programme, although with disparate outcomes as elaborated in Chapters 3 and 5. As can be seen, CBNRM, now so prominent throughout Namibia's communal areas, has its origins in pre-Independent Etosha-Kunene.

2.6 Conclusion

The South African period was characterised by the classification and hierarchisation of human inhabitants according to so-called ethnic groups, the separation of human inhabitants from wildlife, and the reorganisation of space in Etosha-Kunene. Local inhabitants had become and were treated as resources for the colonial system, as was nature: both to be treated and exploited differently. The attempts at neat spatial-functional severance clearly reflected colonial thinking, being rooted in the ideas and categorisations documented in Chapter 1. Local human inhabitants were displaced and removed from lands they had previously lived in, and wildlife separated from its broader ecological context. The importance of "nature" for the colonial project increased considerably during the years covered in this chapter, which were also dominated by settlers' interests at the start of this period and the implementation of apartheid towards the end. Especially from the 1950s until the 1970s, nature conservation gained more prominence and was professionalised and "scientised".²⁷⁵ This was due to various factors, among them the spatial limitations for further white settlement based mainly on livestock husbandry and the increasing interest in tourism. Nature conservation became driven by the aim of nature commercialisation, an emphasis amplified since Independence.

The high economic value of game was the reason for the establishment of Game Reserve No. 2 in German colonial times, as outlined in Chapter 1. During these early times, game was important as an economic resource for settlers and traders and as a social resource for white sportsmen.²⁷⁶ Its value increased tremendously during South African times, both for settlers, thanks to the legislation enacted by the SWAA in 1967, and for the administration itself, due to the significance that tourism gained in economic terms for the territory. Wildlife became a product to be sold, not only as meat

²⁷³ Powell (1998: 27)

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ As can be seen by the proliferation of research publications concerning the 'Greater Etosha Landscape' (GEL) comprising Etosha National Park and a 40km surrounding 'buffer zone', from the 1960s onwards (Turner *et al.* 2022).

²⁷⁶ Miescher (2009: 99–101)

or hides to be eaten and used, but also an image of African wilderness for foreign visitors and as trophies for hunters from overseas.

The spatial reorganisations documented in this chapter had a tremendous impact on Etosha-Kunene ecology: in simplifying terms, ENP became overpopulated in wildlife and underpopulated in terms of human inhabitants, whilst from a conservation perspective the homelands of Kaokoland and Damaraland became underpopulated by wildlife and overpopulated with people and livestock. Game and local people with their livestock were perceived by the authorities as enemies to each other. During the 1980s, initial attempts to reconcile the interests of game protection on the one hand and of local populations on the other were observable but also limited in face of the liberation war and the political turmoil during those years. When Namibia became independent in 1990, it had to address this colonial legacy and the spatial division of Etosha-Kunene. In Chapter 3 we outline the efforts the new nation undertook to reshape Etosha-Kunene.

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3. CBNRM and landscape approaches to conservation in Kunene Region, post-Independence

Selma Lendelvo, Sian Sullivan and Ute Dieckmann

Abstract

We review how national post-Independence policy supporting Community-Based Natural Resources Management has played out in Etosha-Kunene, highlighting a new impetus towards a “landscape approach” for conservation in communal areas. Communal land immediately to the west of Etosha National Park is currently divided into a series of communal area conservancies, inhabited by pastoralist populations relying additionally on varying combinations of horticulture, gathering, hunting and wage employment. A new donor-funding trend is now noticeable towards recognising how landscapes with conservation and livelihood value overlap these areas. In the 2000s a Kunene People’s Park was proposed to connect the Hobatere, Etendeka and Palmwag Tourism Concessions between Etosha Pan and the Skeleton Coast, although this was never formalised. In 2018 proposals for a ‘People’s Park’ were reignited with international support by conservation donors and the British royal family. Present proposals for an Ombonde People’s Park/Landscape currently comprised primarily of two conservancies on the western boundary of Etosha National Park are being implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism with support by multiple donors. We provide an overview of these conservation changes in Etosha-Kunene for the three decades since Namibia’s Independence in 1990.

3.1 Introduction

Wildlife is an important part of African cultures and livelihoods. Coexistence between African communities and wildlife was maintained through traditional conservation practices existing prior to formal colonisation, comprised of traditional rituals, beliefs and taboos.¹ During colonial times, protected area management followed a fortress conservation model (see Chapter 2): local and Indigenous communities were excluded from the use and management of wildlife, thereby de-coupling socio-ecological systems. In Namibia, this detachment of local communities from interactions with wildlife—linked especially with colonial land appropriation, as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2—had tremendous effects both on wildlife populations and human inhabitants, including on cultural values and value practices around indigenous fauna and flora.² While protected areas have rescued many species from extinction all over the world, declines have also been associated with the expansion of infrastructure development, human settlement and economic activities.³ For example, in the early 1970s, black-faced impala (*Aepyceros melampus petersi*) in north-west Namibia were declining in numbers with translocation into Etosha National Park (ENP) enacted to support remaining populations.⁴

1 Kideghesho (2008)

2 Songorwa *et al.* (2000)

3 Naughton-Treves *et al.* (2005), Chape *et al.* (2005)

4 Green & Rothstein (1997) in Matson (2004)

Protected areas, however, have also been criticised for creating isolated conservation islands that disconnect wildlife from human populations living beyond their boundaries.⁵ In Namibia, indiscriminate and substantial decimation of wildlife occurred from “pre-colonial” and through colonial times, often due to the hunting and trading activities of non-local people—as documented in Chapter 1.⁶ This situation continued following implementation of the Odendaal Plan and the creation of “homelands”, which extended the historical exclusion of local people from utilisation rights to wildlife resources in communally-managed areas.⁷ This situation ran parallel to the enactment of Nature Conservation Ordinance 31 of 1967 which enabled “game” to become a resource with economic value on freehold farms:⁸ as detailed in Chapter 2. Conservation legislation was further updated with Nature Conservation Ordinance 4 of 1975, through which the former Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism (MWCT) again relaxed prohibitions for hunting by white settler farmers on freehold land, whilst retaining them for hunting and trapping by African residents in communal areas.⁹ Private game reserves and “hunting farms” could be established in freehold settler farming areas, if certain species-dependent requirements for fencing and security were adhered to.¹⁰ The former South West Africa thereby became aligned with similar apartheid-era game farming policies on freehold land in South Africa.¹¹ Wildlife management reform was clearly necessary after Independence to reverse this situation for communities living outside protected areas, so that they may also benefit from the conservation of wildlife and other “natural resources”.

It is sometimes asserted that losses of wildlife through illegal hunting in communal areas in the 1980s occurred because these areas were excluded from the provisions of the 1975 Ordinance.¹² A particular focus of this anxiety was the Kaokoland and Damaraland Homelands of north-west Namibia—an area framed as a ‘last wilderness’ by South African environmentalists¹³—also see Chapters 12 and 13. Conservation concern in the 1970s and 1980s focused especially on losses of internationally-valued large mammal species—particularly desert-dwelling elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*). At the same time, the reasons for wildlife losses at this time in north-west Namibia are many and complex.¹⁴ In the 1960s the area was reportedly exploited as something of a private hunting reserve by top government officials, including Cabinet Ministers in the South African government.¹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the late 1970s and early 1980s drought contributed to wildlife losses, both directly and through stimulating local “poaching” in attempts to counter erosion of livelihoods. Organised illegal trafficking in ivory and horn during the 1980s, known to have been pursued as a ‘deliberate policy of the various organs of the South African state’,¹⁶ also may have reduced elephant and rhino populations. The situation in north-west Namibia was exacerbated by regional warfare between South Africa, Namibia and Angola, which made firearms available, often via distribution by the South African Defence Force (SADF) to local people as a means of fostering tensions between different groups so as to compromise regional and national opposition.¹⁷ In other words, the ultimate causes of wildlife losses in the north-west appear largely beyond the control of local people in these years.

As detailed in Chapter 2, this backdrop of drought, civil war and illegal hunting of especially elephant and rhino in the north-west of the country stimulated responses by concerned

5 Songorwa *et al.* (2000)

6 Sullivan *et al.* (2021)

7 Botha (2005), Bollig & Olwage (2016), Heydinger (2020)

8 Joubert (1974), Botha (2013)

9 Barnes *et al.* (2002), Sullivan (2002: 162)

10 Abbiati *et al.* (2013: 15–18); also Degeorges & African Advisory Board (1996: 90)

11 Wels (2015)

12 Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith (2003)

13 Reardon (1986), Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988)

14 Sullivan (2002: 171–72)

15 Reardon (1986: 13)

16 Ellis (1994: 3)

17 Fuller (1993: 81)

conservationists that ultimately became Namibia's celebrated post-Independence Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programme.¹⁸ In encouraging a view of local people as caretakers of natural resources—including land and wildlife—these initiatives proved successful in helping with the recovery of wildlife numbers in the region. Its community-led approach defied the political climate of the time by encouraging active participation by local people in conservation activities—thereby nurturing a vision of wildlife as a valuable social and economic resource for those living in communal areas.¹⁹ In 1990, these initiatives formed the kernel of a new NGO called Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) that began a similar programme of community-based conservation work in what was then Caprivi Region, now Zambezi Region, in the north-east of Namibia.²⁰ As the late Mike Hearn summarises:

[f]ocusing on the charismatic megafauna, a community-based conservation approach in the early 1980s was balanced by intensive field operations and strong law enforcement carried out by both government and non-governmental organisations. These measures greatly reduced poaching and contributed to wider biodiversity conservation objectives.²¹

After Independence in 1990, Namibia identified conservation as a constitutional obligation: Article 95 of the Namibian constitution thus emphasises the need for the

maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and utilisation of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future.²²

This constitutional commitment was followed by the development of a formal policy on CBNRM and the ratification of the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996. This Amendment Act sought to ensure the inclusion of communal land in the “sustainable use” and management of wildlife and other natural resources, leading to the establishment of communal area conservancies as part of CBNRM.²³ The introduction of CBNRM in Namibia acknowledged that local communities, whether on communal or commercial (freehold) land, were important conservation partners who needed to be granted rights to support them when utilising and managing wildlife resources.²⁴ In doing so, Namibia became aligned with participatory approaches to conservation that were simultaneously market-oriented, the assumption being that both local communities and wildlife populations would benefit from commercialisation of the latter and the enrolment of the former in wildlife and tourism enterprises. This “new” conservation was thus driven by: acknowledgement of the costs experienced by farmers living alongside wildlife in these areas; a need to counter the alienating effects of past exclusionary conservation policies; the assertion that economic incentives were needed for local people to maintain a benign relationship with animal-wildlife; and recognition of the economic development needs of rural populations. In this neoliberal moment, the primary ‘facilitators’ of CBNRM and other participatory and inclusive approaches to conservation tended to be NGOs, and the emphasis was on establishing profit-oriented wildlife and tourism businesses through encouraging external investment, as elaborated in Section 3.2.²⁵

18 Clements *et al.* (1984), Berger *et al.* (1993: 923), Jacobsohn (1995, 1998[1990]), Durbin *et al.* (1997), IRDNC (2015), Sullivan (2022: 3–7)

19 Owen-Smith (2002)

20 Taylor (2012), IRDNC (2015)

21 Hearn (2003: 1)

22 GRN (2014[1990])

23 NACSO (2004), Weaver & Petersen (2008)

24 Murombedzi (1999: 288), Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith (2003), Jones & Weaver (2009), Hauptfleisch *et al.* (2024)

25 Sullivan (2006)

3.2 Community-Based Natural Resources Management in Namibian communal land areas

Namibia's CBNRM programme attempts to tackle the historical decoupling of Indigenous communities from indigenous fauna. Protected areas and national parks are widely criticised in southern Africa for displacing local communities and forfeiting their rights to wildlife and ancestral connections in those areas.²⁶ In combination with colonial appropriation of the most productive lands for farming, the loss of land by local and Indigenous Namibians has been both rapid and very substantial (as documented in Chapters 1 and 2).

Namibia's conservancy policy for communal areas was therefore developed as the basis for CBNRM through devolved management of wildlife without moving people from the land.²⁷ In Namibia's CBNRM programme, residents of communal land areas who become conservancy members may benefit from, and have management responsibilities over, animal-wildlife. To be registered as a wildlife management institution, a conservancy requires a defined boundary and membership, a representative management committee, a legal constitution and a plan for the equitable distribution of benefits.²⁸ Like the much-publicised CAMPFIRE programme of Zimbabwe—the blueprint for USAID (United States Agency for International Development) funded CBNRM programmes throughout southern Africa and elsewhere²⁹—conservancy policy has been informed by the assumption that 'conservation and development goals can be achieved by creating strong collective tenure over wildlife resources in communal lands'.³⁰ Additionally, CBNRM focuses on creating mechanisms for harnessing market values from wildlife by providing communal area conservancies with rights to the 'consumptive and non-consumptive use and sustainable management of game [...] in order to enable the members to derive benefits'.³¹

The belief is that market values will act to mitigate or "offset" the costs of living alongside populations of large-bodied mammals that may damage livestock, crops and farming infrastructure.³² Consumptive use of wildlife thus forms a major part of "sustainable use" in Namibia's CBNRM programme. As Bollig reviews, in circumstances in which wildlife populations are buoyant,

[c]onservancies receive annual game quotas [...] set in annual meetings in which conservancy members, officers of the MET [Ministry of Environment and Tourism, now Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MEFT)], NGO staff, and also trophy-hunting companies participate. About 20% of the quota is designated for trophy hunting, whereas 80% is kept for own-use hunting [...] The latter category consists of animals assigned to traditional authorities to furnish meetings with meat, animals traded in shoot-and-sell contracts to butchers from the wider region, and animals exchanged with local agencies for their services.³³

Regarding trophy animals, '[t]rophy hunters, or more often their helpers, usually only cut off the "trophy part" of the animal that has been shot. The meat is left with the community for distribution',³⁴ as per the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996.³⁵

As with CBNRM elsewhere, the ethos of Namibia's programme is that appropriate incentives to use natural resources sustainably will arise if these resources have sufficient economic value

26 As Dieckmann (2007) and Hoole (2008) document for ENP.

27 Nujoma (1998)

28 MET (1995a, b)

29 In the 1990s USAID-funded CBNRM programmes in southern Africa included Botswana's Natural Resources Management Programme (NRMP), Zimbabwe's Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), Zambia's Administrative Management Design (ADMADE) programme, and the Namibian programme Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE). See discussion in Sullivan (2002)

30 Murombedzi (1999: 288)

31 GRN (1996: 24A (4)), also Hewitson & Sullivan (2021: 3)

32 Drake *et al.* (2021), Tavolaro *et al.* (2022)

33 Bollig (2016: 792–93)

34 *Ibid.*; also see Hewitson & Sullivan (2021)

35 Corbett & Daniels (1996)

to local people, conferred through rights of use, benefit and management.³⁶ Unsurprisingly, given both intense NGO, donor and government efforts to facilitate 'land acquisition for conservation in the non-formal sense',³⁷ as well as local uptake of conservancy establishment as a forum for expressing claims to land, historically marginalised communities have seized the opportunity to gain rights over natural resources.³⁸

In general, the CBNRM conservancy programme forms part of Namibian government policy whilst receiving support from varied donors, NGOs and other organisations. Indeed, the integration of wildlife conservation with rural development via conservancies in communal land areas has been the focus of an impressive list of donor-funded, NGO-implemented projects. For example: a five-year Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) project from 1993, extended in 1999, brought major donor funding from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and USAID to the CBNRM project; the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and World Bank funded an Integrated Community-Based Ecosystem Management (ICEMA) project focusing on selected conservancies from around 2003–2011; the Strengthening the Protected Areas Network (SPAN) from 2004 onwards brought finance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GEF, and Germany's state-owned investment and development bank (KfW), and included communal area conservancies in proposals for new forms of protected areas; and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) is funding 'biodiversity economy' initiatives that include communal area conservancies.³⁹ A new Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF) established in 2020 as a charity under German law—involving the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), KfW, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and WWF—has recently approved a 'Skeleton Coast-Etosha Conservation Bridge' project led by WWF Namibia and IRDNC, to the tune of USD 1 million a year for 50 years.⁴⁰ These and other donor-funded initiatives have directed millions of dollars towards developing CBNRM and sustainable use businesses.⁴¹

The primary facilitators of CBNRM, through which donor funds are applied for and channelled, have tended to be NGOs working in conjunction with government, especially the MEFT, formerly the MET and MWCT. In the Namibian case, the primary national facilitating NGO is IRDNC, which in the 1990s was considered to have 'a particular onus [...] to facilitate conservancy registration and development'.⁴² In 2013, a new *National Policy on Community Based Natural Resources Management* published by the then MET thus emphasised NGOs as partners in the 'institutional framework' of CBNRM.⁴³ Conservancies are also described as organisations established to facilitate business, such that a conservancy is 'a business venture in communal land use [...] although its key function is actually to enable business'.⁴⁴ The conservancy programme has grown since its initiation in the 1990s, with conservancy governance allowing future-oriented thinking and an ideal of engaging in sustainable practices while maximising returns.⁴⁵ The institutional context means that as well as connecting communal areas with consumers from afar (such as tourists, investors and trophy hunters), the programme places these lands within the orbit of state, donor, NGO and private sector aspirations, governance and control (see Chapter 5).⁴⁶

Namibia's conservancy policy has been heralded as the most progressive initiative of its kind in southern Africa.⁴⁷ In September 1998 Namibia became the first country worldwide to be

36 Naidoo *et al.* (2016)

37 Jones (1999a: 47)

38 Sullivan (2002: 162, 165), Bollig & Menestry Schweiger (2014: 169–170, 178), Bollig (2016: 780)

39 Sullivan (2023: 16)

40 LLF, WWF, IRDNC (2024); <https://legacylandscapes.org/map/skeleton-coast-etosha/>

41 Weaver (2016)

42 Durbin *et al.* (1997: 5)

43 MET (2013: 13–14)

44 NACSO (2014: 25)

45 Child (1993, 1996)

46 Gibson & Marks (1995: 942), Sullivan (2002: 163; 2023: 17)

47 Mafune (1998)

honoured for a people-centred environmental initiative with a WWF Gift to the Earth Award.⁴⁸ The programme has been celebrated for improving livelihood sustainability through diversifying income;⁴⁹ providing a participatory decision-making process that is empowering to women;⁵⁰ and empowering ‘poor, disadvantaged rural people’.⁵¹ This support aims to strengthen the capacity of local communities to successfully manage conservancy institutions, as well as to assist with compliance in relation to government guidelines and conservation standards, through activities such as game counts and audits, and conservancy “Event Book” documentation (see Chapter 14). Conservancies have generally been presented as having a positive track record, with communal areas benefiting from wildlife-generated wealth alongside pastoralism and other livelihood activities.⁵² It is also considered that wildlife conservation and tourism play a role in preserving culture and values of Namibian local people involved in CBNRM, and that the CBNRM programme provides for sustainable development for the poor (although for complexities see Chapters 5 and 6). Integrating wildlife management with livestock is thought to be a good option for rangelands affected by climate change through offering possibilities for livelihood diversification, although mitigation of possibly problematic human-wildlife interactions remains an issue (see Chapters 11, 17, 18 and 19).⁵³

At the same time, CBNRM advocates are increasingly suggesting the regulation of pastoral activities in core areas of conservancies set aside for tourism and trophy hunting, through development of wildlife management and conservancy zonation plans.⁵⁴ The enforcement of this practice limits and denies communities on communal land access to such areas for pastoral activities, thereby further constraining pastoralist and other traditional livelihood practices on communal land.⁵⁵ In addition, persistent negative human-wildlife interactions hinders progress and harmonious coexistence in conservancy areas. Some wildlife animals have become habituated to tactics designed to deter them, thereby causing more damage to property.⁵⁶ Cases in point are the damage caused by elephants to communal water points utilised by residents in dryland conservancies in west Namibia (as documented in Chapter 11), and rising predation levels on livestock which heavily affects local livelihoods (as documented in Chapters 17, 18 and 19).⁵⁷ As the late conservationist Garth Owen-Smith stated in *The Namibian* newspaper in 2017,

[p]ut simply, during droughts, predator numbers increase because hunting is easier, while their prey populations decrease due to little or no reproduction, higher drought-related mortalities and increased predation. In communal areas, this predator/prey imbalance causes lions to turn on the easiest alternative available—the local farmer’s livestock.⁵⁸

In the years since, however, concerns have also been raised about the status of the lion population in Namibia’s north-west, given the decline in prey availability linked with drought and possibly unsustainable prey offtake, as detailed in Section 3.2.1.

The conservancy programme in Namibia is driven by the Namibian government, who through the years has worked in partnership with various partners, including civil society, donor agencies and the private sector to promote local-led conservation, including landscape protection to enhance connectivity with other areas.⁵⁹ Anthropologist Michael Bollig⁶⁰ also refers to the community

48 Sutherland (1998)

49 Ashley (1997), Hulme & Murphree (1999)

50 Jones (1999b: 302) – although also see Sullivan (2000)

51 Jones (1995), Ashley (1997), Callihan (1999)

52 Barnes *et al.* (2002)

53 Niamir-Fuller *et al.* (2012), Inman *et al.* (2020a, b)

54 Cruise & Sasada (2021)

55 Shilongo *et al.* (2018)

56 O’Connell-Rodwell *et al.* (2000)

57 Sullivan (2016), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), Lendelvo *et al.* (2021)

58 Owen-Smith (2017: online)

59 Weaver & Skyer (2003)

60 Bollig (2016)

conservation programme in Namibia as the ‘new commons’, referencing the devolution of rights over natural resources, especially for wildlife management and through direct involvement in decision-making about use, protection, investments and benefits. The communal area conservancy programme demonstrated its importance over the years as a crucial vehicle for enhancing economic development in rural Namibia, through wildlife conservation and tourism that promotes community participation.⁶¹ The first four conservancies in Namibia were gazetted by the MET in 1998, namely, Nyae Nyae Conservancy in Otjozondjupa Region, Salambala Conservancy in Zambezi Region, and Torra and #Khoadi-llHôas Conservancies in Kunene Region. By 2020, there were 86 conservancies covering 58.7% of communal areas in Namibia representing 20% of the country’s surface area and encompassing more than 200,000 people:⁶² see Table 3.1. A government *Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concessions on State Land* was also applied as of 2007,⁶³ clarifying access arrangements for tourists (including hunting tourists), to previously and newly established concession areas, from which additional revenue would also be generated for the state in a sustainable way from Namibia’s indigenous plant and wildlife resources—on which more in Section 3.3.

Table 3.1. Numbers of communal area conservancies registered by year following Independence in Namibia.

Year	Cumulative number of conservancies	Area coverage (in sq km)	Percentage coverage in communal areas (%)	Percentage coverage in Namibia (%)
1998	4	16,821	5.5	2.04
1999	9	21,669	7.1	2.6
2000	10	25,237	8.2	3.06
2001	15	40,714	13.3	4.9
2002	15	40,714	13.3	4.9
2003	29	70,995	23.2	8.6
2004	31	78,708	25.7	9.55
2005	44	105,038	34.3	12.74
2006	50	118,704	38.8	14.4
2007	50	118,704	38.8	14.4
2008	53	122,897	38.4	14.9
2009	59	132,697	43.3	16.1
2010	59	132,697	43.3	16.1
2011	66	146,321	47.8	17.8
2012	77	158,247	52.2	19.2
2013	79	160,244	52.4	19.4
2014	82	162,030	52.9	19.66
2015	82	162,030	52.9	19.66
2016	82	162,030	52.9	19.66
2017	83	163,151	53.2	19.8
2018-21	86	166,179	58.8	20.2

Source: Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO), *State of Community Conservation* reports 2004–2021, <https://www.nacso.org.na/>.

Regardless of the success stories and general stance of acceptance of CBNRM, however, diverse and opposing narratives also surface in discussion about whether these are really community-driven

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Mosimane & Silva (2014), NACSO (2021)

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ MET (2017[2007])

conservation efforts or imposed forms of organisation and governance.⁶⁴ It is also important to acknowledge that communal area conservancies became established on top of the pattern of land control set up during the country's colonial and later apartheid history.⁶⁵ As documented in Chapters 1 and 2 and shown in Figure 3.1, most of the central and southern parts of the country were surveyed, fenced and settled by commercial white farmers once African Namibians had been constrained to more marginal lands which also acted as labour reserves (the dark shaded areas on the left-hand map). In 2018, more than 70% of freehold land was owned by 'previously advantaged farmers', which in Namibia's racialised history means they are white.⁶⁶ It is Namibia's remaining communally-managed land areas—those often more marginal lands (for farming) beyond the predominantly white-owned freehold farms—that are the focus of CBNRM, through the registration of communal land areas as conservancies with defined boundaries, members, and plans for wildlife management. As the map on the right of Figure 3.1 indicates, communal area conservancies remain limited to areas designated under colonialism and apartheid as communal lands where African land-users were permitted to live. The registration of communal area conservancies has not disrupted the highly unequal and enclosed pattern of land distribution established through Namibia's colonial and apartheid histories;⁶⁷ although, as mentioned, the registration process has often been drawn on to assert and negotiate historically understood and contested claims to land. In addition, some ethnic groupings of Namibians who were not allocated communal land under South Africa's administration of the territory have remained excluded even from CBNRM initiatives, as is the case for Hai||om inhabitants of Etosha-Kunene (see Chapters 2, 4, 15 and 16).

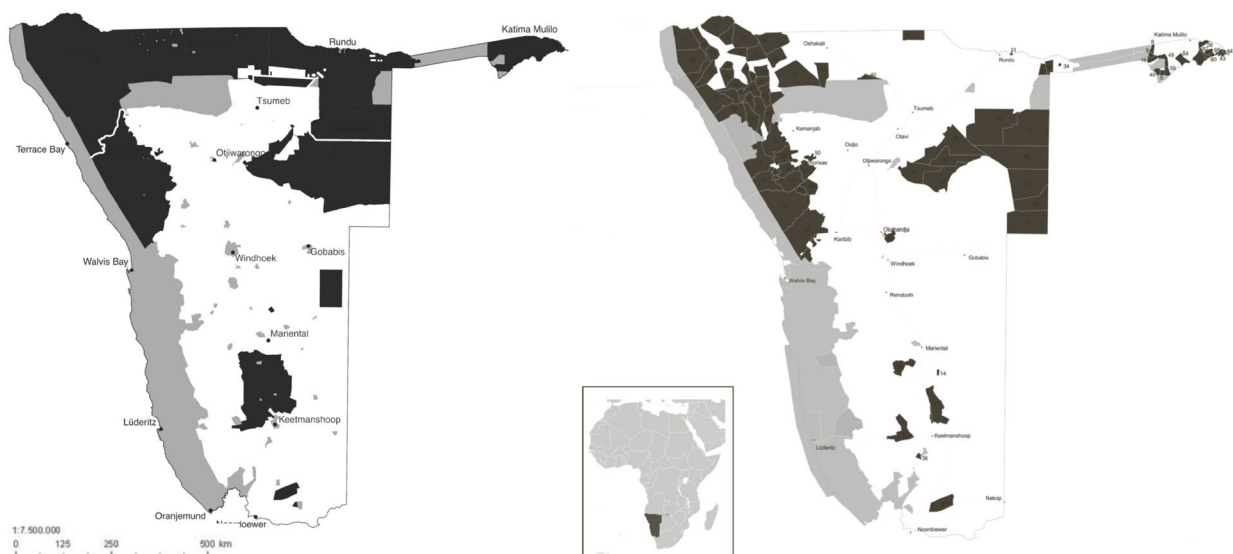


Fig. 3.1 Broad patterns of land tenure in Namibia: the dark shading on the map on the left shows areas under communal tenure in 2000 (John Mendelsohn pers. comm.); the dark shading on the right-hand map shows 82 registered communal area conservancies in 2014 (there are now 86) (NACSO, Windhoek, <https://www.nacso.org.na/conservancies>). The white areas on both maps are mostly under freehold tenure (other than in north-central Namibia). The pale-shaded areas are under state protection for conservation or (formerly) diamond mining, or are designated as tourism concessions.

Source: © Sullivan (2023: 17), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.2.1 CBNRM in Kunene Region

With regard to Kunene Region specifically, 38 conservancies (44%) have been established in this region where they encompass an area of 60,735 km² with a population of around 71,500 people, making up 52.7% of the region and 7.4% of the country's surface area (as extracted from conservancy

⁶⁴ Taylor (2012), Mosimane & Silva (2014), Koot *et al.* (2023)

⁶⁵ Becker (2022a, b)

⁶⁶ NSA (2018), Becker (2022a, b)

⁶⁷ Sullivan (2018)

data, <https://www.nacso.org.na/>): see Figure 3.2. Kunene is the largest of the 14 political regions in Namibia, covering 144,255 km², which constitutes 18% of the land area of the country. The climate of Kunene Region is characterised as arid to semi-arid, with high temperatures and a rainfall gradient from the east where more than 400 mm of rain may be received, to the west where desert conditions mean that rainfall is lower than 100 mm.⁶⁸ The key feature of the climate here is the unpredictable variability of rainfall, especially in the drier west, meaning that primary productivity is similarly dynamic. Rainfall for the settlement of Sesfontein, for example, has been documented as having an annual mean of 95 mm and a coefficient of variation of 70% (n=24).⁶⁹ The region is characterised by an incised landscape with mountainous areas (see Chapters 9 and 11), alluvial plains and ephemeral rivers, i.e. rivers that flow only when there is enough rainfall in their catchment areas,⁷⁰ providing rich sources of biodiversity and important habitats in this dryland area.⁷¹ The region is home to a fluid diversity of ethnic identities, as documented in Chapters 1 and 2.

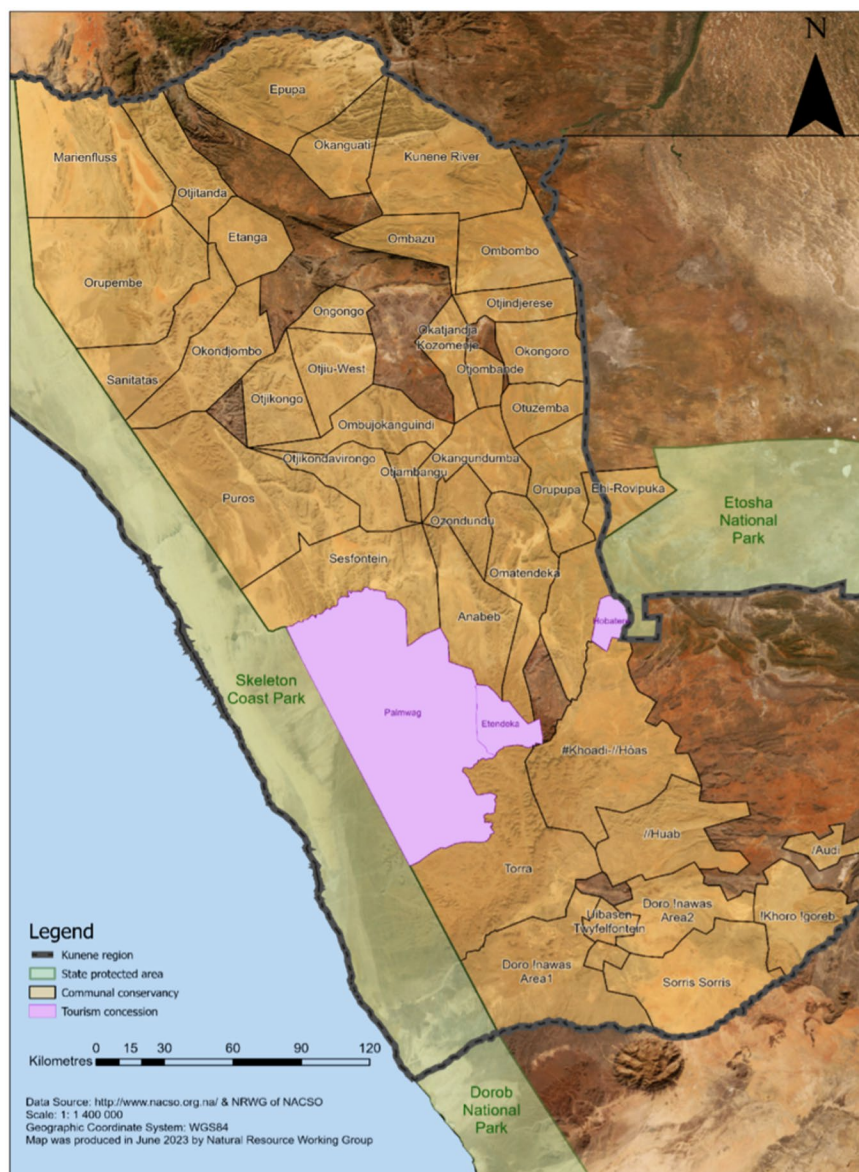


Fig. 3.2 Map of conservancies, state protected areas and tourism concessions in Kunene Region. Source: public data, NACSO Natural Resources Working Group (<https://www.nacso.org.na/working-groups/natural-resources-working-group>), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

68 Ndimwedi (2016)

69 Sullivan (1999: 259)

70 Jacobson *et al.* (1995)

71 Shikangalah & Mapani (2021)

Kunene Region is notable for having the highest number of conservancies by region by far. The region's conservancies now sustain multiple joint venture arrangements with tourism enterprises, as well as having contracts with eight professional hunting businesses operating in 21 conservancy hunting concessions (according to recent data);⁷² although wildlife declines in the last decade have caused a corresponding decline of hunting quotas (discussed further below). In addition, wildlife dispersal methods such as translocation were also carried out at different stages of the programme to increase wildlife species ranges and to enhance the “tourism product” (also see Chapter 9): indeed, 40 gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) were translocated in 2023 to locations in the Palmwag Tourism Concession in response to a severe decline in the population of this species in north-west Namibia. Translocations in this context normally involve movement of wildlife species from protected areas or freehold farmland into community-managed, communal areas;⁷³ with some occasional translocation of animals identified as problematic (such as predators or elephants) from communal areas to protected areas and freehold farms.

These changes have not only contributed to increasing the amount of land under conservation both nationally and in Kunene Region specifically, but they have also increased the range within which wildlife in Namibia could freely move, thereby contributing to the diversity of wildlife species with viable populations. Adding complexity, wildlife species population increases from the 1980s until around 2012 that are attributed to the success of CBNRM⁷⁴ are considered to have also contributed to heightened multispecies “Human-Wildlife Impacts”, including livestock depredation, crop raiding, damage to infrastructure and human attacks. For this reason, 1,415 ‘problem animals’ were destroyed across 79 conservancies between 2001–2019.⁷⁵

The 2007 Concessions Policy (plus 2017 amendments⁷⁶) additionally clarifies formal arrangements whereby conservancies can enter into contractual relationships with operators awarded a concession. The Concessions Policy distinguishes four broad types of concession: lodge-based tourism, camp site-based tourism, trophy hunting, and traversing rights (whereby a communal conservancy or tour operator have rights to traverse national park areas with tourist clients). In effect, these arrangements were already consolidating an approach focusing on connecting landscapes through which wildlife move, prefiguring a “landscape approach” to conservation in communal areas, as outlined further in Section 3.3. As a result, connections between largely unfenced conservancy, concession and protected areas have been consolidated, as shown in Figure 3.3. Concessions such as Palmwag have additionally been awarded to conservancies to permit conservancy committees to co-manage and look after these areas in partnership with government agencies and NGOs; additional proposals have also been made to reduce concession sizes and divide tourism areas between operators.⁷⁷ The Big 3 Trust, established around 2012 and led by the Chairmen of Torra, Anabeb and Sesfontein conservancies, is thus now the concessionaire for the Palmwag Tourism Concession, able to enter into legal contracts with operators awarded tourism contracts in the concession (see Chapter 13). These approaches build on co-management programmes developed throughout African contexts⁷⁸ and elsewhere, to allow active participation by local communities for the purposes of inclusion and reducing conflicts over resources.⁷⁹

Despite these forward-looking innovations, for north-west Namibia specifically, concern about declining populations of some wildlife species now appears warranted, alongside entrenched poverty in this region. The combined impacts of high permitted wildlife offtake quotas extended into a multi-year drought—as shown in Table 3.2 and Figures 3.4 and 3.5—have led to a current situation of reduced offtake possibilities. Significant and sustained declines of populations of gemsbok,

⁷² <https://www.nacso.org.na/hunting-partners>, last accessed 1.8.2023; also Naidoo *et al.* (2016)

⁷³ NACSO (2013), Paterson *et al.* (2008), Thomsen *et al.* (2022)

⁷⁴ NACSO (2022)

⁷⁵ Tavolaro *et al.* (2022: 8)

⁷⁶ In the Nature Conservation Amendment Act 3 of 2017.

⁷⁷ MET (2009)

⁷⁸ Baghai *et al.* (2018)

⁷⁹ Nath *et al.* (2016), Fedreheim & Blanco (2017), Petursson & Kristofersson (2021)

springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) and Hartmann's mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*) have been observed between 2011–2017 in Sesfontein, Anabeb and Puros conservancies,⁸⁰ as well as the Palmwag Concession with which these conservancies are contractually connected. Relatively good rainfall in 2022 does not appear to have contributed to a recovery of populations, for which a sustained run of good rain years would be needed.⁸¹

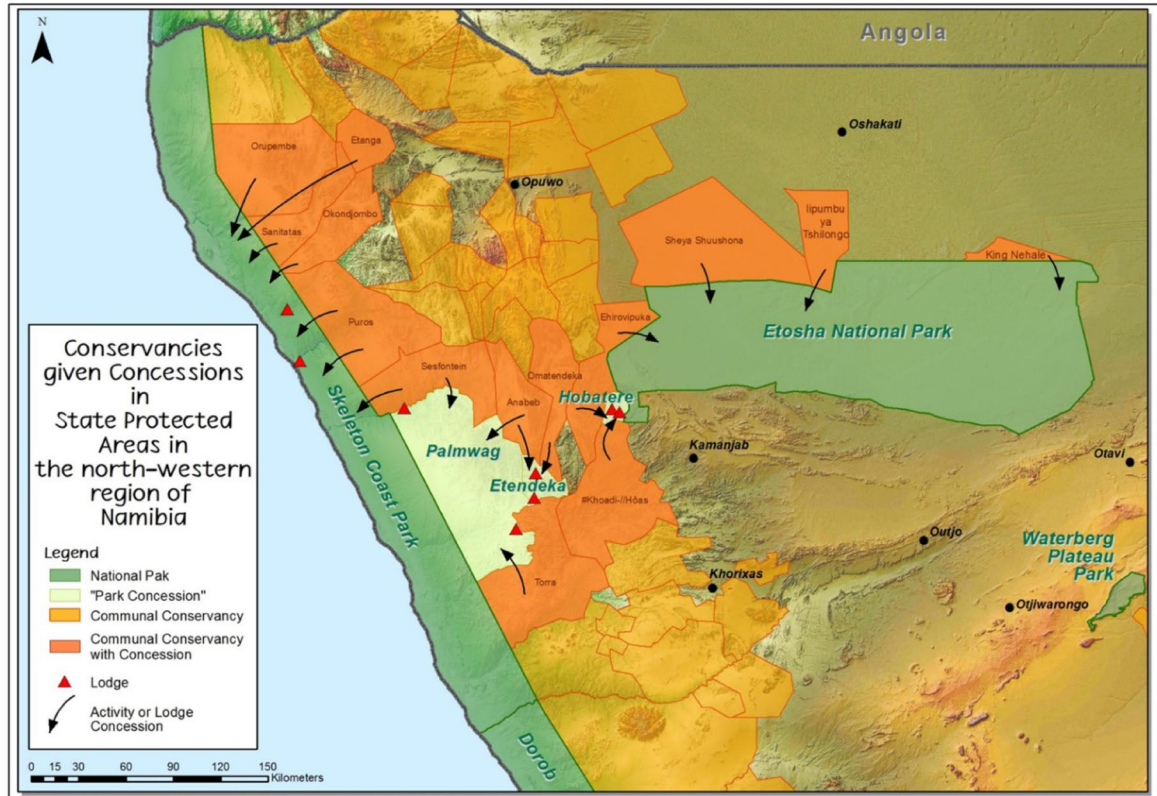


Fig. 3.3 Map of tourism concession areas utilised by conservancies in Kunene Region and next to Etosha National Park. Source: public 2015 data at <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/Concession%20map.jpg>, 19.7.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

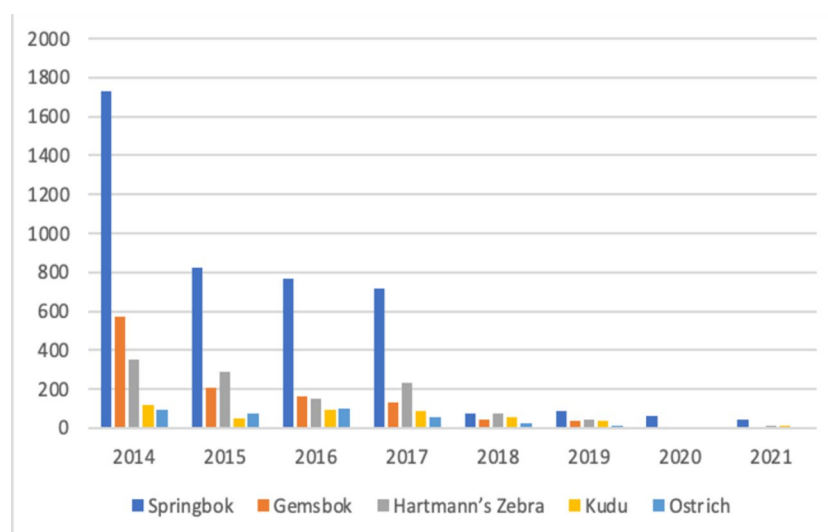


Fig. 3.4 Graph showing declines in numbers of harvested animals from the five primary prey species focused on for consumptive use in north-west Namibia, 2014–2021. Source: graph created by Sian Sullivan from NACSO Game Count North-west Namibia May 2022, public data, <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/North%20West%20Game%20Count-Regional%202022%20final.pdf>, 1.8.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

80 Heydinger *et al.* (2019: 497–98)

81 For figures, see NACSO (2022)

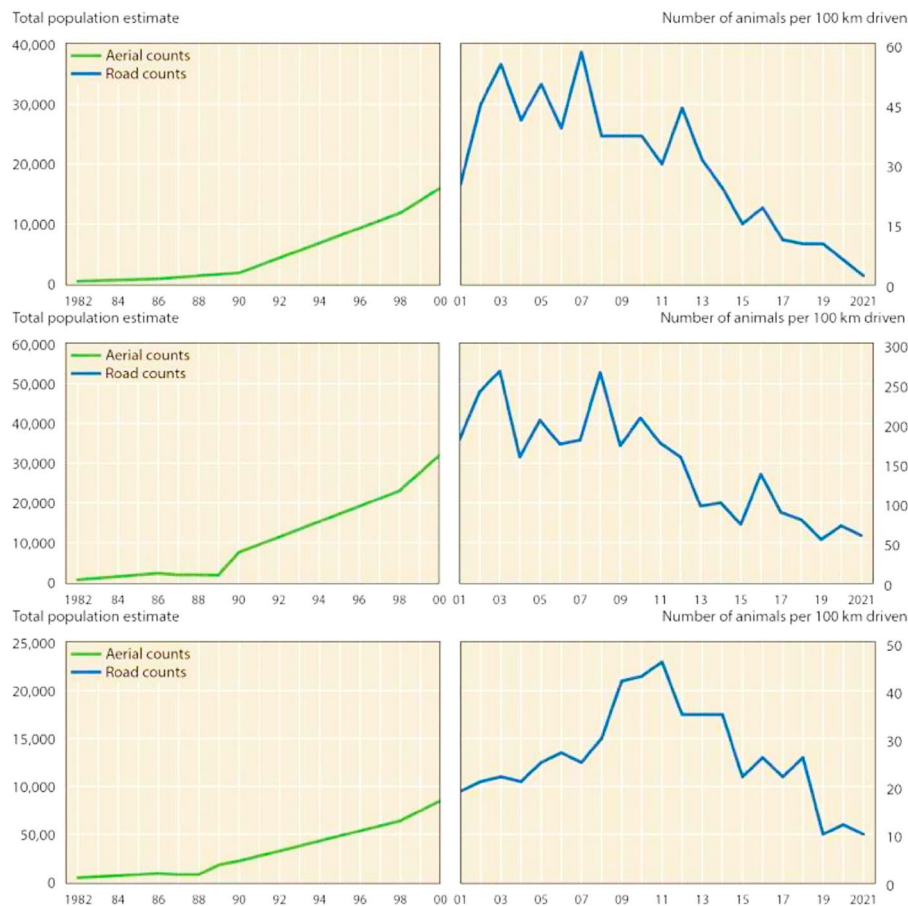


Fig. 3.5 Graphs showing population count data for gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) (top), springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) (middle) and Hartmann's mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*) (bottom) for Erongo and Kunene Regions in north-west Namibia, from aerial counts for 1982–2000 and road counts from 2001–2021. Source: NACSO State of Community Conservation 2021 public data (<https://www.nacso.org.na/resources/state-of-community-conservation-figures-and-tables>, 1.8.2023), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

What these data show for north-west Namibia are that prey species have declined, leading to a situation in which predators such as lion and leopard are increasingly preying on peoples' livestock (see Chapter 17). This combination of dynamic factors led to a moratorium on “shoot-and-sell” off-take by commercial butcheries in the north-west,⁸² radically reducing actual or potential conservancy income from consumptive use of wildlife, although trophy-hunting of predator species appears to be continuing in the area.⁸³

Presenting additional challenges, and despite several decades of donor-financed CBNRM, Kunene Region also remains the area of Namibia where eradication of poverty appears to be the hardest. In 2022 the World Bank confirmed that 1.6 million people in Namibia (of a total population of 2.6 million) are living in poverty,⁸⁴ with Kunene Region in north-west Namibia the worst hit area. In 2011 39% of the population in Kunene Region were classified as ‘poor’, i.e. living on <USD 1/day.⁸⁵ In 2021, and partly reflecting subsequent years of drought as well as the impacts of COVID-19,⁸⁶ over 64% of the population of Kunene Region was considered “multidimensionally poor”, with a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.379—the highest poverty intensity level in Namibia.⁸⁷ Alongside these figures, and prior to the COVID pandemic, tourism was the third largest sector in

⁸² Heydinger *et al.* (2019: 498)

⁸³ Africa Geographic (2023)

⁸⁴ Petersen (2022)

⁸⁵ GRN (2015)

⁸⁶ Lendelvo *et al.* (2020)

⁸⁷ NSA (2021: 29)

terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), contributing around 14.7% of GDP in Namibia in 2019,⁸⁸ suggesting that tourism gains may not be reaching people in rural areas where tourism business and investment are prominent.

Table 3.2 Numbers of prey species harvested in north-west Namibia from 2014–2021.

Species		Number of animals harvested							
	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Springbok	Dry period begins in Kunene Region	1727	821	768	719	76	85	64	42
Gemsbok		572	208	163	131	43	35	1	
Hartmann's Zebra		350	288	150	234	72	45	8	10
Kudu		120	49	91	86	54	34	7	10
Ostrich		95	75	100	55	27	12	1	3
Giraffe		16	9	6	11	2	6	1	3
Jackal		14	9	6	11	2	6	1	3
Steenbok		8	3	13	3	4	8		2
Klipspringer		5	5	7	5	4	5		

Source: Adapted from NACSO Game Count North-west Namibia May 2022, public data, <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/North%20West%20Game%20Count-Regional%202022%20final.pdf>, 1.8.2023.

Given the contexts and challenges shaping CBNRM in Namibia, some of which—as with COVID-19—could not have been predicted in advance, it is perhaps unsurprising that research documents a variety of outcomes for the programme.⁸⁹ Recent research thus brings complexity into analyses of CBNRM success in Namibia observing, for example: discontent with CBNRM as a development strategy,⁹⁰ in part due to the exacerbation of “human-wildlife conflict”⁹¹ (also see Chapters 11, 17, 18 and 19); low value and low volume levels of economic incentives;⁹² concerns regarding the long-term financial viability of communal area conservancies;⁹³ the concentration of skilled knowledge, resources and decision-making power in the hands of tour operators and NGOs,⁹⁴ combined with an emphasis on multiple trainings that do not lead to improved wages, thus compromising the retention of trained conservancy staff;⁹⁵ and exacerbation of local differences and inequalities through complex local dynamics that can act to privilege particular constellations of people over others with similar claims to conservancy opportunities and resources (see Chapters 5 and 6).⁹⁶ Mosimane and

⁸⁸ US International Trade Administration (2021)

⁸⁹ See discussion in Koot *et al.* (2023)

⁹⁰ Silva & Mosimane (2012), Silva & Motzer (2015)

⁹¹ Silva & Mosimane (2012), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), Tavolaro *et al.* (2022), Luetkemeier *et al.* (2023)

⁹² Suich (2013), Hewitson (2018), Kalvelage *et al.* (2020)

⁹³ Humavindu & Stage (2015)

⁹⁴ Newsham (2007), Hoole (2010), Lapeyre (2011a, b, c, d)

⁹⁵ Stamm (2017)

⁹⁶ Sullivan (2002, 2003), Pellis (2011), Taylor (2012), Gargallo (2015), Pellis *et al.* (2015), Koot (2019)

Silva additionally highlight the significance of conservancy establishment as a boundary-making exercise in which new conservation borders are created that, although unfenced, ‘involve complex social processes of cooperation and competition for rights and recognition’.⁹⁷ A strong focus on economic benefits may thus crowd out attention to other relevant factors such as strong cultural attachments to place and cultural dimensions generating social cohesion and resource value.⁹⁸ In addition, a combination of neocolonial labour relations in trophy hunting businesses,⁹⁹ limited incomes deriving from CBNRM-related activities,¹⁰⁰ and dependency on sometimes reducing donor support,¹⁰¹ may act to limit autonomy and self-sufficiency amongst rural communities, thereby hampering the sustainability of CBNRM initiatives.

This is the complex setting into which a new impetus to create jointly managed conservation areas on communal land is emerging in north-west Namibia. In Section 3.3 we continue this CBNRM journey by engaging with these nascent landscape approaches to conservation in Kunene Region, documenting their form and the perspectives shaping them.

3.3 New landscape approaches to conservation in Kunene Region

The 1,140 km² Omboonde Peoples’ Park (OPP) is the first step towards developing the greater vision of a Kunene People’s Park. It is a progressive new type of protected area—an African way of linking conservation of wildlife to enhanced quality of life of the communities who co-manage and live around the wildlife and tourism area they have chosen to protect. What makes this different from conventional national parks is that it builds on and enhances community ownership of wildlife and valuable natural resources—the key to the success of community-based conservation in Namibia—as it will be a genuine partnership between two communal conservancies and the government.¹⁰²

Conservancies are now becoming subjects of new conservation arrangements called People’s Parks or People’s Landscapes, as permitted through the category “contractual parks” in the long-awaited Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill of 2017.¹⁰³ Currently the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 (and amendments) makes no provision for the establishment of conservation areas such as “People’s Landscapes” or “People’s Parks”. Indeed, this lack of appropriate legislation was one reason why, in the late 2000s, a major donor-funded effort to establish a “Kunene People’s Park” (KPP) that would connect the Hobatere, Etendeka and Palmwag Concessions between ENP and the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) eventually floundered.

In Namibia several landscape approaches to conservation have emerged recently, whereby projects are implemented at the landscape level rather than the local level. Initiatives taking a landscape approach to address environmental concerns are supported by the MEFT, GIZ and Namibia’s Environmental Investment Fund (EIF). An earlier project deploying a landscape approach was the GEF-funded Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative (NAM-PLACE). This project identified five protected landscape conservation areas and adjacent areas of different land-uses for promoting corridors to sustain the viability of wildlife populations.¹⁰⁴ In addition, a Green Climate Fund (GCF) project was implemented in Namibia partitioning conservation areas into landscapes to address climate change related challenges faced by communities. The landscape concept has been embraced by GIZ, as demonstrated by its financial support for landscape-level approaches to conservation.¹⁰⁵ Recently, a GEF-funded MEFT project has also started using the

97 Mosimane & Silva (2014: 85); also Sullivan (2022)

98 Jacquet & Delon (2016), Koot (2019), Silva & Mosimane (2014), Sullivan & Ganuses (2021), Sullivan (2022)

99 Hewitson (2018), Koot (2019), Becker (2022a, b) Sullivan (2023)

100 Paksi & Pyhälä (2018)

101 Nuulimba & Taylor (2015), Lubilo & Hebinck (2019)

102 IRDNC (n.d.)

103 Denker (2022: 5)

104 These landscapes are Mudumu North Complex incorporating Mudumu National Park and other conservation designations in Zambezi Region (NACSO 2012), Greater Waterberg in Otjozondjupa Region, the Windhoek Green Belt, Greater Sossusvlei-Namib and the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscapes in southern Namibia.

105 Schütz (2019)

landscape approach to address “human-wildlife conflict” (HWC) and “wildlife crimes” in Kunene and other regions. Transboundary conservation—including the Iona-Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Park agreed by the governments of Namibia and Angola in 2018 (see Figure 3.6)—also sits with landscape-level conservation initiatives.¹⁰⁶

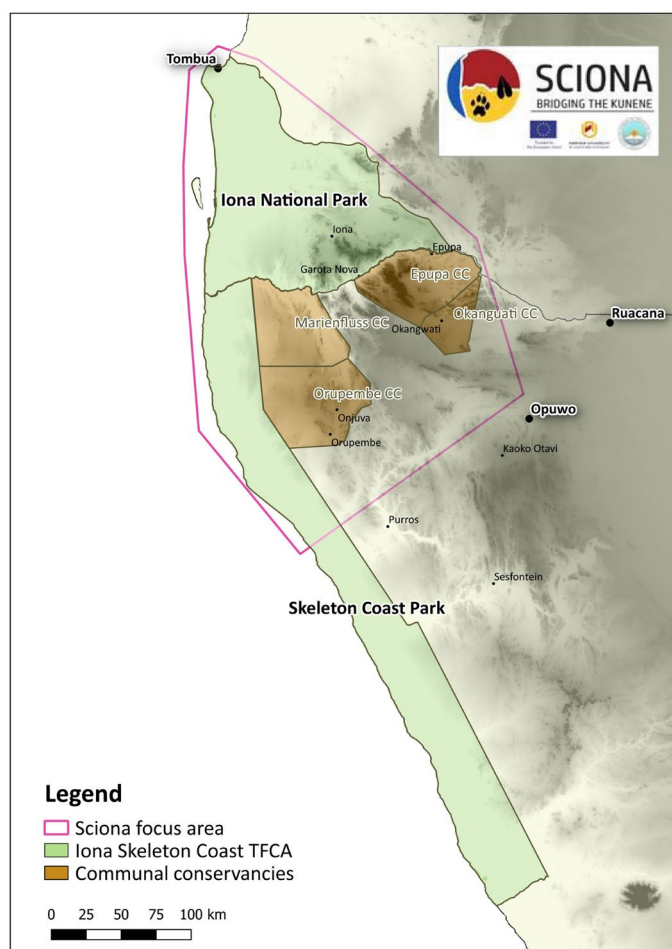


Fig. 3.6 Map of Iona-Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Conservation Area of Angola and Namibia. Source: public domain image, <http://sciona.nust.na/about>, 31.3.2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Iterating multiple pre-Independence proposals for a formalised conservation corridor between ENP and SCNP (see Chapter 13), an impetus remains to connect the different ecologies of these two protected areas to create a “wildlife corridor” between them.¹⁰⁷ Currently this impetus is manifesting in a new Ombonde People’s Landscape, also referred to as the “Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape”, proposed ‘as a protected area in the form of a “landscapes of special conservation importance”’.¹⁰⁸ Initiated in part so as to enable more control over 4x4 self-drive tourists, in the first instance ‘[t]he Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape is a joint initiative between the Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka conservancies’ immediately west of Etosha National Park¹⁰⁹ (Figure 3.7). Both these conservancies were registered in 2003. This People’s Park/Landscape initiative has been emerging since at least 2018, with international support by conservation donors and the British royal family.¹¹⁰ According to the Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002,¹¹¹ north of the Ombonde tributary to the Hoanib River the territories of these conservancies sit within the Kaokoland

¹⁰⁶ Bollig & Vehrs (2021)

¹⁰⁷ KREA (2008), MET (2009)

¹⁰⁸ Denker (2022: 5)

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹¹⁰ As reported at <https://www.irdnc.org.na/women-for-conservation.html>; <https://www.irdnc.org.na/seen-on-the-banks-of-the-Hoanib-River.html>; <https://twitter.com/kensingtonroyal/status/1044861632436994048>; also IRDNC (n.d)

¹¹¹ Available at <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Communal%20Land%20Reform%20Act%205%20of%202002.pdf>

Communal Land Area, whilst their areas south and west of the Ombonde are in the Damaraland Communal Land Area. These areas are thus also governed by the relevant Communal Land Boards and Traditional Authorities, of which several are formally recognised in Etosha-Kunene: see Figure 3.8 and discussion in Chapters 4, 6, 13, 14 and 16.

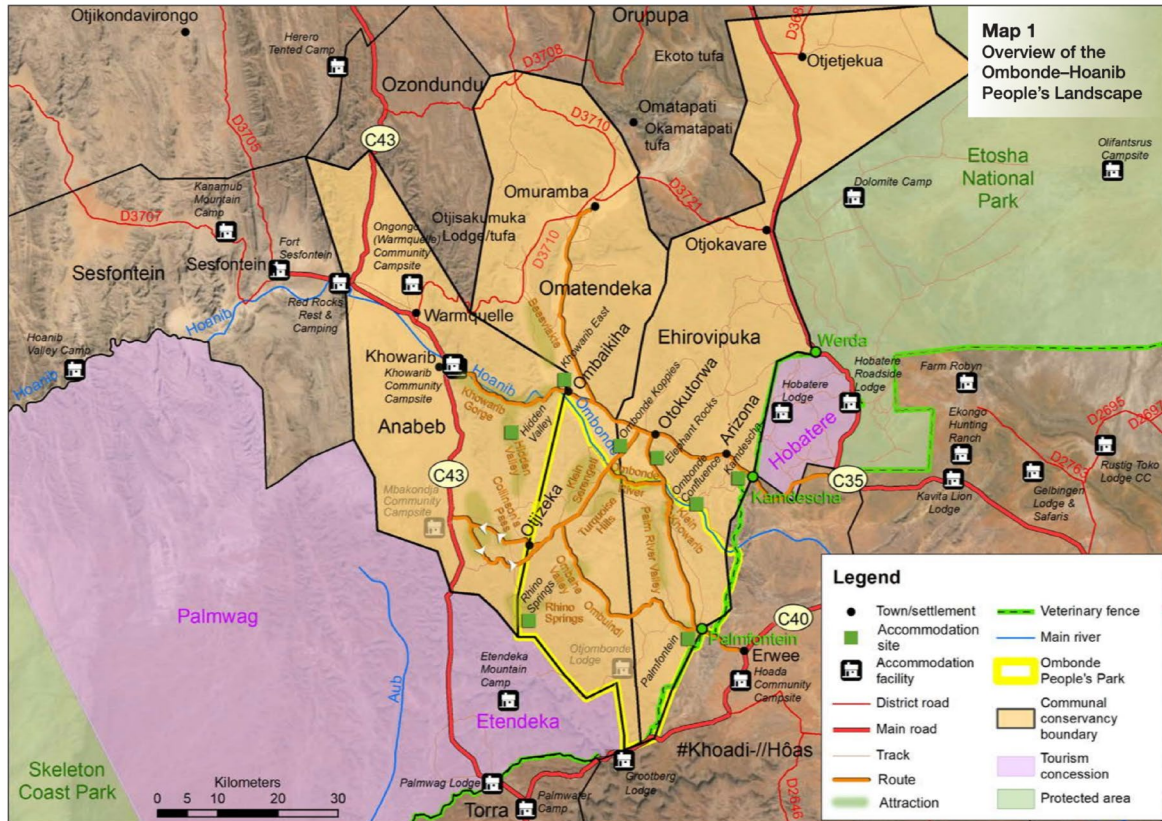


Fig. 3.7 The proposed boundaries of the Ombonde People's Landscape, labelled here as Ombonde People's Park due to the previously proposed name for the area. Source: public domain image, Denker (2022: 6, data from NACSO), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

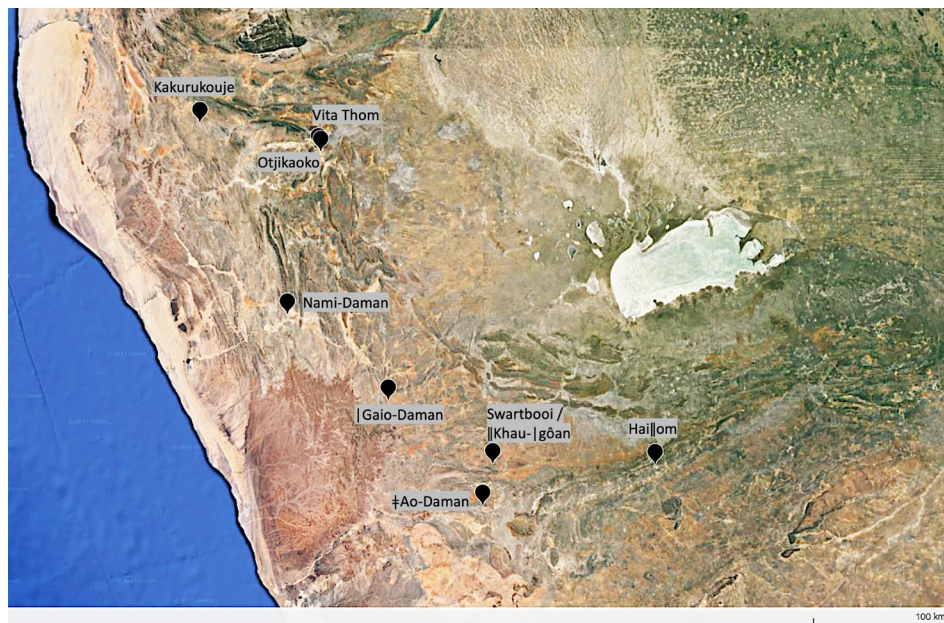


Fig. 3.8 Locations of recognised Traditional Authorities in Etosha-Kunene. Source: drawing on Mendelsohn (2008: 7, 92), with updates. Map created by Sian Sullivan on Google Earth, map data attribution: Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, from 2015 onwards, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In this section we look at the drivers of this process to connect conservancy areas into a new landscape focused conservation configuration. A series of 11 interviews were conducted by Lendelvo involving stakeholders from different organisations including conservancy members and government officials, coupled with Focus Group Discussion (FGD) (see Table 3.3). These interviews and discussions form the basis for our contextualisation of landscape approaches to conservation in this section. Landscape level wildlife conservation approaches have been applied in different contexts worldwide for various purposes.¹¹² There are cases where integrated landscape approaches were implemented to enhance biodiversity through increasing habitat area and connectedness.¹¹³ For example, in their article ‘Bigger is better’, Kennedy and co-authors¹¹⁴ demonstrate that landscape level mitigation initiatives were able to provide cost-effective conservation and sustainable development outcomes when this approach was tested in Brazil. Wildlife species in most African landscapes are migratory, moving over long distances even beyond national territories. It is indicated that management of wildlife resources over larger areas provides better results economically, socially and ecologically.¹¹⁵ Landscape approaches can be broadly defined as a practice of multiple land-uses across boundaries within a particular area, to promote environmental and land integrity, strengthening measures for large-scale challenges such as human-wildlife conflicts and climate change, while taking advantage of opportunities such as tourism and “conservation hunting”.¹¹⁶

Table 3.3 List and description of respondents in research by Lendelvo regarding new landscape approaches to conservation and the Ombonde People's Landscape.

Details of Respondents	Affiliation	Date
Individual interviews		
Landscape Conservation Officer	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)	10.9.2021
Former Committee member	Kunene Conservancy Association	10.9.2021
NGO Regional Leader	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)	16.9.2021
Freelancer/NGO Technical Advisor	Private/IRDNC	21.9.2021
Eba Project Official	Environmental Investment Fund (EIF)	23.9.2021
Traditional leader	Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy	28.9.2021
NGO National Leader	IRDNC	15.3.2022
Member of Conservancy Management Committee	Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy	10.6.2022
Member of Conservancy Management Committee	Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy	11.6.2022
Community Activist	Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy	12.6.2022
Women in Conservation activist	Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy	12.6.2022
Focus-Group Discussion		
Mixed Groups (All ages & gender with different portfolio is conservancy)	Omatendeka Conservancy (15 persons)	10.06.2022

¹¹² Beale *et al.* (2013), Sayer *et al.* (2013), Doyle-Capitman (2018), Yeiser *et al.* (2018)

¹¹³ Pedroza-Arceo *et al.* (2022)

¹¹⁴ (2016)

¹¹⁵ Denker (2022: 10–11)

¹¹⁶ Sayer *et al.* (2013)

The emerging ‘Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape’ in Kunene Region west of ENP is thus connected with a growing post-Independence emphasis on landscape approaches to conservation. Named for the Ombonde and Hoanib Rivers—the former being a tributary of the latter and thus part of the Hoanib River catchment¹¹⁷—Omatendeka and Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancies are currently inhabited predominantly by ovaHerero and ovaHimba pastoralists incorporating mobility into their livestock herding practices (see Chapter 14). As with other conservancies, Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka implement zonation plans that divide areas into tourism, wildlife, hunting and livestock farming or multi-use areas. Wildlife core areas were designated where livestock activities are highly regulated, but conservancies have had difficulties enforcing these plans successfully, because wildlife core areas are also viewed as rangeland reserves for livestock during dry seasons (also see Chapters 6 and 19). Indeed, pastoralist mobilities are often a reason why conflict may emerge in relation to access restrictions relating to wildlife conservation areas in African drylands.¹¹⁸ Limited control over the influx of livestock into wildlife areas has resulted in conflicts between farmers and conservancies, sometimes leading to legal cases to evict pastoralists viewed as “intruders” into conservancy areas demarcated for wildlife and/or trophy hunting.¹¹⁹ Legal cases to evict pastoralists who are not conservancy members have been initiated by Sesfontein, Ehi-Rovipuka and Anabeb conservancies.¹²⁰ Indeed, a motivation for establishing an Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape is precisely to strengthen the designation of ‘clearly zoned core wildlife areas’, following an understanding that ‘a registered people’s landscape has the powers to enforce such zonation, which a conservancy does not’.¹²¹

Apart from the primary objective of sustainable wildlife use and tourism, the proposal for the Ombonde People’s Landscape envisages finding solutions for addressing “illegal” livestock movement to core wildlife areas. Views from interviews with community members continue to refer to those with livestock inside the Ombonde Landscape as ‘illegal’; others indicated ‘it is not allowed by the government’ to graze within the wildlife core area. The movement of cattle into the core area has been kept low through a mutual understanding by members of the conservancies. However, an unprecedented increase in livestock observed in the Ombonde area and attributed to people from areas outside Omatendeka and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies, has stimulated a sense that this issue might be more easily be tackled at a landscape level rather than by individual conservancies. During an interview with a member of the Kunene Conservancy Association,¹²² it was evident that many conservancies spend much time seeking court orders to remove livestock from “core wildlife areas”.

Indeed, in conservancies, wildlife core areas are expected to have minimal human interactions to allow for the healthy build-up of animal numbers and diversity, including protection of rare and endangered species. In an interview with one of the conservancy leaders in the Ehi-Rovipuka conservancy—a wildlife core area of a conservancy was framed as the ‘bank or treasure area’ for any conservancy, because this is the area where hunting and tourism, and even the entire economy of the conservancy, is dependent on. Mr Asser Ujaha from Ehi-Rovipuka conservancy (also see Chapter 14) indicated that the idea to establish the Ombonde People’s Landscape was born out of the notion of the sustainable use of wildlife, and improving the benefits of wildlife conservation for members of the conservancy. A leader from IRDNC with interests in new lodge development indicated that their conservancies are rich in resources, but the current model of management of core areas within conservancies is preventing conservancies from maximising the potential of

117 Jacobson *et al.* (1995)

118 Homewood *et al.* (2012)

119 Shilongo *et al.* (2018)

120 For example, *Anabeb Conservancy Committee v Muharukua & 39 Others* (HC-MD-CIV-ACT-OTH-2016/03267) [2021] NAHCMD 24 (1.2.2022), <https://namiblii.org/na/judgment/high-court-main-division/2022/24>.

121 Denker (2022: 32)

122 The Kunene Conservancy Association is a regional voluntary body of elected officials from Conservancies to provide coordination and drive community conservation in Kunene Region.

connections across areas; whilst additionally draining conservancy management through having to resolve one conflict after another. An elderly respondent from a group discussion indicated that:

conservancies were not established for us but for our future generations, and as we now gain better understanding of the challenges, we put minds together to think on how to better the conservancy programme for our future generations. The landscape approach helps us to preserve that area for tomorrow and those who are against it today will see the benefits tomorrow.

In the case of Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka conservancies, designated wildlife core areas are adjacent to one another, presenting an opportunity for cooperation for sustainable wildlife management and benefits for conservancy members.

The initially proposed Ombonde People's Park/Landscape thus resulted in proposals for these two neighbouring conservancies to combine their wildlife core areas to allow for management of wildlife and promotion of tourism at a landscape level.¹²³ As indicated in Figures 3.2 and 3.7, the area envisaged for the Ombonde-Hoanib People's Landscape in fact includes a disputed area between the two conservancies.¹²⁴ This land has not been registered as a conservancy,¹²⁵ and the "landscape approach" is deemed a way to solve this unresolved dispute by connecting the dispute area to the conservancies via the Ombonde People's Landscape. Given overlapping land designations, it is important to iterate that the area selected for the Ombonde People's Park/Landscape sits in the Damaraland Communal Land Area (as per area definitions in the Communal Area Land Reform Act 5 of 2002), with implications for TA jurisdiction.

In 2018, the Ombonde landscape approach was presented by the Conservancy Management Committees at separate annual general meetings of the two conservancies, as well as at a meeting of 46 'representatives of the Ehi-Rovipoka [sic], Omatendeka, Anabeb and Sesfontein conservancies at Opuwo Country Lodge' in May 2022.¹²⁶ In terms of leadership, the governance of the "Ombonde People's Park", which is already operational, comprises an 18-member board of directors who will serve for three years. Directors are drawn from the two conservancies, and the board is currently chaired by a member from the Omatendeka conservancy with a member from the Ehi-Rovipuka conservancy deputising. Each conservancy delegated their Conservancy Executive Committee Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary as board members, as well as three women from the Women for Conservation Group and two members of the Traditional Authority (TA). The Vita Traditional Royal House is a recognised TA by the Namibian government in the area and is connected with Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy (see Figure 3.8). The Vita TA work closely with two TA headman groups in the Omatendeka Conservancy, namely the Tjauira and Kandjii TAs, which do not have official government recognition.

This governance body of the Ombonde People's Park is accountable to the management committees of the two conservancies and has already facilitated the drafting of a constitution, drawing site maps, and formulating management plans and feasibility surveys in collaboration with partners: mainly NACSO, IRDNC, WWF, GIZ, MEFT and investors interested in tourism and other opportunities in the area.

Indeed, a major impetus shaping the Ombonde People's Landscape is to enhance controlled tourism access to the area, for example, through opening a currently "dormant" high-end lodge built in the south of the Omatendeka Conservancy,¹²⁷ and developing additional accommodation

¹²³ Denker (2022)

¹²⁴ As outlined in Section 3.2, part of the registration process of a conservancy in Namibia requires that conservancies clearly define their boundaries and negotiate these with their neighbours: see Silva & Mosimane (2014), Sullivan (2022). During the development stage of Omatendeka and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies, the two conservancy communities could not come to agreement over the disputed area, as shown in Figure 3.2.

¹²⁵ Denker (2022: 7)

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32

¹²⁷ See <https://www.africa-discovery.com/namibia/camps/damaraland/omatendeka-lodge.php>. The lodge is also called Otjomonde Lodge, as in Figure 3.7.

sites through the landscape—as indicated by the green squares on Figure 3.7.¹²⁸ Part of this impetus involves creating a vision towards ‘branding’ the ‘Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape’. As a Namibian tourism and conservation consultant, commissioned to assess the tourism potential of the ‘Ombonde-Hoanib People’s Landscape’, writes:

the creation of a strong ‘Ombonde-Hoanib Brand’ that produces a clear identity by defining the “Ombonde-Hoanib Experience” and the “Ombonde-Hoanib Vision”, as well as other identity elements, is an important first step in attracting visitors to the area; visitors travel to a destination for a perceived experience that is created by a particular notion of being in that destination—a “sense of place”; this is created only in part by the physical features of the destination and must be enhanced (“built”) through a combination of branding and marketing.¹²⁹

The Ombonde People’s Landscape (OPL) works closely with IRDNC as a core support organisation, in partnership with other agencies. Seven people from the two conservancies are currently employed by OPL with a vehicle donated through the funding efforts of IRDNC and other partners to realise the operations of the OPL: these employees include a driver and six game rangers (see Figure 3.9). In addition, the German government through a GIZ-funded project on ‘Biodiversity Economy in Selected Landscapes in Namibia’ recently showed its support when they released a Tender Invitation advert (Figure 3.10) in a local newspaper for business and tourism development for the Ombonde People’s Landscape. The advert suggests there are also other landscape approaches with a similar purpose.



Fig. 3.9 The first employees of the Ombonde People’s Landscape and the Toyota land cruiser used during patrols in the “Park”. Photo: © Asser Ujaha, 2023, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The chairpersons of the two conservancies have confirmed that the OPL application was presented to the MEFT and received support from the Ministry. In a group discussion in Omatendeka Conservancy, one of the local members of the TA made a statement alluding to this response of the MEFT, saying: ‘it will be a glory day of my life the day I open my eyes and hear the [Protected Areas and Wildlife Management] Bill has been passed’. Community members in a FGD in Omatendeka acknowledged that the conservancy approach is a novel idea, that has ‘bonded and unified the community not only as a community but also in looking after the natural resources commonly and fighting together against common “enemies” affecting both the people and the resources’. These common enemies included hunger, poverty, alcoholism, poaching, overgrazing and lack of finances. Respondents in group discussions in Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka agreed that the continuation of conservancy-level management alone may lead to ecosystem fragmentation or separate people

¹²⁸ Denker (2022: 7, 22–25)

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30

from places of value outside conservancies from which they previously may have had access and connections. It was indicated that the management of a landscape will give an opportunity for adjacent conservancies to take common decisions over the landscape, unlike the past where each conservancy decided with limited inputs of their neighbour(s). Not engaging in landscape conservation can even lead to disconnecting communities in the Kunene landscape in the future—even though they may share similar cultural contexts—although it is not clear how this approach could shift the power-and-control dynamics of local resource use. Other respondents went further to indicate that open areas outside conservancies should be utilised through common agreement rather than in a disputed manner. At the same time, the realisation of landscape approaches is risky and currently not backed by legislation although other respondents believed that the forthcoming Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill will provide a promising mechanism to support the formalisation of landscape approaches to conservation.

Tourism consultant Helge Denker notes that,

[a] range of development steps have taken place, including extensive community consultations, the formulation of a draft management plan, the formulation of a tourism development plan, and wide-ranging stakeholder consultation that has included private-sector engagement.¹³⁰

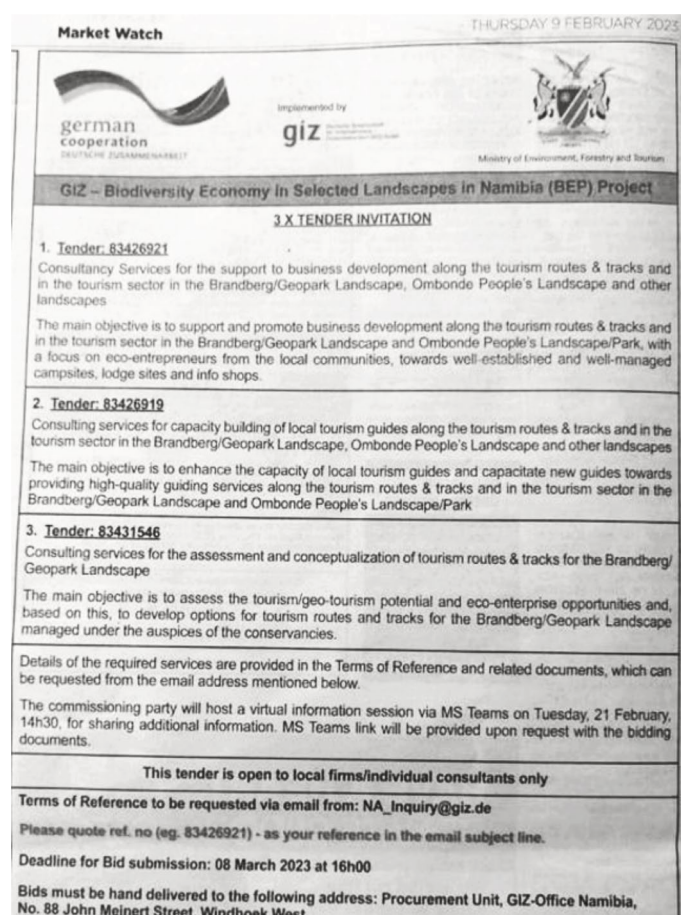


Fig. 3.10 A newspaper advert for consultancy services to support tourism development in the Ombede People's Landscape as supported by GIZ. Source: scan by Lendelvo from New Era Newspaper, 9.2.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

At the same time, confusion and concern has also been generated by the Ombede People's Park/Landscape proposal, particularly in neighbouring conservancies, perhaps indicating a lack of appropriately shared information about the initiative.¹³¹ In 2019 a group of concerned persons

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5

¹³¹ Kambaekua (2023)

emerged opposing the landscape proposal. Although described in observed meetings as mainly made up of young people, in reality this group includes older residents with long histories of association with the broader Hoanib-Ombonde river system, as well as leadership roles in conservancies and TAs in the area.¹³² Their opposition is on the basis that the landscape proposal was primarily focused on wildlife and excluded livestock grazing, whilst the area concerned is known for historically providing livestock farmers with grazing during dry seasons (see Chapters 1, 13 and 14). The emergence of a “concerned group” triggered the necessity of rigorous awareness-raising efforts by NGO, TA and conservancy leaderships. As the idea of the OPL gained momentum, the issues raised by the concerned group reappeared on the agenda of the annual general meeting in 2022. Indeed, newspaper reports into 2023 continued to share concern ‘from exasperated community members’, particularly around suspicions that ‘the park will take up their grazing and ancestral lands’.¹³³ The Chairpersons of the two Conservancies both confirmed that Ombonde does not aim to take away grazing but rather regulates livestock numbers within the area zoned for sustainable wildlife conservation, and is intended to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and other challenges associated with a high influx of livestock (also see Chapters 6, 14 and 19).

Overall, then, initiatives such as the OPL in Kunene Region, adjacent to ENP, can be seen as an orientation towards “coupling” conservancy ecosystems to enable wildlife management across connected landscapes, and to ensure greater benefits from wildlife and tourism activities. Doherty and Driscoll¹³⁴ argue that coupled landscapes can be defined through the multiple ways in which ecosystem ‘components’ are connected across time and space, including through human use, access and mobilities. As Arthur Hoole has documented, historical ‘decoupling’ of members of the Ehi-Rovipuka community from Etosha National Park in the past might thus be redressed to some extent through recoupling conservancy areas with ENP and associated wildlife (see Chapter 14).¹³⁵ It should be noted too, however, that tensions also arise in terms of conservancy restrictions placed on areas zoned as “core wildlife” or “hunting” areas, that also act to “decouple” people and their livestock from conservancy land.

The Ombonde People’s Landscape, in particular, covers a wide range of core areas, and plans are in place to aggregate two conservancies so that they can be collectively managed, a process from which one conservancy (Anabeb) has already withdrawn. Conservationists view the joint management of the OPL as an exclusive wildlife and tourism area to be progressive, in that competitive land uses such as grazing and other activities will be managed such that they have minimal impacts on conservation and tourism. The approach is also viewed as able to reduce fragmentation and encourage cooperation, with the belief that this type of ecosystem coupling will enhance the integrity of biodiversity within the area and the resilience of ecosystems to sustainably support conservation into the future. Others, however, view this approach as a familiar increase of externally funded control, enacting donor visions of the landscape disconnected from local mobilities and histories. Concerns exist about communal area dwellers losing access to communal land and grazing resources so that land can be zoned for exclusive use by tourists and monetised for gain by investors.¹³⁶

It is clearly difficult to implement conservancy coupling to create the OPL and other connected landscapes as the success of this approach requires regulation of livestock numbers in the area. From a conservation perspective, dealing with those who are utilising the area for activities not deemed consistent with conservation, as well as observing an “invasion” into the landscape by the

¹³² Sullivan pers. obs.

¹³³ Kambaekua (2023)

¹³⁴ (2018)

¹³⁵ Hoole (2008, 2010), Hoole & Berkes (2010)

¹³⁶ On which, see new controversial plans for biodiversity and landscape management and monetisation in South Africa (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment 2024) discussed, for example, by Pinnock (2024) and Vegter (2024).

landless (see Chapter 6), presents challenges that could lead to conflict. Another aspect of concern centres around community awareness, needed to bring communities on board regarding the benefits and challenges of integrating different land use regimes. The OPL may compete with grazing needs for livestock. For example, most areas in conservancies declared as “hotspots” for wildlife conservation or wildlife core areas are also “hotspots” for grazing, causing competition between conservation leadership and local livestock owners. In addition, the legislative process for the new Protected Areas and Wildlife Management Bill (of 2017, updated in 2020) has been prolonged, although is considered likely to support these activities. A possible outcome, however, could be that landscape approaches are halted on legal grounds, as occurred with the proposed Kunene People’s Park. Uncertainties on collaboration between conservancies, in terms of looking at the different community needs, values, and government structures, adds to the envisaged challenges.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has delved into the intricate relationships between the design of the conservancy programme permitted through amended conservation legislation, and the proposed landscape level conservation approach which is not currently supported by the national legal framework. While most programmes are designed based on the existing legal framework the Ombonde case study demonstrates the emergence of a different conservation approach, shaped by conservation leaders and their partners. Community-based conservation in Namibia has been in operation for close to three decades and community members have gained diverse experiences and exposure over these years, with different interventions leading to different outcomes. Local communities continue to participate in this programme and their experiences will shape its future, just as the past histories documented in Chapters 1 and 2 have shaped the conservation approaches of today.

In documenting how community-based conservation is changing to encompass landscape scale thinking we have shown that CBNRM in Namibia is not cast in stone but is evolving, as people become more aware and understanding of what it is they want to gain from this multi-faceted approach. At the same time, reforms of legal frameworks are ongoing. A reshaping of resource management into a collaborative and integrated approach is taking place, whereby it is assumed that this will increase community benefits, contribute to ecosystem integrity, and assist communities to deal with major challenges happening across and beyond their conservancy boundaries that are threatening conservation. For example, Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka conservancies seem to be moving towards identifying themselves as one community that shares a similar identity and assigns similar values to the areas around their communities. There is a perceived need for collaboration between “communities” to be strengthened for sustainable implementation of conservation initiatives, on the principle that benefits may be broader when communities collaborate across a larger landscape. This consolidating perspective is also a challenge for the OPL leadership, as well as the leadership of the wider “Skeleton Coast-Etosha Conservation Bridge” project, to ensure that this landscape approach yields equitable outcomes in Etosha-Kunene.

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PART II

SOCIAL LIVES OF CONSERVATION IN ETOSHA-KUNENE, POST-INDEPENDENCE

4. Hai||om resettlement, legal action and political representation

Ute Dieckmann

Abstract

This chapter considers the destiny of Indigenous Hai||om after they were evicted from Etosha National Park in the 1950s. Differently to communities further west, Hai||om were not provided a “Homeland” under the separate development policies of the 1970s, but instead were left without any land. In post-Independent Namibia this meant they had no opportunity to establish conservancies under Namibia’s Community-Based Natural Resources Management programme. Some efforts have been made to compensate Hai||om by purchasing several farms for them in the vicinity of Etosha National Park, although most Hai||om residents of the park resisted their resettlement, fearing they would lose all access to the park, i.e. their ancestral land. In 2015, a large group of Hai||om from various areas dissatisfied with the government’s resettlement approach, launched a legal claim to parts of their ancestral land, mainly within Etosha National Park. This chapter outlines these developments, paying attention to the rather ambivalent role played by the Hai||om Traditional Authority. It also looks at recent developments, arguing for inclusion of Hai||om cultural heritage in future planning and implementation of nature conservation and tourism activities in the Etosha area.

4.1 Introduction¹

Our hearts are in Etosha and we don’t want to be resettled on farms without any acknowledgement that we are the original inhabitants of Etosha. We don’t want our rich cultural heritage to be forgotten and we strongly believe that the Government can benefit in providing space for our rich cultural heritage within the Etosha National Park. Tourists will also appreciate it and the image of the Park will be improved. After having lost the land [a] long time ago and with it our livelihoods, we ask to start to benefit from the Etosha National Park. We hope to start negotiations with the Namibian Government in order to find solutions for all of us.²

This is an extract of a letter from the Okaukuejo Hai||om Community Group—an interest group of around 60 Hai||om residing in Okaukuejo within Etosha National Park (ENP)—addressed to the Minister of Environment and Tourism (MET, now Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, MEFT). It was written on 7 July 2010, during the negotiation process of Hai||om individuals and groups with the Namibian government after the government had purchased the first resettlement farms in 2008. Two years later Hai||om had already moved to the farms, mostly from the townships of Outjo and Otavi, but very few from ENP. Subsequently in 2015, after years of preparation and initiated by Hai||om still living in ENP, a large group of Hai||om from various areas, dissatisfied with the resettlement approach by the government, launched a legal claim to parts of their ancestral land (mainly ENP).³

- 1 This is a substantially revised and updated version of a chapter that first appeared as ‘From colonial land dispossession to the Etosha and Mangetti West land claim—Hai||om struggles in independent Namibia’ (Dieckmann 2020).
- 2 Komob (2010a)
- 3 Koot & Hitchcock (2019), Odendaal *et al.* (2020)

Around 10,000 Hai||om currently live in Namibia, mostly in the Kunene and Oshikoto regions, and to a lesser degree in the Ohangwena and Oshana regions.⁴ Hai||om in all regions share a high level of marginalisation and poverty, although there are some variations depending on sites and available livelihood options.⁵ Due to the large-scale dispossession of their land, neither traditional livelihood strategies (hunting and gathering) nor agriculture can play a significant role in sustaining Hai||om livelihoods. Formal employment opportunities are rare, and dependence on welfare support provided by the state is high; educational levels are generally low, with low literacy levels, especially amongst the older generations (see also Chapter 16).⁶ Furthermore, Hai||om feel highly discriminated against by other ethnic groups and disadvantaged in comparison to others: this experience of marginalisation has become an integral part of a shared Hai||om identity.⁷

This chapter first explores colonial legacies affecting Hai||om, especially concerning land dispossession and the intertwined issue of ethnic ascriptions. It will then outline the land situation of Hai||om in independent Namibia before looking into the vital aspect of community representation. Afterwards, the chapter deals with two approaches towards land restitution: the Namibian government's provision of group-resettlement farms via the Hai||om Traditional Authority (TA); and the reaction by Hai||om who took steps to launch a legal claim to their ancestral land. It will become evident that the issue of community representation is of major significance regarding the successes and failures of both approaches. In conclusion, the chapter points to a couple of interlinked predicaments, which play a constitutive part in the current situation of Hai||om.

4.2 Colonial legacies

At the onset of the colonial period, Hai||om lived in north-central Namibia, in an area stretching from former "Ovamboland" in the north, Etosha, Grootfontein, Tsumeb, Otavi and Outjo, to Otjiwarongo in the south. They lived mainly by hunting and gathering, complemented with other small-scale and localised strategies, dependent on the changing demands and opportunities in the area, e.g. mining and trading in pre-colonial and early colonial times (see Chapter 1), seasonal work for farmers, in mines or road construction, and livestock herding (see Chapters 2, 15 and 16). They were also part of an elaborate trade network with their oshiWambo-, otjiHerero- and Khoekhoegowab-speaking neighbours.⁸ Hai||om speak Khoekhoegowab, a different language family to Kx'a to which the dialect cluster Ju (spoken by Ju|'hoan and !Xun, two other groups subsumed under the term "San", formerly "Bushmen") belongs—these languages are not mutually understandable.⁹ At times, Hai||om shared areas of land and resources with neighbouring groups.¹⁰

As outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, the eastern part of Game Reserve No. 2 proclaimed in 1907, covered parts of their former area. For almost fifty years after the proclamation, Hai||om were accepted as inhabitants of the game reserve, while white settlers increasingly occupied the surrounding area. The game reserve became the last refuge where Hai||om could practise a hunting and gathering lifestyle. But by the end of the 1940s and early 1950s, the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen did not consider Hai||om worth being 'preserved' due to their degree of 'assimilation' with other groups (see Chapter 2).¹¹ They did not, therefore, receive their own "native reserve" in the area they were living in, and were evicted from ENP in the 1950s. After 1954, a

4 See Affidavit of Ute Dieckmann in *Jan Tsumeb and 8 others v Government of the Republic of Namibia and 19 others*, Case Number A206/2015 at para. 15–35, for more detailed information on the number of Hai||om.

5 Dieckmann (2014)

6 *Ibid.*

7 Dieckmann (2007: 296–99)

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 44–50

9 Dieckmann *et al.* (2014: 23)

10 Widlok (2003: 91)

11 NAN SWAA A 267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa: 6.

few Hai||om remained in the park as labourers but could no longer live at the various waterholes. Instead they were limited to staff quarters close to the rest camps at Okaukuejo and Namutoni and near the Lindequist and Ombika/Andersson gates to the east and south of ENP, with no land-rights in the park.¹² The other evictees became landless farm labourers eking out a living on the settler farms on Etosha's borders, their labour sustaining a heavily subsidised white-owned commercial agricultural sector.¹³

With the implementation of the Odendaal Plan, in 1970 "Bushmanland" was created (east of Grootfontein and bordering Botswana), but at some distance (around 300 km) from the area occupied by Hai||om. Although the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen also did not consider Khwe as 'worthwhile to be preserved',¹⁴ the Odendaal Commission recommended a 'homeland' for Khwe ('Barakwengo Bushmen') in 'Western Caprivi east of the Okavango River'.¹⁵ Yet, this homeland for Khwe was also not realised, because the administration needed to keep strict control over the area in times of anticolonial resistance in Namibia's north and Angola. Instead, the area became Caprivi Nature Park in 1963, upgraded to 'Caprivi Game Park' in 1968,¹⁶ and becoming part of Bwabwata National Park in 2007. Its protected area status not only provided a higher degree of conservation protection, but also better options for social control and later military operations.¹⁷

In contrast to Khwe and most other San groups in Namibia, the settlement area of Hai||om was situated in the centre of colonial activities, and they were in contact with representatives of the colonial state, as well as with other Indigenous groups, for some time.¹⁸ Von Zastrow, district officer of Grootfontein, thus commented in 1914 on Hai||om contact with "Bergdamara" (≠Nūkhoen) in the west and "Kung" in the east.¹⁹ This contact and "mixing", coupled with their speaking Khoekhoegowab rather than a San language, contributed to why Hai||om were perceived as not representing the stereotype of "pure Bushmen", even as they were considered "Bushmen" because of their dominant subsistence practices and social organisation.²⁰ Their alleged "assimilation" was crucial for denying them any "native reserve" or "homeland" under the German and South African colonial and apartheid regimes. The category 'Hai||om' therefore shared some of the characteristics of what Eriksen calls a 'liminal category':

[f]irst of all, the existence of ethnic anomalies or liminal categories should serve as a reminder that group boundaries are not unproblematic. These are groups or individuals who are "betwixt and between", who are neither X nor Y and yet a bit of both. Their actual group membership may be open to situational negotiation, it may be ascribed by a dominant group, or the group may form a separate ethnic category.²¹

In addition, while in pre-colonial and early colonial times land had been shared between different groups and different land use systems,²² during colonial times, land use became increasingly exclusive (see Chapters 1 and 2). Part of the land inhabited by Hai||om became allocated to white settlers and fenced off, and part of their land became allocated to wildlife as ENP, entirely fenced in. Little land was left, which they continued to share with other human and beyond-human inhabitants (e.g. in former "Ovamboland" and Mangetti West), although on unequal terms. At the time of Namibia's Independence in 1990, then, Hai||om found themselves altogether dispossessed of their

12 In 1984, 244 Hai||om lived in the park at Okaukuejo, Halali, Namutoni and the two gates (Marais 1984: 37).

13 Suzman (2004: 221)

14 NAN SWAA A 267/11/1 1956: Report of the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in South West Africa: 6.

15 Odendaal Report (1964, para. 384(ii): 99)

16 Taylor (2005: 29)

17 Khwe were allowed to live in the area and hunt with "traditional weapons". Around 1970, however, the South African Defence Force (SADF) declared the park a military zone and established military bases there (Boden 2009: 57).

18 Dieckmann (2007: 355)

19 von Zastrow (1914: 1–3)

20 Dieckmann *et al.* (2014: 23)

21 Eriksen (1993: 156)

22 Widlok (2003: 91)

land.²³ They had no access to communal lands²⁴ and therefore no option to establish conservancies (see Chapter 3),²⁵ to keep enough livestock to sustain themselves, or to engage in agriculture. They continue to live scattered over northern-central Namibia, a factor impeding the establishment of a powerful representational organisation (see Section 4.4).

4.3 Current land situation

Following Namibia's Independence in March 1990 and the first National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question in 1991, the government took measures to redistribute the country's land and facilitate land reform. Although the government made some attempts in the 1990s and early years of the new millennium to address the landlessness of San communities, including Hai||om, these have not made a fundamental difference to their situation²⁶ (also see Chapter 16). Worse still, Hai||om who had *de-facto* land-rights (e.g. those living in Mangetti West, see below) faced further land encroachment by other ethnic groups.²⁷

Concerning the various land-tenure systems under which Hai||om are living, the situation of Hai||om regarding land can be outlined as follows:

- Hai||om in ENP have no *de-jure* land-rights;
- Hai||om who live and work on commercial farms have no rights to such land at all;
- Hai||om whose farm employment ceases have no land to call their own, and usually end up in informal settlements in towns in the vicinity, or with family on resettlement farms (many of which are already overpopulated). Most of the Hai||om in urban areas (e.g. in Outjo, Otjiwarongo or Tsumeb) have no tenure security and are living in informal settlements where residents are regularly threatened with eviction. The communal land in the north where Hai||om are living as a minority among the large majority of oshiWambo-speaking residents falls under the traditional authorities (TAs) of the respective oshiWambo-speaking groups;²⁸
- in the first 15 years after Independence, some Hai||om were resettled on group resettlement farms under the national resettlement programme by the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR, since 2015 Ministry of Land Reform, MLR).²⁹ Of the approximately 55 group resettlement farms, about seven of them (Excelsior, Oerwoud, Tsintsabis, Kleinhuis, Namatanga, Queen Sofia, Stille) have considerable numbers of Hai||om beneficiaries. However, a high level of dependency on government support exists on these farms, and self-sufficiency is unlikely to be achieved in the near future.³⁰ Furthermore, it is unlikely that any of the resettled Hai||om beneficiaries have ever received any title deed in their individual names;
- the Hai||om community of Farm Six in the Mangetti West Block (the area around 'Farm Six' east of ENP, see Figure 4.1 in Section 4.5) faces even worse problems regarding access to land.³¹ For a long time, Hai||om there had *de-facto* land-rights and could hunt and, even

23 Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014: 608)

24 Some Hai||om were living in "Ovamboland", but this area was densely populated and dominated by oshiWambo-speaking groups, and Hai||om had little voice there.

25 Dieckmann (2001, 2007). In former "Bushmanland", two conservancies were established by different San groups (see Hays *et al.* 2014).

26 Harring & Odendaal (2006)

27 Dieckmann (2014: 209–10)

28 Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014a: 437–64)

29 Note that this was different to the scheme under the San Development Programme, when farms were explicitly handed over to the Hai||om, as described in Section 4.5.

30 GRN (2010)

31 National Planning Commission (2007: 39)

more so, gather bushfood in the area. These activities came under pressure when the Namibian Development Corporation made four farms in the Mangetti area available for the relocation of oshiWambo-speaking cattle owners who had lost a court battle regarding their illegal cattle grazing activities in western Kavango Region. Although this was meant to be a temporary solution, in 2010 the Owambo farmers' stay was extended, with their cattle grazing in the area where Hai||om used to have temporary camps to hunt and gather bush food.

4.4 The issue of community representation

Given this shared experience of land dispossession and marginalisation, Hai||om see an urgent need to have a "representative" to negotiate on behalf of the Hai||om with the state.³² In this regard, the most powerful institution is currently the Traditional Authority (TA), provided for by the Traditional Authorities Act (25 of 2000). The main functions of all Namibia's TAs, as established by the act, are: to cooperate with and assist the government; to supervise and ensure the observance of customary law; to give support and advice, and disseminate information; and to promote the welfare and peace of rural communities.

According to the Act,

"traditional community" means an indigenous homogeneous, endogamous social grouping of persons comprising of families deriving from exogamous clans which share a common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, who recognises a common traditional authority and inhabits a *common communal area*, and may include the members of that traditional community residing outside the common communal area.³³

This is where the next predicaments come into play: strictly speaking (and disregarding the other questionable phrasing in this definition, e.g. 'homogeneous', 'exogamous clans'), Hai||om are not a 'traditional community' in the terms of the act. Firstly, as has been outlined above, they do not inhabit 'a common communal area'; and secondly, they do not recognise a 'common traditional authority' (see Section 4.6). The Traditional Authorities Act (TAA) is perceived by some to apply as a model the traditional system of oshiWambo-speaking groups (who constitute over 50% of the Namibian population); a model that is characterised by a hierarchical authority structure with a single representative leader for a large group.³⁴ This model does not necessarily work well for all leadership structures in the country: San communities, in particular, find it difficult to use this institution for their own benefit.³⁵ For San communities, it would be more correct to talk about 'neo-traditional authorities',³⁶ as it seems that in the past they had no 'traditional' hierarchical authority structures, and neither 'chiefs' (as 'supreme traditional' leaders) nor a 'Chief's Council' or a 'Traditional Council'.³⁷ Nevertheless, Hai||om perceive the TA institution as being an important tool for making their voices heard.

Despite these issues, the official Hai||om TA under Chief David ||Khamuxab was recognised under the act by the government on 29 July 2004. At this time, some Hai||om groups already rejected the recognition claiming that the 'so-called Traditional Authority was nothing but a SWAPO structure'³⁸ and that the TA had not been elected by the Hai||om community.³⁹ During the following years, most of the development targeting the Hai||om was channelled through the Hai||om TA. Currently,

³² Dieckmann (2014: 224)

³³ GRN (2000, Section 1, Definitions, emphasis added)

³⁴ Dieckmann *et al.* (2014: 34–35)

³⁵ Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014: 607–8)

³⁶ With regard to the Topnaar, Krämer (2020) also uses the term 'neotraditional authority'.

³⁷ GRN (2000: Section 1, Definitions and references to other Sections therein)

³⁸ Amupadhi (2004)

³⁹ For more details for the struggle around a Hai||om TA see Dieckmann (2007: 324–26).

dissatisfaction with the chief is evident in most Hai||om communities, and there is a division amongst Hai||om between supporters and opponents of the chief.⁴⁰ Major concerns include the absence of proper elections to appoint the chief, a lack of information and transparency, corruption and favouritism, and therefore a general lack of representation of Hai||om community interests.⁴¹ This conflict is a major impediment to development.⁴² In recent years, the government has become increasingly aware of this challenging situation, and of the complexities regarding the role Chief ||Khamuxab plays in community development efforts⁴³ (also see Chapter 16).

These issues can be understood as a conflict between the traditional structures and processes of Hai||om and those defined by the TAA. The Act stipulates that TAs should be designated in accordance with the customary law of the applicable traditional community. However, unlike the customary laws of many other traditional communities in Namibia, the customary law of Hai||om (like that of most San communities) does not make any provision for the establishment of overall authorities.⁴⁴ Furthermore, whereas local and national political leaders come to power through elections, traditional leaders are generally appointed according to customary law, with little transparency in the appointment process. The system is, therefore, open to abuse. In some cases, the process through which a TA comes to power is obscure, and it is often said that party politics have played a role.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the lack of powerful individual leaders in traditional Hai||om society means that the TAs lack internal role models to emulate in their own leadership positions. Training for Namibian TAs, monitoring of their performance, and the requirement of accountability are virtually non-existent. Another difficulty is posed by the fact that all TAs in Namibia receive monthly remuneration, as well as a 4x4 vehicle and other provisions from the government and various donors. For many reasons, this access to money, transportation and other benefits is a source of conflict in a community like the Hai||om, whose traditional values were strongly egalitarian.

Independently of the TA, Hai||om also attempted to establish several other community-based organisations over the years to either represent specific segments of Hai||om or the overall Hai||om community. None of these organisations proved capable of providing Hai||om with a powerful common political voice.⁴⁶ As with the TAs, one of the biggest obstacles in the path of any overall Hai||om organisation is that the former egalitarian structures do not provide for any kind of formal “authority” empowered to speak on behalf of the people. The legacies of colonial history, above all land dispossession (resulting in their geographical scattering), and marginalisation (implying low levels of education and the lack of money and transport), are additional challenges.⁴⁷ Most importantly, however, and as will become clear, the government is hesitant to accept any other structures than the TA for Indigenous communities to negotiate with.⁴⁸

4.5 The resettlement strategy of the Namibian government

Awareness of the marginalised and partly desperate situation of the San in Namibia increased significantly with the establishment of the San Development Programme (SDP) under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in 2005. This programme can be attributed to the then Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Libertina Amathila, who was shocked about the living conditions of San in Namibia after a visit to various San communities in the country. She then focused on the “development” of the

40 Oreseb (2011)

41 Dieckmann (2014: 223–24)

42 Koot & Hitchcock (2019: 62–64)

43 R. Collinson and W. Odendaal, pers. comm., 28.6.2019.

44 Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014b: 509–12)

45 Dieckmann (2007: 316) referring to several newspaper articles.

46 Koot & Hitchcock (2019: 65)

47 Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014: 604–6)

48 *Ibid.* (2014: 608)

San during her tenure as Deputy Prime Minister (2005–2010).⁴⁹ The SDP aimed to ensure integration of San into the mainstream of Namibia's economy. In 2007, the programme was extended to cover other marginalised communities including Ovাতue, ovaTjimba and ovaHimba. The programme was supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 2008–2013, trying to promote Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. The ILO perceived the existence and potential of the SDP as a platform for promoting Convention 169 in the southern African region as a whole.⁵⁰ In 2009, the programme was transformed into the Division of San Development (DSD), still under the OPM.⁵¹ In 2015, the DSD was renamed the Marginalised Communities' Division (MCD) and shifted to the Office of the Vice-President (OVP). Around 2019, it was merged with the Division of Disability Affairs as the Division of Disability Affairs and Marginalised Communities, within the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare.⁵² The personal initiative of the former Deputy Prime Minister and the ILO involvement were important drivers of the programme in the initial years but the programme lost momentum over the years, perhaps connected with the Namibian government's lack of recognition of specific rights of "Indigenous Peoples".⁵³

The urgent issues acknowledged under the programme included the impact of colonial land dispossession and the current landlessness of San communities, as well as education and unemployment. The programme responded to the land issue by donating resettlement farms to San communities in various regions. Despite well-known challenges associated with group resettlement,⁵⁴ this model continued to be employed for San resettlement, although it had been stopped for the resettlement of other poor and landless Namibians.⁵⁵

Dissatisfaction with the collective resettlement of San people on resettlement farms—while other Namibians were resettled as individuals—was also expressed by the Deputy Minister of Marginalised Affairs, Royal |Ui|o|oo (himself a Ju|'hoan), in a 2018 article in *The Namibian*:

[t]here is a concept of saying it's a group farm. Why is it always the marginalised groups who are being grouped to make things difficult for them? Why can't the marginalised, even just one of them, be given a full farm instead of a group thing?⁵⁶

Some group resettlement farms were earmarked specifically for the Hai||om. This was also related to the centenary celebrations of ENP in 2007: the government could not ignore the fact that Hai||om had lost their land due to the establishment and development of the ENP, meaning that the centenary was not a celebratory event for them.⁵⁷

The MLR had already carried out farm assessments and identified potential farms for purchase before 2007. A consultant was contracted to conduct research on behalf of the MET, resulting in a project implementation plan for resettlement of Hai||om and recommending the establishment of conservancy-like institutions (see Chapter 3):

[t]he overall approach of the project is to address these problems through resettlement of the San living in the park and those living at Oshivelo on land purchased adjacent to the ENP. The aim is then to assist the resettled people to develop sustainable livelihoods on the land through a diversity of land uses, particularly involving wildlife and tourism, based on the communal area conservancy approach.⁵⁸

As mentioned in the document, the primary target group for resettlement was the Hai||om still residing within ENP, of whom only a minority were employed by the MET and Namibia Wildlife

49 Dieckmann *et al.* (2014: 28)

50 *Ibid.*, p. 30

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29

52 Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (2022: 1)

53 <https://www.iwgia.org/en/namibia/4640-iw-2022-namibia.html>

54 GRN (2010)

55 Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014a: 452)

56 Mumbuu (2018)

57 Weidlich (2008)

58 MET (2007: 3)

Resorts (NWR),⁵⁹ with the rest retired or unemployed, and staying with their employed relatives. Another target group for resettlement were Hai||om staying in Oshivelo, a squatter camp at the north-eastern border of ENP (where many former Etosha evictees were residing).⁶⁰ The plans envisaged that farms be bought for resettlement by the MLR on the eastern side of the park (close to Oshivelo) and at the southern border of the park (close to the Andersson gate and Ombika). The resettled Hai||om should be assisted to develop sustainable livelihoods on redistributed land through a variety of strategies and land uses, involving the utilisation of wildlife, tourism, and—as in the case of communal areas—the creation of conservancies. There were also discussions about Hai||om gaining access in the form of concessional rights over specific sites in ENP which were of particular cultural importance to them.⁶¹ It is noteworthy that in his report the consultant stressed that there was a considerable need for proper planning at different stages of the project, including a need to carry out certain feasibility studies before some of the proposed activities could be initiated. Moreover, he warned that if the project moved too quickly so as to get results on the ground, then the Hai||om community would not properly benefit from the project.⁶² Additionally, the necessity to provide sound capacity-building programmes was stressed. It was anticipated that the project would require commitment from the government and donors over a period of at least 10 years to provide the Hai||om beneficiaries with sustainable livelihoods based on sound land management, the development of productive businesses and partnerships, and good governance.⁶³

In November 2008, the first farms (Seringkop and part of Koppies, with a total area of 7,968 ha on the southern border of ENP) were officially handed over to the Hai||om TA. It was the first time in the country's post-colonial resettlement history that a resettlement farm had been handed over to a particular ethnic group.⁶⁴ On the one hand, this could be interpreted as a deviation from relevant national policies on land and resettlement, but on the other hand, the Hai||om, as San, are recognised as a primary target group of the Resettlement Programme. Since 2008, the government has purchased five more farms close to the southern border of ENP specifically for Hai||om: Bellalaika (3,528 ha), Mooiplaas (6,539 ha), Werda (6,414 ha), Nuchas (6,361 ha) and Toevlug (6,218 ha). In early 2013, Ondera/Kumewa (7,148 ha), a combined farming unit around 30 km east of Oshivelo, was purchased (see Figure 4.1).⁶⁵

Most of the Hai||om residents in ENP resisted their relocation, fearing they would lose all access to the park once they had agreed to be resettled on the farms: their priority was to gain employment in the park and to stay there. Since 2012, however, a small number of Hai||om from ENP agreed to move to the farms, as the MET promised to provide them with housing and other support.⁶⁶ After the farms Ondera/Kumewa were handed over to the Hai||om TA in 2013, Hai||om from Oshivelo and surrounding commercial farms and other resettlement farms started moving there.⁶⁷ As they had not been living in ENP for some time, there was no notable resistance by these people to move to the farms.

59 NWR is a state-owned enterprise, mandated to run the tourism facilities within the protected areas of Namibia.

60 Shigwedha (2007)

61 See also Dieckmann (2011a)

62 It turned out that he was right with this assessment.

63 MET (2007)

64 Another farm was allocated to San communities in February 2008. However, this farm was handed to 'San' belonging to several of the six different San groups. As the six different San groups do not identify themselves as one overarching ethnic group, this resettlement project was—strictly speaking—not a resettlement project based on ethnic criteria.

65 Lawry & Hitchcock (2012)

66 *Ibid.*, p. 9

67 Jan Tsumib and 8 others v Government of the Republic of Namibia and 19 others, Case Number A206/2015 at para 78 (Founding Affidavit of Jan Tsumib).

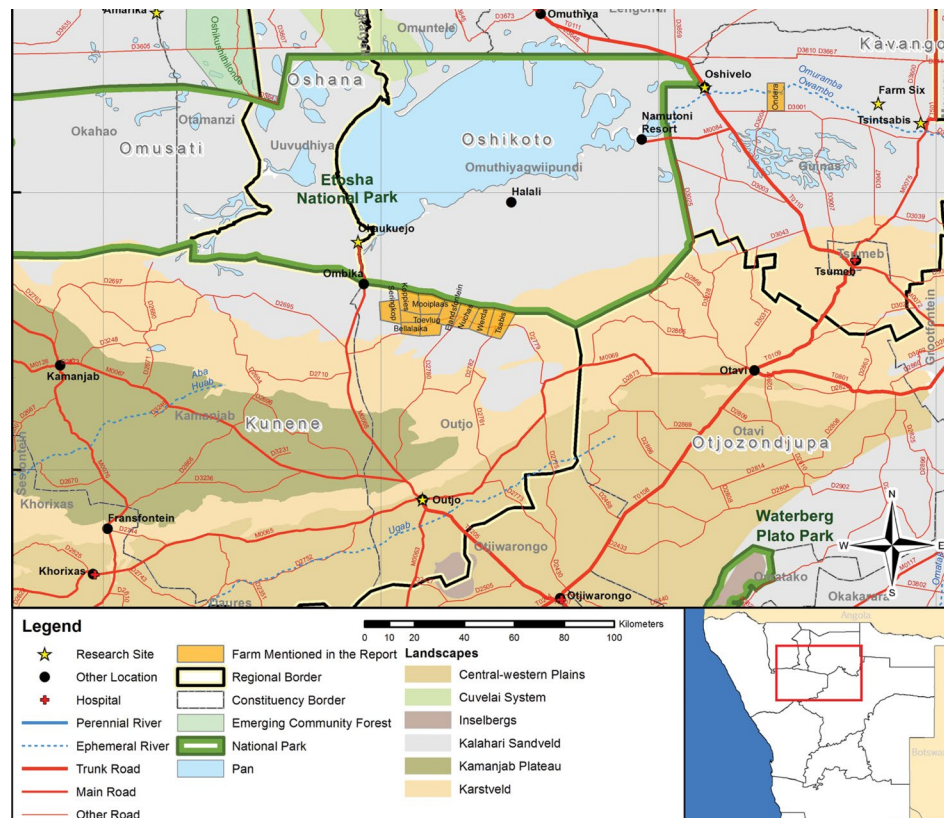


Fig. 4.1 Hai||om resettlement farms in 2014. Source: © Dieckmann (2014: 174), reproduced with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

By September 2012, around 690 Hai||om, including the chief, were living on the seven resettlement farms south of Etosha.⁶⁸ The fact that a Land Use Plan and Livelihood Support Strategy,⁶⁹ followed by a Strategy and Action Plan,⁷⁰ was released only in 2012 indicates that there had been little coordinated planning beyond land purchases in the early stages, standing in stark contrast to the measures proposed in the initial consultant's report.⁷¹ The reports mentioned above had been commissioned by Millennium Challenge Account—Namibia (MCA-N),⁷² in response to a request from the then MET for planning assistance. Access to the resettlement farms was managed by the Hai||om TA. The chief received resettlement requests from local Hai||om people and then provided them with places on the resettlement farms once the farms had been purchased and handed over to the TA. This was a matter of concern for many Hai||om, who felt that many of those people first resettled were family of the chief, or closely connected to him.

Pension money and food aid were the main livelihood strategies for farm residents. Transport to Outjo for accessing pensions was a problem, however, given that this town is at least 90 km away mostly by gravel road.⁷³ Less than 15% of Hai||om farm residents owned livestock. Income-generating activities, such as the exploitation of natural resources (firewood, mopane worms—edible caterpillars of *Gonimbrasia belina*, and medicinal plants), as well as the production of crafts, were relatively undeveloped.⁷⁴ Gardening (either communal or individual) only took place on a

⁶⁸ Lawry & Hitchcock (2012: 9)

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Lawry *et al.* (2012)

⁷¹ MET (2007)

⁷² MCA-N was a body created to oversee the implementation of a US-Namibian funding agreement through the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Namibia's National Planning Commission, amounting to more than USD 304,000,000 to facilitate poverty reduction through a number of projects (Millennium Challenge Account—Namibia 2010: 4).

⁷³ Dieckmann (2014: 204)

⁷⁴ Lawry *et al.* (2012: 10)

small scale. The resettlement farms received support through a variety of government agencies (e.g. in terms of infrastructure, financial and technical support) and the Namibian—German Special Initiative Programme.⁷⁵ Some improvement concerning infrastructural development on the farms has taken place over the years (e.g. a primary school and clinic at Farm Seringkop).⁷⁶

Since the early stages of planning it was additionally envisaged that Hai||om on the resettlement farms should be enabled to gain additional income through the granting of a tourism concession to the specific area around the waterhole !Gobaub in ENP (see Chapter 15). In 2011, a feasibility study was conducted to assess this option.⁷⁷ Extensive debate took place between the MET and MCA-N during 2011 and 2012 regarding the type of legal entity such a concession could be granted to, with the latter emphasising the need to have a democratic institution in place. It was most probably the involvement of MCA-N, whose representatives were aware of the internal conflicts around the TA and understood that the community, therefore, had no single representative body, which led to the establishment of an association to operate as “the concessionaire”, instead of the Hai||om TA.⁷⁸ Eventually, in September 2012, the !Gobaub Community Association was established to oversee the wildlife tourism concession around the !Gobaub area. The constitution of the association, however, was drawn up by lawyers in Windhoek without proper consultation or participation of the potential members, and without taking the realities on the ground into account.

In restricting the possible membership in the association to Hai||om residents on the resettlement farms, the MET decided that potential benefits from the concession should only be available to them. This meant that those who had decided to stay in Etosha, as well as other Hai||om who had lost land during the colonial period but did not stay on the resettlement farms, were excluded from any benefits arising from the !Gobaub concession. This situation arose even though several consultancy reports,⁷⁹ including the *Report on the Strategy and Action Plan for the Hai||om Resettlement Farms* compiled in September 2012, recommended a broader approach to membership: ‘[w]e believe that there is considerable merit in including the Etosha Hai||om in the membership of the !Gobaub Community Association’.⁸⁰ This recommendation was based on three arguments:

- First, the Etosha Hai||om have considerable knowledge of park and tourism management and the Park’s landscape and wildlife. They can bring this knowledge to bear in the development of tourism plans and programmes, including cultural programmes.
- Second, many of the Hai||om who chose to remain in the Park will do so because they earn livelihoods as Park employees or have family members who are employed in formal or informal livelihood activities. They should not be disqualified from membership in the Association simply because of the need to continue to earn a Park-based livelihood.
- Finally, by including Etosha Hai||om in the Concession, many of the social and political divisions likely to result from their exclusion would be alleviated.⁸¹

These recommendations were ignored, however, and the concession agreement was signed between the MET and the ‘!Gobaub Community Association’,⁸² meaning that only people from the resettlement farms, as members of the association, were to become beneficiaries of the concession. As with the drafting of the constitution of the ‘!Gobaub Community Association’, participation in drafting the contract by members of the association—let alone by the rest of the Hai||om—was no doubt rather limited. Their absence becomes evident when reading the agreement. It is phrased in

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15

⁷⁶ Rasmeni (2018)

⁷⁷ Collinson (2011)

⁷⁸ Jones & Diez (2011)

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Lawry *et al.* (2012)

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² MET (2012)

legal language, difficult for many to understand, let alone people with limited reading skills and proficiency in formal English.

Notably, in Annexure 3 of the *Head Concession Contract*, Hai||om, as part of the San, are portrayed as the ‘Survivors of the Late Stone Age Era’ and as ‘a “living link with prehistory”’ constituting ‘extant receptacles of a rich source of ancient Indigenous knowledge, traditions and customs’.⁸³ The rights of the concessionaire are limited or impractical.⁸⁴ It should also be noted in this context that the idea of building a lodge at !Gobaub for the exclusive benefit of Hai||om was originally developed by the residents in ENP (see Section 4.6).⁸⁵

Currently, the Division of Disability Affairs and Marginalised Communities within the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare coordinates and leads the post-resettlement support.⁸⁶ Yet, even 11 years after resettlement, the residents did not see the desired improvements in their livelihoods. In 2019, residents who had moved to the farms from ENP complained about the lack of job opportunities on the farms and considered moving back to Okaukuejo. Furthermore, predators preying on livestock, especially hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*) and lions (*Panthera leo*) breaking through the ENP fences, remained a problem. Some residents collected firewood or produced charcoal for sale, while a few women received sporadic payments from working on a gardening project. The residents reported not having any papers testifying to their rights to land, and not feeling secure about their right to stay on and use the land.⁸⁷

In short, land acquisition and resettlement planning and strategy on the resettlement farms south of Etosha were of a piecemeal nature, and the resettlement of Hai||om was anything but a well-planned and coordinated process. The crucial question of livelihood sustainability was not adequately addressed. Due to the remoteness of the farms, employment opportunities, piece work options, and options to engage in small businesses, were more limited than in larger settlements and towns such as Okaukuejo, Outjo or Otavi. It appears that Hai||om became even more dependent on government aid on the resettlement farms than they had been beforehand during times when they lived in towns or in ENP. Furthermore, government participation and consultation initiatives were mainly facilitated through the Hai||om TA, which, as it turned out, complicated issues further and led to more divisions in the community (also see Chapter 16).

Concerning the tourism concession, no tangible progress has been made either. In 2017, *The Namibian* reported that no investor had been found, although there had already been proposals by Ongava Game Reserve, Namibia Wilderness Safaris and Namibia Wildlife Resorts,⁸⁸ a situation linked to various factors. The internal disagreements regarding who should negotiate on behalf of the Hai||om is certainly one of them. While the chief would have liked to take a leading role in this, both the MET and the !Gobaub Community Association persisted in making the association the sole concessionaire; although it appears that this situation hampered negotiations with several tourism companies who expressed an interest in investing and building a lodge at the farm Nuchas. Eventually, on 3 June 2021, an operator contract was signed between Ongava Game Reserve (Pty) Ltd and the !Gobaub Association.⁸⁹ Since then, however, not much has happened.⁹⁰ As a result, no benefits have yet been derived from the concession for the Hai||om.

At first sight, it appears that the situation at the farms to the east of ENP, i.e. Ondera/Kumewa (see Figure 4.1)—handed to Hai||om in 2013—is better than that on the farms south of ENP. In 2016, a

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 52

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* For instance, as per Annexure 3, to access the concession area, the concessionaire has to apply to MEFT not later than 30 days before the planned activity. Given the irregular rainfall, how can a trip to collect specific plants (for example) be planned 30 days beforehand?

⁸⁵ For further details see Dieckmann (2014: 205); also Suzman (2004: 231–32).

⁸⁶ See e.g. Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (2022: 27)

⁸⁷ Interview by W. Odendaal with Ballalaika residents (2019)

⁸⁸ Kahiurika (2017)

⁸⁹ See https://www.meft.gov.na/files/downloads/271_Announcement%202020.pdf

⁹⁰ Conversations by U. Dieckmann with various stakeholders (July 2021, October 2022, April 2023)

reporter from The Namibian newspaper even referred to Ondera as ‘Namibia’s resettlement jewel’.⁹¹ The number of households at Ondera has grown considerably since the early stages of resettlement. In 2016, around 120 households were reported to be living there;⁹² by 2018, the Deputy Minister of Marginalised Communities, Royal |Ui|o|oo, mentioned 430 households;⁹³ a resident speaking to the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) team in 2019 estimated around 460 households to be living there.⁹⁴

At the time when the farm became a resettlement project, it had fully operational dry and irrigation farming systems in place, and agricultural activities were ongoing. The income from sales was kept in a trust account, and people involved in the project were getting a monthly allowance of N\$1,200 each from the government. Additionally, between 2014 and 2018 Ondera received support from Namsov Fishing Enterprises (Pty) Ltd in the form of livestock, allowances, a 4x4 vehicle, a tractor and farming implements.⁹⁵ Still, in 2019, the main sources of income at Ondera were pension money and the garden project. Residents would prefer to have individual plots, rather than the community cultivation project. The allowances and food aid paid by the government were reported to be irregular. Residents were told that the farm’s carrying capacity for all types of livestock was 400. With 460 households living at Ondera, this would amount to less than one head of livestock per household, which cannot possibly represent a significant source of income or food.⁹⁶

The nearest clinic is at Oshivelo, about 45 km away; there are hospitals at Tsumeb and Oshivelo, and two health workers are working at Ondera. Food is also mainly bought at Oshivelo or Tsumeb but transport remains a problem.⁹⁷ An Early Childhood Development Centre and a primary school are at Ondera.⁹⁸ Secondary schools are located at Ombili, Oshivelo and Tsumeb. Residents mentioned the lack of job opportunities as a major stumbling block preventing the completion of schooling, mainly because people are pessimistic about finding work after doing so. Irregular electricity supply and transport appear to be major problems at Ondera and residents complained that the government did not always react and assist when problems, e.g. concerning electricity, were reported. Residents felt insecure regarding land-rights and reported that government officials had told them to leave when they were not willing to work on the farm.⁹⁹ In sum, compared to the farms south of ENP, Ondera would at first sight seem to have better prospects for development. Considering that 460 households with an estimated population of 2,000 already reside at the farm, however, farming activities (livestock and cultivation) can hardly meet the needs of the inhabitants. The distance to the nearest towns is a major obstacle that limits other income-generating activities.

To date, Hai||om have been resettled on eight farms with about 44,206 ha of land under the government programme for marginalised communities. Dependency on government support is high, and opportunities to develop self-sustainable livelihoods on these farms seem to be low in the absence of strong and coordinated efforts to establish diversified livelihood options moving beyond small-scale gardening and small-scale livestock production.

4.6 Legal action by Hai||om: Reclaiming Etosha and Mangetti West

A group of Hai||om within Etosha, the Okaukuejo Hai||om Community Group mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, became increasingly unsettled with the developments regarding the

91 Itamalo (2016)

92 *Ibid.*

93 Staff Reporter (2018)

94 Interview by W. Odendaal with Ondera residents (June 2019)

95 Staff Reporter (2018)

96 Interview by W. Odendaal with Ondera residents (June 2019)

97 Interview by U. Dieckmann with Ondera resident (October 2022)

98 Rasmeni (2018)

99 Interview by W. Odendaal with Ondera residents (2019)

resettlement farms south of Etosha after the first farms were handed over to the chief.¹⁰⁰ They were reminded of the eviction of Hai||om in the 1950s and feared that remaining Hai||om still living in ENP would now also be expelled from their ancestral land. Furthermore, having lived and worked in Etosha for most of their lives, they had hardly any experience in farming and no spiritual connection to the land outside the park (see Chapter 15). Living on a resettlement farm did not seem like a viable option to them. In 2010, they held a meeting with the Prime Minister to raise their concerns.¹⁰¹ The Prime Minister referred them to the then Minister of MET, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaithe, to discuss the matter. Her opinion was that it was in the Hai||om's best interests to move out of Etosha.¹⁰² She also visited Okaukuejo to present the government's plans regarding resettlement and possibly a concession.

The Okaukuejo Hai||om Community Group felt that their concerns and demands were not being taken seriously, and wrote another letter to the Minister of MET. The extract quoted at the beginning of the chapter is from this letter, in which they also clarified that they did not recognise Chief David ||Khamuxab as their chief, because he had not been democratically elected by the Hai||om and was not working on their behalf. For these reasons they requested new elections of a Hai||om TA. They wanted the government to recognise that Hai||om are the indigenous inhabitants of ENP and to respect their cultural heritage there. They, therefore, wished to take part in decision-making processes regarding the development of ENP. They stressed that they did not want to be resettled on farms and that they had never requested resettlement farms. They further requested that the government should hand over !Gobaub as a cultural heritage site to the Hai||om. Furthermore, they asked the government to take affirmative action to address the high level of unemployment amongst Hai||om youths within the park, pointing out that members from other ethnic groups, originating from other areas, would nowadays get preferential employment in the park.¹⁰³

The MET did not react to the letter, and the Okaukuejo Community Group decided to ask the LAC for legal assistance with respect to 'taking government to court'.¹⁰⁴ During the following months, on advice of the LAC, the Etosha Hai||om Association (EHA) was established in order to have a legally recognised voice which could act independently of the TA. Importantly, according to its constitution, the membership of EHA was open, subject to certain conditions, for any person who shared a common cultural identity with the Hai||om people or the Hai||om traditional community. The founders of the association travelled to other Hai||om communities to introduce the organisation and its aims, to secure support for it, and to extend the membership to Hai||om living outside ENP.

In April 2011, the committee of the EHA wrote another letter to the Minister of Environment and Tourism and other stakeholders to call a stakeholder meeting to discuss their concerns to reach a consensus on the way forward.¹⁰⁵ The meeting took place on 30 May 2011 and was attended by representatives from the MET, including the Minister, members of the Hai||om TA (including the chief), members from MCA-N and several NGOs. It is worth describing the meeting in some detail, as it might have been a turning point in the Hai||om strategy to be heard.

At the meeting, the MET Permanent Secretary, with the additions of the MCA-N representative, outlined a prosperous Hai||om future on the resettlement farms with ample support and development (i.e. agriculture, infrastructure, wildlife). But she also stressed that the Hai||om would need to move out of ENP to the farms, and remarked: '[y]ou would still be with the wildlife of Etosha but only on the other side of the fence!'¹⁰⁶ The EHA attendees were not convinced and repeated their claims

100 Due to my previous research and my work at the LAC (2008–2015), I was kept updated on the developments: the Hai||om Community Group, and later the Etosha Hai||om Association (EHA) regularly consulted the lawyers at the LAC and forwarded the letters they had sent to government officials to the LAC as well.

101 Komob (2010a)

102 *Ibid.*

103 *Ibid.*

104 Komob (2010b)

105 EHA committee (2011)

106 Dieckmann (2011b: unpaginated meeting minutes)

and demands. The EHA Chairperson, the late Kadisen ǁKhumub, gave an emotional speech (which was translated) and asked for recognition of the Haiǁom residents in ENP as an integral part of the park. He requested affirmative action for their children and grandchildren regarding employment in the park and thereby the right to stay in ENP. He said that he had the impression that employing members of other ethnic groups over Haiǁom youths in ENP meant ‘erasing Haiǁom blood from Etosha, to remove the original owners from the park’.¹⁰⁷

When the Permanent Secretary wanted to close the meeting after a brief absence, saying she would need to consult with the Minister, the Minister arrived unexpectedly, telling the audience that she had not read the agenda but got to know that the Haiǁom TA was present and thus came to greet the TA and to hear the discussion. When EHA members again raised their various concerns, she pointed out that the MET was not responsible for ancestral land claims, and referred the EHA to the MLR. She stressed that she would work with the chief of the Haiǁom TA. The representatives of the EHA again clarified that the EHA had been established because they did not recognise the chief and because the chief neither took the concerns of the community into account, nor shared any benefits provided to the Haiǁom TA with the community. Shortly thereafter, the Minister closed the meeting.¹⁰⁸

The EHA representatives left the meeting with the impression that the MET showed little willingness to discuss their concerns and claims. Even some minor concessions by the MET concerning the various claims made by EHA would have smoothed the way for further negotiations. After the meeting, however, the EHA representatives came to the conclusion that the government’s intention was to remove the Haiǁom from ENP to the resettlement farms, and that Haiǁom would never be included in any development plans for ENP. Against this background, the EHA asked the LAC to initiate further legal action.¹⁰⁹

On 31 August 2011, the Minister again came for a meeting at Okaukuejo, when a consultant contracted by MCA–N to conduct a feasibility study on a tourist concession to !Gobaub presented his concept. As was made clear by Kadisen ǁKhumub at the meeting, this feasibility study had been undertaken without proper consultation with Haiǁom in ENP, and he stressed the significance of !Gobaub as a holy place for Haiǁom. He expressed his fear that the significance of !Gobaub for him and other Haiǁom would not be respected in this initiative.¹¹⁰ Notably, the feasibility study explicitly identified as beneficiaries both members of the Haiǁom community who had moved to the resettlement farms neighbouring Etosha, and members of the Haiǁom community who resided within ENP. Furthermore, the study stated that the ‘Haiǁom community’ would need to accept the proposals before any further steps were taken, and that the formation of a legal entity such as a trust or an association of the Haiǁom was advisable.¹¹¹

In September 2011, the EHA sent a letter again to the Minister of the MET demanding that they also be consulted in future planning regarding the concession.¹¹² Since there was no reply from the MET, five months later the EHA reiterated the claims in another letter to the MET. They stated that: ‘we are left with little option but to assert our rights by way of possible legal action and refuse to be forced out of Etosha. We trust that you will appreciate that you have left us with no other options’.¹¹³

This time, the MET did react. In a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of MCA–N, the Minister allowed for the inclusion of ‘the Haiǁom groups’, most likely referring to the EHA, in the Trust (the legal entity to be formed).¹¹⁴ Strangely, though, this decision was not given effect in further developments. As mentioned above, when the !Gobaub Community Association was eventually

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Komob (2011a)

¹¹⁰ Komob (2011b)

¹¹¹ Collinson (2011)

¹¹² Khumub (2011)

¹¹³ Khumub (2012)

¹¹⁴ MET (2012)

constituted in September 2012, only the resettled Hai||om were permitted to be members, and benefits from the concession would therefore only be available to Hai||om residents on the resettlement farms.

It should be mentioned that Hai||om had also tried on another front for their cultural heritage to be acknowledged. Since the turn of the millennium, a couple of Hai||om elders had worked closely with the present author and other researchers and organisations to document their cultural heritage in ENP. The work, which had started rather informally involving various individuals and organisations, became formalised as the *Xoms |Omis Project* (Etosha Heritage Project), a community trust under the guidance of the LAC.¹¹⁵ The main objectives of the project were to research, maintain, protect and promote Hai||om heritage associated with ENP and surrounding areas in order to capitalise on that heritage in the tourism sector; and to initiate capacity-building programmes based on this heritage for Hai||om individuals with a genuine interest in the cultural, historical and environmental heritage of the park: for details see Chapter 15. The project had made several attempts to collaborate with NWR with a view to making products generated through this initiative—maps, posters, postcards, T-Shirts, a tour guidebook and a children's book¹¹⁶—available in tourist shops in ENP; and to allow traditional dancing and generally increase the visibility of the Hai||om cultural heritage in ENP. All these attempts were met with no success. It seemed that NWR had no interest at all in allowing attention to be drawn to the former presence of Hai||om in ENP, and did not consider their presence and histories to be a potential tourist attraction.

During the same period, Hai||om from different communities also employed a variety of strategies to bring about new elections for a Hai||om TA. One initiative was a petition filed in 2011 to spark new elections.¹¹⁷ Another was the organisation of Hai||om according to traditional subgroups¹¹⁸ with individuals representing these subgroups.¹¹⁹ These efforts too were unsuccessful.

The diplomatic strategies for Hai||om to have their concerns taken seriously and to gain recognition as former inhabitants of ENP seemed to be exhausted, leading Hai||om to choose legal action as a last resort. During 2013, the LAC and Legal Resource Centre (LRC, South Africa, which offered their support and experience for the legal action) had meetings with Hai||om in Oshivelo and Outjo to further assess the possibilities and intricacies of a land claim and to garner further support for the case.

The then United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya (2008–2014) visited Namibia in September 2012 (as part of his mandate to examine the human rights situation of Indigenous Peoples around the world), meeting stakeholders from government, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, as well as various San communities, including Hai||om in and around ENP. Relevant in the context of this chapter (i.e. ENP, the resettlement farms, and San TAs), he recommended the following in his report:

82. Namibia should take measures to reform protected-area laws and policies that now prohibit San people, especially the Khwe in Bwabwata National Park and the Hai||om in Etosha National Park, from securing rights to lands and resources that they have traditionally occupied and used within those parks. The Government should guarantee that San people currently living within the boundaries of national parks are allowed to stay, with secure rights over the lands they occupy.

83. In addition, the Government should take steps to increase the participation of San people in the management of park lands, through concessions or other constructive arrangements, and should minimize any restrictions that prohibit San from carrying out traditional subsistence and cultural activities within these parks.

115 <https://www.xoms-omis.org/>

116 Dieckmann (2009, 2012)

117 P. Watson, pers. comm., 2011

118 See Dieckmann (2007: 112–13) for these traditional groupings.

119 E. Naoxab, pers. comm., 11.3.2014, meeting with Hai||om Subgroup Leaders.

84. The Government should review its decision not to allow the Hai||om San people to operate a tourism lodge within the boundaries of Etosha National Park under their current tourism concession. Further, management of concessions should not be limited to only those Hai||om groups that opt to move to the resettlement farms. [...]

87. Recognition of the traditional authorities of indigenous peoples in Namibia is an important step in advancing their rights to self-governance and in maintaining their distinct identities. The State should review past decisions denying the recognition of traditional authorities put forth by certain indigenous groups, with a view to promoting the recognition of legitimate authorities *selected in accordance with traditional decision-making processes*.¹²⁰

Without venturing into legal questions in detail, reference should be made to the issue of *locus standi* and the subject of land, which were discussed at length amongst the involved lawyers.¹²¹ Being aware of the intricacies of the Central Kalahari Court Case, which originally included 243 applicants, a number later reduced to 189 surviving applicants,¹²² as well as the problematic position of the officially recognised Hai||om TA and the problem of representation within former hunter-gatherer groups, it was decided to first launch a class action application on behalf of the Hai||om. Class action lawsuits were not at this stage an option in Namibian law, and the country's law needed to be developed to allow the applicants to pursue the legal action in a representative capacity on behalf of their community.¹²³ Eight Hai||om were the applicants in this action. Along with the government and some other stakeholders, the Hai||om TA was a respondent.

The application was filed in 2015 and after two initial postponements, was heard in November 2018. It was dismissed in a judgement announced on 28 August 2019.¹²⁴ The rationale for the dismissal was grounded in the Traditional Authorities Act, mentioned above. The judges held that the competent body to launch such an action would be the Hai||om TA and that the applicants had not exhausted the internal remedies provided by the act, nor had they challenged the constitutionality of the provisions of the act.¹²⁵

The appellants appealed the judgement in the Supreme Court in November 2021. They had revised their strategy, arguing that the TAA and international law were not in conflict with each other and that international law was 'better equipped to support the rights of the Hai||om'.¹²⁶ As Willem Odendaal explained,

the core of the appellants' submissions to the Supreme Court was first to show that nothing in the text, context and purpose of the TAA suggest that the Hai||om, either as "a people" or "minority group" (as termed under international law) or "traditional community" (as termed under the TAA) prevented them from bringing the representative action.¹²⁷

The Supreme Court, again, dismissed the Hai||om litigants' case, but for different reasons to the High Court. The Supreme Court opined that the TAA did not grant the Hai||om Traditional Authority exclusive powers to pursue the community's claims. Yet, it argued that the existing remedies in the legal system had not been exhausted by the applicants:

[c]lass action may not be part of our law but that does not mean no other form is available to pursue the claims. The applicants have not at all addressed the question why, failing the class action route, other forms of legal capacity to act do not offer the Hai||om sufficient recourse to pursue their claims rather than reliance on the amorphous form in which they seek to act—a form which, like the class action is not recognised in our law.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ Anaya (2013: 19–20, emphasis added)

¹²¹ See Odendaal (2022: Chapter 2)

¹²² Hitchcock *et al.* (2011: 80), Sapignoli (2015: 295)

¹²³ Menges (2019)

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ High Court of Namibia (2019); for more details see Odendaal (2022: Chapter 6)

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 247

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 243–44

¹²⁸ Supreme Court of Namibia (2022: para. 74)

The Supreme Court pointed to ‘forms of legal organisation which could have been considered to overcome the unavailability of a class action’,¹²⁹ namely forms of a *universitas*:

[a] universitas is a legal fiction or incorporeal abstraction which may be created in terms of legislation (eg, companies and close corporations, or other juristic persons specifically created by a statute, such as traditional authorities under the TAA, the Law Society, and various State-owned enterprises). Another form of universitas is an unincorporated association of natural persons also known as a voluntary association. The main characteristics of the universitas are its existence as a separate entity with rights and duties independent from the individual members’ rights and duties and that it has perpetual succession.¹³⁰

A voluntary organisation, as a form of a *universitas*, could, according to Namibia’s High Court Rules, sue or be sued in its own name.¹³¹

It needs to be emphasised that the actual land claim of the Hai||om was not yet brought to court, only the issue of *locus standi* was decided upon in their case. Odendaal comments:

[t]he application for representative action was in essence an effort to solve the question of standing. If the formation of the universitas manages to solve the question of standing, the source to support the merits of the Hai||om people’s six land claims, [...] namely constitutional, customary, common, comparative and international law could still be employed by the Hai||om people. This is because neither of the two courts in the Tsumib case, have made any significant enquiries into or findings on the merits of ancestral land claims in Namibia. Therefore, the merits of the claims, as were presented in the application still needs testing and as such could be redeployed in a new application, or action if so desired. Indeed, if the universitas accomplishes to solve the Hai||om people’s standing problem, then there should be no reason why the Hai||om litigants could not rely on a combination of constitutional, customary, common, comparative and international law to advance their claims under the guise of a universitas.¹³²

Given the enormous time and other resources which court cases like this one consume, it remains to be seen whether Hai||om will continue with this path.

4.7 Discussion and Conclusion

During the course of developments described in this chapter, it became evident that the situation of Hai||om in independent Namibia is complex, and the marginalisation most of them are experiencing, is difficult to overcome. This is due to several interrelated predicaments.

The overall predicament is that while ethnicity, ethnic consciousness and ethnic stereotypes are still prevalent in everyday life and lived experiences of Namibians (including Hai||om) the government arguably fails to adequately address these issues.¹³³ As James Suzman noted in 2001:

[i]n rural areas in particular, ethnic consciousness often prevails as a cipher for social action. The policy of separate development pursued by the apartheid regime polarised relations between different ethnic groups in Namibia, such that by the time of independence ethnic consciousness pervaded Namibian political and social discourse. The GRN’s strategy for dealing with this has been to deny “ethnicity” or ethnic consciousness any status in politics or policy and to subordinate all matters of customary law to the Constitution and laws of Namibia. While this may be the best strategy for dealing with these problems in the long term, as has reportedly been the case in Tanzania (Ndagala pers. comm.), it does

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 77

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* para. 78

¹³¹ Odendaal (2022: 253). Odendaal discusses the potential implications of this judgement for the Hai||om case in some detail.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 258–59

¹³³ This is also responsible for the fact that it is reasonable to argue in respect of ‘Hai||om’, as it is reasonable to argue in the name of any other ethnic group in Namibia.

have negative short-term consequences. Most significantly it makes few allowances for the role of ethnic consciousness in maintaining and reproducing uneven structural relations.¹³⁴

The fact that Suzman's assessment is still by and large correct 22 years later, points to this very predicament. Although the Namibian constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, more could be done to combat social stratification according to ethnicity. Namibia's statistical population data (e.g. Population and Housing Census or Inter-censal Demographic Surveys) do not include ethnic variables but instead include the variable 'main language spoken at home', the categories 'San language' or 'Nama Damara languages' being amongst those listed.¹³⁵ This categorisation disguises the fact, that Hai||om and Khwe are both speaking Khoekhoegowab ('Nama/Damara languages'), and that other San, especially in the northern regions, do not speak a San language anymore.¹³⁶ Yet most Hai||om and other San belong to the lowest strata of society in terms of social stratification and economic indicators. Not providing variables able to measure these facts accurately does not contribute to a solution. Furthermore, the government is preferring to talk about 'marginalised communities', but in fact refers to specific ethnic groups within its programme (San, Ovaherero and Nama), and not, for instance, to farm workers, charcoal workers, widows, etc. Disguising the fact that ethnicity, and especially ethnic ascriptions, was and still is a major reason for marginalisation and discrimination, impedes appropriate and sustainable action.

The relevance of ethnicity, ethnic ideals and ethnic realities played out specifically in the historical events affecting the Hai||om, interrelated with other factors. The area that Hai||om inhabited in pre-colonial and early colonial times, namely northern-central Namibia, was an area highly valued by the colonial powers, both German and South African. It was partly of interest for its agricultural potential, partly as a protected area, and as a buffer zone to the north (of the Police Zone/Red Line).¹³⁷ Hai||om and others were not living at the margins but in the centre of the colonial enterprise (see Section 4.2 and Chapters 1, 2, 15 and 16), leading to their discrimination on the grounds of their assimilation with other "groups" and the appropriation of land they were inhabiting for settler farming (Section 4.2), as well as difficulties in terms of their representation with regard to the institution of Traditional Authorities (Section 4.4). As noted in Section 4.2, these factors meant that at Independence, Hai||om found themselves dispossessed of their land, with no access to communal lands and thus no option to establish conservancies or community forests.

Ethnicity comes into play again, first, because their customs were not accommodated by the TAA, and second, because they continue to be considered as one of the San communities of Namibia. This label and the concomitant ideas are linked to land again. The government, attempting to somehow "restitute" them for the loss of land, employed the group resettlement approach specifically for San much longer than for other social groups who fell under the target groups of its land reform programme. These group resettlement farms proved up to now unable to provide sustainable livelihoods to their "beneficiaries". They run the risk, in the absence of long-term and coordinated multi-stakeholder support, of becoming rural slums. As Koot and Hitchcock note:

[i]f the resettlement policy continues to be implemented as it is currently, a rural slum like Tsintsabis or a small town like Oshivelo could function as an example of the type of socio-economic problems that are typical of marginalisation and could easily happen elsewhere (for example, in "Little Etosha" [the resettlement farms south of Etosha]). What is interesting is that, although there is a lot of talk about land restitution to undo colonial practices, the loss of land subtly continues for the Hai||om San. This quiet, yet insidious process may occur for a number of reasons, including: wealthy farmers extending their territories (as in Mangetti West); in-migration placing increasing pressure on resettlement farms (such as Tsintsabis); or Hai||om being subtly pressured off their ancestral lands (most significantly, Etosha).¹³⁸

134 Suzman (2001: 73–74)

135 NSA (2017: 95)

136 See Dieckmann *et al.* (2014: 21–23) for more details.

137 Miescher (2009)

138 Koot & Hitchcock (2019: 72)

Apart from the continuation or intensification of poverty for Hai||om who have chosen to move to one of the resettlement farms, in-migration by (more dominant) others is a serious threat, taking place not only at Tsintsabis (see Chapter 16) but also at farms south of Etosha and Ondera.¹³⁹ Without proper overall Hai||om representation they have barely a chance to successfully fight former or current land dispossession.

Although the government is aware of the problematic role of the recognised Hai||om chief, they blame the individual for his shortcomings and failure to adequately perform the tasks demanded by his position.¹⁴⁰ But the similarities with other San communities dealing with other TAs, as well as problems encountered with the TAs of other groups,¹⁴¹ suggest that blame should not be laid at the door of the individual chief, but perhaps at the structuring effects of Traditional Authorities legislation in relation to cultures with egalitarian values at the core of their social organisation practices. In fact, the first judgement (the High Court judgment) in the Hai||om case implied that this door is open.¹⁴² Odendaal notes that,

the court found that if the TAA infringes or does not adequately give effect to the constitutional rights of the Hai||om people, then the applicants would have to challenge the constitutionality of the offending provisions of the TAA.¹⁴³

Due to the failure of the TA to voice wider Hai||om concerns, a court case was launched involving an application for class action to claim Hai||om ancestral land (Section 4.6). A lot of effort was put into the question of representatives who could act on behalf of the Hai||om community.¹⁴⁴ In the first judgement though, the TA issue became the major obstacle preventing Hai||om from launching an ancestral land claim.¹⁴⁵

The government certainly welcomed the first judgement. Yet, the strategy of only negotiating with the Hai||om TA brought with it its own problems and costs for the government. It is questionable whether this strategy was a hindrance to the goals the government had in mind for the Hai||om.¹⁴⁶ First, having not ensured the support of the wider Hai||om community in their resettlement plans this situation impeded the government's plans to resettle the Hai||om from ENP. The initial issue of unemployed Hai||om there has not been solved, as the government is loath to involuntarily remove them. Second, the development of the concession has not been taken forward. Third, financial and technical support channelled through the chief does not necessarily reach the wider community, or even all beneficiaries on the resettlement farms, where there are high levels of dependency on government aid and no signs that this might change in the near future.

Finally, in taking the Hai||om from Etosha seriously, the court case might have been prevented. When Hai||om from Etosha started corresponding with the government in 2010, they asked for acknowledgement that they were the former inhabitants of ENP, and wanted as such to be involved in decision-making regarding Etosha's future development. They also wanted recognition that their cultural heritage and history are inseparably connected to the ENP lands, and they therefore asked for !Gobaub as a Hai||om cultural heritage site. For those still employed in ENP and their descendants, they demanded that Hai||om should be given preferential status when it comes to employment opportunities in the park. It is noteworthy that at the initial stage of their struggle, no explicit request was made for financial compensation. Considering the estimated market value of

¹³⁹ Interviews by U. Dieckmann in Outjo and Windhoek with residents at Toevlug and Ondera (October 2022).

¹⁴⁰ This becomes evident when government officials informally advise Hai||om to sort out the chief or to reconcile with him.

¹⁴¹ LAC employees, pers. comm.

¹⁴² High Court of Namibia (2019)

¹⁴³ Odendaal (2022: 241)

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 173 ff.

¹⁴⁵ High Court of Namibia (2019)

¹⁴⁶ Within the overall framework to 'Integrate Marginalised Communities into Mainstream Economy' as outlined, for example, in Namibia's Fifth National Development Plan (GRN 2017).

the ENP lands being around N\$3.8 billion,¹⁴⁷ these initial requests appear rather modest. However, the government was not inclined to accommodate any of the requests. With minor admissions, the government could have circumvented litigation and concomitant public and media attention.

Even if the outlook for the future does not currently look too bright for Hai||om, the second court ruling in the Supreme Court¹⁴⁸ is of vital significance. In promoting the legal form of a *universitas* (e.g. a voluntary organisation), it opens doors for legal claims (e.g. ancestral land claims) in the name of Hai||om, but not necessarily via the TA. Even outside the courtroom, this judgement hopefully has some influence on the government in reconsidering its strategy of merely negotiating with the Hai||om TA. It is time that political Hai||om representation, with or without one or several recognised TAs, becomes stronger and recognised locally, regionally and nationally.

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¹⁴⁷ Annexure A Particulars of Claim in Jan Tsumib and 8 others v Government of the Republic of Namibia and 19 others Case Number A206/2015 at Para 32.1.

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5. Environmentalities of Namibian conservancies: How communal area residents govern conservation in return

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Abstract

This chapter explores how communal area residents in north-west Namibia experience, understand, and respond to their conservancies. Drawing on philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality" and specifically its "environmentality" variant, conservancies are understood as localised global environmental governance institutions which aim to modify local people's behaviours in both conservation- and market-friendly ways. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork across four conservancies in Kunene Region, the chapter reveals how local communities culturally demystify, socially re-construct, and ultimately govern a global, neoliberal(ising) institutional experiment in return. Confirming stark experiential discrepancies and distributional injustices, the analysis cautions against a simplistic affirmation of the conservation dictum that "those who benefit also care". Instead, it demonstrates that experiences of neoliberal incentives such as ownership and benefits are a limited predictor of local conservation practices. In the context of Namibian conservancies, "friction" between global and local ways of seeing and being in the world produces novel, hybrid environmentalities characterised in part by what political scientist Jean-François Bayart calls 'the politics of the belly'. The chapter explores how communal area residents seek to opportunistically work the conservancy system to their advantage. It highlights an accountability gap within conservancies which not only entrenches local inequalities, but effectively transfers frictions between global and local environmentalities to the community level where they have the potential to develop into intra-community conflicts.

5.1 Introduction¹

Namibian conservancies are community-based organisations with limited rights and responsibilities for the governance of natural resources on communal land. They are 'communal property regimes',² or 'local common property resource management institutions',³ to which the state devolves tradeable use rights over game, land, and tourism on condition that communities assume responsibility for the sustainable management and protection of wildlife. After decades of exclusionary, fortress style approaches to conservation linked to alienating colonial and apartheid injustices, conservancies provide a hopeful counter-narrative about the restoration of Indigenous and local rights to land

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2 Jones & Murphree (2001: 44)

3 Jones (2010: 106)

and natural resources.⁴ Nationally, this social, ecological, economic, and political transformation was enabled by Namibian Independence from colonial South Africa in 1990, with a clear vision to reform apartheid conservation policies and redress past injustices.⁵ Through conservancies, black farmers on communal land should receive the same ownership rights and benefits from game that white farmers on freehold land have enjoyed since proclamation of The Nature Conservation Ordinance, 31 of 1967⁶ (see Chapter 2). In many ways, the success or failure of the conservancy system at the local level is entwined with the post-apartheid trajectory at the national level. Conservancies thus play a key role in post-apartheid politics and reconciliation.

In the fields of conservation and development, Namibia's conservancies are generally considered a leading example of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in southern Africa;⁷ celebrated as 'one of the most successful examples of legal empowerment of the poor of the past decade'.⁸ With 86 registered conservancies covering almost 20% (163,151 km²) of Namibia, they are intended to enable over 200,000 rural residents to benefit from a wildlife-based economy.⁹ It is undeniable that conservancies contribute significantly to achieving key conservation and rural development goals. In 2017 alone, community conservation generated nearly USD 9 million (N\$132 million) in returns for conservancy members, and facilitated over 5,300 jobs,¹⁰ whilst iconic wildlife thrived. Between 1995 and 2016, Namibia's elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) population reportedly grew from 7,500 to around 22,800 (see Chapter 11), with free-roaming desert-adapted lions (*Panthera leo*) expanding their range and numbers (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19).¹¹ Recent game count figures for the north-west, however, show declines in many wildlife populations, due to the combined impacts of a prolonged drought since 2012, high offtake quotas up to around 2016, and possibly illegal harvesting (as detailed in Chapter 3).¹² In ecological terms, conservancies' success is thus mixed. In socio-economic terms, the picture is even less clear. While some assess the impact of conservancies on rural lives and livelihoods as predominantly positive,¹³ an increasing number of studies express concerns.¹⁴

To further contextualise conservancies and critically assess their political potential for empowering rural communities, it is important to consider 'the alliances and mobilizations'¹⁵ on which the conservancy system depends. First, the shift from fortress¹⁶ to community-based conservation was ideologically controversial with apartheid-era civil servants remaining sceptical about decentralised, democratic governance arrangements as they distrusted rural Africans to use wildlife sustainably. Defying the traditional command and control preservationists, a small but

4 Sullivan (1999: 2)

5 Jones (2010: 107–8)

6 MET (1995: 5), Bollig (2016: 778)

7 Roe *et al.* (2009: 39)

8 Boudreaux (2010: 1)

9 Naidoo *et al.* (2016), NACSO (2018)

10 *Ibid.*, p. 13

11 NACSO (2016: 7–11)

12 NACSO (2022)

13 Jones & Weaver (2009), Owen-Smith (2010), Hoole & Berkes (2010), Boudreaux (2010), Nuulimba & Taylor (2015), Jacobsohn (2019)

14 For example, Kahler & Gore (2015), Mufune (2015), Mosimane & Silva (2015), Silva & Motzer (2015), Bollig (2016), Bollig & Olwage (2016), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), Kalvelage *et al.* (2020)

15 Brosius *et al.* (2005: 16)

16 In north-west Namibia, the "fortress" version of conservation is not necessarily connected with a particular enclosed area. The entire north is split from southern Namibia by a veterinary cordon fence, the 'Red Line' (see Miescher 2012: 2), and further separated internally by various national parks, as well as hunting and tourism concession areas. Colonial administrations, however, also implemented "fortress-style" conservation in the unfenced, communal areas. When I speak of a shift from fortress to community conservation, the "fortress" should thus be understood metaphorically. It represents coercive and exclusionary forms of conservation practice rooted in an imposed ontological division between (black) people and nature and related myths about "wilderness" (Adams & McShane 1996; Neumann 1998; Brockington 2002; Adams & Hutton 2007: see Chapter 2), including the reified dislocation and dispossession of Indigenous Namibians from their land, wildlife, and hunting rights in the north-west of "Etosha-Kunene" (Bollig & Olwage 2016; Sullivan & Hannis 2016; Sullivan 2017: discussed further in Chapters 12, 13 and 14).

committed circle of progressive government officials and NGO practitioners pushed through the necessary institutional reforms (see Chapters 2 and 3).¹⁷ Different interpretations regarding the extent of decentralisation and communal proprietorship of natural resources, however, meant that policy stances oscillated over time and ‘communities received conflicting messages from reformers and traditionalists’.¹⁸ As will be seen in this chapter, community perspectives and experiences reflect these divergent understandings and conflicting communications regarding the status of conservancies and, particularly, the extent of local ownership over wildlife.

Secondly, conservancies are not only the creation of a small, progressive circle of committed Namibian community conservation advocates. As a true child of the 1980–1990s, they are also a product of the global neoliberalisation of conservation.¹⁹ The 1992 Rio Earth Summit marked a shift in global conservation policy towards more “people-centred” approaches and an inclusion of wider social, economic, and political goals.²⁰ As a result, fortress conservation and its artificial separation of people and nature was replaced by a ‘consensus around sustainable use as a legitimate wildlife management strategy’.²¹ Community-based conservation was the new mantra and, where possible, fines, fences, and firearms were to be replaced by incentives aimed at winning the support of local populations living in and around wildlife areas. More specifically, the neoliberal “innovation” of the conservancy model is the idea that newly devolved rights enabling communities to earn an income through the commodification of wildlife and landscapes would lead to local valorisation of wildlife and thus to conservation-friendly behaviours. As such, conservancies not only combine conservation and rural development goals, but also integrate local people, their land, and resources into the market.²² To the extent that they aim to ‘produce both environmentally and market-friendly subjects’,²³ they can reasonably be considered ‘civilizing projects’²⁴ and projects of ‘improvement’.²⁵

Third, the space for conservancy reform opened up by Namibian Independence and reinforced by an enabling international environment characterised by debates on sustainability and local integration, was further instilled with emergent thinking about common property resource management. According to Jones,²⁶ the legislation for conservancies was directly influenced by the late Elinor Ostrom’s (1990) design principles for self-governance of common pool resources. Since Ostrom’s principles are based on a combination of game-theoretical, rational choice and behavioural approaches, however, she admits that her theory is limited to situational and observable variables ‘rather than internal, in-the-mind, subjective variables, which are far more difficult to measure’.²⁷ Her theory consequently fails to consider sufficiently how historicity, social interactions, and divergent local experiences and meanings shape the impacts and outcomes of common property regimes (as further discussed in Chapters 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 19). The institutional arrangements she inspired run the risk of reproducing these limitations, as Dressler

17 Jones & Murphree (2001: 40, 54), Jones (2010: 113)

18 Jones & Murphree (2001: 54)

19 The neoliberalisation of conservation captures ‘the increasingly hegemonic influence’ (Fletcher 2023: 3–4) of the global political-economic programme of neoliberalism (see Harvey 2005) within the global conservation movement. It is characterised by several trends, including the growing dominance of alliances of big international NGOs, corporations and financial institutions, the privatisation of nature reserves, the devolution of resource control, and the commodification of natural resources which can be traded through market-based instruments (MBIs), such as payments for environmental services (PES). Whilst neoliberalism is often associated with the rolling back of regulation, Fletcher (2023: 10) argues that neoliberal conservation is, in fact, ‘an “anti-regulation machine” purporting to reduce state regulation while actually expanding it’. See also Sullivan (2006), Igoe & Brockington (2007), Brockington & Duffy (2011), Büscher *et al.* (2012).

20 Carmen *et al.* (2015: 182)

21 Newsham (2007: 145) in Jones (2010)

22 Sullivan (2006), Bollig (2016: 773), Sullivan *et al.* (2016: 14)

23 Holmes & Cavanagh (2016: 204)

24 Dressler & Guieb (2015: 332)

25 Li (2007)

26 (2010: 109)

27 Ostrom (1990: 37–8)

and co-authors²⁸ forewarn with regard to CBNRM more generally: ‘being scaled up as a global pre-packaged solution to local problems, CBNRM’s near universality may lead to its demise’. The danger of rolling out conservancies as unproblematic, charismatic travelling packages²⁹ across different socio-cultural contexts in Namibia should not be underestimated: it neglects the complexity of global-local interactions and the unpredictability of hybrid institutional outcomes mediated by culturally and individually variable experiences and understandings of the world.³⁰

This chapter aims to shine a light on how communal area residents in north-west Namibia experience, understand, and respond to their conservancies. It is an attempt to show how rural communities culturally demystify, socially re-construct, and ultimately govern a global, neoliberal institutional experiment in return. Drawing from Foucault’s governmentality³¹ concept and its ‘environmentality’³² variant as applied to processes of environmental governance, I frame conservancies not only as common property regimes or community-based organisations, but as localised global environmental governance institutions. Just as environmental governance processes ‘are primarily designed to modify human behaviours that affect biodiversity’,³³ an environmentality lens reveals that conservancies aim to modify the behaviours of communal area residents in both conservation- and market-friendly ways. My somewhat critical reading should not be misunderstood as a denunciation of conservancies, nor of their architects, committees, members, or support workers, for whom I have the utmost respect for their work. I hope instead to contribute to a candid conversation in Namibia about divergent experiential realities within conservancies, and the ways in which conservancies might be supported to come closer to meeting communal area residents’ priorities and fulfilling *their* visions of “socio-natures” (on which, see Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15).

The materials presented in this chapter, e.g. interview transcripts and fieldnotes, derive from year-long ethnographic fieldwork conducted in close collaboration with two Namibian NGOs and four communal conservancies in the Kunene region between March 2018 and March 2019. They comprise almost 300 days of participant observation and over 80 interviews with communal area residents, rangers, and conservation practitioners.³⁴ Based on these materials, I challenge the conservation dictum that “those who benefit also care”. Instead, I show that local experiences of structural incentives like ownership and benefits are only a limited predictor of local responses to conservation. Before presenting the empirical flesh of this argument, however, I briefly explain how, in theory, different environmentalities in the conservancy model aim to manage natural resources and ‘conduct the conduct’³⁵ of rural communities.

5.2 Environmentalities of Namibian conservancies

The first application of Foucault’s (2007) governmentality concept to global institutions of environmental governance was Luke’s (1999) characterisation of the Rio Earth Summit as a novel environmentality.³⁶ To the extent that conservancies are a product of the horizontal and vertical

28 (2010: 12)

29 cf. Brosius *et al.* (2005: 5), Tsing (2005)

30 Millar (2014: 3)

31 Foucault (2008: 176, 218) framed governmentality as ‘the art of government’, and a ‘general style of thought, analysis and imagination’ which entails various particular modes of ‘conducting subjects’ conduct’, e.g. biopolitical, neoliberal, disciplinary, sovereign, and truth (Fletcher 2010: 178).

32 Environmentality can be understood as governmentality related to the environment, a ‘green governmentality’ (Luke 1999) or a conservation governmentality. It is as generic a term as governmentality and, thus, the way in which it aims to ‘conduct conduct’ also depends on its particular mode, e.g. biopolitical, neoliberal, disciplinary, sovereign, truth (Fletcher 2010, 2017).

33 Salafsky (2001: 185)

34 Schneider (2022)

35 cf. Foucault (1991: 102)

36 Fletcher (2017: 312)

integration championed at the summit and in its aftermath, it is fitting to use the same theoretical approach to analyse how this vision is implemented in a specific context. For the subsequent application of environmentality to the conservancy model, I draw on Fletcher's enlightening discussions of the concept.³⁷

Formally, the conservancy model reflects a neoliberal environmentality, a mode of environmental governance which uses structural incentives, i.e. devolved ownership and benefits from wildlife, to change local behaviours in conservation- and market-friendly ways.³⁸ The neoliberal environmentality of conservancies thus represents an external, legal type of intervention. Assuming self-interested, rational actors, the change in ownership is supposed to alter the cost-benefit ratio of engaging in environmentally harmful practices, particularly illegal hunting, in favour of conservation. Wildlife that is protected and secured can then be safely marketed and commercialised along with the region's spectacular landscapes via profitable ecotourism and trophy hunting industries. The income gained through public-private partnerships is administered by the conservancy and accrues to registered members as benefits. Benefits may be distributed to individual members in the form of employment, meat, and occasional cash payments; or distributed collectively in the form of communal development projects, such as upgrades to schools, livestock kraals, or water infrastructure. The neoliberal environmentality of conservancies employs the market as the model for local behavioural change. The effect is an extension of market logics to more-or-less previously "unintegrated" or marginalised rural populations, and an opening-up of "their" untapped natural resources to global processes of commodification and capital accumulation.³⁹

Locally and on a more informal level, the conservancy system also reflects a disciplinary environmentality which aims to produce 'environmental subjects—people who care about the environment'.⁴⁰ Conservancy members become environmental subjects when they internalise desired norms and values, such as local ownership, protection, and sustainable use of natural resources. Internalisation of norms and values is achieved through education and outreach, fear of deviance, and subtle but omnipresent threats of violence.⁴¹ Communities then self-regulate their practices in the logic of Foucault's Panopticon (i.e. self-surveillance) model of power. As discussed by Li⁴² in relation to governmentality, due to the impossibility of universal coercion and regulation, disciplinary environmentality 'operates by educating desires and configuring habits, aspirations and beliefs'. In contrast to neoliberal environmentality, where rational actors protect wildlife out of economic self-interest, the disciplinary mode of environmental governance aims to achieve an internal 'subjugation' of the hearts and minds of local people who support conservation because they 'care'.⁴³

In practice, neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities interact. The extent of ownership and benefits goes to the heart of rural lives and livelihoods. In Namibian conservancies, neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities merge because devolved ownership over natural resources—the structural incentive—is not merely an economic mechanism but a social and political value, linked to redressing colonial and apartheid-era injustices. As mentioned, through conservancies, black farmers were putatively to receive the same ownership rights over game as white farmers,⁴⁴

37 Fletcher (2010, 2017)

38 Sullivan (2006)

39 *Ibid.*, Fletcher (2010)

40 Agrawal (2005: 162)

41 Neumann (2001: 327)

42 (2007: 5)

43 cf. Fletcher (2010)

44 Despite the empowerment rhetoric around conservancies, significant structural differences exist regarding the land distribution and rights between Indigenous communal area farmers and settler freehold farmers. As Sullivan (2002: 164–65) explains, freehold farmers not only own the most productive land in southern and central Namibia which holds around 70 per cent of all "game" in the country, but their rights are also inalienable as they 'effectively and legally own the capital constituted by their land and the resources on it'. Whilst settler freeholders are thus free to turn their rights over huntable game into individual profit, the rights of Indigenous and local farmers

partially restoring Indigenous access, use, and control of natural resources. When local people accept the CBNRM narrative and experience or perceive genuine ownership and benefits from wildlife, then environmental degradation—especially illegal hunting—becomes (in theory) immoral and unethical. While the production of an environmental ethic and the diffusion of related norms are objectives of a disciplinary mode of environmental governance, in the Namibian case they are achieved through a combination of neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities. The neoliberal incentives reflect social and political values that, over time, are accepted, internalised, and translated into two distinct social norms: pro-environment and pro-market.

Finally, it must be noted that there are further strategies of environmental governance or modes of environmentality visible in conservancies: namely, sovereign and truth environmentalities. The former refers to environmental ‘governance through top-down creation and enforcement of regulations’⁴⁵ which is evident in traditional fortress conservation approaches, as well as more recent forms of militarised conservation,⁴⁶ green security,⁴⁷ or green violence.⁴⁸ I discuss sovereign environmentalities in detail elsewhere.⁴⁹ Truth environmentalities refer to environmental ‘governance in accordance with [a] particular [local/cultural] conception of the nature and order of the universe’.⁵⁰ They can include alternative and often hidden practices that are based on Indigenous people’s traditional ecological knowledge, intrinsic valuations of nature, and essential human-nature connections or non-dualistic ontologies.⁵¹ The concept of “truth environmentality” captures the circulation of these alternatives under the surface of any localised form of global environmental governance, such as conservancies⁵²—as explored in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15. Although sovereign and truth environmentalities work through the conservancy system, they do not reflect conservancies’ original modes of governance or primary operating logics. For the purpose of this chapter, therefore, I focus on local experiences of neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities as they reflect the original and guiding logics of conservancies. Nevertheless, Indigenous (truth) environmentalities overlap and interact with these dominant modes of environmental governance. Therefore, I return to truth environmentalities when I discuss how communal area residents in Namibia demystify and socially re-construct their conservancies’ localised forms of global environmental governance from below.

5.3 Local experiences of conservancies’ environmentalities: The pivots of ownership and benefits

The neoliberal incentives of ownership and benefits are the pivots of the conservancy system. They largely determine whether communal area residents experience their respective conservancy as empowering or disempowering, and whether they support or resist the vision of conservation and development put forth by CBNRM. The underpinning logic is simple: people who genuinely feel they own and benefit from wildlife, will value it and, in turn, support its sustainable use, rational management, and protection.⁵³ Locally, this logic has also become stated common sense, as one conservancy manager told me: ‘[t]hat is the bottom line: with no incentives, no conservation’

remain severely restricted, ironically not least through their membership in a ‘communal property regime’ (Jones & Murphree 2001: 44). In other words, in practice, black farmers on communal land can never have the same ownership rights over game as white farmers on private land (also see Chapter 3).

45 Fletcher (2010: 178)

46 Lunstrum (2014)

47 Kelly & Ybarra (2016)

48 Büscher & Ramutsindela (2016)

49 Schneider (2022)

50 Fletcher (2010: 178)

51 See Sullivan & Hannis (2016)

52 Sullivan (2019)

53 See discussion in Sullivan (1999: 1, 2003) and Bollig (2016: 772)

(#35, 29.9.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy⁵⁴). While a sense of ownership and (real or perceived) benefits are the preconditions for successful CBNRM, in practice conservancies are unable to realise these ideals for all their members.

5.3.1 Benefits

In the eyes of Nangolo,⁵⁵ an ovaHimba farmer living with his family and livestock in the mountains, Witgat Conservancy represents unfulfilled hopes and promises:

[y]ou see, the conservancy is just like a photo to us. It is like a road sign that tells you about a turn coming up ahead, but the sign never goes to the turn itself. It always remains on the pole where it was put first. The sign itself will never reach the turn. The conservancy is just like that. It is just like a photo we are told belongs to us while it belongs to the bosses themselves, the white people who are eating⁵⁶ from it. (#62, 14.11.2018, Witgat Conservancy)

By contrast, Emma, an ovaHerero farmer from the same area, compares Witgat Conservancy to livestock her family owns and depends on for their lives and livelihood:

[...] the conservancy is our cow that we milk. If that cow wasn't able to give us milk, we would no longer have a livelihood. [...] We say we live from the conservancy because my father [a Community Game Guard (CGG)] fed us from the conservancy until he passed away and now my brother [a Community Rhino Ranger (CRR)] took over and continues to feed us from the conservancy to this day. [...] We were raised by the conservancy. Our conservancy is like our cattle that we drink milk from. (#68, 15.11.2018, Witgat Conservancy)

Although living in the same village, Nangolo and Emma share two strikingly divergent narratives about the nature of the conservancy, their perceived ownership over it, and the extent of benefits they derive from it: the conservancy is like a misleading road sign to one and a life-saving, paternalistic cow to another. This experiential gap has been a consistent theme throughout my fieldwork. Every new encounter with a community area resident was like throwing a loaded dice that had only two sides. Local people seemed to either love or despise their conservancy, although there was a tendency towards the latter. Individuals who do not benefit are acutely aware of the distributional injustice, as expressed by a Damara/!Nūkhoe farmer:

[w]e feel angry and unhappy because we don't benefit. The main purpose of the conservancy was to bring benefits to us, assist us in times of need, and give us money when they are selling wild animals. But look at us, we are dying of thirst. They should drill boreholes and bring water closer to us. But the Government and those people of the conservancy are eating the money while we are just left. I am getting angry when I speak about these things. (#55, 18.10.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

Such narratives are not surprising. In a study of local perceptions towards poaching in a conservancy in Namibia's north-east Zambezi region, Kahler and Gore⁵⁷ found that 75% of survey respondents (n = 56) did not think benefits from wildlife were distributed equally. Based on a case study of a conservancy close to my fieldwork area, Schnegg and Kiaka concluded that 'the conservancy has

54 The names of the four Kunene conservancies studied—*Welwitschia*, *Mopane*, *Witgat*, and *Camelthorn*—are pseudonyms to protect participants' identities. I selected these pseudonyms as they reflect some of the most prominent plant and tree species in the study area, as well as the names that local people commonly use to refer to them. Whilst I selected these pseudonyms for their apparent ease and neutrality, there is always a risk that changing place names might be locally perceived as political, especially in the ethnically and linguistically diverse Kunene region with its historical experience of oppression, in-migration, and related fears of loss of place and culture (see Sullivan 2003). I want to emphasise that no political meaning is attached to the selection of pseudonyms here.

55 All interviews are number coded (#1–99) and all names of interview participants are pseudonymised to ensure anonymity and protect local informants.

56 In otjiHerero the verb *okuria* means both 'to eat' and 'to benefit'. I discuss these meanings further in Section 5.4 on conservancy capture and the 'politics of the belly'.

57 (2015: 54)

made #Khoadi //Hôas a better place for elephants as well as for some people'.⁵⁸ They criticised the fact that the largest part of the revenue, some 84%, did not stay with the conservancy or translate into community returns, 'but goes to enterprises in Windhoek or abroad and to the state'. They argued that this immense distributional injustice, 'experienced by almost all inhabitants', leads to frustration, grief, powerlessness, and despair.⁵⁹ At a national level, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) and the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) note that the biggest governance challenges are financial mismanagement and a failure on the part of 'conservancy elites' to engage the wider membership.⁶⁰

5.3.2 Ownership

The perception and actual distribution of benefits is closely linked to local experiences of devolved ownership over wildlife. To the extent that the state grants ownership rights to rural communities and maintains the authority to (de-)gazette conservancies, i.e. grant and revoke their status as a recognised community organisation, the paternalistic relation with the conservancy may be extended to the State. Friedman⁶¹ even argues that paternalism is a 'structuring structure'⁶² in Namibia that mediates state-local relations. The following account by Hosea, an ovaHerero farmer and senior manager with a wildlife monitoring NGO, seems to support the paternalism interpretation:

[m]e as a Namibian and the area I am working in is where I am born and, I mean, the rhino [*Diceros bicornis bicornis*] conservation and the conservation itself is very important to me, yeah, because it's like goats in my kraal. So, your own goats, who must look after them if it is not yourself? So, I allowed myself to look after this wildlife because it belongs to me. [...] I mean, I know it belongs to anybody; anybody actually benefits from rhinos, but I mean it's actually a property of the Government. [...] So, the Government is like the main umbrella, or the mother, and we are the kid; or we are children. So, you know, definitely, if your parents send you out to look after something or to take care of something, you won't refuse to do it. So, the Government allowed us to look after the wildlife in western Kunene. (#97, 16.2.2019)

Sense of ownership over wildlife, perceived benefits, and internalisation of paternalism seem to be linked. Those who benefit directly from community conservation, like Hosea, the game guards, and the rangers, or indirectly, like Emma above, have a strong sense of ownership and accept responsibility for the protection of wildlife. They also subscribe to a paternalistic hierarchy where the government and/or the conservancy sits at the top and local residents at the bottom. In these cases, the interplay of neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities successfully produces two novel, overlapping subject positions. On the one hand, the conservancy programme neatly integrates them into the market. Instead of being "only" subsistence farmers, they are also in "regular", salaried employment on which they depend for their livelihoods and which may even contribute to capitalist production. For example, they usually use their income from conservation to increase the number of livestock they have. If they do not have enough children or relatives to herd them, they often employ marginalised wage labourers from either side of the Namibia-Angola border. More than just neoliberal subjects who have been moulded into market-friendly behaviours by structural incentives, some communal area residents might even be considered "capitalistic" in the sense that they own a limited means of production, i.e. livestock, and become employers for whom labour is a cost that needs to be kept low to maximise profit. On the other hand, they accepted their devolved ownership and responsibility for the sustainable management, use, and protection of wildlife. They ostensibly internalised related norms and values, like the valorisation of wildlife

58 Schnegg & Kiaka (2018: 110)

59 *Ibid.*

60 NACSO (2018: 55)

61 (2014[2011]: 23–5)

62 Bourdieu (1999)

and a moral ethic in which wildlife needs to be cared for. Through the interplay of neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities, then, the conservancy programme successfully produces both neoliberal and environmental subjects.

Furthermore, in situations where the diffusion of neoliberal environmentality among a community is relatively advanced and an influential or large proportion of members have accepted the narrative of communal ownership and benefits, disciplinary modes of environmentality may be stimulated and spread more easily. In other words, within the conservancy model, neoliberal environmentalities (aiming to produce neoliberal subjects) promote disciplinary environmentalities which subsequently aim to produce environmental subjects. For example, although Uahaverako, an ovaHimba resident in Camelthorn conservancy, does not necessarily feel like she owns wildlife and is sceptical about the conservation of game—especially dangerous animals like elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) and lions (*Panthera leo*)—she feels she is socially coerced into accepting the communal ownership and protection narrative:

[t]he animals were accepted. You are told under the trees [meetings] that the community has accepted the animals. How am I able to escape that [decision] while I am part of the community? So, I am supposed to say that they are mine too. Would you say that they are not mine and run away? (#79, 17.11.2018, Camelthorn Conservancy)

The external, neoliberal incentive and its narrative around communal ownership and sustainable use have become disciplinary. Having grown up in a time when subsistence hunting—arguably also a form of sustainable use—was common, Uahaverako would not normally agree to the new conservancy rules and norms communicated to members during meetings. Yet, it is her fear of deviance and the potential social repercussions that discipline her. Although she is one of the oldest residents in her village, she feels she would no longer be accepted and would have to leave the community were she not to subjectify herself to the new norms. Uahaverako is a strong and pragmatic woman. She might say that she supports conservation in order not to be troubled, but she has evidently not been fully internally subjugated into an environmental subject position as envisioned by a disciplinary environmentality.

Moreover, the diffusion of different environmentalities and related subject positions is as patchy as the local experiences of ownership and benefits are non-universal. In fact, my perception is that community area residents across these four Kunene Region conservancies more often socially re-construct and resist conservancies' environmentalities than subjecting to them. Many people felt they receive few benefits, understanding the ownership incentive more as rhetoric or a "trick" played by the government to convince them to protect wildlife:

[w]e have been given wildlife to herd [...] it's like you were given a shop to take care of and sell goods in the absence of the owner. (#76, 16.11.2018, Camelthorn Conservancy)

[t]hey will use that word [communal ownership] because if they don't use that word the wildlife won't have any herders [protectors]. If these people [CGGs/CRRs] don't get paid, who will take the risk of walking in the thorns for free? (#51, 12.10.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

This experiential discrepancy in comparison to those perceiving ownership and receiving benefits is fuelled by legal and policy ambiguity. As suggested in the introduction, this is partly a result of competing perspectives within the environment ministry regarding the extent of decentralisation and conflicting communication received by communities.⁶³ As communal land formally remains under state ownership, some officials administratively contested conservancies' ownership of wildlife (conferred to them under the 1996 Nature Conservation Amendment Act), insisting that communities cannot own wildlife found on state-owned land; although a legal opinion sought from the Office of the Attorney General confirmed that 'conservancy committees do in fact have

63 Jones & Murphree (2001: 54)

ownership of huntable game'.⁶⁴ Given Namibia's colonial and apartheid history, the political currency of (real or perceived) ownership of wildlife must not be underestimated, with the state careful to emphasise full devolution of ownership. For example, the *National Policy on Community Based Natural Resource Management* of 2013 asserts that once a conservancy has been gazetted, 'ownership over wild game and use rights over other game species will be given to communal area residents'.⁶⁵ In practice, however, the MEFT retains ultimate ownership and control over wildlife: it not only has the power to de-gazette conservancies but also sets the quotas for how many animals can be harvested per species (see Chapter 14). Without an approved quota, conservancies are not permitted to use or sell what is supposedly 'their' wildlife. In his analysis of the new 'commons' created by conservancies, anthropologist Michael Bollig⁶⁶ explains the status quo of ownership like this:

[...] communities gain limited management and transfer rights over game and land. Ownership rights in both instances remain with the state, and the rights devolved to communities have to be negotiated annually (in the case of game quotas) or at less frequent intervals (in the case of land rentals). [...] The natural resources "captured" under this regime are moved from a state-owned phase into a community-owned phase, are then commoditized, and finally become privately owned.⁶⁷

At best, communal ownership can be described as limited and temporary. Despite assertive conservation and development discourses that never use such adjectives to qualify the extent of ownership, communal area residents understand very well that they do not fully own wildlife:

[w]e have to go and ask for permission. [...] It is not ownership. It is just a joke. [...] Yours [ownership] is just to protect. If you want to eat, ask to get permission. (#45, 10.10.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

[i]t is like they say: we are a bunch of stupid people. The government can tell the community that the things [wildlife] belong to them but they will not benefit from the things. [...] I am not interested in taking care of it [wildlife] because I get no benefit from it. (#25, 23.9.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

This perceived deception of communities by the Government is further aggravated by the fact that limited and temporary "ownership" of wildlife is only devolved for certain species of huntable game in north-west Namibia, e.g. kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*), oryx (*Oryx gazella*), springbok (*Antidorcas masupialis*), and zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*). Most high-value species like elephants, rhinos, lions, and leopards (*Panthera pardus*) remain exclusively owned and controlled by the state. This situation adds to the perceived dishonesty of the ownership narrative and the overall injustice of conservation-community or government-local relations:

[l]ike, for me, let me put it this way, the government says the diamonds must not be touched because these stones have money, they are worth a lot of money. And then the same with the rhinos. They say they belong to them because the rhinos also bring in money. Where are the rhino horns which they cut off? Where did they take them? Why don't they say, take some [horns] and go and sell them so that we can also live from it?! But then they say, no, these ones [high-value game] are for them [government]; and then the baboons which are living under the trees here, the local people, the ordinary people, they must just take the leftovers of what is there. (#59, 19.10.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

The comparison here between diamonds and rhinos is telling because, in contrast to wildlife, there is no ambiguity regarding the ownership of precious stones. Further, despite the empowerment rhetoric of CBNRM, the farmer in this quote likens the treatment of communities to baboons: powerless, dehumanised recipients of arbitrary government sponsorship and regulation. Whereas the South African colonial administration was largely indifferent to the ways in which "natives" in

64 Cited in Jones (2010: 117)

65 MET (2013: 1)

66 (2016: 774)

67 In the final stage of this "capturing" process, certain wildlife species may become privately owned to be hunted and used by individual community members (e.g. through an "own-use" permit) or by commercial operators.

the former homelands defended themselves and their livestock from “vermin”, including lions,⁶⁸ the post-apartheid government is regarded as having taken back and recentralised control, rather than decentralising it through conservancies.

The lack of ownership and benefits, and the deception and oppression perceived by some communal area residents, contrast strongly with the perceived empowerment of others. But how predictably does this experiential discrepancy produce different degrees of environmental subjectification? In other words, do most people who benefit also “environmentalise”, i.e. become ‘environmental subjects’ who intrinsically care about the environment?⁶⁹ Conversely, do those who do not benefit automatically resist conservation? What are the effects of divergent local experiences of conservancies and the limited reach of neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities? How do communities govern conservancies in return and how do they negotiate distributional inequities?

5.4 Conservancy capture and the “politics of the belly”: Frictions between global and local environmentalities

Based on the preceding discussion of local experiences of ownership and benefits as the pivots of conservancies’ global environmentalities, one might be tempted to accept the conservation dictum that “those who benefit also care”. The problem with this interpretation is that it constructs recipients as passive receivers of global governance logics. To caricature: insert incentives and the stick into any cultural context and at least those who get their bellies and pockets filled will forever act in conservation- and market-friendly ways. In the latter part of this chapter, I show that local experiences of neoliberal incentives like ownership and benefits are, in fact, only a limited predictor of local responses to conservation. The extent to which local people cooperate or resist conservation, or the extent to which they assimilate or reject global environmentalities, fundamentally depends on local desires and practices and the kind of social institutions they shape.

To put it more sociologically, local responses do not only depend on the global structures that conservancies aim to localise, but on the local structures and agencies through which they operate on the ground. In the context of Namibian conservancies, I argue that this friction between global and local ways of seeing and being in the world has produced a novel, hybrid environmentality characterised by what Jean-François Bayart calls ‘the politics of the belly’. The politics of the belly is both ‘a regime of economic accumulation and social inequality’ and ‘a “moral economy”’ produced by the interactions between Africa and the rest of the world.⁷⁰ Following Foucault, Bayart specifically conceptualises the politics of the belly as a hybrid governmentality which mediates ‘between the techniques of domination over others and techniques of the self’.⁷¹ Like other forms of institutional (neo-)patrimonialism, patronage, clientelism, or corruption, participation is near-universal due to the network character of the politics of the belly, as well as its principles of reciprocity and partial redistribution of wealth: ‘all actors—rich and poor—participate in the world of network’.⁷²

68 While Indigenous Africans were prohibited from hunting wildlife and persecuting predators without official permission, it was effectively tolerated if local people defended themselves and their livestock from lions and other predators considered “vermin”. This often included the killing of lions through plant-based poisons, spears, and bows and arrows. In one instance, in the 1940s, the Government even supplied rifles and ammunition to the traditional authorities at Sesfontein to enable the community to deal with marauding lions themselves (see Chapter 13). Despite Indigenous Africans’ persecution of predators at the time, their restricted ability to do so should be seen in the context of racialised regulations and apartheid ideologies which empowered white settler farmers—and supported their removal of predators from their land—and further marginalised black farmers (Heydinger 2019: 58–80, 140–48).

69 cf. Agrawal (2005: 162)

70 Bayart (2009: xlix–l)

71 Foucault cited in Bayart (2009: xlvii)

72 *Ibid.*, p. 235

Nevertheless, to the extent that these networks are founded upon inequality, they also reproduce inequality.⁷³

Before examining in detail how the politics of the belly play out at the local level within the membership of conservancies, it is important to highlight again the unequal power relations and parallel processes of enrichment unfolding between “local” patrimonial networks and “global” networks of State, international NGOs, and the private sector. The real “belly” filled through CBNRM structures is to be found at the level of Namibian and international NGOs, consultancies, and tourism operators, subsidised through major donors such as USAID, the World Bank (WB), KfW and WWF. This structural inequality was built into CBNRM from the start: the policy was driven largely by expatriates and white staff working in the environment ministry since before Independence, many of whom later found employment in the developing tourism industry and/or as CBNRM consultants. In contrast, in the early years of CBNRM, local people were actively discouraged from applying for formal Permission to Occupy Land (PTO) leases that would enable them to participate as entrepreneurs in the growing post-apartheid tourism sector.⁷⁴ As conservancies are argued to enable ‘*land acquisition for conservation* in the non-formal sense’,⁷⁵ they in practice maintain the interests of conservationists, hunters, tour operators, investors, consultants, donors, and tourists.⁷⁶ NGO and consultancy services are a major part of CBNRM business. In addition, most economic transactions derived from tourism in Namibia are controlled by large tour operators, with power concentrated at national and international levels.⁷⁷

Communal area residents, however, remain marginalised from tourism activities and incomes even within their conservancies, due to limited property rights, legal pluralism, public and private land appropriation, limited community capacity, and, as a result, often unequal co-management agreements.⁷⁸ Recent research confirms the limited “trickling down” of CBNRM income, both in Kunene and Zambezi regions, with about 16–20% of total tourism turnover captured by conservancies.⁷⁹ When I speak of conservancy capture at the local level in the following sections, therefore, it should be clear that what is being “captured” by communal area residents, and what they often fiercely fight over and negotiate through the politics of the belly, are the scraps left after processes of resource appropriation and capital accumulation by the conservation-tourism-development-security nexus. The smaller “bellies” of local elite and ordinary networks discussed in the following sections are thus a direct product of the larger bellies of global networks, as well as the highly unequal global-local interactions that maintain them.

5.4.1 The smaller “bellies” of local elite networks

Conservancies are a prime location of the mediation between the global and the local. As they represent the social institutions which contribute to the production and transmission of particular environmental subjectivities, they can be considered as frictional spaces in which the politics of the belly plays out. I argue that one prevalent and especially impactful articulation of the politics of the belly is when kin-based, patrimonial networks of local elites seize control of the conservancy and its limited benefit flows, what I call ‘conservancy capture’. An unemployed ovaHimba shares her account of capture in Camelthorn conservancy:

[w]e have headmen, the committee, the chairperson, the people who are on top [...] Look, we have lodges and campsites [...] The selected few who have connections to the people collecting the money

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 269

⁷⁴ Sullivan (2002: 158–59)

⁷⁵ Jones (1999: 47, emphasis added); also discussed in Sullivan (2006: 115)

⁷⁶ Sullivan (2002: 165, 2023)

⁷⁷ Lapeyre (2011a)

⁷⁸ Lapeyre (2011b: 311–12, 2011c: 226–17)

⁷⁹ NACSO (2015), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), Kalvelage *et al.* (2020)

from tourists are the ones who are eating the money. The rest of us who are not committee members or headmen do not see the money. We don't benefit. [...] The thing that hurts me the most in this conservancy is when there are employment opportunities. For example, these people just say, let's employ the child of the headman or that child of a person already working for the conservancy. Now, look, my mother and my father are unemployed. But they continue to employ members of specific families and children of those who are already employed. They ignore us. They don't take other people into consideration and that is painful to me. (#78, 17.11.2018, Camelthorn Conservancy)

In the following excerpt, the headman referred to in the preceding quote acknowledges that he is both complicit and complacent in the conservancy's capture, as he benefits indirectly through the employment of his relatives and fails to take action to change the circumstances. He confirms that capture is a challenge, although not a genuine concern to him:

I told you that the committee is constantly changing. [...] When the sitting committee is removed, you are told that they have been mismanaging and not doing their job. [...] When you elect the new committee, you hope they will bring change and do a better job. But they are just doing the same. They just do the same the previous committee was doing. Maybe the people on the committee wrote a law that they are following but not sharing with the community [laughs]. As long as my child is employed and getting paid, I can get bread from it. So, we just sit here, even though the bosses are eating the money. (#76, 16.11.2018, Camelthorn Conservancy)

The headman alludes here to an unwritten law regarding benefits. In fact, people often talk about a "law of eating", which basically means that whoever gains access to the benefit flows of the conservancy is expected or even entitled to make use of these opportunities. In *otjiHerero*, *okuria* means both "to eat" and "to benefit". When people speak figuratively of "eating money", they refer to the illegitimate yet widespread practice of appropriating funds for themselves and their patrimonial networks. They are in fact talking explicitly of a politics of the belly. This is the very opposite of what CBNRM is supposed to be about yet, according to participant accounts, it is one of the key themes of conservancy governance. As an *ovaHerero* CGG states:

[t]here were complaints from the community that the money is being eaten by the people who are on the committee. [...] The people whom they selected [...] For example, they selected you, me, and one other person, and when we go to the bank together to withdraw money, *pheeeeeewwww* [swiping his fingers over his mouth while blowing out air to indicate that the money is gone with the wind], we finish it. You see? That problem is real. [...] The day might come we end up shooting each other with firearms. (#60, 13.11.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

The politics of the belly encompasses virtually all kinds of benefits, from cash, through employment, to hunting. In at least two of the conservancies studied, there were several accounts of systematic over-hunting implicating the highest levels of conservancy management:

Look, mis-use, for all these years, the men have been hunting more than the allocated quota. (#26, 24.9.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

Look, it is a bit difficult to tell, but you can see that they were fiddling with the numbers. They had close relationships with the [former conservancy chairperson⁸⁰] and they used to manipulate the papers and shoot more. It is a bit difficult to explain. They would tell you that they had shot the number of animals on the quota, but the next day they would come again and shoot more. It seemed they never reached the number of animals they had to shoot. (#33, 27.9.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

These statements reveal senior representatives of conservancies to be central players in systematic, illegal schemes of killing wildlife for commercial gain by shooting and selling more game than permitted under their government-approved quotas.⁸¹ These narratives were further supported by

⁸⁰ Name removed to protect informant's identity.

⁸¹ To provide some context, the environment ministry issues annually variable game harvesting quotas to each conservancy. The conservancy committee then decides what portion of the allocated quota is to be utilised for own-use hunting, shoot-and-sell, or trophy hunting. Under the shoot-and-sell system, conservancies, in partnership with

informal conversations with a professional hunter with decades of experience in the region. In my fieldnotes (FN 16.6.2018), I recount his account as following:

[h]e claimed to have seen “refrigerator trucks filled to the top” with game; springbok, zebras and oryx lying on the ground. Some of the biggest trophies were apparently being “shot for butcheries from Swakopmund to Opuwo”. These “hunting parties” weren’t shooting animals professionally, according to prescribed hunting rules, but they were shooting from their vehicles; and they would leave injured animals, which they had failed to kill, to the predators. That way, a lot more game was killed than the quotas provided for. [Trophy hunter] reminisced about the time when wildlife along the route from Palmwag to Sesfontein was abundant. According to [trophy hunter], at one point the conservancy claimed to have counted an unbelievably high number of springbok and extrapolated that there were 80,000 animals in the area. As a result, it received a quota of 12,000 for three years. The manipulation of quotas and the subsequent, unprofessional killing of game led to the decimation of wildlife in the area. While people blame the severe drought for the large-scale decreases in game numbers, for [trophy hunter] it is evident that the local people are responsible.

It is important not to accept this account uncritically and make communities a scapegoat for the decline in plains game. In fact, it might even be useful for outside professional trophy hunters to be dismissive of local people’s practices to gain an advantage in the competition for coveted hunting permits. Nevertheless, when local and outside testimonies are read together, it seems that conservancy capture and the politics of the belly are not only related to financial mismanagement but extend to natural resource management (NRM) and can undermine conservation goals directly. As conservancy “captors” become focused on exploiting business opportunities and maximising profits, the foundation of community-based conservation is at risk. The imbalance between business and NRM functions at management level is further experienced by ordinary members in the form of an increasingly neglected and slowly disintegrating CGG system, as observed by an ovaHerero farmer and an employee in the hunting industry respectively:

[a] bad thing I noticed is that our game guards don’t go out on patrol anymore. [...] In the past, my grandfather and others always patrolled regularly to places like [remote springs]⁸² and elsewhere. Today, the game guards only receive their information from herders, even when a gemsbok dies in the river nearby. They don’t walk around in the bush anymore. (#67, 17.11.2018, Witgat Conservancy)

Yeah, but they [CGGs] are no longer working. They just stay at their homes and receive salaries. [...] They don’t do their job. All of them, they are sitting at their houses and wait for their pay. (#38, 6.10.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

This perception of a disintegrating CGG system was witnessed across all conservancies studied. Some respondents blamed an unfettered politics of the belly, particularly of a younger, more educated local elite who took over the conservancy management from an earlier, often less formally-educated, leadership.

Yet, in contrast to arguments made by Silva and Motzer⁸³ and De Vette and co-authors,⁸⁴ Bollig argues that there is ‘very little evidence for systematic elite capture’: rather than a small, wealthy, and powerful elite, committee members and conservancy managers are not considered to be systematically enriching themselves because of their embeddedness in kinship networks to which they allocate benefits in the form of employment.⁸⁵ While largely agreeing with his assessment, I would, however, maintain that since committee members are able to allocate locally vital benefits, such as employment, tenders, scholarships, meat, and transportation, they do, in fact, constitute

professional hunters, can shoot game species and sell the meat to generate a cash income. In recent years this system has been suspended in most conservancies due to the context of a multi-year drought and related declines in plains game, that were also connected with high offtake levels (see Chapter 3).

82 Place names erased to ensure anonymity.

83 (2015)

84 de Vette *et al.* (2012)

85 Bollig (2016: 785)

‘a small group of powerful people that controls a disproportionate amount of wealth and political power’—Bollig’s own definition of an elite⁸⁶—in the form of benefit flows. In addition, I contend that their actions do reflect attempts at systematic enrichment, if not directly for themselves then at least for their kinship networks, which are traditionally conceived as reciprocal across ovaHerero, ovaHimba, and Damara/!Nūkhoe cultures (and western culture as well) and in which wealth is often shared.⁸⁷ The typical members of conservancy committees are male, between 20 and 40 years of age, finished at least grade 10 or 12, and—whilst without salaried work—are part of a young, educated elite which eagerly seeks to grow their herds.⁸⁸ The latter point is key. As Sullivan explains, in a semi-arid desert environment with frequent localised droughts, a wide, flexible, and reciprocating network of kin is particularly important for pastoralist groups to negotiate access to scarce resources, such as water and grazing.⁸⁹ Capturing a conservancy and directing its benefit flows towards one’s patronage and kinship networks can, therefore, be interpreted as a systematic strategy to guarantee the survival and growth of one’s herd, and thus the accumulation of one’s wealth.

The maximisation of profits and economic growth achieved by local elite networks through conservancy capture at the expense of the wider communities’ rural development, is a prime example of what happens when a neoliberal environmentality diffuses and combines with a local cultural context characterised by patronage and kinship relations. In other words, conservancy capture is the result of the hybridisation of a new, global mode of environmental governance and a deep-rooted local ordering based on reciprocity among patrons, clients, and kin. Across the study’s four conservancies, committee members manifest their rational, economic self-interest as partly neoliberalised subjects by capturing benefit flows and re-directing them to their individual kin networks.⁹⁰ When neoliberal environmentality diffuses across a local cultural context that requires reciprocity and distribution of wealth to one’s kin, the result is the reproduction of global-local inequalities at the local level, i.e. an exacerbation of local-local inequalities within the community. The visibility of distributional injustice across society further cultivates the politics of the belly. Although most people lament the status quo, everyone who gets a chance seems to participate. This is also true for more marginalised local people who are part of less powerful but nonetheless “hungry” networks.

5.4.2 The even smaller “bellies” of ordinary networks

At the community level, the politics of the belly, or the law of eating, is not only evidenced by elite networks’ capture of the conservancy, but also by ordinary members’ continuation of banned livelihood activities, as my conversation with Justus, a farmer in Mopane Conservancy, illustrates:

[f]or example, if someone like me who only has his small house becomes hungry, I usually go around and ask from others who have livestock, but now these people tell me that they don’t have any livestock for me [due to drought]. Would it be better if I stole a goat from these people or a springbok from the wild? Or am I supposed to even walk past a dead springbok?! [...] If you regularly steal a wild animal and you chuck it on the donkey cart, take it to [larger village], and sell it to get wasted [as in drunk], then you are doing a wrong thing. [...] We are all stealing. You even hear that there is corruption at Government-level. They are also stealing. The only problem is when you get caught [everyone laughs]. [...] Now how am I supposed to get my share here [in remote village] [laughs]?! [...] Look, there are people who get employed by the conservancy as a secretary or someone else handling cash, and when they are sent to withdraw money, they steal N\$20,000 [USD 1,500]. Even when they are identified, they are just removed and replaced by other people. [...] Now, how are people who are never able to sit on

86 *Ibid.*

87 cf. Sullivan (2001: 187)

88 Bollig (2016: 784)

89 Sullivan (2001: 187)

90 Shinovene *et al.* (2020); see also Kleinfeld (2019)

the committee or be employed, like the elderly, supposed to eat from the conservancy?! (#57, 18.10.2018, Mopane Conservancy)

Justus relates the widespread continuation of banned livelihood activities directly to the mismanagement and corruption of funds at both conservancy- and state-level. He justifies his illegal behaviour by asserting an entitlement to “his share” which, in the perceived absence of distributional, recognition,⁹¹ and procedural justice,⁹² he can only claim himself. This is another illustrative example of how local people negotiate and resist conservancies’ neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalities. In contrast to conservancy members like Emma, Hosea, or the game guards and rangers cited in Section 5.3 who have successfully turned into environmental subjects, members like Justus resist environmental subjectification by pragmatically continuing to live as they did prior to the onset of community conservation.

But Justus’s narrative and his ostensible escape from the conservancy’s environmentalities also provide hope. Unlike the predatory and harmful resistance by local elite or kinship networks which violate principles of community conservation—such as sustainable use, democratic governance, and equitable benefit sharing—Justus clearly articulates an appreciation of sustainability and social justice. He would only hunt game or pick up a piece from a carcass if he was hungry and unable to acquire meat otherwise. Arguably, his moral compass is intact, for he does not wish to steal a goat from his neighbours but rather takes a springbok ‘from the wild’ which is formally owned by either of two institutions, i.e. the state or the conservancy, perceived by him to be distant and corrupt. His narrative then points to an Indigenous truth environmentality which coexists and struggles with the conservancy’s dominant environmentalities. Rather than subscribing to the conservancy’s novel environmental governance which bans unauthorised harvest of game, local people like Justus maintain their more intrinsic, alternative conceptions of both human-nature and local social relations, i.e. sustainable use and no thievery among neighbours, respectively. Although far from the norm, shimmers of truth environmentalities deeply rooted in people’s identities occasionally gleamed through, as in Jan’s account, an ovaHerero farmer from Witgat Conservancy:

[t]he reason for protecting these animals is [...] because we were born together and we are living alongside them. That little trick of the Government, that story of taking care of the animals because we might benefit from them, only came later. (#61, 14.10.2018, Witgat Conservancy)

Jan’s claim to an essential human-wildlife connection that transcends dualistic ontologies suggests an intrinsic, Indigenous ethic of sustainability. Like Justus, who sees through the empty promises of the conservancy and is largely unaffected by either neoliberal or disciplinary environmentalities, Jan’s articulation of a truth environmentality also entails a propensity to hunt sustainably for his own use and share the spoils with his neighbours:

[t]he way we live together here, this gentleman knows that the springbok is like a goat. Neither of us is protecting these animals. We are just watching out for them not to be wasted. I will tell you honestly: if I go and kill a springbok and tell my friend here, we will just put it into the pot, eat it, and keep quiet about it. (#61, 14.10.2018, Witgat Conservancy)

The representation of these alternative conceptions is important in order to emphasise the limits of dominant environmentalities and local people’s agency in resisting them. At the same time, they should be neither essentialised nor romanticised: they are not only heterogenous and hybridised, but their outcomes are unpredictable and potentially incommensurate with global visions of

91 ‘Recognition (in)justice’ accounts for people’s different epistemological and ontological worldviews. It specifically refers to policies and practices that acknowledge and even promote such worldviews, while avoiding interfering with or altering them (Martin *et al.* 2016). In Namibia’s communal conservancies, recognition justice would acknowledge alternative, intrinsic local perspectives and values towards nature that might conflict with dominant neoliberal environmentalities (Sullivan 2006; Martin *et al.* 2013).

92 Schnegg & Kiaka (2018: 110–13)

conservation, security, and development. The commercial over-hunting by local elites and the continuation of unauthorised subsistence hunting by ordinary community members are testament to the unpredictability and potential undesirability of global-local outcomes.⁹³ But both elite and ordinary articulations of the politics of the belly are forms of resistance that remain hidden. As all community members seek to opportunistically work the system to their maximum advantage, they actively obscure their own malpractices, even if they lament those of others. As resourceful ‘organic intellectuals’,⁹⁴ they know exactly how to exploit their conservancies to maximise their claims to status, privilege, and benefits, i.e. ‘brokered autonomy’.⁹⁵ Speaking to the Traditional Authority (TA) counsellor cited in Section 5.3.2, who felt that the government treated communities as if they were ‘a bunch of stupid people’, in reality, it seemed more like communities were taking the government and conservation for a ride. As the counsellor clarified: ‘[w]e are acting as if we were protecting the things [wildlife], but, in fact, we are not protecting them’ (#25, 23.9.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy). To an extent, their dishonest relation and reciprocal deception serves a purpose for both conservation and communities. On the one hand, the government receives communities’ “lip service” to conservation, which it requires for the secure commodification of natural resources on communal land and the marketisation of Namibia’s celebrated conservation-development-tourism nexus. On the other hand, communities receive associated benefits and, at the same time, are able to continue to defy governmental logics without being held accountable.

To be clear, this neoliberal *laissez-faire* approach is fundamentally unjust as it empowers only local elites who are already in positions of power. Elite networks exploit and accumulate with impunity, while ordinary residents who kill an antelope for the pot are regularly fined or even imprisoned. Local elites are essentially given *carte blanche* to capture conservancies to benefit their kin-based patrimonial networks, while community members at the periphery of these networks are further marginalised. Moreover, the accountability gap is not only problematic because it entrenches local inequalities, but it effectively transfers frictions between global and local environmentalities to the community level where they have the potential to develop into protracted intra-community conflicts.

5.5 The accountability gap: An unfettered politics of the belly in conservancies?

The politics of the belly and other forms of patrimonial governance can be considered a legitimate form of authority or belief, rather than a pathology.⁹⁶ In fact, Bayart emphasises that the politics of the belly has ‘absolutely no normative connotation’.⁹⁷ Arguably, conservancies’ hybrid form of governance permits the politics of the belly to simultaneously enable and debilitate local conservation, development, and, above all, empowerment efforts. Nevertheless, across my study area, communal area residents consistently complained about conservancy capture and protested the distributional injustice of the politics of the belly. There was clearly an accountability gap, as NACSO attests:

[f]requently there is a lack of willingness or ability to enforce decisions and to deal with bad practices. Financial mismanagement and corruption is an issue in point. Many committees have not dealt quickly and effectively with cases of corruption, and police support has not always been forthcoming when requested. [...] There has also been a tendency for committees to recycle themselves, without fresh

93 Also see Vaughan *et al.* (2004)

94 Cavanagh & Benjaminsen (2015: 730)

95 Tilly (2004: 14)

96 Pitcher *et al.* (2009: 149)

97 Bayart (2009: lxxvi)

blood coming in. This enables the same people to build up power bases by representing the committee to outsiders and government, and to receive sitting allowances.⁹⁸

One reason why “eating” committees are not simply replaced is the near-universal participation in the politics of the belly, combined with patronage networks organised along kin and ethnic lines that successfully mobilise their support bases to obstruct any challenges by opposing groups (also see Chapters 6 and 7). I argue further, however, that the main reason why conservancy capture persists, despite widespread discontent and resistance, is a somewhat naïve and idealistic notion that the community itself must hold their committees accountable. While commendable for its empowering spirit, in practice, the principle of leaving rural communities to resolve governance issues entirely by themselves favours those already in positions of power and entrenches local inequalities. Is it really fair to expect subsistence farmers with limited formal education (if any) to hold a new, better educated and sometimes predatory elite to account for complex institutional and financial processes? A conversation with Dimo, a local ovaHerero chief and long-term NGO advisor on conservancy governance, made these dynamics remarkably clear:

I think, it depends on the Government, how strong they will be regarding the issue. [...] The current national policy of conservancies clearly states that the members must hold committees accountable. You understand there? They have to hold the committee accountable. But imagine a guy like [chairperson of Welwitschia Conservancy]. [Chairperson], uhm, we know him as a gangster. He is a guy who [...] he is a very dangerous guy, you know him. He grew up in towns: Namibia, South Africa, travelling there. The guy does not work. But what type of cars is he driving every time [expensive 4x4 vehicles]? So, a poor community member, you are expecting that poor member to hold that person accountable? (#98, 17.2.2019, Mopane Conservancy)

The administrative officer of Camelthorn Conservancy agrees that pitting ordinary members against powerful, educated committees is an unfair match. He feels left alone by the Government:

[t]here is a problem with the illiteracy among our people. [...] We are just waiting for the committee because we cannot organise a meeting ourselves. We have given that authority to the committee. I don't know what we can do. We asked the committee to call the meeting but they don't. We requested the Government to help but they remain quiet. That is why I say that the Government is somehow hiding something. Or, why else wouldn't it look into these issues? Next year is their [committee's] third and final year. All these past years they never held a meeting. (#80, 18.11.2018, Camelthorn Conservancy)

For the Government and NGOs, intervention in conservancy governance is a risk. Arguably, they have little to gain and much to lose. NGOs have no formal mandate to challenge a committee that was supposedly democratically elected by a conservancy's membership. If NGOs intervened, they might risk forfeiting their legitimacy; although there's a certain irony here that the same NGOs that proposed conservancies and facilitated their proliferation through Namibia's communal areas should not be accountable for their outcomes. While the Government formally has an oversight role and the right to remove a committee and/or de-gazette a conservancy under certain circumstances, by default, it would risk becoming embroiled in local politics and antagonising a powerful local network. In the absence of outside intervention, the community is left to challenge elite networks itself. This can lead to the formation of factions within a community with different networks vying for local hegemony. The intra-community conflicts further reinforce patron-client relations associated with the politics of the belly as networks often seek to mobilise supporters and increase their relative strength vis-à-vis other networks.

Hendrik, an outspoken Riemvasmaaker member of Welwitschia Conservancy, even claims to have been directly threatened by senior committee members, implying that should he continue to commit “libel” against them he might have a road accident in the future:

98 NACSO (2016: 25)

[t]hey [committee members] are threatening if you go and report them, they say they will find you on the road. The man will apparently kill you. [...] I was personally threatened and then I decided if it is like that then each one must live his own life. I on my own and he on his own. (#38, 06.10.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

While this is a serious allegation, having stayed with Hendrik for several days at his farm, I have no reason to question the authenticity and truthfulness of his story. At the very least, considering Dimo's account of Welwitschia's chairperson as a "gangster" (interviewee #98), it speaks to the possibility of physical violence in the context of conservancy capture. Threats of violence and violence itself are then part of community-level disciplining that prevents critical voices from being raised, listened to, and acted upon. Sometimes they even risk reinforcing social, economic, and ethnic cleavages with the potential for severe intra-community social conflict, with some respondents even comparing inequitable governance of conservancies to new forms of apartheid.⁹⁹ The consequence can be local resignation, a sense of powerlessness, and ultimately withdrawal:

[w]hat will it help if I get angry? You will just be angry and hurt your heart. I just lead my life. You will never go and approach them [people at the top]. What will you discuss with them? (#37, 06.10.2018, Welwitschia Conservancy)

To be clear, communal area residents are not passive and/or helpless bystanders. Analyses of patrimonial governance often wrongly construct people in such contexts as both unable to adhere to principles of liberal democracy and too passive in demanding accountability.¹⁰⁰ Instead, local people in north-west Namibia are pragmatic survivors who participate and protest in the politics of the belly depending on their opportunities. They demand accountability but struggle to hold powerful networks to account, or to shift the balance of power in favour of their own networks. Some may resign because they have been angry and frustrated for too long.

It appears that a major limitation of conservancies' institutional architecture is its reliance on an unbridled neoliberal environmentality: a mode of strictly market-based environmental governance which includes neither an external, structural incentive against capture—such as a credible threat of government intervention, nor sufficient space for non-neoliberal environmentalities to meaningfully develop Indigenous, social justice oriented environmentalities. As Foucault asserts: '[n]eoliberalism should not be identified with *laissez-faire*, but rather with permanent vigilance, activity and intervention'.¹⁰¹ Since the market is an 'artificial construct' that was 'actively created' and needs to be 'constantly maintained',¹⁰² to the extent that conservancies are primarily based on a neoliberal environmentality promoting an unrestrained market logic, they need to be contained through re-regulation. Given the adverse outcomes of conservancy capture for both nature and people, it seems that those governing community conservation in Namibia—government, NGOs, committees, and ordinary members—have either forgotten or are severely neglecting their crucial roles in accountability and regulation. When formulating her principles for common pool resource management institutions, Ostrom already forewarned that:

[p]owerful individuals who stand to gain from the current situation, while others lose, may block efforts by the less powerful to change the rules of the game. Such groups may need some form of external assistance to break out of the perverse logic of their situation.¹⁰³

99 Friedman (2014[2011]: 76-80) also observed new forms of apartheid, or "neo-apartheid", in the former "homeland" of "Kaokoland". Focussing on the social relations between Namibia's dominant Ovambo ethnic group and the Kunene Region's ovaHerero and ovaHimba, he discusses how "Kaokolanders" often feel that their region is structurally neglected and discriminated against in relation to the allocation of resources, e.g. development and employment. He argues that for many people today the discrimination and inequality among Indigenous groups is perceived more severely than the apartheid under South African rule (also see Chapters 4 and 16).

100 Pitcher *et al.* (2009: 149)

101 Foucault (2008: 132)

102 Fletcher (2010: 173)

103 Ostrom (1990: 21)

The expectation that communities must self-enforce is like asking a mafia family to hold its godfather to account.

This exacerbation of intra-community social conflict can, at least partly, be explained by the introduction through CBNRM of a neoliberal environmentalism to the local political economy. This neoliberal environmentalism is embodied, in hybridised form, in the politics of the belly and, as such, reinvented by local agencies for their own purposes, i.e. the maximisation of advantages and benefits to one's patrimonial, kin-based networks. As this section has illustrated, however, the hybridisation of neoliberal environmentalism through communal area residents does not necessarily make it more socially just. In contrast, it has the potential to increase inequalities and, thus, intensify local cleavages and intra-community social conflict. This situation further reinforces my earlier argument about the need for additional oversight, support, mediation and, if necessary, re-regulation of conservancies. As forewarned by both Foucault in 2008 (originally 1978–1979) and Ostrom in 1990, if inequality is to be opposed, neoliberal environmentalism has to be kept in check, irrespective of whether it works through global or local networks.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that when conservancies' global neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalisms work through local agencies, they produce a hybrid environmentalism characterised by the politics of the belly. I showed how local people experience the pivots of the conservancy system, i.e. the structural incentives of ownership and benefits, emphasising how both neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalisms—as forms of environmental governance—interact to successfully produce both market- and conservation-friendly subjects. The diffusion of environmentalisms and the production of desired subject positions is limited, however, because of unequal benefit distribution; as well as partial and temporary ownership rights experienced by communal area residents as mere rhetoric to turn goat and cattle herders into “environmentalised” herders of state-owned wildlife.

While there is no doubt that some conservancy members receive benefits, have experiences of ownership, and become neoliberal and/or environmental subjects, I have shown that there is significant experiential discrepancy. The majority of local people do not have experiences of ownership, and many do not receive benefits. But no matter how ambiguous, limited, and temporary the rights, or how uneven the benefits, communities are still in charge of conservation on the ground. By seeing through incentive mechanisms and rhetoric, they demystify environmental governance and re-negotiate it on their own terms through the politics of the belly.

No doubt my critical, Foucauldian framing will raise eyebrows among Namibian conservation and development practitioners. While institutional challenges are widely acknowledged, few question the internationally celebrated and locally praised conservancy programme: the associated silencing of critical questioning is itself a form of disciplining.¹⁰⁴ After all, conservancies are closely linked to the restoration of Indigenous rights and national reconciliation. Nobody argues with that, and neither do I. Indeed, let me be clear that, despite my critical framing, I am a staunch supporter of conservancies. As an idea and a vision, I wholeheartedly believe in them. But as an institution and a socio-political reality, my research experience indicated that they are in urgent need of reform. They still reflect the neoliberal idealism of the 1980–1990s without having recognised its local consequences in the 21st century. They are institutionally rooted in the past and somewhat lost in the present; long derailed but still going. There is a need to refocus on empowerment, not conservation and “development”; and to refocus on people's experiences and everyday realities to champion not neoliberal and disciplinary environmentalisms, but ‘democratic, egalitarian, and non-hierarchical forms of natural resource management in which local people enjoy a genuinely participatory (if not

104 Koot *et al.* (2023)

self-mobilising) role'.¹⁰⁵ Conservancies should also no longer displace, but instead promote, 'truth' or 'liberation' environmentalities that reflect Indigenous beliefs, intrinsic values, and non-dualistic ontologies, rather than global neoliberal environmentalities. The question that lingers is how much of that "truth" remains after three decades of neoliberal environmental governance.

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¹⁰⁵ Fletcher (2010: 178)

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6. The politics of authority, belonging and mobility in disputing land in southern Kaoko

Elsemi Olwage

Abstract

The focus of this chapter concerns the interwoven politics of authority, belonging and mobility in shaping “customary” land-rights in southern Kaoko. I argue that ancestral land-rights need to be understood as a social and political rather than a historical fact, and one which is relationally established and re-established in practice, over time, and at different scales. The chapter draws on research conducted from 2014 to 2016 comprising a situational analysis of a land and grazing dispute in southern Kaoko, in and around Ozondundu Conservancy. It shows how persons and groups were navigating overlapping institutions of land governance during an extended drought period, in a context shaped by regional pastoral migrations and mobility. This case material illuminates how conservancies and state courts have become key technologies mobilised to re-establish the interwoven authority and land-rights of particular groups of people. This dynamic is especially the case, given a post-Independence shift towards more centralised state-driven land governance, amidst deeply rooted political fragmentation in most places, and land-grabbing by some migrating pastoralists. The chapter concludes by arguing for the importance of engaging socially legitimate occupation and use rights, and decentralised practices of land governance, towards co-producing “communal” tenure and land-rights between the state and localities. This emphasis is critical for evidence-based decision-making and jurisprudence in a legally pluralistic context.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on a situational analysis¹ of a land and grazing dispute during a multiyear drought in the semi-arid communal rangelands of Namibia’s northern Kunene Region, also known as Kaoko. Whereas average rainfall between 1998 and 2011 was estimated at 377.2 mm per year, during 2012–2014 a reduction of 45.8% was observed for the region.² For Kaoko’s predominantly pastoral and agro-pastoral societies, this meant not only widespread cattle losses but also extensive livestock and socio-spatial mobilities in northern Kunene Region as crucial drought risk management strategies.³ The Ozondundu Conservancy in southern Kaoko also experienced an influx of “those who were on the move” (sing. *omuyenda*, pl. *ovayenda*). Many of these mobilities eventually became a strong bone of contention, culminating into a local and legal dispute (also see Chapter 3). Given the constitutional protection of communal land-rights, some cases were finally taken to the High Court of Namibia in Windhoek.⁴ In this chapter, I take a closer look at a particular dimension of this dispute: the interwoven politics of authority, belonging and mobility⁵ in shaping

1 The situational analysis approach expands on the extended-case study method first pioneered by anthropologist Max Gluckman (1940). It is a qualitative, grounded and praxis-based research method based on the detailed description of an experienced and observed social situation. This then forms the basis for analysing wider socio-political, environmental and/or historical processes and changes and how they shape local contexts, including how local actors themselves (re)fashion these dynamics of change and continuity (see for instance, Kapferer 2005).

2 Schnegg & Bollig (2016: 66)

3 *Ibid.*, p. 67

4 Werner (2021:14), Olwage (2022)

5 For similar discussions, see Taylor (2012)

‘socially legitimate occupation and use rights’.⁶ In so doing I illustrate how ancestral land-rights in north-western Namibia should be understood as a social and political rather than a historical fact, and one which is relationally established and re-established in practice, over time, and across local and regional scales.

The chapter has two contentions. First, I unpack the resilient myth of kin-based rural “villages” or local “communities” as an often-imagined site of trust, stability, and cohesion, including in decentralised models of land and resource governance. As I illustrate, these localities should be simultaneously conceptualised as sites of ‘mobility and struggle’,⁷ in which migration often emerges, not only as a response to drought, but also as a ‘critical response to irreconcilable situations of disagreement and dispute’, including between kin.⁸ This chapter thus looks closely at how complex patterns of migration and mobility shaped and are shaping the social and political embeddedness of communal tenure within the Kunene Region, including through the integration of newcomers.⁹ Secondly, the chapter aims to address the question of socially legitimate occupation and use rights in a context where state-driven communal land reform ‘do[es] not appear to have removed the uncertainty about legitimate access and rights to land’.¹⁰ Rather, in some instances, these provisions are generating and heightening local frictions (also see Chapter 5). The chapter aims to critically engage with these frictions, especially concerning unresolved issues of overlapping jurisdictions and authority over land, perceived as negatively impacting land-rights¹¹ (also see Chapters 3, 4 and 16). In doing so, I explore how tenure was co-produced from the ground-up, including through everyday political, socio-spatial, and legal practices.

The concept of “legal pluralism” is often mobilised to refer to the existence of interacting, simultaneous and competing normative frameworks co-existing within the same social order, or society.¹² I approach this concept not as an explanatory theory but rather as a ‘sensitising concept’,¹³ enabling one to engage with interactions and power relations between formal, codified state law and policy, and local living norms. I regard “custom” as ‘a dynamic domain of African jurisprudence, evolving in tune with vernacular usage and context, and not as a static repertoire of rules established definitively in the past’.¹⁴ Such understanding foregrounds the ‘processual nature of local law’ instead of the straightforward application of rules.¹⁵

I engaged with the dispute during my PhD research (2014–2016), which included participating in dispute meetings and processes, and conducting ethnographic research within and in the surroundings of Ozondundu Conservancy and neighbouring conservancies, where the dispute took place. The situational or extended case study approach argues for theorising the general ‘through the dynamic particularity of the case’.¹⁶ Instead of using case material as “an example”, such material is instead taken as the starting point for wider analysis through a praxis-based lens.¹⁷ The first section of this paper provides a discussion on the overlapping institutions of land governance in southern Kaoko. This is followed by a short description of the dispute. Subsequent sections each analyse specific dimensions of the dispute, including interrelated contestations over territory, place, authority, belonging, mobility, and land-rights.

6 Cousins (2007)

7 Hebbbar (2023)

8 *Ibid.*

9 Lentz (2006)

10 Werner (2020: 257)

11 *Ibid.*

12 von Benda-Beckmann & von Benda-Beckmann (2006: 14)

13 van Binsbergen (2003: 39)

14 White (2015: 4)

15 van Binsbergen (2003: 39)

16 Evens & Handelsman (2005: 1)

17 Kapferer (2005: 89)

6.2 Overlapping institutions of land governance

Ozondundu—meaning mountains—is a conservancy that incorporated interrelated settled and cattle-post places within southern Kaoko, with predominantly otjiHerero-speaking homesteads forming part of a historically-constituted and kin-based shared land-use community (see Figure 6.1). Livelihoods in Ozondundu were rooted in subsistence pastoralism combined with: rain-fed agriculture and harvesting; community-based conservation, hunting and tourism; state social grants; and regular oscillatory migration and travelling to urban centres to engage in wage labour and enterprising activities that may include sending remittances back to the rural areas.

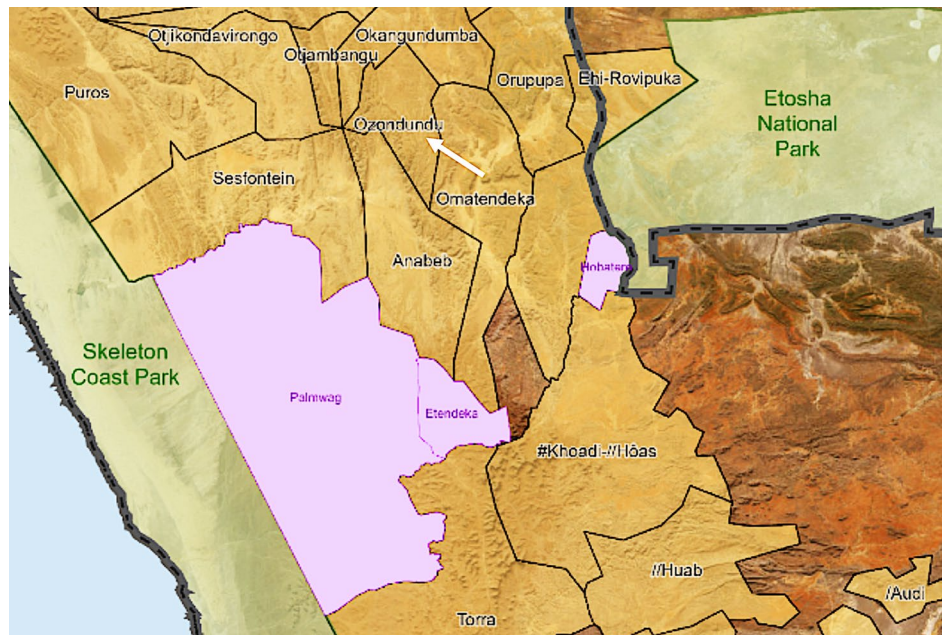


Fig. 6.1 Map showing location of Ozondundu Conservancy in between Etosha National Park and the Skeleton Coast National Park. Source: NACSO's Natural Resource Working Group, June 2023, adapted from Figure 3.2, Chapter 3, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Situated in the northern Kunene Region, Ozondundu Conservancy is part of Namibia's communal lands. Post-Independent Namibia inherited a 'dualistic land tenure structure'¹⁸ after more than a century of German (1884–1915) then South African (1920–1990) colonial and apartheid occupation and rule (see Chapters 1 and 2). Whilst around 43% of Namibia's land area falls under freehold title, 42% constitute "communal lands" or non-freehold land—legally in state guardianship—with remaining areas proclaimed as state land.¹⁹ In contrast to freehold title, rights to land within Kaoko's communal lands are administered through the Kaokoland Communal Land Board (established through the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002) and relevant Traditional Authorities (TAs). They are thus simultaneously legal in a formal sense, as well as applying principles of legalised customary governance and subject to the Constitution.²⁰ Yet here, as elsewhere in Namibia, "communal" tenure evolved and continues to evolve at the intersection of inherited Indigenous land-relations, culturally-informed institutions, and colonial and post-colonial state policies.

Given southern Kaoko's dryland and mountainous environment, land-use and pastoral practices were negotiated through mobile land-use, with both the socio-spatial mobility of households and herds remaining crucial strategies for coping with drought periods and highly localised rainfall patterns.²¹ This land-use was socially and spatially organised between interrelated settled and

¹⁸ Werner (2015: 67)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Werner (2018: 2)

²¹ See Bollig (2006: 157–69) for a description of drought-periods in northern Kaoko.

ancestral places (*ovirongo vyomaturiro*) and adjoining and shifting seasonal cattle-posts (*ovirongo vyohambo*). Movement between these places was seasonally negotiated, depending on the size of livestock herds, mutual availability of labour, water, pastures, and cultivation possibilities, as well as experiences of drought events. In addition, several households practiced what can be understood as ‘multispatial livelihoods’²² or multilocal households, with their herds and fields separated between localities, and household economies organised between rural and urban mobilities.

Ancestral land-relations and the practice of kinship, specifically dual descent kinship, remain key institutions governing locally nested and bundled rights over land and land-based resources in this context, with land-use boundaries overlapping and networked.²³ In any ‘communal’ or ‘customary’ lands, ‘rights to land are intimately tied to membership in specific communities, be it the nuclear or extended family, the larger descent group (clan), the ethnic group, or as is the case in modern property regimes, the nation state’.²⁴ In the context of this research, kin, and clan-based belonging to one’s matriclan (sing. *eanda*, pl. *omaanda*) and patriclan (sing. *oruzo*, pl. *otuzo*) were crucial. However, membership in these groups was not “a given” and had to be practiced. In addition, such belongings overlap and intersect with other forms of social and political belonging in shaping locally nested and bundled rights over land and land-based resources.

Historically, and as Bollig²⁵ and Friedman²⁶ have shown, tenure in Kaoko was founded upon an historicised relationship between one’s patrilineal and matrilineal ancestors and specific land-areas (as also explored for diverse residents of Etosha-Kunene in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15). Such relationships were and continue to be established through creating material-symbolic ties to the land, such as the ability to locate one’s ancestral graves as well through ‘oral knowledge’²⁷ and performance practices, including praise poetry (sing. *omitandu*, pl. *omutandu*).²⁸ Moreover, the remembrance of the social histories of past group migrations (*ekuruhungi rwomatjindiro*),²⁹ including through narratives of migration and settlement, are a crucial part of rooting ancestral land-relations. These narratives and material-symbolic practices shape both collective and divergent forms of social and political belonging, integrate interrelated (and often translocal) ancestral and cattle-post places, and vernacularly construct place and territorial boundaries.³⁰ Hence, they work as a kind of ‘oral land registry’,³¹ a vernacular and emplaced archive. Place-relations were also reiterated in practice, through everyday land-use and mobilities.

These land-relations were also closely intertwined with the construction of legitimate authority relations in the allocation of rights to access land and land-based resources, with such claims closely intertwined with ancestral and especially patrilineal claims to specific land-areas. Such institutions are reflective of pan-African frontier dynamics in which the ‘principle of precedence’ is ‘intimately intertwined with the legitimacy of authority’, with those longer in residence acquiring (over time) more rights over land and resources, with such rights subsequently ritually expressed.³² Yet first-comer narratives—like any narratives—are socially rather than historically constructed, and are open to contestation and changing interpretations, being important political resources within local and wider struggles over authority and land (see Chapter 1). Prior to colonial indirect rule, and within this form of tenure amongst otjiHerero-speaking pastoralists, senior men connected to first comer homesteads were considered the guardians of the earth/land (*oveni vehi*) with people settled

22 Foeken & Owuor (2001)

23 Lentz (2006)

24 *Ibid.*, p. 1

25 Bollig (1997)

26 Friedman (2005: 39)

27 I use the concept of ‘oral knowledge’ from Rizzo (2012: 13)

28 van Wolputte (2006: 470); also see Bollig (2013)

29 Bleckmann (2007, 2009), Kavari & Bleckmann (2009: 4)

30 Bleckmann (2012)

31 Lentz (2013: 4)

32 Kopytoff (1987: 53)

around them being their patrilineal and matrilineal relatives.³³ Any newcomer usually needed his permission to settle.

Subsequently, such authority is now primarily vested in a network of local (and male) headmen (sing. *osoromana*, pl. *ozosoromana*), councillors (sing. *orata*, pl. *ozorata*) and chiefs (sing. *ombara*, pl. *ozombara*), with this political structure historically co-constructed during colonial indirect rule and with state recognition as an important source of outside legitimisation, especially in a context of competing chieftaincies. As shown in Section 6.3, however, the authority to allocate rights to access in southern Kaoko also remains strongly decentralised in institutions of collective deliberation.

The Ozondundu boundaries were only cartographically mapped in the early 2000s with the establishment of communal area conservancies in the region, although its genealogy is constructed both in shared histories of land-use and legacies of colonial tenure policies. The then South African administration established the Kaokoveld “native reserve” and later the Kaokoland “homeland”,³⁴ introducing new administrative structures and internal boundaries (see Chapter 2). From the late 1940s onwards, Kaoko was divided into several ‘wards’,³⁵ administered by state-salaried headmen and sub-headmen, responsible for allocating rights of access within these boundaries.³⁶ This process built on the prior negotiation of indirect rule in which chiefs were appointed, with the wards subsequently incorporated into different and competing chieftaincies.³⁷

This mapping of wards was facilitated by an expansive borehole drilling programme and the parallel construction of a large network of roads, with the goal of introducing more sedentary forms of pastoral land-use, as well as to divide (and rule) Kaoko’s different groups:³⁸ see Chapter 7. Yet this process was also negotiated by local actors. For instance, the Ozondundu households mobilised to claim an independent ward by the 1980s: rooted both in a shift towards more localised forms of transhumance land-use with the drilling of boreholes and the devastating drought of 1981–1982; as well as political histories of fragmentation from neighbouring chieftaincies claiming autonomy in dealing with the state.³⁹

After Independence, the colonial tenure systems—i.e., ward boundaries and the local institution of headmanship—were no longer officially recognised.⁴⁰ Rather, initial engagement with state-driven communal land reform hinged on the official recognition of customary law and authorities. Consequently, legislative frameworks for the recognition of customary authorities were put in place, now organised as TAs under the Traditional Authorities Act of 2000.⁴¹ Local leaders and groups had to rely on competing claims for state recognition within new legislative bounds and blue-print institutional structures, with historical (hereditary) legitimisation being a strong prerequisite and TAs re-structured as a chief and his normally 12 councillors.⁴² With the gazetting of communal conservancies from the late 1990s onwards, many local headmen mobilised this process in an attempt to reaffirm their jurisdictions and authority, with several conservancy boundaries subsequently mirroring that of the former wards, including the Ozondundu Conservancy.⁴³

Importantly, conservancies as registered entities with elected governing committees, have no legal powers or local duties with regards to land administration.⁴⁴ Consent by TAs, in this case local headmen, was required, however, in gazetting conservancy boundaries and establishing local land-use plans. Unofficially this involvement provided a tool for local headmen to cartographically

33 Bollig (2013: 319)

34 Bollig (1998a, b)

35 “Traditional headman wards” in northern Kunene are referred to as *hoofmanwyke* in Mendelsohn (2008: 48).

36 See for instance, van Wolputte (2004) and Bollig (2013)

37 Bollig (1998a)

38 van Wolputte (2006, 2007)

39 Olwage (2022)

40 Werner (2020: 263)

41 Bollig (2011), Friedman (2014[2011])

42 Friedman (2005: 34)

43 Bollig (2013, 2016)

44 Werner (2021: 33)

(re)assert and document their jurisdictions, including to rally support for state recognition within broader TA structures during a period of transition. There is also no legal basis for either including or excluding local headmen and TAs with Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) governance structures:⁴⁵ at a local level, elected committees usually do not include them, unless in an advisory role. Still, local headmen and their senior councillors (on a local level) exercise influence in conservancy governance, especially given their long-standing role in governing the allocation of rights to access land and land-based resources, including as mediators.

Currently, there are 38 gazetted communal conservancies in Kunene Region (as reviewed in Chapter 3). This rapid increase, as both Sullivan⁴⁶ and Bollig⁴⁷ have argued, was partly due to local interpretations of conservancy proposals as a land and territorial, rather than an exclusively wildlife management issue (especially in the 1990s and 2000s), with these boundaries now signifying the known jurisdictions of headmen and emerging place identities.

Furthermore, the Communal Land Reform Act (CLRA) of 2002, together with the Traditional Authorities Acts of 1995/2000, situated state-recognised TAs as the ‘supreme power to allocate land or to deny settlement permission according to traditional rules’, given that these do not conflict with constitutional and statutory law.⁴⁸ This fuelled a degree of centralisation of authority in the TAs and chiefs, rather than local headmen and places, further igniting struggles over recognition. This reform was accompanied by the launching of a programme for codifying and registering communal land-rights in 2003, and the formation of regional Land Boards to ratify such applications.⁴⁹ The land-right remains for the period of a person’s natural life and can be passed on to next of kin, given that this is done through the state’s processes⁵⁰ (also see Chapter 13). Communal land-rights usually focus on a bounded residential and/or farming unit, with sizes relatively established, yet not exceeding 50 ha,⁵¹ with most being much smaller than this.

In most of Kaoko, and until recently, there has been limited engagement with this formal titling process given how it conflicts with mobile land-use practices and existing institutions governing nested and bundled rights over land and land-based resources. Additionally, the registration of land-rights only applies to individual and/or private rights on communal land, and does not include similar protection for grazing rights within commonages, including group-based rights,⁵² which are governed in Kaoko primarily by the state-recognised TAs, and in this case through local-level headmen. Nevertheless, fears and anticipation of such formal titling process have in some instances fuelled regional migrations and land-grabbing. In addition, post-independent reforms signalled a shift away from verbally negotiated and allocated rights to access as practiced in large parts of Kaoko, towards more codified and formalised modes of land governance.⁵³

It is thus within this shifting legal and politically pluralistic context that the dispute took place and was negotiated; with the dispute itself emerging as a crucial arena within which these intersecting normative frameworks were fashioned and refashioned. Hence, as I will illustrate throughout this chapter, within Kaoko long-standing institutional arrangements, instead of being completely abandoned, are revised within existing ‘sedimented layers’ in what has been termed ‘bricolage work’⁵⁴ (also see Chapter 7). In so doing, I focus specifically on the interwoven politics of belonging, authority and mobility which animated the dispute and how this shaped socially legitimate occupation and use rights, especially land-rights.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

46 Sullivan (2002)

47 Bollig (2013, 2016)

48 Behr *et al.* (2015: 463)

49 Bollig (2011: 171)

50 Chief Development Planner, Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, Opuwo, 16.3.2015 and 29.3.2016.

51 Werner (2020)

52 *Ibid.*, p. 260

53 Olwage (2022)

54 Cleaver & de Koning (2015: 6)

6.3 A land and grazing dispute

From 2012 onwards, Ozondundu experienced several in-migrations, including of livestock herds. By the start of 2015, tensions between the so-called residents or dwellers (sing. *omuture*, pl. *ovature*) and the newcomers (sing. *omuyenda*, pl. *ovayenda*) were heightened as pastures dwindled. This situation culminated in dispute meetings in the shade of a large Leadwood (*Combretum imberbe*) tree in a place called Otjomatamba (see Figure 6.2). The early meetings were focused on tracing the different newcomers' genealogies of arrival and to situate them socially and relationally. Complicating the deliberations were cases raised and discussed which involved persons and households not necessarily designated as newcomers, yet whose livestock mobilities and/or belonging were still contested or ambiguously situated. Included in this non-newcomer category were former residents who had moved herds into the area, married women who had returned with their own livestock as well as that of their affinal kin, and migrating and closely related households from neighbouring areas. Distinctions and boundaries between residents and newcomers were thus riddled with ambiguity, often intentionally, to maintain the flexibility required for navigating overlapping land-use boundaries and drought events.

Eventually, however, a contested group of newcomers was differentiated. They included seven heads of homesteads allocated drought-related temporary access-rights in the past and who had left again. A further eight to 10 households were also identified who arrived subsequently, with some claiming they had negotiated their access through the prior newcomers, or that they belonged to these homesteads and thus had rights of access. Such claims and genealogies of arrival were disputed. Moreover, in the previous year, a meeting was held where all those who came because of drought were asked 'to return to where they had come from'. This request was not adhered to. Such practices were perceived to be a violation of existing social norms governing shared pastures (also see Chapter 3). These "newcomers" were eventually situated as having settled forcefully (*ovature wokomasa*), or with arrogance (*ovature ovana manjengu*)—having first arrived by 'asking for drought' (*omuningire wourumbu*) and then refusing to leave.

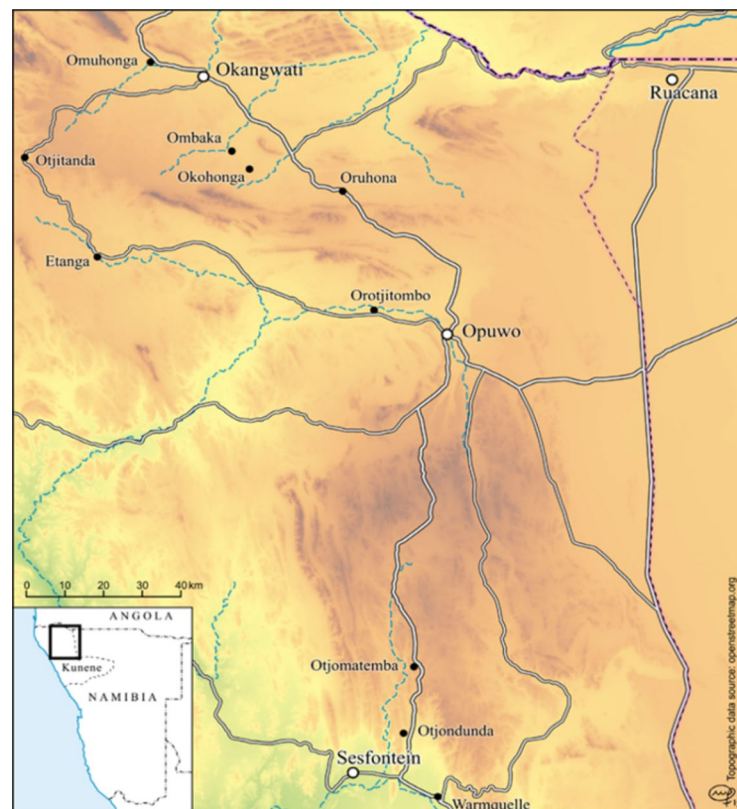


Fig. 6.2 Southern Kaoko places between which migration occurred. © Cartographer Monika Feinen, created for this research and used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

As the dispute progressed two further critical dimensions surfaced. First, most of these contested newcomers were considered relative strangers, i.e., they had come from afar and did not share a long-standing reciprocal relationship or close kin-relations with the Ozondundu households. The majority were ovaHimba homesteads who, during the previous decade, had initially migrated from northern Kaoko and the Epupa constituency (places like Oruhona, Etanga and Ombaka) south to the Anabeb and Sesfontein conservancies, to places such as Otjondunda and Warmquelle (see Figure 6.2). From 2012 onwards, however, these regional migrations were combined with a general increase in drought-related livestock movements. This meant that several households moved their livestock north again into Ozondundu (especially Otjomatamba) in search of pastures.

A second key dimension differentiating the newcomers was that in countering their expulsion, many claimed they had in fact been allocated settlement and/or grazing rights by one headman. At the time of the dispute Ozondundu had two local headmen each affiliated to oppositional Traditional Authorities (TAs). Whereas the state-recognised headman (Muteze) affiliated to the Vita Thom Royal House as a senior councillor in the official structure, a newly locally appointed headman (Herunga)—who at this stage was unrecognised within the official TA structure—was affiliated to the Otjikaoko Traditional Authority (both headmen are ovaHerero) (see Figure 3.8, Chapter 3, for locations of the formally recognised TAs in Etosha-Kunene). For many Ozondundu residents, such local-level divisions were seen as a root cause of the dispute.

In the course of time and after several weeks of deliberations, most of Ozondundu's residents eventually reached a consensus that the newcomers had to leave in 21 days. Although emphasising expulsion, it was reiterated that homesteads were welcome to return, given that they respect social norms. Eventually, after five weeks passed and with several unsuccessful attempts to evict the homesteads, wider networks were mobilised. These networks involved neighbouring headmen who shared socio-political affiliation: primarily to the Vita Thom Royal House and the Ovaherero Traditional Authority led by the Herero Paramount Chief acting as an umbrella body for all ovaHerero and ovaHimba TAs in Namibia. In a final attempt these groups gathered at the newcomers' homesteads to subtly coerce them to leave (successfully), and subsequently travelled to other areas to try to do the same with regards to long-standing disputed cases (unsuccessfully).

Despite a dramatic exodus from Ozondundu, with the onset of the dry-season several newcomer households returned. Meanwhile, the dispute shifted to the state courts. Given the constitutional protection of communal land-rights, a case was opened in the High Court in Windhoek. This case involved affiliated chieftaincies in southern Kaoko (specifically the neighbouring Ongango, Otjapitjapi (in Ozondundu), and Ombombo chieftaincies), with specific newcomer cases across all three of these areas.

To better understand what was at stake within this dispute, Sections 6.4 to 6.8 focus on the interrelated dynamics detailed above. I first examine how the dispute was shaped by local struggles and divisions within Ozondundu, specifically over authority and territory, showing how these divisions were embedded within the legacies of a 'factional dynamic'⁵⁵ within Kaoko. Building on this analysis, I delineate the mobility and settlement practices characterising the disputed newcomers, including how this triggered a reassertion of social norms and a place-based politics of authority and exclusion. By drawing on cases raised during the dispute, I discuss the micro-politics of belonging in the integration of newcomers. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the politics of belonging and authority in legally disputing land and socially legitimate rights to access within southern Kaoko, including looking at the outcome of the case mentioned above.

6.4 Disputing territory and factional belonging

For many residents and newcomers, the local struggles over authority were situated as a key root cause of the dispute (albeit from different positionings), as well as of the wider land conflicts within

⁵⁵ Friedman (2005, 2014[2011])

southern Kaoko as a then emerging ‘zone of rural immigration’.⁵⁶ Although orchestrated at a local level, this proliferation of local headmen was embedded in larger and long-standing territorial struggles. Histories of political fragmentation took root already pre-Independence, leading to Kaoko post-Independence emerging as a site of both political struggle and marginality, with particular local implications for land governance.⁵⁷

Since 1998, multiple TAs were given state recognition within Kaoko, rooted in an historically-constituted factional dynamic. As mentioned in Section 6.3, two oppositional TAs were recognised in southern Kaoko specifically: the Otjikaoko Traditional Authority and the Vita Thom Royal House.⁵⁸ In addition, although not officially recognised within Kaoko, many local leaders were affiliated with the Ovaherero Traditional Authority. In the official structure, each TA was represented by a chief and his normally 12 councillors, with many of these councillors in turn functioning as local headmen (*ozosoromana*), with their own local level councillors—creating a layered structure of authority. In addition, there were local headmen who were established during colonial indirect rule but subsequently not recognised in the official TA structures. Importantly, and in contemporary Kaoko, none of these state-recognised TAs had clear territorial jurisdictions: their jurisdictions overlapped, with most conservancies and places divided in terms of affiliation, including Ozondundu.

Implicitly embedded within the Traditional Authorities Act (TAA) was the assumption that recognition hinges on the ‘possession by a group of a “separate identity” based on common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, a common traditional authority, and the inhabitation of a common communal area’.⁵⁹ Similar to what has been noted in post-apartheid South Africa, the idea of a ‘traditional community’ combines with the ‘rubric of custom’ to organise ‘space as a territorial patchwork of separate jurisdictions, each of them corresponding to a traditional community that consists of native subjects bound together by their ethno-cultural traits’.⁶⁰ In the context of southern Kaoko, however, such assumptions of territory, community and jurisdiction are problematic, with jurisdictions overlapping and many land-use communities divided in terms of factional and political belonging (also see Chapters 4 and 16).

Given overlapping jurisdictions and factional dynamics, post-colonial state policies have arguably exacerbated existing struggles between competing TAs over territorial claims. On a local level, this involves competing headmen vying for state and local recognition,⁶¹ which, if given, would ensure that such places become territorially integrated into specific TAs, providing them with the legal authority to allocate rights to land within these places. In Ozondundu and neighbouring conservancies specifically, the Otjikaoko Traditional Authority were vying for power and authority in a context historically dominated by leaders affiliated to the Vita Thom and Ovaherero Traditional Authority. Yet migrating households likewise played a role in these struggles over territory, as discussed in Section 6.5.

To better understand how these local place-based struggles were co-shaped by larger contestations over territory, belonging and authority, it is necessary to briefly discuss some of their historical precedents. Importantly, political belonging and affiliation in Kaoko and intertwined struggles over land and authority were, and continue to be, strongly shaped both by complex histories of migration and displacement, as well as the politicisation of ethnic idioms. The majority of Ozondundu households enacted their social belonging to a larger pan-Herero society⁶² and traced their social histories to central-west Namibia (the Omatjete area, north-west of Omaruru). From here their ancestors fled during the German colonial and genocidal wars (1904–1908). As much as this history is shared, it is also coloured by divergent and idiosyncratic migratory pathways. These

56 Lentz (2013: 2)

57 Friedman (2014[2011])

58 Friedman (2005, 2014[2011]). See Friedman (2005) for the genealogy of these factions.

59 Taylor (2008: 85)

60 *Ibid.*

61 Werner (2020: 279)

62 Bleckman (2012)

migrations, and the movement from place to place it entailed, were mainly negotiated through extended kin-networks, and relations of patronage.⁶³

For instance, along the way some families remained in places further south (for example, in Otjitambi close to Kamanjab). Others again continued north, including to places in eastern Kaoko and some into southern Angola, re-migrating back into Kaoko at a later stage. From here, households incrementally moved to and settled in Ozondundu, especially from 1910 onwards when Angola's administration changed from military to civil rule, and again with the end of German colonial rule in Namibia 1915.⁶⁴ Many households who initially settled in southern Kaoko were forced to move north again due to the appropriation of land during the South African colonial regime. Later, the same families were once again forced to migrate north-west (for example from Otjovasandu) between 1929 and 1931, during one of the major forced removals in the South African colonial history.⁶⁵ These migrations happened as the colonial state consolidated the notorious "Red Line" (later the Veterinary Cordon Fence, VCF), a border-making process which involved negotiation and contestation⁶⁶ (see Chapters 1, 2, 13 and 14). For instance, during these forced removals one headman (Gideon Muteze) and his followers managed to negotiate with the Native Commissioner in Outjo to be resettled in Otjapitjapi, a place in Ozondundu he had known previously. In other words, Ozondundu, like much of Kaoko, was constituted through overlapping historical and household migrations, including within a wider culturally heterogeneous region (see Chapters 5, 7, 12, 13 and 14).

Yet despite a shared sense of wider ovaHerero belonging, some in Ozondundu identified with what was termed the Ndamuranda section of Kaoko's society, who display and perform their affiliation to the chiefly line of Maherero (an ovaHerero leader based in Okahandja in central Namibia in the late 19th century): they were thus associated with those who migrated and re-migrated into Kaoko during later years. Divergent migration histories were crucial in shaping political belonging within this context. However, these shifting affiliations and the making of shared identities were also strongly refigured during the period of colonial indirect rule.

Specifically, the continual political mobilisation of ethnic idioms, embedded within a "tribalistic" discourse and the favouring of the "Herero" section by the colonial state, worsened already existing tensions between emerging sections of Kaoko's society and chieftaincies.⁶⁷ These tensions were magnified through the implementation of a livestock-disease control programme during the late 1960s, leading to some leaders eventually agreeing (after initial resistance) to cooperate with the authorities, whilst others resisted. Two strongly opposing factions formed: those perceived to be in close collaboration with the colonial administration, referred to as the "small or minority group" (*Okambumba*) and who constituted mostly "Herero" (and Ndamuranda) leaders; and those in opposition who became known as the "large group" (*Otjimbumba*)—the majority group constituting the "Himba/Tjimba" grouping.⁶⁸

By the 1970s these tensions had spiralled into a violent regional conflict.⁶⁹ The conflict gave rise to kin-based identities rooted in divergent 'politico-ethnic formations'⁷⁰ as well as a nativist politics of autochthony, with the "Herero" section (and particular patrilineal clans in this section) accused of being "intruders" and "outsiders" in the region (also see Chapter 3 for discussion of this discourse of "intruders" in current circumstances in north-west Namibia). Historically a continuity and

63 *Ibid.*

64 Bollig (1998a: 182)

65 Bollig (1998b: 511). Also see Miescher (2012: 103)

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*, p. 31; also see van Wolputte (2007: 110) and Friedman (2007)

68 Bleckmann (2012: 127), Friedman (2005: 33)

69 This year was also known as '*ombura yondjembo yaKaningena*'—the year of the gun of Kaningena, see Bleckmann (2012: 142)

70 Friedman (2005)

mutual interdependence between local and regional-scale political organisation emerged,⁷¹ with first-comer/late-comer relations and ancestral validation orchestrated and contested at different scales and embedded within an “ethnic idiom”.⁷² Moreover, ‘what had previously been considered a disparaging ethnic classification’, namely “Tjimba”, which historically had referred to herders who lost most of their livestock, became ‘the foundation for a new form of political consciousness’, including one rooted in struggles against marginalisation and colonial (and elitist) rule.⁷³

This conflict led to a breakdown of cooperation between chiefs and kin-based shared land-use communities and gave rise to new forms of political belonging. As one person⁷⁴ explained: ‘[w]hen initially [...] when you could say because I have found rainwater at Omao and I will take my cattle and simply go and stay, this was no longer the case’. In Ozondundu as well, households were divided in terms of factional belonging. For example, some would associate with a “big group” or “Tjimba” political positioning with such forms of belonging stretching across generations and associated with particular patrilineal and competing first-comer and authority claims.⁷⁵

Moreover, these conflicts happened against the backdrop of the declaration of Kaoko as a military territory in 1976 and the larger national liberation struggle. Between 1978 and 1981–1982 a devastating drought also hit the region, leading to up to 90% livestock losses and famine (also see Chapter 2). Political instability was further exacerbated by the civil war in former Portuguese Angola.⁷⁶ This complex chain of events forced many men to join the South African army and police in the 1980s.⁷⁷ Following the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference in 1975, the South African administration introduced ‘second-tier authorities’ meant to be ‘self-governing’ ethnic administrations of the homeland areas⁷⁸ (also see Chapter 13). This meant that all of Namibia’s otjiHerero-speaking societies, including the ovaHimba, were subsumed under the ‘Herero Representative Authority’.⁷⁹ This change signalled a shift in which local political belonging was increasingly refigured within emerging national party politics and the liberation struggle.

With the establishment of second-tier authorities, delegates of both the “small” and “big” groups were appointed. Soon, however, members were using the power of the new governing body ‘to appoint their own group’s headmen’, thereby polarising villages.⁸⁰ During this time the Herero Representative Authority was dominated by the DTA⁸¹—a coalition party formed after the Turnhalle Conference backed by the South African administration. Yet with these dynamics, the DTA eventually had to choose sides. In the end, they supported the large group faction and, as a consequence, the small-group leaders opted for SWANU,⁸² who later allied with the NPF,⁸³ with some later shifting to other affiliations post-Independence, including to SWAPO.⁸⁴ It was also during this time, with the ‘political party spirit’ being ‘high’, that local leaders and the headman from the ‘area of the mountains’—i.e. Ozondundu—were said to have managed for their area to be proclaimed as an independent ward.⁸⁵

As detailed, after Independence, multiple TAs were recognised in southern Kaoko, with jurisdictions overlapping and shared land-use communities divided in terms of affiliation. The Otjikaoko Traditional Authority was politically shaped by autochthonous claims and identified

71 Kopytoff (1987: 7, 52)

72 Lentz (2013: 3)

73 Friedman (2005: 39)

74 Transcribed interview, Otjomaoru, 23.04.2016.

75 For more on the histories of these political identities, see Friedman (2014[2011]) and Bleckmann (2012).

76 Bollig (2006: 7, 52)

77 See Bleckmann (2011: 1)

78 Friedman (2005: 34)

79 *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*

81 Demographic Turnhalle Alliance

82 South West Africa National Union

83 National Patriotic Front

84 Friedman (2005: 34–35)

85 Transcribed interview, Otjomaoru, 23.04.2016.

with a former “Himba”/“Tjimba” and “big group” (*Otjimbumba*) section in Kaoko. The Vita Thom Royal House’s members, on the other hand, were associated with those who migrated and re-migrated into the region during the first decades of the 20th century, and with the legacy of a minority “Herero” or “small group” (*Okambumba*) section and the colonial state-supported elite. In the context of regional migrations, these long-standing internal tensions found new expression in contested places. Moreover, minority factions and those who felt unrepresented began appointing their own headmen and affiliating to oppositional TAs in a bid for state recognition.

In addition, given Kaoko’s political histories,⁸⁶ in the first decade after Independence many local leaders and communities were still associated with oppositional political parties, as opposed to the rest of the northern regions where the governing SWAPO party dominated.⁸⁷ With struggles for state recognition by competing TAs, leaders and headmen, Kaoko soon became embroiled in a protracted power struggle: Ozondundu, for example, was almost equally divided in terms of SWAPO and DTA (now PDM⁸⁸) supporters in 2015.⁸⁹

For many, this political fragmentation and the proliferation of local headmen were seen as contributing to the breakdown of local institutions of land and resource governance, and the root cause of the dispute. Such perceptions were not limited to southern Kaoko. In reflecting on this situation, one of the newcomers explained things to me as follows:⁹⁰

K: In our area, the ovaHimba area, the reason you always hear that people are being chased away is that we don’t settle in a good way. If it was in our ovaHimba area,⁹¹ you would have looked at the homesteads they settle in a disorganised order that damages the grazing area, that’s why the cattle are dying because they are overgrazing. If you talk to someone about it, then it’s a big fight so people are just settling the way they want.

E: Has it changed from how people used to settle in the past and now, especially where you come from?

K: It has changed totally because nowadays you cannot tell someone to change the direction of grazing so that you can conserve the grass for calves for later then you end up quarrelling or fighting.

E: Why do you think it has changed now?

K: Why it has changed is because previously the headman was only one in the area and now the political parties also become more, e.g., DTA, SWAPO, UDF⁹², NPF, etc. so every headman is on his own with his followers and everyone does not mix with the people falling under the leadership of the ones who are settling there. The above-mentioned leaders from the different parties are competing against each other and are jealous of each other because everyone wants to have more followers, e.g., each one needs 50 followers, and all those 50 people will come from Etanga and Owambo land so their family will also want to come and live in the area and they will not refuse because they need to increase the number of their people in their party.

To better understand how these dynamics played out on a local level, Sections 6.5 and 6.6 take a closer look at how the dispute intertwined with these socio-spatial, political, and factional struggles over authority, land and belonging.

6.5 Migratory drift and *opolotika*

Following Namibia’s Independence, more regional pastoral and household migrations took place within Kunene Region, including in response to environmental and population pressures and drought events. This migration situation was exacerbated by the initial lack of a clear national state

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Bollig (2011)

⁸⁸ Popular Democratic Movement

⁸⁹ Friedman (2014[2011]: 225)

⁹⁰ Transcribed interview, Otjomatamba, 29.04.2015.

⁹¹ Historically this constituted northern Kaoko (and parts of southern Angola), but these boundaries are subjectively known and shifting based on chieftaincy claims and wider polities, as well as colonial borders. The legacy of colonial indirect rule also played a role here in which northern Kaoko was mapped as the “ovaHimba” area.

⁹² United Democratic Front

policy on the allocation of land within communal areas during the first decade post-Independence.⁹³ Article 21(h) of the Constitution also stipulates that any Namibian citizen can freely settle on communal land—provided he/she follows local procedures for acquiring access. This created a ‘legal vacuum’⁹⁴ exploited by many seeking to access land, including within Kaoko.⁹⁵ Internal struggles over authority and factional belonging also generated a perceived and constructed ‘interstitial frontier’;⁹⁶ it created places which became politically defined and subjectively perceived as open to legitimate “intrusion”.

Bolig⁹⁷ observed that already during the mid-2000s there was a large out-migration of households southwards from the northern Epupa constituency, as well as north into southern Angola. These migrations were fuelled by the search for better pastures due to high livestock numbers and ecological degradation, with stocking rates in northern Kaoko higher than those in southern and central Kaoko,⁹⁸ leading to crises concerning pasture management.⁹⁹ Migrating households had to rely on a range of spatial, social, and political tactics to navigate their mobility. One such strategy was to try and establish satellite and drought-period cattle-posts and to then subsequently negotiate one’s legitimacy and belonging, often through claiming socio-political affiliation as well as through maintaining translocal place-relations.

For example, one of the heads of a newcomer homestead in Ozondundu, Tjimbinaje,¹⁰⁰ was in a polygynous marriage with four women. Their household, like many others, had initially migrated from northern Kaoko to Anabeb Conservancy, before creating a satellite cattle-post in Ozondundu from 2012 onwards. During our acquaintance, we mostly met with his third wife and his cousins, nephews and nieces who took care of the livestock. Later, I learned that the senior wife headed and managed the ancestral homestead in Oruhona in northern Kaoko (see Figure 6.2); the second and third wives moved and managed households and livestock between southern Kaoko and Opuwo; and the fourth wife mostly managed another cattle-post in northern Kaoko, at a place called Okorue. Thus, although these north-south migrations were permanent for some, they were temporary for others, generating translocal and gendered place relations and mobilities.

In other words, for many ovaHimba newcomers in Ozondundu, their ancestral homesteads and, in some instances, their main homesteads and other cattle-posts, remained in northern Kaoko (often more than 200 km away)—with livestock herds separated between these multiple and distantly-located places. This separation of livestock herds constituted an important pastoral strategy to mitigate the risk of livestock losses in drylands, whilst simultaneously being an important practice for gaining additional rights of access, over time. Following Diallo,¹⁰¹ a large number of the north-south regional migrations could be characterised as ‘migratory drift’ in which patrilineals, over the long-term, gain or try to gain new or additional territory and land. Given the importance of ancestral land-relations in governing land-access within this context, the negotiation and establishment of translocal place-relations produces and re-produces relations across locales, integrating them territorially.¹⁰² Hence, people and groups are emplaced even when they move, dynamically moving with and within their institutional embeddedness, including their clan and political belonging. Given this ‘situatedness of mobile actors’,¹⁰³ together with the socio-spatial and political practices deployed by newcomer homesteads, this situation generated larger concerns not

93 Gargallo (2010: 160)

94 Werner (2015: 75)

95 Werner (2018: 3). This dynamic also played out further south, for example in the Sesfontein Constituency and the Damaraland Communal Land Area (Sullivan 2003: 82).

96 Kopytoff (1987: 16–17)

97 (2013)

98 Schnegg & Bolig (2016: 68)

99 *Ibid.*

100 Pseudonyms are used for all named interviewees.

101 (2001)

102 Brickell & Datta (2016)

103 Greiner & Sakdapolrak (2013: 374)

only over dwindling grazing, but additionally over long-term claims to land by particular groups. These translocal mobilities were also locally commented on, valorised, and disputed.

For instance, with the arrival of disputed newcomers in Ozondundu, several residents contested their genealogies of arrival and intentions, as detailed in an interview with a senior stock owner, Karumendu:¹⁰⁴

K: The settling of people procedurally starts like for, e.g., some people come to ask and then the surrounding areas will discuss the matter to settle the applicant temporarily who would go back after the drought. These people are settled for a while until rain starts, now they have to go back. If the place from which a person came from didn't get enough rain, then the place where a person is settled temporarily, his period of stay can be extended. So, whatever is to be agreed upon should be done in consultation with all the people in the area. That was a manner in which things were done when we grew up. Nowadays, things are strange, people from other areas just come to Otjomatamba without any consultation or permission and chase their cattle into a *kraal* [livestock pen] they have just found in a place and start separating the calves from the cows.

V [translator]: Which *kraal*?

K: It is an old *kraal* but it does not belong to them.

E: Meaning that all who came into Otjomatamba did not ask for permission?

K: Seven people asked for settlement and were accepted, after they had received rain, they went back. The current ones never had permission.

There is one person, his boss is at Opuwo, that one has got permission that's why we didn't chase him away.

E: Why does he think this problem is starting now, why is it happening now? [Addressing the translator]

K: The problem is with the ovaHimba people, and the reason is unknown, it is them who do not consult but start building *kraals* everywhere they like because the ovaHimba people are not consulting anyone.

V: Why do they want to be settled everywhere?

E: Does it perhaps work differently to settle in their areas where they are coming from?

K: We found out from people coming from that side that they have also done the same way at the places they came from, and it has created a dispute among them. We don't talk to each other. At Otjondunda all those people that you find there are illegal, no one is born there. They settled by force and others continued to settle all over without permission. I heard that some people went to report the case to the police.

As noted above, the dispute generated a particular politics of belonging in which "ovaHimba people" or the "Himba" were primarily considered "strangers" or "illegal" migrants. Despite this ethnic idiom, however, what was at stake was rather the perceived forceful settlement practices of some, including by tactically navigating the drought situation. Such practices meant there was animosity from the start, as noted above: 'we don't talk to each other'. Such animosity was closely linked to the newcomers' continually endowed strangerhood—with both the politics and practices of arrival playing a crucial role in the negotiation of sociality and belonging within southern Kaoko and the integration of newcomers (also see Chapter 3).

With the onset of the dispute in Ozondundu, wider tensions in southern Kaoko were already rippling out, in some cases erupting into conflict. As one resident¹⁰⁵ of Anabeb Conservancy south of Ozondundu explained:

[w]hen they came, they came to "ask for drought" (*omuningire wourumbu*), and we accepted. When the rain came, however, they were refusing to leave. This resulted in a conflict and fight at Okanamuva (a cattle-post). We were accusing them of not coming for drought, but rather to win over the place and the land. People were threatening each other with guns. Here (Anabeb Conservancy) there were no rains and even drought, but still, they were refusing to leave. We don't have a problem with people—but it is bringing conflict to our areas.

¹⁰⁴ Transcribed interview, Otjize, 31.3.2015.

¹⁰⁵ Translated interview, Otjondunda, 17.04.2015.

Many of these settlement practices were criticised by drawing on a discourse of *opolotika*. As expressed by an interlocutor¹⁰⁶ from the Anabeb Conservancy:

[f]irst, we did not know what they (the newcomers) were looking for. But it is because of *opolotika*. They want to take this area to belong to them.

Anthropologist John Friedman¹⁰⁷ argues that the term *opolotika* has come to denote a specific material form and practice within Kaoko. Unlike the concept of politics, it does not refer to a “generalised notion of power”, but instead to practices by both political actors and parties, including competing TAs, in relation to Namibia’s post-Independence SWAPO¹⁰⁸ government. As a normative discourse, people generally relate *opolotika* to ‘divisiveness, conflict, violence, death and war’—with it also used as a general ‘derivative of problems, or as a form of criticism, or as the act of quarrelling’.¹⁰⁹ As an Ozondundu resident related:¹¹⁰

[i]n the olden days, people were cooperating. Now they brought in *opolotika* and this is dividing (*okuhanika*) people. One will settle people here and if you are deciding to leave to let areas recover then others will remain. In the past, people had a small meeting and decided collectively that now they must leave a certain area to allow it to recover. This is no longer the case, if you move now, you move by yourself. Things have changed. These days settlement is motivated by *opolotika*. It is changing things.

In the context of the dispute, *opolotika* was used as a social and critical commentary on the breakdown of land governance institutions and how this was connected to the political practices of competing headmen and chiefs, as well as the socio-spatial practices of particular newcomer or migrating homesteads. In mobilising a discourse of *opolotika*, these mobilities were perceived and commented on as settling primarily through force and/or conflict by negotiating rights access through oppositional TAs and headmen, and hence as dividing shared land-use communities. In addition, these translocal mobility and settlement practices were perceived as attempting to territorially integrate specific places within larger polities, and over time. Moreover, in mobilising a discourse of *opolotika*, the ‘conflation of local “traditional” chiefship with national party politics’¹¹¹ was commented upon, including its political and social impacts locally.

For example, similar to Ozondundu and during the dispute, people explained that the newcomer ovaHimba homesteads at Otjondunda (Anabeb Conservancy) were rumoured to have been permitted by only one headman in an area governed by multiple headmen. After some years the situation became out of control, as more and more newcomer herders and livestock migrated into the area and the headman left. Thus, there were recurrent discussions with regards to the belonging of these homesteads—despite most of them having lived there for more than eight to 10 years.¹¹² Similarly, as noted in Section 6.3, during the dispute Ozondundu also had two headmen, each affiliated to different TAs. While the one headman (Muteze) was state recognised, the other headman (Herunga) was not. In becoming appointed as a new headman, Herunga’s claims to authority had to be socially and culturally legitimised. Some of the migrating households tactically navigated this process. For example, in generating counter claims against their proposed expulsion, and to delay their exodus, several ovaHimba newcomers in Ozondundu drew on pastoral notions of conviviality and patronage. As one person¹¹³ explained:

[a]ll of the ovaHimbis, when they came to settle, Herunga did not know about them, but it was claimed that they were settled by Herunga because they are in his area, but he said, “How can I settle people

106 *Ibid.*

107 Friedman (2005: 47)

108 South West Africa People’s Organisation

109 Friedman (2014[2011]: 225)

110 Translated interview, Otjomatamba, 15.04.2015.

111 Friedman (2014[2011]: 225)

112 Translated interview, Warmquelle, 17.04.2016.

113 Transcribed interview, Otjomatamba, 29.04.2015.

while I was in Marine¹¹⁴ or did I settle them while I was there?” He said if people are claimed to be settled by him then they must remain there because he will accept them as they are given to him, so is it how the people became Herungas.

Such practices were welcomed by Herunga in the spirit of expanding his follower base and to strengthen his claims to intersecting ritual and political authority. It thus affirmed his position as the “owner” of the place. Yet, locally, and as shown in Section 6.3 and discussed in more detail below, such authority claims, and settlement practices were disputed, including by mobilising long-standing social norms, competing normative orders, and an ethnicised politics of exclusion.

6.6 Contesting place and authority

Importantly, the boundary between those considered as dwellers or residents (*ovature*) and those who were on the move (*ovayenda*) was performed and negotiated during dispute deliberations, rather than as an *a priori* differentiation. Given that land-use boundaries were overlapping and networked, being and becoming a resident was largely a question of relationality. It was a fact that had to be relationally established, including over time. Consequently, and as I will discuss below, places were often sites of contestation, with interwoven struggles over authority, belonging and mobility a crucial arena in which historically-grounded and situated notions of residency—and thus of land-rights—had to be established and re-established. Key in this process was the question of authority, i.e., who had the legitimate authority to integrate and settle newcomers, with this question of authority closely intertwined with a place-based politics.

As explained by several persons, customarily both grazing and settlement rights within places had to be verbally negotiated according to social norms (*okuningira ousemba*, literally ‘to talk words’). First, the most senior male or female household member visits the place without bringing any livestock. The person would then approach kin (if there were any) who would refer them to the senior councillors, who in turn would take the message to the headmen. It was also seen as good practice for the newcomer to visit and acknowledge known first-comer homesteads. This process of negotiating access was also bureaucratised, and a livestock moving permit system was institutionalised already during South African colonial rule. Post-Independence, and after the TA Act came into force in 2000, permission papers had to be issued by state-recognised TAs, in this case, local state-recognised headmen. Migrating households require a permission paper both from their place of origin, as well as the place of migration, and have to subsequently present their livestock at the local veterinary extension office or clinic for the issuing of a livestock movement permit. Still, drought-related, and temporary access rights to pastures between overlapping land-use areas, were predominantly allocated through informal verbal agreements, based on mutual reciprocity. It was these practices that opened up spaces of ambiguity where claims could be made on both land and resources, including through relations of patronage and affiliation and specifically within contested places such as Otjomatamba, characterised by political fragmentation and overlapping migrations and mobilities.

Moreover, despite the social norms articulated above, how exactly the place or place-boundaries should be defined that informed who the collective resident households or local authority were, were in many instances a matter of contestation—with especially disputes providing a generative platform in refiguring these boundaries. For example, during the dispute, and for many residents, Otjomatamba was seen and dwelled in as a dry season cattle-post settled during the early 1990s (see Figure 6.2). It was narrated as a cattle-post belonging to Otjapitjapi (an ancestral place in Ozondundu Conservancy) which was subsequently settled, especially with the drilling of its borehole, and hence falling within the jurisdiction of the state-recognised headman, Muteze (see Chapter 7).

¹¹⁴ Marine is the place south of the VCF where Herunga kept most of his livestock and had another homestead.

However, this place-genealogy was contested. From the perspective of others, Otjomatempa was an “old place”, characterised from the start by ancestral homesteads, and established during the 1950s. These divergent histories of place-formation and ‘first-comer narratives’¹¹⁵ were themselves emplaced, i.e. they were narrated and performed through tracing past migratory pathways, the location of graveyards and burial sites, ruins of former homesteads, and the social histories of water wells.¹¹⁶

At the core of Otjomatempa’s competing settlement narratives were local struggles over authority, territory and belonging. In constructing Otjomatempa as an “old place”, a historical narrative in which Herunga’s (classificatory) father was the first to have settled, Otjomatempa was legitimised, making an argument for his claims to ritual authority and as the “owner” of the place. At the same time, and through his political affiliation to the Otjikaoko Traditional Authority, Otjomatempa’s territorial integration within other larger polities was enacted. Such claims were meant to be strengthened through the settling and integration of newcomers.

Yet, in response, others mobilised an inherited hereditary chieftaincy model and colonial tenure boundaries to dispute such claims and to re-assert Otjomatempa’s place-identity within Ozondundu’s jurisdiction. As one senior councillor¹¹⁷ lamented:

[t]here are rules (*oveta*) for movement and settlement—these rules came from us, but also not from us exactly, it was from the government (*ohoromende*). In the past, the South African government (*ohoromende wa Suid-Afrika*) decided to give the power to the headmen. While they were doing that, they were also giving each headman a place to settle, with people supporting them. It was working like that. First, it was the government, but now it is natural. But now things are changing. There were only a few headmen in the past. Now, some are forcing themselves to become headmen, so that they can also get paid by the government. Here, there was only one headman, he was living in Otjapitjapi and was buried in Otjapitjapi [east of Otjomatempa on Figure 6.2]. He was replaced by his son and this son also died, and then Muteze was appointed. It is the headmen deciding if there are too many people in one place. Nowadays they are forcing themselves to become headmen, those who are not established. And the established ones are having trouble.

There is a law (*oveta*). We set up the meeting. Last year we had the meeting. The reason that we are having so many meetings is because of the two headmen. The people are divided (*okuhanika*). With that, some people are going behind and telling the Himba homesteads (newcomers) not to leave. And then the Himba homesteads are talking as if they are deciding that for themselves—not like they heard it or were told by someone.

Evident in this quote was an understanding in which headmanship and authority were intimately entangled with the making of colonial indirect rule. In other words, there was an historical consciousness concerning the “invented” character of the institution, although also foregrounded here was its subsequent naturalisation—legitimised within existing institutions. As emphasised: ‘he was living in Otjapitjapi and buried at Otjapitjapi’. Even so, it was the state-recognised and hereditary headman who was ‘controlling the area’ and ‘deciding if there are too many people at one place’, rather than those associated exclusively with institutions of ritual authority. This narrative was strongly contesting competing claims—including how these were perceived to be dividing people, leading to ‘many meetings’.

Likewise, in this context, residents mobilised a discourse of *opolotika* to comment on these struggles over authority and the territorial integration of Otjomatempa. As one person expressed:

[t]he problem came because Herunga wanted to establish a clinic, and Muteze resisted. Herunga used to be Muteze’s senior councillor. Now they are fighting [...] “Where is your father’s grave?” It is just *opolotika*.¹¹⁸

115 Lentz (2013: 4)

116 Olwage (2022)

117 Translated interview, Otjomatempa, 01.02.2015.

118 Translated interview, Otjomatempa, 20.11.2014.

Generally, this discourse was rooted in a juxtaposition to *ombazu* (custom, or tradition). As one person emphasised: ‘Herunga just *opolotika*—Muteze is connected to *ombazu*’. For Friedman,¹¹⁹ a distinction between ‘tradition’ or ‘custom’ (*ombazu*) and ‘politics’ (*opolotika*) can be made as follows: *opolotika* referred to dynamics which have emerged after or with Independence and which are always changing, whilst *ombazu* was construed as ‘a permanent thing’ and relating to the inherited ‘patriarchal political order’ of state ‘recognised’ headmen and their territories. In making this distinction, ‘custom’ has come to work as a kind of ‘anti-politics machine’,¹²⁰ mobilised to deflect the challenging of inherited structures of authority.¹²¹ In other words, these discursive practices aimed to delimit the registers within which the institution of local headmanship could or should be translated, delegitimising competing authority claims. At the same time, such discursive practices were reasserting particular territorial claims—more specifically, the integration of all the Ozondundu places under the jurisdiction of Muteze—and by extension larger chieftaincies and polities.

Furthermore, during the dispute, and in response to navigating these local factional politics, social norms were re-asserted, including holding senior councillors and competing headmen accountable. It was thus asserted again and again, that no one person, including the headmen, had the authority to allocate rights to access land: these decisions had to be taken collectively. In this regard the Ozondundu conservancy boundaries and membership were powerful symbolic tools mobilised to assert who exactly this collective was, particularly given that land-use boundaries were overlapping. Hence, internal frictions were eventually set aside in the face of a larger concern: perceived land grabbing by particular migrating households over the long-term.

This was evident in how, during the dispute, a wide-spread ethnicised politics of exclusion emerged (also see Chapter 3). Specifically, shared social norms and values and pastoral belonging were re-asserted through a normative discourse on “Himba mobility” as a negative form of transhumance. As one local councillor¹²² expressed this in Otjomatempa:

[w]e (referring to the residents of the area) and the ovaHimba, our attitudes, our ways in the home are not the same. While we are here, the ovaHimba [...] they will move where the grazing is. They just follow the grass. When it is the rainy season, they are just moving around, creating several cattle-posts. OvaHimba are like this, if they come for drought and to settle at a place, if the rain happens to arrive, and you request them to leave, they will only refuse. And just imagine, their cattle are a lot.

Another senior councillor¹²³ echoed these sentiments:

[t]he ovaHimba are cleverer than all of us. They are moving the cattle beyond the Red Line (now the VCF), even all the way to Outjo and Kamanjab. They separate their cattle. Many people are speaking to them and perhaps think that they are stupid—but you don’t know what is in their heads. The Herero have a different movement. Normally you have your ancestral homestead, with the ancestral shrine you belong to, but often there is no livestock. Rather you would have another established homestead. For example, my ancestral homestead is in Otjomaoru and I am permanently settled in Otjomatempa (both within Ozondundu). I would only go to Otjomaoru when there are funerals, weddings, or for the naming of children—for this reason, it is helpful to maintain a small house there.

OvaHimba grazes only for the animals, not for the veld. They finish the grazing everywhere. They will stay here in Otjomatempa and surrounding areas just for now, and then they will leave, without being chased away by the people. They will only stay until the grazing finishes. They overgraze until the seeds are gone.

119 Friedman (2005: 47)

120 cf. Ferguson (1994)

121 Friedman (2005: 47)

122 Translated interview, Otjomatempa, 1.2.2015.

123 Translated interview, Otjomatempa, 13.2.2015.

“Himba” pastoral practices were thus construed as privileging mobility over sedentariness,¹²⁴ with such land-use practices framed negatively (*omundu wonduriro ombwii*). For some, such land-use practices were construed as threatening future possibilities—both for communal conservancies, as well as securing inheritances such as land. As one interlocutor emphasised:¹²⁵

[i]n Otjomatempa (in Ozondundu) we are working with the conservancy and the ways that the ovaHimba migrate, they will just settle anywhere, and this will chase the wild animals away. Behind the mountains, close to Otjitaime (the spring), we have zoned the area for the wild animals—but some of the homesteads are going that side and making a cattle-post. People in Otjomatempa want to make a rest camp there, for tourists—but now because of the cattle being there, the tourists won’t enjoy it so much, because they want to see the wild animals. People’s concern is also for their children, when the children are adults and then they start to make their homestead—where will there be space? The ovaHimba think that they will be staying permanently and then they will give livestock to their children, who will make a cattle-post, and in the end, it will be us having to leave the place.

In contrast, local spatial practices were presented as being intertwined with a different kind of territoriality. “Herero” mobility was said to be limited only to one area and construed as contained, rational and bureaucratised. Here, then, divergent forms of pastoral land-use and translocal place-relations were an ‘arena of contestation’¹²⁶ and grounds for expressing shared belonging. Yet, rather than this being inherently about the assertion of ethnic differences and radically different land-use values, it was instead rooted in attempts to re-assert a particular normative and territorial order. In other words, these discourses were aimed at assembling solidarity within larger publics, with “Herero” mobility mirroring that of state rationality, and thus better placed to garner legitimacy. Emplacing these discourses within an ethnic idiom drew on long-standing engagements with the state (including TAs), as well as outsiders: invoking a pan-Herero solidarity that could potentially cut across the deeply seated internal political and factional divisions.

Hence, the dispute clearly generated a pronounced politics of belonging between “Herero” residents and “Himba” newcomers. It is important to emphasise, however, that in the everyday these boundaries were fluid, with both mobility and settlement navigated along intersecting axes of social and political belonging. To illustrate these dimensions, I turn briefly to two cases concerning ovaHimba newcomers whose belonging and settlement, although ambiguously situated, were not legally contested.

6.7 Integrating newcomers: The micro-politics of belonging

Locally, disputes were not necessarily about or only about conflict, but were simultaneously spaces critical for ‘enabling exchange and reciprocity’ and for identifying, establishing, and recognising ‘potential alliances through the process of reckoning relationships’.¹²⁷ This approach afforded the flexibility and fuzziness characterising group and territorial boundaries in this context, these practices being crucial for maintaining long-term relations of cooperation in drylands (also see Chapter 5). Moreover, these institutions enabled the strengthening of interwoven claims of authority and land-rights by particular clans and lineages—as newcomers could be integrated and legitimate authority relationally performed. Lastly, given the heterogeneity of patterned pastoral mobilities within Kaoko, disputes enabled situated processes of adjudication in which the norms governing rights to access could be (re)articulated in practice, including on a case-to-case basis.

Although access to pastures was a major driving force fuelling regional pastoral and household migrations, these mobilities were simultaneously motivated by other push factors, including

124 Lentz (2013: 30)

125 Translated interview, Otjomatempa, 01.02.2015.

126 Yuval-Davis (2011: 18)

127 Sullivan & Homewood (2017: 135)

interpersonal tensions between people and shared desires for autonomy. In talking with one of the ovaHimba newcomers, Kaire,¹²⁸ whose settlement was in fact accepted within Ozondundu, he proceeded to provide an example, based on his own personal experience and migration from Etanga (see Figure 6.2):

K: Why we, the ovaHimbas, have started mushrooming in this area is because we are experiencing problems in our area. Let's say you are staying at a certain place; you are born three and one is the firstborn. This first-born does not want you to stay in that place, so he always troubles you by creating conflict among you. Because you don't want to have a conflict with him you prefer to go to stay at another place—so that you can only come to visit him for a short time or when there is a family-related problem like a death. When you are leaving you ask like 10 calves to go with you, but you do not tell him the truth: that you are going because of the conflict that he is creating among you, but you rather say you met people from a certain place and asked for grazing and you have been approved. When you have come to the place you ask for permission to stay, and they first will want to know why you have moved from your place. You will tell them the story of why you want to live there. For instance, you would start telling someone that it is your relative that you have a problem with, your elder brother, and you want to start a new homestead so that you can stay alone. They will listen to you and accept you [...] [not clear] then you will be settled. So, you now go and visit him just to see their wellbeing. Some people will just move in because they have been attracted by the area by just driving through or by foot to come and visit here from Etanga. Do you know where Etanga is?

E: Yes.

K: By just passing through by car they are attracted by the beauty of the place and decide to come and stay without asking permission from the local people. After the people have realised his stay, they will ask how he came in and he will say he has asked for permission to stay but then in reality is not the truth. The said person is the one referred to as an illegal resident and he must be prosecuted. That is the situation right here why people are being chased away. Some people came in with permission and some are just sneaking in.

As emphasised, together with respecting the set social norms, the reason for requesting settlement likewise informs the integration of newcomers, with flexible belongings at work. Important here, however, was also his household's intersecting social, economic, and political locatedness and genealogy of arrival. Kaire's migration from Etanga to Ozondundu was negotiated through the patronage and livestock movements of his wife's brother, a headman from Otjihamana (close to the urban centre of Opuwo)—matrilineally related to Ozondundu's state-recognised headman (Muteze). Patron-client relations were thus often characterised by household migration by the "clients", while the "patrons" negotiated rights to access. Moreover, kin-relatedness—as a key variable in governing rights to access—intersected with socio-political affiliation and livestock wealth to open possibilities for mobility. This case was still mentioned during the dispute, which pointed to the fact that claims to residency was an ongoing process, and one that had to be negotiated over time. For instance, in hearing about the dispute, the headman from Otjihamana gifted a goat to be slaughtered for food in support of the dispute proceedings, thereby strengthening the acceptance of his herds and Kaire's household within the place.

Similarly, another case discussed during the dispute was that of Meundju, the sister of the head of a large ancestral homestead in Ozondundu. She had married an ovaHimba man from Etanga and given tendencies towards 'patrilocal postmarital residence'¹²⁹ had initially left Ozondundu. However, she returned some years before to take up the post as a primary school teacher. In so doing, she had brought livestock belonging to her, her husband, and her husband's family and thus to her affinal kin, mainly due to the severity of the drought in northern Kaoko. Given that Meundju's husband was employed in South Africa, it was her husband's family—specifically his younger, married brother—who was taking care of the livestock. Unlike other ovaHimba homesteads, Meundju's affinal kin were not asked to leave; their newcomer status was shaped by their close kin-relatedness

¹²⁸ Transcribed interview, Otjomatamba, 29.4.2015.

¹²⁹ Scelza (2011)

and the fact they followed the “right” procedures in acquiring rights to access. At the same time, their settlement status was still imbued with ambiguity, with some residents mobilising patrilocality settlement norms to contest these livestock movements and in-migration. Counter-claims relegated these tactics to *opolotika*, and attempts by some to divide resident homesteads.

Importantly, and as shown, membership in kin or clan-based groups are not “a given”, and often intersect with politico-ethnic and factional belonging to shape highly situated forms of belonging. In other words, people’s social positioning is ‘constructed along multiple axes of difference’¹³⁰—including kinship, gender, and ethnicity—with such axes co-constituting each other in shaping situated rights to use, access and/or dwelling. Moreover, ‘being an insider or an outsider is always work in progress, is permanently subject to renegotiation and is best understood as relational and situational’, with sociality and relationships being key in how ‘being and belonging are translated from abstract claims into everyday practice’.¹³¹

In this context, the boundaries between residents and newcomers were often intentionally imbued with ambiguity. This ambiguity allowed for the negotiation and re-negotiation and the reckoning of relationships.¹³² However, these practices were not devoid of power struggles, mistrust, and division—with especially the legacies of factionalism as a key generative force in place-based politics, including migration. As alluded to, interpersonal tensions combined with the pressures on pastures and land, in some instances becoming a push factor for regional migration—with persons preferring to co-reside with strangers, rather than close kin, as a means to maintain relationships over the long-term. In this case then, kin-relatedness is not always the main or even preferred relational thread opening and closing possibilities for mobility and settlement, with political affiliation and relations of patronage providing alternative migratory and co-residency pathways.

In the context of the dispute, and as shown, what eventually differentiated the contested newcomers were their claims that Herunga, as a then non-state recognised headman affiliated to a minority faction, had allocated rights to access and settlement to them, as well as their initial arrival under the guise of drought-related temporary access. In an attempt to delegitimise such practices, local leaders eventually turned to the state courts.

6.8 Negotiating and re-asserting land-rights

The opening of the legal case was motivated not only by a concern for pastures but linked with the interwoven authority and land-rights of particular groups within southern Kaoko. Specifically, it was informed by the perceived marginalisation of the former “minority”, yet economically and politically powerful group of “Herero” and Ndamuranda, and their leaders within the TA structures after Independence. Such perceptions were fuelled by the centralisation of authority and legal power through state-driven communal land reforms in the TAs.¹³³ Moreover, this situation, combined with the ongoing north-south regional migrations of ovaHimba households, located this dispute as a territorial, as much as a land and grazing, dispute.

The legal case that opened with the dispute documented here was eventually not supported by any state-recognised chiefs within the TA official structure, although it was led by a senior councillor (Muteze) of the Vita Thom Royal House TA. This situation initially weakened their case, resulting in some of those involved declaring that ‘the ovaHimba are ruling’ and that ‘all the chiefs were now ovaHimba’. In recent years, ovaHimba especially (along with other groups in Kaoko) have gained international recognition for their Indigenous rights,¹³⁴ this recognition bolstering anxieties regarding the ancestral validation of particular groups over others within southern Kaoko. Such

130 Yuval-Davis (2006: 200)

131 Nyamnjoh (2013: 670)

132 Cousins (2007: 296, 304)

133 See, for instance, Friedman (2014[2011]: 193), Werner (2018)

134 Harring (2001), Bollig & Heinemann (2002), Bollig & Berzborn (2004)

anxieties were heightened by the liberal rights engendered by the Namibian constitution. As one person¹³⁵ who was part of the subsequent legal case reiterated:

[i]t is because of rights—people are misunderstanding it and thinking that everyone has the right to move whenever she/he wants, and to settle wherever. We need procedures. First, we approached the police, then the governor's office—both of whom did not have any power to force people to move. Then we went to the Ministry's office. They also did not have the right. Everyone was referring us to the Magistrate's Court. Then we decided to look for a lawyer. A lawyer is the fastest way.

This rights-based citizenship was seen as threatening vernacular group-based rights to land, with such rights having to be established and re-established over time and through specific practices.¹³⁶

Tellingly, within the legal struggles in the High Court, several “newcomers” mobilising counterclaims, stated they did in fact follow “Himba customary law” in negotiating access-rights, specifically via councillors and headmen. Since the constitutional recognition of customary law, several state-recognised TAs have embarked on ‘law-ascertaining processes’,¹³⁷ with the Otjikaoko and the Vita Thom Royal House TAs participating in this project.¹³⁸ In invoking specifically “Himba” customary law, however, the claimants were also mobilising political identities that held traction within wider publics at state and global levels.

Despite appeals, the defendants involved were eventually legally instructed to leave the areas concerned, with the court ruling that ‘no councillor, on his own, had the right to grant such a permission’ (meaning the allocation of customary land-rights), and that such rights had to be allocated in written form and ratified by Regional Communal Land Boards.¹³⁹ This ruling thus succeeded in supporting the situated adjudication outcomes in Ozondundu to some degree, especially the assertion that decisions to allocate land-rights or settlement had to be taken collectively.

At the centre of this case was the interwoven struggles over authority, belonging and land. The question of who has the authority to settle and integrate newcomers is integral to the question of establishing and re-establishing “customary” land-rights over the long-term, and the politics of autochthony is often mobilised to contest and (de)legitimise specific authority relations. For many lineages associated with the former Herero and Ndamuranda section, re-establishing their legitimate claims to authority was considered crucial in a context where historically such claims were called into question by designating these groups as “outsiders” on a regional level. With the tendencies of the CLRA to centralise legal power within the state-recognised TAs and chiefs, local land-use communities and their leaders were concerned this could lead to their marginalisation (and perhaps the loss of economic and political power), including through an eventual loss of cultural and ancestral land-claims. This fear was also driving the fragmentation of TAs into additional sections, as different local groups struggled for recognition, autonomy, and land-rights.¹⁴⁰

Apart from turning to the state courts, conservancies were a powerful tool for (re)asserting and legitimising interwoven authority and land-rights, with those longer in residence having gained registered membership over time. To provide an example: at the beginning of 2016, and as the legal case and local struggles stretched on, there was a rumour that ovaHimba homesteads in the Anabeb Conservancy wanted to establish their own conservancy. I met with a resident¹⁴¹ who explained:

K: They [the Himba newcomers] are not members of the conservancy, we did not permit them because they did not ask, and they settled illegally. They are troubling us, look at how they are dividing places by force. Therefore, they said they have been here for 10 years so they must be accepted. We told them even if you have resided for 10 or five years you are strangers here and you were not permitted to stay

135 Translated interview, Omaso 1, 22.4.2015.

136 Lentz (2007: 38)

137 Hinz (2008: 84)

138 Hinz (2016)

139 Miyamoto (2022: 22)

140 Miyamoto (2022)

141 Transcribed interview, Khowarib, 17.4.2016.

here. We have said you must go back where you came from and come and follow the correct procedures to be members of the conservancy, you will not benefit here because you are strangers here and you don't have legal papers from your headman, so you are just strangers.

E: Meaning that they have to take all their livestock back first and then come back to ask?

K: Yes, legally, is what we are saying but they don't understand.

When you are legally permitted you will be monitored for five years and another five years to see how you will behave yourself, then you will go to the office and be registered and when you are coming from there you will have to provide a clearance that you have left the other conservancy and you want to become a member of the new one, e.g. if you are coming from Opuwo you must be accompanied by a letter stating that you have been a member of that conservancy and now you are coming to join another one.

By refusing conservancy membership, the newcomer ovaHimba homesteads were symbolically excluded and relegated to ongoing strangerhood and non-belonging (also see Chapter 3). This was despite having resided here for more than five years, the legal time period required to apply for formal conservancy membership.¹⁴² Here, then, despite conservancies having no legal traction regarding tenure, conservancy membership was mobilised as a tool to formalise residency, as well as to reassert the social norms and rules governing rights to access, including “legitimate” authority relations. As noted by the interlocutor, ‘you must go back where you came from and come and follow the correct procedures’. Conservancy committees, who are locally re-elected every third year and based on democratic principles, including gender equality, remain embedded within broader institutional contexts. For instance, it has been shown that committee members, and especially managers, should be considered residents, with both personal and political identities tied to local authority structures.¹⁴³ These institutions have thus emerged as additional arenas (together with local headmen and their councillors) through which the integration of newcomers are socially legitimised or delegitimised, depending on shifting configurations of power and authority, locally and regionally.

Consequently, as shown throughout this chapter, claims to land and land-based resources within this context cannot be established by force or conflict alone.¹⁴⁴ Such claims rely on cultural and social legitimisation, including through building alliances, solidarity, and consensus over time, by drawing on both “customary” and “state” law. Apart from social norms and state laws governing the negotiation of rights to access, another crucial element is the reckoning of relationships and the negotiation of one’s intersecting social and political belonging. On the one hand, this involved practices of arrival in which resident households were acknowledged and rights to access were allocated through “legitimate” authority relations. On the other hand, it meant navigating one’s migration through networks and alliances considered legitimate, including by those who held social and political power within places.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter drew on a situational analysis of a land and grazing dispute to explore the interwoven politics of authority, belonging and mobility in shaping customary land-rights in southern Kaoko. In doing so, I traced how both overlapping historical (and colonially induced) migrations, and their embeddedness within the legacy of a factional dynamic, historically divided shared land-use communities. Moreover, these divisions were finding political expression within national party politics, as rural places and conservancies struggled for development, recognition and representation within the post-Independent state, including with and through the TAs.¹⁴⁵ This

¹⁴² Kalvelage *et al.* (2021: 285)

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 286

¹⁴⁴ Lentz (2007: 42)

¹⁴⁵ Friedman (2014[2011])

situation pointed to how, within Kaoko, many places were still marked by the institutional and interpersonal legacies of colonial indirect rule and the liberation conflict, including in terms of sociality within shared land-use communities: especially pronounced in contested places such as Otjomatamba whose territorial integration into larger jurisdiction areas, and by extension politics, were disputed.

Given larger transformations in regional migration patterns and an ongoing drought, the settling and integration of newcomers became caught up within these place-based politics over authority and belonging. Some migrating households and herders however also tactically navigated internal antagonisms as well as the drought-related temporary affordances made by communities. At the same time, local political actors leveraged the integration of newcomers to bolster their intersecting ritual and political authority and power. Likewise, TAs and chiefs sometimes leveraged these processes on a regional level, including through political party belonging, to claim additional territory. In the end, however, such practices were seen as sowing mistrust and more division, with local land-use communities mobilising to re-assert social norms governing rights to access, and by taking legal action. This dispute foregrounds the ongoing importance of decentralised land governance, including collective deliberation within places, both for the allocation of land-access, as well as the establishment or re-establishment of ancestral land-rights, over the long-term.

Moreover, in focusing on the dispute, this chapter has illustrated how ‘customary tenure rules and institutions were, and continue to be, subject to multiple interpretations and claims, and are in themselves characterized by legal pluralism’.¹⁴⁶ In other words, there is a plurality inherent in living customary law, and these norms are struggled over in practice, including regarding the political and social embeddedness of customary land-rights as ‘a complex bundle of rights’.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, underpinning these practices over socially legitimate occupation and use rights in the legally pluralistic context of southern Kaoko are ‘the multifaceted relational processes at the core of normative change: the normative comparisons that are made, the linkages to normative publics that are sought—and which of these can successfully induce solidarity’.¹⁴⁸ These processes include the post-Independent state and the TAs as crucial sources of ancestral validation, rights and authority, as well as ongoing grass-roots processes of building new political formations, politics and belonging.

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¹⁴⁶ Lentz (2007: 43)

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Eckert (2012: 165)

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7. The emergence of a hybrid hydro-scape in northern Kunene

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Abstract

This chapter shifts from land and boundaries to consider the management of water in “Etosha-Kunene”, and specifically the materiality of infrastructures linked to water resource management and its social-ecological implications. In north-western Namibia a unique “hydro-scape” has emerged. Before the 1950s, the area was characterised by the scarcity of permanent water places and sources. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, the then-ruling South African administration drilled hundreds of boreholes in the region as part of its apartheid “homeland” policy and “modernisation” impetus. Initially, local leaders and traditional authorities rejected the idea of water development through borehole drilling; many felt that once such a complex and expensive infrastructure was operational, the state was there to stay as the guarantor of water infrastructures providing the basic hydro-infrastructure for vast herds of livestock. Since 1990, the independent Namibian state continued the borehole-drilling programme, especially as part of its drought-management approach. From the 1990s onwards, responsibility for maintaining the above-ground infrastructure of boreholes was transferred to local pastoral communities. Nonetheless, the state once again expanded its reach as material water infrastructures opened the door for national and global governance regimes which increasingly permeated communities, even as the state began to “withdraw” through community-based management policies. The result is a dynamic bricolage of institutions shaped by different practices, power relations, norms, and values. Nowadays, local communities reliably maintain water supply, but not always on an equitable basis for all users.

7.1 Introduction

Political ecology approaches have made lasting contributions to comprehending multiscale power structures and processes shaping global resource struggles and environmental changes at different temporal and spatial scales.¹ Recent contributions have argued for engaging with non-human agencies and thus paying attention to the critical role of materialities and technological artefacts in these processes.² Still, the role of infrastructures in shaping human-environment interrelations, power relationships, and state-local interactions—especially in marginal environments—has received little attention.³ Likewise, the common-pool resources literature and institutional theory have recognised the influence of technologies (fisher nets, fences, etc.) in guaranteeing sustainable resource use. All the same, this body of research has neglected the political motivations and long-term implications of placing infrastructures in a specific landscape for the co-production of socio-political institutions and ecologies.⁴ This chapter thus takes the historical construction and making of a peculiar hydro-scape within north-western Namibia as a starting point to shed light on the role of infrastructure in co-shaping emerging power and social-ecological relations, and local resource management institutions.

1 Stott & Sullivan (2000), Neumann (2014), Robbins (2019)

2 Bennett (2010), Anand (2011), Ingold (2012), von Schnitzler (2013)

3 Bryant (2015), Perreault *et al.* (2015)

4 cf. Ostrom (1990), Agrawal (2003), Lambert *et al.* (2021)

Drawing on archival sources and long-term ethnographic fieldwork, the first part of this contribution (Sections 7.2 to 7.6) traces some aspects of the negotiation and eventual construction of a dense network of borehole infrastructures in the Kaokoland Communal Land Area (northern Kunene Region), by the colonial and post-colonial state from the early 1950s onwards.⁵ In so doing, it depicts how the South African administration introduced boreholes in the former South West Africa (SWA) following a twofold aim: i) to sedentarise the local population and expand its presence within this borderland territory; and ii) to increase the economic output of, and to modernise, livestock-rearing practices through what was termed ‘material development’.⁶ Initially, this borehole drilling programme and associated infrastructure were not welcomed, and were heftily opposed and resisted by local leaders. With time, however, competing chiefs and headmen soon realised that boreholes could be a powerful instrument through which to expand and root their own land claims, regulate access rights to pastures, and develop patron-client relationships and positions of power within a contested political environment⁷ (also see Chapter 6). Thus, the expansion of the state became a process partly facilitated and appropriated “from below”. The eventual implementation of the programme and the drilling of hundreds of boreholes over the next four decades radically transformed the local hydro-scape. This operation deeply impacted the form of local institutions, land relations, and pastoral economies, changing subsistence and mobility patterns and social ecologies in lasting ways.

The second part of this contribution (Sections 7.7 and 7.8) shows that the current hydro-scape is simultaneously a colonial and a post-colonial manifestation, as borehole infrastructures continued to be introduced in the region after 1990. In this section, we argue that in the post-Independence era, these infrastructures have come to play a central role in constructing a post-independent and post-apartheid state. The borehole infrastructures co-produce a new sort of neoliberal citizenship by “handing over”—to use the government’s words—responsibility for the basic operation and maintenance of the water infrastructure to local actors, or rather, “communities”.⁸ However, the specific borehole materialities, their historicity, and the demands of boreholes fitted with different technologies in diverse socio-ecological settings, defied the ideal of state retraction embodied by initial water reforms. Before we describe the extensive introduction of borehole infrastructures in the region, Section 7.2 provides a short discussion of Kunene’s previous and inherited waterscapes and management situation.

7.2 Water relations and governance before the introduction of borehole infrastructures

Before introducing numerous mechanical boreholes in the region, natural springs, ephemeral rivers, seasonal pans, rock pools, and hand-dug wells in riverbeds were the key water sources. Rights to access and use of these different seasonal and permanent sources were socially embedded in culturally informed institutions governing shared access to land and pastures (also see Chapters 6, 12, 13 and 14). At the same time, and historically, claiming ownership over more productive and permanent water-places was central to local contestations over territory, power and authority, especially within a context of overlapping group migrations into the region.

In pre-colonial northern Kaokoland, and for the most part of the German colonial period, places with relatively good water availability were usually “owned” or under the guardianship of wealthy otjiHerero-speaking pastoral households descending from immigrant pastoralists (nowadays

5 This area constituted the Kaokoland “homeland” from the introduction of apartheid policies by the South African colonial administration in the 1960s until Independence in 1990 (see Chapter 2).

6 See van Wolputte (2007)

7 *Ibid.*, Bollig (2013, 2020)

8 Also see Sullivan (1996: 47–51)

generally known as ovaHimba and ovaHerero). Headed by men (usually the most senior man in a patrilineage), they were addressed as *oveni vehi*, owners or guardians of the earth/land:⁹ although see Chapter 1 for more historical and cultural complexity for Namibia's north-west. Amongst the otjiHerero-speakers focused on in this chapter, claims to being *oveni vehi* were usually related to histories and genealogies of first settlement and ritually enacted first-comer status¹⁰ (see Chapter 6). Other land and water using households were related matrilineally or patrilineally to these *oveni vehi*, or were tied to them through patron-client relationships.¹¹ This patrilineage-place relation was given an historical dimension through the presence of ancestral homesteads and graves at which remembrance rituals were regularly performed; as well as other practices, such as the performances of place-based praise poetry and “oral knowledge” of past household and group migrations.¹² In addition, water-sources such as hand-dug wells were essential in embedding kin and ancestral relations within the landscape. It was usually the senior men from a particular household and patrilineage who dug the wells, their households claiming exclusive rights to use or allocate access to such sources.¹³ These wells involved investing significant physical labour yet relatively little social coordination costs (for digging and day-to-day management). Hence, during this time, a small, clearly defined and closely related group of households were using water and managing surrounding dryland pastures conjointly.¹⁴

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were no clearly identifiable chieftaincies in northern Kunene. Wealthy and spatially mobile *ovahona* (herders wealthy in cattle) and clients attached to them temporarily gained primacy in one place, but might move on to another place in the context of a drought.¹⁵ In addition, during the latter part of the 19th century Boer settler communities—the Dorsland trekkers—temporarily (1879–1880) stayed in Kaokoveld at Otjitundua and Kaoko Otavi springs, later moving to south-west Angola.¹⁶ From there they launched large-scale commercial elephant hunting expeditions into the northern Kaokoveld almost every year between 1898 and 1908 (also see Chapter 1). Local people hunted mainly for subsistence but were also involved in this form of ivory trade as carriers of ivory tusks.¹⁷ Within this context, permanent water-places became an increasingly important ‘social and political resource’¹⁸ for claiming territories, and as hubs for agricultural production and for commercial hunting expeditions.¹⁹ These places were often claimed through the ownership of firearms which, due to the raiding and hunting economy in existence during this time, had become important technologies for securing power and wealth.²⁰

From 1910 onwards an ‘extremely complex set of relations [was] developing’²¹ between the different autonomous groups occupying the areas from Sesfontein north to the Kunene River. This complexity gained momentum through the return of powerful, wealthy “warlords” and their followers from southern Angola—many of whom had fled there due to *ovaKuenta* (Oorlam/Nama) cattle-raids and colonial wars (discussed further in Chapters 1 and 6). These re-migrations increased markedly after 1910, when Angola’s administration changed from military to civil rule, and as German colonial rule in Namibia came to an end in 1915 (see Chapters 1 and 2). One group under the leader Harunga Vita (“Oorlog”) Thom, which had their main settlement at Otjiyandjasemo—a

9 Bollig & Menestrey Schwieger (2014: 168)

10 Olwage (2022)

11 *Ibid.*

12 Bleckmann (2012), Rizzo (2012)

13 Olwage (2022)

14 Schnegg & Bollig (2016: 63)

15 Rizzo (2012: 81)

16 Jacobsohn (1995: 25)

17 Bollig & Olwage (2016)

18 van Wolputte (2006)

19 Rizzo (2012)

20 *Ibid.*

21 Bollig (1998a: 182)

place with very good spring water—emerged as a politically powerful minority group after 1910.²² Upon returning to the Kaokoveld, Thom competed for wealth, power, and resources in a context of already established powerful leaders.²³

During the German colonial period (1884–1915), the colonial administration did not have a significant direct influence on the resource governance of northern Kunene, a situation that changed radically with the South African colonial government (1920–1990). One of the new SWA administration's first measures was to identify and install three regional chiefs—Vita Thom, Muhona Katiti and Kakurukouye—each perceived to be representative of different “ethnic” groups in Kaoko, with each ruling over a specific “native reserve”:²⁴ Vita Thom was leader of the “Herero”, Muhona Katiti of the “Himba”, and Kakurukouye of the “Tjimba” sections (also see Chapter 2). As noted above, the authority of these men was not exclusively based on genealogical legitimisation as land “owners”: they were (fearfully) respected due to their access to arms and livestock wealth. These chiefs nominated councillors or headmen who supported them, establishing a hierarchical and male-dominated tribal administration.²⁵ The initial favouring of Vita Thom and his followers and the designation of this group as “Herero” by the colonial administration, fuelled existing rivalries and set the stage for future political rifts, divisiveness and struggles over power, territory and resources.²⁶ Many of these “traditional” authorities under the designated chiefs were also wealthy herders who competed not only for state recognition, but also for territorial control at the local level (see Section 7.4).

Despite institutionalising structures of indirect rule, throughout the 1930s and 1940s the colonial state hardly attempted to intervene in rangeland management.²⁷ In contrast, most governmental efforts and resources were directed at developing the “white” settler agricultural economy.²⁸ This situation changed a few years after the rise to power of the National Party in South Africa in 1948 and the official introduction of apartheid state policy and ideology, including in the then SWA. Material development in the guise of “modernisation” entered the political discourse on “native reserve” and later “homeland” policy. This discourse, albeit framed in terms of “development”, became instrumental in segregating and institutionalising structures aimed at controlling the “black” population and the landscapes they inhabited²⁹ (see also Chapter 2). Boreholes and water development in northern Kunene were introduced within this changing and contested political landscape.

7.3 The emergence of the hydraulic paradigm

The introduction of water infrastructure in today's northern Kunene Region was embedded in a broader set of initiatives of the South African colonial administration to bring “development” (“*ontwikkeling*”) and modernisation to the then African reserves from the 1950s onwards.³⁰ This change coincided with the declaration of northern Kaokoveld as an “independent” reserve in 1947—placed under the direct authority of the Chief Native Commissioner in Windhoek in 1957—and the onset of apartheid rule in Namibia.³¹ The introduction of boreholes was also strongly influenced by scientific publications on the region from the 1950s onwards, and international pressure on the

22 *Ibid.*, Gewald (2011)

23 Bollig (1998b), Rizzo (2012)

24 Bollig (1998a)

25 Friedman (2011)

26 *Ibid.*, Bleckmann (2012)

27 cf. Menestrey Schwieger & Mbidzo (2020)

28 Botha (2013)

29 van Wolputte (2006)

30 van Wolputte (2007), Friedman (2011)

31 Bollig (2011)

South African colonial administration to justify its ongoing colonisation of the territory.³² South Africa needed to legitimise its annexation of Namibia after refusing to convert its mandate over the territory into a United Nations (UN) trusteeship. Therefore, a series of commission reports laid down the concepts of “trusteeship” and “guardianship” as principles of administration within African native reserves, later expanded as homelands. Based on these principles, intervention by the state to promote development became mandatory.³³

Concrete recommendations to increase sustainable agricultural output by introducing boreholes in SWA reserves were prominently formulated by South African soil conservation experts who visited the territory in 1951. They strongly argued in favour of more water points to facilitate a rotational grazing system based on camp structures.³⁴ Given that boreholes had been drilled in great numbers and with significant state subsidies on white-owned farms in the 1920s and 1930s, this was not a genuinely innovative technological measure; although ideas to systematically expand these measures to African reserves with substantial capital input, were new. It was also unique that the state would provide a complete infrastructure, own it, and manage it in these areas. In contrast, boreholes on settler and white-owned farms were owned and operated by respective farm owners, despite major state subsidies.³⁵

In the Kaokoland Native Reserve, recommendations for hydrological development were formulated in a letter written in April 1952 by Native Commissioner Eedes in the then Ovamboland, to the Chief Native Commissioner in Windhoek. Eedes argued that concerted development aid would help to ‘uplift’ pastoralists. More boreholes in their areas would lower stocking densities, and more numerous and better-nourished livestock would bring more money to the community and, by extension, development. These arguments gained more prominence as plans for labour export from the Kaokoveld were thwarted a few years later. In 1954 the recruiting office for labour in Opuwo finally closed due to lack of success: the Kaokoveld was no longer regarded as a labour reserve; the future, in the eyes of the administration, now lay in improvement of livestock husbandry. Until then, restrictions on livestock movements and trade across boundaries (which cleared the Kunene Valley of any settlement), as well as vaccination campaigns and measures directed against fire management, had been the main state-driven transformations of social-ecological relations and pastoral economies within the region. None of these changes brought significant new infrastructure.³⁶

Eventually, in 1955, the Chief Native Commissioner made water development a priority task for the administration in the “native reserves” of northern Namibia. He had urged officers to take account of unused lands and asked them to consider whether such lands could be used productively if provided with boreholes:

[w]ater provisioning will, of course, be the most prominent item of the development that has been considered. In this context, it is only required to indicate the number of water points, estimated 8 to 10 miles apart, which would be necessary for the normal demands of the region, taking into account the number of livestock and the availability of land that has not been used yet or not used to its full capacity.³⁷

This policy, oriented towards developing and constructing a new hydro-scape, was initially resisted by pre-Independence traditional authorities and powerful local actors, many of whom were suspicious of the state’s intentions. As pointed out by van Wolputte³⁸ and Bollig,³⁹ their suspicions

32 Bollig (2013: 322)

33 Bollig (1998c)

34 NAN, SWAA 1068, A138/22, C. Ross and J.C Fick, *Report on visit to South West Africa*, Section Soil Conservation and Extension, 31.7.1951.

35 Botha (2000)

36 Bollig (2020)

37 NAN BAC HN5/1/3/18 Kantoer van die Hoofnaturellekommissaris, WDK Naturellesake Omsendbrief Nr. 17 of 1955, 26.8.1955, translated from Afrikaans.

38 (2006)

39 (2013)

were not unfounded as this programme was meant not only to modernise local livestock husbandry, but also to win local support within a larger context of organised resistance against colonial rule.

7.4 Local opposition to development⁴⁰

Van Wolputte⁴¹ reports on a meeting of the local administration with chiefs in which administrative officials attempted to appease the local population who had decided to boycott government initiatives to provide new water points. Traditional authorities voiced their concern that they might become indebted to the government and that the government could claim further land in compensation from them later on. In the late 1950s, leaders rejected a governmental donation of R25,000,⁴² which was meant to spur the borehole drilling programme.

In a meeting in January 1961, the then Native Commissioner Eaton blamed the chiefs in a highly frustrated manner: *‘[e]k verstaan julle will nie die verbeterings hê nie’* (‘I understand you do not want any improvements’). In a meeting in March 1962, an ovaHerero chief openly exclaimed they did not want any money from the “minister” for borehole drilling asserting: *‘ons kan vir ons self sorg’* (‘we can look after ourselves’). While other ovaHerero leaders agreed and contended that they could provide sufficient money to drill boreholes themselves,⁴³ “Himba” and “Tjimba” chiefs disagreed as to what extent monetary help by the government was acceptable. While some agreed with the flat refusal of government assistance, others, such as the prominent ovaHimba leader Munimuhoro Kapika, asserted that they needed further boreholes and that if the government could help it should do so. However, many local leaders were afraid to provide more space for the administration’s engagement in what they perceived as internal affairs. They clearly saw the drilling of boreholes would make them dependent on the government. Potentially, it would entrap them within an infrastructure provided and maintained by an oppressive and segregated state. At the same time, local negotiations over water development were taking place within a context of growing political fragmentation and rifts, partly fuelled by the colonial administration.

Friedman⁴⁴ has illustrated how, during the 1940s, the administration contributed to the ambiguity surrounding “Himba” and “Tjimba” leaders, by undermining their authority and status within the Kaokoland Tribal Council, as opposed to the clear position of “Herero” leaders: such practices fuelled tensions and gave rise to strongly opposing ‘politico-ethnic formations’ and groups. By the early to mid-1970s, tensions between opposing factions spiralled out of control and a violent regional conflict broke out in 1974⁴⁵ (also see Chapter 6). This conflict was not only about collaboration with the colonial government, but also ‘about power, in which contested rights over leadership, pastures, or poaching territories, and later, the socioeconomic supremacy over the trade monopoly (by the “Herero” section) in Kaoko played an important role’.⁴⁶

The later part of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, however, brought a crucial turn in colonial water policies. Local opposition waned as political actors realised that boreholes could be a socio-political instrument through which they might cement their chiefly power, and expand territories or claim autonomy from larger chieftaincies for shared land use communities. Local chiefs and (later) headmen were given the authority to decide where boreholes should be placed. They could develop

40 This section draws on a chapter in Bollig (2020: 163–70) where more detail on the initial resistance to the borehole-drilling programme is given.

41 (2004: 152)

42 The South African rand (ZAR) was the currency of South West Africa during the 1950s, to be replaced by the Namibian dollar (NAD) —pegged to the rand—after Independence.

43 NAN BOP 5 N1/15/6/8 Notule van Vergadering met Hoofmanne, 20 to 23 Maart 1962. Adriaan Karipose: ‘We have our own money and this will support us. We shall make water (i.e. drill boreholes) from the money in our account’ (translated from Afrikaans).

44 (2007, 2011)

45 Bleckmann (2012)

46 *Ibid.*, p. 142. In this context it is important to note that subsistence hunting practices were declared as poaching by the colonial administration (see Section 7.9).

pastures according to their own and their followers' wishes, claim ownership over specific water points, and, by extension, territories. The specific materiality of the borehole infrastructure also provided a pervasiveness and presence in the landscape not previously afforded by wells, which could only be dug in specific places (e.g. riverbeds). Hence, boreholes provided a new technology for expanding and rooting place-based settlement histories and both ritual and political authority (see Section 7.2).⁴⁷

7.5 Borehole-drilling and the expansion of state administration⁴⁸

Since the early 1960s, the administration endorsed and drilled several boreholes a year. A major drought in the late 1950s/early 1960s made the situation more urgent from the administration's perspective. It also convinced administrators that the government should finance borehole-drilling and not wait for contributions from the *stamfonds* (homeland trust fund) of Kaokoland's chiefs.

The Odendaal Commission, which visited the region in the early 1960s, focused its discussions almost entirely on the issue of boreholes. Unsurprisingly, the finalised Odendaal Report⁴⁹ recommended boreholes as crucial to economic development in the Kaokoveld.⁵⁰ Water was regarded as the fundamental resource for a rapidly growing population and had to be exploited with new technological means. The immense bureaucratic fervour of the drilling programme, which got off the ground in 1962–1963, was remarkable.⁵¹ Each borehole was registered in a complex way: communication in the planning phase and data on the actual drilling, depth (in some cases more than a hundred metres), and test-pumping to establish yield, were carefully filed. Likewise, communication on the tenders for fitting boreholes with pipes and adequate pump systems was documented in detail.⁵² Money for boreholes was entered into yearly budgets of the administration from the early 1960s onwards. For the year 1962, for example, some R20,000 was budgeted for new boreholes (drilling plus fitting).⁵³ For each borehole, a detailed geological evaluation was conducted—this was, at least, what the regulations required. In reality, however, the process was relatively swift and often did not consider ecological concerns. Sometimes boreholes were even drilled against the judgement of officials. In a letter written in August 1962, the Chief Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek expressed his understanding of an official's reluctance to give orders for drilling a borehole that chief Muinimuhoro had applied for. The official had voiced ecological considerations as an argument against this borehole. However, his superior argued that 'in this time of unrest'⁵⁴ it was of the greatest importance not to give the local communities any pretext to criticise the government. He feared they could use the denial of a borehole for propaganda against the colonial administration.

Boreholes were drilled in large numbers in Kaokoveld throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The ideal administrative process ran as follows: at the beginning of the year, the agricultural office in Windhoek detailed how many boreholes could be drilled with the funds available. The actual decision about where boreholes were drilled was left to the local administrative staff in Opuwo. There was never a comprehensive plan detailing where boreholes should strategically be sunk

47 For more examples, see Olwage (2022)

48 This section draws on a chapter in Bollig (2020: 170–78) where administrative measures to roll out and administer the borehole-drilling programme are described in more detail.

49 (1964)

50 In 1963 a first scientific report on boreholes was compiled (Blom, L. Horn J. K. Linning, P. Meyer n.d. [probably 1963] Boorplekke Kaokoveld), accessible at the Namibian National Archive. NAN BAC HN5/1/3/18.

51 NAN BAC HN5/1/3/18 has numerous files on the planning, registration and tendering of boreholes.

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Ibid.*

54 NAN BAC HN5/1/3/18 Hoofbantoekommissaris van SWA an Administratiewe Beampite Ohopoho, 27.8. 1962, translated from Afrikaans.

to provide maximum grazing at a sustainable level. Local chiefs applied to the Department of Water Affairs to place a borehole in their area. Local officials then consulted them to identify an optimal location.⁵⁵ Usually, chiefs brought up their wishes in the meetings with the administration. They requested boreholes for existing cattle posts and permanent settlement places to replace or complement wells. But the installation of many others followed this simple reasoning: wherever there was still some grass left, a borehole offered the chance to expand livestock husbandry and increased the options of a chief to attract followers and incorporate territories.

In the 1960s and 1970s, requests for more boreholes took up considerable time during the formal meetings of the administration with local chiefs. The chiefs usually tried to convince the administration to fit the borehole with a diesel engine, which increases the yield. However, the administration often opted for wind-pumps, the cheaper solution, for this technology did not imply providing diesel regularly to the communities. Additionally, borehole infrastructures usually include a reservoir for storing the pumped water and one or two drinking troughs. Chiefs from different group factions often competed for boreholes, and an administrator in the late 1970s voiced his concern that water development was indeed what the traditional leaders were after and what tied them closer to the state apparatus:

[i]t is obvious that “water” is the central concern of the chiefs and all ask for “water” [development] [...] The development of boreholes and the maintenance of water supply infrastructure is of the utmost importance to gain the trust of local inhabitants.⁵⁶

For many years, and into the present, the Water Affairs Department has been the most populous administrative section in order to deal with the immense bureaucracy involved in drilling boreholes. The Water Affairs officer in Opuwo tried to match a list of applications for boreholes handed in by chiefs to his budget and finally decided which applications were to be approved. Geologists established the exact location of each borehole. The Department of Water Affairs tendered the drilling, and a contractor came to sink the boreholes. It employed a white superintendent and 60 African workers who earned R50 to R80 monthly. While drilling a borehole and fitting equipment were tendered out on behalf of the Ministry for Agriculture, the Department of Water Affairs ran the maintenance of the infrastructure and provision of diesel for engine pumps.⁵⁷

The registration of boreholes by the administration also included a quick estimate of their hydrological potential.⁵⁸ The suitability of wells was judged by looking at their potential contribution to livestock husbandry and from a local political perspective. Loyal chiefs were rewarded with boreholes; through them, they could show their followers they could beneficially influence the administration.

In the 1950s, 43 boreholes were drilled in total. All of them were located around Opuwo or to the south-east of it, reflecting the easy accessibility of these places and close contact between administration and traditional authorities from these areas. During the 1960s, another 136 boreholes were sunk, and in the 1970s, 128 boreholes were installed. The Kaokoveld was now covered with a network of boreholes, some equipped with wind pumps, some with motor-driven pumps, and others with hand pumps. In the 1980s, another 57 boreholes were added, and drilling continued well into the 1990s (see Figure 7.1). Apart from the administration’s use of the borehole programme to win local trust, bolster the authority of chiefs, and support access to pastures, it also became a tool for socio-spatial segregation. According to van Wolputte,⁵⁹ ‘whereas roads, for instance, were forcibly constructed to facilitate control over homesteads, people and animals, water holes were

55 The late Garth Owen-Smith, former Agricultural Officer, pers. comm., Weltevrede, April 2012.

56 NAN BOP 5 N1/15/4/1 Notes of a meeting, Versammlung am 13.11.1978, translated from Afrikaans.

57 Bollig (2020: 175)

58 NAN BOP 5 N1/15/4/1 Notes of a meeting on the 13.11.1978.

59 (2007: 107)

used as a strategy to separate the different groups inhabiting the northern Kunene region'; the goal was to fix the 'Ovahimbas in the north, Hereros in the south and Ovatjimbas in the north-west'.⁶⁰

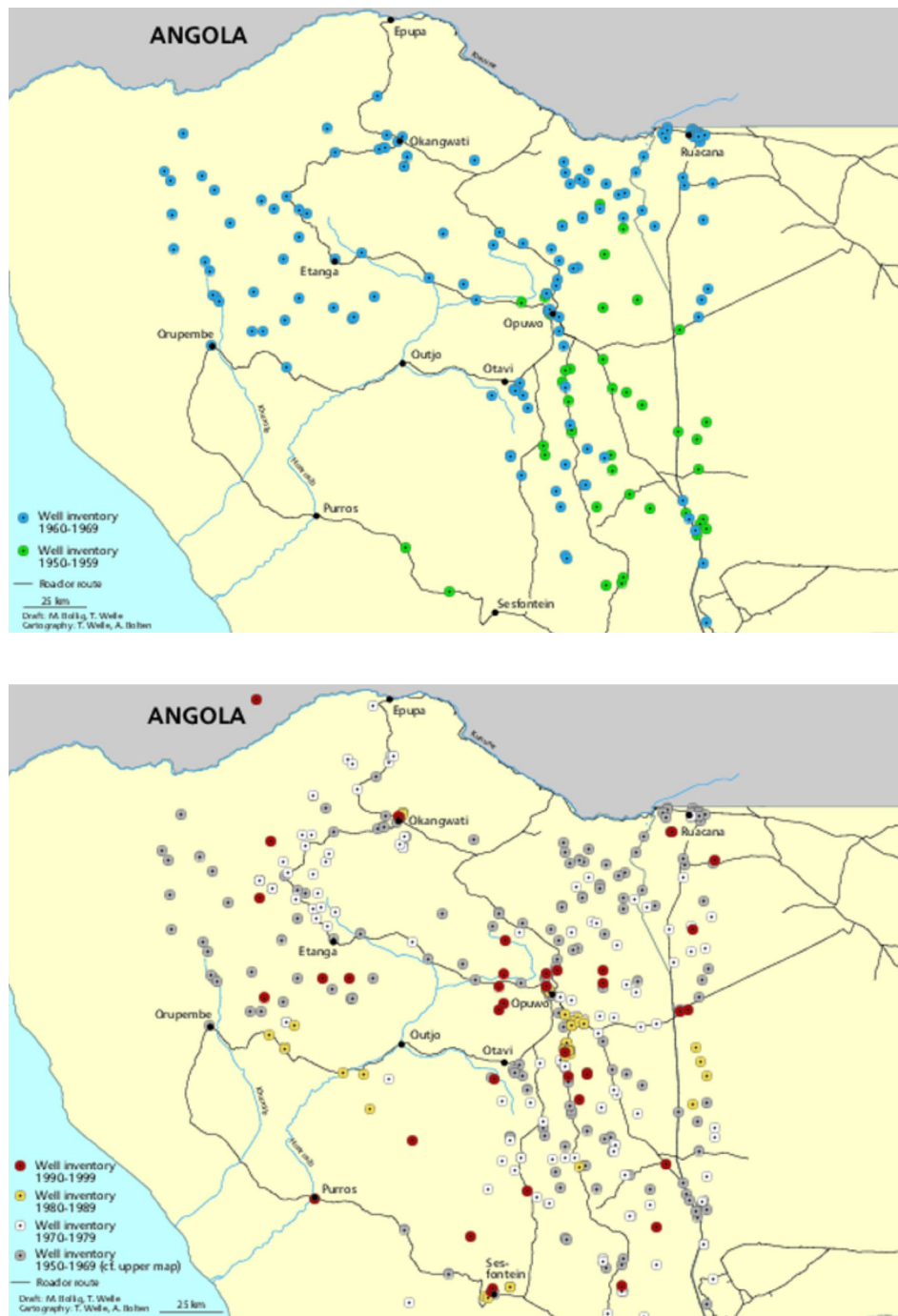


Fig. 7.1 Map of boreholes established in the 1950s and 1960s (above), and map of all boreholes established until 1999 (below). Source: Authors' database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

7.6 Consequences: Changing patterns of mobility and related institutions, rangeland vegetation, tenure, and livestock numbers

The impact of the borehole drilling programme on social-ecological interactions and local place-relations was profound. Boreholes were the first enduring material evidence of the state in much of

⁶⁰ van Wolputte (2006: 464)

the Kaokoveld landscape, inextricably linked to the extension of a network of bush roads and paths. New roads into the veld had to be bulldozed and maintained to drill and service these boreholes. At the end of the 1970s, nearly all settled places were connected by roads and were accessible by the administration. Figure 7.1 shows that the development of the hydro-scape was unequal: the eastern part from north to south received more boreholes than the west, except for the area around Etanga. The south-western part of the Kaokoveld from Orupembe towards Sesfontein received the least number of boreholes. In other words, the state gradually expanded into northern Kunene through a network of roads and boreholes that effectively and irrevocably transformed the local social-ecological system.⁶¹ At the same time, it provided an entirely new infrastructure fitted with mechanical pump technologies, which tied mobile livestock producers to a state-controlled hydrological system.

This implementation of a new hydrological infrastructure had three pertinent consequences with regards to natural resource management and environment: 1) a rapid and profound increase in livestock numbers; 2) a transformation of mobile land-relations and regional migration patterns; and 3) changes in institutions linked to natural resource and land management.

Livestock numbers increased throughout the 1950s and, after a major drought in the late 1950s/early 1960s, nearly tripled by the early 1970s (see Figure 7.2). Although rainfall dynamics (linked to primary productivity) show a strong relationship with increased livestock numbers in certain years, it is tempting to link increases in livestock numbers to the introduction of the borehole drilling programme during and after the 1950s.

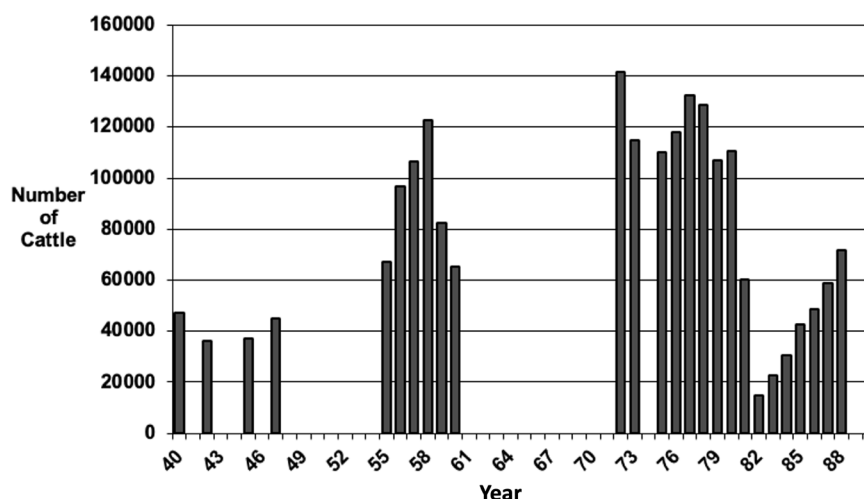


Fig. 7.2 Graph showing the dynamics of cattle herds in Kaokoveld between 1940 and 1990. Source: Created by chapter authors from data held by the Veterinary Extension Service at Namibia's Ministry of Agriculture (no data for the missing years could be obtained), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Developing a network of boreholes in former dry-season grazing areas between the 1960s and the 1970s led to a reversal of previous mobility patterns and land relations. Before the 1950s, herds had stayed close to few permanent water points, like wells and springs, for most of the year. Herds moved to outlying pastures only during the rainy season, using seasonal pans and streams. As soon as these seasonal water sources had dried up, they had to return to the permanent water points. With mechanical boreholes capable of supplying water throughout the year, herds could instead remain in the former rainy-season areas during the long dry season, as they were no longer dependent on rainwater. Therefore, boreholes made much broader areas accessible for grazing and settlement.

⁶¹ Bollig (2020: 193–95)

Consequently, new local rules had to be negotiated and developed in many parts of Kaokoveld to address questions about regulating access to these newly won pastures and land, including in regard to sustainability. The administration began to implement administrative reforms along with the infrastructural developments. In conjunction with the drilling of boreholes, the administration divided Kaokoland into separate neighbourhoods, eventually creating 36 so-called ‘wards’ (*otjiwyke*) (see also Chapter 6). These wards were to be administered by 36 state-salaried “Himba”, “Herero” and “Tjimba” headman and sub-headman, who were incorporated into larger chieftaincies. This mapping of wards was facilitated both by the borehole drilling programme and the parallel construction of a large network of roads.⁶²

Locally, the rules of good grazing (*ozondunino yomaryo*) evolved in the course of the 1970s as a reaction to implementing the borehole programme. Prefiguring the later institution of Auxiliary Game Guards (AGGs) and Community Game Guards (CGGs) (see Chapter 2), grazing guards (*ovatjevere vomaryo*) were nominated in each ward. These persons were instituted into their office by way of a community meeting. The fact that these men were also addressed as *ovapolise vomaryo* (grazing police) may indicate that they were regarded as an extension of the “homeland” bureaucracy. The development of rules for proper conduct concerning grazing was an attempt to minimise the chances of conflict.⁶³

The social set-up controlling natural resources changed in other ways: chiefs had been essential to bring boreholes, and they thereby extended their control over natural resources. While previously it was generally senior men, or rather, wealthy households, who controlled water points on a kinship basis, now it was administrative headmen and chiefs as intermediaries of power controlling natural resource management. Given that chiefs and headmen still needed to gain local recognition to legitimise their claims to authority, however, political authority had to be continually ritualised through place-based practices, as described in Section 7.2 with regards to water places before the introduction of boreholes.⁶⁴ Thus, the management unit for organising grazing, water and land access became the chieftaincy, composed of affiliated wards administered by headmen.⁶⁵

The change in the mobility pattern also generated significant ecological changes. The pre-1950s system favoured perennial grasses, with intense grazing on outlying pastures only during the rainy season (i.e. for only three to four months during the growth period). In contrast, the new mobility pattern implied intense stress through grazing during the dry season, which disadvantaged perennial grasses, and advantaged annual grasses. The new rules stipulated that outlying pastures should not be grazed during the rainy season, ensuring that annual grasses were not disturbed during their main vegetation period. Annual grasses were protected until they had developed seeds and their reproductive success was granted. In contrast, perennial grasses were massively disturbed when, due to the lack of soil moisture, they could not sufficiently recuperate. This process led to a relatively rapid change from a pasture dominated by perennials to a range dominated by annuals in several areas.⁶⁶ Under these conditions, Sanga cattle (the dominant cattle species in the region) often resort to browsing trees and bushes when the grass is depleted, and in situations of drought, pastoralists also collect pods of *Faidherbia albida* to feed them.⁶⁷

Other circumstantial evidence of these changes in grass vegetation is the absence of *veld* fires. Until the 1940s, there were repeated warnings from the administration that any intentional igniting of *veld* fires would be severely punished. However, *veld* fires regularly occurred throughout the 1930s and 1940s and into the 1950s. After the 1950s, no significant *veld* fires could be recorded. This might indicate that a grass layer of perennial grasses had been replaced by a grass layer of annual

62 van Wolputte (2006, 2007), Bollig (2011)

63 Some of these rules are given in detail in Bollig (2006: 330)

64 Olwage (2022)

65 Friedman (2011)

66 Sander *et al.* (1998), Bollig & Schulte (1999), Bollig (2020: 188–89), Inman *et al.* (2020)

67 Bollig (2020: 233, 276)

grasses, with dominance of annual grasses implying less biomass and making the rangeland less susceptible to fires. Nowadays, only a few *veld* fires have been reported without any indication of scale.⁶⁸ Thus the infrastructural change of the hydro-scape brought about a transformation of the vegetation cover which has lasted until today.⁶⁹

These observations conclude the first part of this chapter focusing on the emergence of the regional hydro-scape, especially during the South African colonial period. Now, we turn to the second part, which illustrates its dynamic trajectory in the post-colony.

7.7 The post-colonial hydro-scape: Post-Independence reforms and policies

After Independence in 1990, the new Namibian government tasked the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing to formulate a decentralisation policy to provide direction to future programmes in the country. The main reason for instituting such a strategy was to ‘enhance and guarantee democratic participation of people at lower/grass-root levels’.⁷⁰ On this basis, the government attempted to redress the injustices of colonialism and apartheid that deprived large parts of the Namibian population of political participation and socio-economic development.⁷¹

The Namibian government estimated in 1990 that 50% of the rural population had no access to a reliable source of safe drinking water.⁷² The solution to these challenges was twofold: sinking more boreholes and delegating managerial responsibilities of all these infrastructures to local communities. In the process, the formulation of the Water and Sanitation Policy (WASP) in 1993 was pivotal: it furthered the expansion of rural water supplies in neglected parts of the country and set the cornerstone of community involvement to foster participation and local empowerment. This approach implied that water provision should no longer be organised via traditional authorities (TAs) but directly with communities. Moreover, the bureaucracy connected to water provision was maintained and extended, with several donor-led projects ploughing more money into the Directorate of Rural Water Supply (DRWS). In terms of infrastructure construction, this investment translated into the installation of approximately 10,000 boreholes by 1996, in all communal areas, i.e. the former homelands, now the Communal Land Areas as designated by the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002.

Between 1991 and 1998, access to safe water in rural areas rose from 51% to 65%.⁷³ Today, boreholes continue to be constructed, especially as a mechanism to cope with the effects of drought in communal land areas by opening new pastures.⁷⁴ In doing so, the state has been supported by international NGOs, such as the Red Cross and ICEIDA, an Icelandic Development organisation: the latter installed 33 boreholes fitted with solar pumps in northern Kunene between 2007 and 2010.⁷⁵ In contrast to diesel pumps, which require fuel and oil regularly, photovoltaic installations can be expensive in the event of theft, and challenging to repair in the case of damage. Their installation might significantly reduce conflicts about monthly contributions for diesel, but it may also stimulate them when solar panels are stolen or vandalised. Detailed, long-term studies about the implications of these technologies are yet to be conducted. Still, stakeholders, including government workers

68 E.g. Lendelvo *et al.* (2018: 95)

69 Bollig (2020: 149ff, 190)

70 GRN (1998: 3)

71 GRN (1997: 6)

72 GRN (2000: 13)

73 *Ibid.*, p. 14

74 E.g. N\$2m for boreholes to mitigate Kunene drought, *The Namibian Sun*, 14.2.2022.

75 Hjalmsdottir (2012: 198)

and farmers, see a complete shift from diesel- to solar-powered pumps as a desirable and plausible scenario for the future, especially in terms of lower day-to-day operating costs.⁷⁶

The WASP was directly informed by formulas of global environmental governance and reflecting the new approach to water resource management in the Dublin Agenda 21, which emphasised principles of sustainability, participation, and recognition of the economic value of water.⁷⁷ WASP stipulated that over ten years, the responsibility for managing, operating, and maintaining water installations in rural areas would be progressively given to newly formed community-based organisations of local users (but not to individual users). Community members using one borehole were to organise themselves into Water Point Associations (WPA), elect Water Point Committees (WPC), and conjointly develop their own rules for the management of the water infrastructure in their villages, including regulations to cover the costs of operation and maintenance.⁷⁸ In the early 1990s international organisations such as Africare helped the Ministry of Agriculture pilot these structures in, for example, the Damaraland Communal Land Area of southern Kunene Region.⁷⁹

Consequently, over 320 WPA have been founded throughout the Kunene Region since the mid-1990s.⁸⁰ The process of establishing a WPA, the election of committees, and the development of water point management plans, were supported by extension staff from the regional office of the DRWS in Opuwo (or by NGOs acting on behalf of and/or in coordination with them). The extension staff also advised which rules were to be included in the management plan, oversaw the election of a first water-point committee, and supervised the registration of the users as a WPA.

Menestrey Schwieger,⁸¹ Kelbert⁸² and Linke⁸³ found that DRWS extension staff workers in northern and southern Kunene had very clear ideas about which rules for managing boreholes should be adopted. The DRWS extension staff recommended several strategies for funding the water point: to collect the contributions according to the number of animals each household owns (e.g. 1 N\$ per head of cattle and 50 ¢ per goat/sheep, both per household per month); to introduce a water-point membership fee (N\$20 per adult per year to acquire the right to have a voice in the WPC meetings); a household levy (N\$10 per household per month for the human consumption of water); and special conditions for external users (i.e. that they would have to pay more than the permanent settlers for using the water point: N\$2 per head of cattle and N\$1 per head of small stock). Furthermore, the extension officers recommended imposing penalties in the form of fines or exclusion from the water point whenever users breached the rules. After the management plan for the water point was discussed and decided upon, the corresponding rules were jotted down by DRWS staff.

Regarding the establishment of local WPC, the extension officers also standardly instructed communities to elect individuals for the following positions: a chairperson responsible for providing overall direction to meetings and monitoring the work of the WPA and the WPC; a secretary in charge of organising meetings and taking minutes; a treasurer for collecting contributions and ‘keeping the money safe’; and a caretaker accountable for the maintenance and day-to-day operation of the water point.⁸⁴ During this process, the extension officers advised headmen not to be part of the local WPC and insist that young men and women should be part of the board to promote participation and gender equity. However, these conditions were only partially fulfilled.⁸⁵ In most cases, (elder)

76 “Kunene needs a new water management approach”, newspaper article written by the LINGS project published in *The Namibian*, Tuesday 19.2.2019.

77 cf. UNSD (1992), ICWE (1992)

78 GRN (1999: 8)

79 Africare (1993), see Sullivan (1996: 47–51)

80 We thank Ndelitungilwa Jennifer Haindongo and Anne-Mary Tjipundi from the Directorate of Rural Water Supply office in Opuwo for this information.

81 (2017)

82 (2016)

83 (2017)

84 GRN (2006)

85 See Schnegg & Linke (2016)

women filled only 26.9% of the positions, including the WPC treasurer, due to their role as money keepers in private domains. Young men, in contrast, dominated in the secretary and caretaker roles, while older men usually constituted chairpersons. In this context, we have observed that headmen (and other wealthy influential men) still found ways to strongly influence water point management issues in their favour, as discussed in Section 7.8.

7.8 Implementation, practices and consequences

Local water users voiced their concerns and objections when they were tasked with collecting money contributions to operate their boreholes. Menestrey Schwieger,⁸⁶ for instance, reported heated discussions between villagers of Ombaka, including the local headman and the DRWS staff, when the latter were “handing over” managerial rights over a new borehole installed on-site. In this context, the headman vehemently reproached the DRWS workers, saying that they and the new government just wanted to make them poor, and that it was a scandal they had to pay for water. Other residents also wondered why now, after Independence, they were being requested by their own government to pay for water. The DRWS staff responded that they were not trying to impoverish anyone. They stressed that after Independence, people had to assume responsibility for themselves and that part of these responsibilities would be to operate and take care of the water points the government provided. Against this background, refusing to assume the costs of operating the diesel pump was not an option, as this action would only harm the community—not the government. The dependency on this infrastructure was too high due to high population and livestock numbers. This situation was not unique to Ombaka; people in numerous settlements in Kunene found themselves in a similar position, resigning themselves to the fact that they now had “to pay for water”.

During this “handing over” process, most users formally committed in their management plans to collect payments according to the number of livestock each household owns.⁸⁷ Our interviews and observations, however, reveal that many WPA never applied this rule. From 56 communities, only 25 (44.6%) continued with this rule, whereas in 24 cases, it was never used. In other words: money was *de facto* collected differently to the structures in the management plans with households having to contribute the same amount of money regardless of numbers of livestock—a practice often imposed by “big men” drawing on their bargaining power based on patron-client relationships and authority.⁸⁸ It was often difficult for other community members to impose sanctions on their wealthy neighbours, often kin, in cases of rule breach.⁸⁹

Other rules suggested by the DRWS were not always implemented by the WPA either. For example, special conditions for external users were often dismissed, particularly during drought. Incoming herders were generally permitted to get water at the local borehole without paying an extra fee; in some cases, they were even allowed to access water free of charge since this was “the right thing to do”. In this context, maintaining extended familial networks is crucial to secure possible future access to pastures and water beyond one’s home area, especially in times of need.⁹⁰ Similarly, when less affluent individuals could not pay the water point contributions, the WPC did not automatically impose sanctions on them, such as excluding their animals from using the water point. On the one hand, it is well recognised that anyone could occasionally go through this experience, primarily if it is known that the person was regarded as poor. On the other, denying water for someone’s livestock was equated with “killing the person” since it threatened their main means of subsistence.⁹¹

86 (2017)

87 See Bollig (2020)

88 Menestrey Schwieger (2015)

89 Schnegg & Linke (2015), Menestrey Schwieger (2019)

90 Schnegg & Bollig (2016)

91 Schnegg & Linke (2015)

Against this background, the blueprints suggested by government were not really adopted verbatim because they contradicted the interests and authority of powerful actors at local levels: they clashed with existing norms and values, and in some instances, they did not correspond with local understandings of gender roles and existing water management practices.⁹² Moreover, the reforms have put extra economic pressure on poor households, contradicting goals of promoting equitable socio-economic development for all.⁹³ Despite this situation, communities usually acquired diesel on time, organised spare parts for the above-ground infrastructure, and avoided prolonged water shortages.⁹⁴

Concerning interconnections between water and land management, however, some continuities between the colonial and post-colonial hydro-scape can be observed. As noted above, water and borehole-management are emplaced and thus inextricable from land management. In northern Kunene post-Independence, the social histories of boreholes are often strongly politicised and can become points of contestation between competing lineages, headmen, and factions vying for authority, recognition and land-rights:⁹⁵ including contestations over who initiated their drilling and facilitated such development locally, who was consulted, and what intentions or relations with the colonial administration or state were and still are. Today, senior men from first-come households as well as local headmen remain closely involved in water-management, despite DRWS staff recommendations (as noted above), as an arena for re-asserting place-based authority, or to contest the territorial incorporation of places within larger chieftaincies.

The WPA membership has also become a crucial tool for denying or formalising local residency, especially in the case of drought-related in-migrations by herders and livestock and land disputes (see Chapters 3 and 6). Such membership can be denied to newcomers as a symbolic form of exclusion and non-belonging, especially where newcomers are perceived to have settled without the pertinent permission of the local community. In addition, the specific materiality of boreholes has meant they have become sites of confrontation and conflict within land and grazing disputes, specifically concerning competing models and values of land-use. Residents have locked the diesel engines, or removed and hidden the engine, to exclude in-coming herders from accessing water and seasonal pastures. Given that the refusal of water represents a major cultural taboo, such cases often erupt in conflict, including violent conflict, and in one instance required intervention from the governor.⁹⁶

7.9 Discussion

The emergence of the hydro-scape in Kunene has its roots in the South African colonial project of expanding its presence in the region, increasing the agricultural output of communal lands, and controlling the local population through segregated development and apartheid. Local chiefs and headman rejected the massive introduction of boreholes at first, but then instrumentalised the initiative to increase their socio-political power, including their influence over use of and access to land and water resources. In this context, boreholes were introduced in large numbers often without proper planning and ecological considerations. This process implicated changes in pastoral mobility patterns, land use practices and rangeland vegetation, which have lasted until today.

After Independence, the Namibian government continued drilling boreholes in this part of the country while attempting to introduce new ways of water governance through various reforms. The policy within which this continuity of infrastructural expansion occurs is embedded within a developmental discourse different from the colonial apartheid state. The provision of water

⁹² Schnegg *et al.* (2016)

⁹³ Schnegg & Kiaka (2019)

⁹⁴ Menestrey Schwieger (2020), Schnegg (2018)

⁹⁵ van Wolputte (2006), Olwage (2022)

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

infrastructure in this post-colonial context is aimed at promoting equitable social and economic development. As Schnegg and Kiaka⁹⁷ mention, this transfer of water infrastructure's basic operation and management responsibilities to local agents occurred through a community-based management strategy informed by scientific and neoliberally driven resource management models, advocating state withdrawal and resource commodification as discussed and endorsed at a global level⁹⁸ (also see Chapter 5).

In this context, borehole infrastructures mediated the dynamic relationships between populations and the state.⁹⁹ The handover of borehole infrastructures created a new sort of citizenship in the post-apartheid era, in which individuals and communities should be empowered by taking responsibility for their own resources and decisions regarding how they are managed and shared. This process can be interpreted as an attempt by the new state to distance itself from the apartheid administration and the paternalistic relations it perpetuated.¹⁰⁰ At the same time it is essential to emphasise that while post-colonial government framings like “handing over” suggest that the state is making a “gift” to the community, this gift also came with two challenges: the state stopped supporting communities with diesel for their engines; and the infrastructure requires regular maintenance and occasional repairs from which the state also stepped back. “Handing over”, therefore, also meant handing over water management costs.

By contrast, the materiality of the infrastructures embodied by a dense network of boreholes within a vast and mountainous region also delimited the agency of the state in negotiating its withdrawal from rural water management and supply within this region. For instance, the initial idea of these water reforms was to hand over the ‘full ownership’ of boreholes to local communities within ten years.¹⁰¹ ‘Full ownership’ implies that users should become not only responsible for purchasing diesel for engine pumps and purchasing and replacing spare parts, but also to be responsible for major repairs below ground—such as, re-drilling and exchanging pipes—which are costlier and require a higher level of know-how. The government’s responsibility at this stage would be assisting WPAs in selecting contractors and negotiating contracts for repairs and replacement.

According to interviews with government officials in 2010, this last phase of the community-based water management strategy was put on hold by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry, as there were concerns over whether the communities could *de facto* deal with these responsibilities. In this context, it is essential to mention that the contribution of money for operating the water points was a burden for many households, and only a few WPAs managed to accumulate savings: according to our data collected across more than 50 communities the maximum recorded amounts to N\$3,000. Spare parts and diesel were only available in towns that were difficult for many people to reach due to the lack of public transport and privately-owned cars. Moreover, and to the frustration of many, large parts of northern Kunene previously had no mobile network coverage. The northern Kunene Region is also categorised as the poorest in the country according to the last poverty report¹⁰² (see Chapter 3), and remains marginally integrated into labour and sales markets.

Underground repairs require transporting long and heavy pipes, special vehicles, and technical knowledge: this requires resources and economic capacity difficult for many people and livestock farmers to bear. Thus, the state realised that full ownership might financially and logistically be too large a burden for local livestock farmers and pastoralists. In fact, during the last years, the state continued to repair major damages, such as breakdowns, worn-out equipment, and borehole rehabilitation. It provided a follow-up service to the communities by checking if the

97 (2019)

98 Sullivan (2006)

99 von Schnitzler (2013)

100 Friedman (2011)

101 GRN (2004)

102 GRN (2015)

money contributions were made and advised if there were any problems with implementing the management plans. Therefore, the boreholes' materiality to some extent delimited the agency of the state, in its attempt to re-negotiate paternalistic relations and understandings of the state inherited from the colonial administration: the infrastructures remained as ongoing legacies of the South African colonial period, embodying particular understandings of the state's role and demanding state resources.

The new government ideals of WPA, WPC, and management regulations were thus marginally adopted by actors at the local level. State attempts to introduce and engineer specific 'institutional infrastructures'¹⁰³ within the hydro-scape and prescribe how water management should occur were by and large unsuccessful. Local practices and changing socio-materialities,¹⁰⁴ including the demands of mobile land relations and pastoralism, led to the emergence of different institutional dynamics governing the sharing and use of sets of interrelated boreholes. Here, water management did not simply function according to "crafted" rules and sanctions around boreholes to promote cooperation and equity.¹⁰⁵ Instead, it resulted from a bricolage process,¹⁰⁶ where ideas, global influences, local (path-dependent) institutions, power asymmetries, norms, and values *de facto* influenced how water is supplied and distributed.¹⁰⁷ These processes did not always result in institutions regarded as fair by all water users. The state invaded the local arena with specific ideas and suggestions about how water should be managed; but local players, local institutions, power-relations, and micro-politics determined how these changes unfolded.

This discrepancy between post-Independence policies and their respective implementation does not only apply to the water sector but also to other similar community-based initiatives, such as the wildlife conservancy programme (see Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 17). In collaboration with NGOs, the post-Independent government promoted communities to form communal area conservancies to address these injustices and promote the "sustainable use" of wildlife, delegating wildlife management rights to local people while creating incentives for conservation¹⁰⁸ (although see discussion in Chapters 3, 5 and 11). So, far Kunene has 38 conservancies.¹⁰⁹ The communal conservancy programme has been considered a success in Kunene from an ecological perspective as the numbers and diversity of wildlife increased until 2011.¹¹⁰ Since then, a multi-year drought, game harvesting and animal migration, have contributed to a decline of wildlife in the region, especially of prey species.¹¹¹ From a socio-economic point of view, the picture is more complex: a more critical orientation towards the conservancy model seems linked with a perception that the implied costs outweigh the benefits (also Chapter 5).¹¹²

Against this background, people on the ground dealing with the challenges of resource management continually make demands on and have specific expectations regarding the state. Some people talked nostalgically about the colonial past, for instance:¹¹³

the government used to say that the people must not get thirsty, not even a bird. All must get water, and they did everything they said they would do when they said they would do it. The drum never got

¹⁰³ Hinings *et al.* (2017)

¹⁰⁴ i.e. '[t]he constitutive entanglement of the social and the material in everyday organizational life' (Orlikowski 2007: 1435).

¹⁰⁵ Ostrom (1990)

¹⁰⁶ Institutional bricolage can be defined as the creative piecing together of different arrangements, styles of thinking and social relationships to produce new or adapted institutions (Cleverly 2012).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Jones & Weaver (2009)

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.nacso.org.na/>

¹¹⁰ Mufune (2015), Naidoo *et al.* (2016)

¹¹¹ <https://www.nacso.org.na/news/2021/10/understanding-the-kunene-wildlife-numbers>

¹¹² Silva & Mosimane (2013), Mosimane & Silva (2015), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), Hebinck *et al.* (2019), Heydinger *et al.* (2019), Gargallo (2021)

¹¹³ Names of individuals are avoided to protect anonymity.

empty; we used it until twenty-five litres were left in it. The government came, put in more diesel until it was full, and went again.¹¹⁴

Another informant's statement revealed how the new state was perceived as not taking care of them anymore:

in the past, we had another government that gave us everything. The government was breasting us like a baby. Now, we don't think that this idea [the community-based management strategy] is good because we are not getting milk anymore.¹¹⁵

These quotes must be understood as part of a larger discourse of critique in Kunene towards the government as a historical product.¹¹⁶ Many people in the region expressed nostalgia for South African rule despite the brutality, oppression, and violence of apartheid. This was because of their discontent over changes that had taken place in the provision of state services and entitlements, including in rural water supply and other sectors like education, health, and drought relief, which people feel have deteriorated under the post-Independence state.¹¹⁷

7.10 Conclusion

From a political ecology perspective, we commenced this contribution by advocating the importance of understanding the role of infrastructures in shaping social-ecological relations and local resource management institutions. In doing so, we used the historical construction and emergence of the hydro-scape in north-western Namibia as an example. On this basis, we showed how government interventions, visions of development, and the introduction of infrastructure in the Kunene Region irrevocably transformed social-ecological interactions, institutions of resource governance, and social institutions. We traced the practices of the state apparatus, discussed local resistance and power dynamics, and detailed the consequences of the government programmes linked to the establishment of far-flung water infrastructure. The targeted change of the environmental infrastructure conformed to governmental visions of separate development and agricultural modernisation. Hence, institutional dynamics for common-pool resource management could be better understood considering the materiality of the infrastructures and the socio-historical processes they are linked to.¹¹⁸

In this respect, we also illustrated that whereas the emergent network of boreholes (and other infrastructures) co-produced the gradual expansion of the colonial state, in the post-Independence and neoliberal context, the materiality of the infrastructures once again played a key role in the negotiation of local-state relations.¹¹⁹ The boreholes and their specific infrastructures allowed for a different state penetration within this region: departing from a centralised policy during colonial times, the post-Independence decentralisation reforms attempted to engineer new norms and rules, sharing economies and understandings of citizenship through the hydro-scape. Moreover, extension officers (or NGO personnel working in coordination with them) tried to empower communities by limiting the participation and influence of TAs in the formation of WPCs (and conservancy committees) and influencing WPAs decisions. The result was an institutional bricolage, shaped by dynamic power relations, resistance and various norms and values embedded in kinship and local practices.

Given this context, if the state handed over the full ownership of boreholes to local communities and did not keep on carrying out major repairs, local users might potentially remain without water,

114 Interview carried out by Menestrey Schweiger in Ombaka on 23.10.2011.

115 Interview carried out by Menestrey Schweiger in Ombaka on 10.11.2011.

116 Friedman (2011)

117 *Ibid.*

118 cf. McCord *et al.* (2017), Heinmiller (2009)

119 cf. von Schnitzler (2013), Sultana (2020)

which would feed the general discourse of critique towards the post-apartheid state within the region. What we see in practice is a form of co-management, where the state carries out urgent repairs in the underground apparatus, and local communities manage their water points in *ad hoc* ways and/or follow their own solutions to avoid shortages in the water supply. Furthermore, the hydro-scape and its infrastructures give agency and power to local actors who demand state involvement and encounters with state officials at the local level. The DRWS staff still visits communities to solve major problems with the water supply. Therefore, the state is under pressure and continually drawn into the rural water supply and, by extension, into other sectors.

For the future, adjusting and improving this way of co-managing resources, might be a more realistic strategy, not only in the water management sector but also in other conservation initiatives, such as wildlife conservation. Research has shown that if community-based strategies are to be sustained at scale, local institutions need a “plus” that includes long-term external financial support, as well as technical and managerial advice.¹²⁰ With regards to the water management dynamics presented here, such measures could include equipping all boreholes with solar pumps (with low-running costs); introducing water usage subsidies for the poor; supporting communities (e.g. through extension staff) in terms of monitoring, rule-enforcing, and co-financing of repairs; and/or returning operation and maintenance responsibilities to the state.¹²¹ Certainly, the practical implementation of such measures would imply various kinds of economic investments and political efforts, which would require careful evaluation; yet the potential benefits in terms of poverty reduction, less intra-community conflict, and more reliable water governance in the region would be well worth these efforts.

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¹²⁰ Hutchings *et al.* (2015)

¹²¹ Menestrey Schwieger (2020)

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8. Eliciting empathy and connectedness toward different species in north-west Namibia

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Abstract

This chapter turns to research with young people in north-west Namibia to ascertain their perceptions and understandings of “wildlife”. The aim is to better understand how young members of communal-area conservancies in north-west Namibia know and perceive the value of selected indigenous fauna species in these areas, alongside domestic livestock—specifically goats (*Capra hircus*). This study is set within a context in which tourism in Namibia is understood to greatly contribute to Gross Domestic Product, with Namibia being home to animals whose value is linked with their contemporary scarcity. Such species include black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*)—monitored and celebrated through organisations and campaigns such as Save the Rhino Trust and the Rhino Pride Campaign—as well as lion (*Panthera leo*), and oryx (*Oryx gazella*), all of which draw tourists to Namibia. Whilst these wild animals need to be protected at a global level, nationally they are also Namibia’s pride, even being pictured as nationally important symbols on Namibian bank notes.

8.1 Introducing a survey on “nature connectedness” in north-west Namibia

Indigenous fauna in southern Africa is associated with wildlife-based tourism, a means to enhance socio-economic aspects and livelihoods, especially for communities living in association with wildlife (Chapter 3). At the same time, returns to such communities may be questionable and regarded as minimal (see discussion in Chapter 5).¹ On the other hand, wildlife and other animal species can make significant contributions that outweigh negative perceptions.² Additionally, animal species are accorded local values, including relational values and human connectedness.³ To improve outcomes for biodiversity protection, a “new conservation” has advocated for a more people-centred approach that harnesses human values for wildlife.⁴ Central to this focus on “harnessing values” is designing and delivering interventions that lead to more excellent pro-conservation intentions and behaviours by people, an explicit aim of community-based conservation in Namibia. In particular, the aim of this chapter is to examine and elicit empathy and connectedness amongst young people towards conserving endangered black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) and other animal species.

In addition, support organisations, the government, and local communities are working tirelessly to combat the challenge and consequences of poaching, especially illegal hunting of black rhino, an endangered species with high conservation and tourism value on communal land and protected areas in north-west Namibia.⁵ Geographically, many of these animals are in areas surrounded by communities that manage and benefit from wildlife through the CBNRM

¹ Muntifering *et al.* (2020)

² Khumalo & Yung (2015)

³ Paul (2000)

⁴ Save the Rhino Trust (2022)

⁵ Muntifering *et al.* (2017), Sullivan *et al.* (2021)

programme. Strict anti-poaching measures, habitat protection, community engagement, and international collaboration are essential to these efforts.⁶ It is in fact noticeable that in recent years illegal hunting of rhino is more a threat in Namibia's protected areas and on private farms than on communal land,⁷ where instead blasting for mining is threatening rhino populations and associated tourism investments.⁸ To secure a future for rhinos, continued effort is needed to raise awareness, allocate resources, and implement effective strategies to ensure their survival for generations to come.⁹ Today's youth will be the future leaders of communal area conservancies in north-west Namibia where rhino and other valued wildlife species are present, with conservancies aimed at both protecting these animals and catering and caring for the communities living alongside them. The possibility of rhino extinction in Africa is a significant concern today, and dehorning has been employed especially in southern Africa to discourage poaching for their horns.¹⁰ The loss of these iconic creatures would be a tragedy in terms of biodiversity and would disrupt the delicate balance of the ecosystems they inhabit.

This chapter reports on a survey conducted in 2021 among young people in north-west Namibia (Kunene Region), to shed light on their perceptions and attitudes towards wildlife conservation. Respondents showed a keen interest in engaging with conservation efforts, with a significant majority expressing willingness to contribute. Gender distribution in the survey was balanced, and a large portion of participants had a higher secondary level of education. The survey's findings reveal that family ties to the tourism industry influenced respondents' knowledge about different animal species. Goat (*Capra hircus*) farming is widespread, leading to frequent interactions with goats and a sense of their importance within households. Rhino and lion (*Panthera leo*) encounters are less common, with family members working in rhino conservation and Lion Ranger roles (as detailed in Chapters 17, 18 and 19) potentially influencing these interactions. Perceptions of various animals were explored, showing diverse viewpoints. The oryx (*Oryx gazella*, also known as gemsbok) is recognised as a national symbol and an essential contributor to tourism. Goats are valued for their role in livelihoods but face challenges like drought and theft. We proceed by describing our survey methodology and discussing the survey results.

8.2 Methodology

Our survey was administered among young people aged between 18 and 35 years, in the town of Khorixas and in Torra and Sesfontein conservancies, Kunene Region. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted, with a total of 149 questionnaires administered in the study area. This diverse methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of perspectives and opinions among young people in our Kunene Region study areas. Four different animal species were focused on in this study, as outlined above: namely, lion, rhino, oryx and goat. These four species provided insight in terms of our exploration of human relationship, connectedness and empathy with this selection of animal species.

6 Atkins *et al.* (2018)

7 Reuters (2024)

8 Schneider (2023)

9 Beytell (2010)

10 Chimes *et al.* (2022)

8.3 Findings

This section dives into the results generated from our survey. We focus first on the demographics of respondents, outlining results by age groups. We then document responses to specific questions used to elicit senses of relationship, connectedness and empathy for our selected animal species.

8.3.1 Demographics

Table 8.1 details the characteristics of our survey respondents (n = 149). The respondents comprised an equal gender distribution (males 49.64% and females 50.36%), indicating a balanced representation of perspectives. A diverse range of ages were represented. Most participants were below 25 years (47.1%), comprising a significant proportion of younger respondents. Those between the ages of 26 to 30 accounted for 21.74% of the sample, demonstrating a substantial mid-range age group. Respondents older than 30 years constituted about a third of the participant pool (31.16%). The survey highlighted that a significant portion of respondents possessed a higher secondary level of education, underlining the relatively well-educated nature of our sample.

The questionnaire survey was administered in two ways: in Group 1, responses were evaluated under specific guidelines whereas Group 2 responded to the questionnaire autonomously. This difference in survey approach provided insights into the impact of structured questioning. Upon concluding the surveys, participants were also queried about their interest in engaging with conservation efforts. The results revealed a notable level of interest, with a majority (83.91%) expressing their willingness to contribute to conservation initiatives. This strong inclination towards conservation participation indicates a positive attitude within the surveyed youth population and suggests potential for impactful involvement in safeguarding the environment.

Table 8.1. Representation of survey participants (n = 149) in relation to the different variables.

Category	Percent %
Variable: Sex	
Female	50.36
Male	49.64
Variable: Age	
Under 25 years	47.1
26 to 30 years	21.74
31 to 35 years	31.16
Variable: Education	
Lower Secondary	24.81
Higher Secondary	75.19
Variable: Survey Group	
Supervised (Group 1)	48.97
Independent (Group 2)	51.03
Variable: Support for Conservation	
Yes	83.91
No	2.3
Maybe	13.79

8.3.2 Responses to survey questions

Below we summarise responses to specific questions in our survey.

1. Does anyone in your family work in the tourism industry?

About 60% of the respondents indicated that they have family members who work in the tourism industry. This connection to the tourism sector has given them a unique avenue to acquire knowledge about various animals, particularly those associated with tourism. Interactions with family members in this industry likely involve conversations, stories, and experiences shared within the familial context. First-hand accounts could encompass insights about wildlife behaviour, conservation efforts, and the significance of preserving natural habitats for tourism. Additionally, family members in tourism might offer guided tours or share educational materials, enhancing the respondents' understanding of different animal species in touristic environments. Thus, family ties within the tourism sector can serve as an enriching source of information, contributing to these individuals' awareness and appreciation of the diverse wildlife inhabiting Kunene Region and encountered through tourism-related activities.

2. Have you ever seen these specific animals: Oryx, rhino, lion and goat?

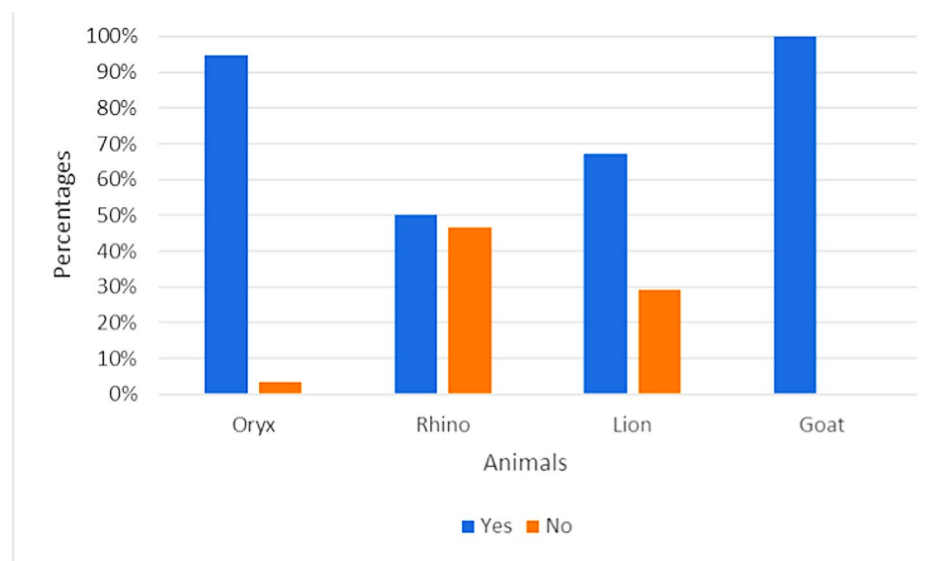


Fig. 8.1 Survey respondents' sightings of four selected animals in Kunene Region. Source: authors' data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Oryx and goats emerged as the most popular animals among the respondents, with more than half of the respondents reporting having also encountered lions (50.36%) and rhinos (53.02%) (see Figure 8.1). Given that 94.74% of the respondents and their family members engage in goat farming it is unsurprising that all respondents were familiar with goats: this shared agricultural activity creates frequent interaction opportunities with goats, contributing to their familiarity. Conversely, encounters with lions and rhinos were less common. Only a little over half of our respondents (53.02%) had seen rhinos, perhaps due to the involvement of their family members in rhino conservation efforts. A larger proportion of our respondents appear to have had familiarity with lions, perhaps related to lion predation of livestock in the area¹¹ (see Chapter 14). Familial connections with Lion Rangers in the area may also play a role (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19), although

¹¹ Sullivan (2016), Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

it appears at the time of our survey that while there is a notable representation of family members engaged in rhino-related work, fewer family members are working as Lion Rangers (although this may have changed since the survey). Our findings highlight the significant influence that familial activities and occupations have on shaping the respondents' exposure to and knowledge of these animals, ultimately contributing to their perceptions and preferences.

3. What are your perceptions of these animals?

The perceptions recorded for young people in our survey refer to the sentiments shared with us by our respondents. The results are presented below for the different animal species.

Oryx, *Oryx gazella*

Opinions provided by respondents regarding the oryx were primarily centred around recognising it as a significant national symbol. They associated the oryx with its distinct features, describing its unique physical attributes. Moreover, respondents acknowledged the oryx's vital role within the community, particularly in bolstering tourism-related activities. A prevailing sentiment that emerged was the imperative to ensure the protection and conservation of the oryx, an important point given its decline in north-west Namibia over the last decade (see Chapter 3). Interestingly, a higher proportion of male respondents (42%) demonstrated the ability to offer detailed descriptions of the oryx compared to their female counterparts (27%).

While an oryx was associated with good things, there was not an urgent call for specific protection measures for the oryx, although a number of suggestions were made to continue preserving the oryx in the area. There is little difference between female and male youth in terms of how to keep oryx in their areas, with the exception that females emphasised more the beauty of the species and that such an animal should not be killed, while male respondents emphasised the ability of oryx to defend themselves: see Table 8.2.

Table 8.2. Observations and suggestions regarding the conservation of oryx (*Oryx gazella*) in north-west Namibia.

Response Category	Respondents %	
	FEMALE	MALE
Avoid killing oryx	10.0	13.0
I like oryx and don't want anyone to kill them	21.4	7.2
Oryx has the ability to defend themselves through their long sharp horns and they use it well	27.1	40.6
Oryx are animals that stay in the field that are protected by rangers	5.7	7.2
The game guards look after the oryx	14.3	13.0
Very important and community must protect the animals themselves	34.3	34.8

Notably, within the age group spanning 26 to 30 years, respondents emphasised the oryx's visual characteristics and the critical importance of its preservation. This variation in responses highlights multidimensional perspectives surrounding the oryx. While some respondents focused on its appearance and the need to safeguard its existence, others emphasised its role as a symbolic representation and a pivotal contributor to community-based tourism. These diverse viewpoints underscore the complex and intertwined nature of cultural, ecological, and economic considerations associated with this captivating animal.

Black Rhino, *Diceros bicornis bicornis*

Most respondents displayed a pronounced interest in advocating for rhino protection, primarily through engagement in conservation campaigns (53%). Notably, Group 2 exhibited a tremendous enthusiasm for active involvement in these campaigns compared to Group 1, whose responses to the questionnaire had been supervised more closely. Both groups emphasised the potential danger posed by rhinos when they perceive a threat, underscoring their ability to behave aggressively and even attack humans. Additionally, respondents from both groups concurred that the rhino population in the area has dwindled due to poaching, revealing a shared concern for survival of this species. Interestingly, the descriptions of rhinos provided by respondents varied widely. Some participants praised the rhino as being a small, short, and beautiful animal. In contrast, others offered different viewpoints, describing black rhino as having an unappealing, ugly appearance with large body size. The description of these characteristics by the youth is an indication of how they differently perceive the rhino, either by seeing it themselves or hearing from others.

The respondents' evident interest in rhino protection underscores a collective commitment to conservation efforts. The nuanced differences in their descriptions of the rhino's physical attributes highlight the diverse perspectives held by the surveyed youth. Moreover, Group 2's heightened eagerness to engage in campaigns suggests a potential avenue for more dynamic and effective conservation initiatives. Table 8.3 summarises respondents' responses to protecting the rhino overall. We found additionally that Group 1 were less aware of the work of Save the Rhino Trust (13%) in Kunene Region, believing that the government is solely responsible for protecting the rhino, whereas 50% of those in Group 2 indicated that Rhino Rangers are also responsible for protecting rhino. Both groups indicated that the rhino's protection is the community's responsibility as well.

Table 8.3. Responses regarding who bears most responsibility for protecting black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) in Kunene Region.

Responsible party	Response (N=149)
Community	43%
Conservancy Rhino Rangers	41%
Government	16%
Save the Rhino Trust (NGO)	18%

Lion, *Panthera leo*

When respondents were queried about their associations with lions, several dominant responses emerged: their mighty roar, their contribution to generating income, their potential to attack humans, their perception as brave creatures, their depiction as serial predators, and their status as a vital member of the renowned Big Five group of animals in safaris. This collection of thoughts highlights the multidimensional perspectives that lions evoke in the participants' minds. Conversely, when discussing reasons for not favouring lions, distinct viewpoints surfaced. Firstly, respondents expressed concern over lions' propensity to attack humans. Secondly, a general perception of lions as dangerous and harmful animals came to the forefront. This perception was reinforced by lions' proximity to human communities and their tendency to prey on domesticated animals, further accentuating their potential threat. The question of lion protection prompted shared sentiments among respondents from both groups. The responsibility for safeguarding lions was primarily attributed to Lion Rangers (whose work is documented in Chapters 17, 18 and 19). These insights illuminate the intricate blend of admiration, respect, and caution lions evoke in the respondents' minds. The differing viewpoints on youth involvement in lion protection underline the complex nature of conservation strategies and the varying perspectives within the surveyed population.

Goat, *Capra hircus*

The respondents offered relatively sparse insights regarding goats. A notable observation, however, was that goats were recognised as holding significant value within households, actively contributing to the sustenance of livelihoods. Respondents highlighted their perception of goats as pivotal assets, vital for supporting households' economic and practical needs. Additionally, respondents brought attention to the vulnerability of goats to environmental challenges, particularly drought conditions, which were noted as a factor leading to goat mortality. Respondents also acknowledged the unfortunate reality of goats being susceptible to theft due to their relatively easy target status. Both groups of respondents concurred on a critical point: safeguarding goats lies with their owners, also complementing the collaborative effort by NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and the national government, through various safeguarding initiatives such as the lighting of *kraals*, and compensation for losses caused by wild animals (under certain circumstances).¹² This shared sentiment underscores the recognition of individual accountability in ensuring the well-being and protection of these valuable animals. While respondents may have offered limited commentary on goats, their shared insights shed light on the crucial role of goats for households, the challenges they face, and the underlying commitment to their care and protection.

8.3.3 How respondents feel

In this section we outline respondents' feelings toward animals and also to Rhino Rangers, and their senses of connectedness to nature, town and home, as well as their knowledge of the latter.

Respondents reported strong feelings and opinions in relation to the four animal species included in the survey. Goats were clearly the most seen and cared for, followed by the oryx and the rhino. The lion was viewed the least favourably, presumably because of its tendency to see livestock and people as prey (also see Chapter 14).

An exciting observation emerged among respondents in terms of their knowledge and sentiments towards Rhino Rangers. One comment reads, for example, 'the Rhino Rangers help provide our conservancy benefits from rhinos'. The respondents clearly emphasised the significant role of Rhino Rangers in facilitating sound management principles that will in turn enable them to receive tangible benefits from the local conservancies. This finding highlights respondents' views of the vital contribution that Rhino Rangers make to the protection of this endangered species and its broader ecological and socio-economic values within conservancies. It is the shared recognition of the positive impacts of Rhino Rangers to conservancies among the respondents that genuinely captures attention, accentuating the critical role of these individuals in the intricate balance between wildlife conservation and community well-being. No doubt similar perspectives will also be emerging in relation to the newer institution of Lion Rangers in north-west Namibia, as documented in Part V (Chapters 17, 18 and 19) of this book.

The questionnaire additionally explored respondents' feelings of connectedness to nature, town, and home, using their responses to the illustrations in Figure 8.2. The outcome of reported feelings of their connectedness to Nature, Town, and Home was as follows:

- 'Me and Nature' (A) A significant majority of the respondents (65.81%) believe that they are intricately connected with nature, resulting in a sense of overlap between themselves and the natural world. In contrast, a relatively small proportion (9.4%) expressed that they do not perceive themselves and nature as a unified entity.
- 'Me and City' (B) The perception of whether respondents feel they are an integral part of their town exhibited a mixture of responses. This variation may be attributed to

¹² MET (2009)

respondents not fully grasping the question's intent or struggling to establish a relatable connection to the query, but also their proximity and association with existing cities.

- 'Nature and Home' (C) A noteworthy observation here is that more than half of the respondents (58.06%) articulated that their home and nature coalesce seamlessly, yielding a sense of coexistence.
- 'City and Home' (D) In contrast to the previous observation, a trend emerged concerning respondents' perception of their town and home as a unified entity. Many respondents appeared uncertain about interpreting this question, resulting in various responses contributing to the mixed perceptions surrounding the interconnectedness of their town and home.

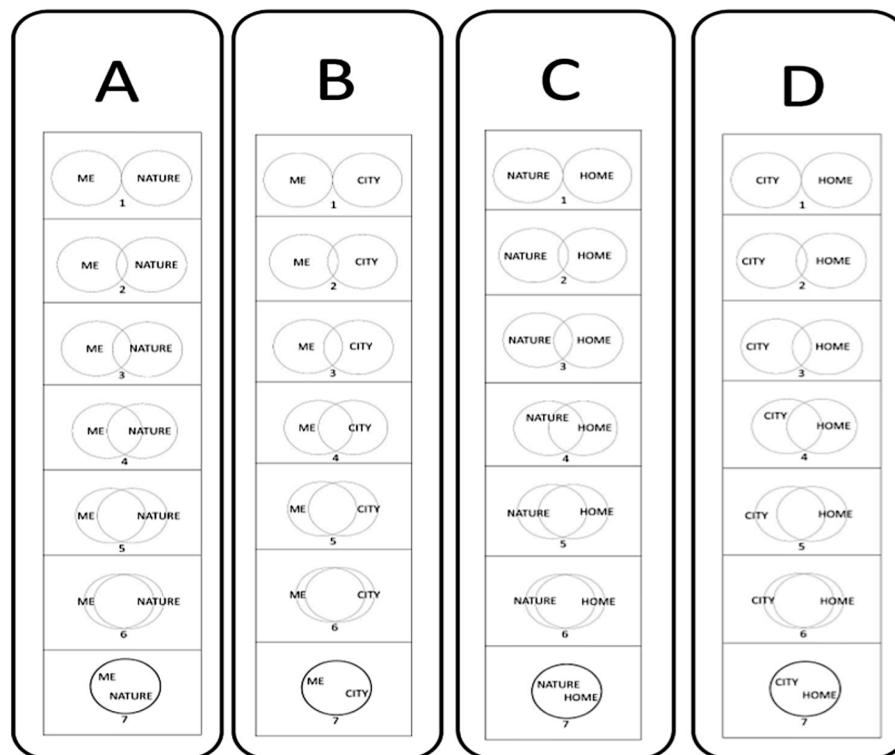


Fig. 8.2 Questionnaire illustrations used to clarify respondents' sense of connectedness to nature, town, and home.
Source: authors' data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In summary, these insights collectively underscore the interplay of individuals' perceptions regarding their connection to nature, their town, and their home. While a strong alignment with nature is prevalent, varying interpretations of the relationships between their town and home indicate the multifaceted nature of these sentiments.

Respondents were also asked about whether they carried feelings towards other people, using three categories: *Not True*, *Sometimes True*, and *Often True*. The results show a response of 63% which exhibit an inclination towards empathy, with the predominant response falling under the 'sometimes true'. This commonality in responses could be attributed to insights shared by respondents, such as 'when a friend is angry, I usually know why'. These comments underscore a nuanced understanding of emotional dynamics and interpersonal cues, contributing to the respondents' empathetic attitudes.

In terms of analysing responses by the respondents regarding their sense of empathy with nature and animals, different patterns were observed. Respondents exhibited a substantial degree of empathy towards nature and animals in that they indicated that they strongly agree (83.2%) they have a strong connection and empathy towards nature and animals. In essence, these data

underscore the prevalence of empathetic attitudes towards nature and animals amongst the youth in our survey, showcasing a consistent and robust inclination towards valuing and understanding the well-being of the natural world and its inhabitants.

8.4 Discussion and review of findings

It is evident from our survey findings that most respondents expressed their connectedness to wildlife and have also further portrayed an exciting willingness to contribute towards conservation. Perceptions and willingness to contribute to wildlife conservation have been identified as critical components in preparing for the future of wildlife protection. It also depicts how people learn in their habitual environment, transfer knowledge between different generations, and use citizen science.¹³ One key finding was that female respondents showed more conservation-oriented behaviours and empathy toward the four species than their male counterparts. The Wildlife Club movement in Africa has strongly emphasised the need to address conservation attitudes and youth behaviours,¹⁴ as reflected in the methodology and findings of this chapter which illustrates the mostly positive attitudes amongst the young people included in our research. In addition, such emphasis is meant to analyse and predict the future of conservation and act as a means of creating awareness in the youth, thus safeguarding the prospect of the different wildlife species.¹⁵ The chapter further presented findings on empathy toward the four species, which came out both strongly and positively, being complementary to calls for future conservation effort. In particular, it is important to focus on conservation areas beyond zoos that have often been the focus on studies on empathy towards wildlife,¹⁶ as has been attempted here in our study of connectedness with nature and selected animal species in the communal land areas of Kunene Region.

Another considerable view on empathy and connectedness of human nature and wildlife is that the narratives used to develop a generalised positive stance differ for every species (as shown in Section 8.2). Specifically, rhinos are sometimes viewed as ugly, giant animals; however, based on the classification of critically endangered species and poaching incidents,¹⁷ respondents have shown empathy and the need to conserve them whilst protecting them from extinction. Lions were also not classified as distinctly favoured species as they portray danger to humans. However, respondents also recognise the lion as brave in its hunting skills, roaring character, and in particular the need to preserve it for future generations as well as the species' ability to create income through tourism.¹⁸ On the contrary, goats and oryx were perceived in a more favourable way: empathy and connectedness was derived from how goats and oryx are susceptible to predators, and also from how goats are part of household livelihoods,¹⁹ whereas, empathy and connectedness toward the oryx has been linked with its role in national symbols.²⁰

To conclude, then, the issue of relationship and connectedness to animal species has proven to be relatable with cultural and ethical values embodied in practice and in the sentiments shared by respondents. The sample selection of animal species covered a wide range of relationships and connectedness amongst respondents, linked with contributions to livelihoods and with concern for conserving rhinos coming out as particularly strong. Overall, the comprehensive findings from this study shed light on several compelling insights. One observation is that goats hold heightened popularity and garner increased preservation efforts among local community members in the

¹³ Ballard *et al.* (2017)

¹⁴ For example, Atsiatorme *et al.* (2011)

¹⁵ Mcduff & Jacobson (2006)

¹⁶ Young *et al.* (2018)

¹⁷ Emslie *et al.* (2019)

¹⁸ Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

¹⁹ Togarepi *et al.* (2018)

²⁰ GRN (2018)

surveyed regions. This stems from goats playing a pivotal role in supporting household livelihoods, effectively cementing their significance within the community fabric.

The survey both generated and imparted knowledge, clarifying how youth participation in conservation relates to wildlife and evidencing young peoples' sense of connection to various species, except perhaps in the case of lions. The lower level of connectedness with lions can be attributed to instances of human-wildlife conflict (HWC), which have generated caution and reduced the perceived connection to these creatures: although it should be acknowledged that when people lived throughout wider areas of north-west Namibia in the past, more robust knowledge as well as practices for living with and appreciating lions existed²¹ (see Chapter 15). A noteworthy finding is the pronounced empathy demonstrated towards rhinos. This heightened empathy can be attributed to the endangered status of rhinos, with participants recognising the urgency and significance of preserving these majestic animals. In summary the findings highlight the complex interplay between popularity, preservation efforts, empathy, and ecological and social factors in shaping attitudes towards different species.

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²¹ Sullivan (2016)

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PART III

ETOSHA-KUNENE ECOLOGIES

9. Giraffes and their impact on key tree species in the Etendeka Tourism Concession, north-west Namibia

Kahingirisina Maoveka, Dennis Liebenberg and Sian Sullivan

Abstract

We report on a study that researched the impacts of browsing giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*) on trees important for pollinators—namely, *Maerua schinzii* (ringwood tree) and *Boscia albitrunca* (shepherd's tree)—within the Etendeka Tourism Concession area to the west of Etosha National Park. Giraffe are selective browsers, and the tallest land animal. Historically, giraffe populations have been amplified here through translocations designed to enhance the tourism product of the concession, which is situated in mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) savanna, semi-desert and savanna transition vegetation zones. Due to browsing by giraffe, *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* trees develop a distinctive shape with only a small, round, high-up canopy of leaves above a very high browse line, with some trees dying as a result. The study also explored five different techniques to protect these trees from further browse damage by giraffes.

9.1 Introduction¹

Giraffe—*Giraffa camelopardalis*—is a large hoofed megaherbivore mammal with a wide, although in many places decreasing, distribution in Africa (see Figure 9.1). The subspecies *Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis* is found throughout Namibia, its distribution amplified in recent decades through translocations. Indeed, translocations to enhance the “tourism product” are one reason for their presence in areas of north-west Namibia, which might otherwise be too arid for the permanent presence of this herbivore. In some contexts in this area their presence has become a cause for ecological concern. This is the case for giraffe in the Etendeka Tourism Concession to the west of the Etosha National Park (ENP) (see Figure 9.2), an area located in a vegetation zone that is transitional between mopane savanna—dominated by the tree *Colophospermum mopane*—and semi-desert² (see Section 9.2).

1 Acknowledgments: the first author would like to express gratitude towards the members of Etendeka Mountain Camp for their kind cooperation and encouragement, especially Mr. Dennis Liebenberg, Boas Musaso and Bonnie | Awarab, as well as to her tutor Ms. Shirley Bethune, who took a keen interest in this project and assisted with its completion.

2 Giess (1998[1971])

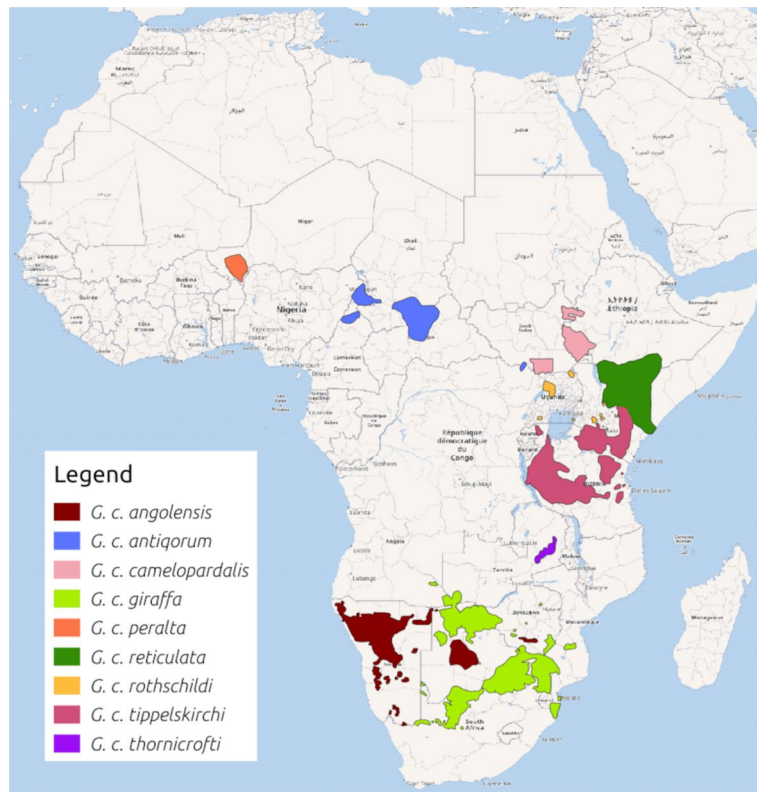


Fig. 9.1 Map showing the distribution of *Giraffa camelopardalis* and subspecies in Africa, as of 2018. Source: © BhagyaMani, drawing on Muller *et al.* (2018) and Winter *et al.* (2018), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giraffe#/media/File:Giraffa_camelopardis_distribution_2018.png, CC BY-SA 4.0. Note that translocations of *G. c. angolensis* from Namibia to southern Angola have also taken place since this map was drawn.

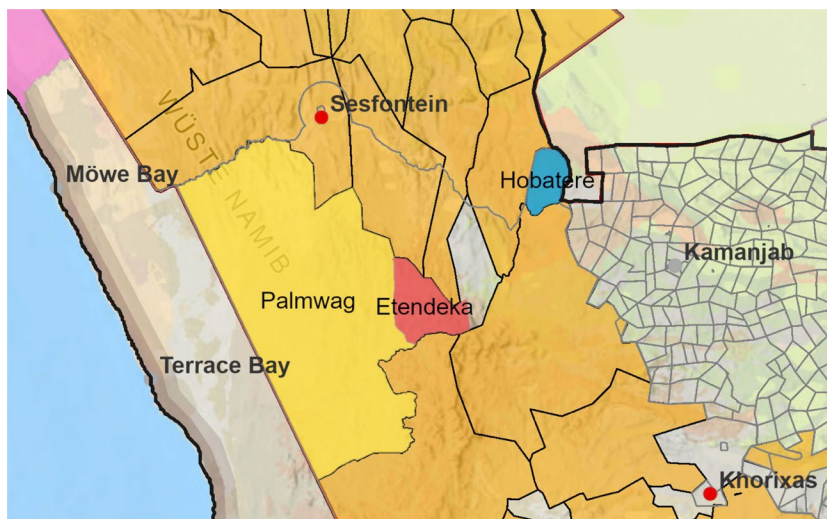


Fig. 9.2 Map showing the Etendeka Tourism Concession, positioned in between the Palmwag and Hobatere Tourism Concessions, with Etosha National Park in the east and the Skeleton Coast National Park in the west. The surrounding orange areas are communal area conservancies. The grey bounded areas in the south-east of the map are freehold farms. © Ute Dieckmann and Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Giraffe are selective feeders and factors such as seasonal shifts in food quality and availability affect their browsing. At Etendeka, as well as in ENP, it is often observed that *Maerua schinzii* (ringwood) and *Boscia albitrunca* (shepherd's tree), both members of the Capparaceae family, have a distinctive and reduced crown-shape caused by intense browsing by giraffe (Figure 9.3). In this dryland environment, the flowers of these tree species are especially important for pollinators, making them critical for the ecology of the area: reduction of their health and presence thus potentially has wider ecological consequences. For this reason, these tree species were selected for a study of the impacts of browsing giraffe at Etendeka.



Fig. 9.3 Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*) browsing in the Etendeka Tourism Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 8.3.2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Etendeka's current giraffe population is linked to translocations of these mammals into the area in the 1980s and 1990s, starting with an initial translocation of giraffe to the farm Werêldsend, south of the !Uniab River, in 1983. The aim was to contribute to the touristic attractiveness of the area by enhancing its complement of large mammals. The research involved finding out about giraffe browsing behaviour in Etendeka, surveying, measuring and mapping especially *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* in the concession, and assessing the level of browse damage (Sections 9.3 and 9.4). In addition, practical ways to protect these trees from further browse damage by giraffe were explored and are documented here (Section 9.5).

9.2 Study area

Etendeka is well known for its layered hills and flat-topped mountains, broken by ephemeral rivers and permanent water springs. Indeed, Etendeka is an otjiHerero word derived from 'Omatendeka' meaning layered hills or mountains. Damara/!Nūkhoen refer to the area as #Nauraheb,³ meaning broken up or breaking up. Both local/Indigenous names reflect the geology and topography of the area which is distinguished by layered flat-top table mountains covered with broken up basalt lava rocks, as can be seen in Figure 9.4. This geologically interesting area⁴ lies between the Grootberg in the east and the Goboboseb mountains in the west. Before the Atlantic Ocean came between the African and South American continents as the Gondwana super-continent broke up more than a 100 million years ago, volcanic activity melted the earth's crust causing lava flows from more than 100 km under the earth's surface to rise to the surface, flowing down huge fissures and covering the Etendeka area in north-west Namibia.⁵ This magma formed the 78,000 km² Etendeka Plateau⁶ and Awahab Outliers, covered with a lava sheet approximately two kilometres thick, and was followed by the split between Africa and South America.⁷ The area is very dry, its annual average rainfall ranging from 100-110 mm. It mostly rains when the wind blows from the east, gathering heat as it moves over the inland plateau. When wind blows from the coast in the west it tends to be cooler.

3 Pers. comm. Welhemina Suro Ganuses, Sesfontein, 5.9.2023.

4 Jerram *et al.* (1999)

5 Grünert (2000)

6 *Ibid.*

7 Rathbun *et al.* (2015)



Fig. 9.4 Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Etendeka Tourism Concession, showing the layered table-top mountains and broken basalt lavas characteristic of this area. Photo: © Kahingirisina Maoveka, 2016, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

This project was conducted under the guidance of Etendeka Mountain Camp⁸ management, the sole lodge in the Etendeka Tourism Concession. The Etendeka Concession comprises a triangular area of 50,000 ha of the Damaraland Communal Land Area (as defined in the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002), near the Grootberg on the edge of the Northern Namib Desert in Kunene Region (Figure 9.2). For a short period starting in 1958, the area was part of an expanded area designated as Game Reserve No. 2. From 1962 to 1970, the south-west boundary of Etosha Game Park (renamed Etosha National Park in 1967), ran slightly to the north of the present position of Etendeka Mountain Camp (see Chapter 2, especially Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Figure 9.5 shows boundary markers along the cutline forming the southern border of the 1962–1970 Etosha Game Park / Etosha National Park boundary, to the west of the current ENP.



Fig. 9.5 Boundary markers along the cutline track of the southern border of the 1962–1970 Etosha Game Park/Etosha National Park, north of Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Etendeka Tourism Concession. The marker in the foreground of the image on the left is the marker on the left of the birds-eye view image on the right. The cutline running diagonally south-west in the bottom left corner of the right-hand image marks an access road to the plateau, originally established by the farmer (Krenz) who held the commercial farm Otjihavera in the 1950s, now part of the Etendeka Concession. Photo on left: © Sian Sullivan, 17.4.2023, drawing on information from Duncan Gilchrist, pers. comm., during site visit, corroborated by pers. comm. information to Dennis Liebenberg from Rudi Loutit (formerly of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism) and the late Garth Owen-Smith (formerly of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation); image on right compiled on Google Earth using data from AirbusMaxar Technologies Imagery from 3.5.2023 onwards. Both images CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

⁸ <https://www.etendeka-namibia.com/>

In the mid-1980s under the former Damaraland Regional Authority (DRA), Etendeka became a tourism concession, alongside the Palmwag and Hobatere concessions (see Chapter 13). No hunting is currently permitted in these areas, although the area was part of a large hunting concession from the 1970s into the 1980s. Co-author Liebenberg, formerly a shareholder in Namib Wilderness Safaris,⁹ has been Etendeka's Concession operator for more than 25 years, during a period of significant change in conservation in Namibia, marked especially by the establishment of community-run conservancies (see Chapters 3 and 5). As shown in Figure 9.2 the Etendeka Concession now shares its western boundary with the Palmwag Tourism Concession, its north-eastern boundary with Anabeb and Omatendeka conservancies, and its southern boundary with Torra and #Khoadi-Il Hôas conservancies. Since March 2012, the Etendeka Mountain Camp enterprise has been run as a joint venture with Anabeb and Omatendeka conservancies, such that the fixed assets of the enterprise belong to these conservancies. The tourism concession is now a shared partnership jointly owned by the investor and the conservancies under Big Sky¹⁰ management.

Alongside Wilderness Safaris' Desert Rhino Camp in the Palmwag Concession, Etendeka Mountain Camp is one of the first lodges in Namibia to earn a five-flower "eco-award" rating for being environmentally friendly.¹¹ The camp uses solar power, is careful with the use of water and wood, and was one of the first tourist enterprises in Namibia to pay a share of income to conservancies bordering the concession. The camp concession-holder and manager (co-author Dennis Liebenberg) collaborates closely with the surrounding conservancies, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) and Save the Rhino Trust (SRT)¹² in managing the area for both tourism and conservation. Ongoing monitoring programmes are the annual game count in June, carried out by driving along a specified route and counting animals within a distance from the road,¹³ and lion monitoring based on photographs and tracking data from fitted satellite collars and telemetry equipment (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19). Black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) also move through the area which is monitored and patrolled by SRT Rangers.

Alongside giraffe, the area hosts a variety of desert-adapted large and small mammals. Species include *Equus zebra hartmannae* (mountain zebra), *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* (greater kudu), *Oryx gazella* (oryx), *Raphicerus campestris* (steenbok), *Oreotragus oreotragus* (klipspringer), *Crocuta crocuta* (spotted hyena), *Proteles cristata* (aardwolf), *Panthera leo* (lion), *P. pardus* (leopard), *Xerus princeps* (Damara ground squirrel), *Lupulella mesomelas* (black-backed jackal), *Acinonyx jubatus* (cheetah), as well as a new species of elephant shrew, *Macroscelides micus* (round-eared Etendeka sengi).¹⁴ The concession is also home to several endemic birds, including Ruppell's korhaan (*Heterotetrax rueppelii*), Monteiro's hornbill (*Tockus monteiri*), the rockrunner (*Achaetops pycnopygius*), and the Benguela long-billed lark (*Certhilauda benguelensis*).¹⁵ Resident reptiles include lizards like Namibian rock agama (*Agama planiceps*), tree agama (*Acanthocercus atricollis*), common striped skink (*Trachylepsis striata*), Namaqua sand lizard (*Pedioplanis namaquensis*), rock monitor (*Varanus albigularis*), web-footed gecko (*Pachydactylus rangei*), and several snakes including the black mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis*), horned adder (*Bitis caudalis*) and western barred spitting cobra (*Naja nigrocollis nigricincta*).

In terms of vegetation and, as noted in Section 9.1, the Etendeka Concession is in a transition area between mopane savanna and semi-desert with few large trees.¹⁶ As well as *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca*, characteristic woody plants adapted for aridity include *Sterculia africana* (African star chestnut) and *Sterculia quinqueloba* (large-leaved sterculia), *Boscia foetida* (smelling shepherd's

⁹ <https://www.wildernessdestinations.com/africa/namibia>

¹⁰ <https://www.bigsky-namibia.com/>

¹¹ S. Bethune, pers. comm., 24.1.2016. See <https://ecoawards-namibia.org/>

¹² <https://www.savetherhinotrust.org/>

¹³ The latest game count for north-west Namibia of which Etendeka is part can be found at <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/North%20West%20Game%20Count-Regional%202022%20final.pdf>

¹⁴ Rathbun *et al.* (2015)

¹⁵ Simmons *et al.* (2015)

¹⁶ Giess (1998[1971])

tree) and *Pachypodium lealii* (bottle tree), and the endemics *Combretum wattii* (Kaoko combretum) and *Acacia robynsiana* (whip-stick acacia). Succulent euphorbias include *Euphorbia damarana* (Damara euphorbia), *Euphorbia mauritanica* (yellow milk bush), and *Euphorbia virosa* (candelabra euphorbia). In Figure 9.4 above the dominant plants are mopane trees and the rounded Damara euphorbia, a favourite food of black rhinos and greater kudu.

9.3 Aims and methods

The field research for this project was carried out as “Work Integrated Learning” as part of a Bachelor of Natural Resource Management (Nature Conservation) degree at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The main aim was to document the impacts of browsing giraffe in the Etendeka Concession Area on especially *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* over five years between 2016 and 2021. An additional objective was to explore practical ways for preventing further damage to these important tree species (Section 9.5).

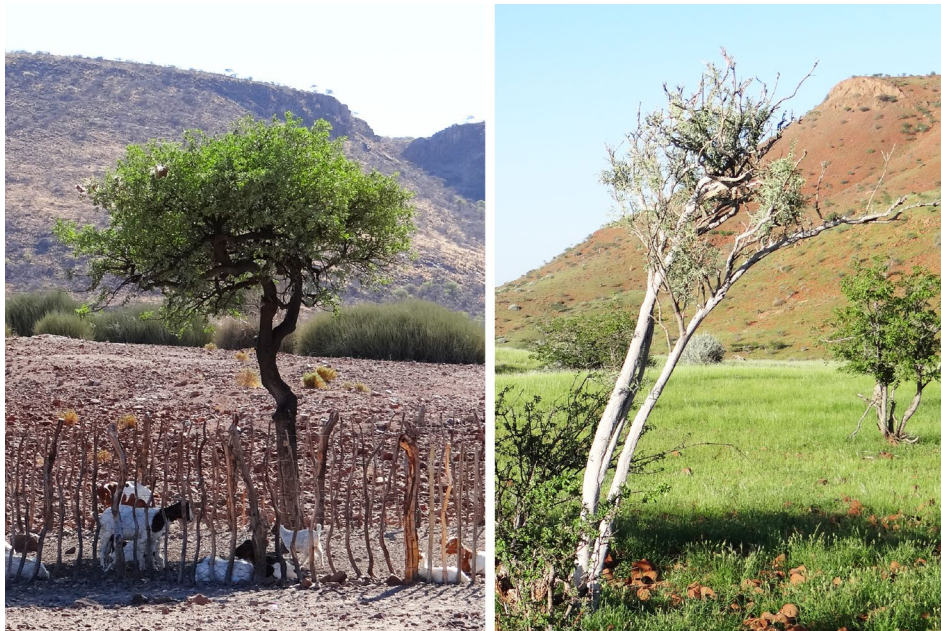


Fig. 9.6 *Maerua schinzii* (left) is a valued forage tree that often forms the centrepiece of goat *kraals* for farmers in conservancies beyond the concession boundaries—as shown here at !Nao-dâis, on the northern boundary of the Etendeka Concession. *Boscia albitrunca* (right) photographed within the Etendeka Concession. Photos: © Sian Sullivan 13.11.2014 and 27.3.2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The growth form of *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* is alike (see Figure 9.6). *Maerua schinzii* occurs throughout the north-western, central and central southern parts of the country but is not found in the arid Namib, the Kalahari vegetation zones or in north-eastern Namibia. It often has a single trunk that may be crooked or twisted because of growing under or against other trees such as mopane that protect its saplings from being eaten by herbivores when they are small.¹⁷ The species has bead-like fruit, simple, green leaves with long petioles as well as wrinkle-like rings on the bark, often at the base of the branches, hence its common name as ringwood tree. The trunk can sometimes look white from one side and dark on the opposite side (pers. obs. by Maoveka). *Boscia albitrunca* (shepherd's tree) is common in the drier parts of southern Africa. Mannheimer and Curtis¹⁸ observe this species to be widespread throughout Namibia, except in areas of the Namib Desert and in the south where tree growth is limited. It also normally has a single trunk with white smooth bark or

¹⁷ Berry & Loutit (1974)

¹⁸ (2005)

sometimes a whitish grey stem. It has single, green-grey leathery leaves and rounded yellowish fruits with single seed. In 2021 an additional tree species—*Parkinsonia africana*—was also surveyed due to observations that this species too is being affected by browsing giraffe.

A field survey of *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* populations in 2016 and 2021, including *P. africana* in 2021, was thus conducted within the Etendeka Concession area. The presence of these species along key routes in the concession was mapped for individuals within 50 m from both sides of the main route from Etendeka Mountain Camp to the main road to Sesfontein, and from the camp to Palmwag, with GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinates recorded for each individual included in this sample, as shown in Figure 9.7.



Fig. 9.7 Mapped locations of measured trees included in this study. Top image: full tree survey in 2021. Bottom image: detail from 2021 showing the different species included in the survey – key: dark green = *Maerua schinzii*; pale green = *Boscia albitrunca*; yellow = *Parkinsonia africana*; circles = live adult trees; crosses = dead trees; dots = juvenile individuals. Source: Kahingirisina Maoveka's research database, bottom image mapped by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The following information was recorded so as to provide an indication of the population structure and recruitment¹⁹ of these selected tree species in the Etendeka Tourism Concession:

1. in 2016, dead trees (e.g. those showing zero green growth and/or no longer standing) and live trees were recorded to determine the ratio of alive, dead and juvenile *B. albitrunca* and *M. schinzii* in the concession area. This survey was repeated in 2021, when *P. africana* was also included;
1. the seedlings or juvenile trees of 30 cm and above were counted so as to indicate sapling occurrence and thus recruitment to species populations, observing that many juveniles use the protection of mopane trees or *E. damarana* to assist their growth. As above, the survey in 2016 focused on *B. albitrunca* and *M. schinzii*, with *P. africana* included in 2021;
1. browse damage was also recorded for tree individuals included in the experiments to protect live mature individuals of *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* (see Section 9.5), following the five score scale in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1. Scoring system used for assessing extent of browsing by *Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis* on *Maerua schinzii* and *Boscia albitrunca* at Etendeka Tourism Concession in 2016 and 2021, and *Parkinsonia africana* in 2021.

Score	Browse assessment
1	No visible browse damage
2	Some evidence of browsing but no clear giraffe browse line
3	Clear giraffe browse line but branches above this line are healthy
4	Clear giraffe browse line and more than 25% of branches or leaves above the browse line dead or removed
5	Clear giraffe browse line and more than 50% of branches or leaves above the browse line dead or removed

9.4 Results

In this section we report on the findings of this assessment of the population structure of tree species selected for study in this survey. In 2016, 604 individuals of dead, alive and juvenile *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* were observed and counted within the Etendeka Concession Area on the route mapped in Figure 9.7. Many more *B. albitrunca* were counted than *M. schinzii*, with the numbers of apparently dead *M. schinzii* comprising a higher proportion of the population of this species than for *B. albitrunca*: as graphed in Figure 9.8. In 2016, as Figure 9.8 shows, *B. albitrunca* seemed to be thriving relative to *M. schinzii*, in terms of displaying a higher proportion of alive trees compared with those recorded as dead. This pattern, however, was reversed for recorded juveniles of these two species, for which *M. schinzii* was recorded to have far higher numbers than *B. albitrunca*, indicating more robust recruitment of the former species compared with the latter.

¹⁹ Meaning the growth of young individuals that may potentially contribute to the future population of these tree species. For similar studies of population structure and recruitment for woody species in Namibia see, for example, Sullivan *et al.* (1995) and Sullivan (1999: 268–71).

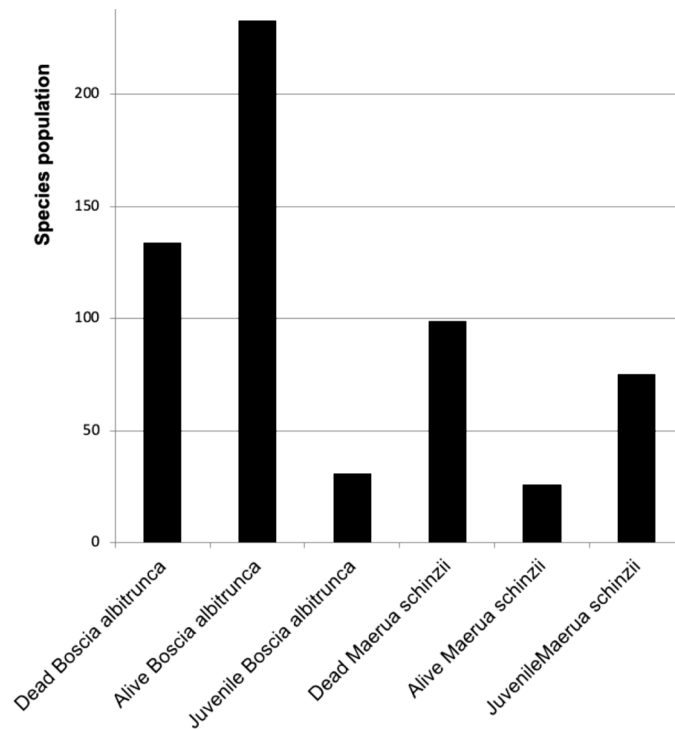


Fig. 9.8 Graph showing the results of the survey of dead, alive and juvenile *Boscia albitrunca* and *Maerua schinzii* in the Etendeka Tourism Concession in 2016. Source: Maoveka's research database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In the repeat survey in 2021, 479 individuals of *B. albitrunca*, *M. schinzii* and *P. africana* were counted within the Etendeka Concession Area and their status as dead, alive and juvenile recorded. As shown in Figure 9.9, the numbers of dead relative to thriving *M. schinzii* remained very high in comparison to *B. albitrunca*, and the latter species seemed to be thriving relatively well in comparison with the former. It was observed that giraffe seem to prefer *M. schinzii* to *B. albitrunca* and it is assumed that this preference is contributing to negative impacts on the population structure of *M. schinzii*. On the other hand, juveniles of *M. schinzii* were observed to be doing well compared to those of *B. albitrunca* because most of them grow close to older mopane trees which protects them from being browsed. The crowns of individuals of mature *B. albitrunca* and *M. schinzii* were observed to have quite unusual shapes as a result of browsing by giraffe. The population of *P. africana* is shown to be relatively small at Etendeka, but with more alive individuals than dead: recruitment thus appears healthy with mature individuals observed to be flowering, indicating that the population of this species is surviving.

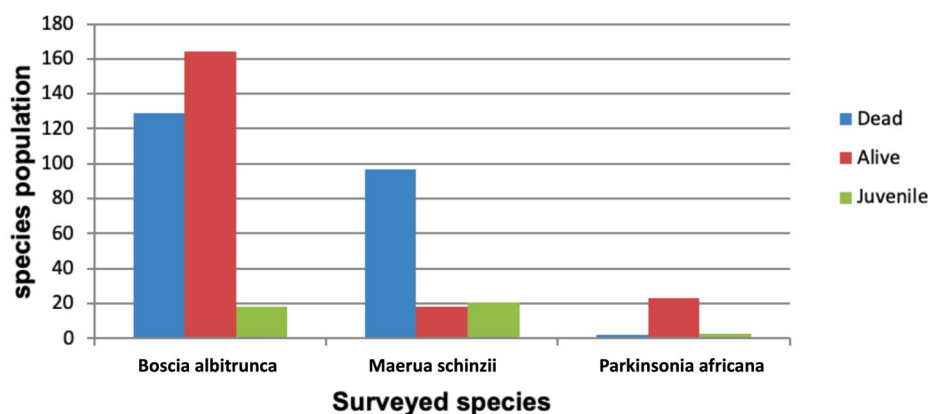


Fig 9.9 Graph showing the results of the 2021 survey of *Boscia albitrunca*, *Maerua schinzii* and *Parkinsonia africana* in the Etendeka Tourism Concession showing proportions of dead, alive and juvenile individuals counted for each species. Source: Maoveka's research database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

An additional cause for some concern is that termites have been observed to be damaging some *M. schinzii* with leaves above the browse line of the giraffes. Termites have started working on live *Maerua* which weakens their limbs making these individuals susceptible to breaking branches, with branches or even the whole tree falling in strong winds. Termites build their colonies around the tree stem up to the branches on which they feed. They work very fast: in some instances dead trees recorded in 2016 had been completely consumed when revisited in 2021, leaving patches of bare ground and contributing to the discrepancy in the number of surveyed trees between 2016 and 2021.

9.5 Protecting live *Maerua schinzii* and *Boscia albitrunca* trees

This section assesses experiments made to protect live mature *M. schinzii* and *B. albitrunca* trees within the Etendeka Tourism Concession. Table 9.2 lists seven trees selected for protection from browsing giraffe, and the different methods used for their protection—focusing especially on the more threatened *M. schinzii*. Five different methods were used to protect the trees from further damage by the giraffes and seven individual trees in total were protected. All of the methods were quite labour intensive. To assess the effectiveness of each method, browsing scores and other indicators of tree health were recorded for each individual in the first week of protection in 2016, and again during the repeat survey in 2021.

Table 9.2. Techniques used in 2016 to protect selected mature *Maerua schinzii* and *Boscia albitrunca* trees from browsing by giraffe, with browsing scores – as per Table 9.1 – and other health indications recorded for 2016 and 2021.

Protected trees	Method used	Browse scores 2016	Browse scores 2021
<i>Boscia albitrunca</i>	Standing rocks	1	1
<i>Maerua schinzii</i>	Rock wall	4	1
	Corrugated iron	4	1
	Fenced	1	1
	Fenced	5	1
	Branches	5	Dead
	Branches	5	Dead

The first tree selected was a *B. albitrunca* individual, protected with rocks from the Etendeka landscape (Figure 9.10). It took about a week to complete this form of protection because a lot of rocks were needed and these had to be brought to the location from the surrounding landscape. Standing rocks were packed together around the tree from about 60 cm from the base of the stem to 2 m away from the tree canopy. The rocks were placed in such a way that sharp or pointed edges were placed upright to make the area around this tree uneven for giraffe to step on. This method is suitable for the concession area because it blends into the scenery. It has also been used in different areas to prevent elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) from approaching water tanks. Nevertheless, the browse score for this tree in 2021 was the same as in 2016.



Fig. 9.10 Image on the left shows a mature *Boscia albitrunca* protected with standing rocks in 2016. Image on the right shows this same tree to the right of the image with an unprotected and now dead *B. albitrunca* visible on the left of the image. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 14.9.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Different techniques were experimented with for protecting *M. schinzii* from browsing giraffe:

1. a rock wall about a metre high and two metres away from the tree canopy was built around *M. schinzii*. This height was chosen because it was the highest recorded for giraffe jumping when chased;
2. a half a metre rock wall was built, and sheets of corrugated iron were placed inside to act as reflectors of the sun to scare giraffe away from the tree. The corrugated iron was placed in such a way that if giraffe try to step over the wall the iron produces a sound that also startles them away from the tree. In this case, the protected tree showed relatively good leaf growth over the five years since protection (see Figure 9.11);



Fig. 9.11 *Maerua schinzii* protected by stone wall with corrugated iron reflectors inside. Note the very high browse line, characteristic of browsing by giraffe. Photo: © Kahingirisina Maoveka, 2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3. for two mature *M. schinzii* a 2.2 m wire mesh fence was erected around each tree, about two metres away, attached to poles dug half a metre into the ground. For one of these sites, two juvenile *M. schinzii* have grown from the roots of the original mature tree, which had died in-between. This technique of fencing prevented the giraffes from feeding from both trees, with one becoming a small bush by 2021. At the second of these sites the protected adult individual had few leaves remaining in 2016, but in 2021 displayed new shoots from the lower part of its trunk, with a new juvenile around 1.5 m high also growing inside the fence. It thus appears that fencing can be used to protect these trees from browsing giraffe, although the fences do not blend so well into the scenery and thus the method is less attractive for tourism purposes;
4. finally, thorny branches from *Terminalia prunioides*—a species that is expanding in some areas of the concession—were also placed around two heavily browsed *M. schinzii* trees around two metres away, alongside branches from *E. damarana*. The *M. schinzii* protected in this way did not survive, which may be because they had already been browsed so heavily by 2016 when they were selected for protection. Advantages of this method of protection is that the branches placed around the trees look natural and provide habitat for small mammals and other creatures.

Since these experiments were initiated many more trees have been protected in the Etendeka Concession, using especially the second method outlined here and shown in Figure 9.11.

9.6 Conclusion

This study was carried out so as to add to knowledge regarding the impact of browsing by giraffe on important tree species within the Etendeka Tourism Concession. Here, giraffe translocated into the concession and then breeding there have been observed to have a significant impact on especially *M. schinzii*, but also *B. albitrunca*, tree species that are particularly important for pollinators. As well as providing an indication of the effects of browsing on the population structure and recruitment of these two species, an aim was to experiment with methods of protecting these trees from browsing giraffes. It seems that the method of building a rock wall with corrugated iron placed inside is the most appropriate for this area: it is effective in preventing giraffe browsing the protected trees, and thereby allows new leaf growth to take place. Additionally, this method blends relatively well into the Etendeka scenery (see Figure 9.11) and thus protects the tourism product of the Etendeka Mountain Camp enterprise.

Overall, it can be concluded that a more explicit “multispecies” approach is needed when considering wildlife management approaches such as translocations of megaherbivores into a dryland area such as Etendeka/#Naurahab. It is clearly important to assess impacts on the ecology of an area as a whole (also see Chapter 10). Otherwise, translocations that may be deemed to improve the “tourism product” of an area may have far-reaching detrimental ecological effects in the long run.

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10. Are mountain and plains zebra hybridising in north-west Namibia?

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Abstract

This chapter focuses on interactions between two animal species critical to the ecosystems of “Etosha-Kunene”, namely mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*, specifically the subspecies *E. z. hartmannae*) and plains zebra (*E. quagga*, specifically the subspecies *E. q. burchellii*). Large herbivore species are increasingly restricted to fenced protected areas with artificial waterpoints, a situation that limits their opportunities for dispersal and access to natural water sources. This restricted movement may lead to genetic consequences including disruption of gene flow, inflation of “inbreeding”, and the loss of rare alleles supporting local adaptation and genetic fitness. In Namibia’s large protected area of Etosha National Park, mountain zebra are restricted to the dolomite ridges in the far western section of the park, while plains zebra occur throughout the park. Historically, the overlap in range of the two zebra species was limited, as plains zebra confined their movements to the southern and eastern edges of the Etosha Pan during the dry season, and to the open plains west of the Pan during the rainy season. Due to fencing and new waterpoint creation, the current overlap of these two previously geographically separated species creates a potential conservation problem in the form of hybridisation between the two species. This chapter reviews what is known about the hybridisation of these two species, and considers implications for conservation and for future research.

10.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on an ongoing study aiming to assess and understand the mechanisms and extent of hybridisation in naturally occurring populations of mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*) and plains zebra (*Equus quagga burchellii*). Drawing on integrated genetics and ecological approaches, its focus is Etosha National Park (ENP) and connected landscapes to its west. In this context, hybridisation may arise when these two populations of individuals taxonomically distinguished based on one or more heritable characters may overlap in space and temporarily cross to form viable, and at least partially fertile offspring.¹ Concerns may arise in this situation in connection with a wider context of the rapid loss of biodiversity globally in part due to anthropogenic changes to the natural environment.²

The impacts of human activities are observed at all levels of biodiversity, from the modification of ecosystems to the extinction of species and the loss of genetic diversity. Human alteration of the physical landscape and species distribution can additionally affect gene flow and introgression³ by influencing the degree of contact between groups of individuals.⁴ Large herbivore species are increasingly restricted to fenced protected areas, a situation that limits their opportunities for dispersal and their access to natural water sources.⁵ This restricted movement may lead to genetic

1 Eckenwalder (1998)

2 Vitousek *et al.* (1997)

3 The transfer of genetic information from one species to another as a result of hybridisation between them and repeated backcrossing.

4 Crispo *et al.* (2011)

5 Shannon *et al.* (2009)

consequences, including disruption of gene flow, inflation of inbreeding, and loss of rare alleles supporting local adaptation and genetic fitness.⁶

Many protected areas located in Africa use artificial water points to provide water for wildlife in the dry season.⁷ Availability of vital resources such as water may alter wildlife distribution as some herbivores no longer need to migrate and become localised. This localisation may cause a rapid population increase of water-dependent species such as zebra, increasing competition with more vulnerable low-density species,⁸ as well as interspecies interaction.⁹

10.1.1 Study area

Etosha National Park is a wildlife reserve located in northern Namibia between 18°80' S-19°23' S and 15°70' E-16°5' E, with an average elevation of 1050 m¹⁰ (see Figure 10.1). The area that is now ENP was once part of the large connected landscape of about 80,000 km² named Game Reserve No. 2 at the time of its proclamation under the German colonial regime in 1907 (for details see Chapter 1). In 1947, the north-western part of Game Reserve No. 2 became simultaneously a “native reserve” area home to otjiHerero-speaking peoples (see Chapters 2, 6 and 7), with Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples also present throughout southern Kunene to north of Puros and towards the coast (see Chapters 1, 12 and 13).¹¹ In 1970 the size and boundaries of ENP as it currently exists were established, its extent now encompassing 22,000 km² (for details see Chapter 2).¹²

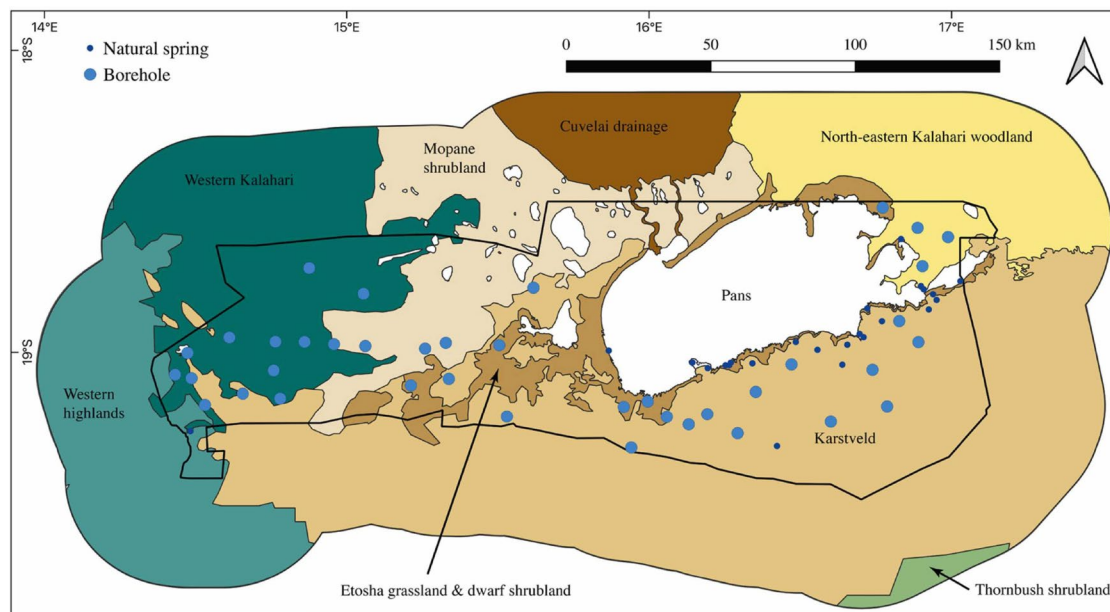


Fig. 10.1 Map showing the major vegetation communities characterising Etosha National Park (signalled by the inner black boundary) in connection with the Greater Etosha Landscape, together with the distribution of boreholes and natural springs. Saline pans are shown in white. Source: © Turner *et al.* (2022: Figure 2), reproduced with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Almost all ENP may be described as an arid to semi-arid savanna with 250-500 mm average annual rainfall and a highly variable and erratic rainfall pattern.¹³ The vegetation is classified as arid savanna including open grasslands and groves of woody species.¹⁴ Much of the park is covered by

6 Dalui *et al.* (2020)

7 Geenen (2019)

8 Harrington *et al.* (1999)

9 Gosling (2014)

10 Zidon *et al.* (2017)

11 Sullivan (1999), Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021, 2022)

12 Berry (1997)

13 Plessis (1997)

14 Zidon *et al.* (2017)

mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) shrubveld and treeveld, alongside large salt pans with open grasslands along the pans. Seven basic vegetation types are described: bare ground, grassland, steppe, grass savanna, shrub savanna, low tree savanna and high tree savanna.¹⁵ These seven vegetation types are further grouped into the following basic habitat types: bare areas (salt pans), open plains (grassland, grass savanna and steppe), shrublands (shrub savanna) and woodlands (high tree and low tree savanna) (Figure 10.1). Common grass species are *Cynodon dactylon*, *Eragrostis micrantha*, *E. rotifer*, *Diplachne fusca* and *Chloris virgata*. Mopane is the dominant tree species.¹⁶ Etosha National Park has three characteristic seasons: the wet (rainy) season (January–April), the cool-dry season (May–August) and the hot-semi-dry season (September–December). The mean monthly temperatures range from 25°C to 6°C minimum in June and July, to highs of 34–35°C in October–December, and lows of around 18°C in November–February.¹⁷ Etosha National Park supports a high density of mammal populations with many herbivores of which zebra and springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) are the most abundant plains ungulates.¹⁸ African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer caffer*) were known historically in the park area but no longer occur here.¹⁹

In ENP, perennial water is found only in fountains and drinking troughs supplied by boreholes. Rivers and water-courses are dependent upon rainfall and as such are not important sources of water for wildlife during the dry season.²⁰ Park boundary fences covering over 850 km were erected in the 1970s,²¹ blocking wildlife dispersal beyond the park's boundary, thereby preventing migrations to external water sources in the dry season (see Chapter 2). A consequence of this situation is that several artificial waterholes were established from the 1950s onwards to improve the wildlife viewing experience for tourists and provide water for wildlife within the park.²² Some waterpoints, especially those on the 19th latitude (corresponding roughly with the southern boundary of Etosha Pan), were established to attract elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) back into the park as a measure to reduce human-elephant conflict in commercial farms close to the protected area (see Chapter 11). There are now over 100 perennial watering points in the Park, including artesian springs, contact seeps and 55 boreholes²³ (see Figure 10.1). On the broader implications of changing the hydrology of landscapes in north-west Namibia through the drilling of boreholes also see Chapter 7.

10.1.2 The study species

The large protected area of ENP in north-central Namibia is home to two zebra species, Hartmann's mountain zebra (*E. z. hartmannae*) and Burchell's plains zebra (*E. q. burchellii*). Mountain zebra are restricted to the dolomite ridges in the far western section of the park while plains zebra occur throughout the park. In this section, I outline the taxonomic relationships between these two zebra species concerning equids in Africa and beyond.

There are seven species of wild equids of which four occur in Africa and three in Asia.²⁴ All equid species are similar in size and body shape, have a polygynous mating strategy, inhabit open grass or shrub-dominated habitats, and are predominantly grazers.²⁵ Equids are highly efficient hind-gut fermenters, adapted to compensate for low-quality food by consuming large quantities.²⁶ African wild ass (*Equus africanus*), Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*), mountain zebra (*E. z. hartmannae*) and *E.*

15 Huang *et al.* (2021)

16 Roux *et al.* (1988)

17 Turner & Getz (2010)

18 Turnbull *et al.* (1998)

19 Wassermann *et al.* (2015)

20 du Preez & Grobler (1977)

21 *Ibid.*

22 Turner & Getz (2010: 3), Wassermann *et al.* (2015)

23 Hoffman (1989)

24 Moehlman (2002)

25 Rubenstein (1989), Bauer *et al.* (1994), Moehlman (2002)

26 Janis (1976)

z. zebra) and plains zebra (*Equus quagga*) are the four equids occurring in Africa. Mountain zebra and plains zebra are the focal species for this study.

Plains zebra range from southern Sudan and southern Ethiopia, east of the Nile River, to southern Angola, northern Namibia and northern South Africa.²⁷ Six morphologically defined subspecies of plains zebra are recognised based on morphological and genetic cline from north to south across its range.²⁸ The total population of plains zebra across its range is estimated at over 500,000 animals. However, a reduction in numbers of 24% has been observed since the last assessment in 2002, and plains zebra is now listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Near Threatened.²⁹

Historically, mountain zebra occurred from the southern parts of South Africa through Namibia and into south-western Angola. Two subspecies of mountain zebra are recognised: Cape mountain zebra were widely distributed along the mountain ranges forming the southern and western edge of the central plateau of Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces of South Africa, from the Amatola Mountains in the Cathcart District westward and northward to the Kamiesberg in Northern Cape; Hartmann's mountain zebra—named after Georg Hartmann, the surveyor for the German colony discussed in Chapters 1 and 12—occurs in the mountainous transition zone between the Namib Desert and the central plateau in Namibia, with a marginal extension into south-western Angola.³⁰ Although the Hartmann's mountain zebra population has increased overall in recent years, the subspecies remain at threat from droughts that may lead to mortalities across their range. A high proportion (>50%) of mountain zebra occurs on private land where during times of drought they may not be prioritised as they compete with livestock for grazing and water: farmers tend to prefer to protect their cattle by increasing the harvest of zebra, putting the population at risk if dry periods are frequent and prolonged. In Kunene's communal land areas, a marked decline in the number of mountain zebra has occurred as a result of prolonged drought in combination with high offtake levels into this recent drought period (see Chapter 3, Table 3.2 and Figures 3.4 and 3.5). This subspecies is listed as Vulnerable to extinction by IUCN.³¹

Both mountain zebra and plains zebra occur in Namibia where their natural distribution range overlap in northern Namibia. Figure 10.2 shows the historical, current and introduced range of mountain zebra and plains zebra.

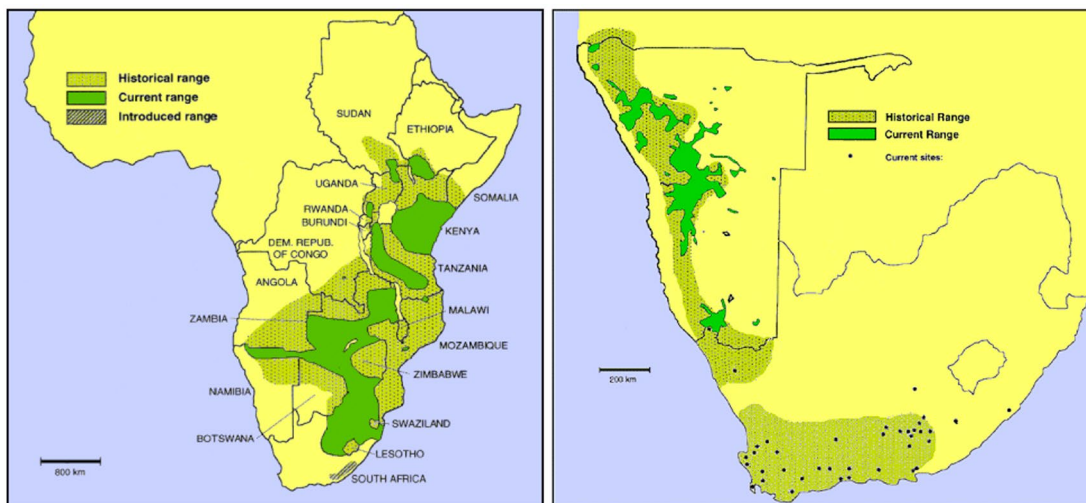


Fig. 10.2 Maps showing the historical, current and introduced range of plains zebra (*Equus quagga*) (left), and of mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*) in southern western Africa (right). Source: http://www.equids.org/images/L_PZebra.gif (L) and http://www.equids.org/images/L_MZebra.gif (R) (public domain images), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

27 Hack *et al.* (2002), Pedersen *et al.* (2018)

28 Groves & Bell (2004), King & Moehlman (2016)

29 *Ibid.*

30 Moodley & Harley (2005), Winker *et al.* (2016)

31 Gosling *et al.* (2019)

Historically, the overlap in the range of the two zebra species in the area of ENP was limited. Plains zebra confined their movements to the southern and eastern edges of Etosha Pan during the dry season, and to the open plains west of the Pan during the rainy season.³² Mountain zebra in the park are restricted to the rocky and mountainous western section of the park, and west of the park into the escarpment. With the artificial provision of perennial water sources throughout the park, however, plains zebra expanded their range and now overlap extensively with the mountain zebra range in the west.³³ This extended overlap in the range of the two previously geographically separated species in Etosha creates a potential conservation problem in the form of hybridisation between the two species—as discussed in detail in Section 10.2.2. The movement of mountain zebra to the west is restricted by the park boundary fence, while the two species interact at waterholes, and sometimes are observed grazing together.³⁴ Plains zebra occur at a higher density throughout the park compared to mountain zebra.³⁵

Plains zebra mares with foals depicting an intermediate phenotype of plains and mountain zebra were observed in western Etosha in the 1980s during zebra translocation operations,³⁶ as well as along the southern boundary fence near Ombika.³⁷ Hybridisation is thought to be more prevalent in western Etosha where the range of the two species overlap.³⁸ Apart from observations based on the phenotypical evidence of foals with intermediary striping patterns, no in-depth research has been undertaken to understand the circumstances surrounding the phenomenon of zebra hybridisation in ENP. However, a pilot research project was initiated to test for hybridisation between the two zebra species using molecular studies.³⁹ At the same time, there is currently no scientific basis for extrapolating the extent of hybridisation to determine whether or not it is a priority conservation concern for one or both zebra species. There is thus a need to identify and understand the ecological and genetic characteristics and causal mechanisms for hybridisation to inform possible remedial measures to reduce or eliminate associated conservation risks.

10.2 Conceptualising home range, habitats and hybridisation: A review of literature

As mentioned, provision of artificial water for wildlife, and fencing off of the ENP protected area, is suspected to have facilitated extended overlap between historically separated wildlife species, leading to potential conservation challenges such as hybridisation. In this section, I review literature on an array of ecological and biological factors that may play a part in causing hybridisation between plains and mountain zebra in the area of ENP, to assess hybridisation likelihood and potential conservation consequences.

10.2.1 Home range and habitat use

Understanding wildlife movements and habitat use is critical for species conservation and management.⁴⁰ Animal space use is a central topic in ecology that has been addressed from two complementary viewpoints, namely geographic and environmental space. Typically, studies rooted in geographic space focus on home range size and spatial distribution, whereas studies focusing

³² Stander *et al.* (1990)

³³ Gosling (2014)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Kilian (2015)

³⁶ Louis Geldenhuys, pers. comm., 2015.

³⁷ W. Versfeld, pers. comm., 2015.

³⁸ Gosling (2014)

³⁹ Kamath (2011)

⁴⁰ Roug *et al.* (2020)

on environmental space aim to identify factors determining resource use and selection.⁴¹ The most commonly used definition for an animal's home range is the area traversed by the individual in its normal activities of food gathering, mating and caring for young.⁴² In this view, occasional ventures outside an area, perhaps exploratory, should not be considered as part of the home range.⁴³ Home ranges differ among animals of different species, among individuals within species, and even in individuals over time.

Home range behaviour is a common pattern of space use although there is also variation in animal home range size. Identifying factors that underlie this variation is fundamental to understanding the distribution and abundance of animals, and ultimately their population regulation, habitat selection and community structure—all relevant for management choices for the conservation of ecosystems.⁴⁴ Furthermore, home range behaviour is thought to be an expression of an animal's decision-making process, shaped by natural selection, to access spatially dispersed resources in a manner that increases fitness.⁴⁵

Biologists track animals to estimate the size and shapes of home ranges, movement patterns within home ranges, home range overlap among individuals, and how home range boundaries vary over time.⁴⁶ Home range size is influenced by several factors. Generally, home range size has been shown to decrease with decreasing body size, increased forage availability, and intraspecific competition, while interspecific competition leads to increasing home ranges.⁴⁷ Large mammals have larger home ranges than small mammals because they require more energy and therefore need a greater area in which to find this energy.⁴⁸ Other factors such as resource heterogeneity, abundance of predators, number of offspring, and anthropogenic disturbance also influence the size of the home range of a species⁴⁹ (see Chapters 17 and 19 for how these issues manifest concerning lion (*Panthera leo*)).

Habitat is a theoretical construct used to describe the living space of an organism. It includes the suite of interacting abiotic (e.g. weather, soils, topography, hydrology) and biotic (e.g. vegetation structure and composition, inter- and intra-specific competition, prevalence of diseases) elements influencing whether or not an organism uses a particular location.⁵⁰ Habitat selection is defined as the disproportionately preferential use of habitat types relative to their availability,⁵¹ and is an outcome of individual characteristics, the landscape animals inhabit and relationships among these.⁵² In their simplest form, habitat studies describe the general distribution of animals, i.e. where they occur in relation to characteristics of their environment.⁵³

Landscape use and the distribution of large mammalian herbivores are primarily driven by the availability of resources and the presence of constraints. Resources are usually related to forage characteristics, while constraints can limit the use of otherwise favourable environments.⁵⁴ Grass quality and distribution are important characteristics defining the availability of forage resources for herbivores.⁵⁵

In equids, as with other mammals, resources determine space use and movements. Home ranges of plains zebra, for example, differ across the continent, and across group composition. In East

41 van Moorter *et al.* (2015)

42 Burt (1943)

43 Kie *et al.* (2010)

44 Loveridge *et al.* (2009)

45 Knüsel *et al.* (2019)

46 Spencer (2012)

47 Bevanda *et al.* (2015)

48 Penzhorn (1982a)

49 Richard *et al.* (2014)

50 Montgomery & Roloff (2013)

51 Johnson (1980)

52 Rivrud *et al.* (2009)

53 Marshal *et al.* (2009)

54 Mariotti *et al.* (2020)

55 *Ibid.*

Africa home ranges in Ngorongoro were 80-250 km², while they were larger in Serengeti where they were influenced by the migratory nature of the zebras; 3-400 km² in the wet season and 4-600 km² in the dry season.⁵⁶ In Kruger National Park (KNP), South Africa, the plains zebra home ranges ranged from 49-566 km².⁵⁷ In another study conducted in KNP, the annual home ranges of plains zebra covered 150-250 km² whereas the seasonal home ranges varied between 30-90 km².⁵⁸

Hartmann's mountain zebra distribution is associated with rainfall patterns, so it has a marked seasonal variation. Their home ranges in Namibia's winter grazing areas were 6-10 km² in the fenced area of Daan Viljoen Game Reserve, and 10-20 km² in the Otjovazandu area of ENP, with much smaller summer grazing areas in both areas.⁵⁹ The home ranges of Cape Mountain Zebra breeding herds in Cape Mountain Zebra National Park, South Africa, ranged between 3-16 km².⁶⁰ The size and shape of the mountain zebra home range are determined by the availability of sufficient grazing, at least one permanent drinking place, mineral licks and sufficient shelter.⁶¹ A recent study in Namibia, however, reported much larger home ranges for mountain zebra averaging between 681 and 256 km² in wet and dry seasons respectively in an unprotected area.⁶²

A suitable habitat is an important factor affecting the distribution and abundance of wild animals.⁶³ Several factors such as variation in structure, abundance and spatial distribution of plant resources,⁶⁴ local density of herbivores,⁶⁵ and sex and stage of life resulting in demographic differences,⁶⁶ may influence habitat selection in herbivores. Preference for a given habitat type is largely determined by the available vegetation within an area which provides herbivores with food, water, minerals, shelter from climatic extremes and cover from predators.⁶⁷ Of these vegetation features, food is considered the most important factor influencing habitat use among large herbivores.⁶⁸

Wild and feral equids inhabit diverse grasslands, shrubland and woodland environments around the world and frequently display seasonal changes in home range dimensions or use in response to shifts in water and vegetation availability.⁶⁹ Plains zebra prefer both open grasslands and woodlands.⁷⁰ Spatio-temporal variation in habitat selection between open grasslands and woodlands by plains zebra exists as a response to predator avoidance and resource availability.⁷¹ A study in ENP established that plains zebra prefer open habitats in wet seasons and wetter years but shifted their selection preferences to woodlands in dry seasons and droughts.⁷² Mountain zebra are not territorial and could therefore be expected to range freely, selecting those areas that best suit their requirements.⁷³ Mountain zebra were also found to prefer grasslands compared to other habitat types in a study conducted in Mountain Zebra National Park in South Africa.⁷⁴ Not much more is known about the habitat preferences of Hartmann's mountain zebra other than their recorded preferences for the mountain escarpment in Namibia.⁷⁵

56 King & Moehlman (2016)

57 Smuts (1975)

58 Owen-Smith *et al.* (2015)

59 Penzhorn (1982b)

60 Ransom & Kaczensky (2016)

61 Penzhorn (1982a)

62 Muntifering *et al.* (2019)

63 Chabwela *et al.* (2017)

64 Spalinger & Hobbs (1992)

65 Maier *et al.* (2005)

66 Nikula *et al.* (2004)

67 Jarman & Sinclair (2021)

68 McNaughton (1987)

69 Bartlam Brooks *et al.* (2013), Muntifering *et al.* (2019)

70 Courbin *et al.* (2016), Fischhoff *et al.* (2007)

71 *Ibid.*, Zidon *et al.* (2017)

72 Huang *et al.* (2021)

73 Penzhorn (1979)

74 Winkler & Owen-Smith (1995)

75 Joubert (1972), Muntifering *et al.* (2019)

10.2.2 Hybridisation and landscape genetics

Hybridisation is a situation in which two populations of individuals distinguishable based on one or more heritable characters overlap in space and temporarily cross to form viable, and at least partially fertile offspring.⁷⁶ Species boundaries are frequently challenged by lineage divergence and hybridisation. Diverged lineages are maintained by barriers to gene flow that vary in strength over time, space, or the genome.⁷⁷ For closely related species, the barriers may be permeable, and changes in ecology, behaviour, population dynamics and distribution of species may result in increased levels of spatial and temporal sympatry,⁷⁸ leading to an increased frequency of hybridisation events.⁷⁹ Anthropogenic activities such as habitat degradation, domestication and translocation of animal species have recently increased the rate of hybridisation events worldwide as humans have facilitated contact between previously allopatric⁸⁰ populations.⁸¹

Hybridisation between genetically differentiated populations, subspecies or even species often occurs in nature as a consequence of secondary contact: such hybridisation may remain constrained to narrow hybrid zones, or may cause widespread introgression with a variety of novel potentially adaptive genotypes.⁸² While the evolutionary consequences of natural hybridisation are usually positive, anthropogenic hybridisation can be problematic.⁸³ Hybridisation can occur due to poor habitat, habitat modification, human-mediated introductions, small populations, skewed sex ratios and low mate availability.⁸⁴ Determining whether hybridisation is “natural” or “anthropogenic” is crucial for conservation, with hybridisation especially problematic for rare species that come into contact with other more abundant species.⁸⁵

While hybridisation is recognised as an important evolutionary force sometimes leading to the formation of new species, increasing rates of hybridisation in the last 20 years, due to anthropogenically induced habitat decline and the introduction of exotic species, is of concern from a conservation perspective.⁸⁶ Whether viewed as a threat or opportunity, hybridisation presents challenges for conservation.⁸⁷ In particular, a high frequency of hybridisation events followed by backcrossing may lead to the formation of a “hybrid swarm”,⁸⁸ and in the most extreme cases may result in species replacement.⁸⁹ Hybridisation and introgression may have harmful effects on the fitness of animal populations in the wild, causing loss of genetic diversity due to genetic homogenisation and/or outbreeding depression in local populations.⁹⁰ It is thus important to strike a balance between these potentially detrimental and beneficial consequences when devising effective conservation strategies.⁹¹

Landscape genetics aims to provide information about the interaction between landscape features and micro-evolutionary processes such as gene flow, genetic drift and selection. Viewed as a hybrid between population genetics and landscape ecology, landscape genetics uses spatial genetic patterns

76 Eckenwalder (1998)

77 Harrison & Larson (2014)

78 Sympatry is the term used to describe populations, varieties or species that occur in the same place at the same time.

79 Levänen *et al.* (2018)

80 Allopatry describes a population or species that is physically isolated from other similar groups by an extrinsic barrier to dispersal.

81 Iacolina *et al.* (2018)

82 Wyk *et al.* (2013). Genotype refers to the genetic makeup of an organism.

83 *Ibid.*

84 Dalton *et al.* (2017)

85 Allendorf *et al.* (2001)

86 Cordingley *et al.* (2009), Ottenburghs (2021)

87 Levänen *et al.* (2018)

88 Defined as a population of hybrids that has survived beyond the initial hybrid generation, with interbreeding between hybrid individuals and backcrossing—i.e. a crossing of a hybrid with one of its parents or an individual genetically similar to its parent, to achieve offspring with a genetic identity closer to that of the parent.

89 Hailer & Leonard (2008)

90 Galov *et al.* (2015)

91 Ottenburghs (2021)

as the focus for analysis.⁹² Landscape genetics treats genetic patterns as multivariate spatial data and seeks to infer ecological understandings by evaluating these patterns either in isolation, or in conjunction with other spatial data.⁹³ This integrated approach allows an assessment of the impacts of landscape composition, configuration and habitat matrix quality on the spatial distribution of neutral and adaptive genetic variation and associated micro-evolutionary processes across natural populations.⁹⁴ Landscape genetics investigates processes at a fine-spatial scale, generally around the dispersal scale of the organisms—such as the effect of barriers or fine-scale genetic structures with regards to landscape features—and is especially concerned with contemporary and recent processes.⁹⁵ Issues of landscape effects on population structure, gene flow and identification of barriers, and fragmentation, connectivity and corridors, are some of the questions that can be answered by the study of conservation genetics.⁹⁶

In the genus *Equus*, hybridisation has been well documented in captivity, as well as in the wild,⁹⁷ and has also occurred where equid species have been introduced outside their natural range or where feral equids have interbred with wild equids.⁹⁸ Cordingley and others⁹⁹ reported for the first time the evidence of hybridisation between two equid species, plains zebra (*E. quagga*) and Grevy's zebra (*E. grevyi*) in Kenya. Although there are differences in the chromosome numbers of Grevy's zebra and plains zebra, meaning that fertile hybrid offspring are not expected,¹⁰⁰ the hybridisation event in Kenya led to the production of viable hybrid offspring able to raise their young.¹⁰¹ In the Kenyan example, the directionality of gene flow was from Grevy's zebra to plains zebra, as all known hybrid offspring were sired by male Grevy's zebra. Dalton and others¹⁰² also found evidence of hybridisation between Cape Mountain zebra and plains zebra in South Africa, despite differences in their chromosomal numbers. In the South African example, the direction of gene flow was from plains zebra towards Cape mountain zebra, and the study only detected F1 hybrids¹⁰³ which may indicate that the hybrids are infertile.¹⁰⁴

Studies with a focus on population genetics and hybridisation between equids have clearly been conducted.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, these studies lack the aspects of spatial ecology of the studied animals, and how this dimension influences their distribution and gene flow, and therefore the population genetic structuring of the studied populations.

10.2.3 Habitat suitability and landscape connectivity

Habitat suitability is defined as the probability that a species uses a particular habitat. In recent years, predictive modelling of species distribution has become an increasingly important tool to address various issues in ecology, biogeography, evolution, and also in conservation biology and climate change research.¹⁰⁶ Habitat suitability models are based on the environmental characteristics of locations used or not used (presence, presence-absence, abundance) by the species in question.¹⁰⁷

92 Manel *et al.* (2003)

93 McKelvey *et al.* (2010)

94 Sommer *et al.* (2013)

95 Montgelard *et al.* (2014)

96 *Ibid.*

97 Cordingley *et al.* (2009)

98 Brown & Jenkins (1987)

99 (2009)

100 Ryder *et al.* (1978)

101 Cordingley *et al.* (2009)

102 (2017)

103 An F1 hybrid is the first filial generation of offspring of distinctly different parental types.

104 Dalton *et al.* (2017)

105 Cordingley *et al.* (2009), Moodley & Harley (2005), Odhiambo (2017), Pedersen *et al.* (2018)

106 Guisan & Thuiller (2005)

107 Zecherle *et al.* (2020)

They can help select reserve networks,¹⁰⁸ and evaluate connectivity,¹⁰⁹ as these models predict the distribution of suitable habitats or resource patches in a landscape.

Maintaining functional connectivity in ecosystems—i.e. through an area or “corridor” which functions to allow wildlife dispersal without disturbance or hindrance (see Chapters 2, 3, 13 and 19)—is considered critical for conserving large herbivores; especially those that track dynamic spatiotemporal gradients in resource availability, while minimising predation risk and human interference.¹¹⁰ Landscape connectivity is important for animal dispersal and gene flow in fragmented landscapes, as it allows for the rescuing of declining populations, the (re)colonisation of habitat patches, and prevents inbreeding effects in small populations.¹¹¹ It is also a critical property in the persistence of spatially structured populations.¹¹² Gene flow is usually restricted by distance, with individuals being genetically more related at shorter than longer geographical distances. Dispersal distance increases greatly when the dispersal route meanders through a fragmented landscape.¹¹³ Therefore land use and habitat fragmentation affect landscape connectivity and potentially reduce gene flow.¹¹⁴ Landscape genetic studies have thus incorporated complex landscape measures rather than straight-line distances to give a more realistic estimate of the effective distance between populations.¹¹⁵ Connectivity—the degree to which the landscape facilitates or impedes movement among resource patches—is often species and process-specific, such that a corridor for one species does not necessarily support the movement of other species,¹¹⁶ requiring the use of multi-species connectivity analysis. Such approaches to connectivity analysis can be valuable for prioritising functional conservation strategies that permit herbivore communities to follow changing vegetation productivity through annual cycles.¹¹⁷

Habitat-based and landscape genetic approaches are different but complementary. When combined they can identify important habitats for different life history requirements of a species. Furthermore, the integrated habitat and landscape genetics model also provides valuable information for resource managers to promote connectivity between critical habitats, through designing corridors and conservation areas¹¹⁸ (see Chapter 3). Various studies assessing the habitat suitability and landscape connectivity for equids have been conducted.¹¹⁹ For example, recent work on the population genetics of equids in southern Africa investigated the population genetic structuring of mountain zebra across its range in Namibia,¹²⁰ and plains zebra across its range in eastern and southern Africa.¹²¹ However, all these studies concentrated on habitat suitability, landscape connectivity, and population genetics in isolation, without integrating these dimensions to understand the processes and patterns at the landscape genetics level for the two species. Additionally, most of the studies assessed the habitat suitability and landscape connectivity for single species only. The population genetic studies also focused on single species except in the case of a few studies that investigated hybridisation. Equally, the studies on habitat suitability and connectivity were also focused on single species.

As such, there is an opportunity here to study habitat suitability and landscape connectivity, as well as the population genetics of two co-occurring species of zebra, to understand the spatial and

108 Zielinski *et al.* (2006)

109 Binzenhöfer *et al.* (2005)

110 Frank *et al.* (1998), Harris *et al.* (2009), Hobbs *et al.* (2008), Owen-Smith (2004)

111 Stevens *et al.* (2006)

112 Metzger & Decamps (1997)

113 Wright (1943)

114 Berry *et al.* (2005)

115 Holderegger & Wagner (2006)

116 Crego *et al.* (2021)

117 Fynn & Bonyongo (2011)

118 Chetkiewicz & Boyce (2009)

119 Sharma *et al.* (2004), Kebede *et al.* (2012), Kigen *et al.* (2013), Mwangi *et al.* (2018), Olivier (2019)

120 Moodley & Harley (2005)

121 Pedersen *et al.* (2018)

genetic outcomes of their interactions. As highlighted in Chapter 2 historical circumstances have led to the fragmentation and transformation of the wider landscape from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast, giving rise to the permanent overlap in the range of historically separated but closely related species which may then hybridise with conservation consequences.

10.3 To conclude: New research objectives and hypotheses for assessing zebra genetic integrity for conservation management in ENP

As a response to the literature review and conceptual dimensions explored in Section 10.2, I now outline the development of a research project exploring the spatial ecology, hybridisation possibilities and conservation implications for mountain and plains zebra in ENP. Data collection is at a preliminary stage, but the research design itself illuminates issues of conservation concern and their management, and further highlights the potentially harmful unintended outcomes that past conservation (and other) policies leading to landscape transformation and fragmentation may have on certain wildlife species in the landscape. This ongoing research is pursuing the following objectives, via a series of hypotheses, as outlined below.

10.3.1 Objective 1: Home ranges and habitat selection

The first objective is to assess home ranges and habitat selection of mountain zebra and plains zebra in Etosha National Park to determine population and species connectivity, isolation or overlap. Here the research is structured by three hypotheses, namely:

1. plains zebra have overall larger home range sizes compared to mountain zebra, and these differences in home range sizes remain the same throughout different seasons;
1. owing to their similar ecology and physiology, no differentiation in habitat selection is expected for mountain zebra and plains zebra as both zebras will select for the same resources;
1. overlap in the home ranges of the two zebra is expected throughout the seasons, and such overlap in home ranges is more profound around wildlife water points.

10.3.2 Objective 2: Hybridisation and genetic connectivity

Based on the literature review shared in Section 10.2, further research will assess hybridisation and genetic connectivity in tandem, by pursuing the following two objectives:

1. to assess the extent of hybridisation in mountain zebra and plains zebra populations in the ENP landscape;
1. to study genetic connectivity across the landscape to identify potential barriers for gene flow in mountain and plains zebra populations.

It is hypothesised that:

1. hybridisation occurs between mountain zebra and plains zebra in the study area, and hybridisation events are restricted to a narrow hybrid zone in the area of overlap between the two species;
1. low levels of genetic diversity are expected for mountain zebra in Etosha due to smaller population size and restricted gene flow between mountain zebra populations as a result of movement restrictions by fences;

1. plains zebra are expected to have higher levels of genetic diversity owing to their larger and connected population size.

10.3.3 Objective 3: Multi-species habitat suitability and landscape connectivity modelling

The third objective for future research is to conduct multi-species habitat suitability and landscape connectivity modelling to correlate gene flow with landscape connectivity for mountain zebra and plains zebra, and to determine spatial probability for hybridisation. This objective is shaped by the following hypotheses:

1. ENP offers limited suitable habitat for mountain zebra and connectivity to available suitable habitat is impaired by anthropogenic factors;
1. ENP has suitable habitat for plains zebra whereas connectivity to available suitable habitat outside the park is impaired by anthropogenic factors.

10.3.4 Objective 4: Management recommendations for conserving zebra genetic integrity

The fourth and final objective is to draw on the research outlined above to make management recommendations for the conservation of genetic integrity for mountain zebra and plains zebra, potentially through spatial separation mechanisms. This objective is structured by the following hypotheses:

1. it is expected that this study will show that habitat fragmentation restricts the movements of wildlife species and connectivity with suitable habitats elsewhere;
1. it is further expected that habitat transformation which facilitates prolonged co-existence between previously allopatric but closely related species has implications for their population and landscape genetics.

To conclude, with this study I hope to shed more light on the home ranges, home range overlap and habitat selection of the two zebra species in the anthropogenically transformed landscape of ENP that has resulted from colonial and post-Independence conservation policies (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3), and how these have impacted on the population genetics of the two zebra species. I further wish to explore and understand the recent and past population genetic structuring of the two species as a result of habitat transformation, while investigating the existence of any gene flow across the landscape. The suitability of areas outside ENP will also be assessed to recommend viable conservation planning for these species that also involves local communities.

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11. Communities and elephants in the northern highlands, Kunene Region, Namibia

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Abstract

We consider a unique population of elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) dwelling in an area known as the northern highlands to the west of Etosha National Park. These highlands are a remote, arid, mountainous landscape where elephants co-exist with rural communities. There is minimal published research on this population of elephants. As part of our scoping for a research project on this population of elephants, we consulted with game guards from 10 conservancies in 2021 and 2022 on their knowledge of elephant populations. We also carried out analysis of Event Book data on human-elephant conflict incidents reported in Orupupa and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies. The community conservancy model has had much success in shaping local attitudes in Kunene Region and increasing the perceived value of wildlife. These successes are being eroded, however, by competition between local people and wildlife over resources—particularly in the context of drought years in north-west Namibia from 2013. We conclude that there is a strong case for expanding the roles of community game guards to strengthen the protection of the elephants in the northern highlands. One suggestion is for community game guards to be offered additional training as “elephant rangers” who can guide tourists in the area, the assumption being that this would increase revenue to community conservancies and help to enhance local perceptions of the value of wildlife.

11.1 Introduction¹

The status of the African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) was amended in 2021 from Vulnerable to Endangered in the Red List of Threatened Species compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).² This change in classification was based on the estimated total population of 415,000 African savanna and African forest (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) elephants in 2016, indicating a 30% decline in total population since 2006. The reduction in total population has been widely reported to be mainly because of poaching and loss of habitat.³

The IUCN compiles the African Elephant Database from surveys of elephants and publishes reports on the status of the species, including disaggregation for different range countries. According to the database, Namibia has the 5th highest estimated national population of elephants in Africa.⁴ The IUCN African Elephant Status Report estimates that the elephant population in Namibia was around 22,700 in 2016.⁵ About 85% of the population is located in the north-east of the country in the Zambezi and Khaudom-Kavango Regions (Figure 11.1). The estimated total elephant population in Namibia

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2 Blanc (2008), Gobush *et al.* (2021), <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/181008073/223031019>

3 Chase *et al.* (2016), CITES (2016), Thouless *et al.* (2016), IUCN (2021)

4 IUCN (2022)

5 Thouless *et al.* (2016)

is uncertain because large numbers of elephants in the north-east regularly move across borders into Botswana, Angola and Zambia, so the total population greatly varies over time. Other ranges in Namibia include a population in Etosha National Park (ENP) (estimated to be about 2,900 elephants⁶); and in the Kunene Region in north-west Namibia. The information in the database indicates that the elephants in Kunene Region are estimated to be about 1.5% of the Namibian elephant population, with approximately 300 elephants over a very large area of at least 41,000 km².⁷

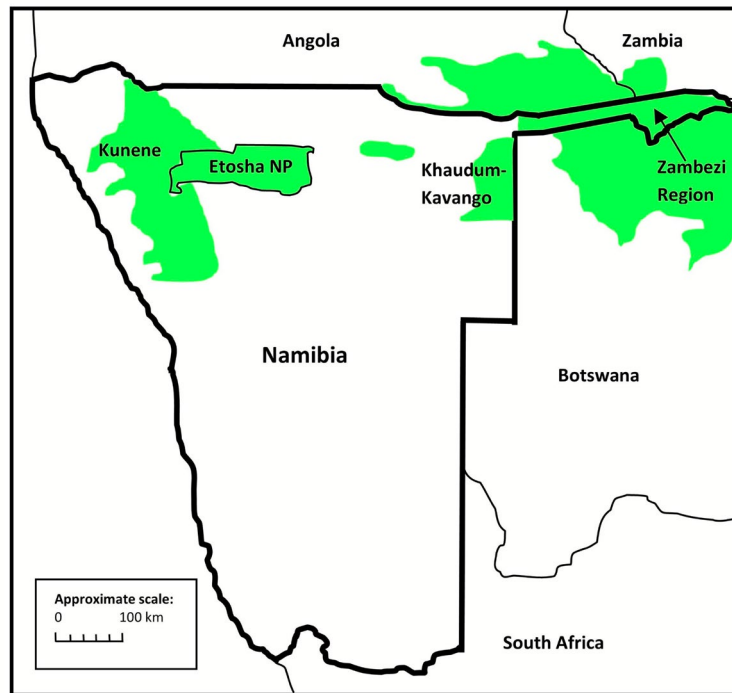


Fig. 11.1 Map showing the elephant population ranges in Namibia. Source: adapted from Thouless *et al.* (2016: 174), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The elephant range in north-west Namibia includes a remote, mountainous landscape to the west of ENP and north of the Ombonde River, referred to locally as the northern highlands (Figure 11.2). The highlands cover a large area of approximately 12,000 km² (more than half the size of ENP), with steep, rocky valley sides and peaks up to 1,800 m above sea level. There are many natural springs in the highlands, which support diverse wildlife. Elephants move in and out of the northern highlands and drink from these springs, as well as from community water points (Figure 11.3). Elephant numbers in north-west Namibia have widely fluctuated since records began. There was much elephant hunting for ivory in the area in the late 1800s and early 1900s (see Chapter 1),⁸ and the population again declined in the 1950s and 1960s because of droughts and the policy of the South African administration to encourage livestock farming and the elimination of game.⁹ The desert-adapted elephants to the west of the highlands below the escarpment towards the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP), have been extensively studied in the lower Hoanib and Hoarusib River catchments.¹⁰ The desert-adapted elephants have also had much media coverage.¹¹ To the east of the highlands, the elephants in ENP have been well studied, particularly by research teams of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT),¹² however, there is minimal published information on the elephants in the northern highlands specifically.

6 IUCN (2022)

7 Thouless *et al.* (2016)

8 Bollig & Olwage (2016)

9 Berry (1997)

10 Viljoen (1987), Viljoen & Bothma (1990), Leggett *et al.* (2003a, 2011), Ramey & Brown (2019)

11 BBC (2008), Wildblood (2012), BBC (2019), Sky Nature (2020), CNN (2022)

12 MEFT (2021)

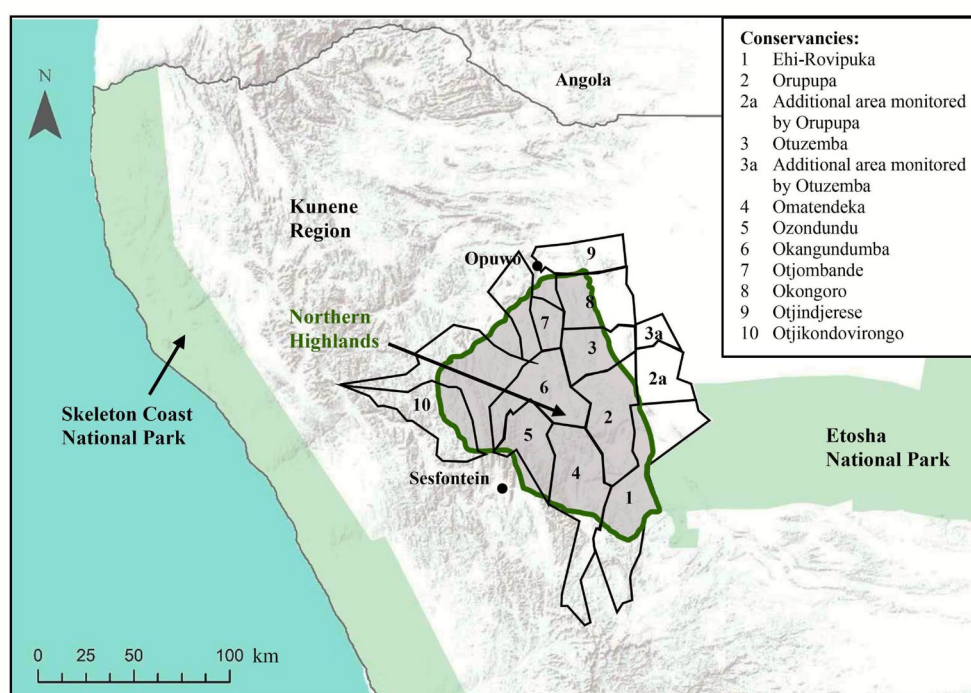


Fig. 11.2 The northern highlands, showing the conservancies consulted during the scoping study reported here, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The desert to semi-desert landscape of north-west Namibia has low rainfall (typically 50 to 250 mm per year),¹³ with the rainy season being unpredictable. There have been several drought years in north-west Namibia since 2013, with heavy rains breaking this dry period across the area in early 2022, but 2023 being once again very dry.¹⁴ When it occurs, rainfall tends to be localised and can be extremely heavy, causing soil erosion problems, a situation perceived to be made worse by cattle grazing in the area.¹⁵



Fig. 11.3 Springs in the northern highlands are important for elephants and other wildlife. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 21.1.2018, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13 NSA (2013)

14 Sasscal (2023)

15 Leggett *et al.* (2003b), NACSO (2017), Heydinger (2023)

There are many villages across the northern highlands, and local people carry out their day-to-day lives alongside the population of elephants. The estimated human population in the northern highlands is under 10,000, with a low human population density of around one person/km².¹⁶ Local communities in the northern highlands are some of the poorest in Namibia, with 39% of the population in the Kunene Region classified as poor in 2011 (i.e. individuals living on less than US\$1/day)¹⁷ (also see Chapter 3). Livestock farming (cows and goats) is the main livelihood for the communities in the north-west (see Figure 11.4).¹⁸ There was a high loss of livestock in 2018–2019 because of drought, which has added to problems of local poverty.¹⁹ There was also an added loss of employment and/or income for many households in Namibia during the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰



Fig. 11.4 Livestock forms the basis of livelihoods in the northern highlands. This photo provides an example of soil trampling and heavy grazing by cattle near water points, Omuuandjai in Okangundumba Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 12.1.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Since 2001, most of the area of the northern highlands has been formally designated as community wildlife conservancies (Figure 11.2). The communal area conservancy model has successfully enhanced local commitment to wildlife conservation through its focus on helping local communities gain some revenue from wildlife: see Chapters 3 and 5.²¹ Community Game Guards (CGGs) are employed by the conservancies with roles to monitor wildlife, record incidents of “human-wildlife conflict” (HWC) (e.g. livestock kills by predators, elephant damage at water points and vegetable gardens), and raise awareness in communities on the benefits of wildlife protection. Increased local poverty, lack of investment in tourism for many conservancies, and human-wildlife conflict, however, have the potential to erode the commitment of local people to wildlife conservation.

The number of elephants and the movements of the elephant population in the northern highlands are uncertain. A detailed understanding of the population and migration routes of the elephants, including the factors affecting their movements, is needed for planning the protection of this population, as well as reducing human-elephant conflict (HEC). More information on the elephants will also provide benefits to community conservancies in terms of planning and promoting tourism opportunities.

16 NACSO (2022)

17 GRN (2015), Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

18 Bollig (2020), Heydinger (2021)

19 Inman *et al.* (2020)

20 Lendelvo *et al.* (2020)

21 Jacobsohn (2019), Störmer *et al.* (2019), NACSO (2021a), Wenborn *et al.* (2022a)

11.2 Method

We carried out an extended scoping study on the situation in the highlands related to local ecological knowledge and problems with human-elephant conflict. This was part of the early planning of a self-funded research project to address a gap in research on the population and movements of elephants in the northern highlands in association with Oxford Brookes University, UK. This chapter summarises some of the main findings from our scoping study. After a detailed literature review, we consulted with 21 Community Game Guards (some individually and some in groups) and several chairpersons or committee members from 10 conservancies in the highlands, from January to March 2021 and February to March 2022. We discussed their knowledge of elephant populations and the trends in local challenges, including incidents of HEC. Part of the scoping study included field trips with game guards to water points visited by elephants, and walking up mountain pathways to identify evidence of elephant movements. The consultation and field observations particularly focused on Orupupa (10 consultation meetings), Otuzemba (three), Ehi-Rovipuka (three), Omatendeka (eight), Ozondundu (five) and Okangundumba (two) conservancies; we also had one consultation with each of the Okongoro, Otjombande, Otjindjerese and Otjikondovirongo conservancies (for locations see Figure 11.2).

The game guards have been collecting data for around 20 years in Event Books as part of their role within conservancies (Figure 11.5). The information recorded includes elephant sightings from foot patrols, and details and locations of reported incidents involving elephants, such as damage at water points. We also analysed Event Book data on HEC incidents reported in Ehi-Rovipuka and Orupupa conservancies.²² Our analysis had the support of the game guards and the agreement of the conservancy chairpersons.



Fig. 11.5 A game guard and a community member in Orupupa Conservancy, discussing conservancy Event Book data and typical elephant movements. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 25.3.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

²² Conservancy Event Book data are increasingly being used by researchers as a source of information about wildlife sightings, incidents and the identification of “problem animals”, see for example, Hewitson & Sullivan (2021) and Natrass (2021).

11.3 Results and discussion

This section includes discussions of local knowledge on the population and movements of elephants, trends in human-elephant conflict, and the importance of the local ecological knowledge of game guards.

11.3.1 Elephant and human populations in the northern highlands

Our literature review, as part of the scoping research, revealed that there is minimal published information on elephants in the northern highlands. The MEFT has carried out a few monitoring surveys of elephants and other wildlife in north-west Namibia, but the mountainous terrain and large area mean it is difficult and expensive to carry out comprehensive surveys. The estimation of the elephant population in the north-west from these surveys, on which the estimate in the IUCN African Elephant Status Report is based,²³ has a high level of uncertainty.

Phillip Viljoen of the University of Pretoria carried out extensive ground surveys in the late 1970s and 1980s, which raised the profile of the elephants in remote north-west Namibia, particularly regarding the desert-adapted elephants.²⁴ The late Garth Owen-Smith, one of the pioneers of the community wildlife conservancy model in Namibia, also kept extensive records on wildlife in north-west Namibia from the 1960s onwards.²⁵ In the 2000s Keith Leggett of the University of New South Wales, published several papers on his research on the population dynamics of desert-adapted elephants.²⁶ This research, however, tended to focus on the desert-adapted elephants in the lower Hoanib and Hoarusib river catchments, rather than the specific population of elephants inhabiting the northern highlands.

Given the scarcity of published research on elephants in the northern highlands, we relied to a large extent on information provided by the CGGs who work for communal area conservancies. They have extensive knowledge of elephant populations, elephant behaviour and movements. According to the game guards, the main conservancies in the northern highlands currently with elephant populations are in the south and eastern part of the highlands, namely Ehi-Rovipuka, Orupupa, Otuzemba, Omatendeka, Okangundumba and Ozondundu (Figure 11.2).

There was common feedback from the game guards we consulted that elephants easily and regularly move up and down slopes in the area. During our foot surveys in the northern highlands with game guards, we observed trees on steep slopes that had been partly eaten by elephants. Elephant dung was also observed on steep mountain paths and on mountain ridges (Figure 11.6). Observations of elephant movements on the mountain slopes in north-west Namibia have been recorded in the past.²⁷ The 1934 book by Shortridge compiled records of mammals in the former South West Africa, including observations on elephants in the early 1920s, stating that ‘in mountainous districts, elephants show an astonishing aptitude for climbing’, and ‘the elephant is the best judge of gradient’.²⁸

The elephant population in north-west Namibia might therefore be unique in terms of walking up mountains, which is unusual behaviour for most populations of the African savanna elephant,²⁹ a species often associated with the flat plains of Africa. The game guards said that elephants tend to stay in the mountains and valleys away from villages during the day, but in the dry season visit some village water points at night. Common feedback from game guards was that the elephants ascend slopes to access some of their preferred tree species, particularly the African star-chestnut

²³ Thouless *et al.* (2016)

²⁴ Viljoen (1987, 1989a, b), Viljoen & Bothma (1990)

²⁵ Owen-Smith (1972)

²⁶ Leggett (2006a)

²⁷ Viljoen (1989b)

²⁸ Shortridge (1934: 369)

²⁹ Wall *et al.* (2006)

(*Sterculia africana*) and blue-leaved corkwood (*Commiphora glaucescens*), which tend to grow on rocky slopes.³⁰



Fig. 11.6 Observation of elephant dung (circled in white) at the top of a mountain near Otjisakamuka in Omatendeka Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 2.4.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The feedback from game guards is that, over time, elephants create pathways by clearing bushes. We noted that the well-used elephant pathways tend to align with an easy gradient up the slopes, although we did observe evidence of elephants taking steeper ascents/descents on occasion. In one case we observed elephant dung on one of the 4x4 vehicle tracks in Orupupa Conservancy, which has a particularly steep slope (estimated at least one in three steepness—about a 20° gradient).

Several game guards have 10 to 20 years' experience in their roles, and there has been a consistent method of monitoring and recording in Event Books for this period in most conservancies. The roles and experience of the game guards mean they also have interesting stories about trends in elephant behaviour. Although much of the information given by them is anecdotal, it does provide some useful indications of how the behaviour of elephants could be changing. For example, in the dry season (June to December) the herds tend to stay in the nearby hills during the day, where their preferred vegetation is growing, and visit community water points on some nights. During the rains (for the years when there are rains), the main herds tend to visit water points in villages much less frequently. There was some feedback that some herds at these times do not move long distances and tend to stay in areas with good vegetation and standing water. This anecdotal information also ties in with previous observations reported in publications,³¹ but needs verification through monitoring activities with GPS (Global Positioning System) collars.

Most game guards stated that elephants regularly visit the area of the conservancy under their responsibility. Several game guards can recognise a few of the herds that regularly visit, usually through herd size and identifying features on the ears, tusks and tails of the larger elephants. Other herds sometimes come into the conservancy for just two or three days but these visit much less frequently and are not yet recognised by the game guards.

The initial feedback from most game guards consulted was that there used to be more movement between ENP and the northern highlands, but their perception is that there have been fewer movements in recent years. An exception is Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy, which is adjacent to ENP

³⁰ le Roux *et al.* (2018)

³¹ Viljoen (1989a), Leggett *et al.* (2004), Owen-Smith (2010)

(see Chapter 14): its game guards observe frequent movement of one or two herds in and out of Etosha in the north of the Conservancy—the state-of-repair of the fence to the Park varies and in many places is not able to keep elephants inside the Park. The feedback during our consultation was that the number of elephants in the area has been increasing over the last 10 to 20 years. Several game guards had observed new herds entering their area in recent years.

The knowledge of the game guards mainly relates to their local area, and they tend to have less experience of wider strategic planning at regional level. We conclude, however, that there is potential for collating local ecological knowledge to provide sufficient information on the populations and movements of elephants for use as a basis for planning conservation management measures to reduce HEC and protect elephants in the northern highlands. Expanding the monitoring activities of game guards to include identification and recording of specific elephant herds would improve knowledge of the elephant population and movements. This information could be used at a regional and local level, and should also be integrated into an Early Warning System between villages about elephant movements. The game guards would need the necessary equipment for elephant identification, and some training. The Namibian NGO Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA), has developed a method for elephant identification and is testing the method in elephant ranges to the south of the northern highlands. Lessons could also be learned from rhino monitoring activities to the south of the highlands by the Namibian NGO Save the Rhino Trust (SRT).

11.3.2 Human-elephant conflict

There is increasing competition in north-west Namibia between livestock and wildlife over water and vegetation, as indicated by records in Event Books by game guards³² and in published research.³³ The situation on the ground is complicated, however, by a number of factors, including the importance to local communities of livestock farming and declines in prey populations, especially in the north-west.³⁴ North-west Namibia has a fragile, but resilient, ecosystem. Future droughts and other events linked to climate change are likely to further increase the impacts on the ecosystem and local competition in rural areas for water resources and vegetation.³⁵ Elephants in the north-west are vulnerable to changes in access to water and other factors that affect migration routes. For example, the drilling of artificial water points in some areas of the north-west has facilitated the expansion of livestock grazing and potentially affected the range areas of elephants³⁶ (also see Chapter 7). Research on the number of elephants and factors affecting their movement is a priority so that management measures can be planned to protect this unique, but vulnerable, population of elephants and their habitats.

There have been challenges with HEC in the elephant range across the north-west, at water points and in vegetable gardens. Our analysis of Event Books over 10 years of records from 2012 to 2021 in Orupupa and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies (Figure 11.2), indicates that the frequency of incidents involving elephants is low, with typically about two to three incidents reported per month on average across each conservancy (Figure 11.7). Even though the frequency of reported incidents is low, however, the damage by elephants at a water point in a village can have a substantial impact on the community. When water infrastructure is damaged, in practice it often takes much time to repair, partly because of the large distances to travel to suppliers to buy parts and equipment. In these cases, people then have to visit other villages or cattle posts to obtain drinking water for themselves and their livestock. One of the main actions villagers can take to reduce damage at

32 NACSO (2021a)

33 Mfunne *et al.* (2013), Hunninck *et al.* (2017), Schnegg & Kiaka (2018), MEFT (2021)

34 See data at <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/North%20West%20Game%20Count-Regional%202022%20final.pdf>, also Chapter 3.

35 Turpie *et al.* (2010), Hunninck *et al.* (2017), Chase & Landen (2019), IUCN (2020)

36 Leggett (2006b)

water points is to ensure that the holding dams, which have been installed at most water points, are full of water for elephants to drink, because damage often occurs when elephants find no water in the dams but they smell water in the pipes.

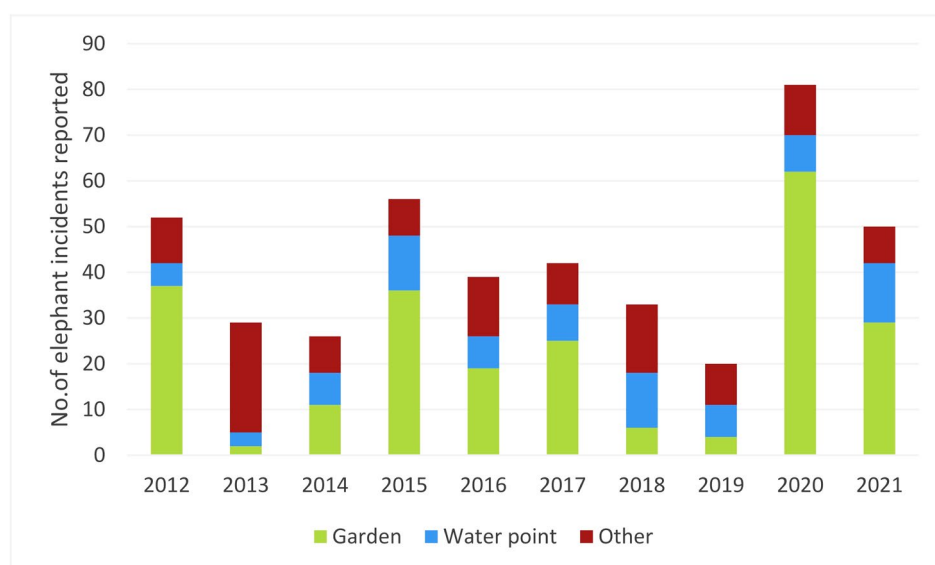


Fig. 11.7 Graph showing trends in total human-elephant incidents recorded by game guards in Ehi-Rovipuka and Orupupa conservancies (the “other” category includes damage to property, *kraals*, etc). Source: surveyed conservancy Event Books, 2012–2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

At the same time, however, when elephants drink the water that has been pumped into a holding dam for livestock, this often results in a substantial financial cost for the village in terms of the diesel needed to pump the extra groundwater (see also Chapter 7). Although such cases are not recorded in Event Books, they do affect community attitudes towards elephant conservation. Several water points have been upgraded to include protection from elephants at holding tanks and troughs (Figure 11.8), and to install solar pumps, which reduces operational costs. Such upgrades tend to be funded by the national government or donor organisations, sometimes via NGOs. The upgrades are a priority for many villages and cattle posts in the conservancies and are included as an important action for the north-west in the National Elephant Conservation and Management Plan of 2021.³⁷

Discussions with game guards and the local community have confirmed that the widespread loss of livestock in the north-west during the droughts of 2018 and 2019 in particular, led to many people starting community vegetable gardens near their water points (Figure 11.9). This new wave of gardening provides sources of food for households, and is much needed because of the loss of livelihoods and income due to drought-related reductions in livestock. Although vegetable growing has been practised in the area for many years, this is an example of the changing situation related to HEC in north-west Namibia. The game guards stated that although typically elephants tend to stay away from villages during the rainy season because they have access to water elsewhere, the recent set up of vegetable gardens has resulted in some visits of elephants to villages during the rainy season. Figure 11.7 demonstrates an increase in incidents at vegetable gardens in 2020 in particular, and 2021. There have also been other years (e.g. 2015) with higher incidents at vegetable gardens.

37 MEFT (2021)



Fig. 11.8 Pipework damage by elephants at the water point in Okazorongua village, Orupupa Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 1.4.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 11.9 Vegetable garden, Ombombo village, Okangundumba Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 12.1.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Our consultation found that the common perception of game guards in Ehi-Rovipuka and Orupupa conservancies is that there has been an increase in total incidents of HEC over the last 10 years.³⁸ Figure 11.7 implies the increase has only been in 2020 and 2021. Overall, the Event Book recordings depend on the mobility and motivation of game guards. Although there is some uncertainty in the data, the Event Book results do provide an overall indication of the challenges with human-wildlife conflict (HWC), including the locations of incidents.

Further work is needed to compare community concerns on incidents of HEC to incidents of predator attacks on livestock (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19). This is important in the context of the strong traditional culture related to livestock farming.³⁹ Predator attacks made up about 80% of

³⁸ Wenborn *et al.* (2022b)

³⁹ Heydinger (2023)

the human-wildlife incidents reported in the Event Books for Orupupa from 2012 to 2020.⁴⁰ The recorded predator incidents mainly involved spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*), cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) or leopard (*Panthera pardus*). The MEFT in some cases provides payments to farmers to offset some of the costs of loss of livestock from predator attacks,⁴¹ as it does for some incidents of damage caused by elephants.

11.3.3 Importance of game guard knowledge

Game guards play an important role in the conservancies to collect and record data from their sightings of elephants, which provides information on elephant populations and movements. As mentioned, they also record incidents of HEC in Event Books, the use of which has become established in community conservancies in Namibia. All these monitoring activities support the implementation of actions in the National Elephant Conservation and Management Plan.⁴²

The problems with damage by elephants at water points and vegetable gardens, as well as concerns over predators taking any remaining livestock and the lack of investment in wildlife tourism (partly because of the COVID-19 pandemic), all contribute to the risk of local reduction in support for wildlife conservation. We suggest, however, that the scenic and remote landscape of the northern highlands, with a diversity of wildlife and cultural heritage, has a high potential for tourism. Diversifying livelihoods away from livestock farming has for some time been a development objective of the Government of Namibia⁴³ (see Chapter 3). Wildlife tourism, planned in a controlled manner to protect habitats and wildlife, has been identified by the government as an opportunity to benefit some of the communities in Kunene Region, to contribute towards diversifying livelihoods and to rebuild local commitment to wildlife conservation.⁴⁴ The elephants in the northern highlands could be a core driver of tourism in the area. The elephants provide the opportunity to generate revenue as game guards could be trained and developed into local guides for wildlife tourism. Expanding their role into elephant rangers could build on their considerable knowledge of elephant movements and behaviour, and their stories on elephants: these are not only useful as anecdotal information for research but would be of interest to tourists. The potential new revenue would enhance the income of game guards, many of whom are currently paid very low salaries, and could also be used to buy equipment for game guards, most of whom do not even have binoculars. Additional revenue could be used by the conservancies to provide benefits and/or damage repair and compensation to communities, thereby encouraging commitment to wildlife conservation (although see Chapter 5 for a discussion of complexities around income- and benefit-sharing in conservancies).

There are frameworks already in place to facilitate a system of elephant rangers. The community conservancies already have systems for revenue collection and financial management and reporting. There are several Namibian NGOs with a remit to promote wildlife tourism and/or wildlife conservation, including TOSCO (Tourism Supporting Conservation Trust), IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation), WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)-Namibia, SRT, EHRA and NACSO (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations), who work together and with the MEFT to support communities in the north-west. More recently, UK-based environmental organisation Conserve Global⁴⁵ has shown an interest in this area of the “Kunene Highlands”. There are commercial travel agents at a central level that organise the bookings of accommodation and guides, and their roles could be expanded to book elephant rangers through the conservancies,

40 NACSO (2021b)

41 NACSO (2019)

42 MEFT (2021)

43 MET (2013), GRN (2017)

44 MET (2018)

45 Korukuve (2023), also <https://conserveglobal.earth/kunene-highlands-namibia/>

in particular for self-drive tourists but also guided groups. At a practical level, the mobile phone network has been expanding in recent years in the north-west which would enable efficient booking of elephant rangers. In addition, most current game guards speak English to an adequate level for such tourism guiding. Our thinking is that tourists could make a booking and meet the elephant ranger at a specified time and place. In practice, the drive could cross conservancy boundaries, as there are several examples of conservancies already cooperating to share responsibilities on wildlife tourism and to share revenues. IRDNC in particular has a strong track record in fostering and co-ordinating such cooperation.

11.4. Conclusion

We conclude that most game guards in the northern highlands have good levels of local ecological knowledge that could provide sufficient information on the populations and movements of elephants as a basis for planning conservation management measures. Such measures can help reduce human-elephant conflict and to protect elephants in the northern highlands. The knowledge of elephant populations and movements would be improved by expanding the monitoring activities of game guards to include identification and recording of specific elephant herds.

Expanding the roles of game guards and their integration into tourism as elephant rangers may also contribute benefits that conservancies gain from wildlife, thereby strengthening the acceptance of communities to share the same area. The initial investment needed is relatively small: binoculars, uniforms, walking shoes, mobile phones, wildlife identification books, cameras and spotlights; and training in tourism guiding (including safety). Community game guards, through their local ecological knowledge, can therefore increase their important role in the future success of the conservancy model. Elephant-based tourism would be a relatively small contribution in terms of revenues and employment to shifting livelihoods in the region, but also a potentially quick intervention. It would build on the existing knowledge of many of the game guards, with existing community-based structures the basis for implementation of an “elephant ranger-led” tourism experience.

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PART IV

HISTORICISING CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY TERRITORIES IN ETOSHA-KUNENE

12. Cultural heritage and histories of the Northern Namib / Skeleton Coast National Park

Sian Sullivan and Welhemina Suro Ganuses

Abstract

We outline Indigenous cultural heritage and histories associated with the Northern Namib Desert, designated since 1971 as the Skeleton Coast National Park. We draw on two main sources of information: 1) historical documents stretching back to the late 1800s; and 2) oral history research with now elderly people who have direct and familial memories of using and living in areas now within the Park boundary. This material affirms that localities and resources now included within the Park were used by local people in historical times, their access linked with the availability of valued foods, especially *Inara* melons (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) and marine foods such as mussels. Memories about these localities, resources and heritage concerns, including graves of family members, remain lively for some individuals and their families today. We argue for the importance of understanding the Northern Namib as a remembered cultural landscape, as well as an area of high conservation value. In doing so, protecting and perhaps restoring access to sites with significant contemporary cultural heritage value, would be appropriate. Such sites include locations of culturally important foods such as *Inara*, graves of known ancestors, and named and remembered former dwelling places. We hope the material shared here will contribute to a diversified recognition of values for the Skeleton Coast National Park, to shape ecological and heritage conservation practice and visitor experiences into the future.

It can be concluded that the coast in the west of the Kaokoveld was not a no-man's-land, but rather that there were south-north and north-south relations and migrations of a sparse coastal population and that memories of it have been preserved right down to the recent past.¹

12.1 Introduction²

This chapter reviews historical and cultural information for the Northern Namib Desert. We summarise observations from historical texts regarding the area (Section 12.2); followed by oral history research with Khoekhoegowab-speaking people now living in the Sesfontein area, who

¹ Köhler (1969: 106)

² Acknowledgements: The journeys reported here were undertaken as part of research carried out through a project called *Future Pasts* (www.futurepasts.net), funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and in part followed leads recorded in prior oral histories. *Future Pasts* was supported by an ongoing Research Affiliation Contract with the National Museum of Namibia. Field research was supported through Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) Research Permits 2023/2015; 2190/2016; 2311/2017, plus a one-day special permit in 2019, and a short preparatory day-journey through the Hoanib into the Skeleton Coast National Park with Gobabeb Namib Research Institute staff on 7.4.2014. We would like to express our gratitude to the following organisations and individuals: all the contemporary residents of the Sesfontein area who consented to share their memories and experiences, as well as the Nami-Daman Traditional Authority, the Hoanib Cultural Group of Sesfontein, and Sesfontein Conservancy for supporting this research; Filemon | Nuab, without whom the interviews and journeys included in Section 12.3 would not have been possible; and the following colleagues, librarians and archivists for sharing sources and other materials (in no particular order): Esther Moombolah-| Gôagoses, Gillian Maggs-Kölling, Eugène Marais, Selma Lendelvo, Pat Craven, John Kinahan, Jill Kinahan, Trudi Stohls, Michael Bollig, Ute Dieckmann, Werner Hillebrecht, Giorgio Miescher (apologies if we have inadvertently missed anyone from this list). Thank you especially to Kenneth | Uiseb of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) for encouraging this research on the cultural histories of the Northern Namib.

remember accessing and using resources and sites within and close to the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) boundary in the past (Section 12.3). Suggestions are made for foregrounding an understanding of the Northern Namib as a remembered cultural landscape as well as an area of high conservation value, and for protecting and perhaps restoring some access to sites that may be considered of significant cultural heritage value (also see Chapters 13, 14 and 15). Such sites include locations of culturally important foods, graves of known ancestors, and named and remembered former dwelling places.

The chapter originated as a report³ written by invitation of the current Deputy Director Wildlife Monitoring and Research of Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), to support development of the new Management Plan for Namibia's Skeleton Coast National Park, 2021/2022–2030/2031.⁴ This Management Plan—hereafter the Plan—foregrounds the significance of archaeological and cultural sites in the Northern Namib alongside biodiversity protection, sustainable use, stakeholder participation and a landscape approach to conservation (see Chapter 3). At the same time, the Plan includes rather little information in terms of historical literatures regarding the Northern Namib, or recall of its prior cultural and livelihood significance for peoples who once accessed and lived in this area.

For example, Chapter 7 of the Plan (Section 7.3) on 'Archaeological sites' states that virtually no sites from the Holocene (ca. 11,650 years ago to the present) have been recorded for the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP). It is assumed that people 'may not have inhabited the coastal part of the Northern Namib during the Holocene'; although

their presence is recorded on the eastern margins of the Northern Namib from where they probably conducted temporary forays into the coast as also clear from the huge number of white mussel shells in shell middens (dated approx. 1,000 to 2,700 years old) which may have been the most important marine species used for food.⁵

The historical and oral history information in Sections 12.2 and 12.3 of this chapter indicates instead that within living memory people accessed and lived in areas that are now part of the Park. Some elderly people now concentrated in the Sesfontein area of the Hoanib River valley retain vivid memories of named places and livelihood practices in the Northern Namib—including harvesting *Inara* melons (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) and marine resources such as mussels. Their narratives also affirm cross-generational depth of habitation of this area.

12.1.1 Policy context

Acknowledgement in contemporary times of peoples' past associations with sites now within the SCNP and on its borders is clearly relevant for those sharing these histories, but is additionally appropriate for a series of policy aims. The material shared here is intended to support the 5th Strategic Management Objective listed in the Plan, namely: '[t]o protect and maintain cultural and historic, archaeological, and paleontological assets'.⁶ It is thus also aligned with Namibia's National Heritage Act of 2004, as well as recognising the ethos of Article 19 of the Namibian Constitution that:

[e]very person shall be entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion [...] subject to the condition that the rights protected by this Article do not impinge upon the rights of others or the national interest.⁷

For the southern parts of the Northern Namib, the lead organisation neighbouring the SCNP that represents local cultural concerns is the recently formalised Nami-Daman Traditional Authority

³ Sullivan (2021)

⁴ MEFT (2021). Following the terminology in this Plan, we capitalise Northern when speaking of the Northern Namib.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 241

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79

⁷ GRN (2014[1990])

(TA) (also see Chapter 13).⁸ This TA considers its jurisdiction to stretch east of the Park boundary from the Hoarusib southwards to the vet fence.⁹ Although not mentioned in the SCNP Management Plan, this TA is a key stakeholder regarding SCNP management, particularly regarding heritage, historical and cultural concerns relating to the Northern Namib, acting alongside the communal-area conservancies neighbouring the park.

Recognising diverse past cultural, resource management and livelihood associations with this landscape for which fragmented memories remain in the present is also an important means of supporting the “biocultural heritage” of Indigenous peoples: i.e. heritage understood as entangled with specific environmental contexts, whose resilient diversity has the potential to support biological diversity.¹⁰ Recognition of, and support for, emplaced cultural environmental knowledge and appreciation—or biocultural heritage—can be viewed as contributing to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 on terrestrial ecosystem health, as well as to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as acknowledged in Chapter 5 of the SCNP Management Plan. Recognising the presence of Indigenous knowledge custodians regarding the former use of the Northern Namib—as encouraged in Chapter 6 of the Plan;¹¹ as well as enhancing knowledge regarding cultural sites in and close to the Park—as promoted in Chapter 7;¹² may widen the appeal and value of the Park whilst respecting prior use and knowledge (as documented in Section 12.3 of this chapter).

12.2.2 Sources

The material shared below outlines cultural histories and remembered resource-use practices linked with the Northern Namib, now protected as the SCNP. It draws on three main threads of research:

1. **Iterative review of historical literatures** regarding *!nara* harvesting and harvesting peoples connected with the Namibian coastal areas, collated in the following timelines:
 - a. *Archaeological and historical records that mention !nara use in Namibia*, linked at <https://www.futurepasts.net/nara-in-archaeology-and-history>, plus map of references to *!nara* use at <https://www.futurepasts.net/archaeological-historical-nara-refs>;
 - a. *Historical references to habitation of the !Khuiseb delta*, linked at <https://www.futurepasts.net/khuiseb-historical-habitation>.
1. **Oral history research and interviews** over the last 25 years with primarily Khoekhoegowab-speaking individuals now living in the Sesfontein area.
1. **On-site oral histories and cultural landscapes mapping journeys** with elderly individuals who remember living in, moving through, and harvesting from areas now located inside the SCNP. Access to localities in the SCNP was enabled as part of a project led by Dr Gillian Maggs-Kölling, Director of Gobabeb Namib Research Institute, on ‘The significance of the Namib Desert endemic *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) as a keystone species in ecology, phenology, culture and horticultural potential’. The following statement in Chapter 5 of the Plan derives from this on-site oral histories research:

Acanthosicyos horridus (*!nara*) colonies associated with all the ephemeral rivers that have supported human occupation in the Namib Desert for thousands of years [...] were used by Damara and Nama people in addition to the well-known association with the Topnaar people.¹³

⁸ NBC News (2021)

⁹ Pers. comm., Secretary and Senior Councillor, Nami-Daman TA, 29.7.2021.

¹⁰ For example, Gorenflo *et al.* (2012)

¹¹ MEFT (2021: 227)

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 253

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 119

All interview material shared in Section 12.3 is from field research we have carried out together. Interview transcriptions in Khoekhoegowab and translations from Khoekhoegowab to English were led by Ganuses, and all interpretations of this material worked on by us both, as well as with our local companions in this research. All journeys reported in Section 12.3 were carried out with the guidance of Mr Filemon | Nuab, a “Rhino Ranger” based in Sesfontein whose knowledge of the north-west Namibian landscape is renowned.

12.2 Historicising the Northern Namib



Fig. 12.1 Map of places (red), rivers (blue) and topographical features (yellow) mentioned in this chapter. #Gieb's grave (see Section 12.2.3 and Figures 12.11 and 12.19) is represented by the purple marker. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery starting from 10.4.2013. © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Mapped historical records of observations and encounters with autochthonous Namibians in the Northern Namib provide background and context to the material documented through peoples' recall in Section 12.3. Whilst these historical accounts need to be read with a critical eye for accuracy, as well as for the prejudices and racism with which they are often imbued, in the absence of other sources they can be informative regarding the past presence of peoples in localities from which they are now absent: also see Chapters 1, 2, 13, 14 and 15. Several actors are particularly visible in this respect, in part because they left reports documenting encounters and impressions from these journeys.¹⁴ Although often focused on the commercial potential of the coastal area—for example, several key journeys were carried out in the course of prospecting for the Kaoko Land and Mining Company (Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft, KLMG) established during the German colonial period of Namibia's history—they also report encounters with people in the landscapes through which they travelled. Read together, these accounts clarify that the Northern Namib was lived in

¹⁴ A broader, in progress mapping of historical colonial journeys through the wider north-west Namibian landscape is linked at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>.

and utilised by diverse peoples, up to the recent past. Historical records for the Northern Namib are outlined below for the following periods: pre-German colony (Section 12.2.1); German colonial times (1884–1915) (Section 12.2.2); and post-World War 1 South African rule (Section 12.2.3). For ease of reference, places, rivers and springs named in this chapter are mapped in Figure 12.1.

12.2.1 Pre-German colony

Overland journeys to the Northern Namib were difficult for the earliest European and American travellers, and recorded observations from the coast are fragmented and tricky to interpret for accuracy. Nonetheless, some pre-German colonial-era observations/projections are relevant in terms of drawing into focus the Northern Namib as an inhabited and utilised landscape.

One narrative, by American sealer Captain Morrell travelling northwards along the coast in 1828–1829, states that some ‘two leagues’¹⁵ north-east of ‘Ogden’s Harbour’¹⁶ (||Huab River mouth—see Figure 12.1) his expedition encountered ‘a small village, inhabited by about two hundred natives’ which he refers to as ‘of the Cimbebas tribe’.¹⁷ ‘Cimbebas’ here is understood to invoke the name given for an inland ‘region between Cape Negro and Tropic of Capricorn’ on a 1591 Italian map of Africa (by Filippo Pigafetta), rather than to ‘Tjimba’ (a contemporary term for cattle-less ovaHerero).¹⁸ Indeed, Morrell remarks of the people he encountered that they differ ‘but very little from the proper Hottentots’¹⁹ [i.e. Khoekhoegowab speaking Nama], writing enthusiastically of the locality that,

[t]here are [...] many fine springs of water, of an excellent quality, in the valley where this village is situated; from which it may be inferred that this would be a fine place for a rendezvous to establish a trade with the interior of the country.²⁰

In the vicinity of Cape Frio further north—if we can trust Morrell’s account—he also writes of an inhabitants’ village ‘about ten miles from the coast’,²¹ characterised by reed mat huts constructed of ‘closely woven mats of coarse grass’, or ‘of the fibres of some plant’:

[t]he two sides generally correspond with each other, as do also the two ends, with the exception that there is a door or opening in one end, just large enough for the occupants to creep in and out. Each hut is covered with an arched or sloping roof, supported by upright posts fixed in the ground, and thatched with matting. The materials are all so light that they can be removed at a very short notice, and without much trouble. I have seen them taken down and put together again in thirty-five minutes. The value of one of these huts is that of a sheep.²²

This description matches the well-known reed-mat huts historically specific to Nama/Khoe pastoralists (see Figure 12.2). Such structures were lived in within recent memory in localities connected with present-day SCNP (such as Sesfontein, close to the Hoanib River), where they were no doubt linked with the presence in this area of !Gomen Topnaar and Swartbooi pastoralists (see

15 Two leagues at sea here may translate roughly into six nautical miles (= 3.452 miles; 5.556 kilometres) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_\(unit\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_(unit))), in which case this locality would be around 11 kms north of the ||Huab mouth, well within the southern boundary of present-day SCNP.

16 Morrell named ‘a beautiful harbor of smooth water’ north of Cape Cross as Ogden’s Harbour, in honour of a member of his crew (William Ogden) who died in the course of a sealing expedition at Mercury Island in the south in 1828 (Morrell 2014[1832]: 316). The ‘Originalkarte des Herero & Kaoko-Landes’ by A. Petermann, including journeys and observations by Rhenish missionaries, locates Ogden’s Harbour at the ||Huab River mouth (Perthes 1878, Tafel 18, online at <https://digital.library.illinois.edu/items/251774e0-e946-0133-1d3d-0050569601ca-4>).

17 Morrell (2014[1832]: 316)

18 J. Kinahan (2020: 2) drawing on J.H.A. Kinahan (1988: 5)

19 This term is considered derogatory (Elphick 1977: xv). No offence is meant by its occasional inclusion here when quoting directly from historical texts, in which the term denotes the specific ethnic and cultural identity for Khoekhoegowab-speaking pastoralists known today as Nama or Khoe/Khoikhoi, thereby drawing their past presence into visibility; also see Chapter 1.

20 Morrell (2014[1832]: 316)

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 318–19

22 *Ibid.*

Chapter 1). The late Philippine |Hairo ||Nowaxas, for example, who described herself as ‘||Khao-a Dama’ (see Section 12.3 and Chapter 13), recalled in 1999 that,

[t]hese dung houses we didn’t know about before, in the old time. Now Julia [Ganus, deceased] is storing the |haru reeds [*Cyperus marginatus*] in her house to make a reed house [|haru oms]. We make the reed houses like this: we cut the reeds and put some in dung [to blacken them] and some in water and then we weave in the black ones on one side and the white ones on the other side; we built reed houses and we didn’t know about these dung houses. When I was small I lived in the |haru oms.²³

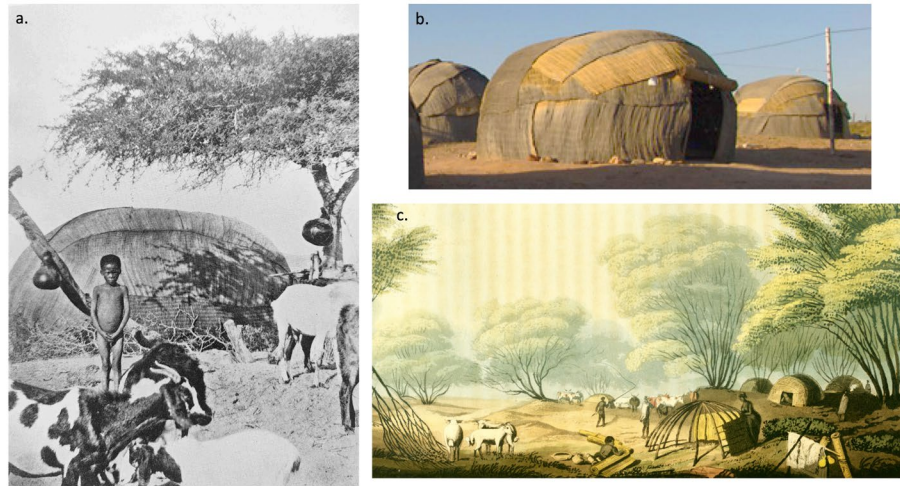


Fig. 12.2 Examples of Nama reed mat huts (known in Sesfontein as |haru oms): a) ‘Topnaar hut under Giraffe acacia’, by L. Schultz. Source: scan from Schapera 1965[1930]: Plate XV; b) contemporary Nama hut in the Richtersveld showing anchor stones at the base. Source: <https://www.exploring-africa.com/en/namibia/nama-people/nama-huts-and-villages>; c) ‘A Hottentot [Khoen] Kraal, on the Banks of the Gariep [i.e. Orange River]’, from Burchell (1822, vol. 1: 325). Source: https://library.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/burchell/burchell5.jpg. All out of copyright or public domain images, adapted by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Reed mat huts leave only subtle traces by way of material remains, but may be visible in the archaeological record as a circle of anchor stones used to help fix the frame poles and mats in place;²⁴ see Figure 12.2b. It is tempting to link Morrell’s account above with limited archaeological data for stone hut circles in the Northern Namib confirming the presence of anchor stones for reed mat huts associated with Khoen pastoralists, that would have been transported by oxen²⁵—as depicted in the well-known (and somewhat romanticised) image in Figure 12.3.²⁶ Indeed, wide diameter (around 4 m) circles of hut anchor stones with a central fireplace and room divider have been found near the !Uniab river mouth—within the SCNP and in between Morrell’s observations above—dated to *ca.* 1,000–1,300 BP and consistent with Nama/Khoen hut construction.²⁷ An eye-witness account from 1896 reported in Section 12.3 also observes ‘deserted, circular reed huts at the Uniab River mouth’.²⁸

Speich writes that,

[t]he production of the [hut] framework is complex and the procurement of the suitable material for the hut frame was probably not possible everywhere. Therefore the frequent occurrence of this type of hut in the arid Uniab Delta [...] raises some questions. In any case, however, the frame can be distinguished by its construction.²⁹

²³ Philippine |Hairo ||Nowaxas, Sesfontein, 15.4.1999.

²⁴ Speich (2010: 48–52), J. Kinahan (2020: 354–56)

²⁵ Steyn (1990: 26–27)

²⁶ Also see J. Kinahan (2020: 357)

²⁷ Blümel *et al.* (2009: 136), J. Kinahan (2020: 263), MEFT (2021: 244)

²⁸ In Jacobson & Noli (1987: 174)

²⁹ Speich (2010: 49). All German to English translations have been made by Sullivan using Google Translate and DeepL Translate.

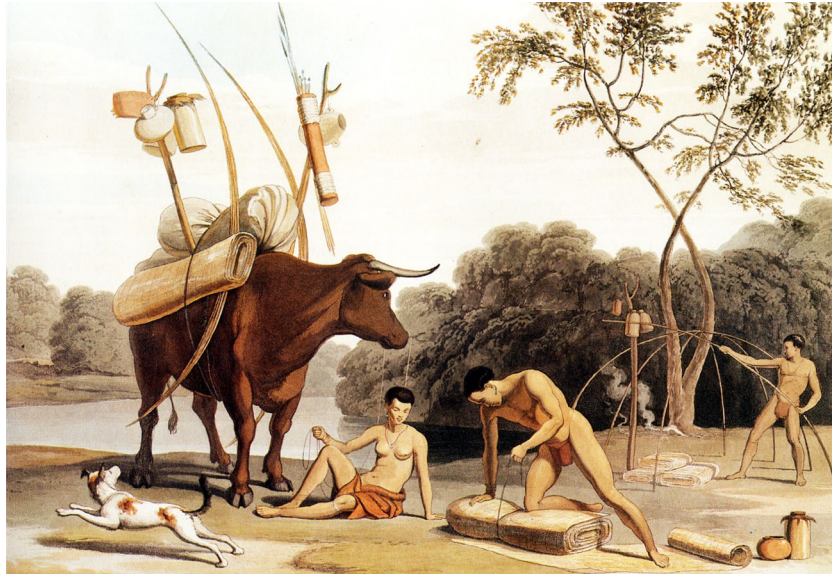


Fig. 12.3 'Korah-Khoikhoi dismantling their huts, preparing to move to new pastures', by Samuel Daniell 1805. Source: public domain image at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samuel_Daniell_-_Kora-Khokhoi_preparing_to_move_-_1805.jpg, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

It should be noted, however, that the poles and mats of which this hut type were built were both durable and portable using pack oxen that were presumably herded in connection with inland pastures.³⁰ These materials were no doubt in part derived from elsewhere in the landscape, being carried by those inhabiting this !Uniab site which was perhaps visited in part so as to access !nara and shellfish. In addition, |haru sedges (*Cyperus marginatus*) from which the mats were made are found at sites of moisture throughout the Northern Namib and adjacent areas.³¹ They are in fact common to the coastal spring known into contemporary times as |Garis³² that is close to the !Uniab mouth (Figure 12.4).



Fig. 12.4 Sedges (|haru, *Cyperus marginatus*) known to be used in the making of Nama reed mat huts, at the water source known in recent times as |Garis at the !Uniab river mouth, Skeleton Coast National Park. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 24.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

³⁰ J. Kinahan (2020: 263, 292)

³¹ In the western and southern Cape of South Africa, the endemic sedge *Cyperus textilis* was used for this purpose (Steyn 1990: 26–27).

³² Documented during journey with Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, 20–26.11.2015.

Archaeologist John Kinahan interprets the presence of apparently Khoe reed mat huts in the Northern Namib as consistent with an hypothesised ‘northward pulse of pastoral expansion’ from the Orange River area; subsequent to westward movements of Khoe pastoralists from the northern Kalahari along the Orange (!Garib) that then branched north and south into the south-western landscapes of present-day Namibia and South Africa.³³ The remains of Khoe reed mat huts in the Northern Namib are additionally consistent with possible southwards migrations of Khoe pastoralists from further north.³⁴ These complexities and uncertainties notwithstanding, the archaeological traces of pastoralist reed mat hut structures appear to evidence past Khoe/Nama presence in the Northern Namib, perhaps associated with wetter climatic conditions from around 1,000-1,350 AD:

[d]uring the Middle Ages a humid phase seems to have transformed parts of the Namib desert into a savanna-like ecosystem. Under the hyperarid conditions of the Little Ice Age [ca. 1,500-1,850 AD] the desert margin shifted to the east again. Apparently, the Namib-desert has been no stable arid region during the younger Holocene. Substantial landscape change happened especially in the area of the desert margins.³⁵

Different types of stone hut circles, as well as contemporaneous shell middens indicating consumption of shellfish such as mussels, have also been documented archaeologically at multiple localities in the Northern Namib. In the vicinity of the !Uniab mouth, the remains of huts formed by ‘coarse boulders’ assumed to serve ‘for the fixation of wooden poles and rods [...] and covered with leaves, branches, grass, or skins for protection’, are attributed to ‘former Bushmen’.³⁶ Further north, the remains of hut circle settlements have also been documented close to the coast north of the Munutum river mouth, in between the Nadas and Sechomib rivers, and at the Khumib river mouth.³⁷ Note that these Khoekhoegowab names for northern Namib ephemeral rivers have been recorded since the area was first visited and mapped by incoming Europeans, their stability and longevity again indicating the past presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples in the Northern Namib (as discussed in Chapter 1).

A site between the Nadas and Sechomib rivers, for example, includes ‘a total of 35 stone circle features’ and some stone circles including whale bones, as well as stone artefacts, potsherds of ‘Khoi’ pottery, ostrich eggshell beads, bones and hunting blinds found at or near the sites.³⁸ Three dates obtained for the sites were ‘within the period AD 1680 to 1940’, with coastal sites considered strongly connected to the hinterland.³⁹ Soot on potsherds from the site north of the Munutum ‘yielded an unexpected age’ of 840 ± 50 AD.⁴⁰ Further south, but within or on the eastern edge of the SCNP, John Kinahan⁴¹ records ‘high local densities of pastoral settlement’ dated to within the last 1,000 years, whose ‘distinctive archaeological features’—namely ‘stone hut circles with associated livestock enclosures, as well as pottery [used for storage of *!nara* and grass seed plant foods] and stone artefact assemblages’—comprise ‘the archaeological signature of the #Nūkhoen’.

Crossing back into the historical (as opposed to archaeological) record, in the 1850s the coastal area west of the ‘Kaoko mountains’ in the north-west (‘the barren Kaoko’⁴²) was recorded by British explorer Francis Galton as inhabited by peoples known as ‘Nareneen’, an appellation presumably connected with their use of *!nara* in this northern part of the Namib (see Chapter 1 and Figure 1.3). Galton writes specifically that,

[t]he Nareneen lived by the sea, and the Ounip (called by the Dutch Toppners [i.e. #Aonin]) about the parts of which we are now speaking [presumably Walvis Bay area], and south of these were the Keikouka

33 J. Kinahan (2020: 262), also Elphick (1977: 16)

34 cf. Stow (1905)

35 Blümel *et al.* (2009: 125)

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 135–36

37 Eichhorn & Vogelsang (2007: 147)

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 149–50

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 145

40 *Ibid.*, p. 151

41 (2020: 288)

42 Galton (1852: 144)

[Kai||khauan/Rooi Nasie/Red Nation], now represented by the red people, by Swartboy [||Khou|gôan], the Kubabees [||Habowen/Veldschoendragers], and Blondel Swartz [!Kamî+nûn!/Gami+nûn]. [...] The Toppners [≠Aonin], however, not being at that time accustomed to the mountain-passes with which the Ghou Damup [Damara/≠Nûkhoen] were familiar, were, as I said, greatly cut off [towards the coast]. And it is curious, that within very late times (about eight years ago [ca. 1840s]), exactly the same thing occurred to the Nareneen living west of the Kaoko. [...] The more northerly Toppners [≠Aonin] were thus quite cut off from all communication with those about Walfisch Bay [...] ⁴³

As indicated in this quote, the mid-1800s were turbulent times (also see Chapter 1). Oral history recorded in Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) Chronicles of the 1800s describes the coastal landscape connecting the Northern Namib with Walvis Bay as one of mobilities between ‘Topnaar’⁴⁴ in the north and those of the Walvis Bay area. ‘Topnaar’ migrating south from Kaokoveld in these years are described as

spread[ing] further south [via the Swakop River mouth] [...] allegedly led by their captain Khaxab to one place ≠Kisa-||guwus commonly known as Kuwis or Sandfontein, located about three miles from the coast and settled south of what is now Walvis Bay.⁴⁵

Late 19th century archives of the Rhenish Mission, drawing on missionary Baumann (based at Rooibank/|Awa-!haos from 1878–1883), assert that ‘[a]ccording to the ancients, the Topnaars came from the north towards the end of the eighteenth century’, and that ‘[a]t the beginning of the 19th century the Topnaar are said to have reached the mouth of the Swakop (tsoa-xou-b)’, their migration perhaps ‘related to the advance of the Herero into the Kaokoveld’.⁴⁶

In 1913 at apparently Sandfontein (≠Khîsa-||gubus), south of Walvis Bay, South African anthropologist Winifred Hoernlé,⁴⁷ relates a conversation with Khaxas⁴⁸— ‘the daughter of one of the last [Topnaar] chiefs’—and ‘some of the headmen of the last recognized chief of the tribe, Piet ||Eibib [||Haibeb]’. In this conversation she learns that according to ‘these old people, the tribe originally lived far to the north in the region to which one branch has again retired’ (i.e. to become the Sesfontein !Gomen Topnaar; !Gomes being the name for Walvis Bay); and that ‘[w]hen they first came to Walvis Bay another Nama people, the “|Namixan”, were in control’.⁴⁹

It seems that historically recorded Northern Namib mobilities from the 1860s onwards should be understood as connected with the earlier mobilities reported by Galton, Hoernlé and Köhler: in which a section of ‘the Topnaar’ retreated to Kaokoveld ‘after the defeat of the Hottentots by the Herero in the sixties of the last century’, leaving ‘the other section [...] in the dunes around Walvis Bay and in the bed of the Kuiseb river at various places’.⁵⁰ These mobilities became amplified after 1864 when Indigenous Swartbooi Nama (||Khou|gôan), then living in Rehoboth in the south, were attacked by Oorlam Nama leader Jonker Afrikaner’s son (Jan Jonker Afrikaner), in retaliation for Swartbooi alliance with the ovaHerero leader Kamaherero against the Oorlam Afrikaners⁵¹ (see Chapter 1). The Rehoboth Swartbooi retreated west along the !Khuiseb River, from where they settled at a short-lived RMS mission station called Salem on the Swakop River,⁵² before moving towards Fransfontein and Sesfontein where they settled in the late 1800s, via !Am-eib in the Erongo mountains. The RMS chronicle of Otjimbingue thus documents that,

Topnaar living in the Kuiseb valley joined forces with the Zwartbooi, headed northward under the leadership of missionary Bohme, and settled in !Am-eib at the Erongo mountains. When the water in !Am-eib became scarce, the Zwartbooi and the Topnaar moved northwards to reach Okombahe,

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 157–58

44 i.e. Nama ‘split off’ from the main body of ‘Kai||khauan/Rooi Nasie/Red Nation’ in the central parts of the territory.

45 Köhler (1969: 106)

46 *Ibid.*

47 (1985[1925]: 47); also see Bank (2016: ch.1)

48 See Hoernlé’s field diaries, Carstens *et al.* (1987: 72).

49 Hoernlé (1985[1925]: 47)

50 *Ibid.*

51 Lau/Andersson (1987: 104), Wallace (2011: 61)

52 Palgrave First Commission, 1876–1877 in Stals (1991: 5), also Rudner & Rudner (2004: 203)

Otjitambi or Franzfontein. From there, many Topnaar moved to Zesfontein (aka Sesfontein), where at that time lived Bushman and Bergdama, who were being influenced by the Herero. The Topnaar were later followed by a smaller group of Zwartbooi who also settled in Zesfontein.⁵³

Through the middle of the 1800s, European travellers found it hard to access present-day Kunene Region in the north-west and few documented encounters with the Northern Namib exist. In 1858, for example, the Anglo-Swedish hunter, naturalist and trader Charles John Andersson travelled through Kaokoveld 'in a vain attempt to reach the Kunene River',⁵⁴ entering a region of arid mountains but being halted by the ruggedness of the area.⁵⁵ In this pre-German colonial moment commercial concerns affecting the Northern Namib and connected landscapes were linked with the export of ivory from the north through Walvis Bay, in part via a coastal route from north to south through the western desert beyond rival European access.⁵⁶ In 1877 Rhenish missionaries Böhm and Bernsmann travelled northwards to the east of the Northern Namib. Their route took them from Otjimbingwe on the Swakop River as far as the Hoanib River in the north-west, circling what are named as the Etendeka mountains (also †Naurahab, see Chapters 9 and 13) in the uplands of the !Uniab via !Am-eib, Okombahe (!A+gommies), Sorris-Sorris on the Ugab river, Urunendis (Uruhûnes), Kai-as, Hûnkab, 'Ub' (|Ūb) on the Hoanib (west of Sesfontein), and 'Zesfontein', for which they also record an otjiHerero name (Ohamuheke).⁵⁷

1879 saw two notable crossings of the Kaokoveld that reached the Northern Namib coast, for which fragmented documentation exists. Trekboers returning from the Okavango in this year turned westwards from 'Ovampoland' 'to the so-called Kaokoveld south of the Kunene River and continued on right down to the sea'.⁵⁸ In this same year, a philanthropic collection organised for the Trekboers by settlers of the Cape led to a relief mission being sent north from 'Walfish Bay' bringing 'clothes, medicine, provisions and ammunition',⁵⁹ in the course of which the Trekboer Gert Alberts led 'a small mounted party down the valley of the Hoarusib River to the sea, in an attempt to collect [the] supplies' arriving on the coast:⁶⁰ see Chapter 1. Although containing little information regarding local encounters, these journeys demonstrate how Kaokoveld to the coast was starting to be traversed by colonial-era travellers.

12.2.2 German colonial times, 1884 to 1915

Commercial interests in the north-west intensified as the 1880s ushered in German colonial rule and a consolidated effort to survey and control the colony's natural and human resources for economic gain. As outlined more fully in Chapter 1 an outcome was the acquisition of mining rights in the north-west, and subsequently a series of expeditions in this area led by surveyor Georg Hartmann to ascertain commercial opportunities, including along the coast of the Northern Namib. Hartmann embarked on his first survey of the 'Kaoko-Feld' for the KLMG in 1894, whilst working for the (British-invested) South West Africa Company⁶¹ in Otavi District (*Gebiet*) south of Etosha Pan. He writes that:

[t]he main task of this expedition was the mining and agricultural investigation of the middle Kaoko area to beyond Seßfontein. On top of that it should try to travel along the Hoanib River to the coast and to investigate the landing conditions there. This expedition should therefore be the first attempt to explore the unknown coast at this point and I confess that I accepted with great enthusiasm to execute this expedition.⁶²

53 Köhler (1969: 111)

54 Rudner & Rudner (1974: 188)

55 Owen-Smith (1972: 29)

56 Rizzo (2012: 37)

57 See map at <https://digital.library.illinois.edu/items/251774e0-e946-0133-1d3d-0050569601ca-4#>, last accessed 14.10.2021

58 Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: 41–2)

59 *Ibid.*, p. 42

60 Stals (1991: 299–307), Owen-Smith (2010: 52)

61 Drechsler (1966: 47, 97)

62 Hartmann (1897: 118)

Referencing Morrell's earlier reports, Hartmann additionally observes that,

the whole unknown coast from Swakop-Mund to the northern border is like a blank white sheet of paper, and yet we see a lot of names and numbers there, proof that up to a certain extent the exploration of the coast has been attempted.⁶³

With Nama guides who were clearly familiar with the terrain, Hartmann travelled west of Sesfontein along the Hoanib towards the coast. His impressions are worth quoting in full: for those familiar with the terrain, they are strongly evocative of the Northern Namib and its neighbouring landscapes:

[t]o the west of Seßontein, there seemed to have been little or no rain. The consequence was that we had to march to the coast under great thirst and terrible heat. In addition the stony ground over all was bad for travelling with ox carts. After three days' west of Seßontein, our ox carts under the engineer Rogers turned south and drove across the mountains in a southerly direction to the west side of the central mountain range [at |Üb?]. I myself walked along the Hoanib with a small cart and some riding horses to reach the coast. Especially on this leg we suffered from thirst again. The Hoanib itself retained its lush bush vegetation. Gradually towards the coast it became lower and reminded us of the influence of the coastal climate. [...] In the Hoanib we suddenly couldn't go any further, because of a mighty sand dune wall of 50-100 m high, which seemed to extend to the N and S into the infinite distance. My Hottentot guides told me, that the coast was not far on the other side of the sand dunes, and in fact we reached it on horseback after a six-hour ride. The surf was quite significant and seemed to have the same texture both to N and S, as far as we could see [...] With our lack of provisions we could only stay for two days and had to try to catch up with our ox carts as fast as possible. From the beach, which was almost without vegetation, we returned over the mighty sand rampart to our camp behind it at the end of the Hoanib River, where our small cart was standing, and from here we drove in a SE direction in order to get the tracks of our ox carts under Rogers' guidance. When we had the Hoanib River valley behind us, we found ourselves on a mighty plain, the so-called Namieb [Namib], which seemed to extend to the S as well as to the N in an infinite way, and which would have formed a single connected table or terrace, if I may say so, if it had not been cut by the Hoanib River valley. Far to the west, towards the coast, the eerie sand dunes shimmered, of the same nature as those sand dunes which prevented the Hoanib from flowing directly into the sea; on the other side, far to the east, there was a broad front, as it were a wall, the table and cone mountains of the inner Kaoko-Feld.

The Namieb was almost as flat and smooth as a table and travelling on it is extremely pleasant. But the vegetation here was very low: very sparse grass growth, here and there small crippled bushes and also the very occasionally occurring strange Welwitschia. We were in the barren coast region, which, like at Walfisch-Bai and Swakop-Mund, was around 60 km wide. [...] The many brackish water points on the Namieb prove no less than the evidence of the sea from which the African continent became raised. By moving diagonally and southeast across the Namieb, we approached the central mountain area of the Kaoko-Feld from which the Namieb ran away. In the western part of this mountainous area we continued our journey to the south. We crossed the |Uni!äb and ||Hu!äb river and found our ox carts northwards from the Brandberg. In this last part of our journey in the middle of the mountain country, past deeply cut gorges with steep embankments downwards and just as steep higher up, the ground is literally sown only with rocks which consisted of fist-sized to child-sized pieces of basalt, this part of our journey was extremely tedious and arduous.⁶⁴

Of particular relevance for the Northern Namib/SCNP is Hartmann's later encounter with a so-called 'decimated tribe' he inscribes in rather derogatory terms as 'the "Seebuschmänner", the apparently bastardized Hottentot or crossbreeds between Hottentotten and Berg-Damara', living 'at the mouths of the |Uni!ab-river up to the Hoarusib and sleep[ing] where in the dunes the #Naras [*!naras*] fruit is to be found'.⁶⁵ Hartmann includes in his text a photograph of these 'Seebuschmänner',⁶⁶ reproduced here in Figure 12.5.⁶⁷ Their body language appears proud and defiant; their attire a combination of what look like springbok and seal skins, as well as a hat worn by their 'captain' that seems

63 *Ibid.*, p. 115

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 124–27. Hartmann's journeys are mapped and annotated at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>

65 *Ibid.*, p. 138

66 The same image is labelled 'Hottentotten' in Hartmann (1902/03: 413)

67 Also see Sullivan & Ganuses (2022: 119–24)

to be of European design; and with knives worn around their necks, perhaps used for scooping out *!nara* melon flesh. ‘Seebuschmänner’ huts assumed to be abandoned are also photographed at ‘Rietgrasfontein’ close to the mouth of the Hoarusib River (Figure 12.6): perhaps those using them were simply avoiding Hartmann’s expedition. Also as part of this 1895–1896 expedition, von Estorff observes ‘deserted, circular reed huts at the Uniab River mouth’, and on return a month later finds here ‘a band of 30 “Bushmen” who had just arrived from the Hoanib River. They were living off narra for the most part’, with one ‘narra knife’ reportedly ‘made from elephant rib at the Hoarusib River’.⁶⁸ In 1910, geologist Kuntz similarly meets “Bergdamaras” upstream on the !Uniab returning from the river’s mouth, where presumably they had been harvesting *!nara*,⁶⁹ and writes of well-fed “Bergdamara” families from here to the Hoaruseb River north of Sesfontein.⁷⁰



Fig. 12.5 ‘Group of sea-bushmen at Hoanib mouth; captain with a woman in the foreground’. Source: Hartmann (1897: 129, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 12.6 ‘Rietgrasfontein close to the mouth of the Hoarusib, on the north side of the spring, protected from the southwest wind, abandoned huts of the Seebuschmänner; two servants of Dr. Hartmann with horses’. Source: Hartmann (1897: 127, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Overall, Hartmann stresses the potential economic qualities of the Northern Namib. He emphasises: ‘fresh guano’ at ‘Cape Fria’, the Hoanib mouth and ‘|Uni!āb mouth’; the ‘convenient landing place’ of the Khumib mouth, ‘about 600 km or by ship 3 to 4 days closer to Europe, than the Swakop mouth and Walfisch-Bai’, and which could be connected by railroad to ‘the Otavi mines’; and the ‘[t]he great value of the inland of Kaoko-Feld as cattle breeding land’.⁷¹ Drawing on information from

⁶⁸ Jacobson & Noli (1987: 174 and references therein)

⁶⁹ NAN.A.327 Krause and Kuntz, Kuntz 25.8.1910, report to the Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft.

⁷⁰ Kuntz (1913: 447)

⁷¹ Hartmann (1897: 140–41)

his Khoekhoegowab-speaking guides, he also makes an intriguing comment regarding possible environmental change in the preceding decades:

[a]t the mouth of the Hoanib they showed me living sea-bushman reed grass places between the sand dunes, which only fifty years ago were ponds, on whose islands thousands of birds nested. These ponds stirred from the groundwater of the Hoanib. In the same proportion as the country raised, the water level sank deeper. Today the ponds are dry. The birds can no longer live on the small islands where they were protected from the jackals [...] But the fresh guano, which lies here still meters thick, reminds of their activity.⁷²

This observation matches information for the more southerly !Khuiseb Delta area of the Namib. Here, freshwater springs in the dunes bordering the coastal lagoons at Walvis Bay and Sandwich Harbour made possible a rich cultural landscape of more than 220 archaeological sites, with extinct springs evidenced by ‘dense beds of reeds, *Phragmites australis*’.⁷³

Use and habitation of the Northern Namib by Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples is also signalled for the German colonial period in various maps, as indicated in Figures 12.7, 12.8 and 12.9 (also see Figure 1.16 in Chapter 1). For example, the *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas* of 1893 (Figure 12.7) names ‘Hubun’ as one of the peoples of the Northern Namib in the vicinity of the Sechomib, Hoarusib and Hoanib rivers, corresponding with the name ||Ukun referring to a particular grouping of !nara harvesters (as detailed in Section 12.3). This map also positions ‘Hottentot’—i.e. Nama—towards the coastal areas stretching north to south from the Sechomib to the ||Eseb/Omaruru rivers, as does the *Karte von Deutsch-Südwestafrika* of 1898, which names ‘Hottentot’ as present along the coast from Walvis Bay north to Nadas (Figure 12.8). A few years later a 1905 map of the territory positions ‘Bergdamara’ in the western reaches of the Khumib River area, ‘Owatjimba’ stretching towards the coast in the far north-west, and ‘Topnaar Hottentotten’ (Nama) west and south of ‘Zesfontein’ (Sesfontein) (Figure 12.9).



Fig. 12.7 Detail from *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas* of 1893, positioning ‘Hubun’ (||Ukun) in the vicinity of the Sechomib, Hoarusib and Hoanib rivers in the north-west, and ‘Hottentot’ (Nama) in the coastal areas stretching north to south from the Sechomib to the ||Eseb/Omaruru rivers. Source: Sam Cohen Library, Swakopmund, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 139

73 J. Kinahan (2001[1991]: 90)

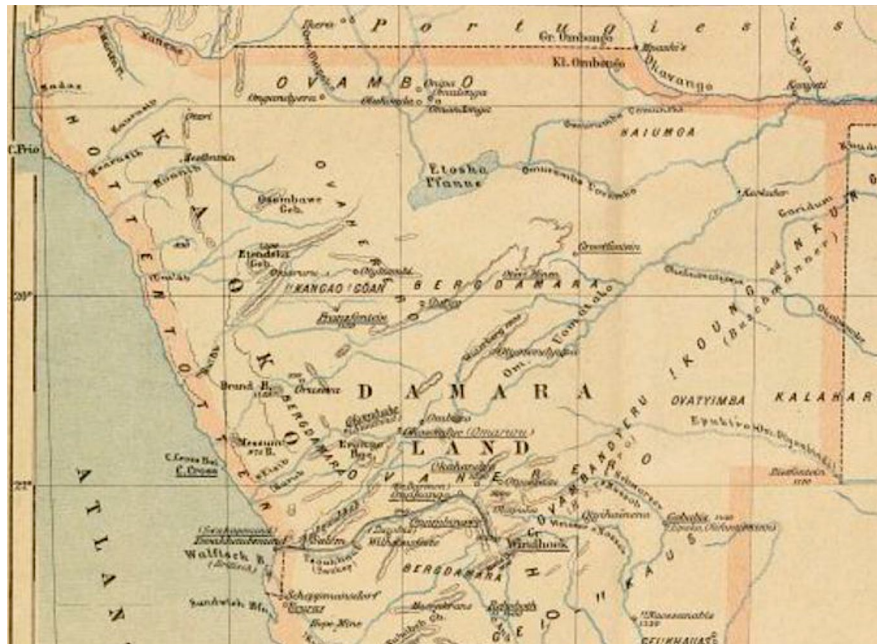


Fig. 12.8 Detail from *Karte von Deutsch-Südwestafrika* 1898, positioning 'Hottentot' (Nama) along the coast from Walvis Bay north to Nadas. Source: <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/karte-von-deutsch-suedwestafrika-1898.html>, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 12.9 Detail from 1905 map by Herrmann Julius Meyer—Meyers Geographischer Hand-Atlas, positioning 'Bergdamara' in the western reaches of the Khumib River area, 'Owatjimba' stretching towards the coast in the far north-west, and 'Topnaar Hottentotten' (Nama) west and south of 'Zesfontein' (Sesfontein). Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10997145>, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The extreme disruptions of the German colonial regime in the early 1900s followed hot on the heels of livestock decline caused by rinderpest in 1897 (see Chapter 1), the effects of which radically reshaped the fortunes and governance of peoples living close to and within the present-day SCNP boundary and accessing its coastal resources. Nonetheless, travellers continued to report encounters with people in the Northern Namib. North of the Koigab and ǁHuab rivers in 1906, George Elers—on an expedition to seek northern deposits of guano—built a road so as to travel

northwards towards Sesfontein, doing this with ‘a large number of Berg-Damaras who live in this [sic] Velds’ who showed him where water may be found.⁷⁴ At Sesfontein, by now a German military post with a brick fort under the command of a Lieut. Smidt, Elers was informed that travel further north was ill-advised because of drought, but he nonetheless proceeded with guides westwards down the Hoanib, writing:

although it looked hopeless I decided to try and am glad to say got through to the mouth of the Hoanib. I got the cart down to the high dunes and proceeded over them with carriers.

I found plenty of water in the sand dunes but of very bad quality [e.g. at Auses?] and my oxen would hardly touch it although they had come through a long thirst. I also found much better water on the sea-side of sand dunes [the spring known as ‖Goada?] and there made my base. I stayed and examined all this part of the coast thoroughly. An old sea Bushman remembered the birds [white breasted cormorants] nesting there as he used to kill them for food and take the eggs.

From Hoanib I proceeded to Hoarusib, I found this the only river that has run for many years. I have no difficulty with water but could not get cart nearer the sea than 40 miles, on account of wash outs and dense reed and bush [...] I found some Berg-Damaras and Bushman who live close to the sea and these people are constantly walking up and down the coast in search for whales that come ashore, *you will find their Kraals all the way to Khumib and also a long way south to the Hoanib* [...] North of the Khumib it was impossible to go on account of the drought.⁷⁵

The German colonial commercialising visions of the Northern Namib outlined above include the area now protected by the SCNP, somewhat belying its contemporary popular visibility as an untouched “wilderness”. It seems likely that the entrepreneurial intentions of the KLMG were already in tension with contemporaneous colonial concerns regarding the over-exploitation of hunted indigenous fauna—especially elephants. As discussed in Chapter 1, in 1907 these concerns played a part in the overlapping designation of the north-west as part of Game Reserve No. 2, stretching from Etosha Pan in the east towards the coast and the Kunene River (see Figure 1.17), and thus incorporating the northern part of the present-day SCNP.

12.2.3 Protectorate and South African administration: 1915–1990

Fragmented accounts through the changing South African administrative period again report local uses of the Northern Namib. For example, in his report of a journey to Kaokoveld in 1917, Major C.N. Manning—Resident Commissioner for ‘Ovamboland’ in the immediate post-WW1 years—refers to ‘Nama or Hottentot speaking people living at Zesfontein and nearer coast’.⁷⁶ In 1942, Sesfontein Nama were recruited to assist an overland rescue mission to the shipwrecked British liner the *Dunedin Star* north of Angra Fria. They clearly knew routes and waterholes through the Northern Namib.⁷⁷ In 1951 a scientific expedition to Kaokoveld financed by businessman Bernhard Carp collected thousands of different insects including ‘over 100 new forms’, underlining ‘the exceptional status of the Kaokoveld as a repository of biodiversity’, as well as ‘the “otherness” of the Kaokoveld’s fauna and people’.⁷⁸ Bollig⁷⁹ quotes a letter from Carp to the Administrator of South West Africa mentioning,

a forager population at the mouth of the Hoanib River. He records them as comprising “3 bushmen, 2 bushwomen, 3 Damas and 3 Dama-women”, and continues: “They were called Sandloopers [Strandlopers?] as they lived in the sand and also part of the year on the beaches of the coast, where they ate dead fish etc. Inland their diet consisted of grass veldkos and anything they could catch. They lived in scherms, no proper huts and had a very primitive life.”⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Elers’ report of 1907, quoted in Jacobson & Noli (1987: 173)

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁷⁶ NAN SWAA 2516 A552/22 Kaokoveld, Major Manning’s Report (1917: 11), for 22.8.2017.

⁷⁷ Marsh (1978[1944]: 74–75)

⁷⁸ Bollig & Olwage (2016: 67) referencing SWAA 1336/A198/39, Carp Expedition; also Bollig (2020: 84–85)

⁷⁹ (2020: 22)

⁸⁰ Referencing NAN SWAA Kaokoveld A522.

This description clearly connects the people encountered on the coast with mobilities inland to acquire complementary foods (see Section 12.3).

In the late 1940s a government ethnologist for the former Dept. of Bantu Administration based in Pretoria also describes in Sesfontein a ‘group of Bushmen [who] calls itself Kubun (with click //ubun)’: ‘the informant said they originally came from a place called !kuseb which is south of Walvis Bay, near the sea’, with he himself (called !Hu-!gaob) and his nephew |Nanimab ‘born where the !Uniab flows into the sea, about seven days walk from Sesfontein’.⁸¹ Van Warmelo’s informant had ‘never had a Bush wife’, but instead ‘had a Bergdama wife with whom he had several children, amongst them three daughters all living in Sesfontein’.⁸² Revealing preoccupations of the day with “pure” and “wild” “Bushmen” (also see Chapters 2 and 4), he states further that ‘[i]t seems as though there is only one pure Bush woman of this group still surviving’, who ‘also lives in Sesfontein and is married to a Bergdama’; and that only ‘[t]wo other pure Bushmen of this group survive’, who also normally ‘live out in the Namib and along the coast, eating what veldkos they can get and especially fish found along the shore’.⁸³

In May 1953 a Mr Louis Knobel from Pretoria in the company of Dr P.J. Schoeman—‘the Game Warden of South West Africa’ (see Chapter 2)—encountered in the Sesfontein community a group of people later described by archaeologist Raymond Dart in a somewhat dated text as:

a small group of coastal Bush-Hottentot folk consisting of three males and an ancient doddering female, said to be their mother, who were reported by the Topnaar Hottentot elders, their overlords, to be the last remnants of what was once a large body of Strandlopers. It was the custom of the Hottentots to allow these Strandloper retainers to go down to the coast each year when the *narra* fruit was ripe. [...] On the coast this Strandloper group still subsists for several months on these fruit and the sea food found along the coast [...], especially on the rocks about the mouth of such rivers as the Kumib and Hoarusib.⁸⁴

Knobel’s photos form the basis of Raymond Dart’s 1955 account of this encounter. He tells Dart that ‘the boy who took them to the isolated huts where the Strandlopers were living informed them that his own father had been a Strandloper, but that his mother was a Topnaar Hottentot’; Schoeman additionally notes that ‘according to these Strandlopers’ own story, their stock had branched off from a Name [*sic*] Hottentot tribe, somewhere near the Brandberg [...] in the Kaokoveld, but their predecessors had lived along the Skeleton Coast and up towards Rocky Point for hundreds of years’.⁸⁵ The three ‘Strandloper’ men photographed in Sesfontein stand before a circular hut made of ‘pieces of wood, branches and palm fronds’ and are ‘clad in front and back aprons of buck-skin suspended from a girdle string, ear-rings and in one case a necklet of the type usually encountered amongst Bush peoples as well as rude sandals tied about their ankles with leather thongs’.⁸⁶ see Figure 12.10. The paper proceeds with a rather objectifying account of the physical characteristics of the three men photographed.



Fig. 12.10 (L) ‘Three Strandlopers of Sesfontein S.W.A., standing in front of their rude hut built of wood, bark, palm fronds and grass’; (R) ‘The same three Strandlopers seated or squatting, the tall one on the right side of the previous picture having changed over to the left side in this picture’. Source: Dart (1955: 176, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

81 van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 45)

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46

84 Dart (1955: 175)

85 *Ibid.*

86 *Ibid.*, pp. 175–77

In May 2019, and again in March 2022, these 1955 images were discussed with Sesfontein resident Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, born *ca.* 1935 at Auses in the lower Hoanib and who grew-up as a *!nara* harvester of the Northern Namib.⁸⁷ Franz recognised one of the men photographed here as called |Gabenaeb, known to be an enthusiastic dancer of |*gais* praise songs. This man is seated on the right, and also standing in the centre of the image on the left. His full name is Werner |Gabenaeb ||Hoëb, and he is an uncle of Franz: Franz's father Dawid |Gero ||Hoëb is the brother of |Gabenaeb—as indicated in the genealogy shared in Figure 12.11.

‡Gîeb & Franz ||Hoëb Genealogy

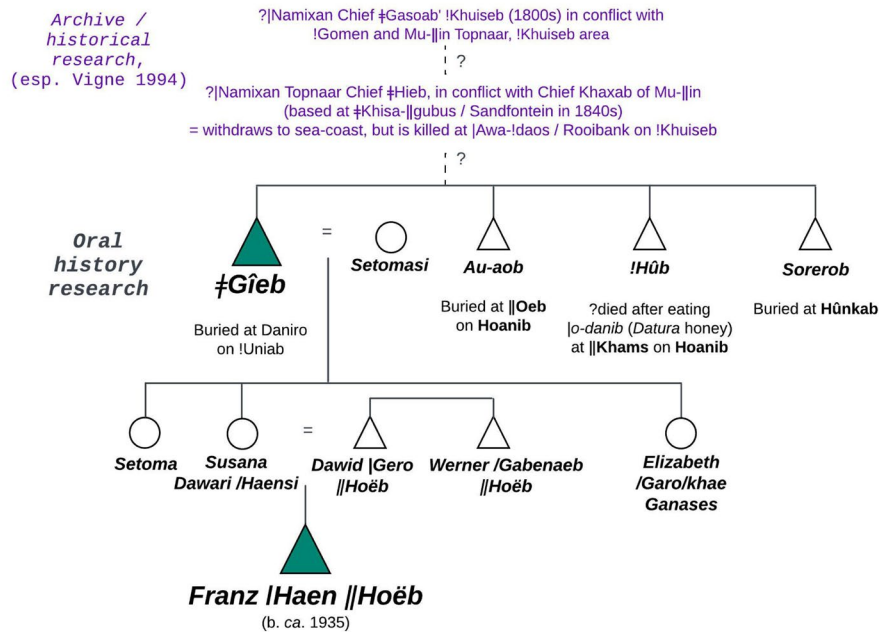


Fig. 12.11 Reconstructed genealogy of Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and his maternal grand-father, the remembered ||Ukun leader ‡Gîeb (see Figure 12.19), drawing on oral histories with Sesfontein residents, and historical material in Vigne (1994: 8), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 12.12 Werner |Gabenaeb ||Hoëb (d.) plays *goma-khās* in Sesfontein. Photo: © Emmanuelle Olivier 1999 (no. 37), digitised by Sian Sullivan in March 2018, identification of musician made by W.S. Ganuses & S. Sullivan in May 2018. Used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

It has been rather extraordinary to us to realise that |Gabenaeb pictured in these images from the 1950s and recognised in field research some 60 years later, was also recorded in Sesfontein in 1999

as an elderly man playing multiple ‘bow-songs’ (*goma-khās*), a musical genre formerly commonly played, often simply for ‘self-delectation’,⁸⁸ i.e. for pleasure, delight, amusement and meditation. The image in Figure 12.12 is of |Gabenaeb, photographed in the early 1950s as an unnamed “strandloper” (Figure 12.10), playing *goma-khās* in Sesfontein in 1999. In the notes accompanying these recordings from 1999, the late Werner |Gabenaeb ||Hoëb plays songs whose names are suggestive of his preoccupations at this time: ‘We move towards Namib’, ‘Should I stay alone?’, ‘The camp has moved’, ‘Homesick’, ‘Who will cry’, ‘Springbok’, ‘I was left alone in the bush at Tce||ami’, ‘We will meet during the rainy season’, ‘Waterhole’, ...

When pursuing this conversation with Franz in March 2022 more information about the men photographed by Knobel in 1953 came to light. The images are not in fact of exactly the same men, as conveyed in Dart’s 1955 paper. The man standing to the left in Figure 12.10 is Alfred |Nabunab, recalled—like |Gabenaeb—as someone who loved to dance |*gais* praise songs: but he is not photographed in the image on the right. |Nabunab is described by Franz as mostly staying with |Namimab (Huiseb) Xam-khaob, !Hûnib and Au-aob, the third of these men being a brother of Franz’s grand-father †Gîeb (see Figure 12.11), who we will meet again below. All these men referred to †Gîeb as their elder: as *da kai*. It is tempting to speculate that ‘|Namimab’ named here may have been the man referred to by van Warmelo above as ‘|Nanimab’, ‘born where the !Uniab flows into the sea, about seven days walk from Sesfontein’.

It seems clear that in the 1950s it was not uncommon for a network of individuals connected with the nodal settlement of Sesfontein to move between the coast and inland, in part so as to harvest *!nara* in the lower reaches of several rivers traversing the Northern Namib. The Khumib, Hoaruseb, Hoanib, !Uniab and Ugab are all mentioned as part of these mobilities, spanning a north-south distance of more than 200 kms. Figure 12.13 reconstructs reported mobilities between *!nara* in the !Uniab and Hoanib rivers and inland springs and dwelling places; also see Video 12.1.



Video 12.1. *Lands That History Forgot: 1st Journey, Skeleton Coast & Hoanib River*—Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, online: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/49940025>. © Future Pasts and Etosha-Kunene Histories, 2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

These documented histories and memories notwithstanding, in the early 1970s Etosha ecologist Ken Tinley⁸⁹ writes of ‘recently extinct Strandlopers along the coast’. This statement is in a report commissioned by the Wildlife Society of South Africa concerning shifts to the then boundaries of Game Reserve no. 2 and Etosha Game Park (see Chapters 2 and 13). Tinley⁹⁰ describes the previous distribution of these ‘Strandlopers’ as ‘discontinuous as they were governed by the occurrence of freshwater in the mouths of the seasonal rivers crossing the Namib Desert’: although ‘they also

⁸⁸ Mans and Olivier (2005: 30–31). This track is now deposited in the British Library Sound Archive, together with the full set of digitised Olivier recordings from Sesfontein in 1999, copies of which have now been returned to the Nami-Daman TA and the Hoanib Cultural Group (Sullivan *et al.* 2023).

⁸⁹ (1971: 4)

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5

extended up some of the rivers traversing the desert’, writing that they ‘are extinct today except for one or two very old individuals living in Sesfontein’. He overlooks the role played in their ‘extinction’ by the establishment of mining concessions for diamonds and semi-precious stones through the northern Namib from the 1950s onwards: at Sarusas in the Khumib River, Möwe Bay, Terrace Bay and Toscanini (see Figure 12.14). Mining is one factor that created the Northern Namib as a restricted area, meaning that peoples using coastal resources were increasingly advised they could no longer access these areas and must become more permanently settled in the inland settlement area of Sesfontein.

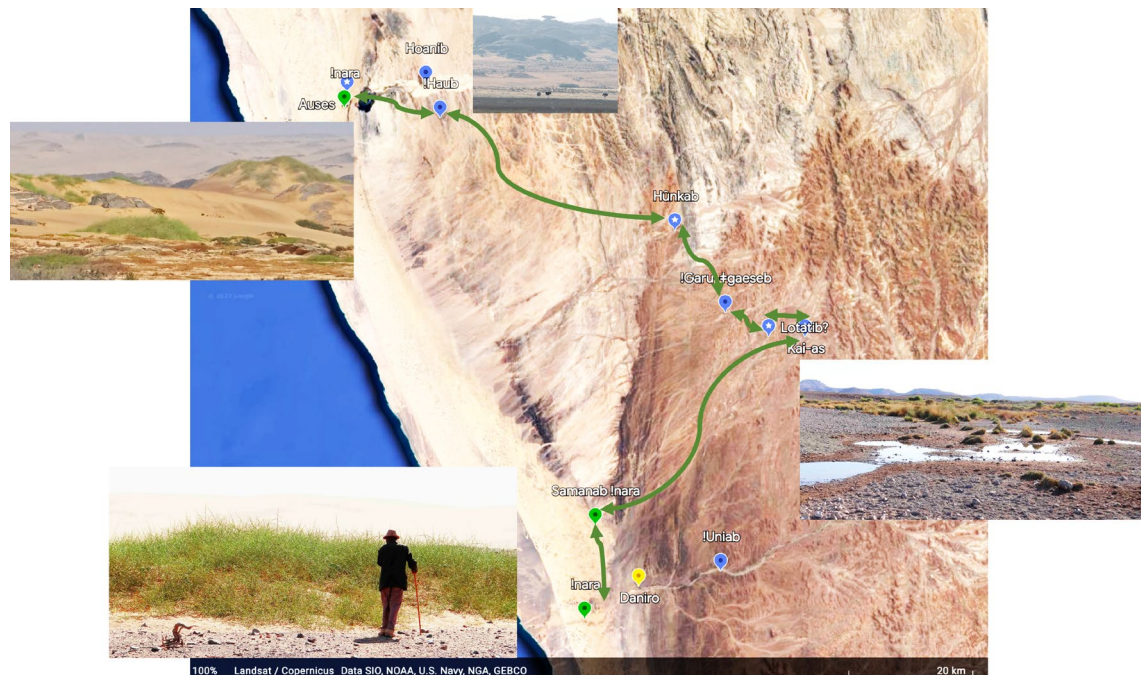


Fig. 12.13 Reconstructed mobilities by ||Ubun (and others) to harvest *Inara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melons from plants in the !Uniab and Hoanib rivers, now in the Skeleton Coast National Park, via inland dwelling places and springs including Kai-as and Hûnkab, based on site visits and multiple conversations with Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

These circumstances are invoked in a short film in which Sesfontein resident, the late Hildegaart |Nuas, tells of how Nama headmen from Sesfontein came to those living in the Hoanib west of Sesfontein saying, ‘you cannot stay here alone, you have to move to Sesfontein so that the government can recognise you’.⁹¹ see Video 12.2. Hildegaart’s parents, and her husband the late Manasse |Nuab, continued to go to the Hoanib *!nara*s at the time of the year when they became ripe, bringing *!nara* cakes back to Sesfontein.⁹² It is likely that there was not only one event in which people were “encouraged” to remain in Sesfontein: people recall being moved to Sesfontein to work for Nama in the gardens there at the time when Husa |Uixamab—who died in 1941—was “captain”.⁹³ When the Northern Namib became restricted as a mining area, however, it became harder to enter the area to harvest *!nara*:

now when the whites started making the diamond mines, now the government told the people that they have to move out and stay in Sesfontein. That’s why they are moving out from the places where they are living.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Manasse ||Gam-o |Nuab and Hildegaart |Gugowa |Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, May 1999.

⁹² Sullivan (2019)

⁹³ Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael |Gâmigu Ganaseb, #Nû!arus, 7.4.2014.

⁹⁴ Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Hoanib Camp/||Oeb, 22.11.2015.



Video 12.2 The late Hildegaart |Nuas of Sesfontein/!Nani|aus, Kunene Region, remembers harvesting *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) in the dune fields of the Hoanib River. Video by Sian Sullivan, 2019, at <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/24efb33d>, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Even then, however, people would travel up and down the Hoanib between Sesfontein and Möwe Bay. For example, Franz ||Hoëb, now resident in Sesfontein, worked as a labourer for both Sarusas and Möwe Bay mining operations, reporting how he and others from Sesfontein would travel to Möwe Bay on donkeys for work in the diamond mine there. Someone would come with them to take the donkeys back to Sesfontein. Others would also come to Möwe Bay bringing goats for consumption by the mine managers. The goats were reportedly grazed at places such as |Garis on the coast at the !Uniab mouth (see Figure 12.4), before being slaughtered for consumption by the mine managers. Sesfontein resident Jacobus ||Hoëb and former headman Simon ||Hawaxab, as well as ovaHimba residents, were also mentioned in this regard, i.e. as those who delivered goats down the Hoanib and across the Namib dunes to Möwe Bay.⁹⁵



Fig. 12.14 Map showing locations of diamond and semi-precious stone mining in the Northern Namib, pre-1980. Source: data from Mansfield 2006, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

⁹⁵ Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, |Garis, 24.11.2015. These recollections echo practices reported further south by Bridgeford and Bridgeford (2002: 23), who write that in 1895–1904 supplies of fresh meat were acquired ‘from the inhabitants of Okombahe in Damaraland, who trekked down the Omaruru River with cattle, watering stock at various waterholes in the river’ with a farmer/shop-keeper (called du Toit) at Cape Cross herding the cattle the last 60 kms to Cape Cross. John Kinahan (2001[1991], 2020) also describes such inland-coastal livestock movements in detail, drawing on archaeological and historical sources for especially the !Khuiseb area.

Iterative clearances of people and livestock from landscapes both west and south of Sesfontein (Chapter 13) acted to facilitate the multiple shifts in the boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 and Etosha Game Park documented in Chapter 2, leading ultimately to incorporation of the Northern Namib as SCNP. The various boundary changes and reorganisations of people and livestock eventually cleared the way for proclamation of what was already a restricted area: in 1971 the Skeleton Coast National Park was established (see Figure 12.15), eventually encompassing the Northern Namib from the Ugab (!U#gāb) to the Kunene rivers, with Park entry requiring a permit.

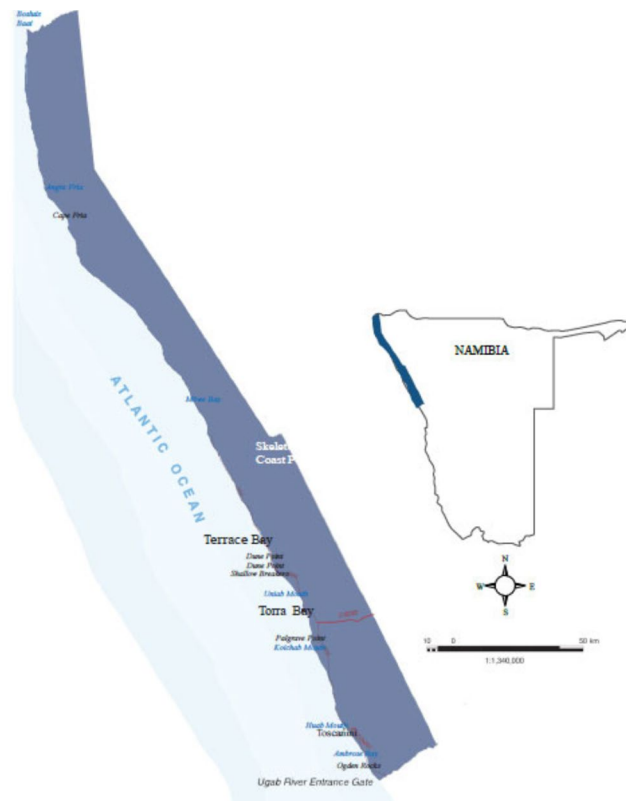


Fig. 12.15 Boundaries of Skeleton Coast National Park, first proclaimed in 1971. Public Domain image, <https://skeletoncoastparkugabgate.wheretostay.na/>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

To summarise, Section 12.2 clarifies that for the duration of written accounts about the Northern Namib—overlapping into the pasts recorded in archaeological research and with oral history accounts into the present—a diversity of peoples accessed, used and inhabited this area. As well as those with little by way of livestock, they included Khoe/Nama and Damara/#Nūkhoe pastoralists, with livelihoods and other practices overlapping in diverse and changing combinations so as to respond to dynamic environmental and political circumstances.⁹⁶ The historical influences and boundary changes ushered in by European colonial venture, however, acted increasingly to fix new, bounded conceptions of the landscapes of the Northern Namib that restricted and contained prior mobilities, whilst creating new regimes of access, governance and use (Figure 12.15). Section 12.3 brings into further focus ways that the Northern Namib was once accessed and utilised by contemporary Indigenous Namibians, bringing to the fore their own accounts of who they are and why the coastal resources were important to them.

96 Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021)

12.3 !*Nara* harvesters of the Northern Namib: Contemporary oral history accounts

When the ||Ukun and ||Kha-a peoples met in the rain time, for example at Kai-as, the ||Ukun would bring !*nara* [from the coast] and share with the others. The !*nara* has oil/fat inside. We would mix the !*nara* and the *sâui* and *bosû* together—it was delicious food!⁹⁷

I was born at Auses where !*nara* grow, and I grew up in the Hoanib river. And from there we moved to the !Uniab river. And at the !Uniab mouth we collected the !*naras*. We put them into a big pot and then we strained that juice through a pot that has holes [in the bottom], and spread this juice on the dunes so that it can get “ripe”. And the seeds—we roasted the seeds and then mixed with the cooked juice and stored [the seeds] in the skin of a springbok.⁹⁸

Many of the fragmented observations recounted in Section 12.2 are visible in recorded oral history accounts that put cultural and experiential flesh onto the bones of the historical records. In doing so, they help to rehumanise and re-individualise the often anonymising and objectifying observations of historical narratives and administrative documents.⁹⁹ They also confirm that an ‘absence of Khoisan-speaking foragers in the oral record’ of more easterly ‘Himba and Herero informants in the 1990s and 2000s’¹⁰⁰ is an artefact of that particular oral record, rather than a reflection of lives lived in the western and coastal areas by those whose accounts are documented below.

This section reports especially on remembered !*nara* use in interviews and oral histories gathered with Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples in and around the northern settlement of Sesfontein (also known in Khoekhoegowab as !Nani|aus and #Gabia#Gao, and in otjiHerero as Ohamuheke¹⁰¹).¹⁰² A number of elderly people now residing in Sesfontein and its environs, and who refer to themselves as ||Ukun, !Narenin, Hoani-Daman and ||Kha-a Dama (ethnonyms explained in Section 12.3.1), remember growing up in areas of what is now the Skeleton Coast National Park, harvesting from tended !*nara* “fields” there. Although drawing on research conducted in this area since 1992, most of the recollections below are from more recent oral histories gathered both at peoples’ present homes and on a series of journeys west of Sesfontein to the lower reaches of more northerly westward flowing ephemeral rivers (the !Uniab, Hoanib and Hoaruseb)—images of some of these “key informants” are included by request and with permission in Figure 12.16. Given the terrain of the Northern Namib, and the difficulties of carrying out on-site field research with contemporary elders of the Hoanib communities with direct memories of sites within the SCNP, the localities retrieved in this way are sparse but significant. As documented in more detail below, they should also be understood as forming part of complex past patterns of mobility and livelihood practices connecting coastal sites and resources—especially !*nara*, but also marine resources such as mussels and seals—with inland sites where a different complement of foods could be obtained (see Figure 12.13).

97 Ruben !Nagu Sanib, |Awagu-dao-am, 18.2.2015. *Sâui* and *bosû* are the seeds of *Stipagrostis* spp. grasses and *Monsonia umbellata* respectively, both collected from harvester ant nests (#*goburun oms*) (Sullivan 1999).

98 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, #Ôs, near Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

99 Förster *et al.* (2018)

100 Bollig (2020: 23)

101 !Nani|aus (‘Nqanicaus’) and Ohamuheke are both recorded in Major Manning’s ‘Traveller’s Map of Kaokoveld’ based on journeys in 1917 and 1919 (National Archives of Namibia) and deposited with the Royal Geographical Society in London in 1921 (NAN A450 Vol.4 1/28, Manning—Royal Geographical Society, London 19.12.1921, also see Hayes 2000: 53).

102 A fuller set of transcripts is available in Sullivan (2021); also Sullivan *et al.* (forthcoming)



Fig. 12.16 Portraits of Sesfontein residents who participated in the oral history research shared here. Top, L-R: the late Manasse | Nuab; the late Hildegart | Gugowa | Nuas; Franz | Haen ||Hoëb; Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb. Bottom, L-R: Christophine Daumû Tauros; the late Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb; the late Ruben !Nagu Sanib. All portraits commissioned from Oliver Halsey, May 2019, except Manasse | Nuab's by Sian Sullivan, 1994. © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.3.1 Who and where?

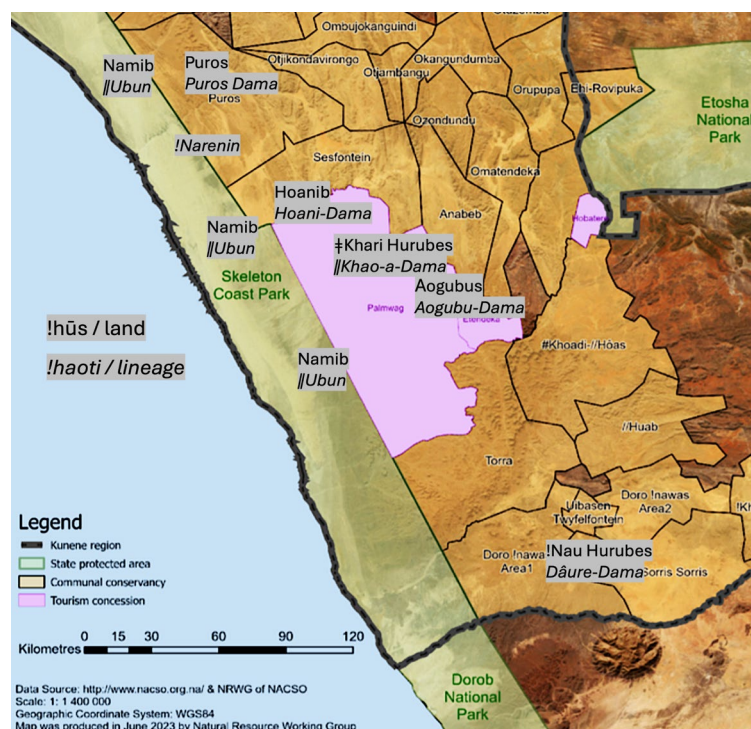


Fig. 12.17 Reconstructed land-lineage groupings for Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara/#Nûkhoen and ||Ukun in north-west Namibia. Note that oral history also makes clear that there was much mobility and reciprocity between these lineages and land areas, as well as by other ethnic groups, especially Nama, and ovaHimba/ovaHerero. Authors' research, © Future Pasts, underlying map adapted from Figure 3.2, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

!Narenin were living in the western areas of Hoanib and Hoarusib. Where we were just now [i.e. Hûnkab area] was ||Ukun land. ||Uku people were living in the places close to the ocean like Hûnkab, !Uniab, |Garis, Xûxûes. Those are the areas of *Huri-daman ||Ukun di !huba* [lit. the 'Sea-Dama (i.e. !Narenin) and ||Ukun land'].¹⁰³

103 Ruben !Nagu Sanib, |Awagu-dao-am, 19.2.2015.

For the Northern Namib within living memory, harvesters and consumers of *!nara* have tended to be associated with four main land-lineage groupings (*!haoti*): *!Narenin*, *!Ubun*, *Hoanidaman* and *!Khao-Dama* (see Figure 12.17), all of whom are now represented by the Nami-Daman TA. In this area of north-west Namibia beyond the “Red Line”, where Damara/†Nūkhoen and *!Ubun* have retained some continuity of habitation for at least several generations, relationships of belonging linking familial groups (*!haoti*) with named areas of land (*!hūs*)¹⁰⁴ have continued into recent years to shape peoples’ understandings of their identity and histories.¹⁰⁵ As noted above, and through circumstances not of their choosing, from especially the 1950s these lineages became concentrated in Sesfontein and associated settlements, whilst continuing to travel to places dwelled in and known from past experience, as well as to retain memories of these places (also see Chapter 13).

!Narenin were/are Damara/†Nūkhoen associated with the western reaches of the northerly Hoanib and Hoaruseb rivers, who for as long into the past as people can remember, relied significantly on *!nara*, hence their ethnonym. They harvested *!nara* from the Hoaruseb River and from near springs called Dumita (towards the mouth of the Hoaruseb), Ganias (north of the Hoanib) and Sarusa (in the Khumib), combining *!nara* foods with other plants:¹⁰⁶

[...] my great, great-grandfathers and mothers were there at Sarusa, and I was born here [in Hoanib] at †Hoadi||gams.¹⁰⁷

The *!Narenin* people are the people of Sarusas and down there in Hoanib [...].¹⁰⁸

[...] my family are the people who are/were living in the *!nara* area, and they collect the *!naras*—that’s where the name [*!Narenin*] is coming from.¹⁰⁹

[...] they would move in between the Hoaruseb and Hoanib. In Hoanib in the rain time they came here to collect food, especially †ares¹¹⁰ and †namib¹¹¹—the latter is not found in Hoaruseb. At this time they wore leather skirts from springbok leather. They would collect *lots* and take back bag by bag to the Hoaruseb. The *!naras* grow ripe in the Hoaruseb at this time and were harvested by *!narab* Dama [*!Narenin*].¹¹²

Coastal foods were clearly important alongside *!nara*. The late Michael Ganaseb, for example, described cooking mussels in black ceramic pots—*!nomsus*—in his early life in the Northern Namib.¹¹³ These coil pots were made using clay—*sohai*—whose sources in the landscape were shrouded in some secrecy.¹¹⁴ In recent generations at least, *!Narenin* and *!Ubun* would interact and intermarry in these northern Namib areas:

104 Termed ‘local-incorporative units’ by the late anthropologist Alan Barnard (1992: 203). There may be some similarities in these land-lineage groups with the clans documented in detail by Friederich (2014: 412–21) for Hai||om utilising land to the south and east of Etosha Pan.

105 Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021)

106 The †Aonin of the !Khuseb River have also at times been given the alternative name of *!Narenin* or *!Naranin*, derived from the word ‘*!nara*’ and reportedly inflected with a derogatory connotation when used by other Nama people (Budack 1977: 2).

107 Christophine Daumû Tauros, Puros, 13.11.2015.

108 Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, †Nū!arus, 7.4.2014.

109 Hildegaart | Nuas, Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

110 i.e. Grass seeds from *Setaria verticillata* collected from underneath especially *Acacia tortilis* trees. Nb. Manning reports so-called ‘Klip Kaffirs’, i.e. ‘Berg Damara’ harvesting these seeds in the Hoaruseb river on his ‘Traveller’s Map of Kaokoveld’ based on journeys in 1917 and 1919 (National Archives of Namibia).

111 Grass seeds of *Danthoniopsis dinteri* that appear white when ‘cleaned’.

112 Eva | Habuhe Ganuses, née †Gawuses, Sesfontein, 1995.

113 Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, Puros, 13.4.2015. In the late 1800s, Gürich describes the use of clay vessels by Damara/†Nūkhoen in the Brandberg preparing grass seeds in a clay pot: ‘[...] for cooking they use thick, large pots, which are made of coarse material and have scarcely been fired; these bulge in the middle and are placed on ash with the lower pointed end’ (Gürich 1891: 140, quoted in Du Pisani and Jacobson 1985: 109).

114 Franz | Haen †Hoëb, Sesfontein, 4.4.2019.

[t]he !Narenin people were living in Puros and the ocean side is where the !naras are living, and the ||Ubun were at !Ui||gams/Auses in the Hoanib. Now when they are looking for the food they meet and it's where the !Narenin men take the ||Ubun women and the ||Ubun women take the !Narenin,¹¹⁵ like that.¹¹⁶

||Ubun are Khoekhoegowab-speakers sometimes referred to as 'Nama' and at other times as 'Bushmen', who had been living in the ocean side north of the !Khuseb, reportedly for generations.¹¹⁷ They are likely to be amongst those coastal peoples associated with the term "Strandloper" in historical texts. In recent generations they are known to have experienced conflict with !Khuseb Topnaar when those who became known as ||Ubun requested to be given milk but were refused. The story goes that long ago a woman on the !Khuseb (at Utuseb) did not want to give her sister the creamy milk (||ham) that the latter desired,¹¹⁸ leading ||Ubun to retreat northwards close to the ocean (*hurib*)¹¹⁹—'[t]hat's why they called them Hurinin'.¹²⁰ As Franz ||Hoëb describes,

there in the !Khuseb there was a conflict between the families. One doesn't want to give the other the milk of the goat—that's why they are angry. And they left the !Khuseb for the !Uniab.¹²¹

||Ubun are linked with many former dwelling sites located in the Namib close to the ocean in this far westerly area. At the !Uniab River, reportedly a !nara plant was found by their dog and when they saw the dog eating the !nara without being harmed they also started eating the !naras there.¹²² As noted in Section 12.2, the presence in the Northern Namib of people named ||Ubun appears confirmed during German colonial times by the name 'Hubun' in the lower reaches of the Hoaruseb and Hoanib rivers on the *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas* of 1893 (Figure 12.7).

In recent generations, ||Ubun moved between !nara fields in the !Uniab and Hoanib river mouths via Kai-as and Hûnkab springs, now in the Palmwag Tourism Concession:¹²³ see Figure 12.13. They also stayed at Dumita in the lower Hoaruseb where there is a spring,¹²⁴ and are considered to be:

[...] the people who built the houses at Terrace Bay and Möwe Bay and were living there. Those circle houses with the rocks at !Uniab are also the houses of the ||Ubun—my great grandparents were coming from those rock houses.¹²⁵

[...] when other people saw them in the Namib with their houses built very close together ('||ubero') they exclaimed over the way the houses were being made—hence the name '||Ubun'.¹²⁶

[...] the ||Ubun people are the people who are coming from Walvis Bay. Now along the ocean there are the huts of the ||Ubun people they built with ribs of the whale.¹²⁷

The reference here to ||Ubun building huts with ribs of the whale is intriguing. Archaeological research reported in the SCNP Management Plan, dates a whalebone hut and shell midden located

115 Khoekhoegowab is a gendered language in which nouns and names ending in 'b' are denoted as masculine whilst those ending in 's' are feminine, thus '!Narenin' here means a !Narenin man.

116 Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, Puros, 13.11.2015.

117 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

118 As related in multiple interviews and oral histories: for example, Manasse ||Gam-o | Nuab and Hildegart | Gugowa | Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, May 1999; Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, near #Ôs, 6.4.2014; Emma Ganuses, !Nao-dâis, 12.11.2015.

119 Hildegart | Nuas, Sesfontein, 6.4.2014; Emma Ganuses, !Nao-dâis, 12.11.2015.

120 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, near #Ôs, 6.4.2014.

121 *Ibid.*

122 Hildegart | Gugowa | Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, 6.4.2014; Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, near #Ôs, 6.4.2014. This story itself iterates a trope in which dogs (*arin*) are considered closely linked with human being and perception, attributes also conferred to lions (see Hannis & Sullivan 2018: 287).

123 Documented through journeys with Franz ||Hoëb and Noag Ganaseb, 20–26.11.2015, and Franz | Haen ||Hoëb 5–9.5.2019.

124 Hildegart | Gugowa | Nuas (*née* Ganuses) | Nuas, Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

125 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, 5–9.5.2019.

126 Manasse ||Gam-o | Nuab and Hildegart | Gugowa | Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, May 1999; also Emma Ganuses, !Nao-dâis, 12.11.2015.

127 Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, #Nû!arus, 7.4.2014.

south of the Ugab River mouth in Dorob National Park to approximately 1,000 years ago.¹²⁸ As mentioned in Section 12.2, whale bone material is also reported in association with hut circles north of the Munutum in the Northern Namib.¹²⁹ Jill Kinahan¹³⁰ writes that,

[a]fter catching and stripping the blubber from a whale, the Americans [whalers] would dump the carcass overboard, providing the coastal people with a bonanza of fatty meat, and gigantic bones which could be used for building material.



Fig. 12.18 Detail of 'Strand Bosjemans' village from 'Historical map, Orange River to Karas Mts., SWA', apparently created as a composite of multiple sources of information from different expeditions, including that led by Hendrik Hop in 1761–1762 accompanied by surveyor Carel Brink (Mossop 1947: 50), although attributed to Robert Jacob Gordon 1786. Source: open image Kaart van Zuid-Afrika (RP-T-1914-17-3), <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/object/Upper-northern-half-of-Gordons-great-map-of-Southern-Africa-2e2c01cff5ad98bda9ac53b3d17094ba>, Rijks Museum, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Whaling along Namibia's Atlantic coast took place through the 1700s into the 1800s, so it could be expected that whale bone huts benefitting from whale hunting would also be of a more recent age. A late 1780s image of a 'Strand Bosjemans' ('Beach Bushmen') village, for example, is constructed of whale bones, and positioned on the coast north of the Orange (!Garib) River: see Figure 12.18. In the image, the huts are placed very close to each other; the family grouping is accompanied by several dogs, a beached whale is being butchered to the left of the huts, and one human figure in the centre is carrying on their back what appears to be a heavy bag filled with ostrich eggs used for storing potable water. It is possible that there may once have been whalebone settlements in the Northern Namib that looked something like this image—as indicated by the whalebone 'encampment' at the mouth of the Ugab 'constructed from ribs and mandibles of the Southern Right Whale *Eubalaena australis*'.¹³¹

It seems possible that contemporary ǁUkun are descendants of a 'Topnaar group' called |Namixan who, in the 1800s under their 'Chief #Gasoab, lived in the !Khuseb', coming into conflict with Topnaar groups called !Gomen and Mu-ǁin, which continued 'between #Gasoab's successor, Chief #Hieb, and Chief Khaxab of the Mu-ǁin'.¹³² The |Namixan reportedly withdrew 'to the sea-coast' from where 'Chief #Hieb and two companions travelled secretly to Rooibank [in the lower !Khuseb] to look for any of his people left there', being 'surprised at a Mu-ǁin werf [settlement] by a commando which attacked from the dunes rather than approaching them along the river, killing

¹²⁸ MEFT (2021: 242)

¹²⁹ Eichhorn & Vogelsang (2007: 152–153)

¹³⁰ (2000: 16)

¹³¹ J. Kinahan (2020: 319)

¹³² Vigne (1994: 8, emphasis added) drawing on an archived late 1800s statement by 'Piet !Haibeb', son of Mu-ǁin 'Topnaar' leader Frederick Khaxab, to an agent of German colonial settler Adolf Lüderitz.

Chief #Hieb and his companions'.¹³³ The |Namixan were again driven away 'under Chief #Hieb's son'.¹³⁴

Given known naming practices in which sons of lineage leaders in particular may take on their father's name, the possibility exists that 'Chief #Hieb's son' mentioned above is connected with the maternal grand-father #Gieb remembered by the elderly ||Ubun man Franz ||Hoëb, born at the *!nara* fields near Auses in the lower Hoanib river and now living in the vicinity of Sesfontein/!Nani| aus: see reconstructed genealogy in Figure 12.11. Franz remembers his family harvesting *!nara* in the lower Hoanib and moving between *!nara* fields in the !Uniab and Hoanib via Kai-as. In May 2019, Franz ||Hoëb led us to the grave of his grand-father #Gieb in the lower !Uniab river, located exactly as mentioned in numerous prior interactions, in the present-day SCNP (see Figure 12.19). #Gieb's grave is next to the former dwelling site called Daniro (the place of honey, *danib*), where #Gieb and others first encountered German men travelling down the !Uniab; described to Franz as being the first occasion when these ||Ubun had seen white men and encountered food in tins—as recorded in the first journey film in *Lands That History Forgot* (Video 12.1). This encounter was perhaps the 1896 journey by von Estorff related in Section 12.2, in which 'Bushmen' harvesting *!nara* in the !Uniab mouth are described.¹³⁵ When we relocated this grave spoken of in previous interviews, there were imprints of footsteps all around it which we later learned were from a running event of around 40 people across the park, held in April 2019. It would mean a lot to descendants of #Gieb living in the Sesfontein area today for this grave to be marked and protected from human and animal disturbance into the future.



Fig. 12.19 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb stands at the grave of his grand-father #Gieb. The footsteps from a recent sports run across the desert are clearly visible on either side of Franz. Photo: screenshot from the film *Lands That History Forgot* (2024, Video 12.1), © Future Pasts/Etoshia-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Hoani-Daman is an ethnonym attributed to Damara/#Nūkhoe families linked especially with the lower reaches of the Hoanib River, where the plant foods *!nara*, *xoris* and *#ares* are found. The late Hildegart |Gugowa |Nuas (*née* Ganuses), for example, lived her early years with her parents at places where plants of the *!nara* melon (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) grow in the dunes of the !Uniab and Hoanib Rivers in what is now the SCNP (see Video 12.2). In the Hoanib, the places where Hildegart's parents stayed were called ||Hoas and !Ui||gams, near Auses waterhole. Here, and as detailed in Section 12.3.3, each family had their own *!nara* plants from which to harvest.¹³⁶

When the *!nara* harvesters of the Northern Namib relocated more fully to Sesfontein, the Nama leadership gave them gardens so they could start planting food. They began wearing European-style

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, emphasis added

¹³⁵ In Jacobson & Noli (1987: 174)

¹³⁶ Hildegart |Gugowa |Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, 6.4.2014. Also see Sullivan (2019)

clothes instead of the skins of springbok they had worn when ‘in the field’. But Hildegart’s parents continued to go to the *!naras* at the time of the year when they became ripe. They would move down the Hoanib and bring *!nara* cakes back to Sesfontein. Up until the 1990s, Hildegart’s husband, the late Manasse ||Gam-o |Nuab, continued to go to the *!nara* fields of the Hoanib, bringing back bags of *!nara* on a donkey to Sesfontein.¹³⁷

||Khao-a Dama are associated with the area further inland known as #Khari (‘small’) Hurubes (also ||Hurubes), and are a grouping that in times past were connected with ||Khao-as mountain, a large mountain at the confluence of the #Gâob (Aub) and !Uniab rivers in the present-day Palmwag Tourism Concession (see Chapter 13). Although apparently not harvesting *!nara* themselves, they appreciated the *!nara* that was shared by others, as illustrated in the quote opening Section 12.3. The extent of past mobilities of these peoples through the north-west landscape and Northern Namib is often commented on by elderly people interviewed today who lament the loss of access and social autonomy characterising these remembered pasts:

we moved also from Kai-as to the places where the food is. Even we go *far* away: behind that Puros side it’s also the place where the *kai khoen* (old people) go for *!naras*.¹³⁸

It should be noted that Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples were/are not the only inhabitants documented in recent decades as accessing the Northern Namib and utilising *!nara*. After rain in December 1984, anthropologist Margaret Jacobsohn observed possibly Tjimba lineage members spend about three months at ‘Sechomib wet season camp’—described as a few kilometres from ‘Ochams spring’, ‘70kms N-W of Purros’—taking ‘advantage of good local pasture for their goats and a large crop of ripe *!nara*’.¹³⁹

12.3.2 When?

Oral histories are clear that the harvesting of *!nara* required sensitivity to its seasonality, and its complementary use with other seasonally available foods:

[a]nd the people also knew when it’s the *!nara* time—for collecting, for harvesting—and when the *!naras* were finished then we would move to Kai-as and collect honey and grass seeds [*sâui*]. And we were also hunting springbok [*Antidorcas marsupialis*] and oryx [*Oryx gazella*]. And if we saw, ok, this is now the time of the *!naras* then we would go from Kai-as to !Uniab again to collect the *!naras*.¹⁴⁰

Ok, now, from Hûnkab to the other side it’s a ||Ubun area and the ||Ubun people were living in that ocean side [Namib *!hûs*]. And when it is now the rainy season, and after the rain, June-July, they came to Kai-as and Uruhûnes [Urunendis] looking for *sâu*, *bosû* and honey [*danib*]. And then when it is finished they go back again to the *!naras* places where the *!naras* is, and they eat the *!naras*.¹⁴¹

It is said that Franz’s ||Hoëb’s grandfather #Gîeb, whose grave is located behind the !Uniab river mouth dunes (Figure 12.9), would observe the fruit of *Boscia albitrunca* (| *hûnis*) becoming ripe and would use this as the signal that now is the time for the *!naras* to also become ripe:

[n]ow that time the people they don’t count the months. They only check it on the trees. They say ok, if the shepherd tree is ripe then they know that the *!naras* is also ripe and they go [there] at that time to the !Uniab. But the shepherd tree—the time when this is ripe is October.¹⁴²

137 Manasse ||Gam-o |Nuab and Hildegart |Gugowa |Nuas (*née* Ganuses), Sesfontein, May 1999.

138 Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Sesfontein, 25.5.2019.

139 Jacobsohn (1995: 117–18)

140 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, #Ôs, near Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

141 Ruben !Nagu Sanib, |Awagu-dao-am, 19.2.2015.

142 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, #Ôs, 6.4.2014; also Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, journey Möwe Bay to Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

‡Gîeb would reportedly walk alone to !Uillgams/Auses to check the *!nara*. When he saw the *!nara* is ripe he would return to !Uniab side and say to the people you can go now and ‘milk the cattle’, but you must not take the ones that are not ready yet to get calves (i.e. only take the ones that are ripe).¹⁴³ Franz and his cousin Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb recalled these mobilities which they experienced as children and young people: ‘[w]hen we are young now we move from place to place and when we get tired so we sleep there [...] until we reach Auses, for the *!nara*’.¹⁴⁴

12.3.3 How?

The oral histories of *!nara* harvesters of the Northern Namib echo what is known for practices of ownership, management, harvesting and preparation of the !Khuiseb delta *!nara* harvesters.¹⁴⁵ References to these practices as also those of their ‘great-great-grand-fathers’ indicates cross-generational longevity of *!nara* harvesting in these areas. The loss of access to this valued food is lamented by those who remember harvesting it in the Northern Namib:

it was the food we are eating in the past and we also want to go and collect it, but now the government doesn’t want the people to collect the *!naras*. You have to have a permit to go and collect.¹⁴⁶

At Auses and elsewhere in the Northern Namib, specific *!nara* patches were owned and managed in the same ways as described above for !Khuiseb *!nara*. Thus,

[w]hen they came to the *!nara* plant, everyone has got their own *!nara*—they are divided. So if you collect the seeds and the *Salvadora* berries [*xoris*] then you can come from Gantias to the !Uniab to collect grass seeds [*sâui*]. But not the *!nara*. If you came from Gantias to !Uniab then the people who are there can give you the *!naras*, but you can’t go and collect [from these plants]. So the thing is also, they divided the plants—when it is the *!nara* harvest time then everyone goes to their *!nara*—!Ubun go to the !Uniab [and Auses], and !Narenins go to the Gantias [north of Auses] for the harvest time. But for the grass seeds time—they came together. And they can move to another place, like the !Uniab, and collect the grass seeds. But when it comes to the *!nara* time then each person can go to their own places and collect the *!nara*. Their great-great-grandfathers who were there had those rules to divide the *!nara* plants. It was their great-great-grandfathers.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps unsurprisingly, cooking and preparing *!nara* fruits and seeds for consumption is also consistent with the processing technologies documented for the !Khuiseb delta *!nara*:

[w]e collect the *!naras* and break them open and put the flesh in a big tin and cook it. And that juice we put [spread] it on the ground and when it gets dry we pick it up, and also for the seeds. There are many things [seeds] which are left in the pot and we also make these dry, and put them in the skin of a springbok—not a goat.

It’s like maize meal—when you harvest the maize then you store it. So, we also make the *!naras* to eat the whole year [i.e. they are stored].

Ok, in the past there is no knife or spoon, so that’s why we are using the rib of the whale—as a spoon and also like a knife. So, what we are doing—the rib was divided here—we cut it here and one we make sharp like a knife, and the other [part] we make it like a spoon. Now in the past there was no knife. That’s why we are using the rib.¹⁴⁸

Ok, the *!nara* plants are also different. There are two different types of the *!naras*. Some are sweet and some are bitter. So, now we taste [the fruits] and when it is sweet then my parents collect the *!naras* and [they peel and] they put it [the pulp] in the tin and they cook. And when they cook they use the stick for stirring and after that they take also a tin like this one, that has got the holes [in the bottom], and they

143 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

144 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Hoanib Camp/!Oeb, 22.11.2015.

145 See, for example, Budack (1977, 1983), Dentlinger (1977), Botelle & Kowalski (1997), Henschel *et al.* (2004)

146 Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

147 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, near †Ôs, 6.4.2014.

148 *Ibid.*

pour it [the cooked juice = *goabe*] into the tin and |*hâka* this juice [i.e. shake the tin] and then they pour this juice onto the dunes to dry. And the things which are remaining in the tin [the seeds], then they pour these to one side so that they are separate [and they pound these]. So the seeds have also got a milk, and they use that milk in the *gaub* [shallow wooden bowl] for the children to drink. Now that juice [from the *!nara*]—they called it *goabe*—it's the name of the juice that they put in the *gaub*. From the fruits. You pour that juice on the dunes. Now the remaining seeds which is in the tin you also put these on the dune [to dry and then they can be peeled—*gora*—and eaten]. Now when it [the juice] gets dry on the dunes then we roll it.¹⁴⁹

There are also differently shaped *!nara* fruits, with rules around who can eat them:

khās-!nara is long/oval shaped, not round. It makes the old woman sick. Also the *!nara* that is shaped like a breast—only men can eat that *!nara* and women cannot touch it.¹⁵⁰

A notable aspect of food procuring practices amongst *!nara* harvesters of the Northern Namib was an emphasis placed on technologies of food storage, clearly important for being able to survive and thrive in such an arid, but also productive, environment:

[n]ow the way how we stored the food was—that time we are using the springbok skin as a bag and we put the *!naras* pips in that bag and we dig the hole and in that hole we pour the ash and when we put the first bag in, we pour ash on that first bag and then we put the second one in and we pour ash on the second one, and the third one we put in and then we pour ash on top of the bag, and then we cover this again with sand and on top of that sand we also pour the ash again. And when we go back to |Garib [further east along the Hoanib], and if we want to eat the *!naras* we will come back [to Auses] and take out the *!naras*—that one was the “trunk” of the old people. And if the rain is even falling the water won't get in there. On top we pour also the ash.¹⁵¹

The people would store these foods in the skin of a gemsbok [*Oryx gazella*] and bury them at living places so that there would be food for them there when they returned.¹⁵²

As mentioned, a repeated refrain in the oral histories relates how foods from different localities were shared when people would meet each other. Ruben Sanib thus spoke of how ||Ukun collected *!nara* at the ocean side, and then they would move inland and share with ||Khao-a Dama, for example at Kai-as, and they would all also eat the valued foods of *xoris*, *sâun* and *bosû*.¹⁵³ Thus,

||Ukun made bags with young oryx skin and they put the *!naras* in there and when they came to Kai-as and Uruhûnes they bring it along and share with the other people of #Khari Hurubes. *!Naras* seeds were pounded and mixed with *sâu*, *bosû* and *#ari* and eaten. *!Naras* has got an oil/fat inside. When they are going to Sesfontein the ||Ukun people took the *!naras* and shared with other people in Sesfontein.¹⁵⁴

!Nara were also utilised for medicinal purposes; for this the male and female plants were distinguished. The thinner roots of the male plant were considered to be medicinal and used as a decoction to treat coughing and also to cleanse the kidneys.¹⁵⁵

12.3.4 Hunting

Finally, and as mentioned above, hunting as well as how to live alongside large-bodied mammals, some of which may see people as prey, was an integral part of the assemblage of practices through which *!nara* harvesters of the Northern Namib sustained themselves and understood their

149 Christophine Daumû Tauros and Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb, Sesfontein, 6.4.2014.

150 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

151 Franz | Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Hoanib Camp/||Oeb, 22.11.2015.

152 Ruben !Nagu Sanib, |Awagu-dao-am, 19.2.2015.

153 *Ibid.*

154 *Ibid.*

155 Franz ||Hoëb, near #Ôs, 6.4.2014. Cf. a decoction was taken for kidney and stomach pains (roots) and ‘male *!nara* roots’ / ‘aore *!nara !noma.b*’ were taken for ‘men’s illness’ (Du Pisani 1983: 5; Sullivan 1998: 390).

identities. Hunting is recounted as guided by strict rules designed to ensure the presence of animals into the future: for example, reportedly no hunting should take place of animals with females who have young, and no hunter should take more than one animal—if he did he would be prohibited from hunting for two months and would have to leave his bow and arrow in the hut.¹⁵⁶ The skill of hunting a large animal for meat was highly valued and ritually recognised. Clearly animated by this memory, Noag Ganaseb recalled how when he was growing up his father made a bow and arrow for him and taught him how to hunt; and he gave him a dog [*arib*] so that he could go out with the dog, bow and arrow and hunt an oryx. When he brought that meat home he carried it on his carry stick (*dara*) and with the raw meat they ‘|gara’, which means they painted marks on his feet, legs and arms so that when he would hunt again he will do this in a ‘good way’ and will be able to run fast, like the oryx.¹⁵⁷ Their elders—*kai khoen*—are remembered as being very strong:

[t]hey walked from Auses to #Habadi-|aus (for hunting) and then to the Hoanib mouth. If they didn’t get any wild meat they came to the coast to “collect” seal [*Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*] meat [not seen as hunting]. They believe very much in bow and arrow. But they would also find the seal (*!hom*) on the beach and would shoot them too.¹⁵⁸

Additionally, how people lived with animals in the past came up frequently in oral histories:

if they saw an elephant [*Loxodonta africana*] or a rhino [*Diceros bicornis bicornis*] now they said ok “Move out from the road so that I can go through”. And they move out and the people go through.¹⁵⁹

The significant changes people have witnessed that have brought motor vehicles and other technologies into the Northern Namib are considered to have caused animals such as elephant and lion [*Panthera leo*] to become more “naughty”.

12.4 Concluding summary

Read together, the archaeological, historical and oral history material shared in Sections 12.2 and 12.3 conveys a different version of the Northern Namib to that which is vivid in the popular imagination: namely the wild, desolate beauty of the “Skeleton Coast”. Instead, the Northern Namib comes into focus as a known and remembered landscape, vivid in the minds of Namibians of the north-west as filled with memories, as a source of highly valued foods, and where known and unknown ancestors are buried. These Indigenous cultural and human dimensions of the SCNP are little known and more-or-less invisible today, beyond references to mysterious “strandloppers” seen wandering up and down the shoreline by viewers on ships approaching the coast.¹⁶⁰ The historical and oral history accounts shared here reveal instead a resilient community of diverse and connected peoples able to live—even to thrive—in the extreme environment of the Northern Namib. Their combined practices of hunting, harvesting and storing foods, and their mobilities, connectedness and interactions across large areas (Figure 12.13), were all guided by a symbolically rich shared cosmology reinforced through songs and collective healing events. These practices were enacted in the Northern Namib until this area became closed off from Indigenous use in recent decades for commercial, conservation and administrative reasons; precipitating a loss of access with impacts that extended beyond livelihoods (also see Chapters 13, 14 and 15). As Ute Dieckmann recounts in Chapter 15, this was a form of social and cultural deprivation, as well as a loss of access to resources for sustenance.

156 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

157 Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Hoanib Camp/||Oeb, 22.11.2015.

158 Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

159 *Ibid.* Also Sullivan (2016)

160 E.g. Olusoga & Erichsen (2010: 18), Smith (2022: 6)

The oral history recollections shared in Section 12.3 bring both detail and texture to peoples' lives in the Northern Namib. Only a small number of elders of the Sesfontein area remain to tell of these pasts. Their repeated references to others with whom they shared their experiences, however, clarifies that the Northern Namib was once utilised, moved through and lived in by a connected and cross-generational fabric of multiple families who shared language, values and practices. Those remaining who recall these pasts are happy that something of what the *Inara* harvesters of the Northern Namib know and experienced is being documented and may be communicated to future generations. At the same time there is sadness about what has been lost:

when we are thinking about the past, about how we lived in the field—it's painful. We want to cry.¹⁶¹

As documented in this chapter, heritage and historical realities connect sites now within the SCNP boundary to sites beyond the Park. Information regarding these dimensions of value can thus support the management of the Northern Namib Conservation Landscape as an open, connected landscape. In addition, increasing awareness of how the Northern Namib landscape is understood, remembered and experienced by a wider complement of stakeholders, can assist with ensuring that historical, heritage and archaeological sites (which may overlap) are better contextualised and protected from interference. As such, the information shared here—including former place names, and sites of cultural heritage and historical significance—might contribute to the shift in the public image of SCNP proposed in Chapter 4 of the Plan:¹⁶² namely, to broaden the appeal and relevance of the Park to a wider range of Namibian society, as well as international visitors.

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¹⁶¹ Franz |Haen |Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Kai-as, 25.11.2015.

¹⁶² MEFT (2021: 103)

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13. Historicising the Palmwag Tourism Concession, north-west Namibia

Sian Sullivan

Abstract

The Palmwag Tourism Concession comprises more than 550,000 hectares of the Damaraland Communal Land Area in Kunene Region. To the west lies the Skeleton Coast National Park. Otherwise, the Concession is situated within a mosaic of differently designated communal lands to which diverse qualifying Namibians have access, habitation and use rights: namely, Sesfontein, Anabeb and Torra communal area conservancies on the Concession's north, north-east and southern boundaries, with Etendeka Tourism Concession to the east. Established under the pre-Independence Damaraland Regional Authority led by Justus ǁGaroëb, Palmwag Concession lies fully north of the veterinary fence or "Red Line" that marches east to west across Namibia. In the 1950s, however, the Red Line was positioned further north with part of the current concession comprising a former commercial farming area for white settler farmers, the expansion of which was associated with evictions of people living here. The iterative clearance of people from this area also helped make possible the 1962 western expansion of Etosha Game Park, followed by the establishment of a large trophy hunting concession between the Hoanib and Ugab rivers in the 1970s. Drawing on archive research, interviews with key actors linked with the Concession's history, and on-site oral history with local elders through much of the Concession's terrain, this chapter places the Concession more fully within the historical circumstances and effects of its making. In doing so, competing and overlapping colonial, Indigenous and conservation visions of the landscape are explored for their roles in empowering different types of access and exclusion.

This chapter is dedicated to Ruben !Nagu Sanib, with whom I have worked over the last 10 years. Ruben sadly died on 7 June 2024, as the proofs for this book were being finalised. His knowledge and experiences have contributed significantly to this chapter, especially in Section 13.3.

It has been a great privilege to learn from and journey with Ruben to the area of the Palmwag Concession he knew as Hurubes.

13.1 Introducing the Palmwag Tourism Concession¹

The Palmwag Tourism Concession in north-west Namibia comprises an area of more than 500,000 hectares sitting between the Hoanib River in the north and the Koigab River in the south. As Figure 13.1 shows, the concession is surrounded by a mosaic of different land designations: the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) is to its west, Sesfontein, Anabeb and Torra conservancies are around its north, north-east and southern borders, and Etendeka Tourism Concession is to its east. The area is of high international conservation value, especially for its populations of desert-adapted black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*), elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and lion (*Panthera leo*). It is also valued in conservation terms for its positioning between Etosha National Park (ENP) in the east and the SCNP in the west, discussed further in Section 13.4. This positioning led to its promotion in the 2000s as part of a proposed Kunene People's Park² that is also listed as a current aim of work by the Namibian branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature.³ In recent decades the concession has become an important tourism destination. Namibia's Gondwana Collection of Lodges⁴ now holds the lease to the concession's main tourism facility, Palmwag Lodge.

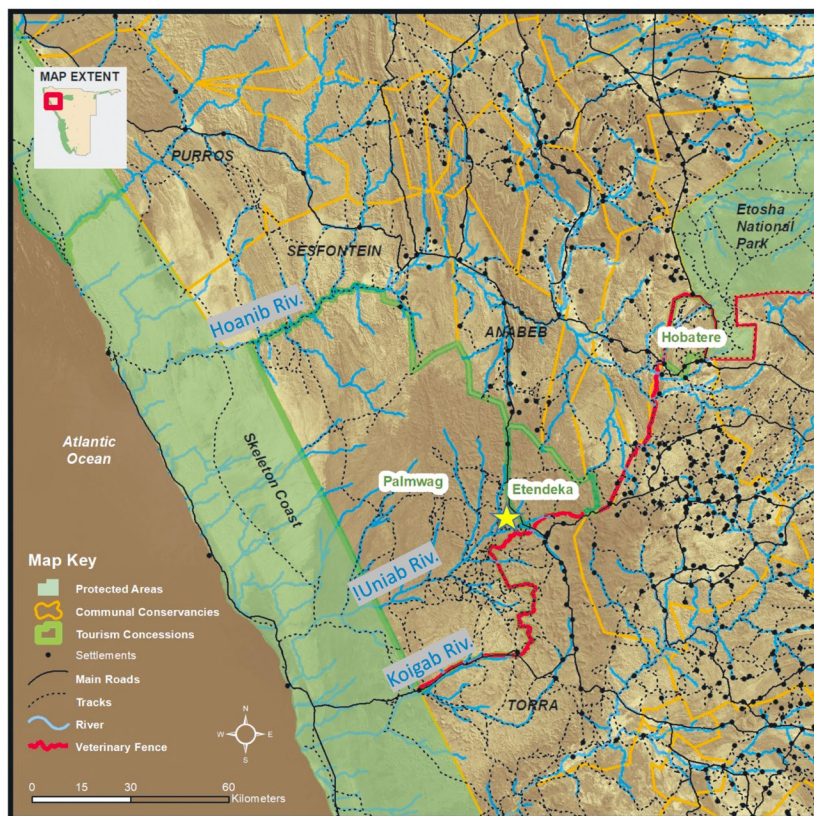


Fig. 13.1 Map showing the Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere Tourism Concessions in between Etosha National Park in the east and the Skeleton Coast National Park in the west. The yellow asterisk marks the location of Palmwag Lodge, and the black dots mark contemporary rural settlements. Base map © Jeff Muntifering, 2019, for Future Pasts research, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

- 1 Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Welhemina Suro Ganuses and Filemon |Nuab, without whom the on-site oral history research reported here would not have been possible; and to the support of various individuals and organisations in the north-west who facilitated aspects of this research, namely Sesfontein Conservancy, the Nami-Daman Traditional Authority, the Hoanib Cultural Group, Kapoi Kasaona (manager at the time of Palmwag Lodge), Bernadus Ūitani ||Hoëb, Duncan Gilchrist, Dennis Liebenberg, Fredrick ||Hawaxab, Oliver Halsey, Gaob Justus ||Garoëb, Tsukhoe ||Garoës, Sonja Hein and Kenneth |Uiseb. I must especially thank all the individuals who shared their perspectives with me—it's been a privilege to hear your stories—as well as James 'Buster' Culverwell for introducing me to Palmwag, more than 30 years ago.
- 2 MET (2009)
- 3 WWF-Namibia (2022: 43): thus, as part of WWF-Namibia's listed outcomes for supporting 'landscape level conservation', an aim for 2022–2026 is that '[t]he Kunene People's Park is functioning (and serves as an example for other such developments)'.
- 4 <https://gondwana-collection.com/>

The Palmwag area is often described in tourism and conservation literature as a pristine “wilderness”. An example is this statement advertising accommodation at Palmwag Lodge: ‘[f]eel the freedom of the north-western corner of Namibia, one of Africa’s last wildernesses [...]’.⁵ I must admit that this was also exactly how I perceived the landscape when I first camped at the lodge’s campsite in 1990. Through research in this area from 1992 onwards, however, I have come to understand that the landscape is replete with cultural histories, identities and memories. Historical documentation tells of people living and moving through this area in the past, being progressively removed from the area, especially as parts of it became commercial farmland for white settler farmers in the mid-1950s (Section 13.2). Oral histories convey the complexities of former dwelling and mobility practices in the area, and the heart-ache experienced through progressive loss of access to localities considered to be home (Section 13.3).⁶

This chapter seeks to convey some of these historical circumstances and to make experienced histories of the area more visible. It places the creation of the Palmwag Tourism Concession within the historical circumstances of its making; hence the term “historicising” in my title. In Namibia, the notion of a concession for particular kinds of use within a land area dates back to before German colonial times.⁷ As an example, a deed of transfer endorsed by Major Leutwein in 1896 reads: ‘[t]he purchaser is entitled to graze and water his livestock at any place of his choice on the parish land of Barmen. *For this concession*, the purchaser shall pay a unique amount of 40 mark’.⁸ In the case of the Palmwag Tourism Concession today, the term ‘concession’ refers to the rights of a tourism operator to develop and profit from tourism infrastructure, without competition from other operators in the area, through a contract with the ‘concessionaire’ of the area.⁹ For Palmwag, the concessionaire is currently the “Big 3 Trust”: a Trust formed from the leadership of the three conservancies surrounding the concession, namely Sesfontein, Anabeb and Torra (see Figure 13.1, Section 13.6 and Chapter 3). This situation, however, is a relatively new arrangement. It is built on layers of history that are more-or-less occluded or invisible today.

In attempting to bring more of these layers of history into visibility in the present, I consider the following elements of this history. I start in Section 13.2 by documenting the significance of the 1950s–1970s expansion of white settler farming into the area, made possible by a change in the north-western boundary of the Police Zone in 1955. I then connect this mid-twentieth century history with some of its consequences for people who thought of this area as home, by going back in time chronologically to give some indication of pre-1950s Indigenous use and mobilities through this area (Section 13.3, also see Chapter 12). I then touch on the 1970s creation of the “Damaraland Homeland” that included these areas previously lived in by especially Damara/#Nūkhoe and !Ubu peoples. I focus here on the ways this event was articulated as a crisis for conservation by ecologists and conservationists (also see Chapters 2 and 12). I outline alternative conservation visions proposed at this time whose symbolic power remains potent in the contemporary moment (Section 13.4, also see Chapter 3). I also document how a large area including and extending beyond the present-day Palmwag Concession was established as a hunting concession in the late 1970s. In Section 13.5 I outline the subsequent shift to the area’s present form as the Palmwag Tourism Concession, created under the Damaraland Regional Authority (DRA) in the 1980s. Finally, in Section 13.6 I consider some of the recent history of the concession after Independence, in relation to the establishment of conservancies in the area, their new responsibilities as the concessionaire, and various new proposals for enhancing protection of the area. Running throughout these layers of

5 <https://gondwana-collection.com/accommodation/palmwag-lodge>

6 See Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021a, 2022), Sullivan (2022)

7 Henrichsen (2010: 103)

8 Mossolow (1993: 71, emphasis added)

9 MET (2007)

history are juxtapositions and tensions between colonial, Indigenous and conservation visions of this celebrated, but variously constructed, ‘Arid Eden’¹⁰ (Figure 13.2) and ‘last wilderness’.¹¹



Fig. 13.2 Popularised through the memoir *An Arid Eden* by well-known conservationist the late Garth Owen-Smith, ‘the Arid Eden Route’ has become a way of framing and selling tourism in north-west Namibia as ‘Unimagined. Unexpected. Unexplored’. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 2.11.2014, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.2 The “Police Zone” expands into the north-west

A major event in the history of this part of north-west Namibia was the expansion of the so-called “Police Zone” in 1955. As documented in Chapter 2, the Police Zone was the area of former South West Africa (SWA) where the then South African government permitted commercial farming by white settler farmers. Already in 1939 the South West Africa Administration (SWAA) conveyed interest in expanding European settlement in this area, observing that ‘the only portion really suitable for European settlement is the small corner [...] now in the cattle-free zone between the Kaokoveld and Outjo districts’.¹² In 1955 the Police Zone area was expanded in this north-westerly direction to the limit of the orange area on Figure 13.3. The red line across this map marks both the new northern boundary of the commercial farming sector and a border across which livestock, fresh meat and other agricultural produce from Indigenous farming areas to its north should not cross,¹³ although it remained unfenced at the time in the north-west.

What many visitors to this ‘last wilderness’ today probably do not realise is that part of the Palmwag Concession was designated in these years as commercial farmland for white settler farmers. The area north of this commercial farmland (coloured in yellow on Figure 13.3) was intended as a “livestock-free” zone, but appears to have been more aspirational than reality—especially in the landscape around settlements in the Hoanib valley such as Sesfontein, Warmquell and Kowareb.¹⁴

¹⁰ Owen-Smith (2010), Bollig (2020)

¹¹ Owen-Smith (1972a). Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: iii) delineate this ‘last wilderness [...] a remote part of primeval Africa’ as encompassing ‘the modern territories of Kaokoland and Damaraland [...] stretching from the Ugab River to the Kunene, and from the coast inland to around the present-day eastern boundary of Kaokoland and the boundaries where Damaraland abuts on the magisterial districts of Outjo, Otjiwarongo, Omaruru and Karibib’. This area is more-or-less the same as the present area of the Kaokoland and Damaraland Communal Land Areas, as delineated in the Communal Land Reform Act 2002, plus amendments (GRN 2013[2002]: 39–43); also see Section 13.4.

¹² SWAA (1939: 170, para. 1108)

¹³ Thereby iterating the rules of the previous Police Zone boundary across which ‘[n]atives are not allowed to export fresh meat into the Police Zone’, and in which areas north of the boundary were framed as ‘the Prohibited Area’ for which a permit was needed for entry (NAN SWAA 2513 Inspection Report: Kaokoveld Native Reserve: September–October 1949, by Native Commissioner Ovamboland [Pritchard Eedes, “Nakale”], Ondangua 10.10.1949). Also see Bollig (1998)

¹⁴ Early maps of the area used the spelling “Kowareb”, which is preferred by people from the area I have discussed this with, hence using this spelling rather than “Khowarib”: the “kh” at the start of the name is especially considered to

This area had long been utilised for herding by varying combinations of Nama, Damara/#Nūkhoe, ovaHerero and ovaHimba herders, as documented further in Section 13.3. Indeed, only a few years previously (in 1949) the Native Commissioner for Ovamboland—Pritchard Eedes—made a commitment to inhabitants of ‘Kaokoveld’ and ‘Zessfontein’ to supply them with more rifles and ammunition to enable them to destroy ‘certain classes of vermin’, namely predators such as lions and hyena known to attack livestock in these farming areas.¹⁵ The expansion of commercial farmland in 1955 nonetheless acted to prevent local land-users from living in, accessing and utilising the newly surveyed and designated lease- and free-hold farming area. The north-westerly boundary of these farms—the areas bounded with straight lines on the map in Figure 13.4—comprised the new Police Zone boundary, as marked on Figure 13.3. Although no fence was constructed here at this time, the Police Zone boundary was etched into the landscape as cleared cutlines that remain visible today.

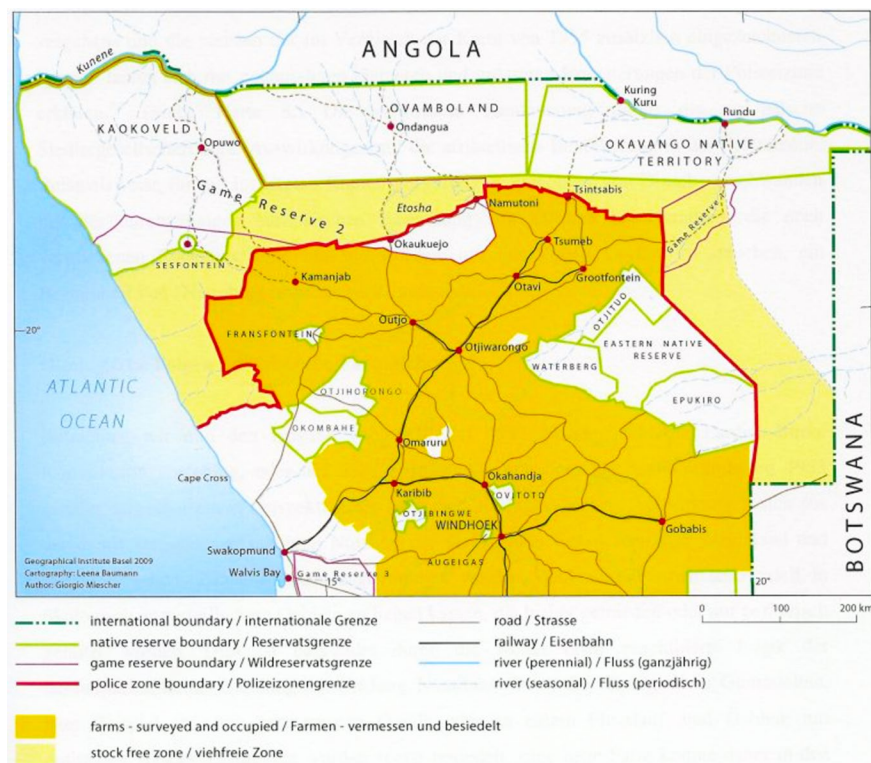


Fig. 13.3 Map showing the 1955 positioning of the Police Zone boundary (marked in red), which permitted the north-westerly expansion of the commercial farming area (in orange) into the area now demarcated as the Palmwag Concession. The yellow-shaded area on land variously designated as “native reserves”, as well as part of Game Reserve No. 2 in the north-west, was intended as a livestock-free zone, but was difficult to police. Source: Map 7 from Miescher (2009: 282, used with permission), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The most north-westerly farm in this newly expanded settler farming area—Farm 702 on Figure 13.4—became known as Palmwag Farm, the name *Palmwag* variously translated as ‘Palm wait’, ‘Palm guard’, ‘Palm risk’ or ‘Palm venture’. The current tourism concession is named after this name for the previous commercial farm. Drawing on archival research by Jack Kambatuku regarding the inhabitants of commercial farms in the area that in the early 1970s became designated as Damaraland (see Chapter 2),¹⁶ a reconstructed history of Farm 702 indicates that it was settled by various white farmers and their livestock on and off from 1954, until the farm became available for incorporation within the Damaraland Homeland in 1972.

be inaccurate. The linking of “Khowarib” with the term *//khowa* meaning “open”, as documented in Denker (2022: 9), does not seem to be a familiar explanation of the placename, at least with those from the area I have asked about this association.

15 NAN SWAA 2513 *op.cit.* (1949: 1); also SWAA (1939: 172, para. 1133)

16 Kambatuku (1996)

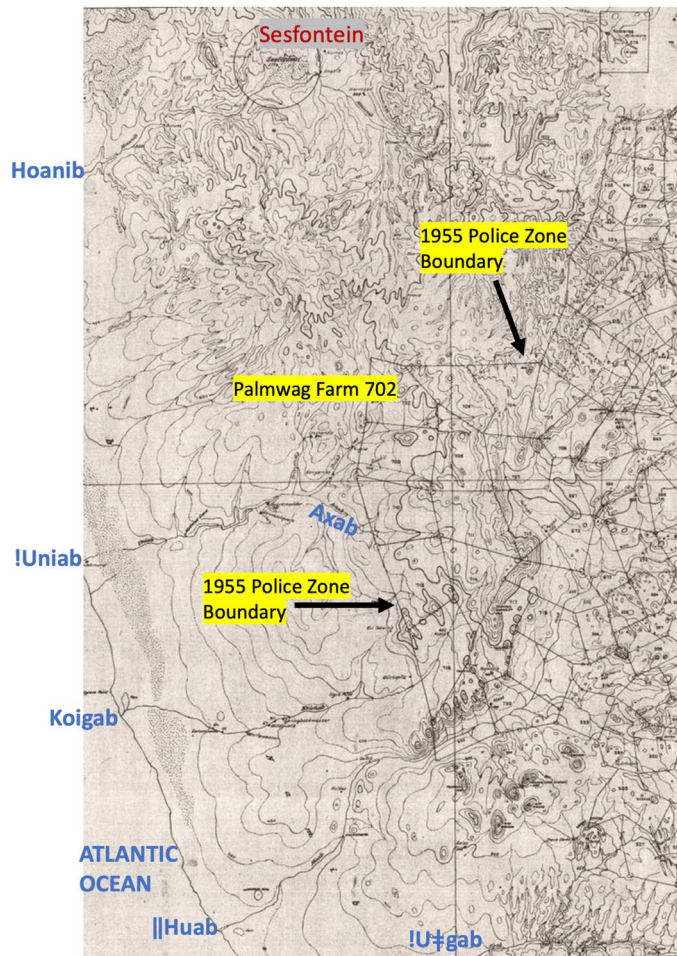


Fig. 13.4 Map showing the expanded commercial farmland area in north-west Namibia: the north-west boundaries of the surveyed farms mark the 1955 Police Zone boundary, and farm 702 is “Palmwag Farm”, now the site of Palmwag Lodge. The names in blue mark the ephemeral westward-flowing rivers of this area. Source: Adapted from Sheet 6, Fransfontein, Surveyor General’s Office Windhoek, undated, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

As Kambatuku documents,¹⁷ in August 1954, Farm 702 was advertised for landless white farmers to apply for a grazing license: 9 farmers applied, and J.M.L. Carstens was successful. At this point he was sub-leasing Twyfelfontein farm on the Aba-||Huab River further south, and had been moving around in this area for a couple of years. Providing some idea of the sizes of herds brought into the expanded commercial farming area in these years, Carstens moved 808 sheep, 300 goats and seven cattle to Palmwag Farm; also gaining permission from the Land Board for 700 small stock owned by a neighbour to graze there. The farm depended on open water from the !Uniab River with ‘2 wells fitted with portable engines and a dam (impoundment) with a centrifugal engine drawing water from it’.¹⁸ In January 1964 Farm 702 was purchased by Carstens using the Administration’s buying option, reportedly for £1,506 [apparently R3,009.86, according to historical data].¹⁹ In this same year the farm was tendered for sale back to the Administration and valued at R44,946. It was eventually purchased by the Government for R56,000, with Carstens remaining as a lessee for R83/month from October 1964. If these figures are correct, it appears that the farmer would have gained considerably from this transaction. The stock numbers remained roughly the same through these years, with the addition of two horses and two mules.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–8

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7

¹⁹ ‘R’ = South Africa rand, the currency of these years for “South West Africa”. Historical exchange rate derived from <https://fxtop.com/>

In January 1965, the lease was awarded to R.V. Madsen from Gobabis district, but was cancelled in April 1965 because he was not considered to be a *bona fide* farmer since he was also a businessman who owned a store in Gobabis. Madsen negotiated to remain with his 2,500 sheep, vacating the farm in April 1966, after which it remained unoccupied until February 1969 when it was leased to an H. Steenkamp, with an F. Jooste also awarded a lease contract, but this farmer left due to poor grazing. In 1971, a Mr P. de Wet applied to lease the farm but was not granted the land due to poor pastures in this year. It was only in January 1972 that the farm became available for use by the then Department for Bantu Administration in Pretoria for incorporation within the post-Odendaal Commission communal area of Damaraland. Similar histories conveying the dynamism of use of this farming area in the 1950s and 1960s can be reconstructed for farms throughout the expanded Police Zone area.²⁰

The name “Palmwag” that Farm 702 became known by refers to the tall stands of *Hyphaene petersiana* palms that cluster at this site of permanent water on the !Uniab River. The settler farmhouse of the 1950s and 1960s was located where the water-tanks for Palmwag Lodge are now positioned (Figure 13.5a).²¹ Multiple oral histories and other conversations relate that both the farmhouse and the lodge water-tanks are located at the previous site of a livestock-*kraal* that belonged to Simon !Hawaxab. In the 1940s and 1950s, Simon was the headman of Sesfontein/!Nani-|aus, a major settlement and native reserve area dating back to German colonial times (see Chapter 1), situated close to the Hoanib River to the north of the new commercial farming area.

This site that became known as “Palmwag” has an older local name that also invokes the palms at this place. This name is !Gao-!Unias: !Gao means “cut”, and !unias references the name !unis for the *Hyphaene petersiana* palms standing at this site. This name refers to how the river cuts through the landscape here, and to how the palm trees—!unis—grow prominently in this cut (as can be seen in Figure 13.5a). It is common in this north-western area for a watercourse to be named after a permanent source of water—such as a spring—positioned upstream in the watercourse. Following this principle, it is the presence of the palm—!unis—at sites of permanent water upstream that gives the name !Uniab to this major river that is now a central feature of the Palmwag Concession. In the past people moved up and down this river, as far as the ocean where !nara (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melons could be harvested (see Figure 13.5b), as well as between this river and the Hoanib and !U#gab rivers to the north and the south (as documented in Chapter 12).

!Gao-!Unias, the place of palms on this river that became the site of a commercial farmhouse and then a high-end tourism lodge, was thus also a place where people lived in the past, utilising its permanent water to support their livestock herding. Referring to !Gao-!Unias as a place amongst those remembered as part of wider dwelling and mobility practices, Ruben Sanib, an elderly man who lived in Sesfontein and whose testimony I will draw on extensively in Section 13.3, relates that,

[m]y name is Sauneib !Nagu. I grew up with my father and mother in Hurubes [referring to the northern mountainous area of the Palmwag Concession]. My family name is |Awise, and we are !Khao-a Dama.²² [...] I was born at Xom-ti-!gaus. My parents were living in the places called Urubao, Tsaugu !gams, Kō, #Hā !gams, |Gui-|naran, Barangan, Tsaun, |Nobaran, Soaun, Palm, !Uniab, !Gao-!Unian, Kai-as. These are the places where the old people lived in the past, before they were told no! They must move to Sesfontein and leave Hurubes behind.²³

The commercial farming area expansion shown in Figure 13.4, combined with the desire to claim the area north of the new Police Zone boundary as a wildlife area, removed a large tract of land from local use between the Hoanib and !U#gab Rivers. It effected the movement of

20 Kambatuku (1996)

21 Pers. comm. Duncan Gilchrist, 19.10.2017.

22 From !Khao-as, a large mountain at the confluence of the #Gaob (Aub) and !Uniab rivers, now within the Palmwag Concession (see Chapter 12).

23 Ruben Sanib, Sesfontein, 25.05.2019, emphasis added. All interviews in this chapter are by Sian Sullivan and Welhemina Suro Ganuses.

Damara/#Nūkhoen northwards to Sesfontein and other settlements in the vicinity of the Hoanib River, and southwards towards Okombahe/!A#gommes on the !U#gab. Speaking of the movement of 'Damaras' to 'Sessfontein' from 'Southern Kaokoveld', in 1952 an Agricultural Officer writes: '[t]hese Damaras, comprising 9 men, 12 women, and 22 children with 3 families still to come, are at present at Sessfontein and would seem to be virtually destitute'.²⁴ The late Ben Fuller, who carried out PhD research in Sesfontein and Otjimbingwe/Âtsas, also notes that in the 1950s there was an 'influx [to Sesfontein] of outlying residents' termed 'Namidaman', during the time of the leadership of chief Simon !Hawaxab.²⁵ Similarly, in 1951 'Bergdama' are reported to have moved from 'southern Kaokoveld' to the Okombahe Reserve.²⁶

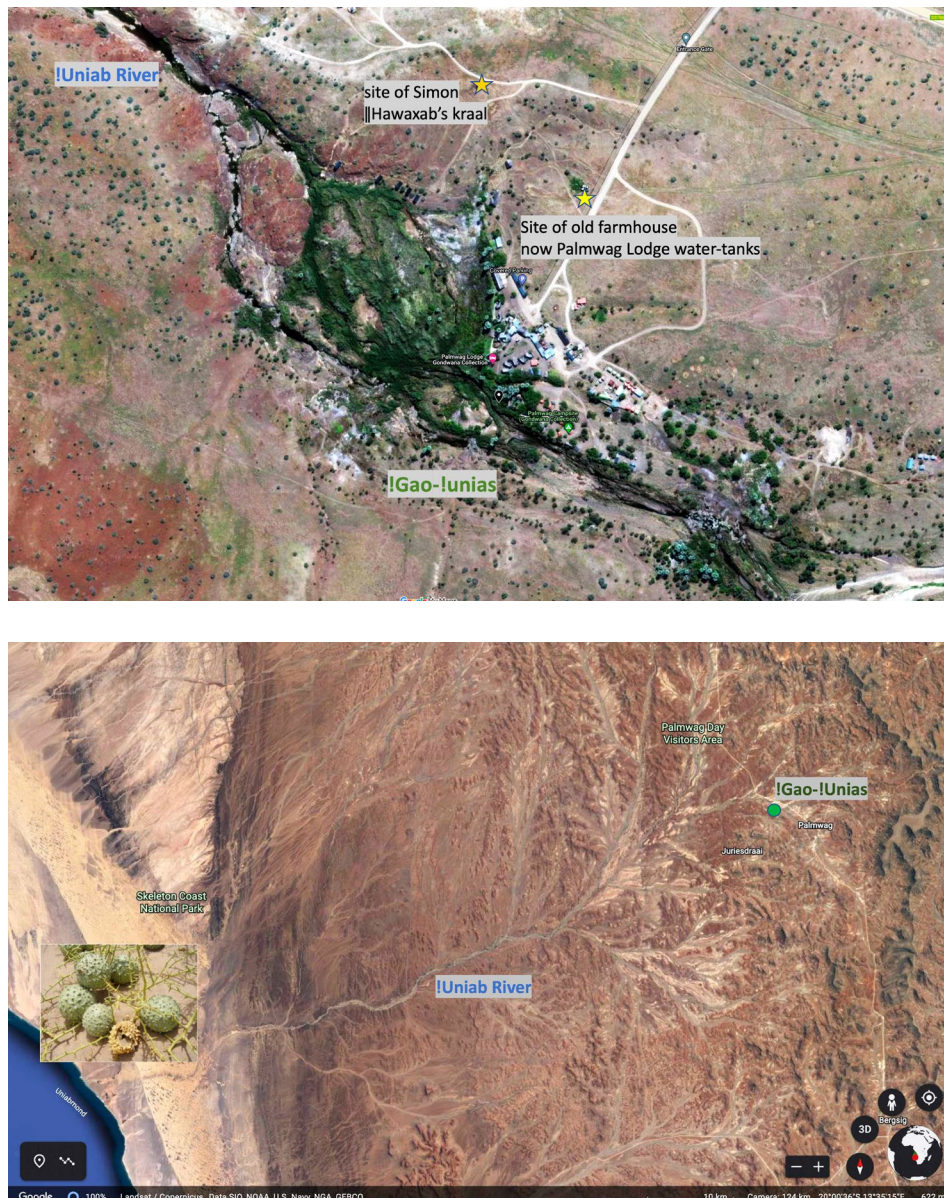


Fig. 13.5 The image above shows the former dwelling place of !Gao-!Unias, now Palmwag Lodge, the location of headman Simon !Hawaxab's livestock *kraal* in the 1950s, and the present-day lodge water-tanks; the image below shows the landscape of the !Uniab River, now a prominent part of the Palmwag Tourism Concession, showing !Gao-!Unias/Palmwag Lodge upstream, and the location of *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melon plants downstream. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery starting from 10.4.2013. © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

24 NAN SWAA 2513 Inspection of the Kaokoveld by Agricultural Officer. 6.2.1952.

25 Fuller (1993: 69)

26 Köhler (1959: 48)

The land claimed for settler farmers, and the area to its north claimed as a ‘livestock-free zone’, was previously lived in, utilised and moved through by people who were then constrained to “native reserve” areas either to the north or south of the new commercial farmland: namely the Sesfontein and Okombahe reserves respectively. The expansion of settler farming in this area thus had a dramatic impact on local land-use and mobilities. This situation was already the case prior to the south-west expansion of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 and the westwards extension of Etosha Game Park in 1962 (as documented in Chapter 2). The progressive displacement of people from this area clearly made it easier to create these new conservation demarcations. In Section 13.3 I consider in more detail the impacts these disruptive events had on people who previously lived in and accessed the area that became the Palmwag Concession.

13.3 ‘This land was ǀNūkhoe land’:²⁷ Indigenous histories of the Palmwag Concession area, pre-1950s

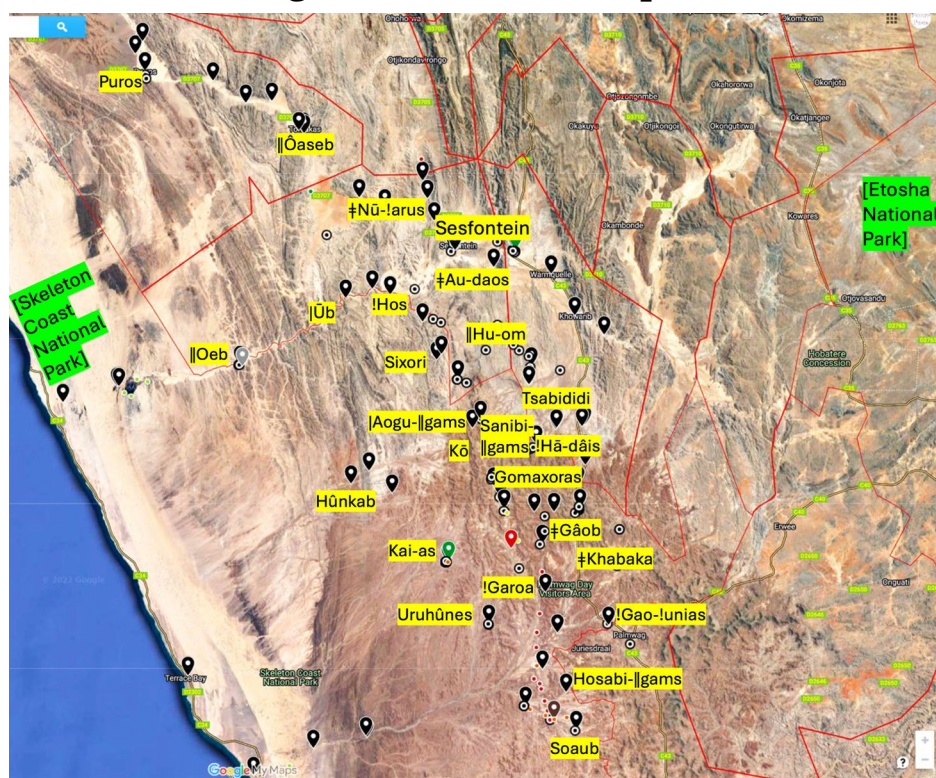


Fig. 13.6 Some key former dwelling places positioned within and near to the Palmwag Tourism Concession, in between the Skeleton Coast and Etosha National Parks. The black place-markers indicate former (and current) living places; the red dots crossing the ǀUniab mark the cutline at the western edge of the 1950s commercial farming area; the red boundary lines mark the borders of communal area conservancies, and the fainter red line marks the current veterinary fence. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including Google Maps data © TerraMetrics 2022, © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The 1950s Police Zone expansion caused a split in a large land area known as ‘Hurubes’ or ǀHurubes, which now sits mostly within the Palmwag Concession: ǀKhari (‘small’) Hurubes is in the north, and ǀNau (‘fat’) Hurubes is in the south (see Figure 12.17). People were reportedly pressed to decide between moving to the Sesfontein or Okombahe Reserves (as noted in Section 13.2):²⁸

it’s the government who told the people to move. That’s why some Dāureb Dama people moved to ǀUǀgab and some Dāureb Damas moved to Sesfontein.²⁹

²⁷ Ruben Sanib, in between Gomaxora and ǀGui-gomabi-ǀgaus, 13.5.2019.

²⁸ Sullivan & Ganuses (2020, 2021a)

²⁹ Conversation with Ruben Sanib and Sophia Opi ǀAwises, Hosabi-ǀgams, 7.11.2015.

Previously they had moved regularly between multiple dwelling places and springs in these northern and southern areas (see Figure 13.6), in the course of livestock herding, aggregating to share gathered foods from different areas, and participating in praise song ceremonies and healing dances (as documented in Video 13.1 linked below).

Land (!*hūs*) and lineage (!*haos*) groupings of Damara/#Nūkhoe and ||Ubun families were at this time living throughout the area. As discussed in Chapter 12, for the area of the present-day Palmwag Concession, these land-lineage groupings, broadly-speaking, were as follows: ||Khao-a Dama were connected with #Khari Hurubes (north of the !Uniab); Aogubus-Dama resided in Aogubus—the mountainous area crossing the present-day boundary between the Palmwag and Etendeka concessions; Dâure-Dama were associated with !Nau Hurubes (south of the !Uniab); and ||Ubun resided in the Northern Namib area, but also moved inland and utilised resources of the !Uniab and Hoanib rivers (see Figure 12.17). People moved throughout the area, crossing into these different lands and connecting with others. The permanent freshwater spring of Kai-as in the heart of the present-day Palmwag Concession (see Figures 13.6 and 13.7) was a particularly well-remembered place of dwelling and aggregation for ||Khao-a Dama and ||Ubun. As Ruben Sanib recalls:

[a]t that time we would go to Kai-as and ||Ubu people would meet us there from !Uniab and we would play together |*gais* [praise songs] and *arus* [healing songs]. And from there, ||Ubun would go back again to !Uniab for the !*naras* and ||Khao-a Dama came back again to their area [#Khari Hurubes] to find the seeds, *bosû* (*Monsonia umbellata*) and *sâun* (*Stipagrostis* spp.).³⁰

A |*gais* song, broadly speaking, is a song sung to praise something. |*Gais* are sung to celebrate entities, people and events that are of value. As Jacobus ||Hoëb, leader of the Hoanib Cultural Group in Sesfontein—known locally as the ‘king of the |*gais*’—describes,

[m]y grand-parents taught me to play the |*gais*. The springbok are playing. The zebra are playing, the gemsbok are playing. All the animals are playing when the rain falls. And the people say, “how can we make something to praise the animals?”³¹

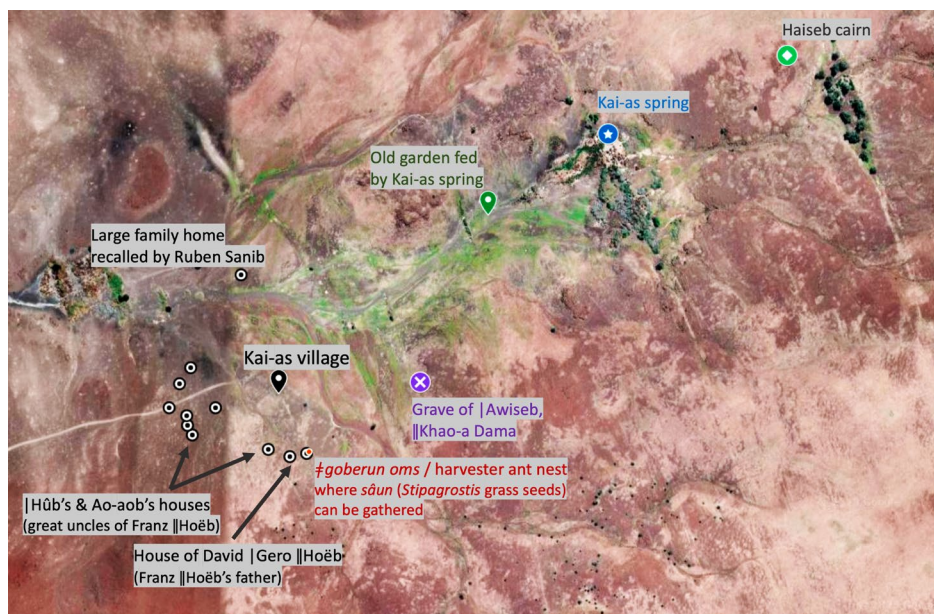


Fig. 13.7 The former Kai-as settlement in the Palmwag Concession. Information from multiple visits and discussion with especially Franz |Haen ||Hoëb, Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Ruben !Nagu Sanib, Sophia Opi |Awises and Filemon |Nuab. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, with Google Maps imagery 2023, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Arus are sung more specifically to support individual and social healing, and especially to support the strength and insights of healers. In this cultural context, a name for a healer is |*nanu-aos* or

³⁰ Ruben Sanib, in between Gomaxora and |Gui-gomabi-!gaus, 13.5.2019.

³¹ Jacobus ||Hoëb, Kai-as, 23.5.2019. Also Sullivan & Ganuses (2021b)

|*nanu-aob*—meaning literally a woman or man who has been called by the rain (|*nanus*) and ‘has the rain spirit’.



Video 13.1. *The Music Returns to Kai-as*. 53 minute version here <https://vimeo.com/486865709>; 30 minute version here: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/6bf387e8>, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

People would especially congregate at Kai-as to play these musics after the rains had started. It was a key place on routes between the localities of important food resources. For example, ||Ubun would move between !*nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melon patches in the !Uniab and Hoanib river mouths, via springs at Kai-as and Hûnkab (to the north-west of Kai-as) (as documented in Chapter 12). The film *The Music Returns to Kai-as*³² (Video 13.1) documents a process of returning to Kai-as with the Hoanib Cultural Group of Sesfontein, whose elders are and were those who remember accessing these wider areas beyond the places where they are now constrained to live, to play once again these musics at this key place of cultural heritage.

Ruben Sanib further remembers how different groupings of people would move through and meet each other in the area of the Palmwag Concession, known as Hurubes and, in the west, as Namib (see Video 13.2). As he describes:

I sit here at !Hubu spring and I am reminded of all the places where the old people [*kai khoen*] lived. People lived a lot in this land, and we met with Dâure-dama people and we exchanged things with them. ||Khao-a Dama met with the people from the ocean [Hurib] side [||Ubun] and at Kai-as, and we collected [ôau] food [*xaira*]: *bosû*, *sâub*, *danib* [honey]. And we danced |*gaib* and *arub* and we sing *he he, hue hue, urr urr!*, and suck [*xoma*] the sicknesses from each other. And it's here when the elders joined with red women [||Ubun] and the red men joined with †Nûkhoe women [...] and Dâure-dama men joined with Hoani-dama women, and Aogu-dama women and Aogu-dama men joined with Hoani-daman and Dâure-daman. It is how we lived in this land.³³



Video 13.2. *Lands That History Forgot: 2nd Journey, Palmwag Tourism Concession / Hurubes—Ruben !Nagu Sanib*, <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12434/6f86e31f>, © Future Pasts and Etosha-Kunene Histories, 2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

³² Sullivan (2021a)

³³ Ruben Sanib, !Hubu spring, 14.5.2019.

The 1950s disruption of access to, and dwelling in, this western area also constituted a repetition of prior evictions from ‘Southern Kaokoveld’. The Annual Report of the SWAA for 1930 thus emphasises the establishment of a ‘buffer zone between the natives in the Kaokoveld and the occupied parts of the Territory’, ostensibly to control the transmission of lungsickness (bovine pleuropneumonia) from the former to the latter³⁴ (also see Chapters 2 and 14). The late Ben Fuller reports that the first lungsickness inoculation programme in the north-west beyond Kamanjab was undertaken by the State Veterinary Office in 1930. It destroyed approximately 18 animals as well as vaccinating 6,514 cattle, and recommended that cattle from Kaokoveld ‘be prevented from moving into the white farming area’, with ‘regular monitoring of waterholes along the 19th parallel by the police [...] [considered] sufficient to prevent the spread of the disease southward’.³⁵

These historical accounts seem connected with oral histories telling of Damara/!Nūkhoe experiences of evictions from the northern part of the present-day Palmwag Concession. Near to the former dwelling place Gomaxora (‘where the cattle dig’—see Figure 13.6), Ruben Sanib thus described a dramatic experience of eviction that took place prior to the death of a Nama headman of Sesfontein called Nathaniel Husa |Uixamab, who died after being mauled by a lion at the place #Ao-daos in 1941:³⁶

[w]e were living at |Gui-gomabi-!gaus [west of Gomaxora]. While we were there we were ordered to move the cattle from this land to !Nani-|aus [Sesfontein] area. Some people were living here with their cattle, and my grand-father was at |Gui-gomabi-!gaus with his cattle. When the authorities took the cattle to Gomaxora to be shot, the men in my family took their bull and killed him at the spring near here [so that the authorities could not shoot the bull]. When the bull was killed, they named the place |Gui-gomabi-!gaus [the cave of that one bull].

When we were living here my grand-mother |Uidige died [Ruben’s father’s mother] and we buried her here and moved on to !Nani-|aus. The men living here with their livestock were !Kharuxab, Gaoeb, Ada-#kharib, Honab and Ganu-#kharib. They were living here with their wives [...] The government does not want us to stay in this area with our cattle, and they came and shot the cattle at Gomaxora. And the men do not want the bull to be shot, so they shot the bull with a bow and arrow and ate the meat there at the place they named |Gui-gomabi-!gaus. [...] It was Gamab with Honab, Titab [Ruben’s father Sanib] and !Kharuxab [the father of the late Andreas !Kharuxab, headman of Kowareb in the 1990s, interviewed below]. [...] The government [#hanub] first said take the cattle [goman] out, but you can stay here with goats [birin] only. But some of the cattle remained in the area and the government came and shot those cattle. This land was #Nūkhoe land. But Herero wanted to move here. They were told to move out and #Nūkhoe were then also told to move out with their cattle and goats.³⁷

In an earlier interview, Ruben affirmed that this displacement was because:

[t]he government said this is now a wildlife area and you cannot move in here. We had to move to the other side of the mountains—to Tsidididi [the area also known today as Mbakondja]. Government police from Kamanjab and Fransfontein told the people to move from here.³⁸

In 1999 Andreas !Kharuxab also reported that,

[m]y grandfathers planted tobacco. And with that tobacco they bought cattle from the Herero who were living in the district of Kante [Kamdesa, towards Kamanjab]. And then they started farming with those cattle, but the government said that you can’t farm cattle in this area. And then they shot the cattle.³⁹

The 1950s commercial farmland expansion clearly took no account of prior mobilities between named dwelling places, such as those shown in Figure 13.6. To provide one example of the reality of these mobilities, several of the places named on Figure 13.6 were mentioned by the late Andreas !Kharuxab, former Headman of Kowareb settlement on the Hoanib River (Figure 13.8):

34 SWAA (1930: 72, para. 487[sic. should be 467] and 473)

35 Fuller (1993: 74, drawing on archive sources)

36 For more information see Sullivan & Ganuses (2021a: 170–73)

37 Ruben Sanib, in between Gomaxora and |Gui-gomabi-!gaus, 13.5.2019.

38 Ruben Sanib, #Khabaka, 20.11.2014. Also see Sullivan & Ganuses (2021a: 155–56)

39 Andreas !Kharuxab, Kowareb, 1999.

[t]here are many places whose names I haven't said yet. There is |Nowarab, !Hubub, !Gauta, ‡Gâob, ‡Khabaga and !Garoab. And there are more places where people lived in that area. !Hagos, Pos and Kai-as were the places where people were living. The people travelled like that (between these places).⁴⁰

Ruben Sanib's testimony above mentions the father of Andreas as being amongst those whose cattle were shot by the authorities, and it is clear that Andreas learned about places in the wider landscape from his fore-fathers.

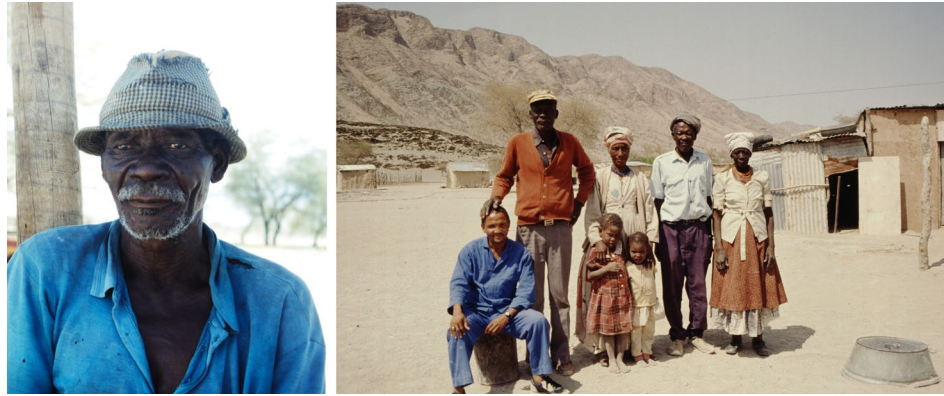


Fig. 13.8 The late Andreas !Kharuxab, former headman of Kowareb, pictured in 1999 and with his family in 1992. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Some documented evidence also exists for these prior mobilities from south of the Palmwag Concession, through the present-day concession area, to places beyond its present-day northern boundary. For example, when a settler farmer called David Levin applied for grazing around the spring |Ui-!aes—which became known as Twyfelfontein—his neighbour Andries Blaauw of Blaauport Farm mentioned to him that ‘a Damara family lived there with some of their animals’.⁴¹ Levin learned that this family moved between |Ui-!aes close to the Aba-!Huab River, De Riet on the !Huab River, springs described as with palm trees in the Grootberg area (i.e. !Gao-!Unias and associated springs), and Kowareb on the Hoanib River.

The following testimonies document further the presence of families inhabiting the area now set aside as the Palmwag Concession. Ruben Sanib relates that,

[n]ow !Abudoeb and his family moved from Soaub to !Nani-|aus [Sesfontein], and Komsi and the other people moved to !U‡gab. When the people moved to the south and the north the white people moved into the area.⁴²

Ruben and his family were with !Abudoeb at Soaub at the time, having travelled there to attend the burial of Ruben's grand-father Aukhoeb Ganuseb (see Figure 13.9). Soaub was a living place that was cleared in order that it could become part of Farm 710, known as Rooiplatz, now the site of the high-end tourism facility Desert Rhino Camp, run by Wilderness Safaris. Ruben recalled that when the government told them to move they travelled first to !Uniab (where the Palmwag fuel station is now). His parents were herding goats there with Andreas !Kharuxab and family. They then moved north to !Garoas, to |Gui-gomabi-!gaus, and on to Sesfontein (see Figure 13.6).⁴³ From Ruben's perspective, it was the new Damara Regional Authority (DRA) after the Odendaal Commission that said,

why are you [the settler farmers] moving in when you told the [‡Nūkhoe] people to move out? You have to go back so that the people can stay at their places. Then, when they told the white people to move out [after the Odendaal Commission in the early 1970s] then the [‡Nūkhoe] people moved to those farms. From Khorixas to Sesfontein on the main road they are living there, like Palm, Palm-pos,

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Levin & Goldbeck (2013: 15-17, 21, 35)

⁴² Ruben Sanib, Hosabi-!gams (now Desert Rhino Camp), 7.11.2015.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Palmwag, !Naodais, Gomagu!gaub, Otjihavarero like that. And from Jakkelsvlei, Middle-pos, Swartwater, Swartwater-pos, Bergsig, Bergsig-pos, Driefontein, Tsaurobfontein—those are the places where the Damara people are living.⁴⁴

At the same time, it was understood that the government of the time did not want people to move back into the western area of Hurubes that had been emptied through previous evictions of people and their livestock (see Section 13.5); even though reportedly people would have moved back if they had been permitted to do so.⁴⁵



Fig. 13.9 Ruben Sanib sits at the grave of his grand-father Markus Aukhoeb Ganuseb at the former living place Soaub in the Palmwag Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 15.5.2019, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The 1950s evictions acted to concentrate people in Sesfontein on the Hoanib River, as well as in Okombahe on the Ugab [!U#gab]. I will focus here on the ‘Zessfontein Reserve’, a large circular area around the settlement of Sesfontein, established under the German colonial regime for especially Nama and Damara/!Nūkhoe inhabitants, in acknowledgement of their histories in this area⁴⁶ (also see Chapters 1 and 12). Indeed, the place ‘Zessfontein’ and ‘the grazing land belonging to it’ was specifically reserved for the people of Sesfontein in 1885 by Nama captain Jan |Uixamab, when negotiating German commercial prospecting interests in mineral resources in north-west Namibia.⁴⁷ In 1921, the incoming South African administration confirmed that this reserve consisting of 31,416 ha for ‘Topnaar and Swartbooi Hottentotten’ was ‘to remain undisturbed’.⁴⁸ It should be noted, however, that the circular area of this ‘reserve’ (visible on Figure 13.4) did not reflect the broader area utilised and known by inhabitants of this area. Indeed, in the SWAA Annual Report of 1939 it was acknowledged that together with the native reserve areas of the northern Kaokoveld, the Zesfontein reserve was ‘much too small’, and ‘a number of the Zesfontein Natives are now living on Crown land’, i.e. beyond the reserve enclave.⁴⁹

The distress caused by the 1950s (and prior) evictions from this wider area of so-called ‘Crown land’ was clearly articulated to a United Nations Special Committee for South West Africa meeting in Sesfontein in May 1962, in which the loss of land and grazing was high on the agenda of residents’ concerns. Present at this meeting were Mr. Simon Hawahab [!Hawaxab], ‘Headman of the Topnaar

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Fuller (1993), Sullivan (1998, 1999), Rizzo (2012)

⁴⁷ Hesse (1906: 139)

⁴⁸ SWAA (1921: 13–14), SWAA (1923: 13); also Silvester *et al.* (1998: 19)

⁴⁹ SWAA (1939: 172, para. 1125), as also demonstrated through on-site oral history and heritage mapping research in the area: see Sullivan (1999, 2022), Rizzo (2012), Sullivan & Ganuses (2021a, 2022)

Nama residents' (36 to 40 persons), Mr Elias Amgab 'Headman of the Damaras' (200 to 300 living in the Reserve), and 'Herero Headman' Urimunge Kasaona,⁵⁰ as well as around 100 residents. They stated that,

the people of Sessfontein used to be able to graze their livestock south of the Hoanib River. However, European farmers had taken the land [...], and were occupying most of the grazing veld which had been formerly used by the people of Sessfontein. Moreover, the farmers did not want the people of Sessfontein to travel through the land now occupied by the Europeans.⁵¹

On top of this rather orchestrated collapse of Indigenous subsistence economies that relied on access to and through this large tract of land, a further dimension of loss is keenly felt by elderly residents of the Hoanib Valley area: namely their inability to access the graves of members of their families buried here. Figure 13.10 shows the mapped locations of some of the graves known to be present in and near to the Palmwag Concession. Many of these graves are of named family members, remembered by those alive today.

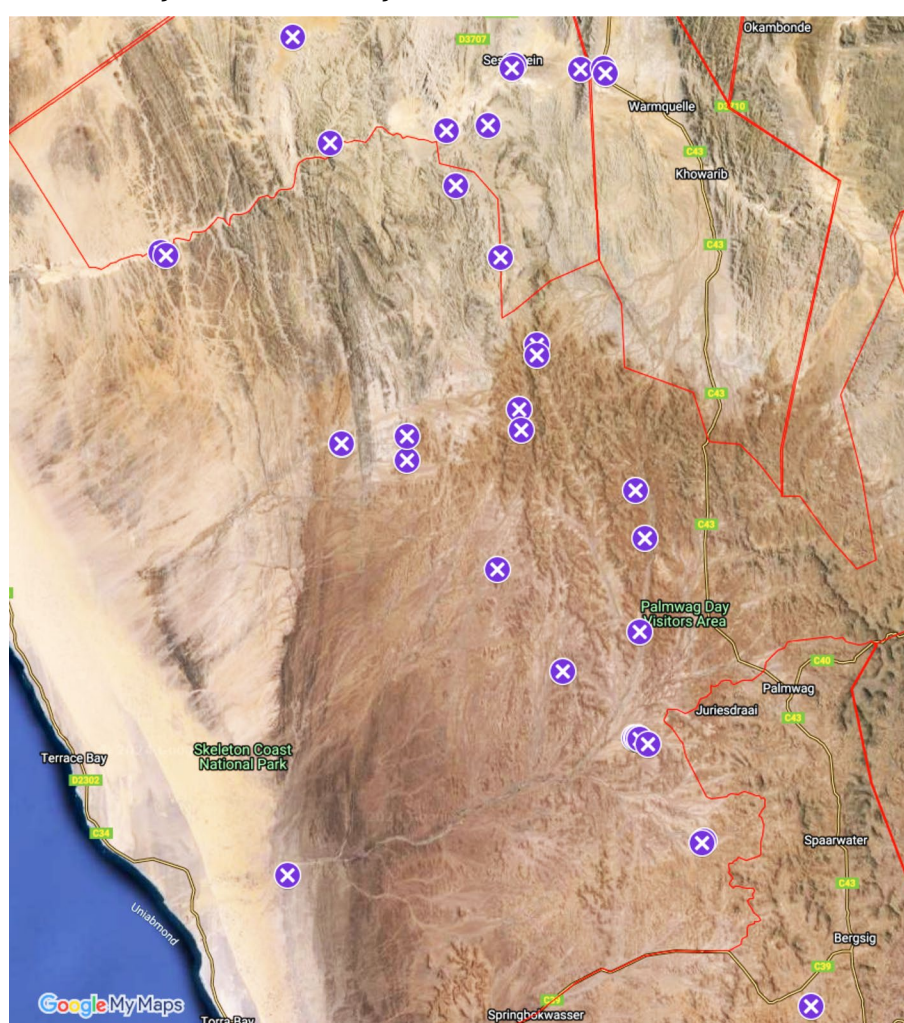


Fig. 13.10 The crosses on this map show the locations of graves of known ancestors in and near to the Palmwag Concession, many of which are of known and named ancestors. Author's research data, including Google Maps data © TerraMetrics 2022, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

- 50 Before 1918 when Sessfontein Headman Levi | Nâbeb | Uixamab died, ovaHimba families (namely Kasaona from near Etanga, Karutjaiva, Uararavi, Kasupi and Uatokuya) reportedly approached the leadership of Sessfontein to request living places at #Guwitas (Otjindakui), Ganamub and Puros. They pleaded that they were fleeing from the war of Chief Vita Thom (Oorlog/Oloxa'), from the Angolan border side of the Hoaruseb River (August Kasaona interview at #Guwitas/Otjindakui, 11.11.2015; also Ruben Sanib and Sophia | Awises, Mai Go Ha, 27.10.2014).
- 51 NAN.A/5212/Add.1 20.9.1962, Meeting with Headmen and residents of Sessfontein Native Reserve, 10.5.1962, United Nations Special Committee for South West Africa: 13–16.

13.4 Conservation visions: Imagining, creating and lamenting an 'Arid Eden'

The 1950s clearance of people from areas within and north-west of the newly expanded commercial farming area paved the way for new ideas regarding wildlife conservation in the area. Already in 1957, new water supplies for elephant were being developed north of the newly positioned Red Line in the triangle between Kowares (now often referred to as Otjokowares, in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy), Warmquelle and Grootberg.⁵² Figure 13.11 thus shows the proposed locations of water supplies for elephant with Dam sites 1 and 2 preferred because site 3 was considered to not be in a 'typical Elephant area' (although see Chapter 11).⁵³ These developments were a response to complaints by the new settler farmers in the expanded commercial farming area that '[e]lephants were damaging their fences, water-supplies, etc.'⁵⁴ The government's reaction was to propose new or expanded dams north of the new settler farming area to which elephants would be attracted. These plans were put in place even though these areas were in localities lived in by local people whose dwelling and mobility possibilities had been highly restricted through expansion of these same farming areas.⁵⁵

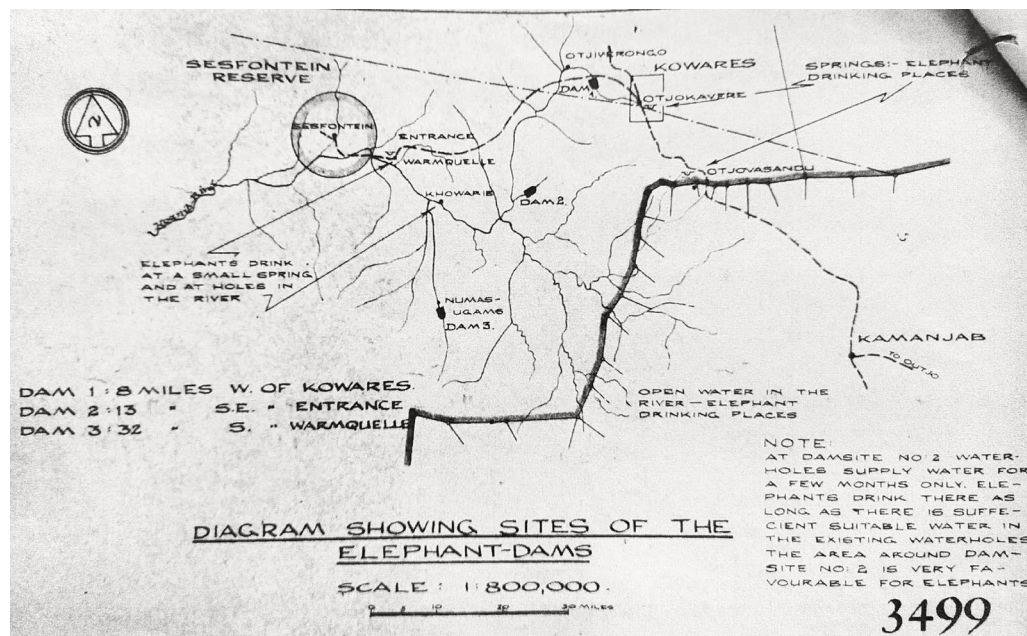


Fig. 13.11 Map showing proposed 'elephant-dams' north of the new commercial farming area, marked by the thick black line. Source: © NAN SWAA WAT.74.W.W.71/4 Game Reserve: Kaokoveld Game Reserve. Triangle—Kowares-Warmquelle-Grootberg. Dams for elephants in the Kaokoveld Game Reserve. To the Director of Water Affairs 28.8.1958, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Simultaneously, new ideas regarding the creation of a south-western extension of Game Reserve No. 2 were emerging in these years, as documented in detail in Chapter 2. In 1956, recommendations were made by 'the Parks Board of South West' for 'an additional nature

⁵² As reported in NAN SWAA WAT.74.W.W.71/4 Game Reserve: Kaokoveld Game Reserve. Triangle—Kowares-Warmquelle-Grootberg. Dams for elephants in the Kaokoveld Game Reserve. To the Director of Water Affairs 28.8.1958.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ In addition, in 1951 it had already been observed that creating 'permanent water supplies away from the surveyed farms' in Grootberg area would not keep 'elephants out of the inhabited areas ... as these animals will always trek to such places where grazing is good': NAN SWAA WAT.74.W.W.71/4 Game Reserve No. 2: Water Holes. Director of Works to the Secretary for South West Africa, 9.2.1951.

reserve between the Hoab [*sic*, ||Huab] and the Hoanib rivers'.⁵⁶ Also in this year it was confirmed that elephant and rhinos were considered well protected in 'the area between the present red line and the Native Area in the North', but that the area should be 'declared as an extension of the Etosha game park' and any shooting of animals there should be prohibited⁵⁷—a rather ironic statement given that two decades later the area was designated as a commercial hunting concession. Nonetheless, respecting the long-established native reserve boundaries where several thousand people lived, the Chief Native Commissioner was clearly not in favour of 'any further portions of the Kaokoveld Native Reserve or the Sesfontein Native Reserve being included in the Game Reserve'.⁵⁸ Arguably, then, the south-westwards extension of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958, and the later Etosha Game Park extension to the west in 1962 (see Chapter 2, Figures 2.2 and 2.3) did not have much additional effect on the people of Hurubes from the Hoanib to the Ugab Rivers, because they had already been iteratively cleared from the landscape. It consolidated rather than created their severance from the resources and living sites of this area, as documented in Section 13.3.

The extended game reserve and game park areas of 1958 and 1962, however, were destined to be very short-lived. In 1964, the published report of South West Africa's *Commission of Enquiry into South West African Affairs* (the 'Odendaal Report') proposed to reconnect the fragmented Native Reserves of Sesfontein, Fransfontein, Okombahe and Otjohorongo (Figure 13.12). This proposal in part reflected prior mobilities and uses of land between these reserve areas that had been disrupted due to the expansion of the settler farming area, documented in Sections 13.2 and 13.3.

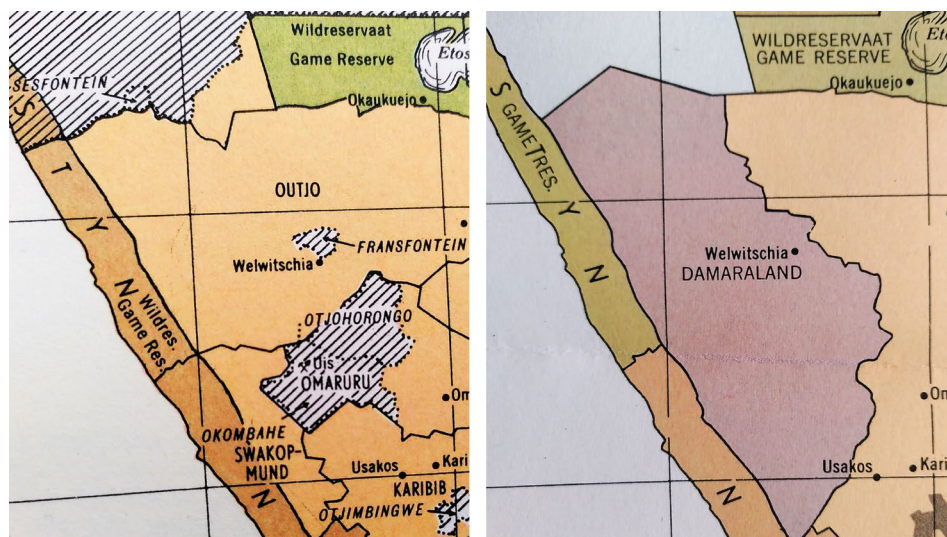


Fig. 13.12 The map on the left, shows the existing 'native reserves' in west Namibia, namely Sesfontein, Fransfontein, Otjohorongo and Okombahe, that were to be joined into a single 'homeland' called 'Damaraland' as shown in the map on the right, thereby also including the known places between the Hoanib and Ugab rivers shown in Figure 13.6.

Source: adapted from Figures 9 and 27 of the Odendaal Report (1964), out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

For conservation and ecology professionals, many of whom had only become familiar with the landscapes of north-west Namibia from around the late 1960s, these Odendaal recommendations constituted an existential crisis. As Hall-Martin and co-authors write, '[c]onservationists saw the deproclamation of much of Etosha as a tragedy'.⁵⁹ This sense of crisis is represented well in the statement by de la Bat that,

[a]fter Odendaal Etosha resembled a plucked fowl. 17972 square kilometres had to be *sacrificed* to the land needs of Owambo, Kaokoland and Damaraland.⁶⁰

56 NAN SWAA A 511/1, 1956-58. de la Bat.

57 NAN SWAA A 511/6, vol. 4 Game Reserves: Boundaries and Fencing 1958-1959. Secretary to Administrator, 26.8.1958.

58 NAN SWAA A.511/6 Extension of Game Reserve No. 2. 26.8.1958.

59 (1988: 62)

60 de la Bat (1982: 20, emphasis added)

Similarly emotive language is repeated in multiple other statements, such as this one from Mitch Reardon's 1986 book *The Besieged Desert* declaring that the Odendaal changes would effect a 'dismembering of the world's largest conservation area'.⁶¹ Writing of the Kaokoveld as 'southern Africa's last wilderness', Owen-Smith similarly asserts that:

[b]efore its deproclamation as a game reserve by the Odendaal Commission in the sixties, the whole Kaokoveld supported a rich and varied spectrum of big game animals.⁶²

This statement is made without mentioning that Kaokoveld was simultaneously a formally declared "native reserve" area prior to this Odendaal moment (as detailed in Chapter 2). This series of dramatic assertions were made even though by the time of implementation of the Odendaal Plans in around 1970, the south-western extension of Game Reserve No. 2, and the western extension of Etosha Game Park, had existed for only 12 years and eight years respectively. Additionally, few personnel or infrastructural developments were in place during these years to make this south-western extension a strong "Protected Area" reality.

The impression given is that a longstanding protected wilderness area was to be both cut up, and more-or-less invaded, by resettled Africans with little prior claim to or experience of the area. From the late 1960s there was also a rush to translocate into Etosha valuable animals such as black rhino from settler farms bought up for Damaraland—the assumption being that resettled African farmers would damage the wildlife remaining in the reallocated farm areas: from the late 1960s to early 1970s several dozen of these animals were translocated to the area that became ENP.⁶³

Four alternative conservation proposals were tabled for this western area in this moment. Three of these proposals have been thoroughly reviewed by Michael Bollig in his monograph *Shaping the African Savannah*.⁶⁴ I want to take another close look at these proposals, however, for their specific implications for the peoples who had previously accessed the area between the Hoanib and Ugab Rivers.

Etosha ecologist Ken Tinley's proposal, commissioned by the Wildlife Society of South Africa and submitted by them to the Office of the Prime Minister in 1969, was published in the journal *African Wildlife* in 1971.⁶⁵ It aimed 'for a division of land between man and wildlife',⁶⁶ and involved creating a 'Kunene Park' in the far north-west, and a 'Kaokoveld Park' that would create a wildlife corridor to ENP (Figure 13.13). Tinley recommended that the peoples of the Hoanib river valley settlements, including Sesfontein, should be removed to a so-called 'Nama Homeland' around the Fransfontein Reserve (included by the South African administration as a 'First Schedule' native reserve in 1923): thus, '[t]he Nama people at Sesfontein and in the adjacent country should be moved to the same homeland area as the Fransfontein people'.⁶⁷ Much of the expanded white settler farming area would remain. To justify this proposal, he writes that:

the Nama people at Sesfontein and Warmquella, the extinct Strandlopers, and the Heiquim "Bushmen" are all of [...] Nama stock and share the same language. One homeland should suffice, as they are a single language group.⁶⁸

Three things are noticeable in these statements. First is the recommendation for a wholesale removal of all Khoekhoegowab-speaking inhabitants of the wider north-west area to a small reserve area around Fransfontein. In this recommendation all the diverse historical connections these language speakers have with the Hoanib valley area are completely disregarded. Second is

61 Reardon (1986: 16, emphasis added)

62 Owen-Smith (1996: 63)

63 Sullivan *et al.* (2021: 13–14, and references therein)

64 Bollig (2020: 206–17)

65 *Ibid.*, p. 208

66 Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 62)

67 Tinley (1971: 14)

68 *Ibid.*, p. 5

the mention of a ‘Strandloper’ (i.e. coastal) population deemed to be ‘extinct today except for one or two very old individuals living in Sesfontein’.⁶⁹ Discussion with inhabitants of Sesfontein and its wider area would have shown both that so-called ‘strandlopers’ and their descendants continued to exist in the area, although finding it increasingly difficult to access coastal areas; and that their livelihoods did not rely on ‘strandloping’ only, but on complex mobilities between coastal and inland areas, food sharing with Damara/ǀNūkhoe groupings also living and moving through the area, and techniques of food storage (as documented in Chapter 12).⁷⁰ Third is the complete absence of any mention of Damara/ǀNūkhoe inhabitants of the area. This is strange because in these decades they are consistently recorded to be the largest population group of the area, as confirmed in the following statistics from surveys in Sesfontein in 1947–1948 and 1991 (Table 13.1).⁷¹ This perplexing rhetorical “disappearing” of Damara/ǀNūkhoe and their histories of association with north-west Namibia lingers in multiple texts written about this area, as discussed in Section 13.5.

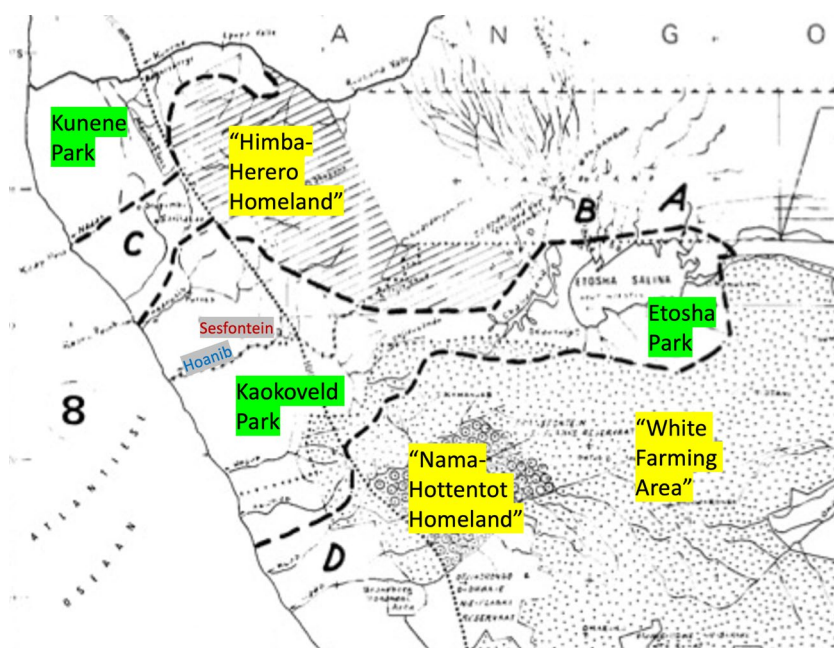


Fig. 13.13 Edited sketch-map of ecologist Ken Tinley's 1971 proposals for creation of a Kunene Park and Kaokoveld Park in north-west Namibia (the latter connected with Etosha Park in the east), from which inhabitants should be removed to a 'Himba-Herero Homeland' and a 'Nama Hottentot Homeland', whilst retaining much of the surrounding 'white farming area'. Source: adapted from Tinley (1971: 10, public domain article at <http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/17211>), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Table 13.1. Population figures for Sesfontein in 1947–1948 and 1991.

Population grouping	Sesfontein	
	1947/48	1991
Damara	576	±480
Herero	396	±200
'other'	243	±126
Total	1,336	±806

Sources: 1947–1948 figures from van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 40); 1991 figures from National Planning Commission (1991).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5

⁷⁰ Sullivan (2021b), Sullivan & Ganuses (2022)

⁷¹ van Warmelo (1962[1951]: 40), National Planning Commission (1991); also summary in Sullivan (1998: 46)

In 1971, the late Garth Owen-Smith also writes a report entitled 'The Kaokoveld: An Ecological Base for Future Development Planning', a shorter version of which was published in the *South African Journal of Science* in 1972. Contrary to Tinley,⁷² Owen-Smith states that,

[d]uring two and a half year's residence in the Kaokoveld, no signs were found of any large scale migration of game to and from the Etosha saline area [with instead] [...] a rather local seasonal cycle, with the water dependent animals, such as elephant, zebra and kudu, concentrating in the vicinity of permanent waterholes during the dry months.⁷³

He thus asserted that 'there is insufficient evidence for a corridor across valuable ranchland to link these two regions' [i.e. Etosha Game Park and the western Kaokoveld].⁷⁴

Invoking the United States' Wilderness Act of 1964, Owen-Smith argued that,

a game reserve in the western Kaokoveld has vast potentials as a tourist attraction, and in time this potential can be turned into an economic asset to the country as a whole and particularly to the people of the neighbouring homelands [...] As the situation in the western areas of the new Damara Homeland is essentially similar to that in the Kaokoveld, it should be possible to extend a game reserve southward along the semi-desert to the Ugab river, thus linking it with the existing Brandberg Nature Reserve.⁷⁵

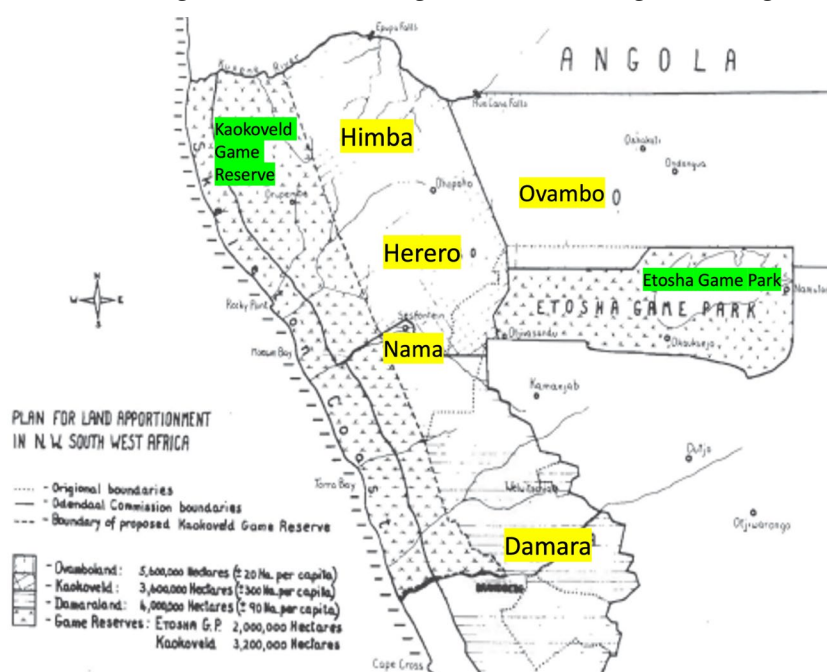


Fig. 13.14 'Plan for land apportionment in N.W. South West Africa'. Source: adjusted from sketch map in Owen-Smith (1972b: 35, public domain article at https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00382353_9803), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Specifically, he proposed the creation of a large 'Kaokoveld Game Reserve' in the west of what is now Kunene Region (Figure 13.14). Whilst somewhat more generous towards local people, his proposals are also framed around the idea that Damara in the north-west are reduced to 'only a few', and that the 'Strandloper' Bushman has passed from the scene:

[i]t appears likely that in the distant past, both the Bushman and [...] Damara were widespread in the Kaokoveld, but within the last twenty years, *the 'Strandloper' Bushman has passed from the scene, and only a few Damara remain*, in the dusty Hoanib river valley between Warmquelle and Sesfontein.⁷⁶

⁷² (1971)

⁷³ Owen-Smith (1972b: 33); also Owen-Smith (1972a: 73)

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32, emphasis added

Framing Damara/!Nūkhoe and !Ubu presence in terms of an absence is damaging. The effects of this rhetorical device remain evident today, contributing to a lingering contemporary sense of bias against Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples in conservation initiatives in this area.⁷⁷

In 1974 a report commissioned by the Pretoria administration on *The Natural Resources of Damaraland* recommended that a Game Reserve area be established in the area north of the Grootberg to Sesfontein road to encourage tourism (Figure 13.15). The report stated:

[t]he establishment of a Game Reserve area has been recommended in the area north of the Grootberg—Sesfontein road to the Hoanib river. Here the pastoral potential is low, being confined to the sporadic use of widely dispersed valleys. A nucleus of game exists and the area could be developed to encourage localised game concentrations and to provide access to scenic attractions for tourists. This reserve could be complementary to Etosha Game Park which is singularly lacking in scenic attractions.⁷⁸

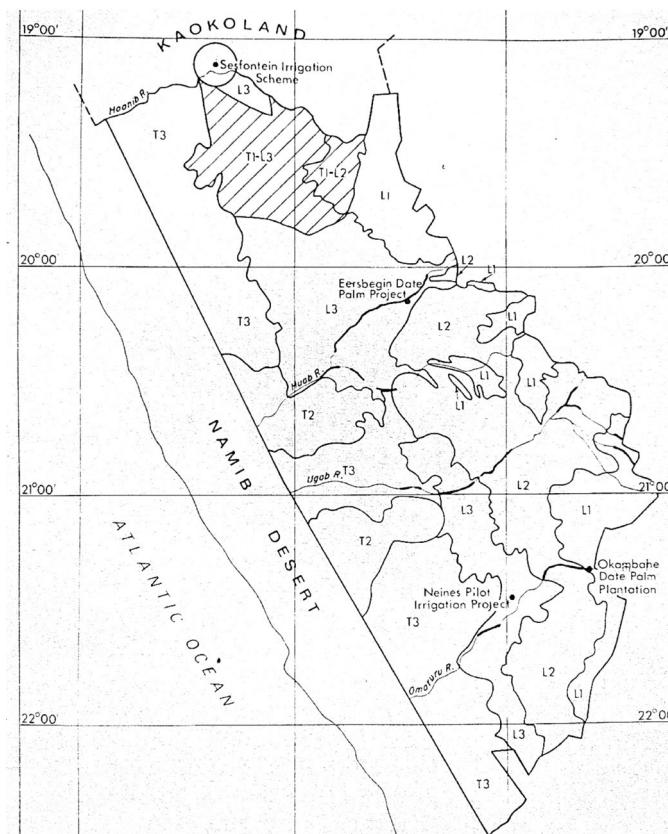


Fig. 13.15 'Damaraland recommended land use'. The shaded area south of Sesfontein is the land proposed as a 'Game Reserve area'. Source: Loxton *et al.* (1974: Figure 4, publicly shared consultancy report), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Finally, in 1974 a team led by Professor Fritz Eloff, head of zoology at Pretoria University, was appointed by the Pretoria-based administration 'to prepare a master plan for the conservation, management and utilisation of nature reserves in Damaraland and Kaokoland'.⁷⁹ Eloff's team undertook several surveys, proposing a 'game reserve' that would include 'all of the Namib, inner Namib [i.e. pro-Namib] and escarpment country west of the 150 mm rainfall isohyet'.⁸⁰ The area would stretch from the Kunene to the !Uniab Rivers, and would include a corridor incorporating the settlement areas of the Hoanib and Omboende Rivers to connect Etosha and Skeleton Coast National Parks; thereby essentially iterating the post-1962 area of Etosha Game Park, as shown in

⁷⁷ Sullivan (2003), Pellis (2011), Kambaekua (2023)

⁷⁸ Loxton *et al.* (1974: para. 29, emphasis added)

⁷⁹ Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 62)

⁸⁰ NAN BOP 83 21/2/2. *Meesterplan vire die Bewaring, Bestuur en Benutting van Natuurreservate in Damaraland en Kaokoland*, 20.2.1975. Reviewed in Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 62–63) and Bollig (2020: 211–17)

Figure 2.3, Chapter 2.⁸¹ It was advocated that all hunting should cease, including ‘pot-licenses’ for administrative staff.⁸²

Despite Owen-Smith’s observations recounted above, this notion of a wildlife corridor connecting Etosha with the Skeleton Coast remains an oft-repeated conservation aim to this day, featuring, for example, in proposals for a Kunene People’s Park in the 2000s,⁸³ and now in a new ‘Skeleton Coast-Etosha Conservation Bridge’ initiative (see Chapter 3). Indeed, demonstrating how conservation imaginaries of this area reverberate through the decades, it is illuminating to see how Eloff’s proposals are matched almost exactly in a recent public domain map: see Figure 13.16. Once again, the focus is a connected wildlife conservation corridor between Etosha and the Skeleton Coast, surrounded in this case by a conservation ‘buffer’ in the west stretching from the Kunene River to south of the !Ugab River.

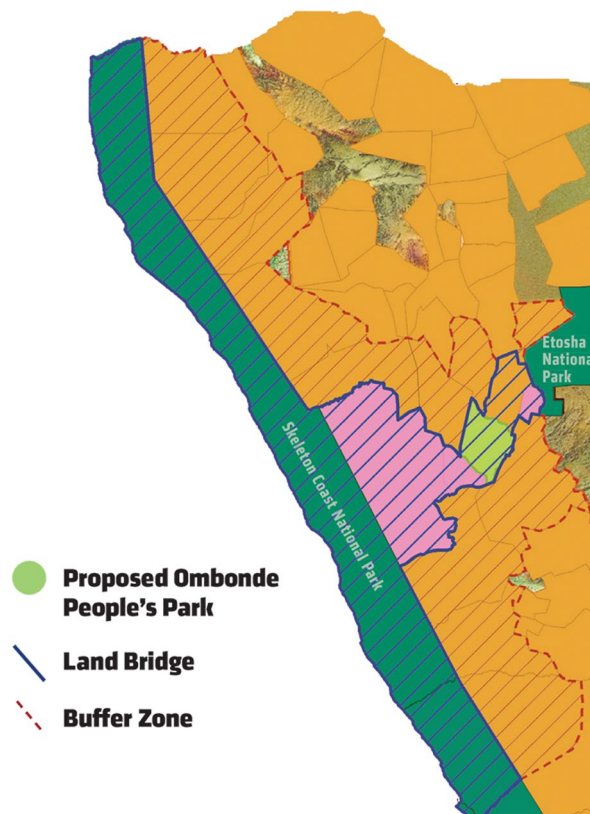


Fig. 13.16 ‘Building a land bridge’. Public domain image downloaded from <https://www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/summer-2023/articles/moving-forward#popup1>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Returning to the 1970s, Hall-Martin and co-authors report that in the midst of Eloff’s work in north-west Namibia, South African businessman Dr Anton Rupert—founding president of the Southern African Wildlife Foundation which became the Southern African Nature Foundation (SANF) and then WWF South Africa—announced in *African Wildlife* magazine that a large conservation area in the north-west of South West Africa was about to be created:

[a] contiguous conservation area covering 72 000 square kilometres is being planned for the northern part of South West Africa. This allays many fears which scientists of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Fund have had, as regards the future of this important habitat. This conservation area will include the existing Etosha Game Reserve [*sic.* Etosha National Park] as well as the Skeleton Coast [National] Park and will be more than three times the size of the Kruger National Park and indeed one of the largest in the world.⁸⁴

81 Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 62), Bollig (2020: 214)

82 *Ibid.*

83 KREA (2008), MET (2009)

84 Quoted in Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 63); also in Bollig (2020: 217)

Reading these 1970s proposals today, it is striking how audacious they are in certain respects. First, the drawing of boundaries for the huge area of north-west Namibia, based on rather little or limited published consultation with local inhabitants for their own views, expertise and concerns, seems suggestive of “coloniality”. Second, both land and people are radically *dehistoricised* in these proposals: i.e. their complex histories are downplayed or removed in various ways. Third, Indigenous histories associated with land between the Hoanib-Ugab Rivers seem to be especially “disappeared”. In different ways, these 1970s reports and proposals acted to “naturalise” prior clearances of people from the landscapes of this area. In doing so, an ideological stance mobilising for the expansion of conservation space was consolidated.⁸⁵

Although none of these proposals were enacted at the time, their ideas, language and suggestions clearly linger in various ways into the present. They find their way, for example, into new proposals for expanded protected areas of various kinds (as shown in Figure 13.16), and in how conservation issues in Etosha-Kunene are consistently framed around the necessity of a conservation corridor between Etosha and the Skeleton Coast.

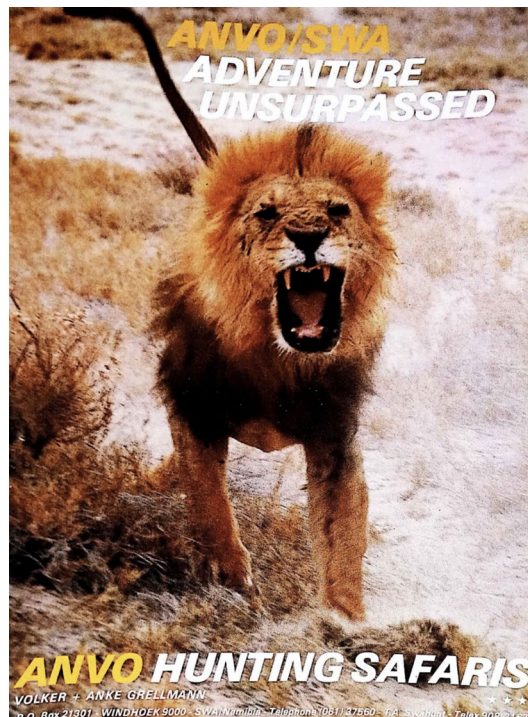


Fig. 13.17 Advert for ANVO Hunting Safaris. Source: scan from SWA Annual (1983: 22), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

What in fact happened in this 1970s moment was rather different to any of the proposals outlined above. In the late 1970s a 10-year trophy-hunting concession of 15,000 km² was leased by the Pretoria-based Department of Bantu Administration and Development to a German-Namibian hunting business called ANVO Hunting Safaris (see Figure 13.17).⁸⁶ It was led by a big-game hunter, the late Volker Grellman, described as ‘[o]ne of Namibia’s most famed hunters’ by the pro-hunting organisation Conservation Force, for which he remains listed on the Board of Advisors.⁸⁷ Grellman’s hunting concession extended from the Hoanib to the Ugab rivers, the area that for a short while had been the ‘western Etosha Game Park’, later described as ‘still game-rich and *largely unoccupied*’.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Cf. Bluwstein *et al.* (2024). With regards to Eloff and Rupert, Michael Bollig (2020: 216) points out that the assumed power of their position may also have been connected with their membership of the elite Afrikaner nationalist Broederbond network and other alliances.

⁸⁶ IlGarob (2002), Owen-Smith (2002). This establishment of a trophy hunting concession appears absent from Hall-Martin *et al.*’s (1988) and Bollig’s (2020) conservation histories of this area, and from reviews such as Owen-Smith (1996).

⁸⁷ See <https://www.conservationforce.org/board-of-advisors>

⁸⁸ Owen-Smith (2002: 2, emphasis added)

The hunting company's annual quota was for two trophy elephants north of the 'Red Line', which by this point had moved southwards to its present location (see Figure 13.1), plus 'problem elephants' as they occurred anywhere in Damaraland, as well as so-called 'common game'.⁸⁹ It is in this moment that a hunting camp was created near the site of the house of the former settler farmer at Palmwag Farm, eventually to become Palmwag Lodge,⁹⁰ although to Khoekhoegowab-speakers in the area it remains known and referred to as !Gao-!Unias.

In the 1970s, however, this land was simultaneously under management by the Damara Regional Authority (DRA) of the second-tier government system, based in Khorixas.⁹¹ What then follows appears to be a struggle over who has rights over this area and its wildlife, in a context of drought, war and over-hunting.⁹² In the late 1970s and early 1980s severe drought decimated wildlife and livestock in north-west Namibia, making indigenous fauna 'vulnerable to subsistence hunting by the now impoverished Herero and Damara inhabitants in the region' (exacerbated due to 'the army's issue of .303 rifles to several thousand Kaokoland men'⁹³); as well as to '[h]unting by government officials, the SADF and other non-residents',⁹⁴ whilst larger predators increased during this time.⁹⁵ Gaob Justus !Garoëb who headed the DRA writes of this period in very strong terms, saying:

[...] the colonial Government inaugurated their lackeys who, among others, made a mockery of our conservation efforts by simply granting Trophy Hunting Rights to Anvo hunting Safaris. This Safari Hunting became an embarrassment, worldwide because of their indiscriminate killing of [...] specifically elephants in their trophy-hunting spree.⁹⁶

Following the 1979–1982 drought, the Department of Nature Conservation (DNC) reportedly started negotiations with the Damara Executive Committee (DEC) of the DRA, led by Justus !Garoëb, and including Simpson Tjongarero (Education), Johannes Hendriks (Agriculture), and Volker Grellman of ANVO Safaris. As Owen-Smith reports, the aim was to re-proclaim 'the trophy hunting concession area in northern Damaraland', with 'an income sharing and joint management plan for the area' also worked out.⁹⁷ Due to low animal numbers and reduced hunting quotas, however, Grellman instead agreed 'to give up his concession if he was paid out for its remaining five years, as well as for his hunting camp at Palmwag'.⁹⁸ The DNC did not have the R63,000 needed for this buy-out, but the then SANF stepped in with a grant agreed 'on the condition that the DNC could guarantee that the area would be proclaimed',⁹⁹ presumably along the lines of the Anton Rupert supported Eloff plan mentioned above.

Assuming agreement from the DRA would be a 'formality', rather than realising that the DRA needed to be negotiated with as a legitimate and independent authority with powers of decision over territory in the homeland, the SANF paid ANVO in mid-1983 and Anton Rupert announced (once again)—this time on South African television—that 'the old (pre-1970) Etosha would soon be re-proclaimed', followed by a similar announcement by DNC officials on SWA television.¹⁰⁰ Former Administrator-General W. van Niekerk reportedly proposed to the DRA 'that a section of northern Damaraland, totaling about 1,2 million hectares, be proclaimed as a nature conservation area', but that 'the area would remain the property of the Damara people' albeit 'managed as a nature conservation area'.¹⁰¹ No 'prior consultation with the affected inhabitants of the region had been

89 *Ibid.*

90 Pers. comm. Duncan Gilchrist, 19.10.2017.

91 Owen-Smith (2002: 2)

92 Owen-Smith (1983: 4), Reardon (1986: 55), Hall-Martin *et al.* (1988: 64), Owen-Smith & Jacobsohn (1991: 10), Powell (1998: 23), Bollig (2020: 196–98)

93 Jacobsohn (1998[1990]: 45)

94 Owen-Smith (2002: 2, 8)

95 *Ibid.*, p. 2

96 !Garoëb (2002: 5)

97 Owen-Smith (2002: 4)

98 *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 4

100 *Ibid.*

101 Botha (2005: 187)

undertaken', however, and Justus ‖Garoëb, as Chairman of the DEC, pointed out that 'the people would turn against them' since the land was considered traditional land (as documented in Section 13.3).¹⁰²

Indeed, the DRA and its DEC were unimpressed at having this large area of land allocated to the Damaraland Homeland pulled from underneath them without replacement. The promise by DNC of 25% of revenues from entry into the concession was also a far cry from earlier promises of joint management of the area.¹⁰³ Early in 1984 the DNC announced that talks regarding the re-proclamation of 'western Etosha' had broken down and were asked by SANF to return the money paid in 1983 to Grellman.¹⁰⁴ ‖Garoëb is reported to have written in newspapers in 1984 that:

DNC's proposal for a large national park will compromise 2/3 of Damaraland, the traditional land of the people. This will have far reaching political implications, which means that people will lose control on decision making power and wealth of natural resources from the area, whilst also being disenfranchised from their farming benefits and potential economic opportunities from being traditional land owners.¹⁰⁵

13.5 Creating the Palmwag Tourism Concession

The Damara Regional Authority, and especially its leader Justus ‖Garoëb, wished to support conservation in Damaraland and reportedly worked with the DNC to halt the granting of hunting permits in the north-west.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the DRA did not wish to hand over this area of communal land to the government for it to be proclaimed as a 'park', as advocated in the proposals outlined in Section 13.4, particularly those by Eloff, Rupert and associates. *Gaob* (King) ‖Garoëb remembers these struggles with central government in South Africa and South West Africa in the following terms:

the only place where they wanted wildlife was Etosha. And they wanted us to link Etosha with western Damaraland and we did not want that because, firstly our area might be smaller because Etosha was not within Damaraland and we did not have any say on Etosha—now if we decided to join Etosha and western Damaraland that will fall with the central government and we will not have any say whatsoever. So it was a big fight. They wanted to extend Etosha to the western Damaraland. We did not want that. We rather want to extend Damaraland to Etosha so that we can have more say on the wildlife.¹⁰⁷

This is the moment in the mid-1980s when the Palmwag Tourism Concession in its present form came into existence, alongside the Etendeka and Hobatere Tourism Concessions (Figure 13.1), an aim being to promote rural development through tourism linked with wildlife, cultural heritage and the spectacular landscapes of Damaraland. As *Gaob* ‖Garoëb describes, 'we decided no no, this is not a hunting farm, it's just to make room for photography and all those good things so that our people could get hold of the areas not to kill but to photograph things'.¹⁰⁸ Initially blocked by the DNC on the grounds that tourism development is 'a central government responsibility',¹⁰⁹ the DRA decided instead 'to lease out the area to tourism operators, which they were legally entitled to do'.¹¹⁰

Drawing here on a 2002 report by Garth Owen-Smith,¹¹¹ in the mid-1980s, K.H. Grutemayer became the first operator of the Palmwag Tourism Concession, being leased the western concession of 582,622 ha of communal land by the DRA, with Louw Schoeman who ran Skeleton Coast Fly-in Safaris taking on the southern concession located south of the newly positioned vet fence. At the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 187–88

¹⁰³ Owen-Smith (2002: 4)

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in the biography of *Gaob* Justus ‖Garoëb written in preparation for receipt of an honorary doctorate from the University of Namibia in 2022, shared by Tsukhoe ‖Garoës, 28.4.2022.

¹⁰⁶ *Gaob* Justus ‖Garoëb, Anker, 7.3.2022.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Owen-Smith (2002: 6)

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7

time Grutemayer already ‘ran occasional 4x4 safaris [through his company Desert Adventure Safari Tours, DAS] through the west of Damaraland’. Palmwag Lodge, consisting of a small campsite and five reed hut shelters converted from the former Palmwag hunting camp, opened in July 1986.¹¹² The DRA derived an annual lease fee and a small levy charged to people driving into the ‘open area’ near to the lodge that remains the ‘Palmwag Day Visitors Area’ today. Access restrictions relied on a 1928 law ‘requiring persons driving off proclaimed roads on State Land to obtain a permit from the “Secretary for South West Africa”’, which in fact continues to be deployed in asserting ‘no entry’ to the area (see Section 13.6). In 1986 the former ANVO hunting concession was split along the Palmwag-Sesfontein road to become the Palmwag and Etendeka concessions to the west and east respectively (see Figure 13.1), with the desert area south of the newly positioned vet fence and !U#gab river becoming, for a while, a third concession area. These Concessions were seen by the DRA very much as leases for the exclusive use of an area for a specific identified purpose, in this case, tourism. As !Garoëb later writes,

[s]uch [a] Concession Area can only be exclusive in relation to the specific purpose for which it was granted/leased. Concessionaire can therefore not prevent the right of entry by others, such as indigenous peoples of the area who for what ever cultural or religious reasons or for collecting wood, wild food, herbs etc. may want to enter such Concession area without any permission to do so.¹¹³

From the Regional Authority’s perspective, the concession was not intended to keep out people who had cross-generational links with the area and its resources. The DRA also intended to support development of a modern tourism route that would enhance self-determination through connecting and promoting different sites through the region. This is clear from an amazingly forward-looking brochure encouraging tourism through the Damaraland Homeland in the 1980s. In the DRA’s tourism vision for the homeland, Palmwag was clearly part of a route that connected sites such as the Brandberg/Dâures, Twyfelfontein/|Ui-!laes, Doros Crater and the Sesfontein Fort of German colonial times, which the DRA began to renovate using labour by young people in Sesfontein.¹¹⁴ The brochure combines images of diverse local peoples, livestock and wildlife in ways that strongly prefigure the conservancy ethos and aesthetic that emerged in the 1990s, as shown in Figure 13.18.

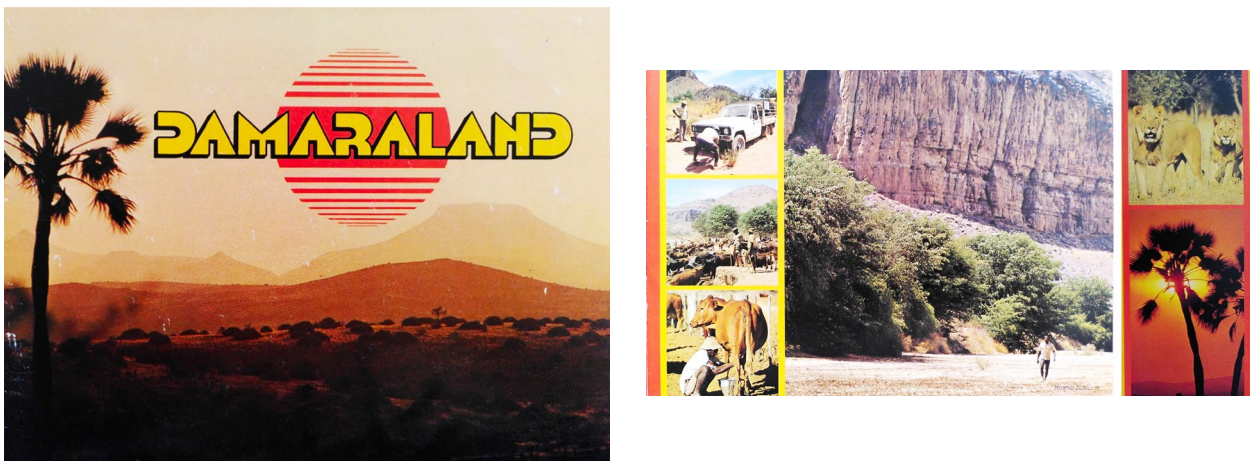


Fig. 13.18 Pages from a mid-1980s brochure produced under the Damaraland Regional Authority (DRA) advertising specific tourism routes through Damaraland and depicting a combination of spectacular landscapes, wildlife, cultural heritage and livelihood practices. Source: DRA (n.d., used with permission), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

¹¹² Pers. comm. Duncan Gilchrist, 19.10.2017.

¹¹³ !Garoëb (2002: 9)

¹¹⁴ Gaob Justus !Garoëb, Anker, 7.3.2022; pers. comm. Fredrick !Hawaxab, 15.8.2023.

13.6 To conclude: The Palmwag Concession, post-Independence

Namibia gained Independence on 21 March 1990, becoming the Republic of Namibia, at which point the second-tier authorities were dismantled. According to Owen-Smith, in 1993 the new Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) decided that the tourism concessions of the north-west should fall under the Directorate of Tourism, and were renewed annually until 1995.¹¹⁵ The emphasis of wildlife conservation in this immediate post-Independence moment was on extending wildlife utilisation possibilities into communally-managed areas, i.e. the pre-Independence homeland areas beyond freehold settler farming areas. In 1995 the MET thus published a position paper on 'Wildlife Management, utilisation and tourism on communal land: Using conservancies and wildlife councils to enable communal area residents to use and benefit from wildlife on their land'.¹¹⁶ The Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 5 of 1996 enabled the establishment of conservancies on communal land, and consumptive use of wildlife in communal areas to facilitate livelihood benefits.

In conjunction with the registration of conservancies in the north-west (see Chapter 3), this process effected a rapid and significant shift away from the former DRA's emphasis on rather low-key photographic tourism, towards intensive wildlife harvesting (currently in decline due to drought and over-harvesting),¹¹⁷ and external investment into the building of high-end tourism facilities. From 1995 the lessees of the north-west tourism concessions were given 5-year concessions 'with the option of a five-year renewal', with a growing emphasis on negotiating benefit-sharing contracts with neighbouring conservancies:¹¹⁸ culminating in the contractual arrangements indicated in Figure 3.3. For the Palmwag Concession the neighbouring conservancies are Torra on its southern border, registered in 1998, and Sesfontein and Anabeb to its north, both registered in July 2003. In 2011 these conservancies 'were given tourism rights over the Palmwag concession',¹¹⁹ via the signing of a 'Head Concession Agreement for the Palmwag Concession, Kunene Region' with the MET. These conservancies subsequently entered into contractual arrangements with tourism operators in the Palmwag Concession, namely Wilderness Safaris, Antigua Investments, and more recently the Gondwana Collection of Lodges; facilitated by the establishment of a legal Trust—the Big 3 Trust—headed by the Chairmen of the three conservancies. In contrast to the approach of the DRA before Independence, and no doubt connected with recent poaching scares in relation especially to black rhino, a post-Independence emphasis on boundary-marking and access restriction is noticeable (see Figure 13.19).



Fig. 13.19 'No entry' sign marking the boundary of the Palmwag Concession, following new contractual arrangements between the then MET, the three conservancies neighbouring the concession, and one of the tourism operators (Wilderness Safaris). Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 20.11.2014, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

115 Owen-Smith (2002: 11–12)

116 MET (1995)

117 NACSO (2022)

118 Owen-Smith (2002: 11–12)

119 Thouless *et al.* (2014: 328)

At the same time, however, the concession continues to be located within the Damaraland Communal Land Area, as delineated in Namibia's Communal Land Reform Act, 5 of 2002.¹²⁰ A function of this Act is to permit the registration of Customary Land Rights within Communal Land Areas, following approval by both the relevant Regional Land Board and recognised Traditional Authority (TA) under the Namibian Traditional Authorities Act, 25 of 2000 (also see Chapter 6). The Customary Land Rights Certificate shared in Figure 13.20, for example, has thus been approved by the Kunene Communal Land Board and the ‡Aa-Dama TA. It seems likely that the Nami-Daman Traditional Authority, formalised in 2021 and working primarily from Sesfontein/!Nani|aus,¹²¹ will be an increasingly important actor regarding land issues through this western area into the future. This TA represents families with cross-generational histories connected with this western area, including the Palmwag Concession, as documented in Section 13.3.


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
MINISTRY OF LANDS AND RESETTLEMENT

Certificate No: **KUNCLB-** [redacted] Form 2

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF CUSTOMARY LAND RIGHT
As in the Communal Land Reform Act (Section 25, Regulation 5)

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT A

Farming and Residential Unit

(description of customary land right which has been allocated as described on the back)

in respect of

Sesfontein Village in Damaraland Communal area

(proportion of land in respect of which customary land right has been allocated)

measuring

2.8 ha

has been allocated to

[redacted]

(full names of person to whom the right has been allocated)

of

Sesfontein Naodais

(resident at address of person to whom right has been allocated)

Signature of Chairperson/Secretary of the Board 

Date 

The parcel is situated within:
Sesfontein Village
Damaraland Communal area
Sesfontein Constituency
Kunene Region
The parcel has been approved by:
Aodaman Traditional Authority
Kunene Communal Land Board

Fig. 13.20 An example of a Certificate of Registration of a Customary Land Right for a 'farming and residential unit', as per Communal Land Reform Act 2002, plus amendments, showing the Land Board and Traditional Authority approval. Author's research data, shared with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Indeed, running through the dynamics regarding the Palmwag area and its neighbours seems to be a tension between two key articles in Namibia's constitution: namely Article 95(l) affirming sustainable use of Namibia's 'living natural resources'; and Article 19 affirming the right to 'enjoy,

¹²⁰ GRN (2013[2002]: 40–43)

¹²¹ GRN Government Gazette no. 7786, 14.4.2022.

practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion'.¹²² In relation to communal areas such as the Damaraland Communal Land Area, in which the Palmwag and other tourism concessions are situated, the former article has tended to be used to promote external investment and profit, on the understanding that fees are paid to conservancies to offset the use of land and living resources for these purposes. As observed elsewhere,¹²³ however, an effect has been a deepening of the loss of access to 'places and "resources" with which cultural expression is entangled', giving rise to potential friction between these two dimensions of the constitution (also see Chapters 12, 14 and 15).

In particular, the Indigenous histories and values documented in Section 13.3 remain in the shadows.¹²⁴ Indeed, conservationists have been urged explicitly to treat with caution Damara/ǀNūkhoe claims to the concessions areas they created, namely Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere. In a statement that simultaneously discounts ethnicity whilst promoting 'local Herero traditional authorities', Owen-Smith, for example, writes:

[a]lthough the Damara Representative Authority (under Chief Justus Garoeb) can rightly claim to have played a major role in the conservation of wildlife in Damaraland, as well as having created the present tourist concession areas, this institution no longer exists. Consequently, although some of the traditional leaders in the present Damara Royal House were previously Damara Executive Committee members, their claim to benefit from the concession areas in the future should be treated with caution. Namibia's new constitution no longer recognizes land-rights based on ethnicity and the local Herero traditional authorities—who have steadfastly supported conservation and kept livestock out of the concession areas—could make equal claims to benefit economically from them.¹²⁵

Since Independence it has indeed been documented for conservancies neighbouring the Palmwag Concession that 'Damara' are concerned 'only the Herero are benefitting [from the conservancy, in this case Anabeb]. They are the ones who come to hunt; they receive the fat meat [...]'.¹²⁶ Following the late Val Plumwood's environmental justice analysis of 'shadow places' as 'sacrificial' or 'denied' places, it appears that certain groups of people here are constructed and treated as 'shadow people': as literally in the shadows of others who, for whatever reason, are able to be more visible, more *recognised*, although this recognition may 'rest on the subordination or instrumentalisation' of others.¹²⁷ This situation, however, does not make the shared realities of those in the shadows, or the repeated distortions of their histories, any less real. Instead, it poses a challenge to attend to injustices from the past that remain in the shadows, but continue to haunt the present through ongoing real, but poorly understood, concerns, and the frictions they give rise to.

This chapter has documented dynamics in an arguably longstanding tussle between the push for more space for conservation control, Indigenous histories and cultural heritage, and profit-making potential. The dance between these very different "powers" in the specific situation of Palmwag will no doubt continue into the future, making it important to understand their contexts and histories.

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¹²⁴ ǁGaroëb (1991), ǁGaroës (2021)

¹²⁵ Owen-Smith (2002: 13)

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14. Living next to Etosha National Park: The case of Ehi-Rovipuka

Arthur Hoole and Sian Sullivan

Abstract

This chapter considers the implications of being park-adjacent for ovaHerero pastoralists now living in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. Using PhD research conducted in 2006 and 2007 as a baseline, the chapter focuses on three dimensions. First, some aspects of the complex and remembered histories of association with the western part of what is now Etosha National Park are traced via a “memory mapping” methodology with ovaHerero elders. Second, experiences of living next to the park boundary are recounted and analysed, drawing on a structured survey with 40 respondents. Most interviewees indicated that no benefits were received at the time from the national park. They also expressed desires for grazing rights—especially for emergency grazing during dry periods—as well as access to ancestral birthplaces, graves and traditional resource use areas, and involvement in joint tourism development ventures inside the park. Finally, different dimensions of local knowledge are recounted, including of wildlife presence and mobilities through the wider region, “veld-foods”, and school-children’s perceptions of Etosha National Park and the conservancy. Although the research reported here was carried out some years ago, circumstances in Ehi-Rovipuka have changed rather little. The conservancy remains along the border of a national park, and peoples’ histories of utilising, moving through, being born and desiring to be buried in the western reaches of the park, continue to exist. The chapter argues that more awareness of how social, ecological and historical dimensions of the broader Etosha landscape are connected is essential for achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes.

14.1 Introducing Ehi-Rovipuka: A park-adjacent conservancy¹

Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy is a narrow conservancy stretching north to south alongside the western boundary of Etosha National Park (ENP) (see Figure 14.1). This proximity to the park is a key reason for why Ehi-Rovipuka, together with its western conservancy neighbour Omatendeka, has been the focus of the establishment of an “Ombonde People’s Park”, recently reframed as the “Ombonde People’s Landscape”, as considered in detail in Chapter 3. The geographical situation of Ehi-Rovipuka presents a particular array of opportunities and constraints for those living in the conservancy.

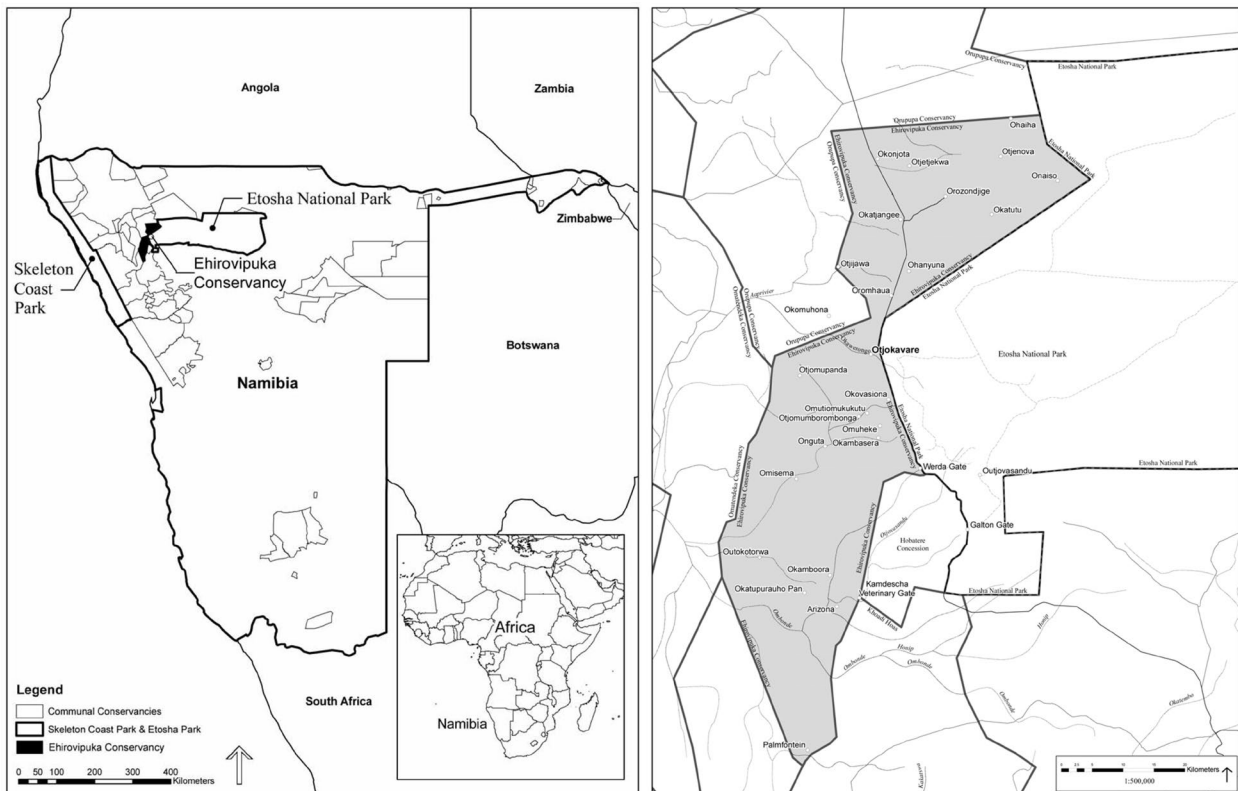
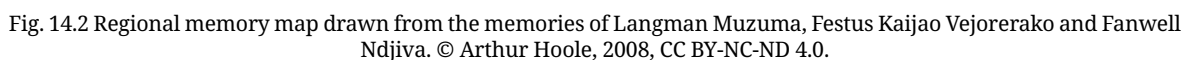


Fig. 14.1 Maps showing the positioning of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy adjacent to the western boundary of Etosha National Park. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

This chapter draws on PhD research carried out by first author Arthur Hoole in 2006 and 2007,² brought together and edited by Sian Sullivan. Our aim is to provide historical depth for the context of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy and the implications of being park-adjacent for ovaHerero pastoralists now living there. The chapter draws on data generated through a suite of participatory research methodologies, including: “memory mapping” to document past associations with, and mobilities through, the wider landscape (Section 14.2); a structured survey concerning experiences of living adjacent to the park (Section 14.3); and documented local knowledge of wildlife in the wider region in relation to its relevance for conservation activities today (Section 14.4). Although this research was carried out some years ago, circumstances in Ehi-Rovipuka have changed little.

- 1 Acknowledgements by Arthur Hoole: I wish to acknowledge several indispensable contributions to my research in Namibia. Asser Ujaha of Otjomuho ably served as my field assistant and community interpreter. Village elders the late Langman Muzuma, the late Festus Kaijao Vejorerako and Fanwell Ndjiva shared their remarkable memories through animated conversations and maps they collectively prepared. The villagers of Otjomuho kindly agreed to be interviewed and generously shared their experiences. Leslie Hoole manually recorded every interview I conducted and took every step of our journey in “Etosha-Kunene”. I also thank Ute Dieckmann, Selma Lendelvo and Sian Sullivan for inviting me to participate in this important project. Sian made a remarkable effort to include my research in the book, leading to my inviting her to be named as a co-author.
- 2 Hoole (2008)

14.2 Memory mapping with ovaHerero elders in Ehi-Rovipuka



Complex, remembered histories of association with the western part of what is now ENP were traced via a “memory mapping” methodology with ovaHerero elders, in which maps of remembered historical mobilities through the landscape were drawn on maps of the area. The resultant maps were supplemented by interviews with the elders who prepared the maps. Figures 14.2 and 14.3 are memory maps prepared by three elders. The late Langman Muzuma was the headman in Otjokavare (formerly Kowares) at the time of the research. He was born inside the boundaries of what is now ENP at Otjovasandu in 1912. Festus Kaijao Vejorerako, was born near Ombombo, outside the present-day park, and is the half-brother of both the former headman Kephass Muzuma and the present headman Langman Muzuma. Fanwell Ndjiva was also born at Ombombo, in 1941, and is a councillor with the Traditional Authority with jurisdiction at Ehi-Rovipuka (the Vita Thom Traditional Authority³). These three elders were 95, 80 and 66 years of age respectively at the time

3 Selma Lendelvo, pers. comm. 14.12.2023.

Concurrent with these maps being prepared, Festus Kaijao Vejorerako was interviewed alone and then together with Fanwell Ndjiva. The headman, Langman Muzuma, was also interviewed on a separate occasion. These interviews forming the basis of Section 14.2.1 were essentially story-telling by the elders in otjiHerero. They were translated as spoken by Asser Ujaha mentioned above, and recorded in handwriting. No attempt has been made to edit these narratives for tense or sentence construction.

14.2.1 A Story of the Hereros in Etosha

A full narrative of ovaHerero history in western Etosha related by elders now living in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy is shared here, and should be read together with the “memory maps” distilling key events and mobilities comprising this narrative (Figures 14.2 and 14.3).

Festus Kaijao Vejorerako (alone in first meeting, 24.4.2007)

Etosha is a place of my families. My grandfather and grandmother were born there; also my father and my mother. My older brother, Kephass Muzuma, former headman, was born at Okavao and Langman Muzuma, the present headman, was born at Otjovasandu [for the locations of these places see Figures 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3]. During that time the headmen had some power to control the area but the Hereros were killed by the Germans and we were split up as families and not too many were left [see Chapter 1]. We were chased out of the park when the whites came from Angola to settle on farmlands in 1928–1929.⁶ The South African Administration pushed us out.

Some of the headmen from other settlements today also lived inside the park. It was all Herero land. The Bushmen and the Herero lived inside the park. The Herero had their cattle there and the Bushmen killed our livestock if they couldn't get enough wild animals. The Herero planted maize and the Bushmen did not.

We moved from the places in the park in 1928–1929 to Ombombo [in Kaokoveld]. My parents and others first went to see if Ombombo would be a good place and I was born there in 1927. We moved back to Otjokavare when the whites moved out in 1969⁷ [from the farm Kowares]. We moved up to where we are today. Our headman (Kephass Muzuma) was rich and had lots of cattle at Ombombo. More cattle were being born and he decided to come back to settle where he was born at Okavao [in the western part of ENP]. He asked permission from the South African Administration and at that time this was a land of wildlife and at that time he was not allowed to go inside the park. When we came back some whitemen cattle were still here but officials said it was not healthy for the cattle to mix [also see #Nūkhoe narratives in Chapter 13 regarding similar experiences].

Festus Kaijao Vejorerako and Fanwell Ndjiva (meeting on 27.4.2007, Festus spoke briefly at the beginning of this second meeting and then remained silent as Fanwell Ndjiva picked up the story)

From 1929 up to now he stayed where his brothers were in Ombombo. The people were told they must move away as the area was given to whites from Angola to move in there. An advanced party went to Ombombo in 1927 and found natural springs there. My parents were part of this group and he was born in that area in 1927.

The people had moved into the park area in 1907–1908 from the south, provoked by the Herero/German war and his parents were caught up in the fighting [see Chapter 6]. People escaped from the Omaruru area to Outjo and west to Onguati (Figure 14.2). They spread out from cattle posts between Outjo and Kamanjab. From there they moved north into Kaross and the west part of the park area.

Fanwell Ndjiva then speaks and tells the rest of the story.

My mother and father gave birth of me on the west side of the Ombombo area in 1941 on July 4. As a boy I started herding goats and sheep. At age 18 my father takes me to herd cattle. In 1967, the former headman, Kephass Muzuma, part of my father's family, was a rich man and took our cattle and his together. I stayed close with Kephass Muzuma while I herded—he was born in the park. His parents were chased out by the South African government because the area was given to settlers coming from Angola and South Africa. The South African administration pushed people out of the Okavao area making way for the whites to come but they didn't really settle in this area as there were not enough of them.

6 This is a reference to the Trekboers who had travelled through north-central and north-west Namibia to settle in Angola in the late 1800s, but were encouraged to settle in South West Africa in the late 1920s (see Chapters 1 and 2).

7 Referring to when the farm Kowares was purchased by the then SWA government for the Kaokoland Homeland, following the Odendaal Commission of the early 1960s (see Chapters 2 and 13).

In 1967 we moved from Ombombo to the area by Sesfontein and Warmquelle. The South African governor came to Warmquelle and told the headman that our cattle are not healthy and that we cannot move across the Hoanib River—next to the big mountain [Urubao] people cannot move cattle. Langman Muzuma stayed at Otjondeka and could not move his cattle. Over a certain line he could not go below it in the area between Otjivero and Warmquelle he couldn't go south of that.

When this news came to Kephaz Muzuma, who was head of all the headmen of Kaokoland, he went to Opuwo to meet the South West African Administration Governor, who was a white man. Before Kephaz Muzuma met with the governor he called to all the communities of Kaokoland and told them that they chased me away from the land that I am born in and they wanted to bring in Angolans and South Africans. He felt they had enough land south of the park to farm on. Now I want to go back to the place where I was born but my cattle are said to be not healthy enough and my cattle's blood must be tested so that I can go back where I was born. The area I am born in will now be in Etosha National Park. This is the message that he wanted to take to the governor in Opuwo—that he wanted to move back there where I came from.

At the meeting with communities some people disagreed with Kephaz Muzuma to take his cattle for blood tests to go back to where he was born to finish his life there. Some herders went south of the Hoanib River and moved south to Otjomumbonde before the blood testing was done. When they came to Otjomumbonde there was a white person farming in the area who saw the cattle and told the governor at Opuwo about the cattle. Kephaz Muzuma was in Windhoek at this time and when he received this message from the South African governor he refused to move the cattle. He said the South African government can go and shoot the cattle and you will pay for the blood of those cattle. In 1969 this happened. Fanwell was a herder with these cattle and they were shamed to hear this news so they took the cattle and went back to the area of Warmquelle.

In 1969 when Kephaz Muzuma came back from Windhoek the cattle were already back in the Warmquelle area. He asked why the cattle had not been left there and said to take them back so that the whites could come and shoot them if they want—we will bring more and start another herd. Kephaz Muzuma really wanted to occupy this area. They took cattle back but only ones not breeding at the time and left others behind. Kephaz Muzuma came to the herders again, including Fanwell, and told them to go and investigate places with enough water for our cattle and they went to Onguta, Otjomumborombonga and Otjokavare in 1970.

[At this point it was asked why Kephaz Muzuma did not direct them to go back Okavao.]

Fanwell Ndjiva continued:

There was no spring there—in old times dry for water. The distance was too far so we go step by step. This whole area was part of the park in those days and larger than now [see Chapter 2]. They did eventually want to get back to the area where Kephaz Muzuma was born. They needed an area with springs to water the cattle.

In 1970 the government drilled a borehole at Ohanjuna and didn't use it. Kephaz Muzuma went to the government to put a pump there for the cattle and the government did that and 2,000 oxen went to Ohanjuna [north of Otjokavare/Kowares].

In 1970, the MET [Ministry of Environment and Tourism⁸] shot your dogs sleeping right next to you because they were in part of the park and the dogs could catch wildlife. You could not have a gun, or a bow and arrow.

Kephaz Muzuma's permanent house was at Ombombo but he moved around to visit the cattle posts because he was the chief of all. This place was in the middle of all and he was the chief of all. In 1975, after cattle is settled more people moved south with their cattle and Kephaz Muzuma brought his holy fire to Otjokavare to settle permanently here.

The park fence was built—a survey was done in 1972. At that time the Hereros disagreed with the fence and reported this to the chief of the Hereros. They took cattle across the survey line to test ground minerals. The government caught Kephaz Muzuma and put him in custody at Kamanjab.

When Kephaz Muzuma was at Otjokavare he asked the government to go back into the park and they said no. The government gave grazing rights north of the Ombonde River and south of Hobatere. Headman Muzuma met with the chief of the Damara [Gaob Justus //Garoëb, see Chapter 13] and traded the grazing area to the Damara for the area south of the Ombonde River to Palmfontein.

Kephaz Muzuma said to the South African government that he could not die with a good heart without returning to his birthplace inside Etosha. In 1980, there was a big drought and Kephaz Muzuma ordered his people to cut the park fence and let cattle into the park. People from the MET asked who cut the fence and Kephaz Muzuma said it was him. Another delegation came from Windhoek and asked Kephaz

8 In these years the government unit responsible for conservation would have had a different name.

Muzuma, if we give you minerals, salt and grass for your cattle will you stop cutting the fence? Kephass Muzuma said yes and there was no more cutting of the fence.

Kephass Muzuma died and was buried at Otjokavare in July 2001, next to the road. A lot of chiefs come and say he is very brave and must bury him where all brave people are buried. But we buried him in an area taken by force by the South African government and everyone can see it from all directions—the owner of this area.

14.2.2 Interpreting the elders' stories and memory maps

The stories told by the elders, and the maps they produced of their memories and reflections, provide evidence of local residents being displaced from a national park and becoming decoupled from resources they had used and formed dependant relationships with. The stories tell of how ovaHerero people occupied and used the western part of present-day ENP from at least around 1908 until the late 1920s. Members of the Ehi-Rovipuka community today are part of this history, including two of the elders who participated in the story telling and mapping. Festus Kaijao Vejorerako also stated that his grandparents and parents were born in the park area, suggesting that ovaHerero people perhaps lived in the park area prior to moving into central Namibia, and that their descendants may have returned to the park area during the colonial war of 1904–1908 (see Chapter 1). The elders reported that their families moved back into the western part of Etosha at the end of the war (as shown on Figure 14.2), as part of the ovaHerero diaspora that resulted from the German genocide. The elders indicated a north-south line in the western part of Etosha (Figure 14.2) that ovaHerero stayed west of. This sense of ovaHerero territory in Etosha exists alongside other inhabitants of the land that is now ENP. Hai||om Bushmen were concentrated to the south and east of Etosha Pan (see Chapters 4, 15 and 16). Historical records also report that mobilities of “Bergdamara” (†Nūkhoen) included the area west of Etosha Pan,⁹ and Owambo herders are documented as utilising areas such as Namutoni to provide water and grazing for large herds of cattle¹⁰ (see Chapter 1).

An especially significant revelation from the stories recounted in Section 14.2.1 is the reason given for displacement of ovaHerero from present day ENP: specifically, that people were ‘chased out of the park’ when white settlers came from Angola in 1928–1929. These settlers were the Trekboers who had left the Cape Colony in South Africa following legal changes effecting the liberation of enslaved workers; who then trekked northwards through the Kalahari and into the territory now known as Namibia, eventually settling in southern Angola in the late 19th century (as documented in Chapter 1). They were offered the opportunity to re-settle in Namibia by the former South West African Administration (SWAA), amidst the administration’s focus on amplifying the numbers of white South African farmers settled in the territory (see Chapter 2). In prioritising these white settler farmers, ovaHerero and others were summarily dispatched from landscapes west and south of Etosha, in the corresponding and iterative effort to establish a livestock free zone between the southern Police Zone and native livestock in the north (see Chapter 13, Figure 13.3). The ostensible aim was to prevent transmission of foot and mouth disease and lung disease from African cattle.¹¹ In other words, it was the competition for place and space with colonial settlers that was the pretext for re-locating the ovaHerero from present day Etosha.

This fact is at odds with an underlying assumption that local residents were initially displaced by a national park conservation agenda. In fact, as the elders’ stories unfold further, we learn that ovaHerero were relocated to the Ombombo area, which at the time, was within Game Reserve No. 2 but simultaneously part of the Kaokoveld Native Reserve, established in 1947 (see Chapter 2). OvaHerero were not in fact removed from the game reserve of the day, but were relocated to a more remote part of it, away from a place and space intended for colonial farm settlement and cattle

⁹ See Peter Möller’s narrative in Rudner & Rudner (1974[1899]: 195–96)

¹⁰ Andersson (1861: 183–84), Berry (1997: 3)

¹¹ Interview with Garth Owen-Smith, 2007.

production. The concern about African cattle mixing with colonial farm cattle runs throughout the story in Section 14.2.1. It explains why the intended return to former grazing territories led by headman Kephass Muzuma in the 1960s was spurned by the South African administration.

A clear theme in the elders' stories and their mapping is indeed Kephass Muzuma's vision to return his people to the place of his birth at Okavao, around 30 kms south-east of Otjokavare in the west of ENP (see Figures 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3). Kephass Muzuma was born at Okavao in 1910 and lived in the park area until being forced out as a young man with his parents in 1928–1929, when they moved north-west to Ombombo, beyond the present-day park boundaries. He had come to know the western part of Etosha National Park as his home and he never forgot the area. His father, Kamuhona Muzuma was headman at that time, and in 1946 Kephass succeeded his father as chief.¹²

A strong sense of place emerges from the movements of people and the various sites depicted. For example, four cattle posts located in a north-west alignment inside the western part of the park carry particularly evocative names (see Figure 14.3). Onavatinda means the family place of the family named Tinda and Otjuhaka means the place of the beasts (cattle) with white stomachs and hooves. Otjongejama is the place of lions and Okavao—birthplace of Kephass Muzuma—is the place of the shield. Further to the south, Otjovasandu is the place of young men and a perennial spring made it an outpost for watering cattle in the winter months. The presence of lion, rhino and elephants required the fittest and most fearless young men to protect the cattle.¹³ Otjatjiweza is the place of the family Tjiweza and Otjomirungu is a place of meeting and people coming together. Otjimbokowe is a rocky place used as a refuge during fighting. Okawamburo is a place of the small spring and Otjokavare is the place of small palms and much water. Onaruwondo is the place of small round houses. These ovaHerero names are thus full of references to families, cattle, wild animals, water sources, vegetation, and terrain, all meaningful elements in the cultural life that took place in western Etosha (for more on placenames and meanings across the cultural diversity of the Etosha-Kunene area see Chapters 6, 12, 13 and 15).

Kephass Muzuma's desire to move back to the park area in the late 1960s was ultimately denied. When his advance parties reached present-day Otjokavare they were frustrated by the South African administration in their attempts to move into the park area. Soon afterwards the park fences were built and efforts to move cattle back into prior grazing areas were met with denials by the government and the temporary imprisonment of Kephass Muzuma when he directed his people to defy the park fence line. At his death in 2001 his followers deliberately chose to bury him as close to the park boundary as possible, and other interviews indicated a wish to move the former headman's bones back to his birthplace Okavao, now inside the park. There is clearly a lingering desire for the present Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy area to be reconnected with pastures, ancestral territory and cultural heritage inside the park. Instead, the conservancy remains split from former pastures, the park fence running along its long eastern boundary rendering this artificial demarcation both visible and more-or-less impassable.

14.3 What is it like to live next to Etosha National Park?

It was only with the evolution of a park conservation agenda following the Second World War and the fencing of Etosha in the early 1970s (as outlined in Chapter 2) that ovaHerero were denied access to the newly delineated park area specifically for wildlife conservation reasons. Until that time, and similarly to the experience of Hai||om (see Chapters 4, 15 and 16), wildlife harvesting by ovaHerero had been tolerated in the historical game reserve areas, even though official legislation may have suggested otherwise. This situation correlates well with responses to a question posed in villager

¹² Ujaha interview, 2007. See Hoole & Berkes (2010) for more details about these mobilities in the first half of the 20th century.

¹³ Berry *et al.* (1997)

interviews enquiring about how peoples' ancestors may have utilised wildlife inside the park. In this section experiences of living next to the park boundary are recounted and analysed, drawing on a structured survey with 40 villagers in Otjokavare. The respondents included representatives from 19 extended family households, as well as village elders, community game guards (CGGs), school teachers, pupils and villagers employed by the conservancy. An effort was made to interview both men and women: of the 40 participants, 22 were male and 18 were female. This survey featured a series of questions, some of which are included in Table 14.1, that aimed to understand present-day relationships between the community and the park.

Table 14.1. Survey questions regarding experiences of living next to Etosha National Park asked to 40 respondents living in Otjokavare, Ehi-Rovipuka.

Park questions	
1	What is it like living right next to Etosha National Park?
2	What do community people do in Etosha National Park?
3	Did your ancestors live in the Etosha Park area? Where? What are the names of these places?
4	What wild animals did your ancestors use in the Etosha National Park?
5	What benefits do you receive from Etosha National Park?
6	What benefits would you like to receive from Etosha National Park?

A fundamental first question asked to villagers was 'what is it like to live next to the park'? Responses to this question are summarised in Table 14.2. They indicate a high affinity with the elders' story-telling and mapping recounted in Section 14.2. Most respondents (55%) reported the story of people being chased from the park and the desire to return to the birthplaces of their ancestors inside the park. Almost a third (30%) referred to following their headman back to his birthplace, but being stopped by the park formation and fencing. Most of the remaining responses referred to frustrations dealing with denial of access to grazing and water in the park. A significant number (25%) noted the value of the park for seeing animals and for educating learners (pupils), mostly from school teachers and pupils. Virtually all respondents (98%) indicated their ancestors had lived in ENP. In shorter interviews with a few people from other villages in the conservancy, as well as with school students interviewed from other communities, all respondents from other communities in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy indicated they had ancestors who had lived in ENP.

In terms of wildlife use, most of the villagers' responses (65%) indicated their ancestors within the present area of the park utilised the same animals they use today outside the park for meat. A further 23% of responses indicated that their ancestors had hunted animals inside the park for meat, skins and animal parts, while several noted some species they cannot find outside the park today that were hunted by ancestors inside the park, such as red hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus caama*) and blue wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus*). A few interviewees also mentioned the gathering of field foods inside the park by their ancestors. At this time, the vast and remote Kaokoveld region was patrolled by only a handful of personnel, mitigating against indigenous wildlife use being denied or penalised by the government. Firearms were not widely used by ovaHerero during this time, and any harvested wildlife was for subsistence use in association with semi-nomadic pastoralism. These various factors explain why ovaHerero use of wildlife remained largely uninterrupted by the early colonial administration.

Table 14.2. Experiences of living next to Etosha National Park.

Villager responses	Frequency mentioned	Percentage of respondents (%)
Some people or their relatives were born inside the park, were chased out and want to return to their birthplaces	22	55
Followed our headman to return to his birthplace but the park was formed, fenced and “we couldn’t move inside; South Africa Administration stopped us”	12	30
A good experience and a privilege: can see animals; learners can see wildlife, can use in the curriculum; promotes a positive awareness of conservation	10	25
Move the fence back 10-20 km, to provide more grazing for our cattle and access to historically important areas and springs	6	15
Park and fence were not here first; the people were here first	6	15
It makes us angry—“we can’t even get access to water in a drought”	3	7.5
Government will not let us graze in the park	3	7.5
No response	3	7.5

When asked what people do in the park today, the vast majority (83%) said that they did ‘nothing’. The remainder noted that some villagers had obtained jobs in the park. Two comments were particularly illustrative, namely ‘we cannot even bury our dead there any more’, and ‘the fence defines the relationship. We cannot go past it’. When asked what benefits are received from ENP today, 35 of the 40 villagers interviewed (88%) indicated no benefits were received and 10% noted that jobs were provided by the park. Meat supply, conservation, translocation of animals, and the protection of villagers from predators each received only one or two mentions. One quote is especially illustrative, corresponding with responses analysed in Chapter 5:

[t]he colonial system gave a lot of pain. We had hoped with the new government after Independence that we might get some rights but nothing has come. We are still crying from the past until now.

A final park-related question asked villagers what benefits they would like to receive from ENP. The most frequent reply was a desire for grazing rights, especially for emergency grazing (62.5%) during drought, followed by involvement in joint tourism development ventures inside the park (47.5%). A variety of other potential benefits were identified (Figure 14.4), including re-settlement in traditional areas, fences to protect the school hostel and yard in Otjokavare, the ability to visit traditional areas and burial areas inside the park and the translocation of some park animals for community use and revenue generation. Some villagers suggested removing the park fence to allow animals and people to move freely, and to permit the harvest of field foods and medicinal plants inside the park, as in the past; fewer responses also mentioned jobs, meat sharing, safe transport for learners to school, and burials in the park with ancestors.

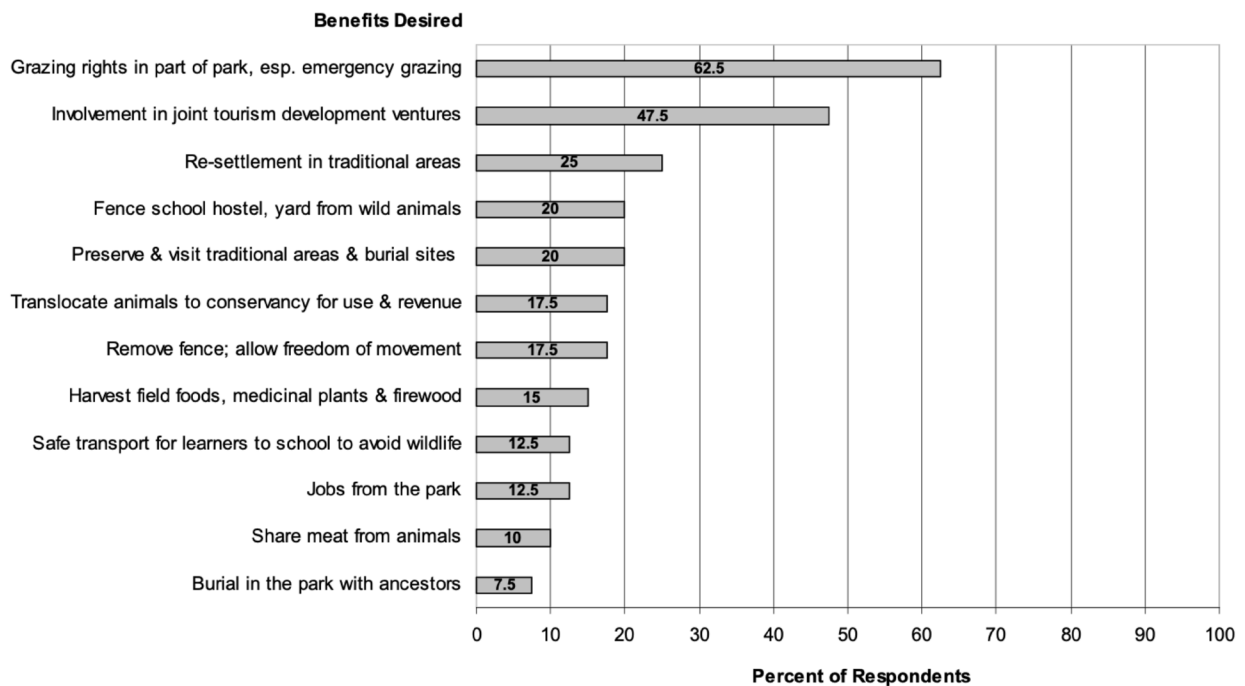


Fig. 14.4 Benefits villagers interviewed at Otjokavare, Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy, would like to receive from Etosha National Park (n = 40). © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

14.4 Local knowledge of wildlife in the wider region and its relevance for conservation activities today

In this section, villager attitudes towards and perceptions of wildlife at the time of this research are recounted, as well as their understanding and experience with the conservancy institution itself. The results of structured interviews, community mapping processes and key informant interviews are presented to create a picture of the place of the community in community-based wildlife conservation. Related details are elaborated for community wildlife monitoring and census processes (Section 14.4.1), as well as governance and administrative organisation features, to provide additional context for understanding and interpreting overall findings. Summary reflections are offered, including further reference to a potential model of attributes for successful community-based conservation.

14.4.1 Wildlife monitoring in Ehi-Rovipuka

Part of the community-based research aimed to better understand community attitudes and perceptions towards wildlife and conservation. At the time of this study, the literature on CBNRM and the conservancies in Namibia was replete with the success of conservancies restoring wildlife populations and producing significant national and community benefits from wildlife in terms of conservancy revenues and employment.¹⁴ It should be noted that this period also coincided with a run of very good rain years (for more on wildlife population dynamics in the north-west see Chapter 3). In this section villager attitudes towards wildlife are documented, as a basis for evaluating the robustness of conservancies as institutions for wildlife conservation, as well as the prospects for biodiversity conservation linkages with protected area management. The community-based wildlife census process at the time of study is briefly described, as a precursor to findings

¹⁴ NACSO (2004), NACSO (2006), World Resources Institute (2005)

about community wildlife values and attitudes. Considerable importance and staff resources are attached to this wildlife monitoring process by the conservancy and the national CBNRM system. The monitoring of wildlife populations and the development of trend data rest at the heart of conservancy conservation activities.

At the time of this research, conservancies—in cooperation with national conservation NGOs and MET personnel—conducted annual game censuses each June. The monitoring process is community-based, led by the CGGs, with technical support. For Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy specifically, a vehicle-based road count is made along five different routes in the conservancy. The average strip width of these routes is 0.32 km and the area represented by the different route zones is approximately 1,417 km². Areas of mountainous or rough terrain are excluded in the preparation of population estimates and in the case of Ehi-rovipuka, this area is about 28% of the overall conservancy area, or 562 km². Thus, the population numbers derived are underestimated for the overall conservancy area and are considered conservative by the agencies involved, building in a safety factor when offtake quotas are ultimately set; although as described below the observed numbers of animals are corrected upwards to take account of land areas missing from the surveys.

Once animals are counted along a strip route, the length and width of the strip route are used to calculate the strip area. It is then estimated how many times the strip area “fits” within the route zone area it transects. The actual number of animals counted is then “corrected”, i.e. multiplied by this factor of the number of strip areas that can fit within the zone, leading ultimately to the amplified regional population estimates shown in Figure 14.5. Resultant route zone estimates are further refined by information from other monitoring methods such as foot patrols by CGGs, specialist species studies conducted from time to time, and local knowledge, to arrive at a consensus for the annual population estimate. Further modelling and adjustments to animal estimates are carried out by a natural resources working group in Windhoek, and contributes to the annual quota setting process with the then MET.¹⁵

These data show that population trends vary from species to species, as well as from local levels (i.e. Ehi-Rovipuka) to regional level, primarily attributable to varying movement patterns for different species. For Ehi-Rovipuka in the surveyed years, gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) populations remained relatively stable, with 900 estimated in 2002 and 882 in 2006. For giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*), the conservancy estimated the population increased, from 100 in 2002 to 382 in 2006 (see Chapter 9). For springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*), the estimated population also grew from 700 in 2002 to 914 in 2006. There was an inexplicably high number of 7,951 reported for Ehi-Rovipuka’s springbok population in 2005, possibly due to the wide movements of animals and unknown field changes in sampling method and intensity.¹⁶ For Hartmann’s mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*), estimates remained relatively stable, with 150 in 2002 and 131 in 2006. Note that these population increases in the good rain years prior to 2011 need to be seen in the context of subsequent declines in following years, as documented in Chapter 3.

Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy’s boundaries represent the area in which the conservancy has recognised authority to manage wildlife and derive benefits from the wildlife resource. Registered members of the conservancy share in the benefits that may be derived from wildlife, and its boundaries are intended to exclude anyone else from use of the conservancy’s wildlife. The conservancy is responsible for the monitoring of populations as illustrated above. Based on the wildlife numbers resulting from the annual censuses, the conservancy makes a request for annual quotas to the MET (now Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, MEFT). The ministry reviews the census results with a technical group of supporting conservation NGOs and, towards the end of each calendar year, grants annual offtake quotas to the conservancy based on this process. The ministry also sets a five-year quota framework for the conservancy.

¹⁵ Matongo, 2007, pers. comm.; Greg Stuart-Hill, 2007, pers. comm.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

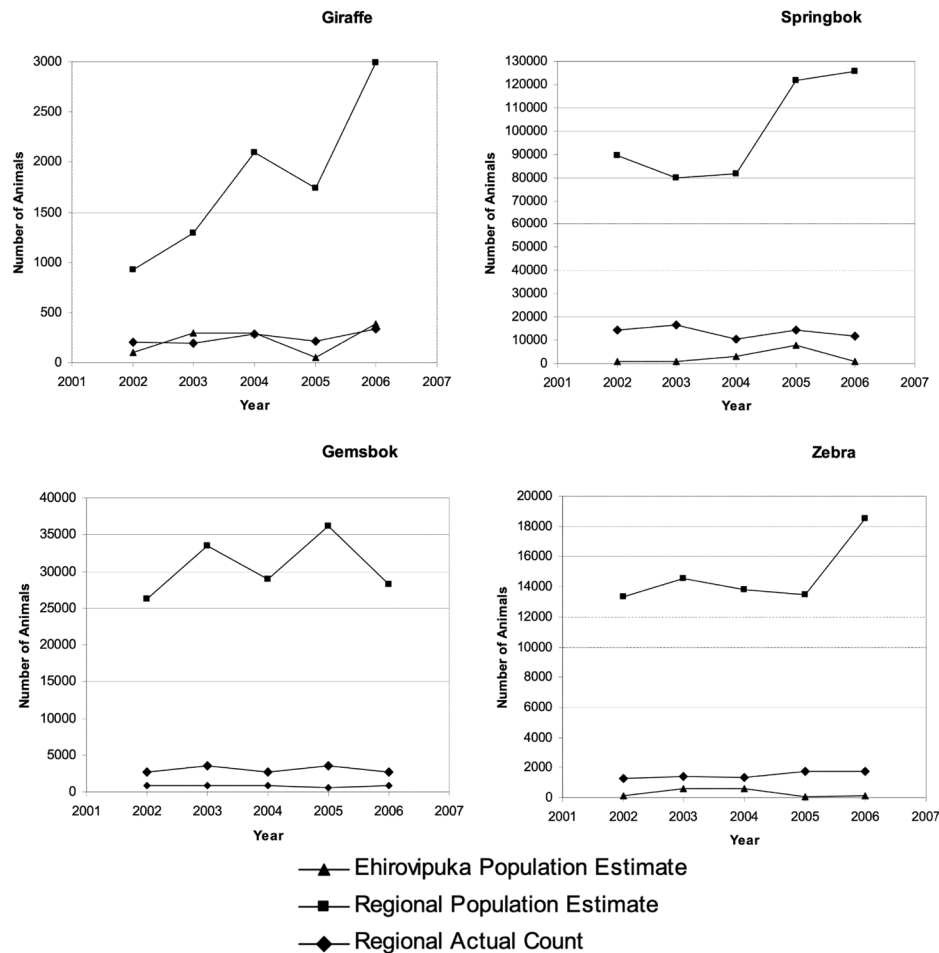


Fig. 14.5 Regional and Ehi-Rovipuka Wildlife Census Data from 2002 to 2006. Adapted from: CONINFO Information System 2006. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

14.4.2 Community Perceptions of Wildlife and Conservation

Turning now to attitudes and values villagers place on wildlife, a series of questions were posed to probe these topics: as shared in Table 14.3.

Table 14.3. Survey questions regarding experiences of living with wildlife asked to 40 respondents living in Otjokavare, Ehi-Rovipuka.

Wildlife questions	
1	How important are wild animals in your household life? Are they Important, Somewhat Important, Unimportant? Why?
2	Which wild animals do you like? Why?
3	Which wild animals do you dislike? Why?
4	What causes increases and decreases in numbers of wild animals?
5	How did your ancestors (e.g., parents, grandparents) protect their cattle and goats from wild animals?
6	What were the community customs and rules for using wild animals before the conservancy?
7	What happened when community rules for wildlife use were not followed by someone in the past, before the conservancy? What happens today?

The first question inquired about the importance of wildlife to household life. The question was closed-ended, and asked respondents to select one of three possible choices—wildlife is ‘important’; ‘somewhat important’; or ‘unimportant’. Respondents effectively changed this range of possible responses, totally avoiding the ‘somewhat important’ choice and adding another response—‘very important’: see Figure 14.6.

Villagers gave a variety of reasons about why wildlife is important to them, as shown in Figure 14.7. Most interviewees (60%) indicated that meat from wildlife was the reason for its importance to households. A closely related factor was the importance of wildlife for livelihoods and survival. The inherent beauty of wildlife, as well as its role in generating revenues for community projects, was also important: from a utilitarian perspective, the ranking of appearance and characteristics of animals ahead of benefits derived from wildlife was somewhat surprising. Villagers were additionally asked which wild animals they liked or disliked, and the reasons for their preferences (Figures 14.8 and 14.9). It is mainly the herbivores that were favoured, although 28% of the respondents indicated that they liked all wildlife. A few other species were mentioned only once as being liked by respondents, including warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*), hares (*Lepus capensis*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) and mopane worms (edible caterpillars from the emperor moth *Gonimbrasia belina*).

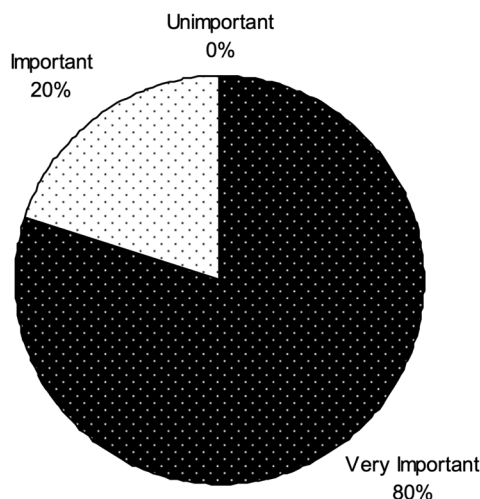


Fig. 14.6 Importance ratings of wildlife to community households in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy (n = 40). © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

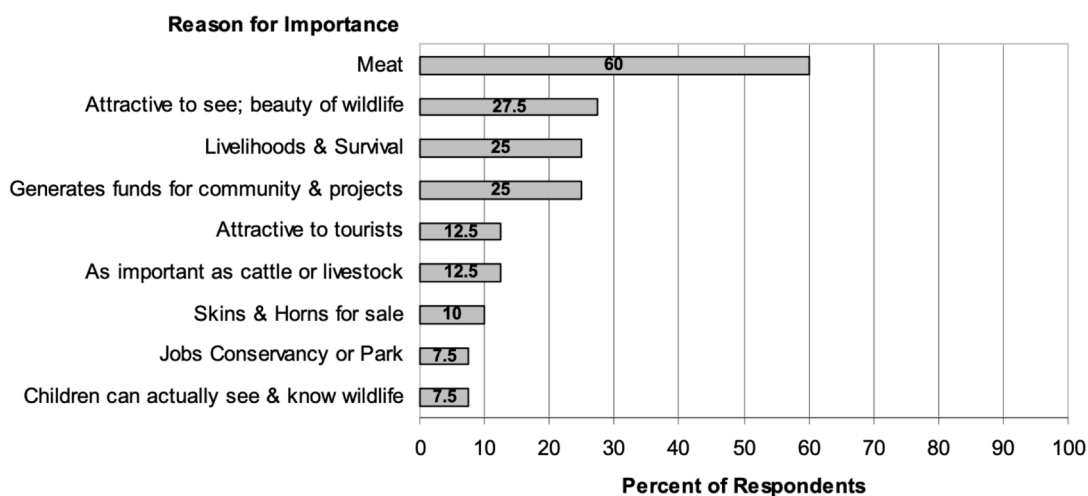


Fig. 14.7 Graph showing reasons given for wildlife importance (n = 40). © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

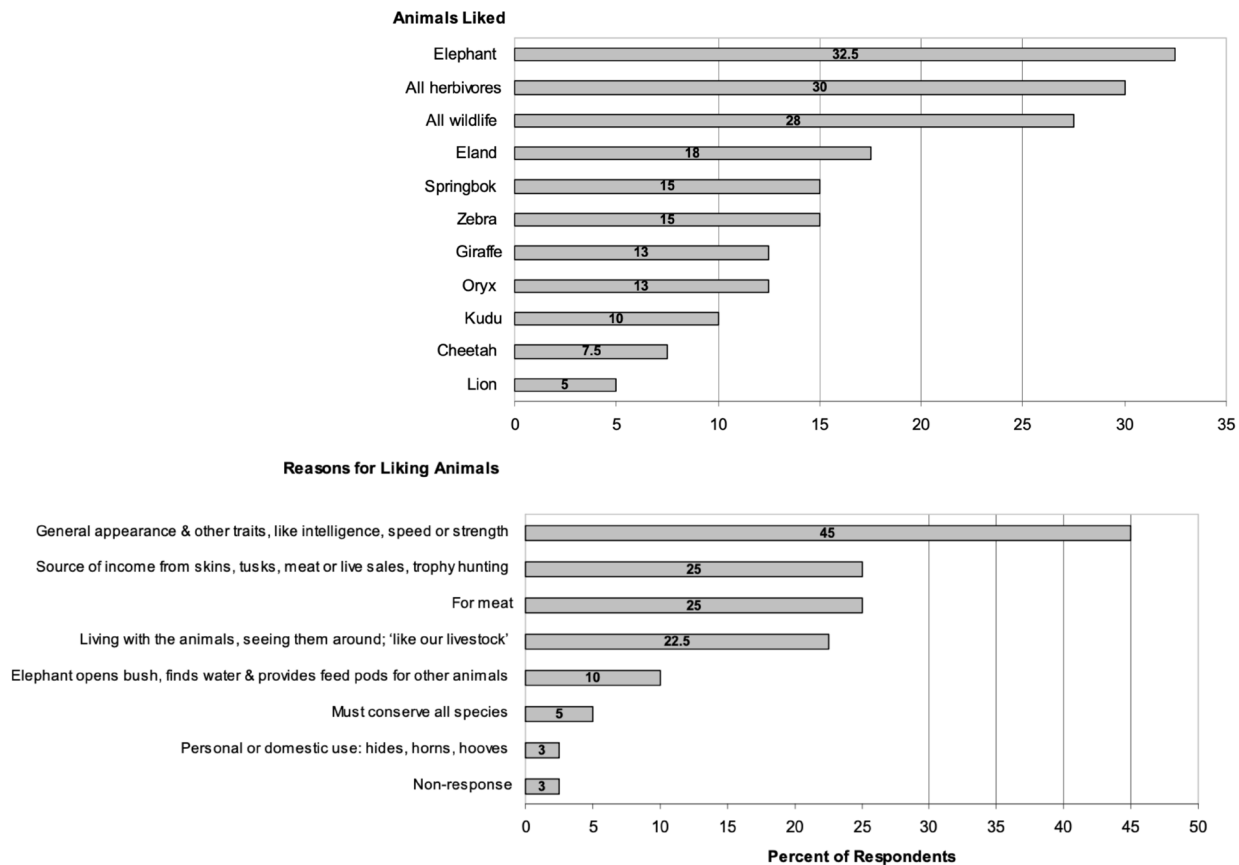


Fig. 14.8 Graph showing wild animals that are liked by villagers (above) and stated reasons for their preferences (below). © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The wild animals that are disliked are mainly the predators (Figure 14.9), with 40% of the villager respondents noting they disliked all predators. Lions (*Panthera leo*) were specifically disliked more than any other individual species, followed by elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). The reasons given for disliking wild animals predictably centred on danger to humans (52.5%), livestock destruction (45%) and loss of property (32.5%). Indeed, the antipathy towards predators is noteworthy (see Chapter 8). While not unexpected in terms of perceived and real threats posed by predators, this finding may have implications for accounting for the role of predators in overall ecosystems function and as animals of particular interest and attraction in wildlife viewing by tourists (as discussed more fully for lions in Chapters 17, 18 and 19). It was also interesting to note the ambivalence towards elephant. Almost a third of the respondents identified elephant as an animal they liked whilst 17.5% indicated they disliked elephant. This finding is at odds with some of the human-wildlife conflict (HWC) literature in Namibia that suggests elephants are only a problem for communities (also see Chapter 11). Perhaps inherent traits of elephant such as their dominant size, intelligence, as well as their ecological roles in creating habitats and water sources for other wildlife, explain their relatively high ranking as an animal appreciated by villagers.

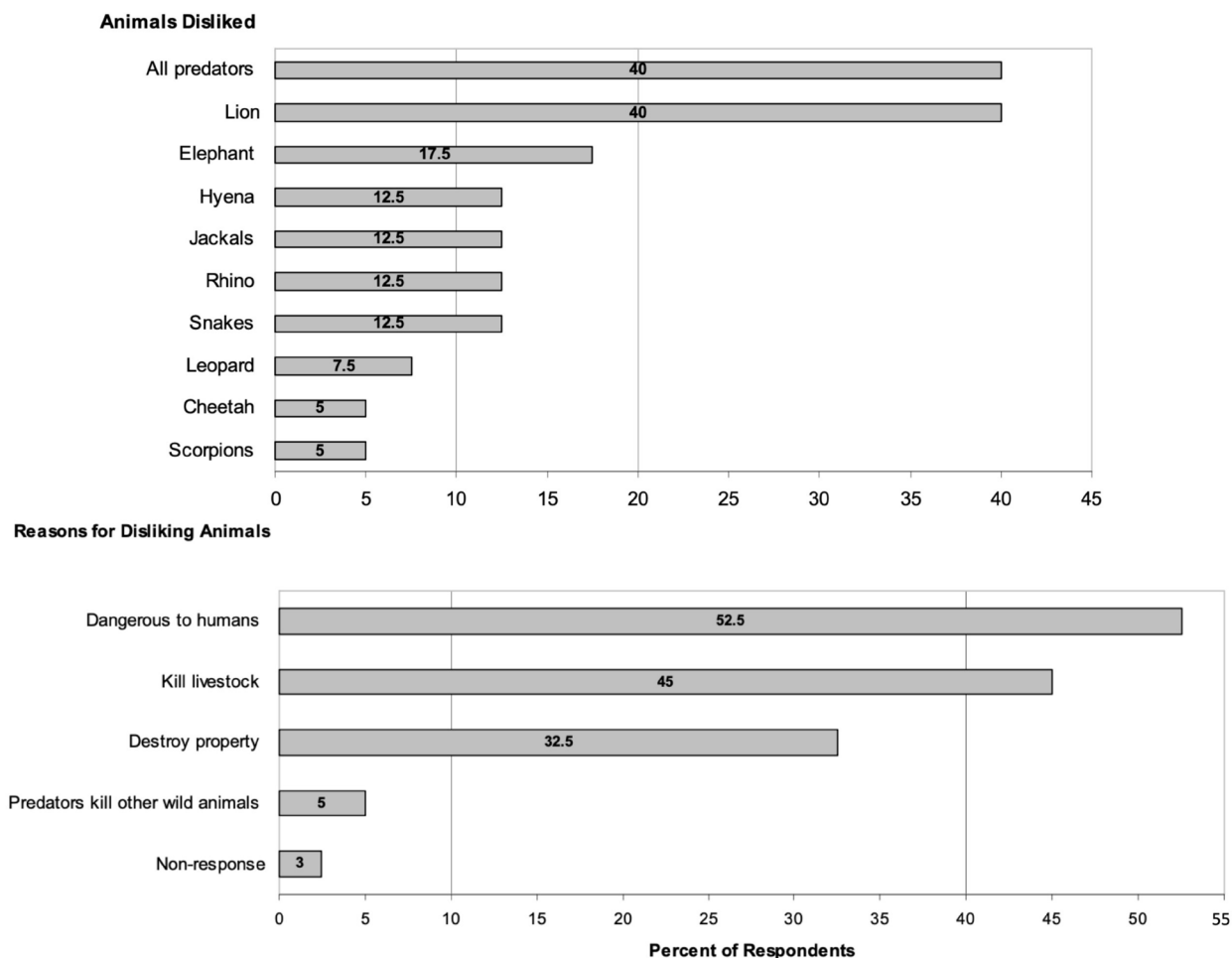


Fig. 14.9 Graph showing wild animals disliked by villagers (above) and the reasons given for their dislike (below). © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Villagers were additionally asked what causes increases and decreases in the numbers of wild animals. The vast majority (78%) identified rainfall as the main cause of increases, along with conservation practices including the control of hunting, conservancies and parks, monetary rewards, CGGs and monitoring (53%). Natural reproduction was mentioned once. Decreases were largely attributed to drought (85%) and uncontrolled hunting/poaching (33%). Predation, uncontrolled settlement, translocations of animals like black rhino away from the conservancy, and trophy hunting of prime male animals, were each mentioned once or twice as other factors causing decreases. Overall, villager responses show the prevailing role of reliable rainfalls and drought as principal determinants of wildlife numbers.¹⁷

Another topic related to problem animals. Villagers were asked how their ancestors had protected their livestock from wild animals, the results of which are summarised in Table 14.4. Responses reveal important differences in past practices from the more sedentary contemporary community life. Most respondents (73%) identified that herders stayed with the livestock and brought them into *kraals* at night in the past. Other responses emphasised a more active knowledge of predators by the ancestors that helped protect livestock.

¹⁷ Similar findings regarding Damara/!Nūkhoe perceptions of rainfall in driving ecological dynamics in north-west Namibia are documented in Sullivan (2002).

Table 14.4. Methods employed by ancestors to protect livestock from wild animals (n = 40).

Villager responses	Frequency mentioned	Percentage of respondents (%)
Herders stayed all day in the fields with the animals, bringing them back to the <i>kraal</i> at night	29	73
Animals kept in <i>kraals</i> at night	13	33
Kill predators with bows and arrows that attacked livestock	11	28
Wait, watch and kill predators attracted by carcass or livestock bait	5	13
Knowledge of wild animals was better in the past: knew where predators were; knew spoor of problem predators, tracked and killed; kept cattle moving	5	13
Youth herded goats and adult men looked after the cattle	5	13
Trained dogs to look after goats and sheep	3	8
Set traps for predators in the fields	3	8
Young boys slept by fires around the <i>kraals</i> at night to guard animals	3	8
No response	2	5

The following comments made by some villagers further capture the essence of the contrasts between present day care of livestock with past practices:

- ‘Today, no one herds the cattle. They are sent out on their own and the children are in school’;
- ‘Well, you can see, the people are just sitting around here in the village and the cattle move out into the fields by themselves’;
- ‘When there were problems with cheetah, they would take the calf of a donkey and put it in the *kraals* with the goats so that when the cheetah came, the mother donkey would make a lot of noise to protect her calf’.

14.4.3 Local knowledge of wildlife

Several other methods were employed in the community-based field research to further illuminate community perceptions and knowledge of wildlife. Local knowledge maps for seasonal wildlife distributions and poaching/problem wildlife incidents were prepared by three knowledgeable villagers engaged in wildlife management responsibilities with Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy (Figure 14.10). This documentation included how these incidents had changed from the start-up of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy in 2001–2002 to the time of the research several years later. Notwithstanding the variability in individual mapping details, all maps display some common patterns of species occurrence. For example, springbok are consistently shown as dominant in the north part of the conservancy. This is a more open, less rugged area, consistent with preferred habitat conditions for springbok. Areas where lions are best seen are consistently shown along the south-east side of the conservancy. These observations are consistent with the findings of a study in these years reporting four lion prides living in western ENP, with two prides regularly breaking through the park boundary fence.¹⁸

¹⁸ Stander & Esterhuizen (n.d.)

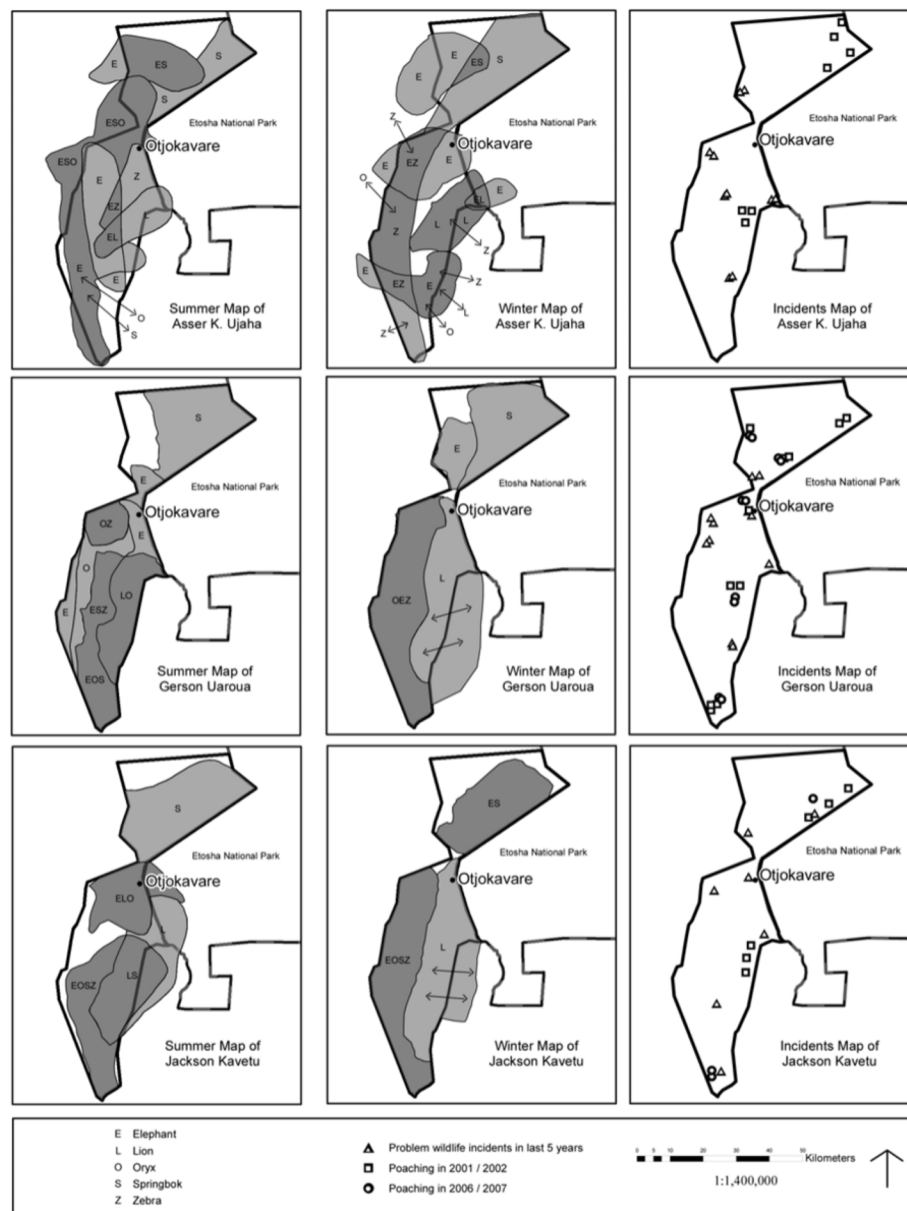


Fig. 14.10 Maps illustrating local knowledge of wildlife distributions in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

These three participants were also invited to draw regional wildlife distribution maps for five species, as shown in the map legends (Figures 14.10 and 14.11). Brief mapping instructions were provided to the participants for the symbols and colours to be used to distinguish species, two different seasons, and the point data of wildlife incidents. Participants were asked to show the best areas for seeing the different species for the two different seasons. Each participant received the mapping guidelines through the community field interpreter, who was one of the mapping participants himself: they completed the maps independently of the lead researcher and of each other, following which we met as a group to verify the maps. The resultant maps display considerable variability in level of detail and no attempt was made to reconcile these differences. It was evident in the group discussion and verification session that each participant had paid different attention to details, especially in the regional wildlife distribution maps. It was also acknowledged by participants that Asser Ujaha's maps of wildlife distributions were the most detailed and the others did not contest those additional details.



Fig. 14.11 Maps illustrating local knowledge of regional wildlife seasonal distributions by members of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Changes in seasonal distributions of wildlife from summer to winter seasons are detectable at the conservancy level (Figure 14.11). This is evident for lion, with greater movement and dispersal in the dry winter period compared to the wetter summer period. Dispersal changes are also evident for elephant. Springbok reverse the usual pattern of more species dispersal during the summer rainy season. They concentrate on short green pastures during the rains and disperse into smaller herds during the dry season. This is evident in the local knowledge maps, especially those of Asser Ujaha.

Hartmann's mountain zebra are predominantly shown in the south-west reaches of the conservancy area. This is more rugged upland country and local knowledge of this animal's distribution is quite consistent with the western science description of the mountain zebra's preferred habitat (see Chapter 10). Elephant seem to be seen periodically throughout most of the conservancy area, but greater concentrations are evident in winter months to the north. Considerable overlap of areas where the five different species are seen is also evident for the conservancy area, as well as lines of wildlife movement, especially in the winter months. The lines of movement depicted

are all in the area of the conservancy south of Otjokavare. In Asser Ujaha's winter map of the conservancy area, lines of movement roughly correspond with the Ombombe River corridor and associated tributaries. The regional maps of Asser Ujaha (Figure 14.11) illustrate the importance of the Hoanib River watershed for wildlife, another aspect of local knowledge consistent with conservation understandings of the area (also Chapters 3 and 13). Generalised patterns of greater species dispersal in summer, as compared to winter seasons, are also evident in the regional wildlife distribution maps. Some of the maps show some wildlife linkages to the western parts of ENP, but the predominant pattern that emerges is the barrier effect of the park fence that runs along the entire western boundary of the national park.

Problem wildlife incidents in the last 5 years (see Figure 14.10) include attacks on livestock by wildlife or damage to property such as community boreholes or crops. Poaching incidents refer to unauthorised harvests or use of wildlife. The data obtained from the community mapping process shows only a few poaching incidents, ranging from six to 10 in number for 2001–2002 and from zero to 10 in 2006–2007. Gerson Uaroua was one of the three mapping participants and at the time of study was also a senior community game guard for Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. He recalled more poaching incidents compared to the others. Regardless, the number of poaching incidents is low and the participants indicated that most were perpetrated by people from outside the conservancy villages. The number of sites shown for problem wildlife incidents in the last five years is relatively few. Hoole studied unpublished annual natural resource reports prepared by the CGGs for 2002 to 2005.¹⁹ The recorded number of poaching incidents correlated well with the local mapping results. Problem wildlife incidents in the field reports ranged from 145 to 279 livestock attacks per year, mainly by hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*), lions, leopards, and to a lesser extent cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*). Very few crop damage incidents were reported, but elephants were implicated in several instances of water borehole damage (see Chapter 11). A study of human-wildlife conflict in the Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy found that spotted hyenas, leopards, cheetahs and lions caused the most problems (also see Chapters 17 and 19).²⁰

It is possible that participants in the mapping processes may not have wanted to reveal poaching incidents, although the close rapport developed with at least two of the three mapping participants suggests otherwise. Also, observations at the time of the research of low densities of wildlife associated with the semi-arid character of the area, alongside the natural resource report data and a general absence of references to poaching in the community interviews, confirms that poaching at the time of the research was not significant. Human-wildlife conflict incidents are more significant, especially livestock attacks. Much is made in literature about human-wildlife conflicts, and this is a preoccupation in the management programmes in ENP and with some NGOs (also see Chapters 11, 17, 18 and 19). The data reported here, combined with results from the likes and dislikes of different wild animals indicated by villagers in Section 14.4.2 suggest that there are indeed conflicts with predators. Lions and elephant frequently break through the western boundary fence of ENP and these animals are implicated in complaints about livestock and property damage.²¹ The area warden for western Etosha also mapped recurring places of fence breaks by lion and elephant and these are shown in Figure 14.12.

19 Ehi-Rovipuka (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005)

20 Stander & Esterhuizen (n.d.)

21 *Ibid.*, Hauptfleisch *et al.* (2024: 507–11)

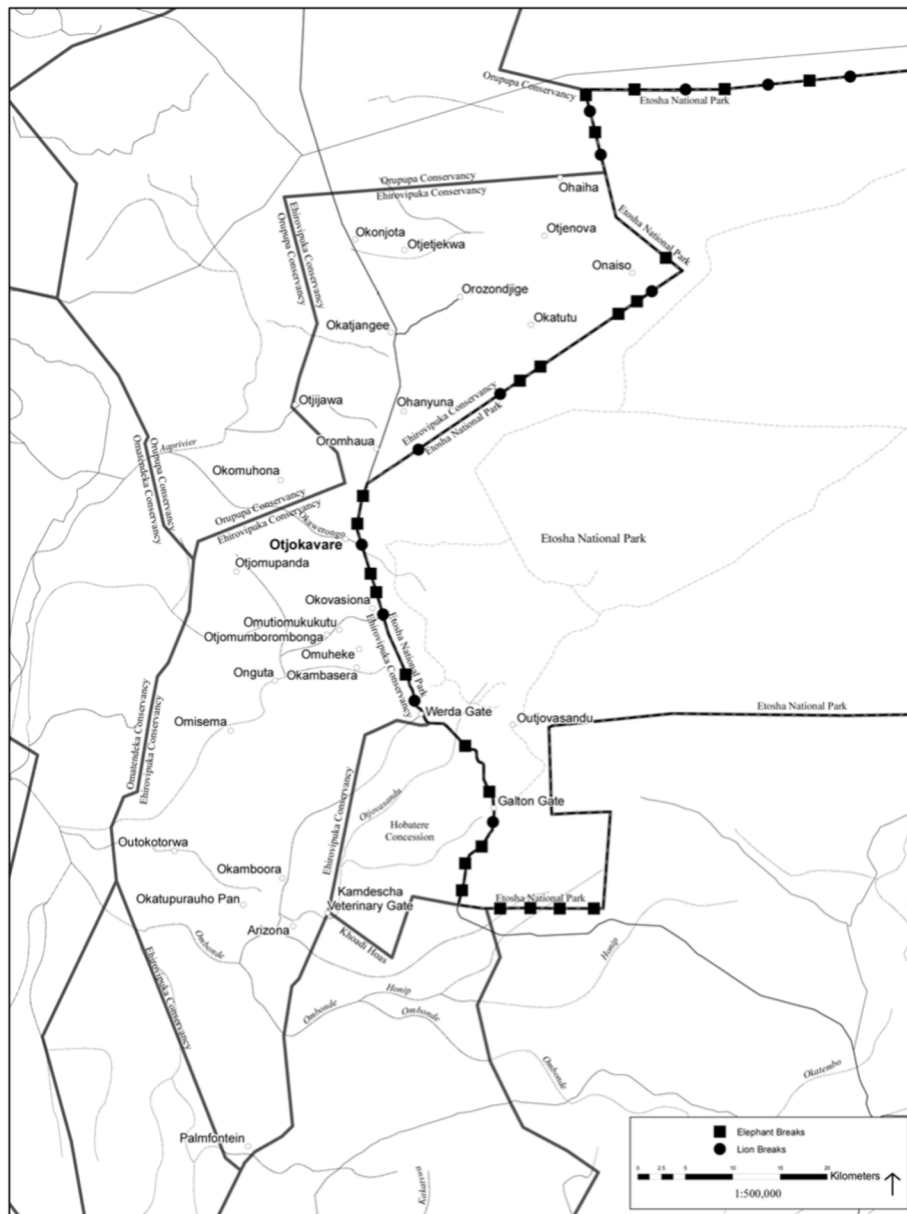


Fig. 14.12 Map showing recurring Etosha National Park fence break locations by elephant and lion, on the eastern boundary of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Villagers additionally confirmed that rules existed in the past regarding the utilisation of wildlife. These were made by the headman and were known by everyone. They included hunting only in the winter (well after the young had been born, during the earlier rainy season), which was also a time when it was cooler to keep meat fresh, and animals were fattened up. Hunters were not allowed to take females with calves—mainly male animals were taken—and females were not permitted to be hunted in the breeding season (see Chapters 12 and 15). Other rules mentioned were that animals could not be taken near water, hunting pressure would be reduced when numbers were depleted, and animals could only be hunted with the agreement of the household head. There was also a separation of hunting areas among different groups of hunters. Further enquiries were made about what happened when such community rules for using wildlife were not followed in the past. Many of the respondents indicated that there were no actions taken since people were on the move, they hunted with bows and arrows and could not kill a lot of animals. The headman was not nearby to enforce rules. A further 33% indicated they believed the headman and council would meet with reported violators, initially warn them and if there were repeat offences, fines in terms of payments

to the headman in livestock would be made. Others noted that repeat offenders or those who could not pay fines in livestock would be beaten on the buttocks in public. Punishment was according to the seriousness of the deed. Many of the villagers interviewed did not know about what may have happened in the past when rules were broken, and did not know what the rules may have been.

An interesting exchange took place at the community report-back and verification meeting that encapsulates the dichotomy evident in villager awareness about past rules of use for wildlife. Preliminary findings were summarised that were similar to the descriptions above, but a young school teacher stated there were basically no rules for wildlife use before the conservancy, asserting that people hunted wildlife as they pleased. The headman was present, however, and he argued strenuously against the teacher's comments, reiterating that there were indeed rules made by headmen in the past, and everyone knew these rules.

Manfred Hinz²² documents that rules for wildlife use in the past reflected an Indigenous conservation ethic and respect for wildlife. The social memory of those rules seems to have faded: while not evident in current conservancy institutional arrangements, a conservation ethic was undoubtedly a factor in the agreement of the headman and communities to institute the CGG programme and then form a conservancy. The wildlife laws of central government now prevail. Violators are reported to the MEFT or to the national police by CGGs or villagers at large, with a graduated system of fines and incarceration applied by the courts.

14.4.4 Field foods

Field foods and their importance to communities was an oversight in the structured villager interview questions, however, many villagers identified field food as important to their households in discussions, with field food harvest one of the benefits they would like to enjoy within and from ENP. One key informant quoted an old ovaHerero saying that: 'if you don't gather field fruits the rains will not come'. The importance of field foods was also stressed by Asser Ujaha, the community assistant and interpreter in this research. He described how mopane worms are harvested from March to May, boiled and dried in the sun, then bagged and sold in Oshakati. Mopane worms are both a dietary staple and can be used in treatment of blood pressure. Mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) leaves are chewed to relieve stomach ailments and the dung of mopane worms is used to heal wounds. He further described the use of Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) as a malarial fever treatment and pointed out trees harvested for various fruits near Otjokavare.

He also noted the harvest of wild honey in July and August by people in Otjetjekwa, in the north part of the conservancy. Bees are smoked out of tree hives and the honeycombs removed.²³ Apparently, this practice has produced veld fires and there are government sponsored workshops to train how to safely harvest without killing the bees and starting fires. Asser Ujaha also related that smaller animals like rock dassie (*Procavia capensis*), porcupine (*Hystrix africaeaustralis*), and birds like wild dove, kori bustard (*Ardeotis kori*) and guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*) are used. Technically, some of these species are subject to government harvest regulation through quotas, but such harvest appears to be largely unregulated and is not high at any given time. Other villagers indicated that the low return of meat from the harvest of birds and smaller game does not warrant the effort to hunt or trap them intensively and therefore such use is more incidental.

²² (2003)

²³ As also documented in detail for #Nūkhoe honey harvesters to the west of Ehi-Rovipuka in Sullivan (1999).

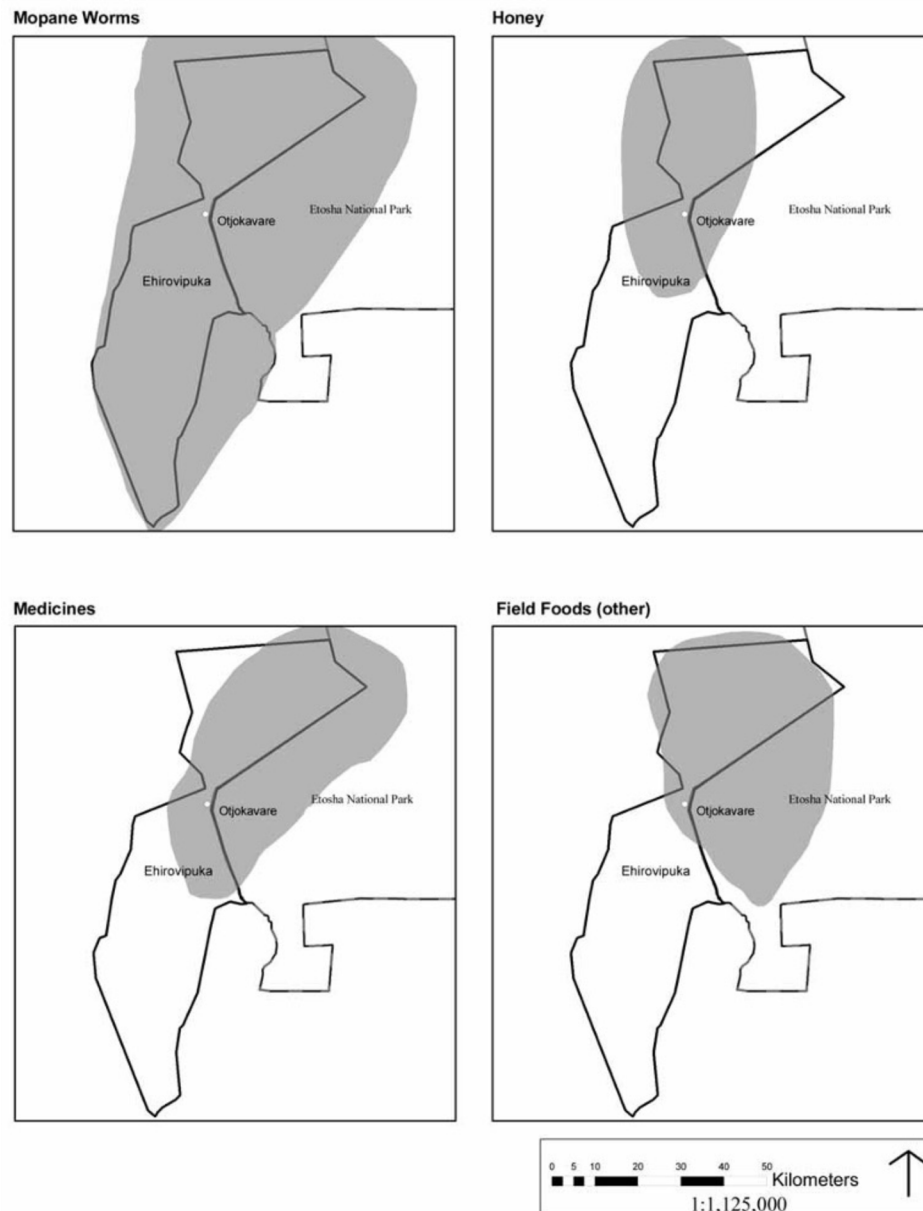


Fig. 14.13 Combined field food and medicinal plant distribution maps of three women village harvesters: Sylvia Kavetu, Rosana Kavetu and Naangota Mavongara. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Given the apparent overall importance of field foods,²⁴ a mapping exercise was carried out with three village women in which they were asked to map important areas for field foods (see Figure 14.13). Women were invited to prepare the maps because women play the main role in harvesting most field food, except for wild honey and hunting small game. Their maps were shared maps at an Otjokavare community report-back and verification meeting in which women participated. The accuracy of the mapping was roundly supported by all present, including the headman. The map shows the importance of the northern parts of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy for wild honey, medicinal plants and other field food harvesting. Mopane worm harvest is shown as important over the entire area. It is also revealing that there are large areas of overlap into ENP, although the meanings of this overlap were not clarified: it remains uncertain whether they were mapping past extents of known harvest, known areas of potential harvest, or whether in fact they were revealing

²⁴ As confirmed in research in other areas of Kunene Region (for example, Malan and Owen-Smith 1974; Sullivan 1998, 2005); also see Chapters 12, 13 and 15.

areas of actual harvest within the park. Such harvest in the park is illegal and it does not seem that the women were indicating that this was a widespread practice, but rather a potential opportunity and known value. Likely, there is some harvest of field foods going on in ENP, since this could be conducted clandestinely through breaks in the park fence (Figure 14.12).

14.4.5 Wildlife awareness amongst school children

One other method was employed to assess the level of awareness and attitudes about wildlife, the park and the conservancy amongst school children. The Grade 7 class of 34 pupils at the Kephos Muzuma Primary School was given a 30-minute drawing and basic question assignment. The school principal assisted in this process by translating the instructions to the class and being present while the assignment was completed. Each pupil was provided a blank sheet of paper and was asked to draw the main road in the area down the centre of page and the position of the school building, as demonstrated on the blackboard. They were then asked to draw anything they saw or were aware of on one side of the road (the side that ENP is on), and then to draw what they saw on the other side of the road, where the school is located (the community side of the road): see Figure 14.14.

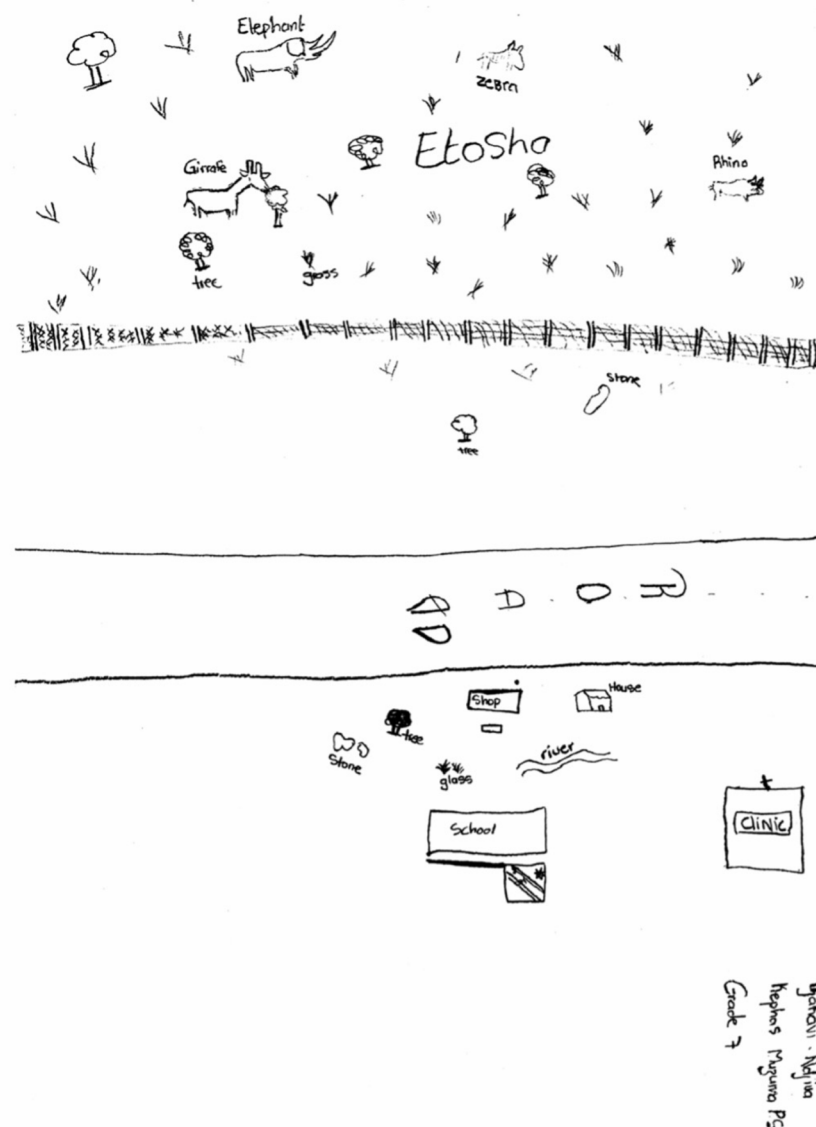


Fig. 14.14 Representative sketch of knowledge about Etosha National Park and Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy by Grade 7 pupil at Kephos Muzuma Primary School in Otjokavare. © Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In this process 26 of the 34 students included the park fence in their drawings, with most showing “community things” on the school side of the road and wildlife on the park side. When asked if they liked wildlife, 30 of the 34 participants said they did. The pupils were asked which animals they liked or disliked, and results were similar to those shown in Figures 14.8 and 14.9. Interestingly, more pupils liked elephants than disliked them, and more disliked rhino than liked them (contrary to findings shared in Chapter 8). The level of dislike for rhino is intriguing, given extensive efforts in the region by Save the Rhino Trust and other conservation agencies to restore endangered populations. The school teachers and my community assistant clarified that this was not surprising since children are taught by parents from a young age that rhino are dangerous when encountered in the field. The pupils were also asked (afterwards, separately from the mapping exercise) to name the national park in the area and the conservancy. Most (31 of 34) named the Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy correctly and most (29 of 34) correctly named Etosha National Park. This result suggests a high level of awareness among community youth about the park, the conservancy, conservation and the value of wildlife.

14.5 To conclude: Past and present in conservation in Ehi-Rovipuka

The research shared here is the outcome of attempts to learn more about how villagers in the park-adjacent Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy view wildlife conservation, and how they participate in, and benefit from, CBNRM, the conservancy and ENP. These insights were sought through a series of questions posed in the structured interviews with 40 villagers, as well as through participant observations, site visits, discussions with community informants, and memory mapping with community elders. Information elicited through this research illuminates both present and past land-use and mobilities through the conservancy and its wider landscape, as well community customs or rules for using wild animals prior to the formation of the conservancy.

Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy became established particularly in connection with the collaboration of the late Garth Owen-Smith (former Director of the NGO Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, IRDNC) with headman Kephass Muzuma—illustrating the importance of leadership and cross-cultural communication in initiating community-based conservation. In fact, Kephass Muzuma was one of four headmen that Owen-Smith worked with during the 1980s, in the precursor CGG programme (see Chapter 2). The roles of government and NGOs, notably IRDNC, are also reinforced by the villager responses reported in Figure 14.15. There was a fairly high non-response to the question of conservancy start-up (15%), showing that a considerable proportion of respondents did not know this history. A community taskforce of 31 villagers had been created by the traditional authority headman and council, receiving training from IRDNC. This taskforce included both men and women who took the conservancy idea into the villages, built understanding and support for the concept, and helped negotiate the boundaries—described as a protracted process lasting three years. An ancillary question was asked about how the boundaries of the conservancy were established. Those that could reply (63%) recognised a process of negotiations with surrounding communities and TAs by the community task force. A relatively large proportion (43%) did not know how the conservancy boundaries had been formed. Important points of emphasis made by some villagers noted that boundaries defined rights of access to wildlife only and the conservancy included communities that agreed on sharing wildlife. Grazing, water rights and other resource access rights were perceived as not subject to the exclusionary role of the conservancy boundaries. The boundaries are well known at the community level; 80% of the villagers interviewed indicated they knew the boundaries, or at least, the different villages that made up the conservancy.

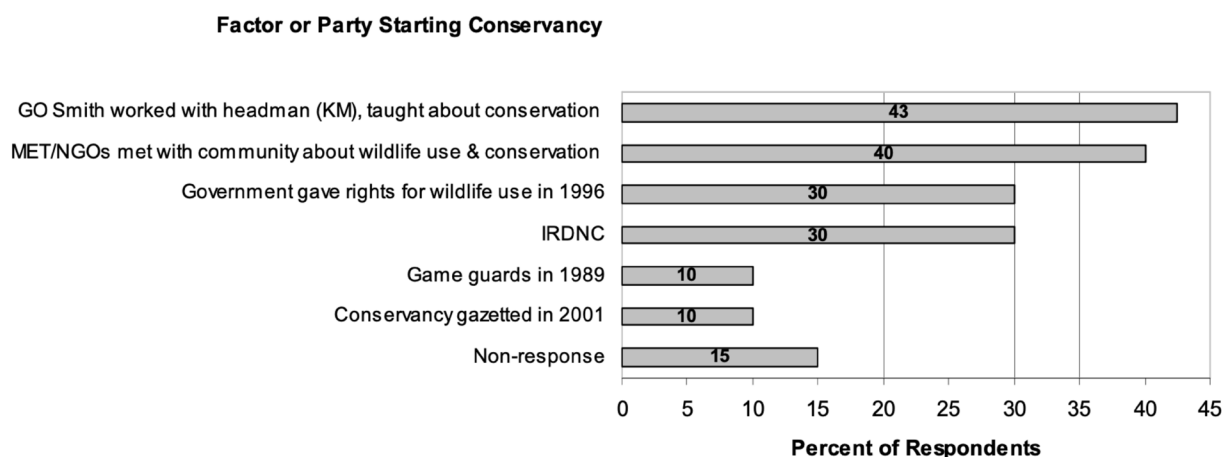


Fig. 14.15 Graph showing respondents' perceptions of key players and contexts in initiating conservancy organisation.
© Arthur Hoole, 2008, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Conservancy establishment clearly has both top-down and bottom-up dimensions (see Chapter 5). The idea originated and was enabled from outside, and at higher levels of organisation than on the local community level. Yet, there was a high degree of self-organisation at the community level for the implementation of conservancy institutional arrangements, especially boundary negotiation. Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy has produced some early benefits for its members and a good deal of hope since its formation in 2001. The sustainability of the conservancy model hinges on institutional strengthening in financial management and transparency in governance, as well as strengthened villager participation in decision-making and priority setting for wildlife-based revenues earned by the conservancy. More culturally congruent and appropriate means for participation in decision-making and distribution of benefits are needed (as also argued in Chapter 5). Constitutionally imposed policies and procedures by central government, such as the conduct of conservancy Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and attainment of set quorums at meetings, need to be replaced or complemented with more consensual decision-making and consultative processes, consistent with ovaHerero traditions. Villagers frequently mentioned the early days of many meetings and consultations at the individual village level, when conservancy formation was being considered and boundaries were being negotiated with neighbouring communities. These approaches have subsequently been diminished and replaced by AGMs and other mandatory features of conservancy constitutions dictated by central government. Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy has developed an apparently decentralised model of governance on paper, but at the time of the research was not being fully realised in practice.

Developing needed linkages with ENP is key to the future of the conservancy and community well-being. A theory of creating economic incentives for community conservation rests at the heart of CBNRM programmes in Southern Africa.²⁵ Yet, the ovaHerero of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy are actively participating in conservation with few tangible economic incentives to date. While certain future benefits sought by villagers are tied directly to economy, they are equally tied to cultural renewal,²⁶ intrinsic values to conserve wildlife, and attaining a greater voice in natural resources management (also see Chapters 5, 6, 12, 13 and 15). Individual conservancies like Ehi-Rovipuka are quite localised wildlife conservation institutions, but connected with many other neighbouring conservancies and nested within the regional distributions and movements of wildlife, upon which each conservancy depends (see Chapter 3). The rapid scaling-up in the numbers of conservancies suggests a commensurate need for scaling-up of regional institutions and collaborations. The management of wildlife must extend beyond the

²⁵ Blaikie (2006)

²⁶ Infield (2001)

monitoring of populations to include monitoring and management of habitats (see Chapter 9), especially the connectivity corridors along ephemeral rivers. These conclusions reinforce certain others in addressing alternative approaches to protected areas that recouple social-ecological systems in the course of aiming for biodiversity conservation. More dynamic models are required that place less emphasis on the designation of parks, and more on needed collaborations and partnerships between park agencies, conservation NGOs and communities in living landscapes.

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15. ‘Walking through places’: Exploring the former lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha

Ute Dieckmann

Abstract

This chapter engages with differing conceptions of the land that has become Namibia’s “flagship park” and premier tourist attraction. By tourists, Etosha might be perceived either as an untamed wilderness or a large zoo; for scientists, it might represent an excellent research opportunity to test zoological hypotheses; and for farmers on the border farms, it might be a source of nuisance, its wildlife causing trouble and—at times—economic loss. For Hai||om, Etosha represents part of their former lifeworld; an ecology of which they were an integral part. Their ancestors lived across the region alongside other Khoekhoegowab- and San-speaking peoples before major immigrations of Bantu speakers during the last 500 years of the second millennium. In the first half of the 20th century, they were mainly living from hunting and gathering, with some families keeping a few goats or cattle, combined with occasional seasonal work and temporary employment. Drawing on a cultural mapping project, combined with oral history and archival research, this chapter explores the lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha and their relations to the land, to other humans and to beyond-human inhabitants, prior to their eviction in the 1950s. Anthropologist Tim Ingold’s concept of “meshwork” is drawn on as a suitable concept for capturing Hai||om’s being-in-Etosha as being-in-relations. The picture emerging from the research is that of a dense relational web of land, kinship, humans, animals, plants and spirit beings, an integrated ecology and an almost forgotten past which should, in line with this publication’s aim, be acknowledged by, and integrated into, future nature conservation policies and practices.

15.1 Introduction¹

This chapter aims to (re-)animate the lifeworld of Hai||om formerly living in the south-eastern area of Game Reserve No. 2, that became Etosha National Park (ENP) in 1967 (for historical contextualisation see Chapters 1 and 2). For Hai||om, Etosha represents part of their former lifeworld; part of their “homeland”, an ecology of which they were an integral part. Their ancestors lived alongside other Khoekhoegowab and San language speakers across the region before major immigrations of Bantu speakers during the last 500 years of the second millennium.² White settlers increasingly occupied the surrounding area, with the result that nearly all of the land south of the Veterinary Cordon Fence (VCF) or “Red Line” formerly inhabited by Hai||om was occupied by settlers in the 1930s. The game reserve became the last refuge where Hai||om still practised a hunting and gathering lifestyle. Up to the 1940s, Hai||om were regarded as “part and parcel” of the game reserve. All in all, between a few hundred and 1,000 Hai||om lived in the park until the early 1950s when they were evicted (also see Chapters 2, 4 and 16).

Drawing on a cultural mapping project in which I was involved, as well as archival and oral history research conducted for my PhD and subsequent research, I explore Hai||om “being-in-Etosha”,³ their relations to the land, to other humans and to beyond-human inhabitants, prior to

1 I have explored similar issues, but partly with other concepts, terminology and examples, in Dieckmann (2023). See also Dieckmann (2021a).

2 Suzman (2004: 223)

3 With “Being-in”, I follow Ingold’s (2011[2000]) use of the term.

their eviction.⁴ Keith Basso notes that ‘wisdom sits in places’,⁵ which serves as a guiding principle: via specific places, I try to convey what it might have meant for Hai||om to be-in-Etosha and to live with the human and beyond-human beings in the area.⁶ Maybe we realise with Basso that ‘[p]laces ... are as much a part of us as we are part of them, and senses of place—yours, mine, and everyone else’s—partake complexly of both’.⁷

‘Walking through places’ instead of ‘walking to places’ hints at both the methodology of cultural mapping and the structure of the chapter. Cultural mapping involves moving in the landscape, and walking around named places which do not have a fixed boundary, but are “just” places. It is not possible to go “to” places and to stop there as if reaching a target/destination. Cultural mapping involves exploring places, finding threads, and finding tracks to other places. The structure of the chapter follows this walking, and the exploration and investigation of threads emerging around these places.

I first describe the methodology and material on which the chapter is based, before “going through” specific places with particular individuals, aiming at (re-)animating the former lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha. All these places lead to specific persons, to beings-beyond-the-human (e.g. animals or ancestors), to other places and other people, and to the past. Following Ingold,⁸ I visualise these Etosha places with Hai||om experience as a meshwork of entangled threads, humans, animals, plants, ancestors, and spirit-beings, woven into the land. In this light, I further explore the results of their eviction. Finally, I argue that Indigenous lifeworlds, their experiences and practices, should enter the conservation conversation and be considered for future conservation efforts in Namibia (see also Chapters 12, 13 and 14).

15.2 Exploring meaning: Methodology and outcomes

I went to Etosha on various field trips between 2000 and 2006 to explore the history of the national park, and in particular the developments regarding the former population of the south-eastern part of the park, as part of my PhD research.⁹ In 2001, due to my ongoing research in Etosha, I became involved in a project which was aimed at the creation of “cultural maps” documenting the historical presence of Hai||om within the area, the representation of a “forgotten past” to deconstruct the image of Etosha as an untouched and timeless wilderness.¹⁰ Other researchers were temporarily part of our project over the years.¹¹ As the process gained momentum, the work, which had started rather informally involving various individuals and organisations, needed to be formalised in a proper organisation, leading to establishment of the Xoms | Omis Project (Etosha Heritage Project)

4 This research was funded by the German Research Foundation (project number DI 2595/1-1) and undertaken within the framework of the DFG-AHRC project *Etosha-Kunene-Histories* (<https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/>); fieldwork was carried out within the framework of the Collaborative Research Centre 386, also funded by the German Research Foundation. The former Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Namibia supported my work with research permits for the Etosha National Park.

5 Basso (1996)

6 Also see Sullivan and Ganuses (2021) for a similar application of Basso’s framing for Damara/#Nūkhoe place-making in north-west Namibia.

7 Basso (1996: 14)

8 E.g. Ingold (2011[2000])

9 Dieckmann (2007)

10 The donors of the Etosha mapping project (Open Channels and Comic Relief, UK) and mapping company (Strata 360, Canada) had been involved in a similar mapping and documentation project in South Africa, with San who had lived dispersed and dispossessed for centuries and who had become known as #Khomani during court case preparations in the 1990s. In the #Khomani project, mapping took place in and adjacent to the Kalahari Gemsbok Park, amalgamated with the Gemsbok National Park in Botswana in 2000 to become the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

11 Namely: James Suzman, Cambridge University, anthropologist; Harald Sterly, University of Cologne, geographer; Ralf Vogelsang, University of Cologne, archaeologist; Joris Peters, University of Munich, archaeo-zoologist; Barbara Eichhorn, University of Cologne, archaeo-botanist.

in 2007, under the guidance of the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) in Windhoek: see <https://www.xoms-omis.org/>.¹²

The main objectives of the project were to research, maintain, protect and promote Hai||om heritage of ENP and its surrounding area in order to capitalise on that heritage in the tourism sector; and to develop capacity-building programmes based on this heritage for Hai||om individuals with a genuine interest in the cultural, historical and environmental heritage of the Park. Furthermore, we aimed at designing, creating, supporting and implementing sustainable livelihood projects for Hai||om communities indigenous to, or with strong historical associations with, the park—based on Hai||om cultural heritage of the Etosha area.

During the research, we worked mainly with a group of elderly Hai||om men: above all Kadisen ||Khumub, born around 1940; Willem Dauxab, born around 1938; Jacob Uibeb, born around 1935; Jan Tsumib, born around 1945; Hans Haneb, born around 1929; Tobias Haneb, born around 1925; and Axarob ||Oreseb, born around 1940. All of them were born in Etosha at various settlements in different areas and had partly worked in Etosha and on farms in the vicinity in the years after their eviction. We gained research permission from the then Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) to work in ENP which permitted us, under specific conditions, to leave the car and to walk around in the park. We regularly undertook journeys in the park, visiting old places of meaning for the Hai||om, finding places that have never been on or had disappeared from official maps and hearing their stories connected to the places. This 'on-site oral history'¹³ as a means of 'cultural landscape mapping' proved highly successful, as it revitalised knowledges, practices and experiences (also see Chapters 12 and 13). I follow this way of working with the structure of this chapter: specific places serve as gateways to convey meaning.

Moreover, we worked at the research camp at Okaukuejo (one of the rest camps in the park), sitting in the shade of a sink roof, surrounded by game-proof fences, for deepening and revising the documented information. During the years we worked together, we got more and more familiar with each other and became a well-integrated team with different individuals taking over different roles (e.g. Jan knew the north-eastern part around Namutoni quite well, Hans had most of the stories, but did not provide the necessary context for me, Willem complemented the stories with his knowledge, Kadisen knew how to explain to me in a way that I would understand). It is one of my most impressive and valuable experiences to have worked for many years with this team of elderly men, who often arrived earlier than the time agreed upon, who enjoyed working with me and who never became tired of my (stupid) questions (or at least did not show it). We spoke Afrikaans but recorded place names, plants and important concepts in Hai||om (part of the Khoekhoegowab dialect continuum). We built up a trusting relationship over the years and we shared a commitment to the work, because we all enjoyed the work and deemed it important. The envisaged products had certainly a motivating force too, but they were not the main driver to continue our work.

The archaeo-zoologist designed a questionnaire on animals in Etosha, which we worked through with the core team for most of the animals in Etosha; questions referred to knowledge on nutrition, reproduction, the behaviour of the specific animal, hunting methods, spoor of the animal, meat processing and distribution, taboos and other usages. The archaeologists of the project undertook an archaeological survey and archaeological investigations of one long-term settlement, #Homob (see Section 15.3.2), and archaeo-zoological data were collected at the same site.¹⁴ The work in this core team was complemented by interviews with other elderly Hai||om in Etosha as well as in Outjo

12 The legal entity envisaged to drive the project on the long-term was a Community Trust. The preparations for establishment of the trust and the formulation of the trust deed were undertaken in close cooperation with the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) in Windhoek and with Hai||om elders who had participated in the research serving as the Board of Trustees. The trust was established in 2009, but never came into full operation as three of the four main drivers of the project, Hai||om elders Hans Haneb, Kadison ||Khumub and Jacob ||Oreseb, passed away.

13 Sullivan *et al.* (2016: 22), Sullivan & Ganuses (2021), Sullivan (2022: 2–5)

14 Peters *et al.* (2009)

[illegible]

Within the project, we produced a place name map (Figure 15.1), a map of Hailom traditional ways of hunting and distribution of resources, two hunting posters and two bushfood posters, two lifeline maps (drafts) and two community posters which were not published.¹⁵ After the main funding came to an end I worked with the core team to write a tour guide book¹⁶ and a children's book,¹⁷ and we produced some postcards and T-Shirts with other smaller funding from different donors¹⁸ to conserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Hailom and to raise some income for the project.

- 15 For a critical assessment of the maps see Dieckmann (2021a)
16 Dieckmann (2009)
17 Dieckmann (2012)
18 The German and the Finnish Embassies in Namibia, the National Geographic Society, the German Research
Foundation, the Legal Assistance Centre in Namibia, EED/Bread for the World and Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Germany.

15.3. Walking through places

In this section, I take specific places, explored with specific individuals, as entry points to the meshwork of human, animal, plant, ancestor, and spirit-being threads, woven into the land.¹⁹

15.3.1 #Aro!gara!garases: A tree with its own nickname

During the time of the cultural mapping research, one specific tree could still be found close to the main road about 17 km from Okaukuejo. We passed it many times on our countless trips visiting different places in the park. It had been given the nickname #Aro!gara!garases (Figure 15.2).



Fig. 15.2 #Aro!gara!garases from afar on the left, and at the place on the right. Photos: © Harald Sterly, 2002, Xom | Omis Project, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

#Aro.s is the Khoekhoegowab term for *Ziziphus mucronata* (buffalo thorn, or in Afrikaans, blinkblaar wag-'n-bietjie—literally “shiny leaf wait-a-bit”—a reference to the notorious capacity of its thorns to snag and halt the unwary passer-by). This species occurs as a large shrub or bushy tree throughout Etosha, usually as a single plant at waterholes. Its strong, flexible wood was used to make bows, and the roots, bark and leaves to treat coughs and chest ailments. Though bitter, the ochre-red, fleshy berries were eaten raw or boiled, which rendered them slightly less bitter. A Hai||om proverb that features this bitter bounty reveals a wry view of relationships: ‘marriage is not like eating #âun (raisin bush, with its sweet berries) but like eating #aron!’

The name of this specific individual, #Aro!gara!garases, contains a swear word, humorously cursing the tree. In the flat terrain, the tree is visible from a great distance. In the past, Hai||om used to undertake hunting and gathering expeditions in the area, or they walked from the police station at Okaukuejo back to their settlements further west. When they became tired in the heat of the day, they would head towards this tree to rest in its shade. In the flat terrain, however, it was easy to underestimate distances, and so after walking in its direction for what might have seemed like hours, they would observe that it scarcely seemed to be any closer. In frustration, they would then refer to it as ‘#Aro!gara!garases’—‘that *tree!’. When asked about this specific tree, an elderly lady, Ticki !Noboses, who had been born in Etosha (at Ombika, *Bikab*) but now living in Outjo (around 150 km away from this tree and around 50 years after experiencing it), would perform as a walker moving towards the tree carrying things in the heat, being exhausted and cursing the tree. It was easy to imagine Hai||om longing for a short break in the burning sun, becoming angry because the shrub with its shade did not appear to come any closer.

¹⁹ Hoole and Berkes (2010) and Sullivan and Ganuses (2021) employed a similar methodology to the west of ENP, also revealing, for example, entanglements of connections of genealogies, events and places (see Chapters 12, 13 and 14).

15.3.2 *Tsînaib* and #*Homob*: Kinship engraved in the landscape

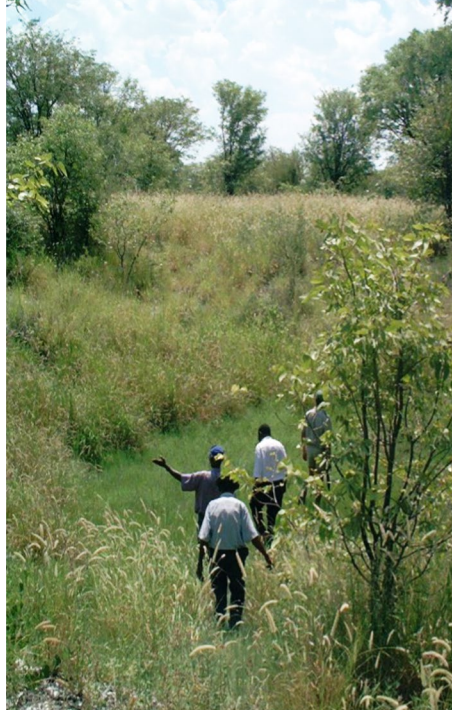


Fig. 15.3 Mark Berry, Kadison ǁKhumub, Willem Dauxab and Hans Haneb in search of the (former) *Tsînaib* well. Photo: © Harald Sterly, 2002, Xom | Omis Project, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 15.4 On the left Willem Dauxab stands at !Gunub. Photo: © Harald Sterly, 2002. On the right Axarob ǁOreseb stands at |Namerob. Photo: © James Suzman, 2002. Both photos are part of the Xom | Omis Project, and are used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

While I did not record a specific (or rather individual) relationality for #*Aro!gara!garases*, with the above narrative constituting more of a “shared meaning” or “shared knowledge”, descriptions at other places point towards relationalities between specific families and respective places: testifying to connections of people and places, the belonging of families to land as well as vice versa—the belonging of land to families.

Tsînaib is a natural well with a permanent settlement situated close to Halali, but has been almost entirely forgotten and is no longer accessible to the public (see Figure 15.3). The Halali tourist camp was opened in 1967 and the waterhole that can be viewed today from the camp is not a natural spring. Indeed, especially in the western parts of the park, many of the accessible waterholes

are artificial, or at least are assisted by electric pumps or windmills (see Chapter 10): Etosha's "wilderness" requires substantial management and maintenance. The well *Tsinaib*, however, was not an artificial waterhole and needed to be regularly maintained and cleansed of mud. The water quality was said to be relatively poor, but it was nevertheless fit for human consumption. Because the well was not an open fountain, it was not easy for animals to drink there, and Hai||om rather hunted on nearby plains than at *Tsinaib* itself.

Tsinaib serves as an entry point to family networks woven into the landscape. Two Hai||om men who were born at *Tsinaib* were Willem Dauxab and Axarob ||Oreseb (see Figure 15.4). Axarob was a solitary, shy person who found it difficult to interact with people. He was mostly at home living alone, out in the bush; his dogs were ample company. When the Hai||om had been expelled from their former settlements, Axarob refused to settle down at the tourist camps or outside the park on a commercial farm. He continued through the 1960s and early 1970s to spend extensive periods "in the bush" in Etosha with his dogs, surviving by hunting, which had by then become "poaching". Both Willem Dauxab and Axarob ||Oreseb died in 2008.

I follow the spatial-kin thread of Willem Dauxab.²⁰ His father was Fritz Dauxab, originating from the *!Harib* area (south of *Tsinaib*, see Figure 15.5 for many of the places named here). Fritz had three different wives in his lifetime, originating from different areas: Aia ||Gamgaebes was born at *Tsinaib*; her sister |Noagus ||Gamgaebes was born at *!Gabi!Goab* (the old location at *#Hoehob* (Okaukuejo)); and Anna ||Khumus was from *||Nububes*. Fritz reportedly had at least nine children. Aia and Fritz had six children born at *Tsinaib*, *||Nububes* and *#Hoehob*. Her sister |Noagus and Fritz had one child, Willem, born at *Tsinaib*, who grew up with his stepfather Petrus *!Khariseb*, originating from the area of *Kevis* (*Kaikebis*, also *#Kharikebis*). Anna and Fritz had three children, born at *||Nububes* and *#Hoehob*. Aia and |Noagus also had two brothers (or cross-cousins),²¹ with the surname *!Noboseb* (since their mother was a *!Noboses*). The brothers, Willem's uncles, stayed at *#Homob* (see Figure 15.5).²²

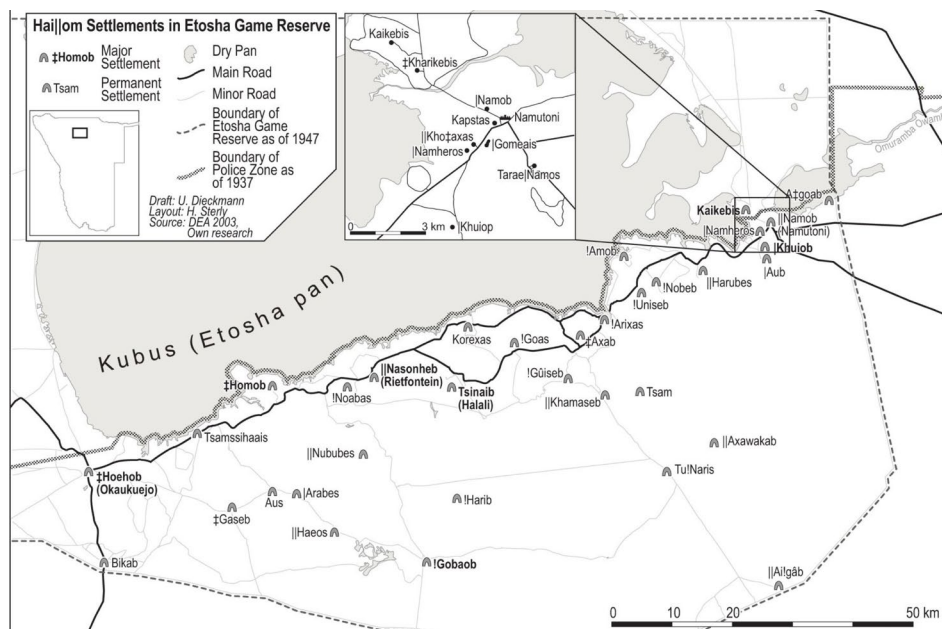


Fig. 15.5 Map of some former settlements of Hai||om in Etosha. © Xom ||Omis Project, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

- 20 In the Hai||om naming system (as in other Khoekhoegowab naming systems), he should be Willem ||Gamgaeb, because his mother was |Noagus ||Gamgaebes. Sons were named after their mothers, daughters after their fathers, see also further below.
- 21 In Hai||om kinship terminology, cross-cousins are named the same as brothers and sisters, see below (see also Widlok 1999: 182).
- 22 The father of |Noagus and Aia ||Gamgaebes also had three wives during his lifetime and around 10 children born in different areas.

Willem was born at *Tsînaib* where he stayed at times as a child with his mother |Noagus and stepfather Elias. I could not figure out if he stayed there most of the time in the year during his childhood, but certainly he considered it and the surrounding area as ‘our place’. At times, they went to the area of Namutoni (|*Namob*), where a sister of his stepfather Elias was staying (it is close to *Kevis*, where his stepfather was from) and stayed there for a couple of months, at times during the rainy season, because there were a lot of #*hûin* trees (*Berchemia discolor*) in that area (whose fruits could be collected and stored for a couple of months). Later, they moved back to stay at *Tsînaib* again. *Tsînaib* was also known for a lot of bushfoods, both corms (e.g. !*handi*) as well as fruits and berries (e.g. *Grewia* spp.). Willem said:

[e]very year, we went here and there, visit each other, there, #*Axab* [not in the map] !*Nobeb*, /*Ui!Goarebeb* [not on the map, but close to !*Nobeb*], //*Harubes*, !*Goas*, |*Uniams*, #*Uniseb* [not on the map], !*Gûiseb*, those were the places where we visited each other.²³

He noted that #*Homob* was also ‘their place’ because the brother of his mother (Jan !*Noboseb*) and another brother (or cross-cousin) stayed there (he explained that !*Noboseb* was the mother’s father of the second husband of Ticki, mentioned above at #*Aro!gara!garases*). We also established that the father of Willem’s mother, Franz //*Gamgaebes* was the father of Ticki //*Gamgaebes*, born at *Bikab*, although the mother of Ticki was not the same as Willem’s grandmother (Ticki and her husband, the grandson of Jan !*Noboseb*, stayed in Outjo during the time of the interview).

Willem and his mother and stepfather from *Tsînaib* used to stay at times at #*Homob* as well because his mother’s brother was staying there. Note, that his father Fritz also stayed at #*Homob* (but in another settlement). Families with the surnames |*Haudum* and #*Gaesen* were also in that area around #*Homob*, *Aus* and #*Gaseb* and #*Hoehob*. Apparently, the main settlement was at #*Homob*, but ‘when they liked to, they went to *Aus*, when they liked to they went to #*Gaseb*. That is how they were moving around’, and they also went to #*Hoehob*.

Willem and his mother (//*Gamgaebes*) only stayed with the mother’s brother (!*Noboseb*) at #*Homob* but did not move with them to the other places. Only in one year with a lot of rain (and mosquitoes), they also stayed around *Aus* (see Figure 15.5). Willem also related that there was a place of //*Gamgaebes* close to Otavi (a town east of the park, around 120 km away from #*Homob*), which he mentioned as another ‘place of us’, but he hasn’t been there, ‘it was the place of the old people’ (it seems he was referring to a time when mobility was less restricted before farms and the park were fenced).

In wintertime, the men staying at *Tsînaib* also went to |*Goses* (the same area as *Tsînaib*, but not on Figure 15.5) close to the Etosha pan, to hunt there and make biltong. Willem mentioned those places close to the pan (e.g. |*Ani Us*, *Gaikhoetsaub*, #*Kharitsaub*, not on Figure 15.5), where the men from *Tsînaib* went hunting (while staying at |*Goses*) and other named places (wells, plains, etc., e.g. *Bukas*, *Tsînaib+gas*, not on map) where the men from *Tsînaib* used to hunt during other seasons. The men also went hunting at places in other families’ areas, but had to ask permission from the elders living in these areas. When they felt like gathering specific bushfood, e.g. *ûinan* (*Cyanella* sp.), during the right time of the year they went to the //*Nububes* area which included *Kokobes* (not on Figure 15.5), known as a good place to collect *ûinan*. Presumably they had to ask the elders there as well for permission.

At #*Homob*, Willem could still point out the remnants of former dwellings and knew who had stayed where. His father, Fritz Dauxab, and his wife were #*Homob* residents. Fritz’s brother Lukas also stayed there; he had the reputation of not being a particularly good hunter, but he was always willing to carry the meat from the spot where it was killed back to the settlements. Furthermore, as mentioned, his mother and Willem’s stepfather resided temporarily there, as did his grandmother

²³ I did not ask about the exact family relations he had to all these places, but I am sure that he would have been able to explain.

and her partner. As is suggested by these complex family ties, serial monogamy was common practice in those days. Willem also explained that one of the waterholes situated at #Homob was used mainly for hunting, and the other for drinking. The waterholes were about 500 m from the settlements.²⁴

The tree where the adult male hunters used to prepare their meat (!hais) before handing over the rest to the women was still there during the time of our research, although it had been damaged by elephants. There is also another tree close to the waterhole, Willem explained, where before the eviction the Hai||om used to wait during the tourist season for visitors, who took pictures of them and often rewarded them with sweets and oranges. Evidently, both textual representation of these family-spatial relations and maps with place names are highly inadequate to comprehend the spatial web arising from kinship ties and other experiences.

15.3.3 ||Khumub and |Nuaiseb: Headmen signified in hills

||Khumub and |Nuaiseb are a pair of hills visible from a great distance across Etosha's flat landscape—see Figure 15.6. They are renowned as prime venues for collecting bush food, in particular berries such as *sabiron* (*Grewia villosa*, mallow raisin), #âun (*Grewia* cf. *flava*, velvet raisin) and #hûin (*Berchemia discolor*, bird plum), and corms like !hanni (*Cyperus fulgens*). The names of the hills refer to two men: |Nuaiseb was the surname of a headman whose extensive territory included these two hills. It was traditionally the responsibility of headmen to oversee the use of “natural resources”, including game and bush food, in the areas under their supervision, to ensure that they were not unsustainably exploited. |Nuaiseb decided to make one of the hills the responsibility of his nephew, whose surname was ||Khumub. The hills, therefore, bear the names of their former Hai||om supervisors.



Fig. 15.6 The hills ||Khumub and |Nuaiseb viewed from Halali tourist camp. Photo: © Ute Dieckmann, 2003, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

On a local level, specific family groups were linked to specific areas (as well as to specific other elements, e.g. animals, natural items such as salt or the poisonous plant used for the hunt). The family groups living in specific areas (also called ‘territories’)²⁵ were headed by family elders, who, as with

²⁴ See Peters *et al.* (2009: 148–56) for further details on archaeological findings at this place.

²⁵ Just to give a rough idea about the size: Friederich (2009: 77, 418–19) noted that these areas were more or less 20 km in radius, as can be seen in his map in the annexure, there have been huge differences in size.

many other hunter-gatherer groups, had to be respected men, sometimes women (called *gaikhoeb* or *gaikhoes*, big/senior man, big/senior woman or *gaob/gaos*, sometimes also called *danakhoeb/danakhoes*, literally head-man/head-woman) who could listen to the people, could mediate in the case of conflicts and were the ones overseeing “the sustainable use of resources” (in a western way of thinking). In my words, they were the ones who had the responsibility (the decision-making role) to care towards the people, the land and other elements/beings of the ecology. Maybe one could also call them stewards of the land, a concept, suggested for the Ju|’hoansi, another San group in Namibia.²⁶

These men (or women) could also be replaced if it turned out that they were not fulfilling their duties. Usually, a grandson or nephew was chosen by the *gaikhoeb* because of his personal qualities, was taught by him and would take over the role later in life. Furthermore, it was a nested system. For example, a certain man might have been considered the headman of a larger area comprising several settlements, each settlement might have had a senior respected person as well. At times, the headman of the bigger area would assign a certain place/area to another man, e.g. his nephew, as in this case |Nuaiseb to ||Khumub. At times, the Hai||om core team members had to discuss who was the headman of a specific area, sometimes they also disagreed. Furthermore, the headmen list, which Friederich²⁷ compiled, shows differences to our list of headmen at specific waterholes. This is a further indication that headmanship was a flexible institution, the important criteria being age and respect and that the elder “belonged” to the place, i.e. that he/she *related* to the land and was part of the family group connected to that specific patch of land.

15.3.4 !Gobaub: Shamans/healers, social organisation, snakes and history

!Gobaub is a waterhole close to the southern border of the park, which many Hai||om remember very well. It is nowadays part of a tourism concession granted to the Hai||om residing on the resettlement farms (for contextualisation, see Chapter 4). The information and quotes below are taken from the transcription/translation of my recordings (in Afrikaans) during a trip to !Gobaub and surrounding places, which I undertook with Kadisen ||Khumub, Willem Dauxab, Jacob Uibeb, Hans Haneb and Axarob ||Oreseb. Since Kadisen’s connections to the place were the closest, he talked most of the time. Others gave brief comments or additions.

A couple of hundred metres from the waterhole is the grave of Petrus Oahetama Suxub, who was buried there in 1948. He was the father’s father of Kadisen ||Khumub, and the headman in the area during Kadisen’s childhood. Kadisen also explained the origins of the (open) waterhole:

[t]hey [Hai||om] say: !Gobaub, it was that man [Petrus Oahetama Suxub] who made it right. In the beginning, it was not a big water, it was only //garus [pothole in stone]. But Suxub was a !gaiob [healer/shaman], he made the place big. [...] This //garus was first discovered by the dogs of !Gauaseb [surname]. When the dogs came back to !Gauaseb with wet paws, !Gauaseb called Suxub. Suxub, as a !gaiob, could also see the future, and had those spirits. Thus, he cut incisions into his feet in the evening, and put them into the water [?]. He just did it like that and went away, and then the thing burst. The water ran everywhere, it ran from here up to the veld, it was strong like that. [...] It was beautiful [...] ²⁸

Kadisen mentioned that his grandfather Suxub was a !gaiob.²⁹ A short explanation seems necessary: !gaiogu (shamans/healers) could communicate and negotiate with //gamagu³⁰ (spirit beings), mainly during trance/healing dances,³¹ and through their connection to //gamagu, they had a wide array

²⁶ See Low (2007: S80)

²⁷ (2009: 420–26)

²⁸ Field trip/interview with Kadisen ||Khumub, Willem Dauxab, Jacob Uibeb, Hans Haneb, Axarob ||Oreseb, 6.9.2001.

²⁹ !gaiob: sg. m.; !gaiogu: pl. m., mostly referred to in the male version, though it was said that there were female healers/shamans as well.

³⁰ //gamab: sg. m.; //gamagu: pl. m., mostly referred to in the male version, though it was said that there were female spirit beings too.

³¹ Widlok has described the basic structure of these dance events in more detail (Widlok 1999: 240–41).

of skills and tasks: they could, for instance, heal diseases, they treated bad luck in hunting, they helped women when giving birth, and they brought rain.³² In the example above, the *!gaiob* could open water.³³

!Gobaub had become a permanent large and open waterhole, thanks to the potency of Suxub and henceforth many families could stay there permanently or seasonally. Kadisen could enumerate many surnames: Suxun³⁴ and Hanen and ||Khumun and 'Aib and ||Gamxabeb, Sorosoab and |Hanixab came also here to make a turn' (all surnames and he continued with further surnames). Surnames played and still play an important role in the social organisation of Hai||om.³⁵ In former times, the surname was passed on by cross-descent, from father to daughter and mother to son (this has changed with identification documents and official marriages, which confuses the system, because it was—at least in the past—not implemented consistently, and only gradually). Not surprisingly considering the naming system of Hai||om, the same surnames were mentioned at various places. Surnames form a relevant and organising part of this socio-ecological knowledge, but on their own do not provide sufficient information, as shown above with *Tsînaib* and *#Homob*.

Suxub was reportedly the headman/steward of the place but *!Gauaseb* supported him/helped him, and acted as leader/steward as well. Suxub and his close male relatives were hunting at one side/in one direction of the waterhole while *!Gauaseb* and 'his group' was hunting on the other side. The hunters used to make *!goadi* [pit blinds] where they were sitting during the night. And when the animals were coming, they hunted them.

Since *!Gobaub* was an open fountain and thus different to *Tsînaib*, people did not take their drinking water directly from the fountain because the animals also used to come there. They dug water conduits to move the water some distance from the fountain. *!Gauaseb* and his group had made a different place for drinking water to that of Suxub and his family. *!Gobaub* had sufficient water to enable different family groups to stay in different settlements not too close to the fountain.

In the late 1940s, and early 1950s, it was also easy for Hai||om to go over to the farms Grensplaas and Tsabis (bordering Etosha in the south, and cut off from Etosha in 1947), Tsabis being one of the envisaged resettlement farms (see Chapter 4). Kadisen remembered:

[t]hey went there to work a bit, getting money, buying goats, then they came here again, they lived here, they moved with the goats. Here were not as many elephants [as today], they came from that side. They chased them away. Lions were neither a lot around here, they were more along the pan. They were scarce here. Just the leopards, those were the most here, they caught the goats. The people were also a bit afraid [...]³⁶

When Kadisen and the other team members were showing me *!Gobaub*, Kadisen intended to visit *||Gauses* (another place) as well (unfortunately we did not make it), where in former times, a specific snake had stayed: '[t]hat *||Gan!Gub* [big snake?], that was the snake [smiling]. They were very afraid of that snake. They said that snake kills the people'. Snakes were mentioned in various contexts and at various places. It was reported that every big water had a water snake, and when the snake died or was killed (as in the case of the waterhole *Bikab*) the water would dry up. Furthermore, some stories related 'mythical' snakes—'mythical' because I could not imagine them: there were reports about huge snakes, almost the width of a road. The existence of "Great Snakes" is reported for other Khoe and San peoples, as well as the occurrence of "water snakes".³⁷ Furthermore, according to some of our team members, snake spirits were among the different *||gamagu*, the spirit beings which populate the world of the Hai||om and which/who can transfer their potency or spirit to healers/shamans.

³² See also Wagner-Robertz (1977: 9–14)

³³ I use the past tense because Hai||om I have worked with said that there are only few if any *!gaiogu* today.

³⁴ Suxub: sg. m.; Suxun: pl. n.

³⁵ Widlok (1999: 194ff)

³⁶ Field trip/interview with Kadisen ||Khumub, Willem Dauxab, Jacob Uibeb, Hans Haneb, Axarob ||Oreseb, 6.9.2001.

³⁷ E.g. Hoff (1997), Sullivan & Low (2014)

Being at *!Gobaub*, Kadisen and the others also explained which bushfood could be found here. First, they talked about corms: '[t]he bushfood here are *uintjies* [corms/onions?], everything, it is full around here'. Then they mentioned specific drupes, *#hûin* [*Berchemia discolor*, bird plum]: '[t]hey are scarce, they are not a lot around here, but there are some', which when ripe were collected in large quantities because they could be stored for many months. A variety of *Grewia* species were also abundant: '*Sabiron* (*Grewia villosa*), *#âun* (*Grewia* cf. *flava*), everything is around here'. Pointing to different directions, Kadisen explained:

//nun [*Walleria nutans*] is also around that side, *ûinan* [not identified, Cyperaceae, Iridaceae or Tecophilaeaceae] is here. That side is *//nun*, *#habab* [probably *Fockea angustifolia*], *#gubub* [Cucurbitaceae], [...] The people here did not suffer from hunger, they had always a lot of food.

He then continued to discuss the animals and hunting:

!Gobaub was a very important place, all the people, the animals moved here [...] Eland were here [...] up to *//Haio*s [another place with a well]. That is the area of Eland. Suxub and people, they were the Eland people and my grandfather |Nu Aiseb [mother's father, staying around *//Nububes* and *//Nasoneb* (Rietfontein)], they are Zebra and Kudu people, they stayed more that side. But my grandfather Suxub is here, he is from the Gemsbok and Eland, they did not think a lot about Zebra, they thought of Eland. Eland are fat, if they have caught an Eland, the whole family is full. They shared with each other when someone had shot an Eland, the whole *!Gobaub* could eat from it. It must be divided and they have to eat it. [...] Not every man needed to shoot his Eland by himself, ehe, no. One is enough for the whole family here, they saved like that. They liked to save, they did not want that the trees are broken, the trees which have food must not be broken, and the hunt as well. You don't hunt every day just the same side, that the animals become wild [...] The people stayed under the side of the wind [?] so that the animals don't get the smell of the people. They stayed like that with the animals. They did not build their houses everywhere to stay there. Always a bit away from the waterhole as well.

Kadisen went on and explained that Hai||om would only shoot for the pot, using this as an entry point for some other moral-cultural considerations:

[t]hat is how the Hai||om are. [...] We did not waste, we shot for the pot to cook. When someone killed two animals, they called him and said to him: What is this? Do you just want to kill or do you eat it? You have to stop that! You must not pass the border of another man [...] *//Haio*s is again another border [area looked after by another headman], he cannot shoot there, they will punish him a bit. So was life. They were content with the food they could get, they did not quarrel. When the stomach is right, the children had eaten, it is enough, they are content. That is why the Hai||om are poor today, they are not men who steal or just grab, ehe, no, he is proud, he has to struggle himself to get food, Hai||om are like that. Until today, we are poor but we are ashamed to grab [gryp].

That is the tradition, you cannot grab, when you are grabbing, the people are looking down on you, they are thinking badly of you. [...] Hai||om are like that. He just wants to be nice, he must be with his children and his wife, they have to eat together and they have to give something to the old people. Hai||om were like that, they were friendly, they did not have fights/quarrelings [...] When the man [a newcomer, stranger] arrives he has to be given so that he can eat, selling was not there. But when you are taking the wife of another man, you will be punished, you have to pay, you have to give some goats for that. Those were the laws, the man who is taking a wife, he gets her forever [vat hom fas] here, [...] you take one woman, it is finished, until you die, you just took that one. Not like us today, I have two children of that woman, I have three children of that woman [others laughing], that thing, it does not work with the Hai||om [in former times], ehe, no, you will be laughed at, you just have to take one woman, that woman is your woman, your children are your children. And you have to try to raise your children, and another man, when he gets big, he takes another woman and raises his children. I can talk badly now, but this year, this year, he takes a woman, he goes to the house of the father of his woman, he lay just down there and eat, and he gets a child. You have raised that daughter and you have to raise the children of her again. Ehe, those things were not happening with the Hai||om, you have to raise your own children. Yes, that was *!Gobaub*, and *//Nubes*, Rietfontein, Halali, everywhere, Namutoni, all [the other men with us or Hai||om in general] understand what I say, that was the tradition of the Hai||om. They have hunted for the stomach, they did not sell it, yeah. [Hans talking Hai||om]. This time [the interview was taken beginning of September 2001, the start of the rainy season], they started to

hunt. They did not hunt meagre things. It had to be fat. When animals were meagre, they have eaten bushfood. They were a bit clever as well, they kept something for the year, the bushfood, they collected it, they kept it. Kudu meat as well. The meat of the winter, June, July, it would last until September, October, the biltong [dried meat]. Old people, they just stamped/crushed it, then they eat it.

15.3.5 #Khari Kevis, //Khou#goab and Aa#goab: Tracing a former “chief” and hunting

#Khari Kevis (Klein Okevi), //Khou#goab and Aa#goab (Twee Palms) were part of the area in Etosha that Hans Haneb knew the best. #Khari Kevis (Klein Okevi) was a settlement close to |Namob (Namutoni). The mother of Hans Haneb, #Nangus Anaki Hanes, originated from the Kevis area and was a member of the Tsam family. She died around 1958 at the farm Onguma. Hans's elder sister |Ininibes Sophia Saries was born about 1926 in the Kevis area. Hans was the second child, born at |Namob (Namutoni) around 1929. His father was based there at the time. His younger sister Elisa |Guri!naes Saries was born in the bush while her mother was looking for bushfood in the Kevis area around 1931. His youngest sister //Otwakhoe Olga Saries was also born in the Kevis area two years later as was his youngest brother, #Oa!kum Adi Haneb, in 1935. He was killed by SWAPO in 1976 whilst working for the South African Defence Force (SADF) tracking “infiltrators” from the north to Okahandja.³⁸

The grave of Fritz !Naob who died in 1945 is situated at #Khari Kevis,³⁹ and his family story is worth explaining. In archival documents of the 1930s, a man with the name Fritz Aribib, son of “Captain Aribib” was often mentioned as one of the Hai||om “leaders”. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the German colonial government concluded a treaty with Captain Aribib at the end of the 19th century. From “a Hai||om perspective”, however, it seems that Aribib could not have signed such a contract because it contravened the Hai||om social system, according to which respected elderly men or women had only responsibility in the small areas and the family groups they were closely connected to: a hierarchical leadership structure beyond this level was non-existent.

In the beginning, the Hai||om core team members, being asked about Fritz Aribib or his father Captain Aribib, first said they never heard of them. Later, after some internal discussions, they came up with the answer that Captain Aribib must have been the man Fritz #Arixab and that his son must have been Fritz !Naob (surname from his mother), who worked for the police at Tsumeb (a town east of Etosha) and also learned reading and writing. At the end of his life, he stayed at #Khari Kevis and died there. He had been a respected person and possessed some livestock. He had a mediator position also in negotiations regarding the eviction but was not regarded as the headman of the area, since he originated from an area further south, around the town Otavi. When Hans, Willem and Kadisen talked about him, they also explained part of the *who-is-who* in his family relations, his wife, mother-in-law, daughter, etc. They also explained that Captain Aribib was family with //Khumus.⁴⁰ The old surname Aribib (or |Aribib) was changed or hidden since the time of the German-Herero war, reportedly, because Captain Aribib was seen as an ally of the Germans.

When Hans Haneb was a child, he often visited his kin at //Khou#goab and Aa#goab (Twee Palms) (see Figure 15.7). When visiting we found many remains left by former inhabitants, including a piece of an oven, pieces of broken glass, metal remains and a meat stamping stone. Hans explained that the two waterholes were brothers. Aa#goab was the waterhole to drink from (*aa* means ‘to drink’) as its water was superior to that of //Khou#goab. //Khou#goab was the waterhole to hunt at (*//khou* means ‘to shoot with an arrow’, *#goab* means ‘mud’). The water was too salty for human consumption. Hai||om hunters used to wait in !goasa (hunting shelters at waterholes or animal

³⁸ Many San men, including Hai||om, were employed by SADF due to their excellent tracking skills (as were Damara/#Nukhoe men, e.g. in Battalion 10, Sullivan pers. obs.).

³⁹ See also Friederich (2009: 60–62)

⁴⁰ Interview 4.4.2002.

paths) for the animals to come and drink. The settlement was situated between the two waterholes. The Hai||om from this settlement also went to |*Namob* (Namutoni) to visit people there and to collect berries, mainly #*hûin* (*Berchemia discolor*, bird plum), in that area. During these visits, Hans was taught by the older, experienced hunters how to hunt at //*Khau#goab*.



Fig. 15.7 //*Khau#goab* (Twee Palms) on left. Photo: © Harald Sterly, 2002. On right, Hans Haneb demonstrating how to use bow and arrow. Photo: © James Suzman, 2002. Both photos are part of the Xom |Omis Project, and are used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Hans could recall many hunting experiences that took place at //*Khau#goab*. Once, he wanted to shoot a kudu, but he became so tired that he fell asleep while he was waiting for one. When he awoke, he was looking straight into the eyes of a kudu, and at first, was too surprised to react and shoot. Once he had recovered, he shot the kudu with a poisoned arrow, and it ran away. The following morning, he and some others tracked it and found it where it had died. They cut up the carcass and brought the meat back to the settlement. On another occasion, he went to //*Khau#goab* to wait for prey in a !*goas*. The next morning, a wildebeest approached from the side. In order to give the headman of the area the opportunity to shoot it, Hans held back, but the animal got the wind of the old man and started to run away. At that point, Hans put practical considerations ahead of courtesy and shot it dead.

15.4 Places as knots, Etosha as meshwork

Following the threads evolving around specific places, I attempted to (re-)vitalise the former lifeworld of Hai||om in Etosha.

More than any other place, #*Aro!gara!garases* signifies the idea of ‘walking through places’, vividly illustrating what living in Etosha entailed. It was a place to rest while moving, not a place to stay at for too long.

Through *Tsînaib* and Willem, we traced the vast kinship-spatial knowledge of Hai||om woven into the landscape; kinship networks are *engrained* in the landscape or—put differently—spatial knowledge is “relational” knowledge.⁴¹ People and land/places were connected and personal identities belonged to the land. Kinship ties implied spatial connections and guided movements. They did establish *common ground*. Areas from which parents originated were regarded as ‘our’ place, which included that one could go and stay there for some time. In Willem’s example, it could also be a stepfather. Willem’s example also clarified that one could stay at the places of one’s parent’s cross siblings. In areas where close kinship of this kind could not be established as easily, one would need to show respect to the fact that one had entered the ground of someone else (e.g. in terms of asking permission to give some of the killed game to the elders there).

41 This does not mean that Hai||om have a purely genealogical understanding of kinship. It is a flexible system with strong relational aspects (see Widlok 1999: chapter 6).

The pair of hills //Khumub and |Nuaiseb led us to specific headmen responsible for the area, their roles for the family group and bushfood to be found.

!Gobaub points to the close connection of people, land and mobility. Although Kadisen was born at a settlement close to another water hole in Etosha (where his mother's father was staying with his family), this place was one he used to visit and where he temporarily stayed during his childhood, as his father's father was living at !Gobaub with extended family. The remarks on surnames of people also inhabiting the area point to the relations of family groups to areas. Socio-spatial arrangements concerning settlement locations and hunting areas were described; the connections of areas, people and animals (e.g. the "Eland people") revealed; and hunting and sharing practices, bushfood occurrence, hunting and consumption morals, were remarked upon. The origin of the waterhole and the involvement of a shaman/healer (!gaio) was explained and the history of the area was embedded in the account (the farms at the border and the temporal farm work). Kadisen also alluded to a special snake.

The other places, #Khari Kevis (Klein Okevi), //Khou#goab and Aa#goab (Twee Palms) also point to the close connection of people and places. This was the home area of Hans Haneb, who remembered his childhood and learning hunting at these places. The place also leads to the early colonial past with the grave of Fritz !Naob. The remains we found there give evidence of past human dwelling in the area.

All these places lead to specific persons, and beings-beyond-the-human (e.g. animals or ancestors); they lead to other places and other people, they lead to the past. Ingold states that,

[p]laces, then, are like knots, and the threads from which they are tied are lines of wayfaring. A house, for example, is a place where the lines of its residents are tightly knotted together. But these lines are no more contained within the house than are threads contained within a knot. Rather, they trail beyond it, only to become caught up with other lines in other places, as are threads in other knots. Together they make up what I have called the *meshwork*.⁴²

Ingold's "meshwork" is a suitable concept for capturing Hai||om's being-in-Etosha as being-in-relations. The meshwork concept is linked to Ingold's reading of 'animacy' as 'the dynamic, transformative potential of the entire field of relations within which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence'.⁴³ He stresses two points of an 'animic perception of the world, [...] the relational constitution of being; [...] and the primacy of movement'.⁴⁴ The meshwork is the lifeworld constituted of organisms in a relational field, and organisms are trails of movement and growth and not entities set off against the environment. The environment, he envisages, is 'a domain of entanglement':

[t]his tangle is the texture of the world. In the animic ontology, beings do not simply occupy the world, they inhabit it, and in so doing—in threading their own paths through the meshwork—they contribute to its ever-evolving weave. Thus we must cease regarding the world as inert substratum, over which living things propel themselves about like counters on a board or actors on a stage, where artefacts and the landscape take the place, respectively, of properties and scenery. By the same token, beings that inhabit the world (or that are truly indigenous in this sense) are not objects that move, undergoing displacement from point to point across the world's surface. Indeed the inhabited world, as such, has no surface [...], whatever surfaces one encounters, whether on the ground, water, vegetation or building, are *in* the world, not *of* it [...] And woven into their very texture are the lines of growth and movement of its inhabitants. Every such line, in short, is a way through rather than across. And it is as their lines of movement, not as mobile, self-propelled entities, that beings are instantiated in the world. [...] The animic world is in perpetual flux, as the beings that participate in it go their various ways.⁴⁵

⁴² Ingold (2011: 149)

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71, original emphasis

In tracing the lines evolving around places a dense web of land, kinship, humans, animals, plants and spirit beings emerges: an integrated ecology, an almost forgotten past. More than only the physical paths in the landscape, I refer to the “intangible” (i.e. “memorial”/mental/psychological/cognitive/spiritual) threads emerging when visiting these places with the former inhabitants. What Nelson stated for the Kokuyun is also true for Hai||om formerly living in Etosha:

[t]he [...] homeland is filled with places [...] invested with significance in personal or family history. Drawing back to view the landscape as a whole, we can see it completely interwoven with these meanings. Each living individual is bound into this pattern of land and people that extends throughout the terrain and far back across time.⁴⁶

The places walked through above show histories and identities woven into places; the land itself ‘is pregnant with the past’.⁴⁷ The story of origin—the ‘bursting’ of the waterhole *!Gobaub*—is connected to the very place. The occurrence and seasonality of bushfood and game are connected to places and woven into the land. Colonial history is part of it too as is the gradual change of livelihood options (Hai||om men went to farms for temporal employment) or the tracing of the former ‘chief’. The graves of deceased Hai||om are kinship ties across generations engrained in the landscape.

Travelling through places with Hai||om brought up numerous stories, oral histories and personal memories, e.g. about conflicts with other groups, about specific individuals, both human and beyond-the-human, about kudu or *!gamagu* (spirit-beings). New stories and new memories have been constantly woven into the land. Even the reminiscence of the eviction became integrated into specific places, where the Hai||om were gradually assembled and eventually ordered by the colonial representatives to leave the park.⁴⁸

Hai||om in Etosha entertained a variety of relations with the land, kin, ancestors and other beings. These relations were constitutive of their being, or in Bird-David’s words:

[a]gainst “I think, therefore I am” stand “I relate, therefore I am” and “I know as I relate.” Against materialistic framing of the environment as discrete things stands relationally framing the environment as nested relatednesses. Both ways are real and valid. Each has its limits and its strengths.⁴⁹

Relationships with space established identities, as did relationships with people and animals. In the former lifeworld of the Hai||om, there was no strict boundary between the natural and the supernatural, material and spiritual, the real and the mythical, or between animated and unanimated beings. By the same token, their connection to the land is not appositely captured as “ownership” in the sense of exclusive rights over the land. Ownership in this sense was/is not possible in Hai||om-Etosha-ecology. Experiencing oneself as part of a wider ecology with diverse beings, rather than as controllers of “nature”, prevents ideas of (exclusively human) ownership in the same way as egalitarian values prevent the establishment of formal, hierarchical leadership structures (see Chapter 4).⁵⁰ Although the boundaries of family-group areas were well known to the Hai||om, and sometimes also marked with beacons (e.g. rocks put in trees), the existence of these outlined areas is not proof of exclusive *ownership* or exclusive rights to access. Instead, they were socially permeable.⁵¹ It is rather an indication that family groups were tied to specific patches of land and had guardianship of the area. Apart from the living elders, ancestors also took care of the land.

46 Nelson (1983: 243) in Ingold (2011[2000]: 54)

47 *Ibid.*, p. 189

48 Dieckmann (2009: 49–51)

49 Bird-David (1999: S78)

50 Although Indigenous land claims around the world demonstrate that the meaning of “land ownership” can be negotiated in court, the proof of “ownership” remains the reference point for legal argumentation.

51 Widlok (2009)

15.5 The meshwork of Etosha, untied and confined

The Etosha area⁵² was thus a meshwork of which Hai||om—as human inhabitants—were a vital part. In other words, they were integral threads, as were spirit-beings and ancestors, predators, prey animals, livestock, trees, shrubs and other plants. Hai||om knew how to sustainably live there, as Kadisen stressed at *!Gobaub*: '[w]e did not waste'.⁵³ Taboo rules of various kinds (e.g. concerning food or behaviour) were in place. Headmen or women were responsible for checking and deciding which bushfood could be collected at which place, and which animals could be hunted in which area. For serious problems and transgression of laws or taboos, *!gaiogu* (shamans/healers) had to communicate and negotiate with *||gamagu* (spirit beings) who supervised and looked after the area in order to find solutions.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, up to the 1940s, Hai||om were also perceived by “outsiders”—above all representatives of the colonial administration, but also by white settlers—as “part and parcel” of Etosha. The native commissioner of Ovamboland, Major Hahn, who was responsible for the Game Reserve, reported in 1936:

I beg to remark that wild bushmen have always been allowed to reside in the Game Reserve. They are considered as part and parcel of it. They are allowed to shoot certain species of game only and these may not be shot or trapped near watering places [...]⁵⁴

Their hunting was generally not seen as a threat to the ecological balance within the area: “to shoot for the pot” (with bow and arrow) was accepted by the colonial officers.

The concept of meshwork also allows for changes, for new weaving, gradual transformations and a more differentiated picture. During the first part of the 20th century, new threads became woven into the meshwork. In addition to hunting and gathering, many families possessed livestock: especially goats, but also a few head of cattle and donkeys. Furthermore, Hai||om men had several opportunities for seasonal or regular work, either inside or outside Etosha, on farms, in mines or road construction or at the police stations of Okaukuejo and Namutoni.⁵⁵ As Etosha was not yet fenced, however, Hai||om men could return to their families and the places they belonged to.

From the late 1940s onwards, the former meshwork underwent serious changes due to the ideals and practices of the colonial administration (see Chapters 2 and 4). These had significant impacts on Hai||om. In the early 1950s, they were evicted from their living places in Etosha. They became labour “material”, a few at the rest camps and most at the commercial farms owned by white settlers. Immediately after the eviction, though, many Hai||om were not aware that there was no return for them. Only after a while, they began to realise that things had indeed changed and that moving back and forth was no longer either a legal or a tolerated strategy. For those few Hai||om who later found employment within Etosha, the maintenance of relations to the land and its beings could be continued, although differently to before. Being employed in Etosha allowed them to stay on the land, yet not anymore at the waterholes but at the police stations/rest camps.⁵⁶ Maybe one could regard this employment as a new thread being woven into the meshwork.

Etosha was gradually reduced in size and fenced in, first at the southern border, dividing the home area of Hai||om and hampering their movement. Recalling the time after the eviction in an interview, Kadisen explained:

⁵² I refer here specifically to the area becoming Etosha National Park, but the same holds true for the entire area of Game Reserve No. 2 in its various configurations and human and beyond-human inhabitants further west (see Chapters 1, 2, 12, 13, and 14).

⁵³ This is not meant to glorify Indigenous peoples as living in harmony with nature, but to foreground that Hai||om experienced the world in a non-anthropocentric way in which living “sustainably” was simply logical behaviour (see Dieckmann 2021a; also Sullivan 1999).

⁵⁴ NAO 33/1, 14.11.1936: Native Commissioner Ovamboland to the Secretary for SWA.

⁵⁵ Dieckmann (2007: 155–56)

⁵⁶ See Dieckmann (2003) for a detailed description of the eviction process.

[t]he fence is now put up. The gate is there now. We came there, they said, no, you are not coming in anymore. Who is on that side, stay on that side. Who is inside, stay inside. We were lucky. We [his family] came in before the fence was put up. That time we were already here. And the people who stayed behind, they came there, the gate was there, it was said, no, you should not come, you will stay outside, you are not coming in anymore.⁵⁷

Only those looking for employment were allowed to get back in (when workers were needed).

The evicted Hai||om became involuntarily deprived of their previous relations to their former places and their former beyond-human companions there. The eviction, therefore, is more than just relocation and more than mere *land* dispossession. It is a *social deprivation*, as relations to places and beyond-the human beings were interrupted. The fencing of the park had critical consequences both for Hai||om and for the wildlife populations of the area (see Chapters 2 and 10),⁵⁸ lions being welcomed to keep some predator-prey balance while Hai||om were evicted as “game exterminators”.⁵⁹

The former meshwork became untied and confined, officially in the name of nature conservation but in fact in a specific way of nature commercialisation: game in “protected areas” became a commodity in the production line of “Africa, the untamed wilderness” to be sold to tourists, while former human inhabitants were excluded from this line. A huge amount of (colonial) management and a “scientification” of “nature conservation” became necessary to maintain this “imagined wilderness” (see Chapter 2). The former meshwork of Etosha as the home of human and beyond-the-human inhabitants, of places conveying the very history of the area, had dissolved, and the past became (almost) forgotten.

15.6 Alternative visions for conservation and beyond? Thinking with relations, thinking with Hai||om

Through places, people and stories, I have conveyed an image of the Etosha area as the former lifeworld of the Hai||om, which can be comprehended as a meshwork with “place-knots”, with threads of human inhabitants, spirit-beings and ancestors, predators, prey animals, livestock, trees, shrubs and other plants. Not only humans were animated and agents, but also animals, ancestors, and spirit-beings. These elements or beings were mutually dependent. They shared places, they shared food or water, nurtured each other, all of them part of the ecology. I showed that the meshwork concept also opens a new perspective on the eviction of Hai||om, comprehending it as social deprivation and not solely relocation. Yet, I argue that this conceptualisation should not stop at the borders of today’s Etosha, or when leaving the past lifeworld of Hai||om. We could take it, as Ingold suggested in general terms more than two decades ago, as a starting point for our⁶⁰ own engagement with the environment:

I am suggesting that we rewrite the history of human-animal relations, taking this condition of active engagement, of being-in-the world, as our starting point. We might speak of it as a history of human concern with animals, insofar as this notion convey a caring, attentive regard, a “being with”. And I am suggesting that those who are “with” animals in their day-to-day lives, most notably hunters and herdsmen, can offer us some of the best possible indications of how we might *proceed*.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Kadisen ||Khumub 7.11.2000.

⁵⁸ Berry (1997: 6)

⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning here that lions had been considered by Hai||om as colleagues and equals. Although there were a couple of stories, also related to specific places, of human-lion encounters, these conflicts were taken amongst equals, sometimes won by Hai||om, sometimes by a specific lion (Dieckmann 2021a: 118–19, 2023: 867).

⁶⁰ ‘Our’ and ‘we’ are used here as a welcoming inclusion to those who feel addressed. It refers to me and those who identify in similar ways who were brought up in a dominant culture where Cartesian dualisms are dominant concepts to cluster the world.

⁶¹ Ingold (2011[2000]: 76, emphasis added)

Thereby, I would not confine this kind of apprehension to human-animal relations but extend it to other elements/beings within the environment too.

I hope that 'walking through places'—through introducing the former lifeworld of the Hai||om—transmits the idea/experience⁶² of "being-with" and *in-the-world*, thus deviating from anthropocentric cosmologies that assume a being-*on-top-of-the-rest*. The Australian philosopher Val Plumwood identified two tasks in face of the current ecological crisis: first, to (re)situate the human in ecological terms, and second, to (re)situate non-humans in ethical terms.⁶³ To my point of view, the former lifeworld of the Hai||om provides hints as to what this could entail. This should not be understood as promoting a return to a hunting-and-gathering way of life but rather as a suggestion to *relate* differently with our "environment". It allows for the (re-)animation of "nature" based on mutual respect and relationality. The objectification of nature, originating in the "Enlightenment"⁶⁴ and a central characteristic of "Modernity"⁶⁵ is arguably an important cause of current ecological crisis. Technology on its own, deeply embedded in modernity's premises, will not bring salvation.⁶⁶ What is needed, is a "relational turn",⁶⁷ not only in science but in nature conservation and our approach to life.

We could also take this "relating-to" and "being-with" as a guiding principle for future nature conservation policies and practices. On other continents and in other regions, the ideas/experiences of Indigenous peoples—resulting in particular environmental knowledges—are more actively promoted by Indigenous scholars⁶⁸ and integrated into discussions on environmental issues and climate change.⁶⁹ Their ways of being-in-the-world are therefore at times included in conservation planning, environmental management, reparation measures and legislation.⁷⁰ Yet, in southern Africa, especially in Namibia, Indigenous people—and in particular San communities—are struggling with the establishment of recognised and influential political organisations, as well as discrimination based on disparaging their (former) ways of life. The notion that the San traditional way of life is a "primitive" way of life and that the San need to be "civilised" is prevalent among Namibians generally, including the government.⁷¹

Hence, the values and ways-to-relate within Namibian Indigenous communities seem disregarded within Namibian society and politics: their ideas/experiences originating in their former "being-in-the-world" have not entered the arena of conservation discourse. This is not only true in the context of reparation for colonial wrongs of conservation practices and resulting land dispossession (see Chapters 4, 12, 13, 14 and 16) but also concerning future conservation efforts. Some might note that Namibia's Community-Based Resource Management Programme (CBNRM, see Chapter 3), emphasises local involvement in conservation issues and thereby goes in the proposed direction. Given its grounding in ideas of rural development based on an economic-progress paradigm and concerns about the protection of wildlife (grounded in the conviction that economic benefits serve as incentives to protect wildlife), 'cultural and historical dimensions of land-use and value [have] remain[ed] relatively weakly entangled with conservation concerns'.⁷² CBNRM instead appears

62 I use 'idea/experience' or 'concepts/experiences' to emphasise that both are mutually dependent on each other, that how-we-know (epistemology) and what-we-know (ontology) cannot be separated: see also Dieckmann (2021b: 18–19, 2021c: 200).

63 Plumwood (2002: 8–9)

64 *Ibid.*

65 Blaser (2013)

66 See e.g. Umeek (2014: 7)

67 See e.g. Dépelteau (2015)

68 E.g. Black (2011), Wildcat (2013), Umeek (2014)

69 E.g. Blaser (2009), Sullivan (2010, 2013, 2017), Cruikshank (2012), Cochran *et al.* (2013), Goldman *et al.* (2016), Burman (2017)

70 See e.g. Salmond (2012), Muller *et al.* (2019)

71 Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014: 503–4)

72 Sullivan (2022: 37)

embedded in a particular ‘worlding’ that is anthropocentric, utilitarian and objectifying with a clear culture-nature dualism.⁷³ As Schnegg and Kiaka note,

CBNRM devalues lifeworlds and worldviews that have been shaped over centuries through specific ways of being. Thus, right from the start, CBNRM fails to recognize that people may have other ways of being-in-the-world than what the modernization paradigm of CBNRM implies.⁷⁴

Moreover, the programme promotes institutional blueprints to be used for community-driven nature conservation, blueprints which barely take histories and former institutions, social structures and ways of decision-making, into consideration (see Chapter 7).

Several scholars have already connected ontological/phenomenological Indigenous case studies from Namibia with conservation and environmental issues.⁷⁵ I argue that it is also time for Namibia’s Indigenous being-in-the-world to be integrated more firmly into the discourse on Namibia’s conservation politics and practices. Imagine that Hailom experiences of their surroundings (as that of other Indigenous peoples in Namibia), their ideas of their place/position in relation to human and other-than-human beings and their acknowledgement of the importance of mutual relationships between a variety of human and non-human actors could find their ways in the Namibian conservation discourse. It would open the possibility that humans may be re-positioned with regards to ecology.

The need for humans to conserve nature focused on the sustainability of human existence embedded in a ‘utilitarian, exploitative, dominion-over-nature worldview’⁷⁶ could be replaced with the responsibility of humans to care for the whole ecosystem (including humans). It would mean that humans do not need to be separated from nature to conserve it. A (re-)animation of nature would mean that the maintenance of ethical and mutual relationships with non-human others would become a necessity of living(-with). It would also imply that local knowledge should be integrated into the management of protected areas, including national parks.⁷⁷ Taking Hailom (and other) concepts/experiences seriously in the Namibian context could also result in some of the other beings or even relations becoming legal persons in the Namibian jurisdiction. This is the case in other countries already: for example, the constitution of Ecuador grants inalienable, substantive rights to nature.⁷⁸ In New Zealand, a river system gained legal personhood based on Māori onto-epistemologies.⁷⁹ New Zealand also granted legal personhood to national parks. In Australia, following Ngarrindjeri negotiations with the government, the *environment* became a recognised water user to be prioritised.⁸⁰

Integrating Hailom and other Indigenous onto-epistemologies in the Namibian conservation discourse would open a variety of alternative paths to be further explored. It would be without doubt a significant step to more empowerment and more participation of Indigenous peoples in Namibia, to more environmental justice and decolonisation of development.⁸¹ It would also be a step to decolonise conservation and to the reconciliation of conservation efforts with diverse human (and non-human) actors.

⁷³ I use ‘worlding’ in the sense that Blaser (2013: 551) suggests, as a ‘form of enacting reality’, which is his understanding of the term ontology.

⁷⁴ Schnegg & Kiaka (2018: 112) referring to Sullivan (2002)

⁷⁵ E.g. Sullivan (2017), Hannis & Sullivan (2018), Schnegg (2021)

⁷⁶ Muller *et al.* (2019: 400)

⁷⁷ For an example from Canada, see Enns and Littlechild (2018)

⁷⁸ de la Cadena (2010: 335)

⁷⁹ Salmond (2014)

⁸⁰ Muller *et al.* (2019: 406–7)

⁸¹ See e.g. Goldman *et al.* (2016), Burman (2017)

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16. History and social complexities for San at Tsintsabis resettlement farm, Namibia

Stasja Koot and Moses //Khumûb

Abstract

The theme of the 1950s eviction of Hai||om Indigenous people from the protected area that became Etosha National Park is continued in this chapter. After this event, many Hai||om San became farm workers. Having lost their lands under colonialism and apartheid to nature conservation and large-scale livestock ranching, most remained living in the margins of society at the service of white farmers, conservationists or the South African Defence Force. After Independence in 1990, group resettlement farms became crucial to address historically built-up inequalities by providing marginalised groups with opportunities to start self-sufficient small-scale agriculture. This chapter addresses the history of the Tsintsabis resettlement farm, just over a 100 kms east of Etosha National Park, where at first predominantly Hai||om (and to a lesser degree !Xun) were “resettled” on their own ancestral land, some as former evictees from the park. The history of Tsintsabis is analysed in relation to two pressing, and related, social complexities at this resettlement farm, namely: 1) ethnic tension and in-migration; and 2) leadership. The chapter argues that the case of Tsintsabis shows the importance of acknowledging historically built-up injustices when addressing current social complexities. The importance of doing long-term ethno-historical research about resettlement is thereby emphasised so as to be able to better understand the contextual processes within which resettlement is embedded.

16.1 Introduction

Resettlement has been an important pillar of the Namibian land reform programme, since prior to Independence in 1990. One important aim of resettlement was to develop marginalised rural populations.¹ This emphasis arises because ‘Namibia has one of the most unequal distributions of land [...] in the world, and this inequality in access and control over land is [...] a major cause of rural poverty, socioeconomic inequalities, and social dissatisfaction’;² Chapters 1 and 2 provide historical contexts giving rise to this situation.

Resettlement in Namibia, therefore, functions as a crucial development instrument. The main legal document to address land inequalities is the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 6 of 1995 (ACLRA).³ In the National Land Policy (NLP) from 1996, the primary objectives were ‘to provide adequate access to land for landless people’ and ‘to promote, facilitate and coordinate access to, and control over, land [...] to support long-term sustainable development for all Namibians’.⁴ Resettlement was thus crucial to achieve these goals. Specified in the National Resettlement Policy of 2001, Namibia identified the following target groups for resettlement: the San⁵ population, displaced

1 Ahmed (1985)

2 Hitchcock (2012: 75)

3 Harring & Odendaal (2007), Dieckmann (2011)

4 Karuombe (1997: 6)

5 “San” or “Bushmen” both refer to Indigenous hunter-gatherers of southern Africa. The term “Bushmen” is based on colonial racism and has a derogatory and patronising character. The more politically correct term “San”, however, also has derogatory and patronising elements (Gordon & Sholto Douglas 2000). Despite these meanings, both terms also ‘signify important identity markers of belonging to the larger regional group that shares cultural similarities and experiences of marginalization’ (Koot, Grant, //Khumûb *et al.* 2023). When applicable we use their own ethnonyms in this chapter, namely Hai||om and !Xun.

people, returnees, ex-combatants, ex-farm workers, destitute and landless people, disabled people and those living in overcrowded communal areas.⁶ The objectives of resettlement are to redress past imbalances in the distribution of land; to make people self-sufficient through agriculture; to integrate resettled populations into the national economy; to create income-generating activities; to reduce livestock and human pressure on communal lands; and to provide resettled peoples an opportunity to reintegrate into society.⁷

Based on their marginalised status and a history of discrimination and exploitation, the government thus made the San of Namibia one of the main target groups of its resettlement policy (also see Chapter 4).⁸ However, only a few of them were able to secure access to resettlement land or resources to be able to carry out development activities on this land.⁹ By 2010, over 55 group resettlement projects had been established by the then Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR), of which at least 23 contained significant numbers of San.¹⁰ Most of them were directed to group resettlement farms that contained many deficiencies, including a lack of (proper) infrastructure, low farming capacities of the beneficiaries, and poor suitability of the land. Furthermore, environmental assessments tended to be poorly done, coordinators of the MLR were often not properly qualified, and beneficiaries did not have official certificates for leasing a piece of land, leading to most resettlement projects failing national production objectives.¹¹

Much literature has addressed resettlement policies and practices and related legal frameworks in Namibia (including the analysis in Chapter 4).¹² In this chapter we divert from a legal focus and contribute an analysis of the historical development of social complexities at one specific resettlement farm, namely Tsintsabis. Our aim is to better understand why resettlement often continues to show limited and disappointing results more than 30 years after implementation.¹³ In our analysis, we focus on San inhabitants of the area, namely, Hai||om and to a lesser degree !Xun, and their relations with other peoples and each other. We focus on two specific social complexities: namely 1) ethnic tension and in-migration; and 2) leadership.

Social complexities ‘will always influence the ways that local people understand, respond to, and are impacted by [...] projects, and hence social complexity should be taken into account when the planning, implementation, and outcomes of [...] projects are considered’.¹⁴ Whilst there is increasing acknowledgement that people are part of much larger networks in which the total environment, including non-human elements, is important for understanding lifeworlds,¹⁵ our specific focus here is on human interactions, relations and activities. Since social complexities ‘demonstrate how the planning, implementation, and impacts’ of policies and/or projects can ‘have different effects for different groups of people’,¹⁶ this focus allows us to concentrate on issues that concern the Hai||om and !Xun of Tsintsabis. We analyse how ethnic tension, in-migration, and leadership issues have developed historically at the Tsintsabis resettlement farm and how they have impacted—and continue to impact—Hai||om and !Xun living there.

In the remainder of this chapter we describe our methodology, following this with a more detailed history of land dispossession among the Hai||om of northern Namibia. Next, we zoom in on the Tsintsabis resettlement farm, its history and two contemporary social complexities, as mentioned above. These two social complexities—namely ethnic tensions and in-migration, and disputes

6 Harring & Odendaal (2007), GRN (2010)

7 Dieckmann (2011)

8 Harring & Odendaal (2002, 2007), Melber (2019)

9 Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, *et al.* (2014), Melber (2019)

10 GRN (2010), Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014)

11 Gargallo (2010), Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, *et al.* (2014), Melber (2019)

12 Suzman (2001), Harring & Odendaal (2002, 2006, 2007), Dieckmann (2011), Dieckmann, Thiem & Hays (2014), Odendaal & Werner (2020)

13 Harring & Odendaal (2006, 2007), Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014), Odendaal & Werner (2020)

14 Fabinyi *et al.* (2010: 619)

15 For example, Sullivan (1999, 2017), Koot & Van Beek (2017), Koot & Büscher (2019), Dieckmann (2023)

16 Fabinyi *et al.* (2010: 617)

around leadership—are at the core of this chapter and have been controversial in Tsintsabis since its establishment as a resettlement farm. Lastly, in our conclusion we reflect back on the process of resettlement for Hai||om more generally and in Tsintsabis specifically, and why/how these social complexities have affected this process. We argue that the case of Tsintsabis shows the importance of acknowledging historically built-up injustices when addressing current social complexities, and we emphasise the importance of doing long-term ethno-historical and ethnographic research to be able to better understand contextual processes of resettlement (also see Chapters 4, 12, 13, 14 and 15). Such knowledge is crucial to inform policy and practice.

16.2 Methodology

Whereas the historical and theoretical components of the chapter are based on academic and grey literature and ethnographic research, the contemporary social complexities in Tsintsabis are largely based on ethnographic research including semi-structured interviews and autoethnography.

First author Koot has lived, worked, and conducted research in Tsintsabis since 1999, with multiple returns to the area. Initially conducting fieldwork there as an MSc anthropology student in 1999, he would later become a development fieldworker between 2002 and 2007, working together with inhabitants—in particular members of the Tsintsabis Trust—in founding Treesleeper Camp.¹⁷ This experience included a close collaboration with second author ||Khumûb and a large variety of people in or connected to Tsintsabis. Since then, he returned for shorter visits to conduct and disseminate research, including for his PhD in 2010.¹⁸ Currently he functions as an adviser for the Tsintsabis Trust, including regular contact via email and WhatsApp with some inhabitants. Through these activities and visits, over the years he has engaged in longitudinal research through ‘ethnographic returning’.¹⁹ He has also conducted research among other San in Bwabwata National Park and the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, Namibia, and in the Northern Cape, South Africa.

||Khumûb has lived in Tsintsabis since 1991. He was born at farm Plaaszak around 15 kms west of Tsintsabis and is a native Hai||om speaker. He moved to Tsintsabis when he was around nine years old. Since 2003 ||Khumûb has been the camp manager of Treesleeper Camp. In 2009 he went to the !Khwa ttu Centre,²⁰ South Africa, for a year-long work and training experience. Furthermore, he followed advanced training courses about Indigenous peoples’ rights at the University of Namibia and the University of Pretoria, and has collaborated with a variety of institutions with a focus on Indigenous peoples and the San. He also collaborated with the Windhoek-based NGO Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) in research about Indigenous peoples and climate change, focusing on Hai||om relationships with climate change.²¹

Because we share a long history in Tsintsabis in different positions that changed over the years, an important method this chapter builds on is autoethnography. This very specific type of ethnography is based on self-observation and reflexivity by researchers in which cultural and personal issues are interconnected and become blurred.²² Through this approach our subjective personal experiences connect and inform the empirics and broader sociocultural analysis of the chapter.²³

17 Koot (2012)

18 Koot (2013, 2016)

19 O’Reilly (2012)

20 <https://www.khwattu.org/>

21 LAC (2013)

22 Ellis & Bochner (2000), Koot (2016)

23 Ellis & Bochner (2000)

16.3 History of land dispossession among Hai||om

Hai||om speak Khoekhoegowab (also spoken by Nama and Damara/#Nūkhoen) rather than a San language, but nonetheless are considered the largest ‘subgroup’ of San in Namibia,²⁴ numbering between 11,000 to 15,000.²⁵ During the 19th and early 20th centuries, they lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle based on seasonal mobility in an area ranging from present-day Grootfontein, Tsumeb, Etosha National Park (ENP), Otavi, Otjiwarongo and Outjo and the area formerly named Owamboland,²⁶ where they also overlapped with other groupings of people. Before colonial settlement, they were in contact with a variety of both Bantu-language speakers and other Khoekhoegowab-language speakers such as Damara/#Nūkhoen. They traded with these groups (especially with Owambo) and shared some cultural similarities (especially with Damara/#Nūkhoen).²⁷ Whilst this diversified their livelihoods and changed their hunting and gathering patterns, they never fully became cultivators or herders.²⁸

North-central Namibia was affected by the gazettement of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1907, and the later establishment of Etosha National Park in 1967 (for detail regarding these histories see Chapters 1 and 2).²⁹ Around 1910–1915 ‘Bushmen patrols’ in the farming area around the game reserve often resulted in death, and in 1928 San were forbidden to possess bows and arrows there; although not in the game reserve, where they were initially tolerated and used to enchant tourists as an image of ‘wild’ Africa³⁰ (see Chapters 2, 4 and 15). In addition, some Hai||om were employed as road workers, police assistants, *veld* fire fighters, waterhole cleaners, and cheap labour more generally.³¹ From the late 1940s onwards, however, they were ever more restricted, especially regarding their livestock and hunting,³² as detailed in Chapters 2 and 4. Plans in the 1940s for a Hai||om Reserve were dismissed on the grounds that they were not considered “pure” San, and to provide a labour pool for white settler farmers in the area—ultimately leading to their eviction from ENP in 1954.³³ From then on, most of them had to work on commercial farms, while some stayed to work in Etosha. The eviction was a gradual process and to this day there are Hai||om living and working in the park.³⁴ As a result of this history, many Hai||om in Tsintsabis continue to feel strong ties to the ENP area (see Chapter 15). As one woman who was born in Namutoni, ENP, explains:

[i]n 1944 we were happy, because we were living on our own. But then we were chased away from Namutoni after a while, in 1956³⁵ that was, yes, because the South African government wanted to make it a game park. But Etosha belonged to the Hai||om. [...] Now we had to go and look for a job. [...] And in Namutoni we were on the truck when they chased us away. Some of our people had then already died.³⁶

Even after 1954 many Hai||om were still moving in and out of ENP but, in the end, Hai||om became a group without land of their own.³⁷

This process additionally and rapidly reduced Hai||om access to resources, as they were living in these newly claimed farming areas. Incoming livestock ate bushfoods, and the new settlers

24 Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000)

25 Hitchcock (2015); Dieckmann, Thiem & Hays (2014: 23) estimate between 7,000 and 18,000.

26 Dieckmann (2007)

27 Barnard (2019)

28 Widlok (1999). Barnard (2019) explains that it is unknown if Hai||om were at a certain point herders like many of their Damara/#Nūkhoe neighbours; although it should be noted that the latter also relied heavily on hunting and gathering (for example, Sullivan 1998, 1999, 2005 and Chapters 12 and 13).

29 Dieckmann (2001, 2003, 2007), Ramutsindela (2004)

30 Gordon (1997)

31 Gordon (1997), Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000), Dieckmann (2003, 2007)

32 Suzman (2004), Dieckmann (2007)

33 Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000), Dieckmann (2003, 2007)

34 Dieckmann (2007), Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

35 This year differs from the starting year of the evictions (1954) as mentioned above, but can of course still be correct because the eviction was a gradual process.

36 Interview, 20.6.1999.

37 Gordon (1997)

hunted game and erected fences, strongly affecting the Hai||om's hunting and gathering livelihood. Increasingly, others were now telling Hai||om that they could not remain on "their" land and Hai||om families started working on these new farms.³⁸ Many felt mistreated there, because payments were only in kind (food, milk or porridge, sometimes including alcohol and/or tobacco). As missionary Reverend C.H. Hahn observed in these times:

[t]he Heikom have perhaps suffered more than any other Bushman tribe. [...] Their various family clans or groups have become disintegrated and have been pushed further and further north [...] latterly by our own settlement schemes. Their hunting grounds and veld kos [field food] areas have either been completely taken from them or have shrunk to such an extent that in very many cases the wild or semi-wild Heikom today finds it almost impossible to eke out an existence. [...] It is surprising that these people do not indulge in more cattle and stock thieving.³⁹

Hai||om working at these farms also resisted mistreatment.⁴⁰ At these settler farms under freehold tenure, Hai||om would do cleaning, herding, milking cows and goats, fencing or transporting materials on ox-carts (Figure 16.1 shows the Hai||om population in 1982).

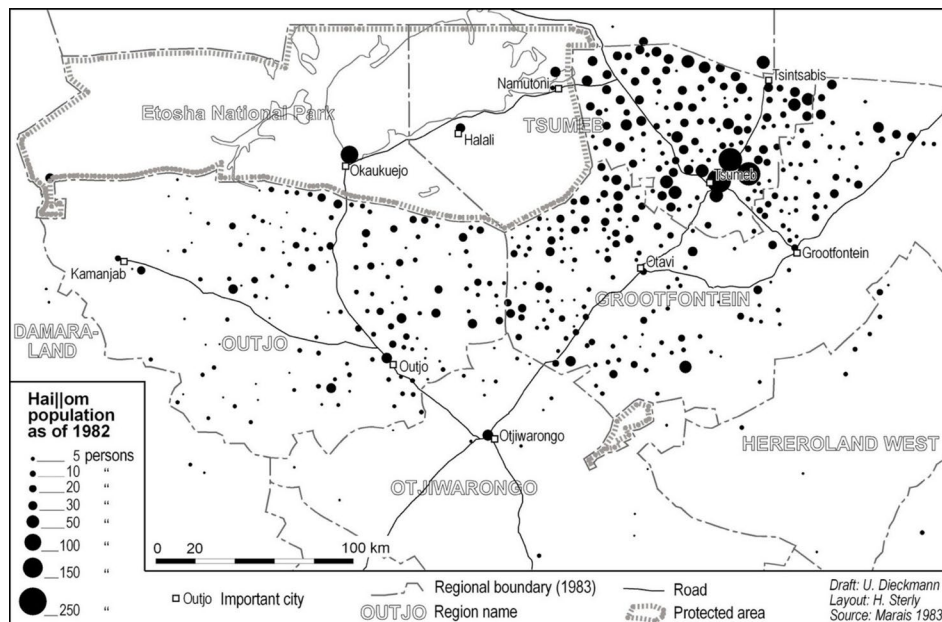


Fig. 16.1 Map of the Hai||om population in and around Etosha in 1982: Tsintsabis is in the top right corner. Source: © Dieckmann (2007: 205), reproduced with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Later, many farms initiated tourism just outside the gates of ENP, often with little involvement by Hai||om.⁴¹ Since Independence, the number of people employed on farms decreased by 36%, mainly as a result of new labour and social security regulations, the uncertainty that land reform posed to land owners, a minimum-wage, and changing farm practices (e.g. the increase in safaris and guest farms). This situation resulted in the fast growth of resettlement camps and urban townships, with more people seeking casual labour. This development hit (ex-)farm workers such as the Hai||om hardest, because they lacked access to communal areas and most had no residence outside their workplace. Consequently, they moved to settlements (e.g. Oshivelo), where they lived from informal labour, prostitution, welfare and begging.⁴² Some also moved to newly established resettlement farms in the area, including Tsintsabis.

³⁸ Dieckmann (2007)

³⁹ Cited in Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000: 125), drawing on archives of the South West Africa Administration, 1927–1948.

⁴⁰ Dieckmann (2007)

⁴¹ Dieckmann (2003), Suzman (2004)

⁴² *Ibid.*, Harring & Odendaal (2006)

Ironically, when the government purchased farms in traditional Hai||om territory after Independence, these were mostly allocated to others, i.e. non-Hai||om with better connections and education.⁴³ Regardless of national policy priorities in post-Independence resettlement, the new government initially purchased 22 farms in areas where many landless San dwelled, but only one (Skoonheid) was set aside for their resettlement. At first, no farms were made available to landless Hai||om apart from the then-MLRR (Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation)⁴⁴ taking over the administration of Tsintsabis.⁴⁵ Despite the government making promises to acquire farms to the east of Etosha for Hai||om as resettlement farms, this did not materialise for a long time, to the frustration of many. Furthermore, in some areas such as Mangetti West (50 kilometres north-west of Tsintsabis), there is on-going pressure on land: Hai||om living there are concerned they will be displaced again because they lack serious political influence. From 2007 onwards, however, more farms were acquired for Hai||om under the San Development Programme (SDP),⁴⁶ including nine farms (seven used for resettlement and two for tourism purposes) in an area south and east of Etosha. This process cannot be seen apart from the government's wish to resettle Hai||om still living in the park to areas outside of it, in connection with a collective action lawsuit by a group of Hai||om seeking to reclaim parts of ENP:⁴⁷ as detailed in Chapter 4.

Ten years ago, Dieckmann and Dirkx⁴⁸ identified only a few positive signs for San at group resettlement farms, and four big challenges. First, a relatively dense population, overstocking of livestock, and issues regarding common property resource management. Second, resettled San have not received individual title deeds.⁴⁹ Third, despite initiatives to make beneficiaries self-sufficient there is still a high level of dependency. Fourth, the MLR engaged with a large number of NGOs (for instance Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), Komeho Namibia and the Desert Research Foundation Namibia (DRFN), co-financed with large international donors) with the aim to improve the sustainable use of farm resources and strengthen resettlement beneficiaries' livelihoods: this large number of stakeholders, however, led to problems of coordination.⁵⁰ Thus far, San beneficiaries on these group resettlement farms are far from self-sufficient. At the root of the latter concerns are also illiteracy, a low level of education and technical expertise, and difficulties in terms of capacities to further strengthen leadership among the San.⁵¹

16.4 Tsintsabis histories

Tsintsabis is situated almost 120 km east of Etosha, and 60 km north of Tsumeb. Already in 1903 the place was mentioned by German colonist Paul Rohrbach, as a waterhole without permanent human habitation, although he mentions San people living in the area.⁵² Later, Tsintsabis turned into a commercial farm, and became a regional police station shortly after 1915 when more farmers started settling in the area. When South Africa acquired a League of Nations mandate to run the then South West Africa in 1919, another 15 policemen arrived in Tsintsabis. As several respondents explained about these days, the policemen built the first houses and employed some Hai||om in this process. Hai||om also worked as cooks, translators, cleaners or camel herders. Steadily the South

⁴³ Suzman (2004)

⁴⁴ The MLRR changed names into the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) in 2005 and subsequently into the Ministry of Land Reform (MoLR) in 2015. In 2020, the MoLR was terminated and "land reform" became part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR).

⁴⁵ Suzman (2004)

⁴⁶ See Dieckmann, Thiem & Hays (2014) and Chapter 4.

⁴⁷ Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014), Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

⁴⁸ (2014)

⁴⁹ In addition to title deeds for individually allocated plots, there are often also common tracts of land, where for instance livestock can graze. For such areas, collective title deeds could be developed to prevent such lands from being grabbed and to put less pressure on the carrying capacity of a group resettlement farm.

⁵⁰ Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

⁵¹ Dieckmann & Dirkx (2014)

⁵² Rohrbach (1909)

African police placed more restrictions on the San.⁵³ As one inhabitant later explained, ‘if the police would see us hunting you could be taken into jail’.⁵⁴ In 1936 the station commander at Tsintsabis rural police station reported that ‘[f]armers find the Bushmen the cheapest kind to engage as it is a known fact that most of these Bushmen are only working for their food and tobacco, and now and then they get a blanket or a shovel’.⁵⁵ In and around Tsintsabis, many San thus became farm workers. Furthermore, the South African police in Tsintsabis also needed San trackers to prevent San attacks on contract workers from the North who passed through the area. As explained in a telegram by the Native Affairs Tsumeb on 24 September 1934, such attacks made them ‘consider Tsintsabis police be temporarily increased by five to six Bushman trackers’.⁵⁶ In the years that followed, supervision of the South African police became stricter, including serious physical and psychological abuses.⁵⁷

From about 1982 until 1990 the Namibian war for Independence was strongly felt in Tsintsabis: the police station was turned into an army base for the South African Defence Force (SADF) for which many Hai||om became trackers. These days were increasingly characterised by fear and insecurity: the main access road into Tsintsabis from Tsumeb was called the ‘Road of Death’,⁵⁸ and the SADF ruled strictly but also provided work and food, similarly to the farmers’ paternalistic relations with the San.⁵⁹ However, the war also created more insecurity. One interviewee stated:

[t]he South Africans did not beat the children, but they beat the men and women. Always when they were coming, sometimes the people they were running away, because they were afraid. We did not fight back to them because the people were afraid and the white men had the guns. Also sometimes we were running away and sleeping in the bush because the people were telling us the SWAPO’s [South West African People’s Organization] are coming.⁶⁰

So, on the one hand the South Africans seemed to treat San better because they were dependent on them for their tracking skills and labour. On the other hand, punishment was continuing as before. A 39-year old man explained that ‘they forced some people to join them. I was also forced. If I did not go I had to go five years in prison’.⁶¹ Under this paternalistic system, however, San generally were mostly regarded and treated as inferior: their traditional egalitarian approach and social systems were strongly disrupted.⁶²

Hai||om have thus historically had, and continue to have,

long-standing contacts with other groups and have adopted many cultural elements from their neighbours. As a consequence they have also suffered academic and political neglect, owing to their allegedly “mixed” or “impoverished” culture.⁶³

This situation has led to diversity in the social practices of Hai||om as:

part of a process in which a certain mode of social relatedness has developed and is cultivated in many different fields of everyday social practise as “Bushmen” interact with neighbouring groups in a changing natural and historical environment.⁶⁴

Their history of inferiority in relation to others has undoubtedly affected Hai||om relations with other groups and leadership structures, also after Independence.

53 Gordon (1997)

54 Interview, 11.4.1999.

55 LGR Magistrate Grootfontein 3/1/7, Annual Report, 1936, cited in Gordon (1992)

56 Cited in Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000: 114)

57 Gordon & Sholto Douglas (2000)

58 van Rooyen (1995: 1)

59 Koot (2023)

60 Interview, 16.4.1999.

61 Interview, 15.4.1999.

62 Widlok (1999), Suzman (2001), Bieseke & Hitchcock (2011), Koot (2023)

63 Widlok (1999: 260); see also Dieckmann (2007)

64 Widlok (1999: 261)

In 1993, Tsintsabis was transferred into a group resettlement farm of 3,000 ha.⁶⁵ This means that in Tsintsabis many Hai||om and some !Xun were, strictly speaking, not “resettled” but continued to stay where they already lived under a different administration, and had to find new post-SADF livelihoods. In 1993, the government counted 841 people living at the farm, a number that increased to more than 1,500 in 2010 because ‘the influx of people has not been controlled’.⁶⁶ In 2012 this number had grown to between 3,000 and 4,000,⁶⁷ mostly due to in-migration. There were two main groups of in-migrants: the first group is predominantly of Hai||om farm workers who came to live with their relatives in Tsintsabis after losing jobs at surrounding commercial farms sold under the national land reform programme. Second, the relatively new tar road that runs through Tsintsabis attracted people, especially non-San, who could easily settle due to the uncontrolled situation of land allocation (see below). Today, some households live in government-supported brick houses while others live in huts or shanties. Tsintsabis also accommodates the Tsintsabis Combined School (up to Grade 10), a medical clinic, a craft centre, a community tourism camp, and a police station.

The initial plan for Tsintsabis was that “resettled” Hai||om and !Xun would use the land collectively. Later the government provided individual 10 ha plots to beneficiaries, with the intention for them to become self-sufficient small-scale farmers. Until today, however, the provision of food through agriculture is very limited. Some of the plots in Tsintsabis are too sandy for subsistence agriculture, and they ‘are not fenced off and do not provide any infrastructure for sustainable gardening or animal husbandry projects’.⁶⁸ Most people depend to a large extent on food aid, provided by the MLRR since 1993 and changed in 1998 to only emergency drought food relief. These food distributions were later complemented by the San Feeding Programme of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), provided by the then Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD). Food aid was combined with other livelihood sources including monthly pensions, farm work at commercial farms, some (illegal) hunting (and meat selling), gathering, tourism, livestock herding (cattle and goats especially), traditional healing, and small businesses such as *shebeens* (where groceries, alcohol and soft drinks are sold). The government’s focus on agriculture was criticised by the informal Hai||om leader Willem |Aib when he visited Tsintsabis in 1999. He explained that Hai||om were

traditionally unknown to gardening. All they ever had to do with farming was looking after the cattle and the goats. [...] And now the government expects them to go farming but they never did it.⁶⁹

In addition to limited acquaintance with agriculture,⁷⁰ water provision, tools and equipment to work the land are difficult to acquire. Furthermore, most people only grow maize or *mahangu* (pearl millet), which lacks the variety needed for a healthy diet. The agricultural carrying capacity of Tsintsabis appears to have passed its potential long ago, whilst government assistance in agriculture was insufficient and community members lacked business skills.⁷¹ Additionally, young people are often bored and experience a lack of opportunities. Harring and Odendaal⁷² of the LAC in Windhoek concluded already in 2006 that ‘Tsintsabis represents a failed model of rural settlement that is all too common in Namibia’.

⁶⁵ GRN (2010), LAC (2013)

⁶⁶ GRN (2010: 30)

⁶⁷ LAC (2013)

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88

⁶⁹ Interview, 27.1.1999.

⁷⁰ Note that nuance is needed here. Some Hai||om had acquired agricultural knowledge through service to others, as described above. We do not intend to convey an essentialised representation of Hai||om as knowing about hunting and gathering only.

⁷¹ Harring & Odendaal (2002), GRN (2010)

⁷² (2006: 18)

16.5 Contemporary social complexities

Against this historical background of Hai||om land dispossession and the development of Tsintsabis into a resettlement farm, we now look deeper into, and try to better understand, two important contemporary social complexities. In Tsintsabis the two social complexities that stand out are ethnic tensions as a result of in-migration, and issues regarding leadership. We turn to ethnic tensions first.

16.5.1 Ethnic tension and in-migration

The above-mentioned shortcomings of the resettlement programme including the lack of land tenure security⁷³ combined with an enormous influx of people in Tsintsabis, have led to a dire situation for the beneficiaries. Today, there continues to be dissatisfaction among the Hai||om and !Xun of Tsintsabis about many things, one of the main ones being the social complexities related to in-migration of other ethnic groups (i.e. non-San) and resulting exclusion and discrimination of San residents. Since Independence there has been much in-migration, which often instigates fear of suppression, land loss and exclusion (e.g. from jobs) among the San.⁷⁴ This is a broader phenomenon in more areas in Namibia where San (and others) live,⁷⁵ but pressure in Tsintsabis seems relatively high due to the continuous influx of people since Independence onto a limited amount of land. As a result of in-migration, ethnic tensions have intensified.

Notable in this regard is the drastic rise in the number of *shebeens* (where the sale of alcoholic beverages is a core business), most of them owned by non-San.⁷⁶ *Shebeens* have been in Tsintsabis since the start of the resettlement programme, but with the increasing number of non-San in-migrants their number has skyrocketed. *Shebeens* have led to some San doing small jobs in service of the *shebeen* owners (e.g. fetching water) in return for alcohol, resembling pre-colonial patron-client relations between San and Bantu peoples.⁷⁷ As one interviewee stated in 2016:

[o]nce the other tribes moved in, they came here and then they put up their *shebeens*, lot of *shebeens* drinking places. Now these eh lot of San people Hai||om people which are already poor have now been addicted to drinking. So those who are now drinking alcohol early in the morning, stand up, go to the drinking place and then now they are fetching water for those people every day.⁷⁸

Moreover, the alcohol abuse associated with *shebeens* increases physical and domestic violence and even deaths, while children also start to drink.⁷⁹ Due to the informal character of *shebeens*, and their tendency to appear and disappear again, it is impossible to give an exact number. Important in this regard, however, is that there have been protests against them in 2014 after two Hai||om brothers were stabbed to death, while the MLR administrator's personal *shebeen* is still open in 2023—despite an earlier public request in 2010 by the deputy prime minister to close down all *shebeens* for the problems they cause.⁸⁰

Additionally, just as among other San groups in Namibia, in-migration has led to exclusion and discrimination.⁸¹ In particular, government jobs in Tsintsabis were mostly given to non-San, due to job requirements and the San not being able to fulfil these requirements based on their backlog in formal education. But it also goes beyond formalities. Over the years, many San have complained

73 Harring & Odendaal (2007)

74 See also Nawatiseb (2013)

75 See, for instance, Sullivan (2003), Hays (2009), Hitchcock (2012), Taylor (2012), Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, *et al.* (2014), Van der Wulp & Koot (2019)

76 Hüncke (2010), Castelijns (2019), Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

77 Dieckmann (2007), LAC (2013), Castelijns (2019), Koot (2023)

78 Interview, 2016–2017, cited in Castelijns (2019: 24)

79 Asino (2014), Castelijns (2019)

80 Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

81 Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, *et al.* (2014)

about ethnic favouritism and San discrimination when jobs were available, for instance at the police force. As the only Hai||om policeman explained in 1999:

[w]e have only one Hai||om [police officer] in Tsintsabis [...] I don't say I don't want these people [non-Hai||om], but if they don't know the language and the area [...] if they go to the people, the people are maybe afraid of them, they cannot talk of anything. [...] They don't take us because we don't have the education and the school. That is why they think they mean nothing, they know nothing, but they have got the skills. You can educate people, but it does not mean that they know.⁸²

In 2023 there is still only one Hai||om police officer (a different one now), despite the police force's growth over the years.

Such exclusion from the limited pool of jobs was also felt in 2009 during road construction work on the D3600, when many external labourers stayed in Tsintsabis.⁸³ Despite most of them being Namibian (around 90% of 350 workers), only a few came from the surrounding areas. This again instigated fear among Hai||om that Tsintsabis would be further taken over by others. Because the farm is already too small to provide all households with a reasonable plot, in-migration further increases land pressure. Moreover, people complained that some of the road workers seduce young girls (as young as 13 or 14) with alcohol and treat them as prostitutes.⁸⁴ Hai||om complained about racism and paternalism by road construction managers, and there have been accusations that the few employed Hai||om were paid below the minimum wage. To speak out, however, would mean they risk losing their jobs.⁸⁵

An important general conception among San in Namibia is that San groups are looked down upon and treated as inferior,⁸⁶ as explained by a young woman when talking about her childhood experiences in school:

[w]e are not the higher classes because the other people are working in the special place, like that, maybe in the big city. They think that's why they are better [...] When they saw us, and our jewels, then they were making the jokes of us. And also because we have the small feet, and we have the small fingers. That is still happening, also after independence [...] with all Bushmens, also !Xung, and also Hai||om. But me I always say that I'm proud to be Hai||om!⁸⁷

A feeling of powerlessness, distrust and inferiority in relation to in-migrants continues until today.⁸⁸ However, there are also some sentiments about reverse discrimination, albeit much less. One shop owner explained:

[n]ewcomers who are of any other tribe than Bushmen do not have any power in this place. They have to listen to the Bushmen. Here in Tsintsabis it often happens that I am insulted. People then say, "It's not your place, it's ours" or "We are poor and you take all our money".⁸⁹

Hüncke⁹⁰ writes that the biggest fear of San in Tsintsabis was 'losing access to land to economically strong outsiders'. As a young Hai||om woman stated:

[r]ich people from outside will take over our places. The newcomers will go to the headman and ask for a plot without informing those to whom the plot used to belong. [...] there will be quarrels between the first people, the Hai||om, and the new people, for example Kavango, Herero.⁹¹

82 Interview, 18.4.1999.

83 Hüncke (2010)

84 Berndalen (2010)

85 Hüncke (2010)

86 Dieckmann (2007)

87 Interview, 16.4.1999.

88 Castelijn (2019)

89 Interview, 22.11.2009, cited in Hüncke (2010: 26)

90 *Ibid.*, p. 42

91 Interview, 29.9.2009, cited in Hüncke (2010: 43)

Over the years Hai||om and !Xun have also complained about in-migrants erecting fences to demarcate their plots, restraining them from collecting firewood or gathering *veldkos* (field foods) on these lands. As a result, they fear their children will not be able to continue living there.⁹² An elderly woman explained:

[t]oday all the lands from there has been sold. To the police officers, to the nurses, people who work in the government, officials, they are the ones who bought the lands from there.⁹³

Despite several visits from government officials over the years promising to improve the situation for the Hai||om and !Xun in Tsintsabis, most of them have now lost faith in the government.⁹⁴ Similarly, many have lost faith in their official and unofficial leaders. This is the dimension of social complexity we turn to next.

16.5.2 Leadership

As explained above, throughout history, San groups have often been positioned in society as inferior to others. In relation to other ethnic groups before colonialism, they engaged in relationships with pastoralists as servants or slaves in patron-client relationships.⁹⁵ Later, this inferior position continued under colonialism and apartheid, when working as labourers on freehold farms or in other positions (e.g. working for the SADF). Many Hai||om and !Xun in Tsintsabis (as well as other San groups) express themselves today as if they still feel inferior in their relations with others (i.e. other ethnic groups, white farmers, expatriates or government officials).⁹⁶ Nonetheless, some San groups have been allowed to establish government-recognised Traditional Authorities (TAs) after Independence (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4). Each TA consists of a “Chief” and a traditional council serviced by traditional district “headmen” and “headwomen”.⁹⁷ Traditionally, however, San groups favoured leadership structures that were relatively egalitarian, focused on consensus, and that pushed against a strong hierarchy.⁹⁸ The new TA system requires a more formal and hierarchical institutionalisation of their leadership that does not take into account their traditional social structure.⁹⁹

Among Hai||om the establishment of a TA that represents all Hai||om has led to much tension: they appointed a Chief in 1996 (Willem |Aib) who was not recognised by the government,¹⁰⁰ but in 2004 the government designated a Hai||om TA under the Traditional Authorities Act.¹⁰¹ David ||Khamuxab, a staunch SWAPO supporter making no claims to ENP, became the Chief, but it remains unclear how this appointment was organised and how much it was supported by the larger group of Hai||om (see Chapter 4):

[i]n 2004, the government of Namibia appointed a Hai||om TA, David ||Khamuxab. There were differences of opinion among the Hai||om about how Mr. ||Khamuxab was selected. Some people said that the government of Namibia appointed the TA without reference to local opinions. A number of Hai||om raised questions about the electoral process that led to the appointment of the TA. [...] There were Hai||om in some areas of Namibia who said that they had held elections but that none of the individuals who they voted for was considered by the government for the Hai||om TA.¹⁰²

92 Hüncke (2010), Castelijns (2019)

93 Interview, 2016-2017, cited in Castelijns (2019: 27)

94 Castelijns (2019)

95 Morton (1994)

96 Koot (2023)

97 GRN (2000), Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014)

98 Suzman (2001), Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014)

99 Widlok (1999), Bieseke & Hitchcock (2011), Dieckmann & Begbie-Clench (2014)

100 Dieckmann (2003, 2007)

101 GRN (2000)

102 Hitchcock (2015: 10); see also Dieckmann (2014)

Support among the broader Hai||om community appears to have been limited, including in Tsintsabis, where ||Khamuxab's appointment was received with suspicion and where people had not joined any voting process.¹⁰³ Today, Hai||om in Tsintsabis expect from leaders under the new TA system that they would prevent in-migration (as described in Section 16.5.1) or instigate and support development processes for the group at large. Most have no confidence in Chief ||Khamuxab or his headman in Tsintsabis, and they prefer a Chief in their own area and not from Outjo (almost 300 km away) where ||Khamuxab is based.¹⁰⁴ Since 2004, there have been two headmen (regional councillors) appointed by and serving/representing ||Khamuxab in Tsintsabis.

For a long time now, there have been tensions between the first headman representing Chief ||Khamuxab in Tsintsabis and the "development committee" appointed by the MLRR already in the early 1990s when Tsintsabis became a resettlement farm. This committee initially consisted of 20 to 25 (mostly older) Hai||om and !Xun inhabitants.¹⁰⁵ It is supposed to oversee

the implementation of the [resettlement] programme and sub committees are supposed to work in the different income generating projects. Some of these sub committees are still operating while others no longer exist as their project members have moved out of the village for paid jobs in Tsumeb or nearby farms.¹⁰⁶

During the road construction work in 2009 (see Section 16.5.1), suspicion towards ||Khamuxab's first headman—who was also employed by the Road Construction Company (RCC) as a mediator to divide jobs—also increased, with people organising a demonstration against his alleged nepotism: apparently his family members received the better and permanent jobs (seven out of 15 permanent jobs) and people felt there was no fair distribution of jobs overall.¹⁰⁷ He was blamed for not supporting but exploiting his own people, for instance by not assisting them to get the right working equipment or holding back part of their salaries. In the end, the new road hardly increased the number of jobs for Hai||om and !Xun in Tsintsabis, but 'the traffic on the road, mainly large trucks, has brought drug trade, prostitution and other criminal activity to Tsintsabis, something which mainly affects the youth and creates a feeling of insecurity'.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he also faced criticism for assumed support in allocating land to outsiders. Due to these reasons, most San in Tsintsabis lost faith in this first headman.¹⁰⁹

Due to all the pressure, the first headman stepped down in 2012 and another one replaced him to become the second headman of Chief ||Khamuxab in Tsintsabis. Despite this change, many still regard the first headman as an informally important person and both he and the second headman continue to be accused in 2023 of giving away land to receive personal benefits, including from government officials. If these accusations are correct, local authorities representing Hai||om evidently play an important role in ongoing processes of land dispossession. Without specifying any persons in particular, the government warned inhabitants of Tsintsabis in September 2023 in a public notice that:

certain persons, including some members of the Tsintsabis community, are involved in illegal land dealings on the said farms [Chudib-Nuut, Urwald and Tsintsabis]. As a result, a number of individuals have grabbed or have been allocated land illegally on these farms.¹¹⁰

A new tactic is applied by some officials and powerful outsiders who gained land illegally for themselves with the support of the first headman representing ||Khamuxab, as observed by

¹⁰³ Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ GRN (2010), Hüncke (2010)

¹⁰⁶ GRN (2010: 130)

¹⁰⁷ Hüncke (2010)

¹⁰⁸ Castelijns (2019: 30)

¹⁰⁹ LAC (2013)

¹¹⁰ Public notice by the Executive Director Ms. Ndiyakupi Nghituwamata of the MAWLR; also Terblanché (2023)

co-author ǁKhumûb over the years: in the area from Grootfontein to Mangetti West to Oshivelo (which is at the heart of “traditional” Hai||om land), they meet with Hai||om who are then being told to disclose themselves as non-Hai||om in return for small benefits (e.g. cash or food). The first headman, still functioning as an important informal leader in Tsintsabis these days, is currently trying to set up a TA body separate from the Hai||om TA to be able to allocate land in these areas or to legitimate previous illegal allocations to officials and powerful outsiders. For this potential new non-Hai||om TA these allocations will be easier if people indeed identify as non-Hai||om, because that would mean they do not fall under the Hai||om TA.

At a national level, the current tendency in the government is to regard Hai||om not as San, as was also done in the past under the South African administration (see Chapters 2 and 4). New plans by different groups of Hai||om aim to appoint different TAs for various geographical areas that would then split up the group that is currently regarded as “the” Hai||om. This would support initiatives as described above, in which Hai||om are pressured not to disclose themselves as Hai||om. In response, Hai||om (including some headmen/headwomen and informal leaders) from Ondera, Grootfontein, Oshivelo and other places that carry strong historical value for them discussed the challenges and how their rights are violated. As ǁKhumûb has observed, they are in the process of formulating a plan based on these challenges to inform civil society organisations and law firms and explain the violations of their human rights. The LAC and the Namibian San Council (NSC) are supportive, but currently lack the means to enact this plan. Together these leaders wrote a letter to the President in 2020, but never received a response.

16.6 Conclusion

Although the social complexities addressed in this chapter are not completely new and can be considered important issues for Namibian San at large, this does not mean they should not be subject to further investigation. It is precisely because of their structural character and their tendency to remain unresolved that they continually need to be addressed. Both in-migration and related ethnic tensions, as well as issues surrounding leadership, are related social complexities that continue to explain why resettlement among the San of Namibia has repeatedly run into problems since Independence. Questions remain concerning why these structural social complexities have not been addressed more seriously in policies and practice, and how to handle this in the future. Exploring historical circumstances and focusing more on ethnographic research is an important step in the analysis of social complexities:¹¹¹ it assists with clarifying the social dynamics that strongly affect resettlement on the ground. As a crucial pillar in the larger national land reform programme, social complexities such as in-migration, ethnic tensions and leadership are pivotal for understanding why resettlement works or not. We argue that the case of Tsintsabis shows the importance of acknowledging historically built-up injustices when addressing current social complexities; and we emphasise the importance of doing long-term ethno-historical research about resettlement to be able to better understand contextual processes around resettlement. Such knowledge is crucial to inform policy and practice.

Sustained research over the last few decades has shown how Tsintsabis and its surroundings land has kept being grabbed by more powerful groups, and that development through the group resettlement programme has been highly problematic.¹¹² Agricultural support from the government has been limited while the few income-generating activities at the farm (a bakery, a tourism project, construction jobs, etc.) revealed ethnic tensions and discrimination (especially of San) and problems surrounding leadership. Such shortcomings were addressed at the Second

¹¹¹ Fabinyi *et al.* (2010)

¹¹² Widlok (1999), Hüncke (2010), LAC (2013), Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, *et al.* (2014), Castelijns (2019), Koot & Hitchcock (2019)

National Land Conference in Windhoek in 2018,¹¹³ but land-grabbing dynamics remain and are reinforced in recent developments. As we have seen, land in and around Tsintsabis is abducted by more powerful groups. “High officials” hold private meetings to request Hai||om to deny their ethnic status as Hai||om, and to make small-scale land grabbing easier. These findings are important for the future of resettlement and warrant further ethnographic investigation. Indeed, generally speaking, resettlement projects in southern Africa have often ‘failed to restore the livelihoods of people affected’.¹¹⁴ This is also applicable in Tsintsabis, where many Hai||om and !Xun feel ‘deprived of their rights because they cannot own the resettlement land but only the buildings on the land’.¹¹⁵ In fact,

[in] many ways, people explain that they still feel colonised, or like slaves. [This] fits into the long history of many San groups in Namibia and southern Africa of being some of the most marginalised people in the region.¹¹⁶

An important recent development regarding the future of Tsintsabis is that in 2020 it was formally announced that Tsintsabis would become a formal “settlement”,¹¹⁷ with around two-thirds remaining a resettlement farm and a third becoming a settlement falling under the Guinas Constituency. This change means that Tsintsabis will cease to fully be a resettlement farm, and different rules and regulations will apply for a central part where most services and provisions are located. The regional officer of the constituency ‘assured the public that the area is receiving undivided developmental attention’.¹¹⁸ It is doubtful, however, how much development this will truly bring, since the Guinas Constituency is without an office in Tsintsabis: the regional officer also explained that the council’s hands were tied by a government moratorium on the construction of offices.¹¹⁹ An additional potential consequence is that most Hai||om and !Xun will be excluded from benefiting from new services at the settlement, because they will need to pay for these services and many of them lack the means to do so. At this stage, it is unclear what this development means for in-migration, leadership and people’s rights to land.

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113 GRN (2018), Melber (2019)

114 Hitchcock & Vinding (2004: 15)

115 Hüncke (2010: 27)

116 Castelijns (2019: 26)

117 This differs from a municipality: a settlement is a smaller formal governmental body that will be managed by an employed Chief Administrator with a settlement committee. They will be responsible for service deliveries within the proclaimed settlement area.

118 Cited in Simasiku (2020)

119 *Ibid.*

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PART V

PEOPLE, LIONS AND CBNRM

17. Integrating remote sensing with CBNRM for desert-adapted lion conservation

John Heydinger

Abstract

This chapter explains how Global Positioning System (GPS) data on lion movements can contribute to community-oriented conservation. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) of desert-adapted lions presents an array of cultural and scientific challenges to local communities living alongside lions. A significant challenge for lion conservationists is the ability to rigorously monitor lion movements in the unfenced landscapes of north-west Namibia, where monitoring challenges are compounded by low levels of information relevant to lion habitat-use and movement ecology in dryland areas. The chapter documents new uses in this area of data collected via satellite-GPS collars affixed to lions, and via trail cameras placed in designated core wildlife areas within communal conservancies and government concessions. Remote sensing methods of carnivore monitoring are now contributing to lion conservation and the mitigation of “human-lion conflict” on communal lands in Namibia’s Kunene Region. The chapter emphasises how this technology and associated data are being incorporated into the Lion Rangers Programme, a CBNRM initiative in which trained community conservationists take responsibility for monitoring lions and managing human-lion conflict on communal lands.

17.1 Introduction¹

The desert-adapted lions (*Panthera leo*) of north-west Namibia’s Kunene Region are iconic, demonstrating unique grouping patterns² and movements³ within a “one-of-a-kind” landscape. Inhabiting unfenced lands designated primarily as communally-managed conservancies, the desert-adapted lion population is relatively small, though stable. From 1997–2015 the population recovered from around 20 to around 180 individuals.⁴ This conservation success story is unique: these are among the only African lion populations to have grown over the last 25 years outside fenced protected areas.⁵ Since the mid-2010s, however, the population has declined to an estimated 57 to 60 adult (non-cub) individuals,⁶ and from an estimated density of 0.28-0.35 lions/100 km²,⁷ to 0.1 lions/100 km².⁸ This decline has been driven by retaliatory lion killing following human-lion conflict (HLC) occurring because lions threaten farmers’ safety and livelihoods via livestock

1 Acknowledgements: Thanks to Namibia’s Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) and Namibia’s National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) for overseeing this work. Thanks to the Community Conservation Fund of Namibia, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Ultimate Safaris, and WWF-Namibia for supporting the Lion Rangers work and research. Thanks to Namibian Lion Trust for supplying lion collar data. Thanks to MEFT-Directorate of Scientific Services and Game Capture for assisting with lion collaring. Mathilde Brassine, Esau Matundu, Uakendisa Muzuma and Jendery Tsaneb assisted with camera trap deployment. Wide Horizons Aerial Technologies and Desert Lion Conservation Trust assisted with collar website management and visualisation. Thanks to all partnering conservancies.

2 Stander (2018)

3 MET (2017)

4 *Ibid.*

5 Packer *et al.* (2013)

6 Muzuma & Heydinger (2024); also see Heydinger *et al.* (2024)

7 Stander (2010)

8 Muzuma & Heydinger (2024)

destruction, in a context of reduced prey due to drought and high offtake levels (Chapter 3).⁹ Since 2000, retaliatory killings of lions following HLC incidents have accounted for 89% of recorded lion (non-cub) mortalities in Kunene.¹⁰ Human-lion conflict thus poses a serious threat to the viability of the desert-adapted lion population.

Lion presence on conservancy lands is something of a paradox. Conservancy legislation was implemented to enable rural Namibians to benefit from wildlife within communal, multi-use landscapes,¹¹ yet HLC imposes significant costs upon farmers in Kunene conservancies. Recent surveys of communal farmers inhabiting three core lion-range conservancies reveal livestock losses from HLC estimated at USD 2,985 per household, and losses from all predators at USD 10,151 over a three-year period, based on surveys of approximately 90% of livestock-owning households.¹² Such losses can be life-altering. Day-to-day household needs may be compromised while funds for emergencies become scarce. HLC and subsequent lion killing is thus both a wildlife conservation and human wellbeing challenge. Furthermore, communal area farmers overwhelmingly (84%) feel they do not benefit from lions inhabiting their conservancy (see Chapters 8 and 14). Even so, 75% of farmers want lions to continue to inhabit their conservancy, the primary reason being that they want future generations to be able to see wild lions.

Strengthening lion monitoring in Kunene Region is important for limiting HLC and supporting farmers' livelihoods. Kunene's vast and rugged landscapes, however, create considerable difficulties for monitoring lions. Not only is much of the area difficult to access, but because desert-adapted lions cover such expansive territories, monitoring efforts must be highly-mobile and flexible. Furthermore, because lions in Kunene primarily inhabit communal land, lion monitoring must also engage local communities. Without community participation, lion monitoring and conservation risks alienating conservancy rights over wildlife, with the potential downstream effect of lion management being considered an external imposition. This may engender antagonism towards lion conservation activities, leading to lion-killing as a form of protest.¹³

The challenge facing Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) of lions in Kunene is how to simultaneously limit HLC while building tolerance of lions among farmers. Doing so requires synthesising inclusive, locally-centred efforts with available technologies for monitoring lion movements. This chapter examines how the Lion Rangers Programme¹⁴ is actualising community-centred monitoring and conservation of the desert-adapted lions. Building on lion ecologist Philip "Flip" Stander's work, the Lion Rangers are using cutting-edge remote sensing technologies, including Global Positioning System (GPS)/satellite collars with VHF (Very High Frequency) and early-warning capabilities affixed to lions (as lion collars); and an extensive array of motion-activated cameras taking high-quality photographs (camera traps) deployed across the landscape along key movement corridors and areas where lions concentrate. Using these methods, Lion Rangers Programme researchers are developing an increasingly comprehensive picture of lion movements in Kunene. Yet, the programme is truly centred on the Lion Rangers themselves (see Chapter 18). Composed of 49 conservancy members from 11 lion-range conservancies, the Lion Rangers are employed by their conservancies and capacitated by the Lion Rangers Programme to monitor lions, provide information to other farmers and key conservancy personnel regarding lion movements and behaviour, while supporting farmers' livelihoods by limiting HLC, thereby increasing local tolerance for living alongside lions. The integration of lion collars and camera traps with the locally-centred work of the Lion Rangers is promoting the active mitigation, management, and prevention of HLC in Kunene.

9 Sullivan (2016)

10 MET (2017), Tavolaro *et al.* (2022)

11 Jones (2001)

12 Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

13 Heydinger *et al.* (in press)

14 <https://lionrangers.org/>

This chapter examines how the Lion Rangers Programme integrates remote sensing technologies with community-centred monitoring and HLC interventions for desert-adapted lion conservation. I begin by introducing the core desert-adapted lion landscape and providing a brief history of the lion population. This includes an overview of historical and ongoing lion conservation efforts in Kunene, including an examination of the effects of CBNRM on the lion population as well as an introduction to the Lion Rangers Programme. Remote sensing technologies have been an important part of lion monitoring in Kunene for years, but recent advances are enabling such technology to also be an important part of limiting HLC. GPS/satellite collars and camera traps are proving to be invaluable tools for monitoring lions and limiting HLC. I close with a case study of a conflict-causing male lion known as NPL-27, to illustrate how these remote sensing and community-centred methods are being integrated for effective desert-adapted lion conservation.

17.2 Kunene core lion range

The core desert-adapted lion range in Kunene is an area of approximately 40,000 km². This area encompasses 11 communal area conservancies (Anabeb, Doro !Nawas, Ehi-Rovipuka, #Khoadi-!Hôas, Omatendeka, Orupupa, Puros, Sesfontein, Sorris Sorris, Torra and Tsiseb) as well as the Hobatere, Etendeka, and Palmwag tourism concessions, and part of the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP) running approximately from the Hoaruseb riverbed in the north to the Ugab (!U#gab) riverbed in the south.¹⁵ Dominated by the Northern Namib Desert, primarily composed of sandy dunes with small oases in the west (see Chapter 12), the area also includes rugged mountains and gravel plains bisected by east-to-west ephemeral riverbeds. The area's basaltic soil is shallow, rocky, and relatively unproductive.¹⁶ Other iconic desert-adapted species include black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*), elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*), and mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*). Rainfall is generally low (50-250 mm per year) and erratic, increasing from west to east. During the wet season (January-May) rains fall in brief, localised downpours. Prey species, including gemsbok, mountain zebra, and giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*), follow the rains to fresh grass and often congregate in riverbeds during the dry season (June-December). Springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) generally stay on the plains, while kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) reside in stands of trees and cliffsides. Surface water is sparse. During the 1970s, however, a government borehole-drilling programme greatly increased year-round water availability (see Chapter 7). Since that time livestock and wildlife are generally grazing- rather than water-limited.¹⁷ Boom-and-bust rainfall patterns cause prey numbers to fluctuate widely. Beginning in 2000 the region experienced a relatively wet period, resulting in wildlife and livestock increases. From 2011 to 2021, extensive drought combined with high offtake levels until around 2016, caused the decline of indicator prey species by as much as 60% and livestock by as much as 67%¹⁸ (see Chapters 3 and 6). Since 2020, early indications are that a modest increase in rainfall is leading to some recovery of wildlife numbers,¹⁹ also complemented by translocations into the area.

This area includes approximately 19,300 rural residents, who primarily identify as Damara/#Nūkhoen or ovaHerero/ovaHimba. Most are small-scale pastoralists for whom livestock has significant economic and cultural value. Drought and predation are the main threats to these farmers' livelihoods, with lions accounting for approximately 20% of livestock losses. Although the Namibian government provides limited annual funding to each conservancy to compensate for livestock lost to human-wildlife conflict, 92% of farmers surveyed are dissatisfied with the

¹⁵ Stander (2007)

¹⁶ Mendelsohn *et al.* (2002), Stander (2018)

¹⁷ Bollig (2020)

¹⁸ Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

¹⁹ NACSO (2022)

programme because the compensation money does not equal the monetary value of livestock lost.²⁰ While pastoralism comprises most household incomes, these are often low and insecure:²¹ 40% of Kunene residents earn less than USD 1/day, while 23% earn less than USD 0.73/day.²² Livelihoods have been further hampered by a downturn in tourism receipts stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.²³ Additionally, Kunene has Namibia's highest primary school drop-out rates; only 55% of residents complete primary school by age 17.²⁴ Such social and economic vulnerability exacerbated by HLC not only worsens livelihood prospects, but may also be straining the conservancy system²⁵ (see Chapters 3 and 5).

17.3 Lions and CBNRM in Kunene

Since the inauguration of Namibia's communal area conservancy system in 1996, Kunene has become a wellspring of community conservation. During this same period lion numbers rebounded. While lions have long inhabited Kunene, likely in low densities, from the 1980s to 1990s they were nearly eradicated on communal lands.²⁶ Speaking of this period, one Kunene pastoralist remembers that '[i]n olden days lions were being killed and they were manageable'.²⁷ The growth of the conservancy system in this century has created a new wildlife conservation paradigm, one in which colonial-era government staff have been replaced by locals as custodians of wildlife; although legal enforcement, e.g. of anti-poaching, remains with the government.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Flip Stander undertook intensive monitoring of the desert-adapted lions, focusing on individuals and groups in the Palmwag Concession and western areas of Puros, Anabeb, Sesfontein and Torra conservancies.²⁸ Already experienced in monitoring lions in Etosha National Park (ENP) and Nyae Nyae Conservancy, Stander's focus on lions in Kunene coincided with the development of the conservancy system. Simultaneously, the region received relatively good rainfall leading to growing prey populations in the early 2000s. During this period lion numbers rose and lions began re-occupying their former range across Kunene (Figure 17.1). In 1999 and 2000, lion numbers in Kunene grew by 22% and 23% respectively, slowing to about 15% from 2001–2004.²⁹ In 2006, Stander hypothesised a significant linear relationship between the number of lions in Kunene and the size of the range they occupy.³⁰ More lions moving within communal farming areas coincided with increasing HLC incidents (as noted above).

The institutional context of this lion recovery is important for understanding the challenge of HLC. Desert-adapted lions range mostly within communal conservancy lands. As part of a counter-hegemonic conservation movement that gained momentum in the late 1980s to early 1990s, communal area conservancies aim to overcome some of the social, political, and economic injustices stemming from wildlife conservation-oriented interventions during Africa's colonial era³¹ (Chapters 1 and 2). Much is written about the history and implementation of communal area conservancies in this volume (see Chapters 3, 5, 6, 11, 13 and 14). Pertinent to lion conservation, under Namibia's Nature Conservation Amendment Act 5 of 1996, communal area residents may secure limited rights to "hunnable game" species via their conservancy. As institutions for securing benefits stemming from wildlife, conservancies may engage in or contract for trophy-hunting

20 Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

21 Mendelsohn *et al.* (2002)

22 NNPC (2015)

23 Lendelvo *et al.* (2020)

24 UNICEF (2013)

25 Bollig (2016)

26 Heydinger (2021)

27 Sesfontein Pastoralist #4, Personal Communication, 23.11.2017.

28 Stander (1999, 2000), Stander & Hanssen (2003)

29 Stander (2004)

30 Stander (2006)

31 Dressler *et al.* (2010), Owen-Smith (2010)

based on government-approved quotas, can apply to hunt protected species such as lions, and can trade and sell wildlife products with government approval. Conceptually based upon the CBNRM framework and Nobel Prize winning economist Elinor Ostrom's Design Principles for Common-Pool Resources,³² communal conservancies use processes of consultation, engagement, and empowerment³³ to facilitate collective proprietorship of wildlife for simultaneous conservation and community benefit (although see Chapters 5 and 6 for review of how this institutional structure is playing out in practice).

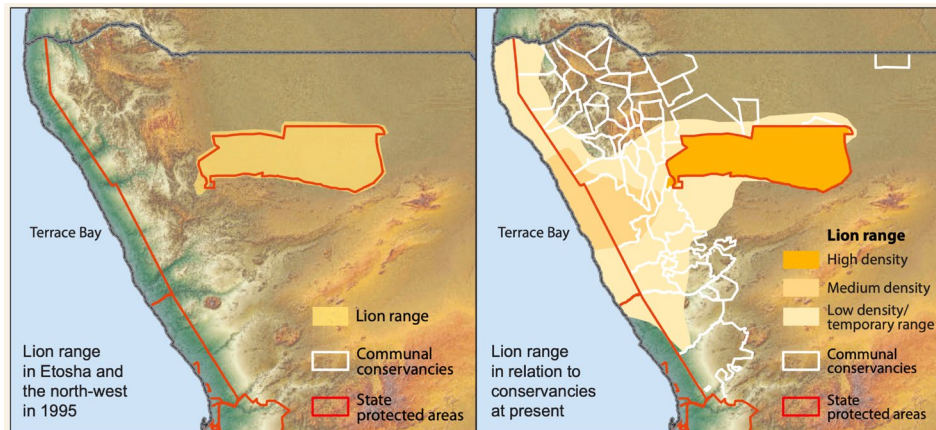


Fig. 17.1 Maps showing lion range expansion in north-west Namibia, 1995–2015. © NACSO (2016: 40), public data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Lions, however, prove an awkward fit with the CBNRM paradigm. Lions are a protected species (Nature Conservation Act 4 of 1975), and thus not subject to normal hunting regulations. Heydinger and Muzuma have examined how conservancies constrain residents' ability to manage and benefit from lions.³⁴ In brief, while conservancy farmers maintain economic and wellbeing risks from living alongside lions, they are unable to directly benefit from lion hunting without government approval. A lack of benefits to match the costs of living with lions is considered a key driver in lion killing. In effect, for many conservancy farmers lion killing is a rational economic response to HLC.

In 2017, Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) released the Human-Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia (NW Lion Plan).³⁵ By providing a framework for addressing HLC while supporting the rights and development needs of local communities, the NW Lion Plan emphasises the importance of community-centred action and decision-making relevant to lion conservation. Objectives include creating a standardised monitoring system, establishing best practices for HLC mitigation, and creating mechanisms to reduce HLC. Following a regional planning meeting held in September 2017, government, researcher, and conservancy stakeholders agreed to activate and capacitate a group of Lion Rangers.

17.3.1 Lion Rangers

The Lion Rangers are conservancy employees, receiving specialised training and equipment to lead conservancy-level efforts in lion monitoring and limiting HLC. Based on successful CBNRM programmes such as the Conservancy Game Guards (CGGs) and Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) trackers in Kunene,³⁶ and the Lion Guardians in Kenya and Tanzania,³⁷ the Lion Rangers are nominated by their conservancies to serve as custodians of lions on communal lands. As a CBNRM programme,

³² Ostrom (1990), Jones (2010)

³³ Jacobsohn (2019)

³⁴ Heydinger *et al.* (in press)

³⁵ MET (2017)

³⁶ Hearn (2003), Owen-Smith (2010), Rhino Ranger Incentive Programme (2014), Muntiferling *et al.* (2017)

³⁷ <http://lionguardians.org/>

tasked with unifying conservation and rural development,³⁸ the Lion Rangers Programme aims at providing lion-centred benefits to conservancies while reducing the costs associated with HLC. This approach is based upon local historical experiences of living with lions³⁹ and contemporary perspectives of HLC.⁴⁰

From its inception, the Lion Rangers Programme goal has been the long-term sustainable management of HLC in Kunene, centring the work of local conservationists, to ensure the survival of the desert-adapted lions as well as community benefits from their presence. Because Lion Rangers operate within communal conservancies, the programme structure and objectives are founded upon the four conceptual pillars of CBNRM. Adapted from Jones and Murphree, these are:⁴¹

- *sustainable use as conservation paradigm*—As the premier threat to natural habitats and resources, landscape transformation necessitates creating incentives for sustainable resource use, rather than technical interventions or compulsion to limit appropriation. Lion monitoring and conservation are linked to the possibility of conservancy residents potentially benefiting from lion presence;
- *economic instrumentalism*—Economic considerations are seen to drive resource decisions. Resource provision and appropriation must be economically competitive or else landscape transformation may occur. This includes the creation of supporting structures and access to markets. By providing employment, the Lion Rangers Programme links lion presence to household level benefits and the local economy. Sustainable management of lions may lead to both consumptive (e.g. trophy hunting) and non-consumptive (e.g. tourism and Wildlife Credits) benefits;
- *devolution*—Responsibility for resources is supported by the authority and entitlement necessary to generate stewardship. Local control enables rights to manage, benefit from, and dispose of resources. Empowered by their conservancy management and trained by programme leadership and other experts, Lion Rangers participate in lion monitoring and HLC interventions and play an active role in decision-making relevant to lion management;
- *collective proprietorship*—Communities of collective interest are the locus for rights-devolution. Internal legitimacy comes from communities whose membership, boundaries, and constitution are self-defined. External legitimacy comes from legislation. As community members are part of a broader set of stakeholders, Lion Rangers are responsible for representing their conservancy in lion monitoring and management operations.

Operating with government approval, Lion Rangers are the conduit between pastoralists, the conservancy, government, and NGOs concerning HLC. Most Lion Rangers are also pastoralists. They embody the experience of living with lions and are charged to faithfully represent the challenges surrounding HLC. Prior to the activation of the Lion Rangers there was limited monitoring of lions in many lion-range conservancies. The Lion Rangers are the first platform to demonstrate that communities can be trusted to sustainably manage “their” lions. By merging the Lion Rangers’ field deployment with cutting-edge monitoring technologies already in use by area researchers, an emphasis is being placed on devolving responsibility to selected community members, without sacrificing high-quality data collection for evidence-based lion conservation. This empowers local people with the responsibility of lion monitoring and conservation.

38 Jones (2001)

39 Heydinger (2021)

40 Heydinger *et al.* (2019), Heydinger *et al.* (in press)

41 Jones & Murphree (2001)

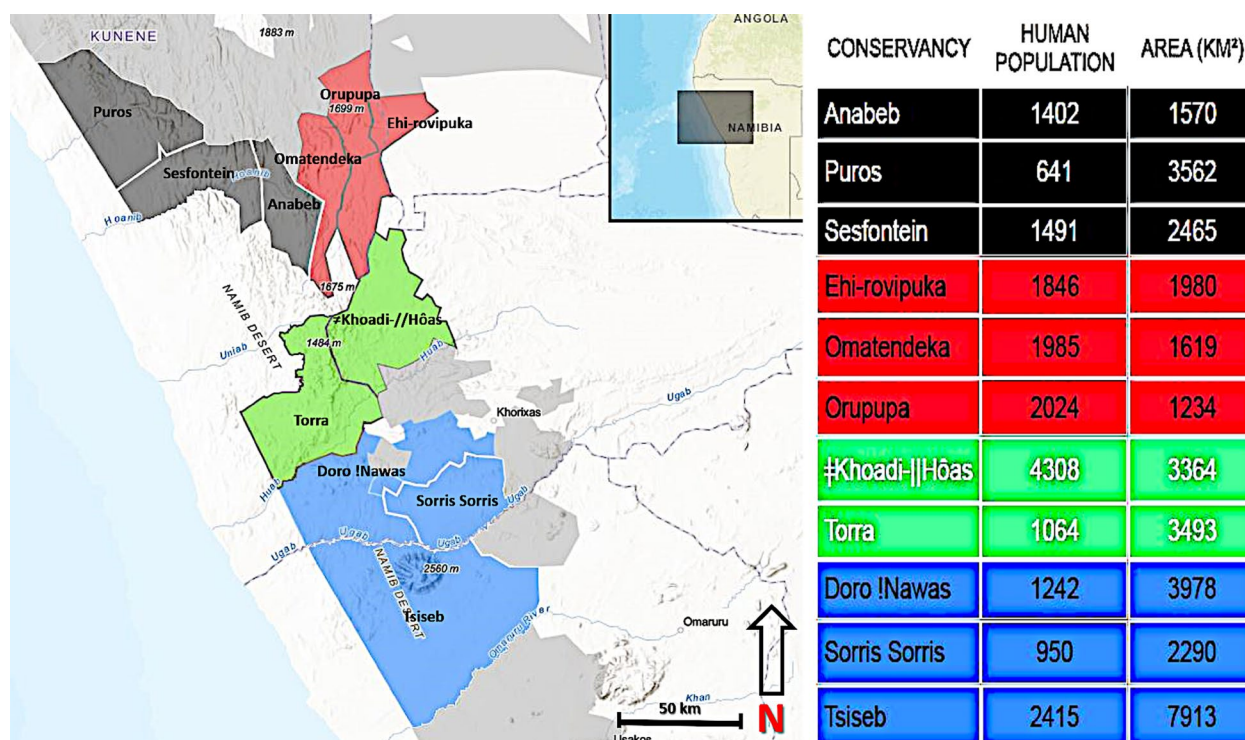


Fig. 17.2 Map showing core lion-range conservancies, separated into Lion Blocks. The Black Block consists of Anabeb, Puros, and Sesfontein; the Red Block of Ehi-Rovipuka, Omatendeka, and Orupupa; the Green Block of #Khoadi-//Hôas and Torra; and the Blue Block of Doro !Nawas, Sorris Sorris, and Tsiseb. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

In Kunene, core lion-range conservancies are grouped into “Lion Blocks” (Figure 17.2). Because lions move freely in this mostly unfenced landscape, it is logical for neighbouring conservancies to partner for monitoring and managing lions. This approach seeks to overcome some of the existing shortfalls related to the conceptual pillars of CBNRM. By linking conservancies together, the justification for and effectiveness of collective proprietorship are strengthened (see Chapter 3); this supports devolution of decision-making to the Lion Block, if not the conservancy, level. Through a forthcoming Wildlife Credits project,⁴² Lion Block conservancies will be paid for lion presence,⁴³ such that Lion Blocks may forge economic links between lion presence and lion conservation by providing community-level monetary benefits: although clearly there may be some tensions here with government-level decisions for consumptive uses of lions through trophy-hunting.

Within their Lion Blocks, Lion Rangers are deployed on joint-patrols, whereby conservancies pool their resources to get Lion Rangers into the field. Generally, Lion Rangers (Figure 17.3) are deployed to field camps neighbouring HLC hotspots, usually for 10 to 14 days per patrol shifts. Lion Rangers are responsible for performing foot- and vehicle-based patrols, which emphasise monitoring lion and other carnivore movements, as well as livestock movements around nearby farms. In the field, Lion Rangers collect environmental data using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) mobile app.⁴⁴ This builds on the earlier Event Book System⁴⁵ to enable environmental data collected by the Lion Rangers to be quickly exported (via either a cellular network or through Wi-Fi) for use by researchers and wildlife managers: as detailed in Chapter 18.

⁴² <https://wildlifecredits.com/>

⁴³ Heydinger *et al.* (2022)

⁴⁴ SMART (2023)

⁴⁵ Stuart-Hill *et al.* (2005)



Fig. 17.3 Lion Rangers Rinoveni Tjauira (of Omatendeka Conservancy), Matarakuani Kavetu (of Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy), and Richard Katira Zaako (of Orupupa Conservancy) on patrol in the 'Red' Lion Block, 2022. © John Heydinger, 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

17.4 Names, collars, and cameras

Within the text of the NW Lion Plan, the Namibian government affirmed the importance of collecting data on the spatial and temporal patterns of lion movements. These data are an important part of not only responding to and mitigating, but possibly preventing, HLC incidents.

17.4.1 Names

Limiting HLC starts with knowing which lions inhabit the area. Beginning in 1999, VHF collars were deployed by Stander on lions in Kunene, primarily for studying their movements and grouping patterns. Building on his experience in Etosha during the 1980s and 1990s, Stander also began giving lions in Kunene unique identifiers in the form of alpha-numeric names. Whereas the convention in western Etosha had been to name lions WPL-# ('W' for western Etosha, 'PL' for *Panthera leo*, plus a unique number to identify the individual), in Kunene individual lions were named according to an XPL-# system ('X' for the Xhorixas [Khorixas] district where the study was taking place).⁴⁶

Naming individuals, in this case nonhumans, is itself a monitoring and governance technology. Individually identifying lions by name, though not unique at the time, was important, both for building a coherent picture of lion movements and grouping patterns, and for creating a discourse in which lions became increasingly known, knowable, and potentially manageable.⁴⁷ Much as the process of mapping a landscape—including the creation of boundaries and assigning names to certain features—increases humans' ability to govern and manage that landscape, naming individual lions reinforces researchers, government staff, and the Lion Rangers' ability to speak with specificity about different lions, in turn enabling us to tailor monitoring and management to lions as individuals. Human-animal historian Etienne Benson has shown that naming research animals is not only useful for differentiating among them, but is also associated with a variety of moral commitments from the researcher towards the subject.⁴⁸ I have incorporated this understanding into the history of human-lion relationships within Etosha:⁴⁹ among park staff and tourist visitors

⁴⁶ Stander (2018). Khorixas is named for *xoris*, the important food plant *Salvadora persica*.

⁴⁷ Scott (1998)

⁴⁸ Benson (2010)

⁴⁹ Heydinger (2021)

to Etosha during the 1950s and 1960s, lions became conceptually transformed from fearsome pests into cosseted individuals who were individually known and in certain cases provisioned with carcasses during drought, and to provide tourist viewing opportunities.

Naming lions in Kunene is indicative of an increased concern for their well-being among researchers, wildlife managers, and the international conservation community. Beginning with XPL-1 and XPL-2 in 1999, to date more than 140 lions in Kunene have received unique alpha-numeric identifiers. To the roster of XPL-# lions have been added OPL-#, for lions inhabiting the greater Ombonde catchment landscape, and NPL-#, for lions monitored by the Namibian Lion Trust,⁵⁰ a local NGO which is also part of the Lion Rangers Programme. Coinciding with the work of Stander and his NGO Desert Lion Conservation Trust (DLCT),⁵¹ the first two decades of the 21st century brought increasing attention to the desert-adapted lions, in the form of research reports and publications, semi-popular articles in conservation magazines, and full-length documentaries focusing on the lives and survival prospects of certain lions.⁵²

17.4.2 Collars

Iterative of Cold War-era technologies developed primarily for military purposes, VHF and later GPS/satellite collaring of elusive, wide-ranging wild animals has been an important part of population biology since the 1960s. Benson provides a thorough and insightful examination of this history.⁵³ From the 1960s, lions were being collared on a small scale in East Africa.⁵⁴ Beginning in 1984, Craig Packer and his team of researchers began fitting VHF collars to lions in Serengeti. Over the next 30 years they collared more than 300 lions, with 18 to 24 lions collared at any one time.⁵⁵ This research revealed ground-breaking insights into lion movement patterns and spatial ecology. By the time Stander began working in Kunene, collaring of lions and other similarly elusive and wide-ranging large carnivores was commonplace elsewhere.

Collars enable lions to be monitored remotely. While VHF frequencies are still used, GPS/satellite collars are now available at relatively affordable prices. These have become central to lion research, monitoring, and HLC prevention in Kunene. Once fitted to an individual through a standard process of chemically-induced immobilisation under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian or paravet,⁵⁶ GPS/satellite collars begin transmitting location fixes, first to a satellite array, which relays the location fix to a secure online interface.⁵⁷ Collars can be programmed to transmit location fixes at different intervals. Currently lion collars in Kunene transmit location fixes every four hours during the day, and every two hours at night; these intervals can be reprogrammed, for example when a lion enters a known HLC area. Collars enable researchers and government staff to monitor collar locations online and communicate movements to Lion Rangers and other staff on the ground. These collars are also part of an “early-warning system”. When lions cross a “geofence” boundary, automated messages in the form of SMSs, go out to area Lion Rangers and farmers alerting them to lions’ presence within the area (see Chapter 18). In January 2023, there were 35 active GPS/satellite collars fitted to lions in Kunene. This represents approximately 65% of adult lions which, as a percentage of the total population, is the highest for a free-ranging lion population in Africa.

Collar data provide a dynamic picture of lion movements across Kunene. Not only can current movements be tracked, but as the number of location fixes grows, these locations can be compared

50 <https://namibianliontrust.org/>

51 <https://www.desertlion.info/>

52 *Vanishing Kings* (2015), <https://intonatureproductions.com/films/vanishing-kings-i-lions-of-the-namib/>

53 Benson (2010)

54 Schaller (1972)

55 Packer (pers. comm.)

56 Stander & Morkel (1991), Kock & Burroughs (2012), Donaldson *et al.* (2023)

57 Elsewhere collars have additional technologies for collecting other data such as respiration and heart rate—these have not been used to date in Kunene.

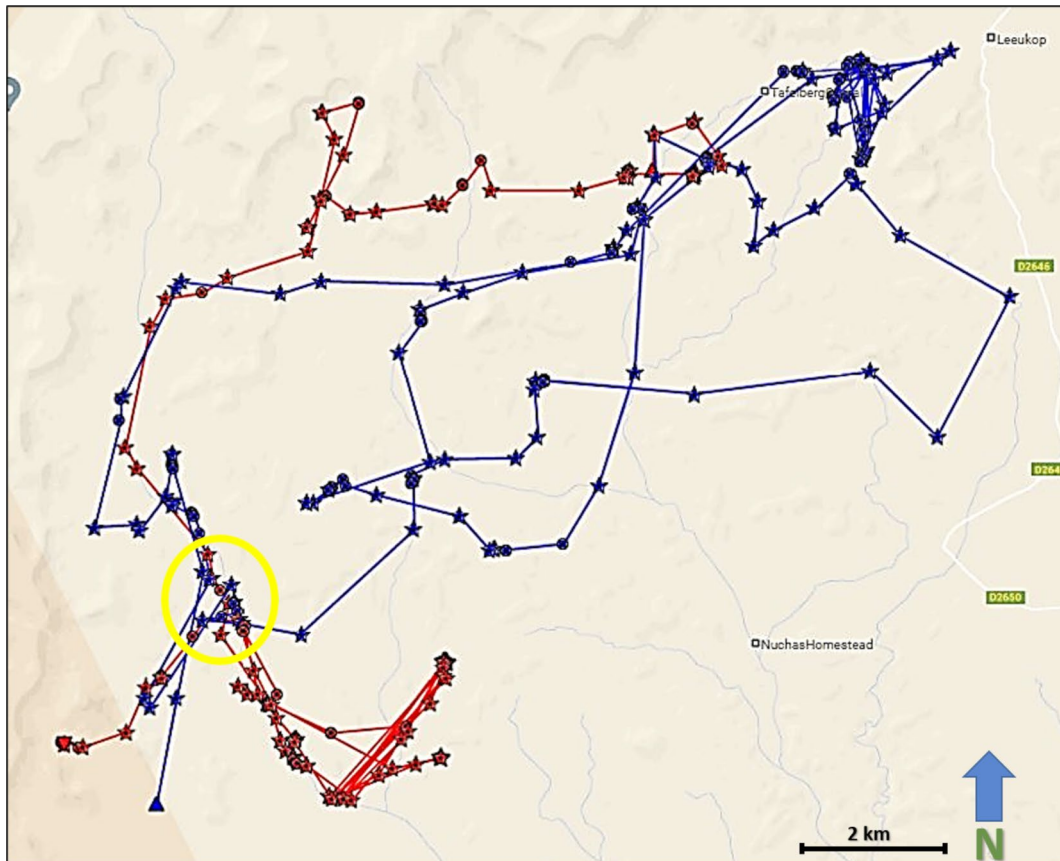


Fig. 17.5 Map showing visualised GPS/satellite collar locations of OPL-3 (red) and NPL-28 (blue) in #Khoadi-IlHôas Conservancy, from 23.12.2022 to 16.1.2023. Yellow circle indicates the area enlarged in Figure 17.6. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Zooming into specific GPS points, however, reveals interaction dynamics (Figure 17.6). At approximately 0400 on the night of 14 January 2023 (green-circled fixes), OPL-3 and NPL-28 came into close contact about 500 metres west of the Klip riverbed. An apparent altercation resulted in OPL-3 moving further south-west, while NPL-28 briefly returned towards the core of his territory. Less than 24 hours later, NPL-28 appears to have pursued OPL-3, pushing him further south-west while NPL-28 once again returned towards the core of his territory. During the next week, OPL-3 travelled nearly 50 kms north out of the area, while NPL-28 returned to the core of his territory to the north-east. It is noteworthy that while OPL-3 is estimated at between five to six years old and 140 kgs, and has struggled to maintain a consistent home range, NPL-28 is estimated at between seven to eight years old and 180 kgs and has been residing in the area since at least October 2022, when he was collared. From this interaction, combined with demographic and physiological data as well as historical collar data from these two lions, and an absence of other known males in the area, we can infer that while NPL-28 maintains a relatively stable territory in the Klip River/Tafelberg landscape—one that he will defend against potential competitors—OPL-3 does not enjoy similar territorial dominance. Indeed, the recorded home range of each lion since NPL-28 was collared on 10 October 2022 further reveals aspects of each lion's spatial ecology. While NPL-28 has occupied a range of approximately 900 km² during this period, OPL-3 has covered an area spanning more than 3,200 km² during that same time. This further reveals the social and spatial dynamics at work among lions. OPL-3 is considered a nomad in search of a stable territory. His wanderings frequently bring him near to farming areas, increasing the likelihood of HLC. His movements are therefore closely monitored by the Lion Rangers. By comparison, NPL-28 is still considered a relatively low HLC risk because he inhabits an area with no currently established farms or livestock outposts.

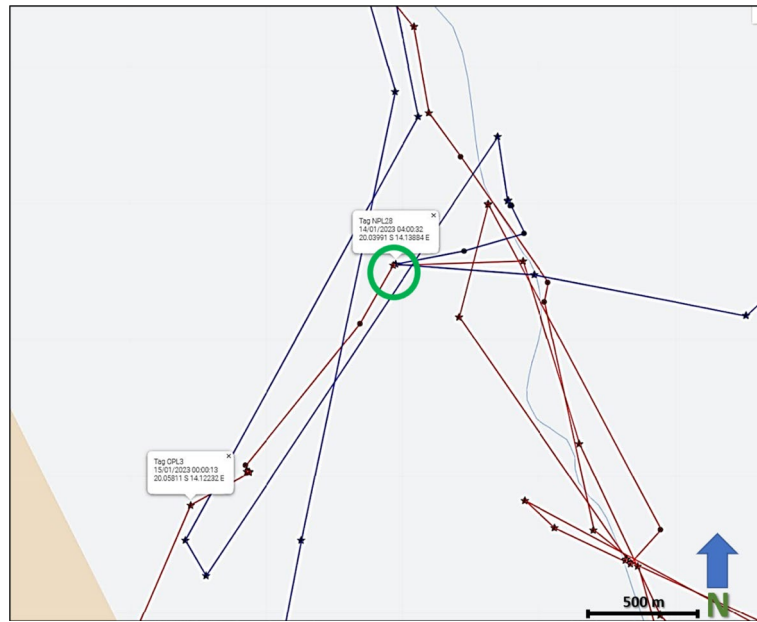


Fig. 17.6 Map showing visualised GPS/satellite collar locations of OPL-3 (red) and NPL-27 (blue) in #Khoadi-||Hôas Conservancy, from 23.12.2022 to 16.1.2023. Area enlarged to emphasise movements from 14-16 January. The green circle indicates a likely conflict event. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Figure 17.7 shows the movements of nine collared male lions over only a two-week period in January 2023, including areas in which people are living and herding livestock. This image indicates the challenge of monitoring and limiting HLC, even over this approximately 7,600 km² portion of the landscape. Although these males generally maintain distinct territories, these can overlap, increasing the prospect of HLC at nearby farms. As more lion collar data become available, researchers and Lion Rangers have more information for limiting HLC.

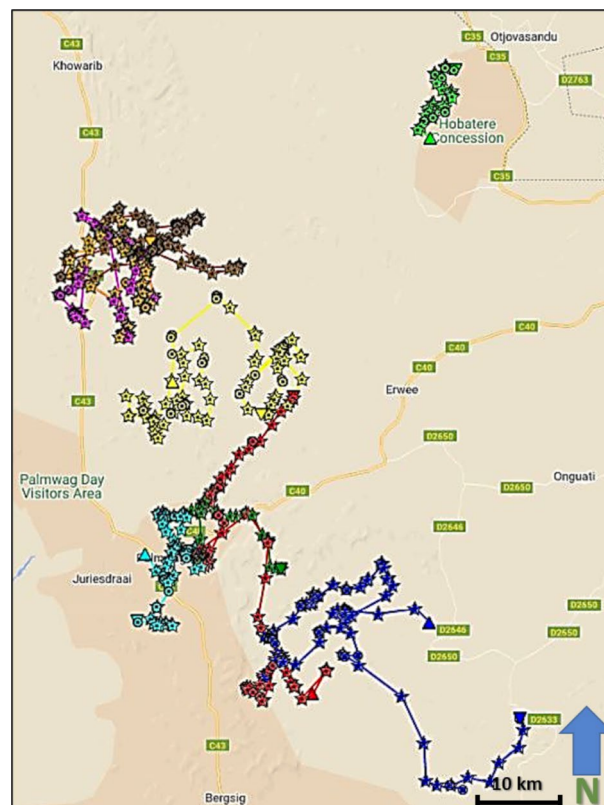


Fig. 17.7 Map showing visualised GPS/satellite collar locations of nine male lions across Kunene, from 10-24.1.2023. Approximate size of areas is 7,600 km². © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

17.4.3 Camera traps

Motion-activated cameras taking high-quality pictures (camera traps) enable researchers and Lion Rangers to intensively monitor key areas where lions are likely present. First developed as a method of estimating tiger population size by Karanth and Nichols,⁵⁸ camera traps are an increasingly popular tool for monitoring and estimating the abundance of large-bodied species when individuals are identifiable. Large terrestrial carnivores generally demonstrate secretive behaviour and nocturnal habits, existing at low densities while having broad spatial requirements that may cross physical, administrative, and political boundaries.⁵⁹ This combination of factors presents challenges to intensive monitoring. Camera traps allow for passive collection of presence and abundance data as well as identification of individuals within key areas. When repeated over time, camera traps have been shown to be a useful method for achieving both precise and accurate population estimates for large carnivores.⁶⁰ Other non-invasive approaches such as track counts have been shown to be less accurate,⁶¹ and may even be too imprecise for implementing effective management.⁶² The predominantly rocky substrates of Kunene also make tracking of lions difficult, and in many areas make it near impossible to use tracks as a measure of abundance.

Beginning in May 2021, we deployed camera trap arrays around key waterpoints and lion movement corridors, centred around the Ombonde lion range landscape in Anabeb, Omatendeka, and Ehi-Rovipuka conservancies and Etendeka and Hobatere Tourism Concessions (Table 17.1). Using a ‘camera blitz’ approach⁶³ we sought to record lion presence where possible with the intended result of collaring key individuals, such as males and pride females. Secondary objectives were to assess the presence of other large carnivores in the landscape, as well as landscape-use overlap among large carnivores. Key individuals were then targeted for collaring, primarily based on HLC considerations, with research data considered a useful by-product.

Table 17.1. Camera trap deployments since May 2021. ‘Capture period’ indicates the dates for which camera arrays were deployed; ‘# cameras’ is the number of individual camera traps deployed and retrieved for each area; ‘effort (trap-days)’ is the sum total number of days cameras were deployed in any area (# of cameras x # of days); ‘target species images’ is the total number of all images of large-bodied mammals photographed during deployment period; ‘lion images’ is the number of captures containing lions.

Deployment	Location Details	Capture Period	# Cameras	Effort (trap-days)	Target Species Images	Lion Images
Etendeka	Etendeka Concession: Upper Uniab Corridor	May 21 – July 21	42	1633	1045	150
Omatendeka 1	Omatendeka Conservancy: Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe Waterhole Complex	Oct. 21 – Dec. 21	80	4085	14949	365
Omatendeka 2	Omatendeka Conservancy: Otjomombonde-Omirembue Waterholes Corridor	Dec. 21 – Mar. 22	81	4203	23611	12
Hobatere	Hobatere Concession: Treehouse Waterhole Area	July 22 – Sept. 22	76	1498	4132	64
Anabeb-Palmwag	Anabeb: Waterholes south of Mbakondja; Palmwag: Okamakuara Waterhole area	Jan. 2023	68	1378	3405	100

⁵⁸ (1998)

⁵⁹ Williams *et al.* (2021)

⁶⁰ Balme *et al.* (2009), Williams *et al.* (2021), Portas *et al.* (2022)

⁶¹ Balme *et al.* (2009)

⁶² Belant *et al.* (2019), Dröge *et al.* (2020)

⁶³ Balme *et al.* (2009)



Fig. 17.8 Selection of camera trap images from Omatendeka 1 deployment Oct.-Dec. 2021, showing the type of quality of lion photos from camera traps. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Scrutiny of camera trap images allows us to identify lion presence and individuals for collaring operations. While lions have been shown to have near-unique vibrissae (whisker spot) patterns,⁶⁴ these are rarely visible on camera trap images. However, given the low overall population (56 to 60 individuals) and extremely low density (0.2 lions/100 km²),⁶⁵ time and location of each photographic capture, along with demographic markers such as sex and age, as well as diagnostic markings such as ear tears, scars, and whether or not the lion is collared, enable us to differentiate among individuals with a high degree of confidence: this may contribute to lion abundance and density estimates going forward. Figure 17.8 shows photos of three collared adult females (OPL-4, OPL-5, and OPL-15) one collared adult male (NPL-27), two uncollared subadult males, and one uncollared adult female.

Camera trap data are enabling researchers and Lion Rangers to make more informed decisions regarding lion monitoring and HLC interventions. Below, I present a brief case study of how collars, camera trap images, and the Lion Rangers' field monitoring combined to limit HLC, resulting in the translocation of the lion NPL-27 away from a HLC area.

17.5 Case study: Translocation of NPL-27

Combined with the field expertise of the Lion Rangers, lion collar and camera trap data provide an increasingly comprehensive picture of lion movements within Kunene communal areas. The case of NPL-27 (Figure 17.9), an adult male lion estimated at seven to eight years of age, vividly illustrates how these data can be combined to increase the effectiveness of HLC management.

⁶⁴ Pennycuik & Rudnai (1970)

⁶⁵ Muzuma & Heydinger (2024)



Fig. 17.9 Camera trap photo of NPL-27 taken near Okavariona waterhole, 13.11.2021. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

NPL-27 was first collared by the Namibian Lion Trust on 30 August 2020 in Omatendeka Conservancy. From then until 1 May 2022, he maintained a relatively stable home range of approximately 850 km², with most of his time spent along a river corridor north-east of the Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe waterhole complex (see Figure 17.4). Numerous photos and videos taken by researchers during this period show him enjoying dominance in the area, including fathering at least two litters of cubs.

From 14 October to 15 December 2021, the Lion Rangers research team deployed 80 trail cameras within the waterhole complex area. During this period, equivalent to 4,085 ‘camera trap-days’, 365 images of lions were captured. NPL-27 appears in 90 of these images. Only one other adult male was captured during this period, in three photos from 14 October. Additionally, NPL-27 was frequently captured in photos with area females, who showed signs of pregnancy during this time. These images supported our conclusion that NPL-27 was effectively maintaining a territory in the area, from which he was largely excluding other males (Figure 17.10).

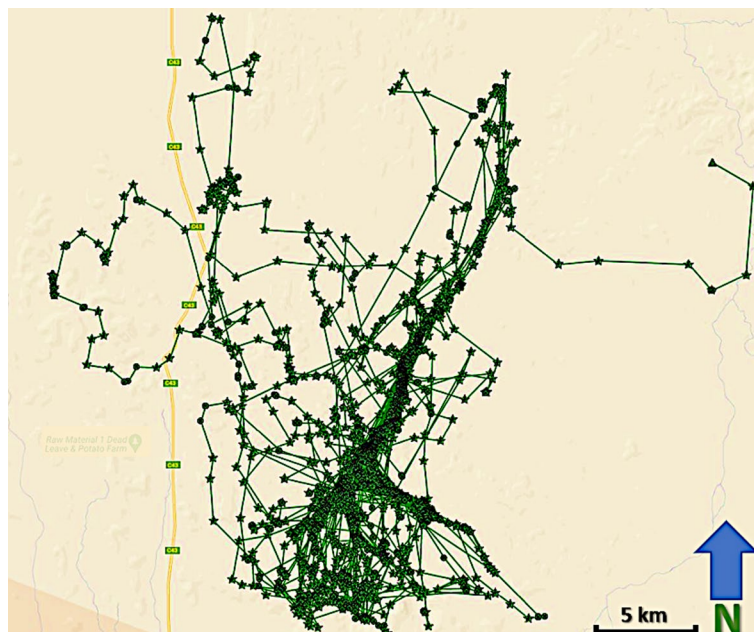


Fig. 17.10 Map showing visualised GPS-satellite collar data illustrating NPL-27 home range in Anabeb and Omatendeka conservancies from 30.8.2019-1.5.2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Abruptly in May 2022, NPL-27's movements changed dramatically. Between 2 May and 13 June 2022, he covered an area encompassing more than 1,000 km², in an area distinctly different from his previous range (Figure 17.11). During this period, NPL-27 was responsible for three separate HLC incidents, during which he killed three donkeys in Omatendeka and two cattle in †Khoadi-†Hôas conservancies (Figure 17.12). His movements also brought him into the †Khoadi-†Hôas farming area, where HLC incidents have previously resulted in numerous retaliatory killings of lions by farmers. Following these incidents, the decision was taken by MEFT and the conservancies to have NPL-27 translocated from the †Khoadi-†Hôas farming area and hopefully away from further HLC trouble.

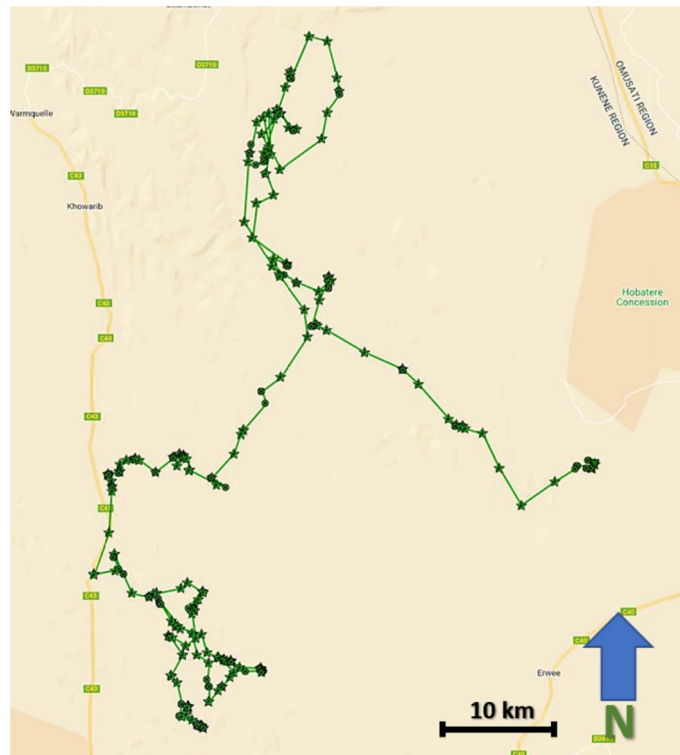


Fig. 17.11 Map showing visualised GPS-satellite collar data illustrating NPL-27 movements in Anabeb, Omatendeka, Ehi-Rovipuka, and †Khoadi-†Hôas conservancies, from 2.5.2022-13.10.2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 17.12 Cow killed by NPL-27 in †Khoadi-†Hôas farming area, 13.6.2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Normally this translocation would have emphasised returning NPL-27 to his previous home-range. However, his sudden departure raised questions as to whether the Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe area remained a suitable destination. Neither rainfall data nor movements of other collared females in the area provided insight as to the cause of NPL-27's seemingly sudden decision to leave the area. If NPL-27 would not re-settle here, it was considered likely he would continue to be a source of HLC.

A first clue as to NPL-27's departure came from the collar data of two other males, who had recently moved their ranges further west, into the Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe area. OPL-8 was first collared by MEFT and the Lion Rangers in the Hobatere Tourism Concession on 6 October 2021 along with his likely brother OPL-7: both were estimated between four and four-and-a-half years old at the time. Collar data from OPL-8 and OPL-7 indicated the two were closely bonded, rarely spending more than a day or two apart (see Figure 17.13). From October 2021 until late April 2022, these two lions primarily resided within the Hobatere Tourism Concession—some 60 kms from the Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe area and separated by a rugged mountainous area. Perhaps in search of mating opportunities, in May 2022 OPL-8, and likely OPL-7 (whose collar had ceased to function), departed Hobatere, making their way south and west. These two males, moving into their prime years, would have been imposing adversaries for other male lions. Further data came from the Lion Rangers' SMART patrols. These showed that, simultaneously, another male, OPL-3, spotted by Lion Rangers on numerous occasions, was moving into the area just south of Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe. Although he was without a functioning collar at the time, OPL-3 was monitored by Rangers in the area, leading to him being collared in partnership with the Desert Lion Conservation Trust on 2 June 2022.



Fig. 17.13 Male lions OPL-7 and OPL-8 shown resting south of Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe area, December 2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

On the night of 28 May 2022, NPL-27 came into close contact with OPL-8 (and likely OPL-7) north of Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe (Figure 17.13). Whether a direct altercation took place is unknown, although NPL-27 and OPL-8's collars recorded locations less than 200 m from each other at both 0600 and 0800. The result of this close encounter appears to be that NPL-27 moved further north, more than 40 kms in the next three days, to an area he had not previously been recorded in. By comparison, in the following two weeks OPL-8 resided in the area where the possible conflict took place, eventually settling into a home-range centred around Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe, which he and OPL-7 have maintained as of this writing. These two males have also taken over the pride privileges of the females OPL-4, OPL-5, and OPL-15, who previously moved primarily with NPL-27.

The conflict leading to NPL-27's departure, visible through available collar data, in combination with Lion Rangers' ongoing work and SMART reports tracking available prey and lion movements, made the Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe area a poor prospect for successfully translocating NPL-27. It was considered highly likely that NPL-27 would either be quickly chased out of the area, or killed in conflict with the other males.

Camera trap data suggested a viable alternative. From December 2021 to March 2022, the Lion Rangers research team deployed 81 camera traps to the Otjomombonde-Omirembue waterholes area in Omatendeka Conservancy. This mountainous and hard-to-reach area east of Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe is considered something of a refuge for wildlife away from farming areas (see Chapter 3). Most crucially, trail camera images indicated minimal presence of lions. During the recent camera deployment covering 4,203 'trap nights', in over 23,000 images containing carnivore or prey species, only 12 images contained lions. By comparison 72 images contained spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) and 162 contained brown hyena (*Parahyaena brunnea*). Five of these captures showed a male lion, known as NPL-33. Although considered to be resident within the Otjomombonde-Omirembue area, when the translocation of NPL-27 was being considered, NPL-33 was approximately 15 km to the north. Trail camera images also showed ample numbers of mountain zebra, giraffe, springbok, and even black-faced impala (*Aepyceros melampus petersi*) in the area. Ongoing Lion Ranger work in the area indicated prey species were still inhabiting the area.

Relying on the combination of collar data, trail camera images, and Lion Ranger reports around NPL-27's former range of Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe as well as surrounding Otjomombonde-Omirembue, the decision was taken by MEFT to translocate NPL-27 to Otjomombonde-Omirembue. During the early morning hours of 17 June 2022, NPL-27 was successfully immobilised and translocated from the #Khoadi-||Hôas farming area (Figures 17.14 and 17.15). An approximately 30 hour operation was completed when NPL-27 was revived near the Omirembue waterhole. Follow-up monitoring by the Lion Rangers and via collar data indicated that he resided in the area through to the end of the month, making no attempt to return to either Otjiapa-Okavariona-Otjejekupe, or the farming areas where he previously caused conflict.

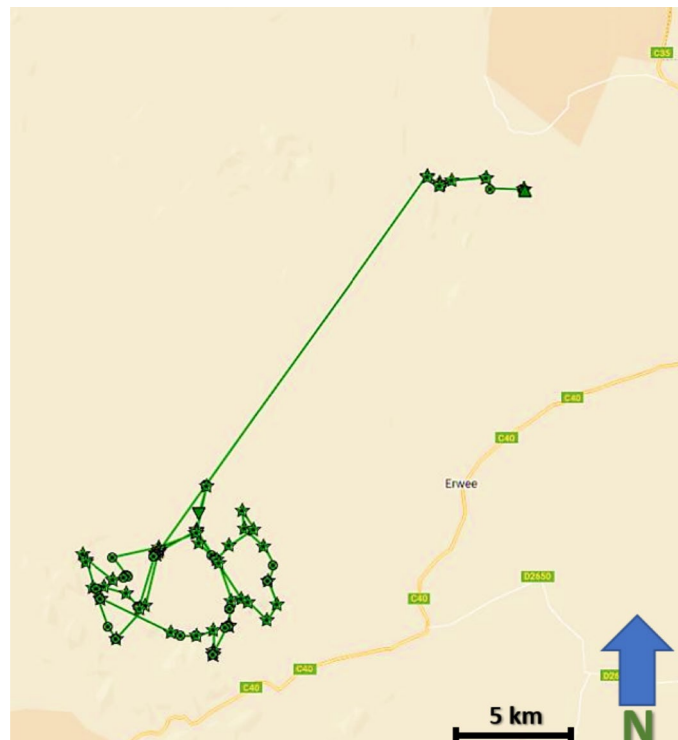


Fig. 17.14 Map showing visualised GPS/satellite collar data of NPL-27 translocation from #Khoadi-||Hôas farming (top right) to Otjomombonde-Omirembue waterholes area (bottom left), 16-21.6.2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 17.15 Lion Rangers, MEFT staff, and NPL-27 during translocation operation, 17.6.2022. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

17.5.1 Translocation postscript

Leading lion researchers are divided on the effectiveness of translocation.⁶⁶ Translocated lions tend to return to their points of departure, sometimes with surprising speed, as our team has seen on numerous occasions. When it is used, translocation may simply be the best available option. Although NPL-27 would later be removed for encroaching on a separate farming area further south, the work of the Lion Rangers and researchers, supervised by MEFT, minimised remaining conflict and contributed to NPL-27 not being destroyed.

Because NPL-27 did not return to his previous range, risking near-certain conflict with OPL-8 and OPL-7, nor did he return to the †Khoadi-†Hôas farming area, his translocation is considered a qualified success. In such a massive, unfenced landscape, there is no guarantee that lions will not encroach on human settlements. Rather the combination of remote sensing data and on-the-ground work of the Lion Rangers contributed to the conclusion that NPL-27 was failing to maintain a territory sufficiently distant from farming areas. He was now considered a “problem-causing” lion in need of removal. As it became apparent that other alternatives had been exhausted, NPL-27’s movements were monitored closely, leaving sufficient time to plan and execute a follow-up operation whereby NPL-27 was safely removed from the area. As of this writing he survives in his new location.

17.6 Conclusion

The combination of the Lion Rangers’ work and remote sensing data is pushing forward the prospect of lion monitoring and conservation based upon CBNRM principles in Kunene. The monitoring and translocation of NPL-27 provide a series of important insights for integrating technological and community-based approaches.

First, Kunene communal conservancies are farming areas. While conservancies have been gazetted to provide limited rights to wildlife for conservancy residents, potentially dangerous animals such as lions cannot too greatly negatively affect human lives and livelihoods (see Chapters 11 and 19). When such damage occurs, action must be taken to secure human well-being, but also to ensure continued support among conservancy residents for wildlife conservation. In the case of NPL-27, once he became a problem-causing lion it was necessary for him to be removed away from causing possible HLC, to ensure human well-being and continued support of lion conservation in the area. Through the work of the Lion Rangers, the conservancies took an active leadership role in monitoring the movements of NPL-27, limiting further HLC, and undertaking his translocation. These operations were performed in partnership with the local communities.

⁶⁶ ALWG (African Lion Working Group) pers. comms., 2022.

Second, the emphasis on remote sensing should not minimise the foundation of CBNRM upon which these specialised techniques become meaningfully operational in limiting HLC. The translocation of NPL-27 was able to take place because of the work of the Lion Rangers in monitoring wildlife, responding to and recording HLC, working with conservancy members to gauge their reactions, and providing on-the-ground information to researchers and government managers to make informed decisions. Remote sensing technologies can help researchers and Lion Rangers understand which lions are moving in which areas. But they cannot anticipate the likely effects of these movements, collect data on the human and more-than-human effects of these movements, nor forecast the response of local people. The interpretive element rests with researchers and the Lion Rangers to not only monitor and understand lion spatial ecology, but also to be able to react to HLC and potentially prevent conflict before it occurs. By providing more information to communities through remote sensing technologies, the Lion Rangers research team is helping grow the capacity of locals managing HLC.

Accordingly, by working with the Lion Rangers, researchers are better able to contextualise how certain types of data collection and analysis can support CBNRM. Much has been and will continue to be written about the challenges and successes of CBNRM in Kunene.⁶⁷ The usefulness of lion collars, camera traps, and the SMART programme (see Chapter 18), rely on community tolerance of living with lions as well as local conservationists' monitoring of the landscape for potential drivers of HLC, such as changing rainfall patterns, encroachment on farming areas by uncollared lion and other large carnivores, and prey and livestock movements. In Chapter 19 of this volume Muzuma explores another side of HLC: livestock movements across the landscape and how these can also drive HLC. Gaining as comprehensive a picture as practicable of the variables contributing to HLC refines the ability of the MEFT, the Lion Rangers, and researchers, to mitigate, manage, and even minimise HLC. This reinforces livelihoods as well as the survival of desert-adapted lions.

As noted by the late Garth Owen-Smith and Margaret Jacobsohn, who helped found Namibia's communal conservancy movement (see Chapter 2), CBNRM must be a bottom-up approach in which process is also product.⁶⁸ Caution should be the operative word when incorporating new technologies into community conservation. Remote sensing technologies such as lion collars and camera traps risk distancing the viewer from the real-life consequences of living with lions. As technology theorist and human-animal studies scholar Donna Haraway has noted, 'situated knowledges'—those that are specifically relevant and forged by their time and place—are particularly powerful because they recognise the connectivity between actors, factors, and forces in each time and place.⁶⁹ Remote sensing techniques should not replace, but augment, existing expertise of those living alongside lions. We have experienced numerous instances where lion collars have failed or been damaged, or trail cameras have malfunctioned, or even disappeared. People, and their knowledge of the landscapes they inhabit, are far more durable (as explored in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15). Desert-adapted lion conservation will continue to rely primarily on the willingness of conservancy residents to live alongside lions. The techniques outlined here merely support CBNRM of lions.

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⁶⁷ e.g. Sullivan (2003), Hoole (2008), Bollig (2020)

⁶⁸ Owen-Smith (2010), Jacobsohn (2019)

⁶⁹ Haraway (1990)

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18. Lion Rangers' use of SMART for lion conservation in Kunene

Mathilde Brassine

Abstract

SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) is a set of software and analysis tools used to enable rapid collection and transfer of patrol data, in order to assess Ranger activities in the field and monitor wildlife movements on an ongoing basis. In north-west Namibia, a small population of desert-adapted lions continues to survive alongside livestock farmers and communities living in conservancies, often resulting in human-lion conflict in a context where livelihoods are already strained due to prolonged drought in the region, as well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognising the urgent need to mitigate this conflict, in 2017 the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism drew up a strategy on a way forward in the form of the Human Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia. The formation of the Lion Rangers Programme is part of this strategy. The SMART system was first implemented into the programme in September 2021. This chapter discusses how the SMART system supports decision-making regarding lion conservation and management at a community-level.

18.1 Desert-adapted lions

A small population of lions (*Panthera leo*) living in north-west Namibia has drawn attention for their ability to survive in arid and semi-arid conditions and a picturesque environment, within national parks, concessions and communal lands. These lions, referred to as desert-adapted lions, or more simply as “desert lions”, are monitored by a dedicated team of Lion Rangers who patrol the vast Kunene Region on foot, equipped with little more than smartphones to record lion movement, prey availability, and other environmental observations (as introduced in Chapter 17). Although this population of desert-adapted lions has attracted much attention, until recently little monitoring had taken place on a wide scale. Prior to 2022, population estimates were based primarily upon expert opinion:¹ from approximately 20 individuals in 1997, this population is estimated to have grown to 150 in 2018.² The first ever Northwest Namibia Lion Population Survey, a community-centred population survey led by the MEFT (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism), took place from 6 November 2022 to 6 January 2023. During this survey, more than 42,000 km² were covered on foot and by vehicle by a team of 40 Lion Rangers and eight MEFT staff. Preliminary results indicate that although the lion population has decreased over the last few years, it remains stable and healthy with a current population of 57 to 60 adults,³ as outlined in Chapter 17.

This population of lions shares limited resources with the local communities whose livelihoods rely primarily on livestock farming (goats and sheep, though increasingly less frequently, cattle); livelihoods which are already strained due to prolonged drought in the region, as well as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ The combination of increased lion numbers since the start of the conservancy system, followed by limited availability of grazing areas for livestock and decreasing

¹ Stander (2010, 2018), MET (2017)

² *Ibid.*

³ Heydinger & Muzuma (2023)

⁴ Lendelvo *et al.* (2020)

natural prey numbers due to drought, past high offtake levels and increased pressure from illegal hunting (also see Chapter 3), has resulted in increased encounters between lions and livestock, in turn resulting in a rise in human-lion conflict (HLC)⁵ and retaliatory killings:⁶ for details see Chapter 17.

18.2 The Lion Rangers

As documented in Chapter 17, establishment of the Lion Rangers Programme (LRP) in 2018 is one of the steps in a strategy to achieve conservation of desert-adapted lions through HLC prevention and mitigation actions across north-west Namibia, as formulated in the Human Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia (NW Lion Plan) of 2017.⁷ Building on community-conservation approaches developed by the Lion Guardians program in East Africa⁸ and Namibia's Save The Rhino Trust,⁹ the LRP comprises 47 Lion Rangers and four rapid response units across the Kunene and Erongo Regions in north-west Namibia (see Figure 18.1). The Lion Rangers are Community Game Guards (CGGs) selected and employed by their conservancies, to reduce HLC by increasing local farmers' tolerance of lions, thus permitting the long-term conservation of desert-adapted lions. They accomplish these duties mostly through foot patrols, and to a lesser degree, vehicle-based patrols. The vastness of the lion range in north-west Namibia and the large number of Lion Rangers, however, has posed a challenge in terms of communication and transfer of information collected during patrols in the past, raising the need for a system that would permit easy data collection and export.



Fig. 18.1 Lion Rangers, Rapid Response Unit members and Leadership team at the 2023 Lion Rangers training. Photos: © Oliver Adolph, 2023, Lion Rangers Programme, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

5 Heydinger *et al.* (2019), Lion Rangers (unpublished data)

6 MET (2017); see, for example, Sullivan (2016)

7 MET (2017)

8 Dolrenry *et al.* (2016)

9 Muntifering *et al.* (2017)

This is where the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) system comes in, as focused on in this chapter. SMART has increasingly allowed timely data collection to take place, permitting rapid analysis and adaptive management. In addition to ongoing individual patrols in their own conservancies, ranger joint patrols are organised by Patrol Leaders in each of their blocks. As detailed in Chapter 17, Blocks consist of 4 or 5 nearby conservancies clustered on the basis of “shared” lions moving through their areas (see Figure 17.2). Patrol Leaders are responsible for putting together teams consisting of Rangers from the different conservancies in their blocks, thus enabling transfer of knowledge across conservancies and generations. Shifts for the joint patrols take place on a bi-monthly basis in various simultaneous potential HLC hotspots, determined by risk potential for HLC, based on data collected with SMART by the Rangers on lion presence and livestock movement.

Community surveys carried out in 2022 show promising beginnings: since Lion Rangers started patrolling across this extensive landscape in 2018, they have already visited nearly half of all conservancy farms, with respondents showing either positive or hopeful views about the programme.¹⁰ The vastness, remoteness, and ruggedness of Kunene Region, however, presents challenges for Lion Rangers to efficiently carry out their duties. These challenges are overcome in part through using remote sensing technology that assists the Lion Rangers with the monitoring of desert-adapted lions, other carnivore species, and prey species. The LRP and associated researchers make use of three remote sensing methods to monitor desert-adapted lions and mitigate HLC: fitting lions with Global Positioning System(GPS)/satellite collars with Early-Warning capabilities, deployment of camera-traps, and the use of SMART. This chapter focuses on the use of the SMART system, within a CBNRM approach to desert-adapted lion conservation. For a focus on the use of lion collar and camera-trap data, see Chapter 17.

18.3 The Early Warning System, its key role players and successes

Over the last few years, new goals and successes focusing on CBNRM of lions in the north-west have been forged, combining the Early Warning System (EWS) developed by Wide Horizons Aerial Technologies, with deployment of Lion Rangers, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)'s Human Wildlife Support Team, and the Namibian Lion Trust's (NLT) Rapid Response Teams. This collaboration has enabled increased monitoring and research of the desert-adapted lions. These goals focus primarily on involving communities in all levels of HLC mitigation efforts: from data collection and access to lion movement, to responding to conflict, and playing an active role in management decisions regarding the deployment of Lion Rangers and collaring of individual lions.

With 47 lions fitted with GPS/satellite collars equipped with VHF (Very High Frequency) capabilities (lion collars) across Kunene Region, representing an estimated more than three quarters of adult lions, this population of desert-adapted lions is considered to be one of the most intensively monitored in Africa. Lion collars provide not only the position and movement of lions, but also trigger automated alerts in the form of SMS (Short Message Service) notifications to the Lion Rangers using “geofence” technology when lions enter farming areas: a geofence being a virtual geographical boundary defined by GPS and cellular data that enables an alert when a device, in this case a collared lion, crosses this boundary. This technology enables Lion Rangers to regularly keep farmers and herders informed of lion movements, facilitating communication flow within their communities and thus reducing the potential for HLC. In addition, lion collars also trigger 16 Early-Warning (EW) Towers deployed in active HLC hotspots, informing nearby farmers when collared lions are in the immediate vicinity by setting-off sirens and alert spotlights indicating direction and distance the lions are approaching from. This enables farmers to best decide how to protect their

¹⁰ Heydinger (2023)

livestock. Lion collars also trigger remote alert units carried by Lion Rangers, devices that differ from Early Warning Towers in that they lack the sirens and lights yet still indicate lion positions, using the iridium satellite network and thus connecting in areas without cellular cover. Lastly, the four rapid response units are equipped with 4x4 vehicles with “rover units” which are linked to the iridium satellite network, allowing the Rapid Response Units to receive geofence alerts, search for individual collared lion locations, and communicate with other rovers, even in areas without cellular coverage.

Lion Rangers and Rapid Response Units thus cooperate to record, mitigate, manage, and hopefully prevent HLC. The SMART system plays an important role throughout this process as it helps with the recording of data on Ranger patrol deployment, presence of lions, their prey and HLC, including details on the specific carnivores linked with human-wildlife conflict (HWC), the type and number of human and/or livestock loss, the presence and type of enclosure used to protect livestock, and details of the livestock owner in order to assist MEFT with compensations and for long-term record purposes. In addition, SMART helps with analysing and visualising collected data, in order to anticipate HLC hotspots and thus assist with adaptive management.

Since the implementation of the EWS in February 2021, a total of 1,461 Early Warning events, (including geofence crossings, EW tower alerts and Remote Alert Unit alerts) were recorded, resulting in over 26,380 SMSs sent out to 62 recipients (Lion Rangers, Rapid Response teams and MEFT staff). The final defence line of the EWS is the predator-proof *kraals*. Since 2020, a total of 101 predator-proof *kraals* have been constructed by the LRP and partners in various HLC hotspots, with only one incident of a breach by a lion entering a predator-proof *kraal* thus far, and no incidents when an Early-Warning Tower was present in addition to the predator-proof *kraals*. Since then, further adaptations on positioning of the *kraals* have been made to ensure this does not occur again. The strengthening of the LRP from 2018 already shows encouraging results: since 2018 HLC incidents have decreased by more than 33% annually (2016, $n = 126$; 2019, $n = 102$; 2021, $n = 82$),¹¹ despite the additional challenges caused by prolonged drought and the COVID-19 pandemic.

18.4 SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool)

The SMART system is a freely-accessible set of software and analysis tools designed to help collect, visualise, store, analyse, report and act on a wide range of data for the management of protected areas, law enforcement monitoring, biodiversity monitoring, etc. Data are collected by the Lion Rangers using a mobile app (SMART Mobile), which is then transferred via a cloud-based system (SMART Connect) to a centralised server which can be accessed via desktop (SMART Desktop) where it can be analysed, and reports can be created (see Figure 18.2 for a representation of SMART data workflow). SMART was first introduced within the LRP in its pilot phase in 2021 to enable rapid collection and transfer of patrol data to assess Ranger activities in the field, for determining Lion Ranger effort which is rewarded with performance-based payments, and to monitor lion and other wildlife movements (see Figure 18.3). Lion Ranger monthly allowances and bonuses are supported by KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau/German Development Bank) via the Community Conservation Fund of Namibia (CCFN) through the Poverty Oriented Support to Community Conservation in Namibia (POSCCIN) Project.

¹¹ Lion Rangers (unpublished data)

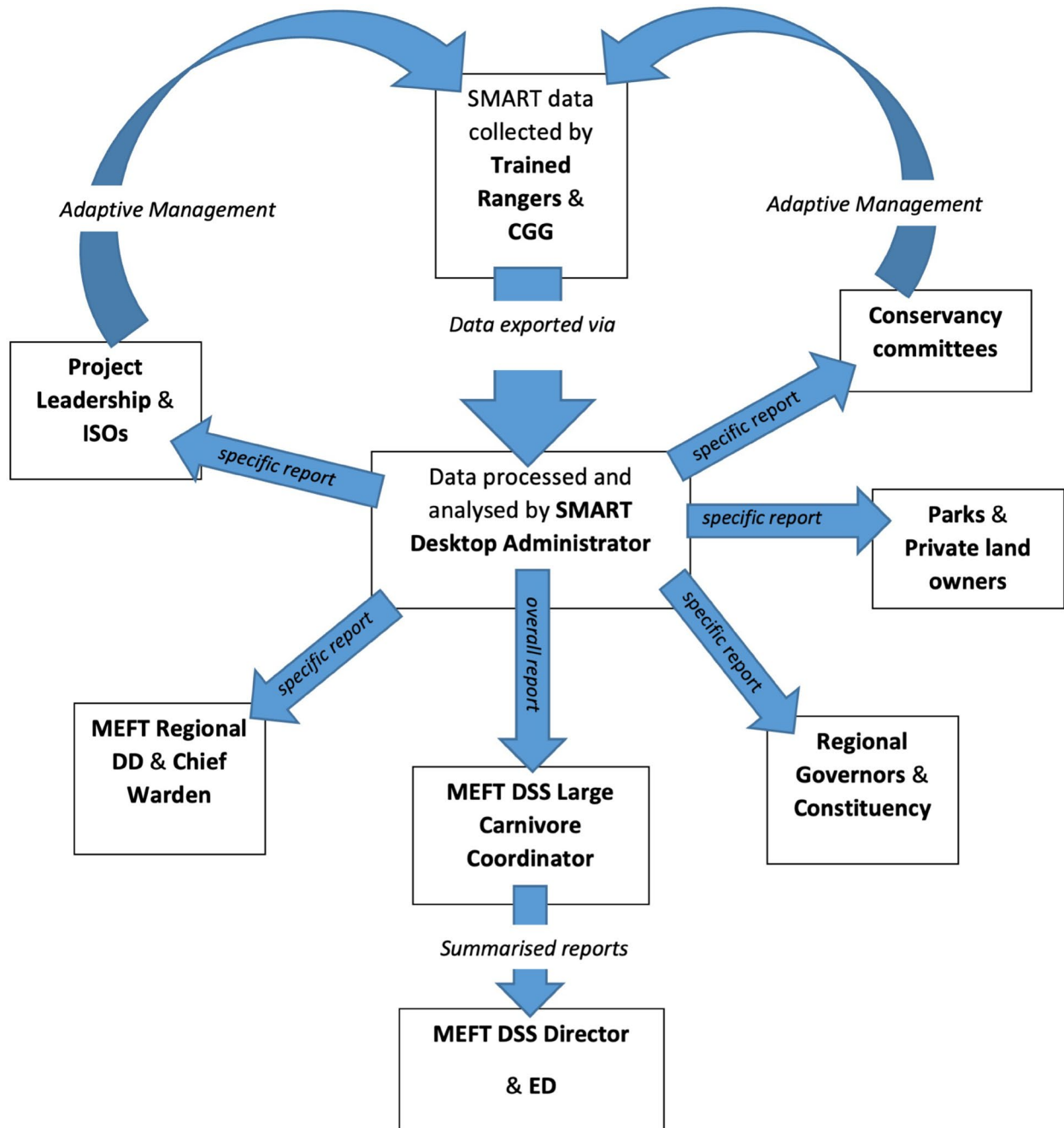


Fig. 18.2 Representation of SMART data workflow. Key: DD = Deputy Director; DSS = Directorate of Scientific Services; ED = Executive Director; ISOs = Implementing Support Organisations. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.



Fig. 18.3 Lion Rangers Uezekandavii Nguezeeta, Tjangu Tjiseua and Kaidue Uaroua recording lion tracks (bottom of the image) in SMART in the Omatendeka Conservancy. Photo: © Mathilde Brassine, Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Lion Rangers and Rapid Response Units have been trained in the use of SMART to facilitate recording of Ranger activities (individual and joint patrols, veterinary interventions, maintenance of predator-proof *kraals*, community meetings to communicate lion movement, attending to HWC, etc.). This training has been part of the EWS, delivered through three training sessions in 2021, 2022 and 2023. SMART Mobile is a user-friendly mobile app with a simple interface (see Figure 18.4). The data collection template used in the SMART Mobile is based on the Event Book System, a system introduced in 2000 for use by conservancies and which puts wildlife data collection in the hands of local communities¹² (also see Chapter 11). Lion Rangers cover on average 9 km on foot per day, sometimes as much as 40 km, to collect information on lion presence and movement, other carnivore sightings and signs (tracks and scats), human-wildlife conflict, prey and water availability, poaching incidents, livestock movement, as well as on the position of active homesteads, and fenced livestock enclosures (traditional and predator-proof *kraals*). GPS locations of all observations are entered automatically in the app and permit easy recording of patrol length and duration. All data is then exported by the Lion Rangers within days through SMART Connect via network or Wi-Fi connections.

¹² Stuart-Hill *et al.* (2005)

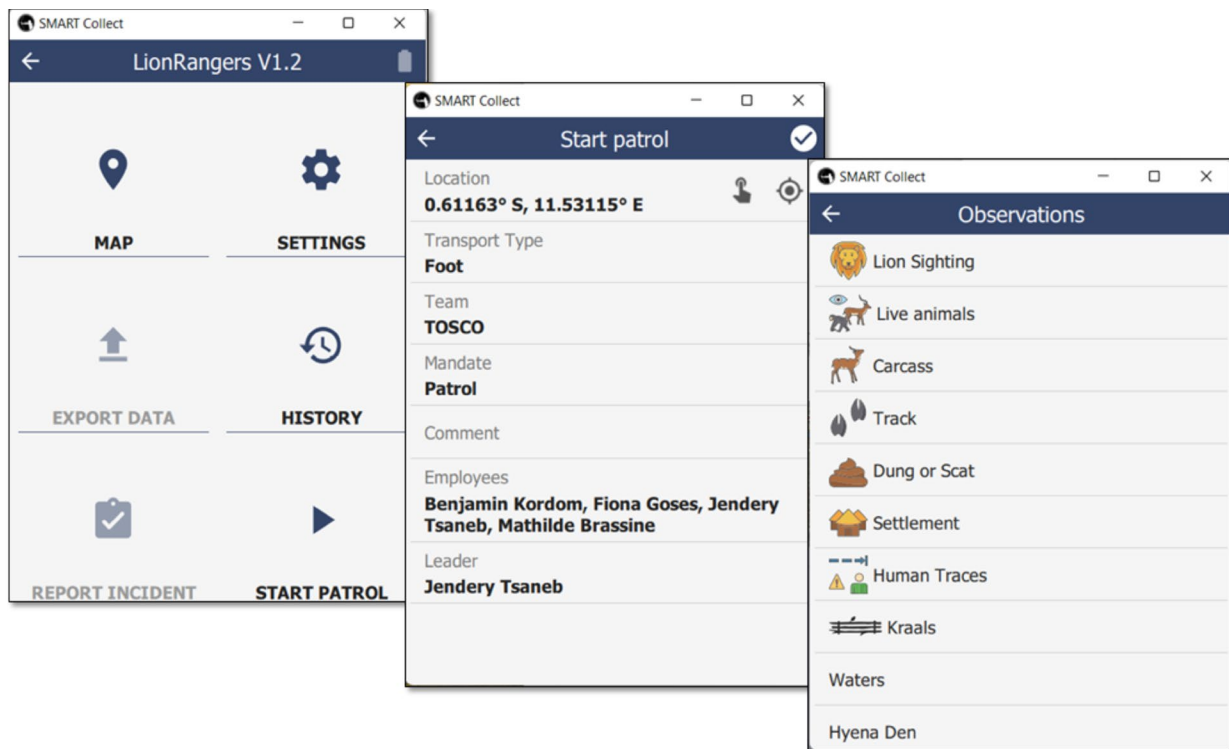


Fig. 18.4 Screenshots of the SMART Mobile app showing the simple and user-friendly display, from starting a patrol to recording patrol metadata and environmental observations. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The LRP administrator monitors and analyses incoming data on a continuous basis, providing reports to the rest of the programme's leadership in order to pre-empt potential conflicts by adapting patrol teams' deployment based on lion and livestock movement. Monthly reports on their respective Rangers' activities are sent to each conservancy's committee representative, as well as to the Rangers themselves so they may monitor their progress and determine if effort is sufficient, or if disciplinary action must be taken by their conservancy and programme leadership. In addition, quarterly SMART reports are compiled for MEFT leadership, regional governors, and constituency councillors (see Figure 18.2). A major advantage of SMART is the ability to create visualisations of the data recorded. Since implementation of the SMART system within the LRP, over a period of 18 months (April 2022 to September 2023), a total of 12,002 Ranger patrols were logged into SMART across the north-west, 8,889 of which were on foot. This represents a total of 50,065 Ranger hours, covering 279,854 km of which 87,678 km were covered on foot (see Figures 18.5 and 18.6). A total of 445 lion sightings and 876 lion tracks sightings (see Figure 18.7) have been recorded by the Lion Rangers during this period.

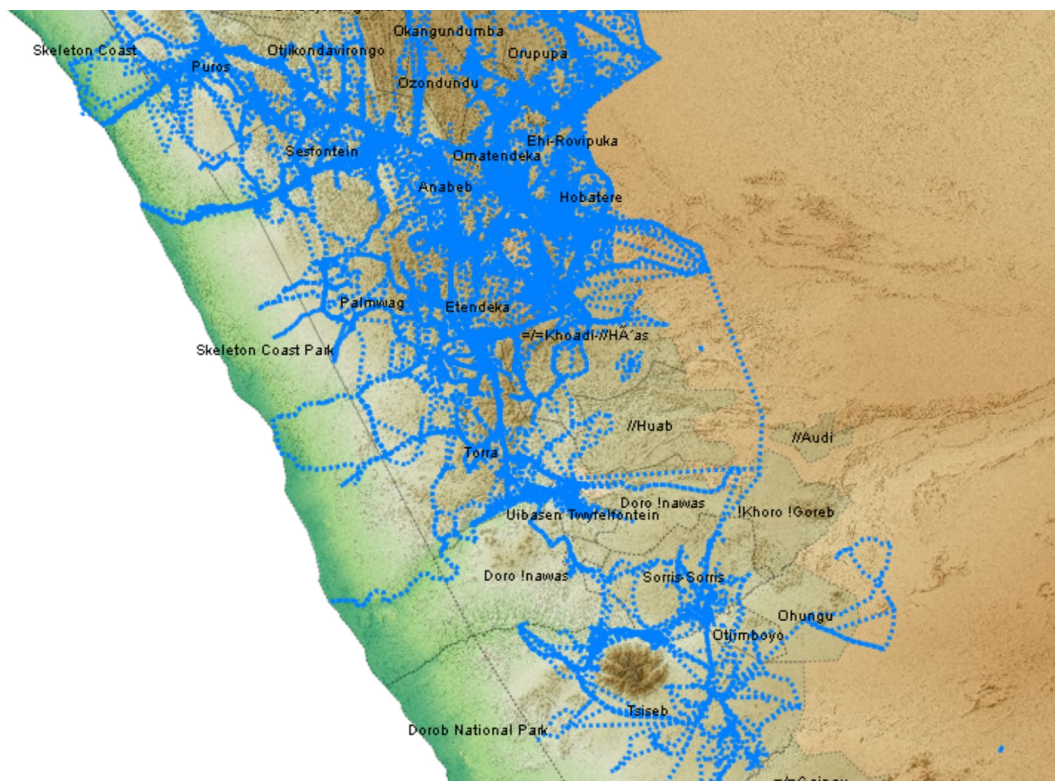


Fig. 18.5 Map produced by SMART representing vehicle and foot patrols carried out across the 11 lion-range conservancies between April 2022 and September 2023. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

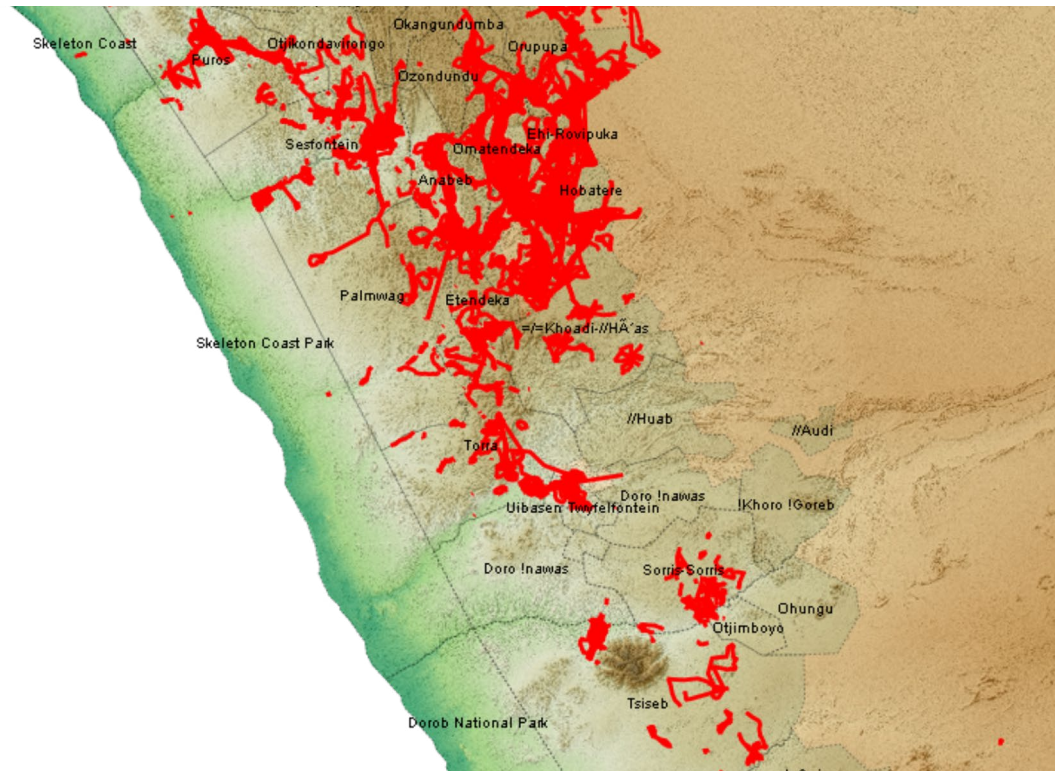


Fig. 18.6 Map produced by SMART representing all foot patrols carried out across the 11 lion-range conservancies between April 2022 and September 2023. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

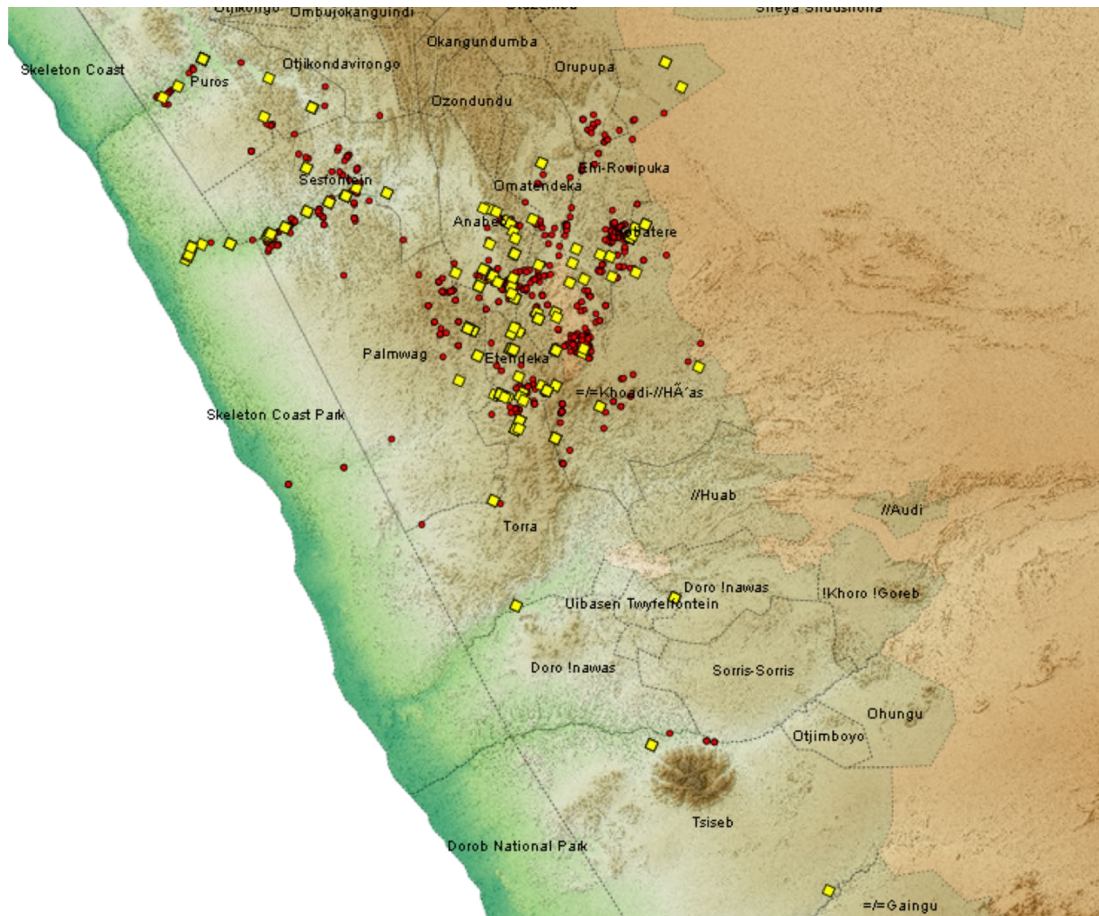


Fig. 18.7 Map produced by SMART representing all lion sightings (yellow squares) and lion track sightings (red dots) across the 11 lion-range conservancies between April 2022 and September 2023. © Lion Rangers data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

At the end of each year, a Lion Ranger award ceremony recognises and celebrates the achievements of the best performing Lion Rangers. In 2023, the three top performing Rangers logged 956 foot-patrols, covering 13,299 km in 11 months. Rinoveni Tjauira, from Omatendeka conservancy, patrolled up to 800 km on foot per month, while Kaidue Uaroua and Esau Matundu have consistently performed above expectations, taking first and second place in 2022. The top three Lion Rangers are rewarded every year with a ram and 10, seven and five goats or sheep for first, second, and third place respectively. Because the majority of Lion Rangers are farmers themselves, they too understand the challenges facing Kunene farmers living alongside lions and other large carnivores. This enables Rangers to better relate, connect, and communicate with the farmers they assist in managing HLC. Since the deployment of SMART, Lion Rangers have responded to 128 human-wildlife conflict incidents, including 72 HLC incidents, at which 361 livestock (primarily goats) were killed. Where illegal lion killings have occurred, these are leading to increased law enforcement. Since 2021, the Lion Rangers have assisted with three arrests and one conviction following lion killing incidents.

SMART also played an important role during the first-ever north-west Lion Population Survey which took place from 6 November 2022 to 6 January 2023, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Based on SMART records, the Lion Rangers covered approximately 42,000 km, through both foot- and vehicle-based patrols over a 54 day period. Logging 331 total SMART patrols, the Lion Rangers recorded more than 100 individual lion sightings in addition to other carnivores, prey species, and other protected species such as elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*). Data from the survey have been analysed and made available to the Namibian government, which intends to release a public report using these data.

SMART has proven to be an important tool to monitor Kunene's lions in particular, and its wildlife in general. At the same time, the data collected depends on the calibre of effort put in by the Lion Rangers to cover their local landscape, and to meticulously collect and transfer the data so that it can feed into the adaptive management loop. Communities are thereby partnering with government to transform citizen science into desert-adapted lion conservation, supporting the survival of Namibia's lions and rural livelihoods.

Data collected through SMART are also used to develop a product for the Wildlife Credit scheme.¹³ Wildlife Credits are a form of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), intended to incentivise conservancies into proactive, verifiable conservation results. Wildlife Credits' products will be determined in each community and payments go directly to local stewards, who are individuals identified by their communities, usually for playing a key role in ensuring conservation successes. The CCFN is the custodian for the Wildlife Credits scheme, with funding sourced from the international community. Paying for results through Wildlife Credits is intended to complement traditional funding such as equipment and training, and to recognise conservancies for their contribution to conservation. SMART reports will be compiled to record conservancy effort at three levels—management, Lion Rangers, and farmers—in order to determine payments.

Beyond the forthcoming Wildlife Credits scheme, communities benefit from the Lion Rangers Programme in several ways: through direct employment of Lion Rangers and Rapid Response Unit members, dissemination of skills gained by the Rangers through training, and most importantly, by playing an active role in decision-making. Indeed, Lion Rangers and Rapid Response team members also play an important role in assisting researchers, MEFT, and the programme leadership with adaptive management, while conservancy committees are involved in determining conflict hotspots and lions to be collared. Devolution of resource rights has proven critical to ensuring long-term sustainable conservation¹⁴ and poverty eradication¹⁵ (see discussion in Chapter 3). As part of a counter-narrative to exclusionary approaches to wildlife conservation, whereby local people were alienated from resource rights and management, CBNRM approaches have been instrumental to the growth of Namibia's communal conservancy system.¹⁶ Founded on the core principles of CBNRM, including "sustainable use" as a conservation paradigm that may (somewhat controversially) include trophy hunting of lions, combined with economic instrumentalism, devolution, and collective proprietorship,¹⁷ the LRP puts the rights and responsibilities for managing lions on communal lands back into the hands of those living alongside the lions: although it should be acknowledged that any hunting of lions is ultimately the decision of the MEFT (also see Chapter 5). The programme supports community development through the dissemination of training skills that Lion Rangers gain during annual training workshops.

In addition to training for their specific roles and responsibilities, including the use of SMART, HLC management, and training on basic lion behaviour, the Lion Rangers have also been taught broader critical skills including First Aid, snake identification, law enforcement protocols, and drug and alcohol awareness. Future training will cover basics of pharmacology and safety procedures during collaring, specialised tracking, personal finance management, and practicing healthy nutrition habits. The programme provides a platform that permits the transfer of knowledge and experience across conservancies and generations (the age variation across the programme spans from 21 to 60). Joint patrols allow Lion Rangers to further develop their leadership skills, opening career opportunities for the younger Rangers. Two past Lion Rangers were recruited by MEFT and are now employed in long-term positions that provide them with additional benefits and financial security. Finally, the Lion Rangers play an important role in facilitating communication within

13 Heydinger *et al.* (2022), Conservation Namibia (2023); see <https://wildlifecredits.com/>

14 Shackleton *et al.* (2002)

15 Shyamsundar *et al.* (2005)

16 Jones & Murphree (2001), Owen-Smith (2010), Nuulimba & Taylor (2015), Heydinger (2023)

17 Jones & Murphree (2001)

their communities, reaching remote areas without cellular network during their foot patrols, and spreading knowledge on lion behaviour and movement.

18.5 Conclusion

The goals of the LRP and associated partners are to facilitate community involvement at all levels of efforts to mitigate HLC, from data collection, to responding to conflict, and playing an active role in adaptive management. Lion Rangers patrol the core range of the desert-adapted lions in remote areas difficult to access, which presents challenges in terms of collecting relevant and timely information.¹⁸ Based on the Event Book System, albeit with a modern take, SMART continues a data collection system that supports CBNRM and empowers communities to monitor and manage their own resources. SMART allows almost instant collecting and exporting of data from these remote areas to a central place where it can be promptly analysed and disseminated. The ability to respond rapidly to movements of humans, livestock, and lions enables leadership to predict potential HLC and thus prevent it, which is particularly critical considering current climatic conditions as drought persists in Namibia's north-west, making livestock increasingly vulnerable to predators. The SMART system therefore supports strategic decision-making regarding management and lion conservation at community, regional and government levels, as well as enabling faster responses and adaptive management.

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¹⁸ Heydinger (2023)

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19. Relationships between humans and lions in wildlife corridors through CBNRM in north-west Namibia

Uakendisa Muzuma

Abstract

Protected areas are considered essential for conserving large carnivores, although large carnivores also occur outside protected areas and have shared landscapes with humans for millennia. The Namibian Community-Based Natural Resources Management programme adopted in 1996 aims to devolve wildlife conservation practices and to benefit local people inhabiting communal areas. The programme is experiencing challenges, but has achieved some success in encouraging the coexistence of wildlife and rural communities on communal land. Because the programme is built upon human-wildlife coexistence, however, human-lion conflict is also present. This has been a pressing concern, particularly regarding people's willingness to coexist with dangerous animals such as lions. From a wildlife conservation perspective, a lack of monitoring of human settlement and livestock movement into conservancy areas zoned for wildlife is a concern. This chapter discusses current research from remote sensing of lion and goat movement using satellite-Global Positioning System collars, focusing on understanding goat movement ecology within designated wildlife areas. Information collected on goat movements within wildlife areas will be used to better manage the shared landscape in the perceived "corridor" between Etosha National Park and the Skeleton Coast National Park. The research shared here thus focuses on the "lion-goat space", contributing to evidence-based goat spatial habitat use in communal area conservancies to ensure appropriate deployments of human-lion conflict mitigation measures.

19.1 Introduction

Protected areas (PAs) are essential for conserving wide-ranging large carnivores, to support their basic ecological needs. At the same time, large carnivores also occur outside PAs and have shared landscapes with humans for millennia. African PAs suffer dramatic budgetary shortfalls, as Lindsey *et al.*¹ have shown. The future of PAs is uncertain, and conservationists need to diversify the spaces where carnivores can survive to cope with this uncertain future. Conservationists have thought of methods to promote human-carnivore coexistence, such as conflict mitigation programmes, compensation schemes and payments for "ecosystem services"² to ensure viable carnivore populations beyond PAs, habitat protection, maintaining ecosystem services, and securing local community livelihoods.³

Striking a balance between livestock production, pastoral mobility, and wildlife conservation is a challenge facing 21st-century conservationists.⁴ Several studies have extensively explored various types of human-wildlife conflict (HWC), ranging from crop-raiding, livestock predations, and

1 (2018)

2 The term "ecosystem services" has been used for several decades to denote the benefits to humans provided by the natural world. For an outline of the history of the term, its contested meanings and implications see Sullivan (2009).

3 Dickman *et al.* (2011), Venkataraman *et al.* (2020)

4 Barua *et al.* (2013)

infrastructure damages, to loss of human lives.⁵ Packer *et al.*⁶ indicated that minimising negative conservation impacts caused by human land use can be attained by separating conflicting activities instead of encouraging coexistence. Land-use patterns incorporating livestock and large carnivores in a single system are not ideal, with physical separation using barriers being highly effective for conserving lions (*Panthera leo*), due to negative interactions between livestock and wildlife.⁷ Other studies indicate a positive perception of livestock-carnivore coexistence owing to adjusted livestock husbandry practices such as moderate grazing.⁸ These studies, however, were conducted elsewhere (North America, Asia and East Africa). Few peer-reviewed scientific studies, particularly in the Namibian context, examine human-carnivore coexistence.⁹ Lessons can be drawn from studies conducted elsewhere, but at the same time, each area has unique social, environmental, economic, and ecological challenges that must be considered to manage such a system effectively. Human-wildlife conflict occurs when wildlife's ecological and biological needs negatively impact human well-being, and *vice versa*.¹⁰ For instance, humans killed by lions are a severe problem in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique.¹¹ Meanwhile, livestock predation is a pressing challenge in southern African countries, such as Botswana and Namibia.¹² The interaction between humans and large carnivores may result in human-lion conflict (HLC) specifically, and may negatively impact large carnivore survival.¹³

HLC arises where humans and large carnivores share space and resources, and may become detrimental to carnivore survival. A lack of availability of prey resources may also drive large carnivores into proximity with humans, with retaliation by humans an outcome of this proximity.¹⁴ This chapter will therefore discuss a research project undertaken in the Kunene Region regarding human and lion coexistence in communal conservancy areas between the Etosha and Skeleton Coast National Parks: framed as a “wildlife corridor” between these two protected areas (see Chapters 3 and 13). The chapter focuses on remote sensing of lion and goat (*Capra hircus*) movement using satellite-Global Positioning System (GPS) collars (see also Chapters 17 and 18), with a focus here on understanding goat mobilities within conservancy areas where wildlife species are also present (also see Chapter 8). It is intended that information collected on goat movement within wildlife areas will assist with better management of the shared landscape between Etosha National Park (ENP) and the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP). The chapter will focus more on the lion-goat interface in communal area conservancies to ensure appropriate deployments of HLC mitigation measures.

19.2 Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) and the lion-goat interface

The Namibian government officially introduced the Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programme in 1996. It aims to devolve wildlife conservation practices and benefits to local people inhabiting communal areas.¹⁵ To date, the programme has achieved

5 Ujvári *et al.* (1998), Bauer & de Iongh (2005), Packer *et al.* (2005), Ripple *et al.* (2014), Hadidian (2015), Sigaud *et al.* (2020), Simon & Fortin (2020)

6 (2013)

7 Holechek & Valdez (2018)

8 Urness (1982), Holechek *et al.* (1989), Vavra (2005), Holechek & Valdez (2018)

9 Rust (2015)

10 Fentaw & Duba (2017)

11 Frank *et al.* (2006)

12 Hemson (2003), LeFlore *et al.* (2019)

13 Woodroffe & Ginsberg (1998), Blackburn *et al.* (2016)

14 Sullivan (2016)

15 MET (2017), Stuart-Hill *et al.* (2005)

successes,¹⁶ in part through a focus on sustainable harvesting of wildlife through hunting and meat consumption, as well as through a focus on tourism investment.¹⁷ These aims have encouraged coexistence of wildlife and rural communities on communal land areas: through practice and collaboration with various stakeholders, residents coexist with and benefit from nature,¹⁸ building on past histories and ecological knowledge. Currently, however, the north-west of Namibia is experiencing wildlife declines as an outcome of a decade of dry years and high levels of harvesting into this dry period, meaning that offtake quotas are currently very reduced with corresponding reductions of income from this source, as discussed in Chapter 3.

At the same time, because the CBNRM programme is built on human-wildlife coexistence, human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is also present. It has been a pressing challenge, particularly in relation to people's coexistence with dangerous animals such as lions. The challenges to this system became evident as never before during the 2010s. As mentioned, this was a dry period in which prey populations fell and lions and other predators turned increasingly to peoples' livestock for sustenance (see Chapters 17 and 18). Retaliatory human killing of lions has garnered local and international attention.¹⁹ The former Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) reported an adult lion mortality rate of 80% and a 100% mortality of sub-adults caused by conflict with humans between 2000 and 2015.²⁰ The authors further indicated that male lion mortality is causing a skewed population sex ratio of 5.4 females to 1 male in the desert-adapted lion population of north-west Namibia. Human-lion conflict (HLC) and the uncertain effects of drought will continue to challenge the community conservation paradigm during the 2020s (also see Chapter 3). Due to the unpredictable rainfall coupled with frequent droughts, pastoralists move long distances searching for water and grazing for their livestock, including wildlife-designated areas, thus increasing the chances of HLC as well as conservancy issues relating to the management of these mobilities (see Chapter 6).

The range of lions in north-west Namibia extends into communal area conservancies. About 36 conservancies have either resident or transient lions.²¹ The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) identified four core lion-range conservancies with the highest HLC using available data²² (see Figure 17.2). Three communal conservancies of north-west Namibia, namely, Anabeb, Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka, are identified with the highest HLC. These conservancies provide an ideal opportunity to study livestock-wildlife coexistence in the context of community conservation programs.

The three conservancies are unique due to their geographical location (see Figure 19.1). Their demarcated wildlife areas adjoin ENP on the western side, Hobatere Tourism Concession to the east, Etendeka tourism concession to the south, and Palmwag tourism concession to the south-west. The SCNP, with which lion populations in this area are also connected, is positioned to the west of these conservancies (although not adjoining the conservancies). These "wildlife areas" provide habitat and connectivity in this ecosystem, and provide an essential migrating and dispersal route for herbivores such as elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) (see Chapter 11) as well as predators such as lions.²³

As part of their management plans, each conservancy has different land use zones (as shown in Figure 19.1). These include for wildlife—areas exclusively demarcated for wildlife breeding and reproduction, where no hunting takes place; settlements—areas zoned for human activities such as settlement; tourism—areas zoned for tourism activities with no hunting of wildlife; hunting—areas demarcated for sustainable hunting of wildlife, based on animal residing in those areas, although

16 Jones (2010), Owen-Smith (2010), Heydinger *et al.* (2019)

17 Nuulimba & Taylor (2015)

18 MET (2017)

19 For example, Sullivan (2016), Smit (2022)

20 MET (2017)

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 Stander (2000)

Although HLC may be imminent where humans and large carnivores share space and resources, variable availabilities of prey might drive carnivores into more intensified proximity with humans. Animals live here in a seasonal and dynamic environment. Variations in weather conditions can negatively impact primary production, reducing resources available to herbivores, this lack of available resources cascading through the food chain. Animal life-history traits, such as reproduction, recruitment, growth, dispersal or migration, are connected with seasonality, as well as the dynamics of unpredictable variability in rainfall. There is limited data on seasonal variation in the spatial habitat lions use at the nexus of wildlife and multi-use areas. This information is likely crucial for reducing spatial-temporal overlap between lions and livestock. Understanding animal activities at different spatial and temporal scales will improve the management of factors that govern resources and habitat selection.²⁷ The desert lion home range size, population structures, social behaviours, and diet are extensively studied (see Chapters 17 and

Owen-Smith (2013), Gonzales *et al.* (2015)

18).²⁸ Little is known about seasonal livestock variation in their areas, however, and little emphasis is placed on how landscape features influence the level and extent of predation on livestock. The heterogeneous environment inhabited by both lions and people needs proper assessment to fully understand human-lion interactions.

Managing the shared landscape in Namibia's CBNRM context is becoming a challenge. For the years since the 1996 Nature Conservation Amendment Act that made establishment of communal area conservancies possible, wildlife rather than livestock monitoring has been the priority. No livestock number or movement records can be found at any conservancy office. This leads to the following questions. Is there any balance between conservation and farming? Are we managing shared landscapes using the cut-and-paste tactic of Protected Area policy and thinking? Do we value the human equation in the CBNRM context? Considering these questions, this study collared goats to understand their seasonal movement in multiple used landscapes.

Advanced animal tracking technology allows ecologists to better understand animal behaviour without directly contacting the studied species. Livestock movement data are obtained using Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking data (see Chapter 17). Twelve goats were randomly selected from villages near wildlife areas between three conservancies: Anabeb, Omatendeka and Ehi-Rovipuka (see Figures 19.2 and 19.3). Mature male (those over 3 years of age) goats were used in this study due to their characteristic social dominance rank, which is determined by size and age, i.e. the older and larger the animals, the higher they become in the dominant social hierarchy.²⁹ The 12 goats were fitted with Savannah FlexTrack collars for two years due to battery lifespan. The GPS collars record GPS locations at one-hour intervals daily. Each GPS collar records 18 hours daily, from 0600 to 2400. To reduce battery usage, all 12 Collars are set to transmit data at the interval of 1440 minutes, i.e. once a day at mid-day (1200). It is important to note that although it is the goats that are being monitored, in reality it is the farmers'/herders' choices of where the goats should be taken for grazing/browsing that is being monitored. Goats are taken out by herders, and those decisions are discussed with the wider group at a farm.



Fig. 19.2 A collared goat at !Nao-dâis/Otjorute village. © Uakendisa Muzuma, 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

²⁸ Stander (1991, 1992a, b, 1994, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006a, b, 2008a, b, c, d, 2009, 2010), Stander & Hanssen (2003)

²⁹ Barroso *et al.* (2000)

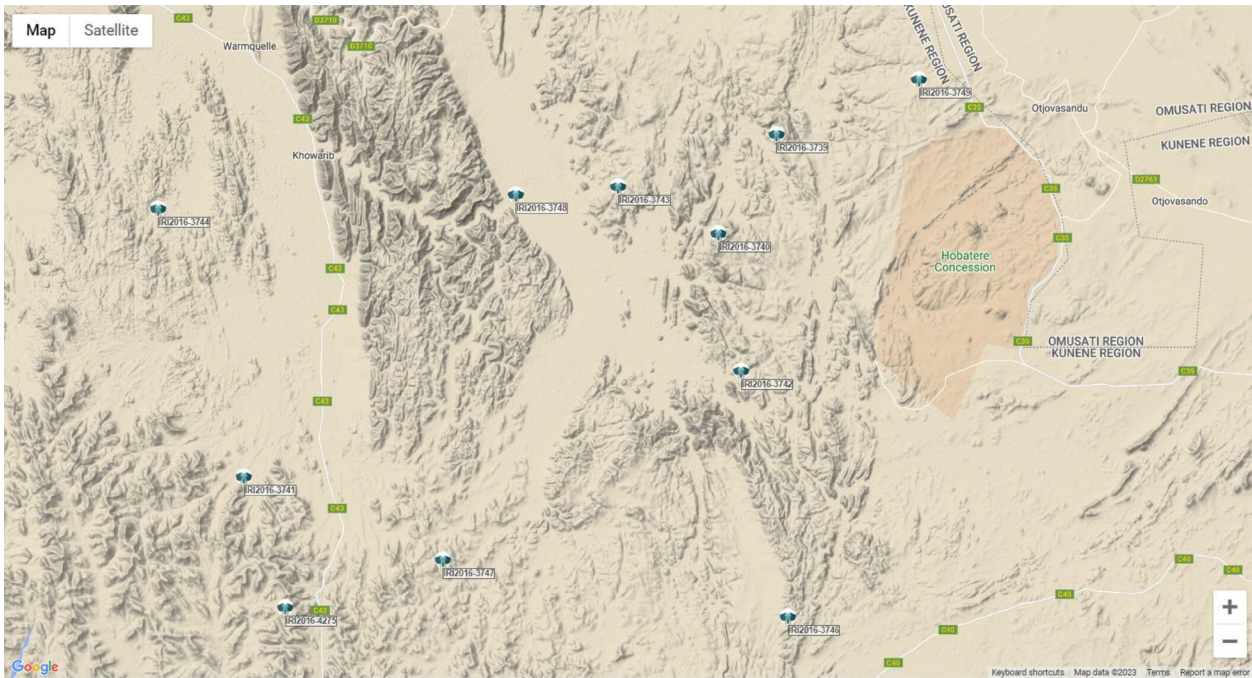


Fig. 19.3 Map showing the farm locations of 11 of the collared goats in this study (blue markers).
© Author's data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The spatial movement data of collared goat #3742 based in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy in Figure 19.4, and of lion OPL-18 in Figure 19.5, illustrate the home ranges with some overlap for two animals of these two species. The goat spends most of the wet season in multiple-use areas, i.e. conservancy areas where human activities such as farming are allowed. In contrast, the lion spends most of her time in the wildlife areas, i.e. areas demarcated by conservancies for wildlife breeding and grazing, mostly to the west of the movements of the goat monitored here. Habitat overlap during dry seasons is mainly due to farmers moving into wildlife areas in search of better grazing/browsing for their livestock. No other study has looked at the spatial movement data of livestock and lions to understand habitat use in the north-west and in Namibia at large. This information is critical for mitigation measures for villages adjacent to wildlife areas.

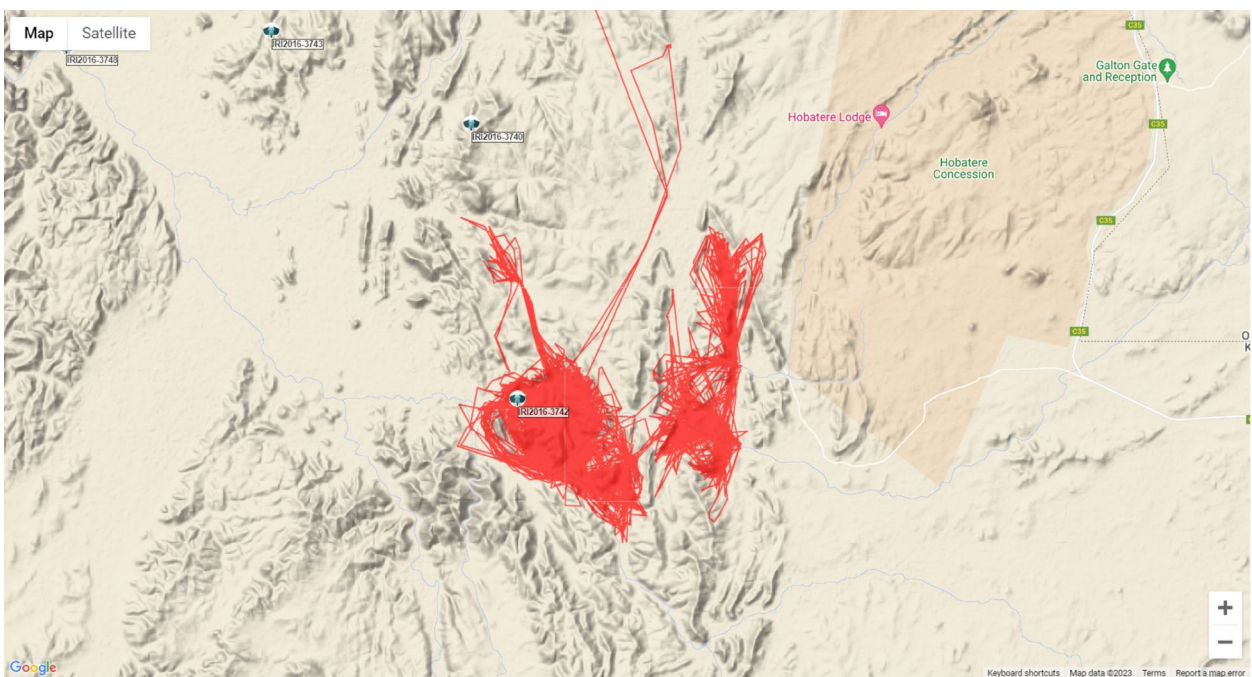


Fig. 19.4 Map showing movement data for a collared goat (#3742) from 1.9.2022 to 8.2023. © Author's data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

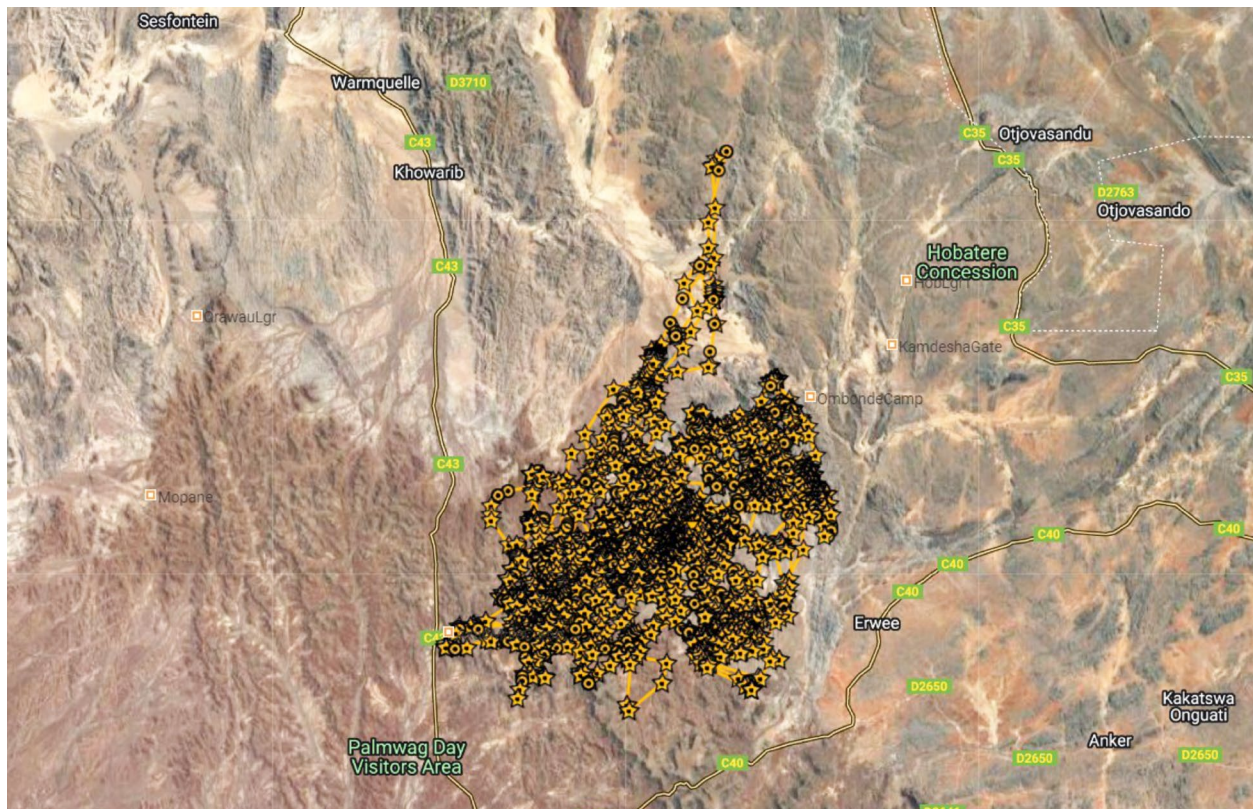


Fig. 19.5 Map showing movement data of collared lion OPL-18 from 1.9.2022 to 8.10.2023. © Author's data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

19.3 Rethinking the CBNRM-livestock policy interface

The Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management 2018–2027³⁰ stipulates that no compensation will be provided to farmers whose livestock are attacked or killed in areas set aside for wildlife conservation. This means that farmers are taking a risk when grazing their livestock in conservancy-designated wildlife areas, because they will not be compensated for losses in these areas. In recent years, more lion poisoning has been recorded in the wildlife areas due to retaliatory killing by “illegal settlers”: i.e. people that are not members of the conservancy or residents of the area, but come from other areas or conservancies, searching for grazing for their livestock and settling without permission from the traditional authority or conservancy management (on such land disputes, also see Chapters 3 and 6). From a policy perspective, however, it is essential to revisit compensation mechanisms for farmers settled legally in areas designated for wildlife in the context of CBNRM. The prolonged drought will keep forcing people to utilise ephemeral rivers running through wildlife areas due to better grazing and the availability of foods such as acacia pods. If they are not going to be compensated for their losses they will resort to taking drastic retaliatory measures against predators, as has already been seen.

The policy thus needs to consider CBNRM. Local people allocated their lands to wildlife, with limited knowledge of the status of wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation, livestock and wildlife carrying capacity, climate changes and human-induced changes such as development and settlement. At the time, there was no thorough consultative input from experts on these subjects to advise them on the future. The current conservancy wildlife management plan is not flexible and does not indicate when or how farmers should settle in “wildlife core areas”. The current view is more focused on conservation for development, while the farming component

30 MET (2018: 23)

is missing. This will privilege those who benefit directly from conservation development, e.g. through job creation in the tourism sector, but may negatively impact those farmers who make a living from their livestock.

19.4 Conclusion

Monitoring the spatial movements of wildlife and livestock in conservancies is essential to ensure proper records for decision-making and area-specific mitigations. With the increase in lion retaliatory killings around and within wildlife areas, research is needed to understand the impacts of the Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management. The status of “wildlife corridors” needs to be assessed, in terms of their contributions to the mobility of animals such as lions and elephants if the connectivity of corridors is not maintained (also see discussion in Chapter 13). The “corridor” between ENP and SCNP is supposed to maintain the free movement of animals from one landscape to another. Lions, however, are sometimes killed by residents on communal land when these animals leave National Parks or tourism concession areas.

This context warrants research to better understand the effects of human settlements situated between parks and concessions areas, given understandings of these areas as wildlife corridors for large carnivores and megaherbivores. The situation is critical given that people have lived for a long time in these areas as well as within areas now designated as national parks and tourism concessions (as highlighted in Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15). There is also a need to understand the impacts of these designations on human settlement and land use. It is essential to remind CBNRM practitioners of the importance of understanding that community conservation needs to align with development aims, including those of sustainable farming. Otherwise, farmers’ associations and others may take an “anti-conservation” stance that will hinder the effectiveness of conservation-oriented implementations (see Chapter 3). Overall, then, it is important that initiatives in north-west Namibia (and elsewhere) adhere to the following three pillars of CBNRM: stakeholder involvement, public participation, and inter-organisational coordination.

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Conclusion: Realising conservation, from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast

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Abstract

This final chapter sums up the Etosha-Kunene Histories project's exploration of colonialism, indigeneity and natural history in Namibia, through a wide-ranging analysis that aims to initiate and inform discussions on conservation policies in the region and beyond. Contributions in the volume from diverse scholars and practitioners have highlighted the complex and often conflicting narratives in conservation efforts, for which Namibia's northern regions offers a case in point. The history of conservation in Etosha-Kunene spans pre-colonial to post-Independence periods, reflecting shifts from unregulated exploitation to formal conservation policies under German and South African rule, and finally to more inclusive approaches post-Independence. These transitions illustrate the political economy and socio-ecological dynamics of conservation, emphasising the interplay between local communities, colonial legacies, and global environmental trends. The volume addresses themes of belonging, co-existence, inclusion, and exclusion, underscoring the ongoing negotiations and conflicts over land use, wildlife management, and human rights in the region. Through its comprehensive historical and political ecology lens, this book hopes to contribute to understanding the intricate relations between nature, culture and economy in conservation practices.

This volume and the workshop preceding it were part of the Etosha-Kunene Histories project (<https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/>) aiming at a multivocal and historical analysis that contributes new thinking on colonialism, indigeneity and “natural history” in Namibia. We (the editors and principal investigators of the project) hope this volume provides an entry point for a conversation on conservation policies and practices from Etosha Pan to the Skeleton Coast, and beyond.

The scholars and practitioners contributing to this volume came from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds and dealt with the issue of conservation from markedly different angles and research foci, revealing manifold concerns but also possible paths for future conservation. Our objective was not to present a “homogenous” story of conservation, but instead to offer polyphonic, with at times (subtly) dissonant voices on conservation, to show the complexity, tensions and frictions inherent in the troubling question of how to live with our planet into the future. This conclusion highlights some major threads the volume has shed light on.

History of conservation in Etosha-Kunene

“Etosha-Kunene” is a region exemplifying both the reasons for, and the transformations of, approaches to nature conservation practices in Namibia.

In “pre-colonial” and early colonial times, the region was characterised by lively spatial and socio-cultural dynamics. Local human groups were mobile and responded to both ecological and political conditions with shifting groupings and alliances of people. Precolonial and early colonial travellers from overseas embedded in a consolidating capitalist world system, came to the area in search of resources: mainly ivory, ostrich feathers, animal hides and guano from the coast along with cattle for trading. Clearly, sustainability was not on their agenda. They did not initially aim to

settle, but to search for commercial goods to be exploited, starting to turn the “natures” of south-west Africa into commercial enterprises, with detrimental effects. The unregulated depletion of wildlife during the 19th century by men of European and American origin (including Boers from South Africa) made the establishment of formal conservation policy during the German colonial period necessary. Wildlife was increasingly seen as an economic resource which had to be used “wisely” through regulation by the German administration. The first three game reserves were established, the largest being Game Reserve No. 2, stretching westwards from Etosha Pan to what became known as the Skeleton Coast, and northwards towards Angola (Chapter 1).

During the initial phase of the South African administration of Namibia the game reserves were retained, although nature conservation was not particularly high on the political agenda. Increasingly though, nature conservation was given more attention, also because the economic potential of protected areas for tourism had become evident in South Africa’s Kruger National Park. The “fortress conservation” model found its way to Etosha which—as a game park—turned into the prime tourist destination in Namibia. Nature conservation became increasingly professionalised and institutionalised, research institutes were established and the focus on game preservation was broadened to include flora. The major focus remained on “game”, however, with African wildlife being the main driver for tourism. The area around Etosha Pan became the enclosed Etosha National Park. Former migration routes of wildlife became restricted, and translocations of animal species became the order of day. “Nature” needed to be protected against humans by other humans. Nature conservation had become a complex management task, with side effects of this effort to conserve “nature” increasingly evident: including, for example, overgrazing by concentrated animal populations, animal diseases, new population dynamics, and so on (Chapter 2, also Chapter 10).

With Namibia’s Independence, the politics of nature conservation moved away from the “fortress conservation” model to include local inhabitants in conservation management. In Etosha-Kunene this was possible on communal land in the areas west and north-west of Etosha National Park, where 38 conservancies were established in the last 25 years. At the same time, the “fortresses” of conservation in Etosha-Kunene, namely Etosha National Park and Skeleton Coast National Park, were maintained, but with the possibility for various kinds of tourism concessions and limited access rights for neighbouring communities and external investors, as outlined in the National Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concessions on State Land of 2007. Today, six conservancies benefit from concessions in the Skeleton Coast National Park, while three conservancies and one association benefit from concessions in Etosha National Park; with conservancies additionally having concessionaire rights to the three major tourism concessions between Etosha and the Skeleton Coast—namely, Hobatere, Etendeka and Palmwag (Chapter 3, also Chapter 13).¹

Political economy of conservation

As this volume has revealed, the history of nature conservation cannot be read in isolation, as much as Etosha National Park, for example, is not an untouched island in the middle of the political changes in its surroundings. Aiming at unravelling the diverse entanglements between politics and ecology and the complex relationships between “natures”, “cultures” and “economies” in Etosha-Kunene, this volume has thereby contributed to the field of political ecology.²

The economic greed and recklessness of European incomers during the pre-colonial and early colonial periods were responsible for the necessity to conserve wildlife, although it was local peoples who were increasingly alienated from protected areas. As Gissibl³ has pointed out, the first steps to

1 <https://www.meft.gov.na/files/files/LIST%20OF%20CONCESSIONS%202016.pdf>

2 See, for example, Roberts (2023)

3 Gissibl (2006: 137)

establish so-called game reserves were also done in the interests of European hunters and to serve settlers' interests in wildlife, both as consumptive and increasingly as commercial resources.

The history of nature conservation in Etosha-Kunene is also embedded in global discourses and developments. Already in 1900, European colonial powers convened the first International Conference on the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa.⁴ The control of wildlife by the state was affirmed and the establishment of protected areas was encouraged.⁵ Evolving in the 19th century in the US, the concept of a “national park”—as a demarcated area controlled by the state for the protection of “nature” with limited human influence—travelled all over the globe, including Africa, where it was initially applied for the preservation of wildlife rather than entertainment, as in the US. It also reached “South West Africa”, via the Kruger National Park, which had become the first South African National Park in 1926.⁶ Kruger had become saturated with visitors during peak seasons and the South West African Administration was urged to develop similar national parks, which became the destiny of the eastern area of Game Reserve No. 2, the Etosha Pan Game Reserve.

The move towards more participatory conservation models after Namibia's Independence also happened in regional and global context. Donor-funded community-based conservation programmes had internationally become the paradigm of the neoliberal 1990s.⁷ Zimbabwe's USAID-funded Communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resource Management (CAMPFIRE), for example, had significant impacts on the Namibian approach.⁸

The recent “landscape approach” in which landscapes are understood not exclusively as “natural” landscapes but as politically, historically, economically and culturally influenced socio-ecological systems with—at times—human modification,⁹ has gained increasing importance in Namibia in recent years, also due to the changing priorities of donors and international agendas (Chapter 3). While the conservancy programme was/is more focussed on the local scale, this approach aims to conserve nature and especially wildlife at the regional level, whilst making these natures available to investors and tourists, taking various human inhabitants and diverse forms of land uses into account.

While in the initial stages, colonial nature conservation in Namibia was restricted to game preservation, the focus shifted via an increasing inclusion of flora and fauna more generally towards “biodiversity” in the 1990s, a change again linked to global developments. The term biodiversity gained prominence from the 1980s, becoming a new buzzword in conservation. It is also mentioned in Namibia's constitution (see Chapter 3). In 1993, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity was enforced, ratified by Namibia in 1997. 2010 was declared the International Year for Biodiversity¹⁰ and 22 May is the International Day for Biodiversity.¹¹ This new focus developed in a framework in which the United Nations, nation states and international actors realised that humankind is dependent on “nature”, on ecosystems, genetic and species diversity: “[b]iological diversity resources are the pillars upon which we build civilizations”.¹²

Nature conservation was both embedded in and constrained by diverse colonial and post-colonial interests. While the lobby to fight for some kind of “nature conservation”, preserving “wilderness” or “untamed Africa” became more powerful, professionalised and media-savvy during the South African period, although the concerns of these conservationists had still to be negotiated with other colonial objectives and initiatives. The demand for land for “fortress conservation” had to be negotiated with the need for land for settlement and the interests of settlers in the colony. Parks

4 Child (2009: 22)

5 *Ibid.*

6 Carruthers (2009: 39)

7 e.g. Sullivan (2002), Bollig (2022: 117–18)

8 Jones (n.d.: 4)

9 Schütz (2019: 3)

10 <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/about/iyb2010>

11 <https://www.un.org/en/observances/biological-diversity-day>

12 *Ibid.*

were created in areas which were not seen as valuable for settlement,¹³ and game reserves were opened for emergency grazing in times of drought. There was also the colonial aim to take control, exploit and “administer” local populations and to locate them in spatially demarcated areas, first “native reserves”, later “homelands”. The—at times awkward and frequent—boundary changes of Game Reserve No. 2 and the Etosha Game Park/National Park (outlined in Chapter 2), and the parallel existence of a Kaokoveld as “native reserve” and part of Game Reserve No. 2 between 1947 and 1967, epitomises these conflicts. In Independent Namibia, rural communities are supposed to sustain themselves and the needs of rural livestock owners whilst nature conservation concerns have to be continuously negotiated (see Chapters 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19).

Nature conservation was and is additionally entangled with developments in science and technology. For instance, new immobilisation techniques made the translocation of game species more successful from the early 1970s onwards. More scientific research in animal diseases was required due to the unforeseen consequences of the fortress conservation model applied in Etosha National Park (Chapter 2). The emergence of a hydro-scape described in Chapter 7 is another example illustrating the extent to which science (in this case) geological research, and advances in technology (drilling and pumping techniques), were important prerequisites for “development” and thereby also significantly influenced nature conservation (see Chapter 10).

As this volume has unveiled, the economy—following specific though slightly changing economic models of the powerful—was and is a major driver of nature conservation. This was true for the establishment of the first game reserves and their transformation during colonial times, and to some extent remains the case in current approaches to biodiversity conservation. While the answer to the question of who should economically benefit differed considerably through time (be it the colonial administration, European hunters and settlers, or “communities”), the dominant assumption that economic benefits provide the most successful incentive for nature conservation remained unchanged.

The politics of nature conservation seriously affected the diverse local populations of Etosha-Kunene as outlined throughout this volume, in colonial times but also in Independent Namibia (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). During colonial times, it meant for many communities removal and relocation from lands where they were living. Affected communities thereby lost—*inter alia*—their livelihoods and access to culturally important land. What Gissibl describes for Africa in general, is true for Etosha-Kunene too:

Africans lost access to the wildlife which served as a food resource while also losing the ability to control animals that threatened their fields and crops. In short, they experienced imperial environmentalism as a form of environmental imperialism; a process which saw the re-ordering of space, the often violent expropriation of traditional rights, enhanced vulnerability and the imposition of European values. Indeed, the problems arising from the separation of humans and wildlife in Africa may well be the most persistent legacy of imperial environmental internationalism shaping African conservation to this day.¹⁴

During post-colonial times, the legacies of colonial politics on local populations still need to be dealt with, e.g. the “fortress” of Etosha and the relocation of Hai||om and ovaHerero (Chapters 4, 14, 15, 16), and the restriction of access for various Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups to the Northern Namib that is now the Skeleton Coast National Park (Chapter 12). Yet new challenges were additionally arising in post-Independent Namibia for local communities, e.g. human-wildlife conflicts adjacent to Etosha National Park and in the conservancies in the west (Chapters 11, 17, 18, 19), or the imposition of new institutional arrangements (Chapters 4, 6, 7).

Still, it also became clear that, since pre-colonial times, local communities (or particular members of these groupings) have resisted or actively shaped the “developments” to come. The Swartbooi/Grootberg Uprising (Chapter 1), the resistance of local authorities to the drilling of new

¹³ See also Child (2009: 22)

¹⁴ Gissibl (2006: 137)

boreholes (Chapter 7), or negotiations of the Damara Regional Authority with regard to the Palmwag Concession (Chapter 13), are three examples of this resistance.

Conservation, belonging and co-existence

This volume also reveals stories of belongings—understood both as “supposed to be together” and of “peaceful coexistence”—and stories about negotiations of belongings, inclusion and exclusion. Which people “belong” to which area and vice versa?

The feeling of belonging by particular human groupings to a specific area surface throughout this volume. Damara/#Nūkhoe and ǀUkun families felt a sense of belonging to the area which is now the Palmwag Concession (Chapter 13), Haiǀom subgroups felt a sense of belonging to the south-eastern part of the Etosha area (Chapter 15), as was the case for ovaHerero families for the western part of Etosha (Chapter 14). What became the Skeleton Coast National Park and ǀUkun, !Narenin, Hoanidaman and ǀKha-a Dama lineages also formerly belonged together (Chapter 12).

Who has the power at which time to decide on “belonging”? For instance, the colonial administration decided at the end of the 1920s that an area formerly used by ovaHerero families all of a sudden belonged to incoming settlers (Chapter 14), whilst in the early 1950s it was decided that Haiǀom did not belong to Etosha (Chapters 2, 15, 16). In creating “homelands” at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s, the colonial administration again made a particularly strong statement about which “ethnic” group belonged to which area. Nowadays, Traditional Authorities and conservancy committees have a say on who “belongs” to an area (see Chapters 3, 6 and 13), whilst Haiǀom inhabitants of Tsintsabis, a resettlement farm on commercial land, with a strong sense of belonging to this place and an equally strong feeling of who does not belong to the area, have no power to restrict incomers seeking to settle on this land (Chapter 16).

The story of belonging goes beyond relationships between humans and land. Connected to the question of which human groupings belong to which area is the question of where livestock belong. The Red Line, functioning as a veterinary control border, was the physical manifestation of the colonial decision regarding whose livestock belonged to which area (Chapters 2, 13 and 14).

Yet, belonging is also at stake with regard to wildlife. The “fortress conservation model” entailed the notion that wildlife mainly (but not exclusively) belonged to protected areas, exemplified by the translocation of particular species to these protected areas and by the physical enclosure of these areas. Exploring the impact of giraffe browsing behaviour on particular tree species in Etendeka Tourism Concession and protection measures for these trees (Chapter 9), the question of belonging surfaces as well. Can these species co-exist in the same area and what are the techniques needed to manage this? Chapter 10 can be read as exploring the question of whether or not mountain zebra and plains zebra belong together or should be kept apart (in order to avoid hybridisation). Chapter 11 suggests arguments that elephants and human communities can belong to the same area, while Chapters 17, 18, and 19 reveal initiatives trying to establish that lions and human groupings can co-exist—i.e. belong—to the same area. In all these chapters, particular humans (in different positions) are unquestioningly asserting decision-making power on belonging and co-existence.

Spatiality of conservation, exclusion and inclusion

The question of belonging is connected to the politics of inclusion and exclusion and the histories of boundary making and fencing. From the perspective of incoming travellers-hunters-traders, the pre-colonial period was a time of orientation and exploration: watercourses and waterholes were mapped, as were people encountered and the roads travelled (Chapter 1). Once this initial orientation and way-finding had advanced, the colonial administration began the spatial reorganisation that continued throughout the colonial period (Chapters 1 and 2). In Etosha-Kunene, Game Reserve No.

2 was established by the German colonial administration, with boundaries of the game reserve put on paper, and later neatly defined and mapped in the South African period. The Police Zone border, later the “Red Line”, cut across the region. Native reserves were established in the north-west of Etosha-Kunene and commercial farms for white settlers were surveyed and increasingly fenced in the south-east. The shape and size of the game reserve was changed considerably during the 1950s and 1960s, the course of the Red Line also underwent several changes and with the Odendaal Report in the 1960s “homelands” were created, consolidating former “native reserves” with commercial land and part of the game reserve added to these “homelands”. While some of the boundaries were mostly on paper, many of these boundaries were implemented with fences and border posts or gates within the physical landscape. The re-organisation in the late colonial times (with apartheid ideology behind it) can be read as a functional severance according to colonial needs, specific “entities”, such as “ethnic groups” and “white settlers”, with wildlife and livestock spatially separated according to the needs of the colonial powers. This is a period of significant de-coupling of former socio-ecological systems,¹⁵ with tremendous effects on human and beyond-the-human inhabitants. People were removed from protected areas, i.e. land they had been living on, and were thus cut off from their former “resources”, including wildlife and plants (e.g. Chapters 12, 13, 14 and 15). Animals were cut off from migration routes and grazing grounds and translocated to and across protected areas (Chapter 2).

With Independence, Namibia had to deal with this legacy and spatial reality. The communal areas of “homelands” were transformed into “Communal Land Areas”, including the right to establish conservancies on this land (e.g. Chapters 3, 5, 6, 13 and 14). Etosha National Park was maintained but some concessions were being made to neighbouring communities over the years. A few commercial farms were turned into resettlement farms (see Chapters 4 and 16).

The maps of Etosha-Kunene nowadays show a much patchier and more segregated landscape (see e.g. Figure 3.2) than those of the late colonial time (see e.g. Figure 2.5). The contested question of boundaries, inclusion and exclusion remains (e.g. Chapters 4, 6 and 16). Not only do conservancies need to have defined boundaries surrounding them, they also need to have a land use plan for the land covered, and many conservancies have different zones for tourism, hunting, farming and multiple-use purposes, again aiming at excluding and including specific beings and activities in each zone. Yet, conservancies had up to now no legal power to enforce these zones.¹⁶

The recent landscape approach (Chapter 3) can be understood as an attempt to re-arrange the landscape yet again, to allow for larger tracts of land to be directed towards conservation and tourism, albeit alongside livestock herding, mining and other activities.

Realising conservation together

The ‘imposition of European values’ mentioned in the above quote by Gissibl points to another theme of this volume, namely the ontological hegemony of European worldviews. Yet, colonial powers could not implement their ideas on *terra nullius*, used as a kind of foil for the realisation of their ideas. They had to deal with a multitude of human and beyond-the-human actors/actants on the ground. Human resistance was already mentioned above. Non-human troublings play an important part too: from elephants breaking through the fences of Etosha National Park, to increased wildlife deaths as the result of diseases caused by the drilling of more boreholes or restricted migration (Chapter 2), to zebra species interbreeding (Chapter 10).

The same holds true for post-colonial conservation efforts. Many of the chapters testify to the contestations, negotiations, resistances or troublings of human and beyond-human actors

¹⁵ See also Beinart (1989: 158)

¹⁶ <https://communityconservationnamibia.com/support-to-conservation/natural-resource-management/adaptive-management>

around the politics and practices of CBNRM. A wide range of human actors are pivotal in shaping the current conservation landscape, e.g. conservancy committees, community game guards and lion rangers, traditional authorities, conservancy members and incomers (e.g. Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19). Furthermore, the actions of the Namibian government in relation to the colonial legacies of protected areas are also contested and at times resisted (Chapters 4, 14 and 15). But beyond-the-human actors shape the conservation landscape too. Protected or conserved species, such as lion (Chapters 17, 18, 19), elephant (Chapter 11), giraffe (Chapter 9) and zebra (Chapter 10) cause trouble at times for humans, plants and domesticated animals (e.g. cattle and goats, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 19) or for the survival of other species. Plants, e.g. *Maerua schinzii* (ringwood tree) and *Boscia albitrunca* (shepherd's tree), important for pollinators but loved by giraffes (Chapter 9), or the cultivated plants grown in conservancies, loved by elephants (Chapter 11), thereby become visible in terms of conservation concern.

It is a truism that the role of water in its manifold presences and absences is crucial as well. Drilled boreholes influence migration patterns and animal demography, in Etosha National Park (Chapters 2 and 10), in the communal areas and in conservancies (Chapters 7 and 11). The absence of rain water due to drought, changes mobility patterns and population dynamics too (Chapters 2 and 6).

In shedding light on all these actors/actants (the above is of course not a comprehensive list), their relations, interdependencies, and antagonisms embedded in and constrained by specific and changing power structures, this volume aimed at raising awareness regarding the complexities of conservation in Etosha-Kunene.

In sum, we need to understand conservation as realised by all these different actors and actants. All of them (including the contributors and editors of this volume)—promoting, negotiating, contesting, resisting or appropriating conservation—play vital roles in how conservation in Etosha-Kunene evolved, what it means, and how it can be read and understood today. All these human and beyond-human actors, combined with conservation and other organisations, donors, investors and the state, will continue to play a pivotal role in the future paths taken for conservation in Namibia: and hopefully, some of the controversial issues discussed and revealed in this volume can be reconciled.

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Appendix: Chronology of conservation legislation and key policies relevant for “Etosha-Kunene”, Namibia

Date	Legislation / policy	Conservation Focus
1892	Regulations for commercial hunting issued	The German colonial administration begins restricting ivory exports from South-West Africa's coastal harbours. ¹ Regulations for commercial hunting are issued, such that anyone wishing to hunt with horses, draught animals or pack animals had to purchase an annual permit; with the hunting of female and young animals (for elephants and ostriches) prohibited, and an annual closed season set for ostriches from 1 August to 31 October. ²
1896		Ostrich hunting season extended from 1 August to 31 November. ³
1902	First government ordinance for controlling hunting is proclaimed and signed by Governor Von Estorff. ⁴ <i>Verordnung betreffend Jagd der Ausübung der Jagd in Deutsch-Südwest Afrika Schutzgebiete</i> [Ordinance Concerning the Exercise of Hunting in German South-West Africa Protected Areas]	<p>The Ordinance stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> certain areas were closed to hunting (in 1907 claimed as Game Reserves by Governor von Lindequist); it was illegal to set any form of traps or snares; District Chiefs had the authority to enforce annual hunting seasons of varying durations for different game species depending on circumstances in his district;⁵ hunting and nature protection laws were enforced by policemen (the <i>Landespolizei</i>), who were also encouraged to acquire hunting licences so as to supplement their diet with meat, and for gaining proficiency in aiming at moving targets.⁶

1 Bollig & Olwage (2016: 63) referencing von François (1993[1899])
2 von François (1899: 107), Joubert (1974: 35), Miescher (2009: 98)
3 von François (1899: 107)
4 Joubert (1974: 35)
5 *Ibid.*
6 Muschalek (2020[2019]: 101, 87–88, and sources therein)

1907	<p>Proclamation 88, issued on 22.3.1907 by Imperial Governor of Deutsch Südwestafrika, Dr Friedrich von Lindequist:⁷</p> <p><i>Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika betr: Bildung von Wild reservaten im Schutzgebiet, KolBl 1907, 428</i> [Decree of the Governor of German South West Africa concerning the formation of game reserves in the protectorate]⁸</p>	<p>This proclamation made it possible for three 'Game Reserves' (<i>Wildschutzgebiet</i>) to be proclaimed.⁹ Economic motivations were clearly articulated in the explanatory paper for establishing the Game Reserves:</p> <p>'[e]verybody knows how much economic value game has in the country. In some cuisines, only game is served as fresh meat. Also the utility value of the skins for blankets and for making straps and whips is known to everyone. Unfortunately, it is impossible to make statistics, but if one wanted to calculate the many hundredweights of game captured in the country every year on the basis of average slaughter prices, it would be estimated to be more than 200,000 m. If you take this sum as an annual pension, the capital involved would mean a fortune of many millions of dollars that we have in our game stock. We all receive this pension free of charge from the country, and so our wildlife provides a very significant part of our common wealth, which every inhabitant of the reserve should be scrupulous about protecting, as it is in the interest of every individual. [...] The benefits that the game reserves would bring to the country would be as follows: centres would be created where game would have to be moved from the grazing areas there and would be brought to farms where it could be shot and exploited. African game is very variable and so the supply of game from the reserves could be extended to areas far from the reserves... The reserves indicated as 1-3 include areas which, for the most part, are not, or temporarily not, suitable for farming. Farms which are located within the reserves or which would later be sold, for example, enjoy the exemptions of § 7.¹⁰</p> <p>Of these reserves, Game Reserve No. 2 – at the time, the largest conservation area in the world – stretched from Etosha Pan to the coast and included Kaokoveld (today's northern Kunene Region), removing the potential threat of settlement by white farmers – see Figure 1.14.¹¹ Hunting was prohibited in the Game Reserves 'without written permission of the district office' and vehicle traffic was also prohibited.¹²</p>
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⁷ Bridgeford (2018: 12)

⁸ Hinz (2003: 128)

⁹ Botha (2005: 174)

¹⁰ ZBU MII.E.1, in Dieckmann (2007: 75–76); see Chapter 1.

¹¹ Bollig (1997: 19). Game Reserve No. 1 was located north-east of Grootfontein including 'protected game in the Omuramba Omutako' and Game Reserve No. 3 was south of the Swakop River and east of the British enclave of Walvis Bay (Bridgeford 2018: 13), later becoming the Namib Game Reserve (Gruntkowski & Henschel 2004: 43; Botha 2005: 182), and now the Namib-Naukluft National Park.

¹² Bridgeford (2018: 12)

1909	<p><i>Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Die Ausübung der Jagd im deutsch-südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiet</i>, KolBl 1909, 376, 15.2.1909 [Decree of the Governor of German South West Africa concerning the exercise of hunting in the German South West African protectorate] Amendments made to 1902 hunting ordinance</p>	<p>Amendments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision for the Governor to give permission for any of the protected game to be shot for ‘economic or scientific reasons’; • a general closed hunting season from ‘November to the end of February’ came into force, although the District Chief had the authority to shorten or lengthen the hunting season according to conditions in his district; • a hunter had to obtain permission from landowners to hunt on their land;¹³ • legal hunting ‘required the hunter to possess a general hunting license [40 marks, the granting of which was based on ‘personal qualifications’] and a hunting permit’ determining ‘the kind and number of animals the hunter was allowed to hunt and the time during which hunting could take place’ (Sections 2 and 5);¹⁴ • owners and lease-holders of ‘completely fenced off pieces of land were not subject to the Ordinance – they had the exclusive right to hunt, but in accordance with certain restrictions set out in the Ordinance’ re: protected species and hunting seasons (Sections 2 and 8);¹⁵ • gun hunts ‘on land not owned by anyone (terra nullius) was free, but subject to other restrictions of the Ordinance’;¹⁶ • hunting with ‘traps, pits, nets, snares and similar tools was not allowed’ (Section 4), thus criminalising Indigenous hunting practices.¹⁷ <p>The 1902 ordinance plus amendments remained in force up to occupation of the territory by South African forces in 1915, and was technically still in force until new Union of South Africa legislation of 1921.¹⁸</p> <p>According to Section 1, ‘Wild animals’ are considered <i>res nullius</i>: ‘[h]unting is defined in terms of this Ordinance as far as they can be considered <i>res nullius</i> in accordance with the relevant provisions of statutory law’.¹⁹</p> <p>The German Proclamation of 1907 regarding game reserves is repealed by Ordinance No. 1 of 1916 which amends and reconfirms the borders of Game Reserve No. 2.²⁰</p> <p>Masters and Servants Proclamation aimed at the ‘systematization, formalization and centralization of labour relations’.²¹</p>
1916	Ordinance 1 of 1916	
1916	Proclamation 2 of 1916	

13 Joubert (1974: 35)

14 Hinz (2003: 21–22)

15 *Ibid.*, p. 21

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, p. 22

18 Joubert (1974: 35)

19 Quoted in Hinz (2003: 21)

20 Dieckmann (2007: 119)

21 Emmett (1999: 76)

1916	Proclamation 10 of 1916	This is the first law in the territory to protect a plant, specifically the Namib desert plant <i>Welwitschia mirabilis</i> , especially in Game Reserve No. 3. ²²
1916	Proclamation 15 of 1916	Decrees that no person can 'cross the line marking the Police Zone without permission'. ²³
1919	The Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 15 of 1919 (22.3.1919)	Confirms the existence of the three Game Reserves proclaimed in 1907 with permanently manned police posts established at Namutoni and Okaukuejo, and controls entry into Owamboland and Rehoboth. ²⁴
1919	Treaty of Peace and South West Africa Act, 49 of 1919	Land held by the German colonial administration becomes Crown or State land of South West Africa, 'with the South Africa Parliament retaining authority over land rights'. ²⁵
1920	Proclamation 25 of 1920	Vagrancy Proclamation: made it an offence for Africans to move around in the Police Zone without 'visible lawful means of support', namely either 10 cattle or 50 small stock. ²⁶
1921	Game Preservation Proclamation for South West Africa, 13 of 1921, based on the 1902 Ordinance for controlling hunting, which remains in force until this year.	Enacted by the South African Administrator and introduced the categories of 'Royal Game', 'Big Game' and 'Small Game', with permission to hunt Royal game only obtainable from the Administrator and hunting other than shooting permitted if allowed by the Administrator (Section 4(1)). ²⁷ Hunting 'other than by shooting was allowed when especially permitted by the Administrator' (Section 9(1)). ²⁸ Hunting and game protection was thus regulated, and made the responsibility of the South African police, ²⁹ as had also been the case in the German colonial period (see Chapter 1). ³⁰
1921	Fencing Proclamation, 57 of 1921	Continues to be invoked in the 2017 Protected Areas and Wildlife Management Bill (Art. 1(1), p.9), regarding standards prescribed for an 'adequate stock fence'.
1922	Proclamation, 26 of 1922	The First Schedule defines the 'prohibited areas', namely the northern areas of the Police Zone – from the Ugab River in the west to the Caprivi strip (now Zambezi Region) in the north-east. ³¹

²² Joubert (1974: 36), Bridgeford (2018: 13)

²³ Silvester *et al.* (1998: 3)

²⁴ Bridgeford (2018: 14)

²⁵ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 14)

²⁶ Dieckmann (2007: 125)

²⁷ Hinz (2003: 22) and references therein.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Joubert (1974: 35), Germishuys & Staal (1979: 113), Bridgeford (2018: 14)

³⁰ Muschalek (2020[2019]: 101)

³¹ Hinz (2003: 129)

1924	Game Preservation Proclamation Amendment Proclamation, 7 of 1924	Introduces ‘the requirement of a permit by the Magistrate of the respective district for hunting on Crown Land’. ³²
1924	Native Reserve Regulations, Government Notice 137 of 1924	Stipulates the duty to ‘assist in the combating of fire and the eradication of noxious weeds’. ³³
1926/1927	Game Preservation Ordinance, 5 of 1926[1927?], repeals and replaces Proclamation 13 of 1921 ³⁴	<p>The list of protected game species was extended;³⁵ Sections 10, 11, 25 prohibit hunting on crown land (i.e. where African peoples lived) ‘with exception of dignitaries and officials on duty in rural areas’, and hunting restrictions on settler farms were applied henceforth.³⁶ Section 10 provides ‘for the Administrator to issue special hunting permits to members of the public service to hunt while on duty trips’.³⁷ New hunting licence requirements and offtake reporting processes were brought in, with trade in ivory and rhino horn made illegal. Nb. Hunting by Haillom in Game Reserve no. 2 was not considered a problem at this time.</p> <p>Special rules for ‘owners and occupiers of land’ with sufficient fences are brought in, allowing them ‘to hunt big game [as well as small game] without a license unless certain restrictions were imposed by the administration’.³⁸</p>
1927	Bantu Administration Act, 38 of 1927	Permits Permission to Occupy (PTO) licenses to be granted by government. ³⁹
1927	Proclamation 11 of 1927	Sought to prevent squatting by limiting the number of people allowed to reside on a farm to five ‘native families’. ⁴⁰
1927	Proclamation, 32 of 1927	The Vagrancy Proclamation (32 of 1927) was amended, ⁴¹ and prison terms for vagrancy were <i>inter alia</i> increased from three to 12 months.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 22

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28

³⁴ Joubert (1974: 35–36), Germishuys & Staal (1979: 113). Bridgeford (2018: 14) and Hinz (2003: 22) date this Ordinance to 1927.

³⁵ Germishuys & Staal (1979: 113)

³⁶ Botha (2005: 179)

³⁷ Hinz (2003: 23)

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23

³⁹ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 15)

⁴⁰ Dieckmann (2007: 125)

⁴¹ NAN SWAA A50/27, 1927, Proclamation No. 32.

1928	<p>Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 26 of 1928</p> <p>Second Schedule to this Proclamation defines the boundaries of "Game Reserve No. 2"</p>	<p>Re-proclaims Game Reserves 1, 2 and 3 and for the first time accurately defines their borders with farm-to-farm descriptions within the police zone, waterholes, riverbeds and other administrative borders north of it.⁴²</p> <p>Hunting permits become available for hunting in the 'so-called <i>prohibited areas</i>' beyond the Police Zone, i.e. where most African and Indigenous peoples were living, although 'an additional permit to the permit required under the Game Preservation Ordinance for hunting game' was required for entering the prohibited areas in the northern areas of the Police Zone – from the Ugab River in the west to the Caprivi strip (now Zambezi Region) in the north-east.⁴³ Native inhabitants of Kaokoveld with firearms are not prohibited from shooting any species.</p> <p>Section 3(2): Game Reserve No. 2 includes the area around Etosha Pan plus Kaokoveld, and covers a total area of 37,000 square miles. Through border changes of Game Reserve No. 2, 47 farms in the south-east of Etosha were either created or existing farms were cut out of the game reserve.⁴⁴ The post of Game Ranger of Game Reserve No 2, up to that date assumed by a Captain Nelson, was abolished and the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland, Carl Hugo (Cocky) Hahn took over and acted as a part-time Game Warden.⁴⁵</p>
1928	Game Preservation Ordinance Amendment Ordinance, 6 of 1928	
1928	Arms and Ammunition Proclamation revised by Government Notice 2, 12.1.1928	The Arms and Ammunition Proclamation was revised to include Bushman bows and arrows under the definition of firearms, making their possession henceforth illegal, although this proclamation seemed to lack the necessary precision for extensive implementation: no fees for licences were ever fixed, nor did Bushmen ever bother to apply for licences. ⁴⁶
1930	Regulations Prescribing the Duties, Powers and Privileges of Chiefs and Headmen, GN 60 of 1930	Includes the duty 'to preserve game and forests and to prevent soil erosion'. ⁴⁷

42 NAN, A511/6 Game Reserve—Boundaries (1927–1954): Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 1928, second schedule: Definition of Game Reserves. Also Owen-Smith (1972: 31, 33), Botha (2005: 181), Bridgeford (2018: 14)

43 Hinz (2003: 22)

44 Dieckmann (2007: 145)

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 145–46

46 Gordon (1992: 129–30), Dieckmann (2007: 125–26): see Chapter 2.

47 Hinz (2003: 28)

1933	Convention Relative to the Preservation of Fauna and Flora in their Natural State	In 1933, colonial powers agreed upon this Convention, one of the first nature conservation agreements for Africa. The Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom were among the signatories. ⁴⁸
1934	Game Preservation Ordinance Amendment Ordinance, 4 of 1934	Marked ‘civil servants and police personnel temporarily or permanently stationed beyond the Police Zone possible beneficiaries’ of the Section 10 rule of Game Preservation Ordinance, 5 of 1927. ⁴⁹
1935		Only in 1935 was private farm ownership within the boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 finally terminated (with one exception – a small piece of land close to Okaukuejo). ⁵⁰
1936	Native/Bantu Trust and Land Act, 18 of 1936	All land set aside ‘for the sole use of aboriginal natives’ becomes vested in the South African Native Trust. ⁵¹ PTO type licenses can be granted (see Bantu Administration Act, 38 of 1927). ⁵²
1937	The Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, 19 of 1937 [claimed to be inspired by the 1933 Convention]	For the first time including the protection of plants (apart from <i>Welwitschia mirabilis</i> , which had been protected since 1916), this Ordinance combined flora and fauna, implying that the administration had started to move towards a more holistic approach ‘[t]o provide for the preservation of the fauna and flora of the Territory in their natural state, and to amend in other aspects the law relating to the preservation of game’: ‘this ordinance now for the first time included the protection of plants. Enforcement of the game laws until then had been the sole responsibility of the SWA Police. This ordinance also permitted interested people to help with the applicable law enforcement in the capacity of honorary game wardens’. ⁵³
1942	Prohibited Areas Amendment Ordinance, 9 of 1942	This proclamation extends the permit situation established in Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 26 of 1928 to ‘other wild animals’. ⁵⁴

⁴⁸ van Heijnsbergen (1997: 16), Dieckmann (2007: 75)

⁴⁹ Hinz (2003: 23)

⁵⁰ Berry (1980: 53)

⁵¹ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 14)

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁵³ Joubert (1974: 36); also Bridgeford (2018: 14)

⁵⁴ Hinz (2003: 22, 129)

1947	Kaokoveld is proclaimed as a Native Reserve (the Kaokoland Reserve) but remains part of Game Reserve no. 2 ⁵⁵	
1947	Proclamation 375 of 1947	Part of Etosha Game Reserve was cut off and made available for settlement and the Police Zone border was shifted in order to provide more farmland for white settlers. ⁵⁶
1948	Report of the Game Preservation Commission	Gives farmers permission to eliminate game species considered a danger to the farming community and recommends that farmers should 'decide whether to preserve or shoot (in whole or in part) zebra, wildebeest, ostriches and warthogs'; but rejects the idea of conferring ownership of game to the white farmers (game meat an important source of protein and white farmers, specially Afrikaners keen to hunt it). ⁵⁷
1951	Game Preservation Ordinance, 11 of 1951 (intended to improve The Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, 19 of 1937)	Provides for the establishment of a Game Preservation and Hunting Board to consist of no fewer than five members to oversee the preservation of game and to make any necessary recommendations to the Administrator. ⁵⁸ Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the appointment of game wardens as honorary or public service officers;⁵⁹ • regulation of hunting on white farms including restrictions on the amount of game that could be taken, length of hunting season and penalties for infractions; although article 27 allowed the administrator 'to permit visiting dignitaries "to hunt any game in open season";⁶⁰ • 'Africans were generally allowed to utilise wildlife resources in their communal areas' until restrictions were imposed by this Ordinance,⁶¹ specifically a requirement for permits from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the native reserve under his jurisdiction (Section 16).⁶²
1955	Preservation of Game Amendment Ordinance, 29 of 1955	New clause included in Section 4: <p>'[s]ubject to the provisions of this Ordinance, any owner or occupier of land shall own all [big and small] game other than protected game, while such game is lawfully upon such land and while such land is enclosed with a sufficient fence...'; with hunting permitted throughout the year.⁶³</p>

⁵⁵ Rizzo (2012: 1); also Owen-Smith (1972)

⁵⁶ Miescher (2009: 279–80)

⁵⁷ Botha (2005: 184)

⁵⁸ Joubert (1974: 36)

⁵⁹ Bridgeford (2018: 16)

⁶⁰ Botha (2005: 180)

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185

⁶² Hinz (2003: 22)

⁶³ Quoted in Hinz (2003: 23)

1956	SWA Parks Board appointed, replacing the SWA Game Protection & Hunting Board of 1951 ⁶⁴	
1958 18.6.1958	Game Parks and Private Game Reserves Ordinance, 18 of 1958 ⁶⁵	<p>Defines ‘Game Parks’ and allows for establishment of private game reserves.⁶⁶ The regulations for Game Parks (Section 5) are more comprehensive than for Private Game Reserves. For example, entry and residence, the possession of firearms, killing, injuring or disturbing animals in Game Parks was not allowed without written permission and the introduction of animals and the chopping/cutting/damaging of trees was prohibited. In Private Game Reserves, according to Section 16(1), ‘no person, except the owner, may hunt any game or other wild animal or bird in any area which has been declared a private game reserve [...] except under and in accordance with the written permission of the Administrator and on such conditions as he may impose in each case’.⁶⁷</p> <p>A major part of the Ordinance focuses on establishing the boundaries of Etosha Game Park around Etosha Pan, as a specific designation of Game Reserve No. 2. Its First Schedule defines the boundaries of a new ‘Etosha Game Park’ which focuses on the area around Etosha Pan with Paragraph 2 stating that:</p> <p>‘[t]he area defined in the first schedule to this Ordinance and known as game reserve No. 2, but excluding that portion which falls within a Native Reserve [i.e. the Kaokoland Reserve of 1947], is hereby declared a game park, to be known as the Etosha Game Park, for the propagation, protection and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, historical or other scientific interest for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the Inhabitants of the Territory’.⁶⁸</p>

⁶⁴ de la Bat (1982: 16), Schoeman (2007: 51)

⁶⁵ NAN, Ordinance 18 of 1958.

⁶⁶ Joubert (1974: 36)

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ NAN, Ordinance 18 of 1958.

1958 18.6.1958 (continued)		<p>Provision is made 'for the fusion of the Game Preservation and Hunting Board with the Parks Board so that all matters concerning game may be dealt with by one board'.⁶⁹ The Parks Board included at least five members: 'civil servants from agriculture, police, native affairs, the chief game warden and members of the farmers' and hunting associations'.⁷⁰ Its aims and functions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To advise the Administrator on the control, management and maintenance of game parks and private game reserves in South West Africa. b) To investigate and report on all such matters concerning the preservation of game as the Administrator may refer to it; c) To make such recommendations to the Administrator as it may deem fit regarding the preservation of game and any amendment to the game preservation laws of the Territory; d) To meet in Windhoek at least once every year; e) To perform and exercise such further functions, powers and duties as the Administrator may by regulation prescribe to the Board.⁷¹ <p>For more detail see Chapter 2.</p>
1958 3.9.1958	Government Notice 247 [Proclamation 247?] by the Administrator for SWA [Daniel Thomas du Plessis Viljoen]	<p>This Government Notice amended section 3(2) of the 1928 Prohibited Areas Proclamation (no. 26) to repeal and substitute the definition Game Reserve No. 2 in the Second Schedule to that Proclamation.⁷² It thereby outlined the new area of Game Reserve No. 2, so that it now included a southern extension along the Ugab River, as well as the north-west area of Kaokoveld; whilst excluding the Kaokoveld Native Reserve and Sesfontein Native Reserve 207. It made no mention of 'Etosha Game Park' [as per Ordinance 18], but included the area defined as Etosha Game Park in Ordinance 18 of 1958 within its boundaries.</p>
1961	Government Notice, 222 of 1961	<p>Moves the veterinary control cordon ('red line') southwards from along the south edge of Etosha Pan to the southern border of Etosha Game Park next to the settler farming area.⁷³</p>
1962	Government Notice, 177 of 1962 ⁷⁴	<p>Etosha Game Park is extended across part of the 1958 south-west extension of Game Reserve No. 2 to a point where the western boundary line of the last mentioned farm [Werêldsend] intersects the southern side of the road from Welwitschia [Khorixas] to Torrabaai; thence westwards along the southern side of the road to Torrabaai [close to the Koigab river] to the low-water mark of the Atlantic Ocean.</p>

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Joubert (1974: 36), Bridgeford (2018: 16)

⁷¹ NAN, Ordinance 18 of 1958; NTB 1/8 N13/2: Jaarverslae van Afdeling, Parks Board of South West Africa Annual Report 1.4.1957 to 31.3.1958 (First Report)

⁷² NAN SWAA A511/6, vol. 4 Game Reserves: Boundaries and Fencing 1958–1959.

⁷³ Miescher (2009: 382)

⁷⁴ Government Notice 177, 15.9.1962.

1962–1963	SWAA White Paper on Activities of the Different Branches of the Administration ⁷⁵ [Government report, rather than legislation]	Describes activities for Etosha Game Park, ⁷⁶ e.g. infrastructural developments, tourism, new appointments etc. States that: ‘Etosha Game Park’s boundaries were extended during the year [1962, Government Notice 177] up to the sea coast by the proclamation of part of Game Reserve 2 as a game park. The popular fishing and holiday resort at Unjab [Unjab] Mouth now falls within the game park. This year permission was again granted to holiday goers to visit the Unjab Mouth during the summer. Numbers of people made use of this concession. Better roads and more facilities will, it is hoped, be provided in 1964’. ⁷⁷
1966	Government Notice, 20 of 1966 ⁷⁸	Named ‘Prohibited Areas Proclamation 1928: Redefinition of the Boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2’, this Government Notice delineated a coastal strip of around 20-miles wide to the west of the Sesfontein and Kaokoveld Native Reserve areas (see Chapter 2).
1967	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 31 of 1967 ⁷⁹	<p>This Ordinance constitutes a ‘major legal review’ and a consolidation of ‘nature protection law into one piece of legislation’⁸⁰ by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishes a Nature Conservation Board (replacing the former Parks Board). Thus ‘[t]he term <i>game conservation</i> was replaced with <i>nature conservation</i>, promoting the concept that nature in its entirety should be conserved, and the idea that the word conservation embraced the concept of <i>judicial utilisation</i> became generally accepted’;⁸¹ • defines the powers and duties of the Nature Conservation and Tourism Branch; • contains ‘chapters on wild animals, game parks, indigenous plants, inland fisheries, protected and specially protected game, game birds and several other important subjects’;⁸² • includes other subjects such as the issuing of licences, and the repeal of laws;⁸³ • provides for ownership of game (with the exception of protected species) to ‘owners or occupiers of a [freehold] farm’ if the game is ‘lawfully upon such farm and while such farm is enclosed with a sufficient fence’;⁸⁴ • permits freehold farmers to hunt on their farm throughout the year without a licence, except for protected game;⁸⁵

⁷⁵ NAN SWAA White Paper on the activities of the different branches of the Administration of South West Africa for the financial year 1962–1963.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 57–59

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁷⁸ NAN, Government Notice 20 of 1966.

⁷⁹ NAN, Nature Conservation Ordinance 1967 (31 of 1967).

⁸⁰ Himz (2003: 23)

⁸¹ Schoeman (2007: 53)

⁸² Joubert (1974: 36)

⁸³ NAN, Nature Conservation Ordinance 1967 (31 of 1967), Chapter I.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, section 7

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, section 9

1967 (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allows freehold farmers 'with the written permission of the Administrator to lease his hunting rights to any competent person',⁸⁶ rapidly leading: 'to the commercialisation of game hunting and farming in SWA and served as a spur to the embryonic tourist industry in the country. Trophy hunting became an increasingly lucrative enterprise and the number of game farms featuring game animals and the spectacular landscapes of the country multiplied. Many farmers, even those that did not contemplate converting their farms into private game reserves, bought game animals made available by the Department of Nature Conservation from stocks considered superfluous to the reserves'.⁸⁷ <p>By changing the prior situation whereby 'all game had belonged to the State', Ordinance 31 creates a context for game to have a monetary value and farmers 'a financial incentive to protect animals on their property', causing many to start restocking their farms' such that 'game numbers on commercial farms increased dramatically'.⁸⁸</p> <p>With this Ordinance, Etosha Game Park became Etosha National Park.⁸⁹ At this point in time the boundaries of Etosha Game Park up to the coast were retained [with a northwards boundary shift of the west part of Etosha Game Reserve, from its position along the Ugab in 1958, to between the Koigab and !Uniab rivers]; and a small corner in the north-east was added. Chapter 3 of this Ordinance iterates Ordinance 18 of 1958, with some adjustments, reading:</p> <p>'[t]he area defined in schedule 7 to this ordinance and known as the Etosha Game Park is hereby declared to be a game park to be known as the Etosha National Park for the propagation, protection and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild vegetation and objects of geological, ethnological, historical or other scientific interest and for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Territory: Provided that it shall be in the Administrator's sole and final discretion to determine whether and when prospecting or mining activities are in the national interest.'⁹⁰</p> <p>The hunting permit situation for the prohibited northern areas, as established by the Prohibited Areas Proclamation, 26 of 1928 and amendment in 1942 ceases.⁹¹</p>
1967	Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction – Chiefs, Headmen, Chiefs' Deputies and Headmen's Deputies, Territory of South West Africa Proclamation, R348 of 1967	<p>Provides general rules for all traditional authorities and special rules 'for courts in certain parts of the country: Kaokoveld, Owamboland, Okavango and Sesfontein', with Sesfontein later excluded and Hereroland added.⁹²</p> <p>Traditional courts 'to which Proclamation R348 applies are, in principle, entitled to administer statutory offences stipulated by the Nature Conservation Ordinance or any other law if so delegated'; and there is no indication that 'any of the nature conservation acts, going back to the first <i>Verordnung</i>... repealed concurrent customary law'.⁹³</p>

86 *Ibid.*, section 12

87 Botha (2013: 246)

88 Bridgeford (2018: 17); also Botha (2013: 244, 246)

89 According to Berry, the Etosha Game Park officially received the status of a National Park in 1967 by an Act of Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (Berry 1997: 4).

90 NAN, Nature Conservation Ordinance 1967 (31 of 1967); section 37 (1).

91 Hinz (2003: 22)

92 *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 130—Section 1 of the Proclamation, as amended by Proclamation AG70 of 1980 and Ordinance 2 of 1986.

93 Hinz (2003: 30)

1968	Development of Self-Government of Native Nations in South West Africa Act, 54 of 1968 ⁹⁴	Enacted following the Odendaal Report ⁹⁵ to assist ‘native nations’ in ‘South West Africa’ to develop ‘into self-governing nations’ of ‘Owamboland, Okavangoland, Hereroland, Kaokoland, Damaraland and Eastern Caprivi’. ⁹⁶
1971 15.10.1971	Government Notice 82	Proclaims the ‘Skeleton Coast Park’, as a narrow protected area in north-west Namibia along the Atlantic Ocean coast. ⁹⁷
1973	Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Act, 9 of 2008	Implements requirements in the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). ⁹⁸
1973	The Owambo Nature Conservation Enactment Act, 6 of 1973	<p>Instituted under the post-Odendaal Owambo legislative assembly and containing ‘mechanisms to co-administer wildlife by delegating the authority to issue hunting licences in certain cases to local offices’, thereby effecting ‘some decentralisation in the law of hunting’.⁹⁹ The Executive Council of Owambo’ receives ‘the authority to determine the hunting season and to issue licences to hunt specially protected game’ (Sections 2 and 3); licences to be issued by ‘the Councillor; i.e the member of the Executive Committee to whom the administration of the Department of Agriculture was assigned’ (Section 4 read with Section 1), whilst licenses for ‘certain game (eland, impala, zebra) could be issued by the various traditional authorities’.</p> <p>Section 5 stipulates:</p> <p>‘(2) A game licence shall be issued by the tribal secretary of the relevant tribal area under the authority of the tribal authority of that tribal area.</p> <p>(3) A tribal authority may authorise game licenses only for its own tribal area and such game licence when issued shall not be valid in any other tribal area.</p> <p>(4) A tribal authority may fix a limitation in respect of the whole tribal area or in respect of a portion thereof, and the number of any species of game or some species or other of game of either sex or any species of game which may be hunted in terms of a game licence’.</p> <p>Sub-section 5(7) determines ‘the fees for licences according to species that could be hunted’.</p>

⁹⁴ See https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/sites/www.un.org.dppa.decolonization/files/decon_num_9-1.pdf

⁹⁵ (1964)

⁹⁶ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 14)

⁹⁷ MEFT (2021: 74)

⁹⁸ <https://cites.org/eng>

⁹⁹ Hinz (2003: 23–24)

1973 (continued)		<p>Section 6(1) extends 'hunting privileges to traditional authorities':</p> <p>'[n]ot withstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Enactment, a chief or senior headman may hunt game, except specially protected game and protected game, without a license during the hunting season: Provided that such chief or senior headman shall hunt game as such without a licence only within the tribal area for which such chief or such senior headman is appointed'.</p> <p>Section 7 'authorised traditional authorities to issue permits to hunt game birds'.¹⁰⁰</p> <p>The Councillor 'was also entitled to grant permits for killing specially protected game, protected game and game' that caused damage, for example to crops, grazing, property, people, etc.; and in cases 'where such animals threatened human life, the local headman had the power to issue the necessary permit'.¹⁰¹</p> <p>The Enactment 'restricted the use of firearms and other weapons' and also stipulated that 'nobody was allowed to hunt by means of' snares, traps, net, pitfalls, trapping kraal, dart guns, etc., unless holding 'a permit issued on the authority of the Executive Council' authorising such a hunt.¹⁰²</p>
1974	The Kavango Nature Conservation Act, 4 of 1974	Similarly instituted by the Kavango legislative assembly to co-administer wildlife. ¹⁰³
1975	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975	<p>Follows the structure of the Nature Conservation Ordinance, 31 of 1967.¹⁰⁴ For example, this Ordinance maintains the ownership rule in Section 29(1):</p> <p>'[t]he owner of –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a farm which is enclosed with a game-proof fence or an adequate fence; b) any piece of land which is not less than one thousand hectares in extent and enclosed with a game-proof fence, <p>shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, be the owner of all huntable game, huntable game birds and exotic game on such farm or piece of land and as long as such farm remains to be enclosed in that manner'.¹⁰⁵</p>

¹⁰⁰ All quotes from Hinz (2003: 24).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 25

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Hinz (2003: 23)

1975 (continued)	<p>Hunting by white settler farmers on freehold land is thereby possible although prohibitions remain for hunting and trapping by Indigenous Africans in communal areas.¹⁰⁶ Private game reserves and ‘hunting farms’ could thereby be established in freehold settler farming areas, if certain species-dependent requirements for fencing and security were adhered to.¹⁰⁷ The former South West Africa thereby became aligned with similar game farming policies on freehold land in South Africa.¹⁰⁸ As such, this was consistent with apartheid-era laws.</p> <p>Section 40(1): it remains an offence to ‘kill game or any other wild animal by any other means than by shooting with a firearm’, or to ‘capture game or any other wild animal by means of a snare, pitfall, trap, net, birdlime, drug or any other device or means whatsoever or by any method whatsoever’, unless specifically permitted.¹⁰⁹</p> <p>Differentiates between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘specially protected game’ (e.g. giraffe, elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus); ‘protected game’ (e.g. roan antelope, cheetah, leopard, tortoises, and most species of birds); • ‘huntable game’ (e.g. bushpig, buffalo, eland, oryx, kudu, springbok, warthog); <p>hunting of these two categories (‘specially protected’ and ‘protected’ game) requires a permit issued by the Ministry, with legal penalties for unpermitted hunting, unless an animal is killed to protect human or livestock, or cultivated land with an approved fence, in which case a written report must be made to the nearest conservator or police office within 10 days (Sections 26(1), 27(1), Sections 26(3) and 27(3) as amended by Act 27/1986 and Act 31/1990, Sections 26(5)-(7) and 27(5)-(7) as amended by Act 27/1986, Sections 26(4)(a) and 27(5)(a), as amended by Act 27/1986, Sections 26(4)(b) and 27(5)(b)), Sections 37(1)(a)(ii), as amended by Act 27/1986, Section 37(1)(b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘huntable game birds’ (e.g. guinea fowl, sandgrouse, quail, francolin); • ‘exotic game’ (e.g. vertebrates which are non-domestic species); • ‘problem animals’ – ‘any wild animals which are declared by the Minister to be problem animals in all or a particular part of Namibia. Such declarations are to be published in the <i>Government Gazette</i>; • ‘wild animals’ – any vertebrate belonging to a non-domestic species or belonging to a non-domestic species ‘with a natural habitat that includes South Africa or Namibia’. <p>written permission from the Cabinet needed for hunting any of these latter categories (Section 28(1)(a)(c), as amended by Act 31/1990, Section 28(2)(a)).¹¹⁰</p>
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¹⁰⁶ Barnes *et al.* (2002), Sullivan (2002: 162)

¹⁰⁷ Abbiati *et al.* (2013: 15–18); also Degeorges & African Advisory Board (1996: 90)

¹⁰⁸ Wels (2015); also Abbiati *et al.* (2013: 15–18), Degeorges & African Advisory Board (1996: 90)

¹⁰⁹ Ordinance quoted in Hinz (2003: 22)

¹¹⁰ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 20–21)

1977	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 amended by Ordinance, 4 of 1977	
1980	Schedule to the Representative Authorities Proclamation, AG 8 of 1980	Repeals the Development of Self-Government of Native Nations in South West Africa Act, 54 of 1968 (with the exception of Bushmanland) to ensure that ownership of communal lands vested in the South African Development Trust, formerly the SA Native Trust, becomes vested in [owned by] the government of the Territory of South West Africa, leading to the various representative [regional] authorities 'acquiring control over communal lands falling under their jurisdiction'. ¹¹¹ The list of powers of the second tier legislative authorities includes Item 1(VI) on 'the enactment of laws on soil conservation, on the protection of water sources, on nature conservation and conservation of the environment', with forestry included as Item 2(II). ¹¹²
1980	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 amended by Ordinance, 16 of 1980	
1986	Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 27 of 1986	Repeals both the Owambo Nature Conservation Enactment Act, 6 of 1973 and the Kavango Nature Conservation Act, 4 of 1974, 're-instituting the centralised system of control and licensing'. ¹¹³
1986	The Damara Community and Regional Authorities and Paramount Chief and Headmen Ordinance, 2 of 1986	Extended 'the system of traditional administration of justice as set out in section 4 of Proclamation R348 [1967] to Damara', with section 22 providing for civil cases 'between members of the Damara community' and section 23 doing the same for criminal matters. ¹¹⁴
1987	Cabinet Resolution	To exempt Ju/'hoansi of East Bushmanland from the provisions of the Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 to permit them 'to hunt in their traditional way', thereby implementing 'in the interest of nature preservation, a concept of preservation of culture'. ¹¹⁵
1988	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 amended by Acts 6 and 17 of 1988	

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14

¹¹² Hinz (2003: 28)

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 25

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26

1990	The Namibian Constitution	<p>Article 95(j) emphasises the need for the ‘maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and utilisation of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians, both present and future’.¹¹⁶</p> <p>Article 66(1) stipulates that:</p> <p>‘the customary law and the common law of Namibia in force on the date of Independence shall remain valid to the extent that such customary or common law does not conflict with this Constitution or any other statutory law’.¹¹⁷</p> <p>Repeals AG 8 of 1980, transferring ‘the powers, duties and functions’ of the various Regional Authorities to ‘the Administrator-General’.¹¹⁸</p>
1990	Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 amended by Act, 31 of 1990	
1995	Ministry of Environment and Tourism position paper published on ‘Wildlife Management, Utilisation and Tourism in Communal Areas’, Circular 19 of 1995 ¹¹⁹	<p>Aims to redress discriminatory provisions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving ‘conditional and limited rights over wildlife to communal area farmers’; • linking ‘conservation with rural development by enabling communal farmers to derive a direct financial income from the sustainable use of wildlife and from tourism’; • providing ‘an incentive to rural people to conserve wildlife and other natural resources through shared decision-making and financial benefit’.¹²⁰
1995	Ministry of Environment and Tourism position paper published on ‘The Establishment of Conservancies in Namibia’ ¹²¹	

¹¹⁶ GRN 2014[1990]; also quoted in Hinz (2003: 29)

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Hinz (2003: 10)

¹¹⁸ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 14)

¹¹⁹ MET (1995)

¹²⁰ Hinz (2003: 3)

¹²¹ Corbett & Daniels (1996: 4)

1995	Ministry of Environment and Tourism position paper published on the 'Promotion of Community Based Tourism' ¹²²	
1995	Traditional Leaders Act, 17 of 1995	<p>Section 1 foregrounds customary law as 'the customary law, norms, rules, traditions and usages of a traditional community',¹²³ which can include 'members of the community residing outside of the common communal area'.¹²⁴ Extends the responsibilities of traditional authorities, for example, through Section 10(2)(c), influenced by Articles 95(l) and 66 of the Constitution:</p> <p>'to ensure that the members of their traditional community use the natural resources at their disposal on a sustainable basis and in a manner that conserves the environment and maintains the ecosystems, for the benefit of all persons in Namibia'.¹²⁵</p>
1995	Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 6 of 1995 (ACLRA)	
1996	Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 5 of 1996, known as the 'conservancy amendment' ¹²⁶	<p>Provision made for establishing conservancies on communal land and giving conditional rights over wildlife, in part to enable consumptive use of wildlife in communal areas – including for trophy hunting – to facilitate livelihood benefits;¹²⁷ thereby seeking to ensure the inclusion of communal land in the 'sustainable use' and management of wildlife and other natural resources: thus, '[a]ny group of persons residing on communal land and which desires to have an area ... to be declared a conservancy shall apply therefore to the Minister...' (Section 24A), with the names of persons forming a conservancy committee, a constitution and a statement of boundaries required.¹²⁸</p>

122 *Ibid.*

123 Quoted in Hinz (2003: 9)

124 Corbett & Daniels (1996: 8)

125 Hinz (2003: 28)

126 Corbett & Daniels (1996: 8)

127 *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8

128 Quoted in Hinz (2003: 5)

1996 (continued)		<p>Although the ‘composition of the conservancy committee is not prescribed’, Section 28A(1)(a) states that ‘it must include at least one traditional leader’.¹²⁹</p> <p>Given that a minority of settler freehold farmers have inalienable rights to a major proportion of the most productive land in southern and central Namibia, plus that their title to land means that they effectively and legally own the capital constituted by their land and the resources on it, including ‘hunting game’, this Amendment is structurally unable to create equivalent circumstances on communal land.¹³⁰</p> <p>Possibility of creating ‘Wildlife Councils’ (Section 24B) also included for areas outside of conservancies.¹³¹</p> <p>Registration is intended to make ‘a conservancy committee or wildlife council ... the owner of all hunttable game, hunttable game birds and exotic game lawfully on such conservancy or within the area of jurisdiction of the wildlife council’; the intention being to give ‘inhabitants of communal land ... the right to make decisions concerning how the wildlife resources on communal land should be utilised’, and to promote ‘a sense of responsibility and connection with wildlife resources which accords with the commonly held view that the community through their traditional leaders owns game under customary law’.¹³²</p> <p>Leads to the establishment of communal area conservancies as part of CBNRM.¹³³</p>
1996	Formal policy on Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM)	
1996	National Land Policy (NLP)	Primary objectives are ‘to provide adequate access to land for landless people’ and ‘to promote, facilitate and coordinate access to, and control over, land ... to support long-term sustainable development for all Namibians’. ¹³⁴ Includes an option for ‘legally constituted bodies and institutions to exercise joint ownership rights over land’, implying that a community which defined itself as a conservancy could register tenure rights to the land defining the conservancy’s territory. ¹³⁵
1997	Game Products Trust Fund (GPTF) Act no. 7 of 1997 (7.9.1997)	A mechanism ‘for ensuring that revenue obtained from the sale of wildlife products could be used for wildlife conservation and community conservation and development programmes aimed at harmonizing the co-existence of people with such wildlife, and thus securing a future for wildlife outside of and within protected areas in Namibia’. Permits the GPTF ‘to collect revenue from wildlife and wildlife products recovered on state land and reinvest it into wildlife conservation, communal conservation and rural development programmes in Namibia’. ¹³⁶

129 Corbett & Daniels (1996: 8)

130 Sullivan (2002: 172)

131 Corbett & Daniels (1996: 7)

132 *Ibid.*, p. 10

133 NACSO (2004), Weaver & Petersen (2008)

134 Karuombe (1997: 6)

135 GRN (1997: 9) in Sullivan (2002: 174)

136 <https://www.gptf.org.na/>

1997	Traditional Leaders Council Act, 13 of 1997	Enabled formation of a Traditional Authorities Council on 3 June 1998 consisting of representatives of recognised Traditional Authorities. ¹³⁷
1997	Traditional Authorities Amendment Act, 8 of 1997	Following this amendment the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing 'started the process of recognising traditional authorities', permitting implementation of 'the new remuneration system for traditional leaders', 'financial assistance envisaged for traditional offices', 'representation in the Traditional Leaders Councils', and decentralisation. ¹³⁸
1998	National Land Policy	Aims to redress the problem of dispossession, discrimination and inequitable distribution of land that characterised the time before Independence and it has an explicit focus on poor citizens of Namibia. ¹³⁹
2000	Traditional Authorities Act, 25 of 2000	<p>Recognises ethnic difference and cultural heritage, as well as the legitimacy of previous so-called 'traditional' leadership structures despite their relationship with the previous apartheid state, defining 'a traditional community' as:</p> <p>'an indigenous, homogeneous, endogenous social grouping of persons comprising of families deriving from clans which share a common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, recognizes a common traditional authority and inhabits a common communal area, and may also include the members of that traditional community residing outside the common communal area.</p> <p>[also as consisting of] person(s) either or both of whose parents belong to that traditional community, and includes any other person who by marriage to or adoption by a member of that traditional community or by any other circumstance has assimilated the culture and traditions of that traditional community and has been accepted by the traditional community as a member thereof.'¹⁴⁰</p> <p>The Act affirms <i>ascertainment</i> of customary law 'as any kind of authoritative transfer of orally transmitted customary law into a written form' and states this as a task of the Traditional Authorities.¹⁴¹ The Act uses the terminology of <i>traditional</i> and <i>senior traditional councillors</i>, although the terms <i>headmen</i> and <i>senior headman</i> remain commonly used.¹⁴² It affirms the role of TAs 'both in ensuring sustainable resource use, and in administering communal land'.¹⁴³</p>
2000	Namibia Tourism Board Act, 21 of 2000	Permits the creation of the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) in 2001 as a regulatory body, ¹⁴⁴ specifically as a government agency tasked with regulating and monitoring Namibia's tourism industries, and governed by a board with two directors from the private sector and directors from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Finance. ¹⁴⁵ The NTB charges an application fee of N\$3,000 for trophy hunting operators with accommodation, plus a N\$200 annual registration fee. ¹⁴⁶

137 Hinz (2003: 12)

138 *Ibid.*, p. 11

139 GRN (1998)

140 GRN (2000)

141 Hinz (2013: 5)

142 *Ibid.*, p. 10

143 Taylor (2012: 45)

144 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namibia_Tourism_Board145 Abbiati *et al.* (2013: 49)146 *Ibid.*

2001	Parks and Wildlife Management Bill	Parks and Wildlife Management Bill, ‘provides for the declaration of protected areas and the necessary procedures before declaration. It further provides for the establishment of conservancies, wildlife farms and game fenced areas. It outlines the provisions under which wildlife may be utilised by land owners, lessees, conservancies, game farms and within communal areas outside of registered conservancies’. ¹⁴⁷
2001	The Forest Act	Implements legislation regarding “community forests” enabling, ‘the registration of various types of classified forest areas, including ‘community forests’. Community forests will be registered with the consent of the relevant Traditional Authority. Management authorities for community forests would be established under similar procedures as for conservancies. For example, a forest management plan is required. The MET advised against the creation of separate conservancy and community forest committees within one community, and promoted the integration of the two approaches.’ ¹⁴⁸
2001	Forestry Development Policy	Aims to, ‘reconcile rural development with the conservation of biological diversity. It recognises the need to involve “local communities” in forest management. The policy views resource ownership as critical for preventing forest degradation. It envisages giving resource tenure over forests to communities in conjunction with the possibility of groups gaining leasehold tenure over land in accordance with the National Land Policy. The policy provides for government to support forest users in their management of forests, through technical and extension services. The policy provides for links to conservancies through enabling forest product harvest quotas and providing for fire control in the management plans of conservancies.’ ¹⁴⁹
2001	National Resettlement Policy	Namibia identifies the following target groups for resettlement: the San population, displaced people, returnees, ex-combatants, ex-farm workers, destitute and landless people, disabled people and those living in overcrowded communal areas. The objectives of resettlement are to redress past imbalances in the distribution of land; to make people self-sufficient through agriculture; to introduce resettled populations into the national economy; to create income-generating activities; to reduce livestock and human pressure on communal lands; and to provide resettled peoples an opportunity to reintegrate into society. ¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Taylor (2012: 206)

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Harring & Odendaal (2007), GRN (2010), Dieckmann (2011), Chapters 4 and 16

2002	Communal Land Reform Act, 5 of 2002 ¹⁵¹	<p>Delineates boundaries of Communal Land Areas and establishes Communal Land Boards for their management, to include 'representatives from farming communities, regional councils, women, the public service and conservancies, in addition to Traditional Authorities', stating that:</p> <p>'(4) Before granting a right to leasehold, subsection (1) in respect of land which is wholly or partly situated in an area which has been declared a conservancy in terms of section 24A of the Nature Conservation Ordinance, 1975 (Ordinance No.4 of 1975), a board must have due regard to any management and utilization plans framed by the conservancy committee concerned in relation to that conservancy, and such board may not grant the right of leasehold if the purpose for which the land in question is proposed to be used under such right would defeat the objectives of such management and utilization plan.'</p> <p>In conjunction with the Traditional Authorities Act (1995/2000), positions state-recognised Traditional Authorities (TAs) as having the power to allocate land or to deny settlement permission according to traditional rules, given that these not conflict with constitutional and statutory law.</p>
2003	Formation of Regional Land Boards	Formation of regional Land Boards to ratify applications to codify and register communal land-rights. A land-right remains for the period of a person's natural life and can be passed on to next of kin, given that this is done through the state's processes. Communal land-rights usually focus on a bounded residential and/or farming unit, with sizes relatively established, yet not exceeding 50 ha.
2004	National Heritage Act, 27 of 2004	Makes provision 'for archaeological assessment, implemented either in the form of an independent investigation or as part of multi-disciplinary environmental assessment reports'. ¹⁵²
2007	MET Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concessions on State Land	Presents 'the first uniform policy framework for concessions on state land, including tourism development and trophy hunting concessions. It recognises the opportunities therein for the economic empowerment of formerly disadvantaged Namibians, especially those residing in or adjacent to national parks. It outlines different types of concessions, general principles applying to them, and the process of establishing, awarding and managing concessions'. ¹⁵³
2007	Environmental Management Act, 7 of 2007	Makes provision for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Environmental Management Plans (EMPs).
2007	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)	Namibia votes in favour of this non-binding UN Declaration. ¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Communal%20Land%20Reform%20Act%205%20of%202002.pdf>

¹⁵² JHA Kinahan & J Kinahan (2008: 5)

¹⁵³ Taylor (2012: 208), MET (2007)

¹⁵⁴ Paksi (2020: 21)

2008	Controlled Wildlife Products and Trade Act 9 ¹⁵⁵	
2009	National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management	
2009	Namibian Chapter of the Game Rangers Association of Africa established ¹⁵⁶	
2013	National Policy on Community Based Natural Resource Management of 2013	<p>States that once a conservancy has been gazetted, ‘ownership over wild game and use rights over other game species will be given to communal area residents’.¹⁵⁷ In practice, however, the ministry maintains ultimate ownership and control over wildlife as it not only has the power to de-gazette conservancies but also sets the quotas for how many animals can be harvested per species. Without an approved quota, conservancies are not permitted to use or sell what is supposedly ‘their’ wildlife. Limited and temporary ‘ownership’ of wildlife is only devolved for certain species of huntable game (e.g. kudu, oryx, springbok, zebra), while most high-value species like elephants, rhinos, lions, and leopards remain exclusively owned and strictly controlled by the State.</p> <p>Emphasises NGOs as partners in Section 5 on ‘institutional framework’, i.e. ‘Non-governmental organisations are recognised by this policy as key partners in supporting CBNRM processes, especially in helping to create or strengthen community based structures and building management capacities and linking communities to funding sources. The government will continue to collaborate with NGOs to deliver services to communities and where appropriate, and support the formation of local NGOs to outsource certain functions to them’.¹⁵⁸</p>
2014	Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Namibia becomes a signatory to the Nagoya Protocol, thus committing the country to develop national legislation on ABS. ¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Denker (2022)

¹⁵⁶ Paxton (2018: 8)

¹⁵⁷ MET (2013: 1)

¹⁵⁸ MET (2013: 14–15), also quoted in Stamm (2017: 81)

¹⁵⁹ Chinsembu & Chinsembu (2020: 2)

2017	Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 3 of 2017	Increases penalties for involvement in rhino poaching: first-time involvement maximum fine = N\$25 million plus up to 25 years imprisonment; and up to fines of N\$50 million and 40 years imprisonment for repeat offenders. ¹⁶⁰
2017 27.6.2017	Access to Biological and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge Act, 2 of 2017	
2017	Human Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia (NW Lion Plan)	Aims to mitigate Human-Lion Conflict (HLC). Includes the formation of the Lion Rangers Programme, Lion Rangers being Community Game Guards selected by their communities and employed by their conservancies to monitor desert-adapted lions and monitor and prevent HLC (see Chapters 17, 18 and 19).
2017	Protected Areas and Wildlife Management Bill, ¹⁶¹ updated in 2020	<p>A Wildlife and Protected Areas Management Bill is announced, which will repeal the Nature Conservation Ordinance, 4 of 1975 and amendments:</p> <p>‘[t]o give effect to paragraph (l) of Article 95 of the Namibian Constitution by establishing a legal framework to provide for and promote the maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and the biological diversity of Namibia, and the utilization of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of Namibians, both present and future, and to promote the mutually beneficial co- existence of humans with wildlife, to give effect to Namibia’s obligations under relevant international legal instruments; to repeal the Nature Conservation Ordinance 4 of 1975; and to provide for incidental matters.’ (p. 2)</p> <p>Additionally, ‘[t]he purpose of this Act is to provide a regulatory framework for the protection, conservation and restoration of species and ecosystems, the sustainable use and sustainable management of indigenous biological resources, the establishment of the Council for Conservation Hunting and the management of protected areas in order to conserve biodiversity and to contribute to national development.’ (Art. 2, p. 18)</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definitions of and regulations for ‘game farming’, ‘sport hunting’, ‘sale of live animals’, etc., all requiring adequately fenced farm areas of >1,000 ha;

160 LAC (2017)

161 GRN (2017)

<p>2017 (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definitions of and regulations for ‘problem-causing animals’, ‘protected species’ (Art. 44), ‘specially protected species’ (Art. 41, 43, ‘sustainable use’, hunting seasons’ (Art. 42); • rules around weaponry that can be used for trophy/conservation hunting (Art. 53); • hunting appears to be specifically precluded from state Protected Areas;¹⁶² • new categories of: 1) ‘Protected Landscape/landscape conservation area’, ‘to protect areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural values, to maintain the diversity of landscape and habitat and associated species and ecosystems of such areas and to contribute to the welfare of the local community and farmland through the provision of natural products and services and the sustainable use of natural resources’ (Art. 14(1d), p.37); and 2) ‘Contractual Parks’, ‘to protect areas where people and nature interact for conservation of natural resources and benefit thereof, established through an agreement by the Minister with another organ of state, a local community, any person or any other party for the collaborative management of natural resources in the area by the parties, or the regulations of human activities that affect the environment in the area’ (Art. 14(1e)); • protection of ‘items and features of archaeological, historical, geological and cultural value within protected areas’ (Art. 7(y)); • regulations and restrictions regarding ‘prospecting or mining in protected areas’ (Art. 21(1), p. 43), including ‘biodiversity offset initiatives’ (Art. 21(4h)); • hunting and collection of wild species in protected areas (Art. 24); • restrictions on luring game from protected areas (Art. 26); • rules around the granting of concessions in protected areas or on communal land (Art. 32), the latter requiring ‘a right of leasehold from the relevant Communal Land Board’; • rules around the establishment, management, rights and obligations of conservancies (Art. 33 to 37), and requirements for ‘taking into account [...] the views of the regional Council and Traditional Authority of that area’; • collection of indigenous plants (Art. 104-110); • rules around human-wildlife conflict management (Art. 111-117), including that ‘[a]ny person may destroy a wild animal, including specially protected game in defense of a human life or to prevent a human being from being injured’ (Art. 116(1)) and ‘if a professional hunter who is a member of the legal entity or with which the legal entity has a contract is within the area of the conservancy or farm at the time at which such animal is required to be destroyed, enter into an arrangement with that professional hunter for the destruction of the animal concerned’ (Art. 116(2b));
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¹⁶² Although a tender was recently (March 2024) released for a hunting concession within Khaudom National Park: <https://www.mefft.gov.na/tenders/tender-for-khaudom-trophy-hunting-concessioninside-khaudom-national-park/422/>

2017 (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of a 'Council for Conservation Hunting' (Art. 72-103). <p>The intention is to 'do away with potential conflict, repetition and overlaps between the two laws, and to streamline the implementation process', and 'to bring wildlife and protected areas management on par with new developments in wildlife and land management in order to contribute to sustainable development, poverty reduction and eradication'.¹⁶³</p> <p>Also expected to acknowledge and strengthen landscape approaches for conservation through the category 'Site of Special Conservation Interest', thereby facilitating establishment of 'People's Parks' or 'People's Landscapes', such as the Ombonde-Hoanib People's Landscape joining the southern parts of Omatendeka and Ehirovipuka conservancies.¹⁶⁴</p> <p>The Bill was expected to be enacted in 2019 but to date remains outstanding.</p>
2018–2027	Revised National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management ¹⁶⁵	<p>Revises the 2009 policy stating that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'safeguards need to be in place to ensure that wildlife is destroyed for good reason' – normally associated with repeated attacks (p16); '[t]he use of products derived from problem causing animals must be done so with a permit and conditions issued by the Ministry'; 'Local wildlife management unit will have the right to inform the Professional Hunter with which they have an existing contract or any other hunter if the contracted PH is not available, of the opportunity to hunt a problem-causing animal for which they have been given permission to destroy by the authorized staff member. The local wildlife management unit will have the right to charge the Professional Hunter a fee in terms of Section 11 (i) of Annex 2. If an animal is hunted in this way then the local wildlife management unit is responsible for the reporting requirements contained in Section 14 of Annex 2' (p17).
2021	National Elephant Conservation and Management Plan 2021/2022–2030/2031	New national elephant plan instituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) (see Chapter 11).

¹⁶³ Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism, Bernadette Jagger in <https://www.facebook.com/metnamibia/posts/2166083883607414>

¹⁶⁴ IRDNC (n.d.), Denker (2022) – see Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁵ MET (2018)

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List of Images and Videos

Introduction

Map of “Etosha-Kunene”. The pale orange areas are conservancies on communal land; the darker orange areas are tourism concessions; the hatched areas show the boundaries of freehold farms held under private tenure; the solid black line is the boundary of Kunene Region. Etosha National Park (ENP) is in the centre, and the pale shaded areas in the west constitute the Skeleton Coast National Park (SCNP). The green markers are the Hai||om resettlement farms Seringkop and Ondera, to the south and east of ENP respectively. © Ute Dieckmann, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 1

1.1. Map of places (red), rivers (blue), topographical features (yellow), tourism concessions and conservancies (green) mentioned in this chapter. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery starting from 10.4.2013. © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.2. Selected colonial journeys through Etosha-Kunene, prior to 1900. Prepared by Sian Sullivan using Google Maps: Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics. Full annotated map linked at <https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4-spatialising-colonialities>, © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.3. ‘Map of WC Palgrave Commission to report on the people and states of Damaraland and Namaqualand and inform decision on merging Government of Cape of Good Hope with states of South West Africa’, 12.12.1876. Source: Cape Archives—Palgrave Papers. Public domain image, source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/24/1876_-_map_from_Palgrave_Commission_papers.png, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.4. Detail from Francis Galton’s map of Africa between 10 and 30 degrees south. Source: Galton (1852: 141, out of copyright).

1.5. Site of around 10 graves near Bukuba-#noahes in the Aogubus land area, south-east of Sesfontein, reportedly of ǀKhao-a Dama individuals. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.2.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.6. Ruben Sanib stands at the well-marked grave of the Aogubu Damara-#Nūkhoe man |Ūsegaib, who herded livestock for Nama of Sesfontein near the spring of |Aogu-ǀlgams south of Sesfontein, now in the Palmwag Tourism Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 22.2.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.7. Swartbooi Nama huts at !Am-eib at the Erongo/!Oe#gā mountains in 1876. Source: photograph 2685 from Special Commissioner William Coates Palgrave expedition, © National Archives of Namibia, used with permission.

1.8. Sirib mountains west of Sesfontein/!Nani|aus, where aromatic plants were once gathered for *sāi* (perfume). Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 21.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.9. #Ao-haib (*Caroxylon* sp., formerly *Salsola*) in the Hoanib River west of Sesfontein, formerly used to make soap for clothes washing. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 21.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.10. 'Karte des Landbesitzes und der Minengerechtsame in Deutsch-Südwestafrika' (Map of Land Ownership and Mining Rights in German South-West Africa), by Max Moisel and Paul Sprigade 1914, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz: a) detail of the Kaoko Land und Minen Gesellschaft area; b. full map. Source: Public Domain image, via Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karte_des_Landbesitzes_und_der_Minengerechtsame_in_Deutsch-S%C3%BCdwestafrika.jpg, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

1.11. Photographed encounters with diverse peoples across Etosha-Kunene in the 1890s. Sources: Hartmann (1897: 123, 129) and Rudner & Rudner [Möller] (1974[1899]: opp. 147, 162), out of copyright. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan using Google Maps (the coloured dots represent selected colonial travellers' journeys, see Figure 1.2): Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.12. 'Negotiation with the Swartboois and Topnaars September 1895', Outjo. Source: Leutwein (1906: 66, out of copyright).

1.13. The most westerly veterinary stations in the 'cordon' (red markers) established between November 1896 and February 1897. Map prepared by Sian Sullivan, using Google Maps: Map data © 2024 Google, INEGI Imagery © 2024 NASA, TerraMetrics, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.14. Map of the area stretching from Outjo to Sesfontein connected via the Swartboo / Grootberg Uprising and colonial military response in 1897–1898. Source: GSWA (n.d.: 417, out of copyright), adapted by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.15. Captured Swartboo Nama in Windhoek in 1899: Captain Christian Swart is thought to be the man standing on the right (Hartmann 2005: 33). Photo by August Engelbert Wulff, 1899. Source: Übersee-Museum Bremen, P00092), <https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/1101015>, CC BY-SA.

1.16. Detail from 'Map of nations (Völkerkarte) for Deutsch-Südwestafrika before the uprisings of 1904–05', by Prof. Dr. K. Weule in Meyer (1909: no page number, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

1.17. Boundaries of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1907. Map: © Ute Dieckmann, data: Proclamations NAN, Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Video 1.1. Ruben Sanib recounts the heroic actions of #Nūkhoe warrior Tua-kuri-#nameb at sites that are part of the story. Video by Sian Sullivan (2015), at <https://vimeo.com/160633314>, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 2

Figure 2.1. Map of the Game Reserve No. 2 boundary in 1907 (brown border) and 1928 (blue border), with the police zone border of 1937 (red), freehold farmland in this year (shaded in brown) and main roads (brown lines). © Ute Dieckmann, data: Proclamations NAN, Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.2. Map of Etosha Game Park (purple contour) and Game Reserve No. 2 (green contour) in 1958, with the 'red line' of 1955 (red) and main roads (brown lines). Note that the southern boundary of Game Reserve No. 2 (in green) overlaps with the veterinary control boundary in red. © Ute

Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958; Government Notice 247 of 1958; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.3. Map of Etosha Game Park in 1962 (blue contour) and Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 (green contour) (for which Government Notice 20 of 1966 retains the 1958 boundary); with the ‘red line’ in 1955 (red) and main roads (brown line). Again, the southern boundary of Game Reserve No. 2 (in green) overlaps with the veterinary control boundary (in red). © Ute Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958; Government Notice 177 of 1962; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.4. Map of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1966 (green contour) showing the excluded ‘native reserve’ area around Sesfontein (brown contour), the ‘red line’ of 1955 (red) and main roads (brown lines). © Ute Dieckmann; data: Ordinance 18 of 1958, Government Notice 20 of 1966; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.5. ‘Proposed Homelands’ for north-west Namibia. Source: Odendaal Report (1964: Figure 27, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

2.6. Map of the borders of Etosha National Park in 1967 (blue), the borders of Game Reserve No. 2 in 1958 (red), the Kaokoland and Damaraland ‘homelands’ as implemented in the early 1970s (light blue and light orange respectively), and currently protected areas (green). © Ute Dieckmann; data: NAN; Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 3

3.1. Broad patterns of land tenure in Namibia: the dark shading on the map on the left shows areas under communal tenure in 2000 (John Mendelsohn pers. comm.); the dark shading on the right-hand map shows 82 registered communal area conservancies in 2014 (there are now 86) (NACSO, Windhoek, <https://www.nacso.org.na/conservancies>). The white areas on both maps are mostly under freehold tenure (other than in north-central Namibia). The pale-shaded areas are under state protection for conservation or (formerly) diamond mining, or are designated as tourism concessions. Source: © Sullivan (2023: 17), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.2. Map of conservancies, state protected areas and tourism concessions in Kunene Region. Source: public data, NACSO Natural Resources Working Group (<https://www.nacso.org.na/working-groups/natural-resources-working-group>), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.3. Map of tourism concession areas utilised by conservancies in Kunene Region and next to Etosha National Park. Source: public 2015 data at <https://www.nacso.org.na/resources/map>, 19.7.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.4. Graph showing declines in numbers of harvested animals from the five primary prey species focused on for consumptive use in north-west Namibia, 2014–2021. Source: graph created by Sian Sullivan from NACSO Game Count North-west Namibia May 2022, public data, <https://www.nacso.org.na/sites/default/files/North%20West%20Game%20Count-Regional%202022%20final.pdf>, 1.8.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.5. Graphs showing population count data for gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*) (top), springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*) (middle) and Hartmann’s mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*) (bottom) for Erongo and Kunene Regions in north-west Namibia, from aerial counts for 1982–2000 and road counts from 2001–2021. Source: NACSO State of Community Conservation 2021 public data (<https://www.nacso.org.na/resources/state-of-community-conservation-figures-and-tables>, 1.8.2023), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.6. Map of Iona-Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Conservation Area of Angola and Namibia. Source: public domain image, <http://sciona.nust.na/about>, 31.3.2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.7. The proposed boundaries of the Ombonde People's Landscape, labelled here as an Ombonde People's Park due to the previously proposed name for the area. Source: public domain image, Denker (2022: 6, data from NACSO), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.8. Locations of recognised Traditional Authorities in Etosha-Kunene. Source: drawing on Mendelsohn (2008: 7, 92), with updates. Map created by Sian Sullivan on Google Earth, map data attribution: Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, from 2015 onwards, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.9. The first employees of the Ombonde People's Landscape and the Toyota land cruiser used during patrols in the "Park". Photo: © Asser Ujaha, 2023, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

3.10. A newspaper advert for consultancy services to support tourism development in the Ombonde People's Landscape as supported by GIZ. Source: scan by Lendelvo from New Era Newspaper, 9.2.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 4

4.1. Haillom resettlement farms in 2014. Source: © Dieckmann (2014: 174), reproduced with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 6

6.1. Map showing location of Ozondundu Conservancy in between Etosha National Park and the Skeleton Coast National Park. Source: NACSO's Natural Resource Working Group, June 2023, adapted from Figure 3.2, Chapter 3, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

6.2. Southern Kaoko places between which migration occurred. © Cartographer Monika Feinen, created for this research and used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 7

7.1. Map of boreholes established in the 1950s and 1960s (above), and map of all boreholes established until 1999 (below). Source: Authors' database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

7.2. Graph showing the dynamics of cattle herds in Kaokoveld between 1940 and 1990. Source: Created by chapter authors from data held by the Veterinary Extension Service at Namibia's Ministry of Agriculture (no data for the missing years could be obtained), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 8

8.1. Survey respondents' sightings of four selected animals in Kunene Region. Source: authors' data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

8.2. Questionnaire illustrations used to clarify respondents' sense of connectedness to nature, town, and home. Source: authors' data, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 9

9.1. Map showing the distribution of *Giraffa camelopardalis* and subspecies in Africa, as of 2018. Source: © BhagyaMani, drawing on Muller *et al.* (2018) and Winter *et al.* (2018), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giraffe#/media/File:Giraffa_camelopardis_distribution_2018.png, CC BY-SA 4.0. Note that translocations of *G. c. angolensis* from Namibia to southern Angola have also taken place since this map was drawn.

9.2. Map showing the Etendeka Tourism Concession, positioned in between the Palmwag and Hobatere Tourism Concessions, with Etosha National Park in the east and the Skeleton Coast National Park in the west. The surrounding orange areas are communal area conservancies. The grey bounded areas in the south-east of the map are freehold farms. © Ute Dieckmann and Atlas of Namibia Team 2022, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.3. Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis angolensis*) browsing in the Etendeka Tourism Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 8.3.2024.

9.4. Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Etendeka Tourism Concession, showing the layered table-top mountains and broken basalt lavas characteristic of this area. Photo: © Kahingirisina Maoveka, 2016, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.5. Boundary markers along the cutline track of the southern border of the 1962–1970 Etosha Game Park/Etosha National Park, north of Etendeka Mountain Camp in the Etendeka Tourism Concession. The marker in the foreground of the image on the left is the marker on the left of the birds-eye view image on the right. The cutline running diagonally south-west in the bottom left corner of the right-hand image marks an access road to the plateau, originally established by the farmer (Krenz) who held the commercial farm Otjihavera in the 1950s, now part of the Etendeka Concession. Photo on left: © Sian Sullivan, 17.4.2023, drawing on information from Duncan Gilchrist, pers. comm., during site visit, corroborated by pers. comm. information to Dennis Liebenberg from Rudi Loutit (formerly of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism) and the late Garth Owen-Smith (formerly of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation); image on right compiled on Google Earth using data from AirbusMaxar TechnologiesImagery from 3.5.2023 onwards. Both images CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.6. *Maerua schinzii* (left) is a valued forage tree that often forms the centrepiece of goat *kraals* for farmers in conservancies beyond the concession boundaries — as shown here at !Nao-dâis, on the northern boundary of the Etendeka Concession. *Boscia albitrunca* (right) photographed within the Etendeka Concession. Photos: © Sian Sullivan 13.11.2014 and 27.3.2022.

9.7. Mapped locations of measured trees included in this study. Top image: full tree survey in 2021. Bottom image: detail from 2021 showing the different species included in the survey – key: dark green = *Maerua schinzii*; pale green = *Boscia albitrunca*; yellow = *Parkinsonia africana*; circles = live adult trees; crosses = dead trees; dots = juvenile individuals. Source: Kahingirisina Maoveka's research database, bottom image mapped by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.8. Graph showing the results of the survey of dead, alive and juvenile *Boscia albitrunca* and *Maerua schinzii* in the Etendeka Tourism Concession in 2016. Source: Maoveka's research database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.9. Graph showing the results of the 2021 survey of *Boscia albitrunca*, *Maerua schinzii* and *Parkinsonia africana* in the Etendeka Tourism Concession showing proportions of dead, alive and juvenile individuals counted for each species. Source: Maoveka's research database, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.10. Image on the left shows a mature *Boscia albitrunca* protected with standing rocks in 2016. Image on the right shows this same tree to the right of the image with an unprotected and now dead *B. albitrunca* visible on the left of the image. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, 14.9.2023, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

9.11. *Maerua schinzii* protected by stone wall with corrugated iron reflectors inside. Note the very high browse line, characteristic of browsing by giraffe. Photo: © Kahingirisina Maoveka, 2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 10

10.1. Map showing the major vegetation communities characterising Etosha National Park (signalled by the inner black boundary) in connection with the Greater Etosha Landscape, together with the distribution of boreholes and natural springs. Saline pans are shown in white. Source: © Turner *et al.* (2022: Figure 2), reproduced with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

10.2. Maps showing the historical, current and introduced range of plains zebra (*Equus quagga*) (left), and of mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*) in southern western Africa (right). Source: http://www.equids.org/images/L_PZebra.gif (L) and http://www.equids.org/images/L_MZebra.gif (R) (public domain images), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 11

11.1. Map showing the elephant population ranges in Namibia. Source: adapted from Thouless *et al.* (2016: 174), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.2. The northern highlands, showing the conservancies consulted during the scoping study reported here, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.3. Springs in the northern highlands are important for elephants and other wildlife. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 21.1.2018, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.4. Livestock forms the basis of livelihoods in the northern highlands. This photo provides an example of soil trampling and heavy grazing by cattle near water points, Omunuandjai in Okangundumba Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 12.1.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.5. A game guard and a community member in Orupupa Conservancy, discussing Conservancy Event Book data and typical elephant movements. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 25.3.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.6. Observation of elephant dung (circled in white) at the top of a mountain near Otjisakamuka in Omatendeka Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 2.4.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.7. Graph showing trends in total human-elephant incidents recorded by game guards in Ehi-Rovipuka and Orupupa conservancies (the “other” category includes damage to property, *kraals*, etc). Source: surveyed conservancy Event Books, 2012–2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.8. Pipework damage by elephants at the water point in Okazorongua village, Orupupa Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 1.4.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

11.9. Vegetable garden, Ombombo village, Okangundumba Conservancy. Photo: © Michael Wenborn, 12.1.2021, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 12

12.1. Map of places (red), rivers (blue) and topographical features (yellow) mentioned in this chapter. #Gieb's grave (see Section 12.2.3 and Figures 12.11 and 12.19) is represented by the purple marker. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery starting from 10.4.2013. © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.2. Examples of Nama reed mat huts (known in Sesfontein as |*haru oms*): a) 'Topnaar hut under Giraffe acacia', by L. Schultz. Source: scan from Schapera 1965[1930]: Plate XV; b) contemporary Nama hut in the Richtersveld showing anchor stones at the base. Source: <https://www.exploring-africa.com/en/namibia/nama-people/nama-huts-and-villages>; c) 'A Hottentot [Khoe] Kraal, on the Banks of the Gariep [i.e. Orange River]', from Burchell (1822, vol. 1: 325). Source: https://library.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/burchell/burchell5.jpg. All out of copyright or public domain images, adapted by Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.3. 'Korah-Khoikhoi dismantling their huts, preparing to move to new pastures', by Samuel Daniell 1805. Source: public domain image at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samuel_Daniell_-_Kora-Khokhoi_preparing_to_move_-_1805.jpg, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.4. Sedges (|*haru*, *Cyperus marginatus*) known to be used in the making of Nama reed mat huts, at the water source known in recent times as |Garis at the !Uniab river mouth, Skeleton Coast National Park. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 24.11.2015, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.5. 'Group of sea-bushmen at Hoanib mouth; captain with a woman in the foreground'. Source: Hartmann (1897: 129, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.6. 'Rietgrasfontein close to the mouth of the Hoarusib, on the north side of the spring, protected from the southwest wind, abandoned huts of the Seebuschmanner; two servants of Dr. Hartmann with horses'. Source: Hartmann (1897: 127, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.7. Detail from *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas* of 1893, positioning 'Hubun' (||Ubun) in the vicinity of the Sechomib, Hoaruseb and Hoanib rivers in the north-west, and 'Hottentot' (Nama) in the coastal areas stretching north to south from the Sechomib to the ||Eseb/Omaruru rivers. Source: Sam Cohen Library, Swakopmund, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.8. Detail from *Karte von Deutsch-Südwestafrika* 1898, positioning 'Hottentot' (Nama) along the coast from Walvis Bay north to Nadas. Source: <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/bestand/objekt/karte-von-deutsch-suedwestafrika-1898.html>, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.9. Detail from 1905 map by Herrmann Julius Meyer—Meyers Geographischer Hand-Atlas, positioning 'Bergdamara' in the western reaches of the Khumib River area, 'Owatjimba' stretching towards the coast in the far north-west, and 'Topnaar Hottentotten' (Nama) west and south of 'Zesfontein' (Sesfontein). Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10997145>, out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.10. (L) 'Three Strandlopers of Sesfontein S.W.A., standing in front of their rude hut built of wood, bark, palm fronds and grass'; (R) 'The same three Strandlopers seated or squatting, the tall one on the right side of the previous picture having changed over to the left side in this picture'. Source: Dart (1955: 176, out of copyright), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.11. Reconstructed genealogy of Franz |Haen ||Hoëb and his maternal grand-father, the remembered ||Ubun leader #Gieb, drawing on oral histories with Sesfontein residents, and historical material in Vigne (1994: 8), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.12. Werner | Gabenaeb ||Hoëb (d.) plays *goma-khās* in Sesfontein. Photo: © Emmanuelle Olivier 1999 (no. 37), digitised by Sian Sullivan in March 2018, identification of musician made by W.S. Ganuses & S. Sullivan in May 2018. Used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.13. Reconstructed mobilities by ||Ubun (and others) to harvest *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melons from plants in the !Uniab and Hoanib rivers, now in the Skeleton Coast National Park, via inland dwelling places and springs including Kai-as and Hûnkab, based on site visits and multiple conversations with Franz | Haen ||Hoëb and Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.14. Map showing locations of diamond and semi-precious stone mining in the northern Namib, pre-1980. Source: data from Mansfield 2006, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.15. Boundaries of Skeleton Coast National Park, first proclaimed in 1971. Public Domain image, <https://skeletoncoastparkugabgate.wheretostay.na/>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.16. Portraits of Sesfontein residents who participated in the oral history research shared here. Top, L-R: the late Manasse | Nuab; the late Hildegaart | Gugowa | Nuas; Franz | Haen ||Hoëb; Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb. Bottom, L-R: Christophine Daumû Tauros; the late Michael | Gâmigu Ganaseb; the late Ruben !Nagu Sanib. All portraits commissioned from Oliver Halsey, May 2019, except Manasse | Nuab's by Sian Sullivan, 1994. © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.17. Reconstructed land-lineage groupings for Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara/#Nûkhoen and ||Ubun in north-west Namibia. Note that oral history also makes clear that there was much mobility and reciprocity between these lineages and land areas, as well as by other ethnic groups, especially Nama, and ovaHimba/ovaHerero. Authors' research, © Future Pasts, underlying map adapted from Figure 3.2, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.18. Detail of 'Strand Bosjmans' village from 'Historical map, Orange River to Karas Mts., SWA', apparently created as a composite of multiple sources of information from different expeditions, including that led by Hendrik Hop in 1761–1762 accompanied by surveyor Carel Brink (Mossop 1947: 50), although attributed to Robert Jacob Gordon 1786. Source: open image Kaart van Zuid-Afrika (RP-T-1914-17-3), <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/object/Upper-northern-half-of-Gordons-great-map-of-Southern-Africa--2e2c01cff5ad98bda9ac53b3d17094ba>, Rijks Museum, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

12.19. Franz | Haen ||Hoëb stands at the grave of his grand-father #Gîeb. The footsteps from a recent sports run across the desert are clearly visible on either side of Franz. Photo: screenshot from the film *Lands That History Forgot* (2024, Video 12.1), © Future Pasts/Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Video 12.1. *Lands That History Forgot: 1st Journey, Skeleton Coast & Hoanib River* — Franz | Haen ||Hoëb, online: <https://vimeo.com/947316591>. © Future Pasts and Etosha-Kunene Histories, 2024, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Video 12.2. The late Hildegaart | Nuas of Sesfontein/!Nani|aus, Kunene Region, remembers harvesting *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) in the dune fields of the Hoanib River. Video by Sian Sullivan (2019), at <https://vimeo.com/380044842>, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Chapter 13

13.1. Map showing the Palmwag, Etendeka and Hobatere Tourism Concessions in between Etosha National Park in the east and the Skeleton Coast National Park in the west. The yellow asterisk

marks the location of Palmwag Lodge, and the black dots mark contemporary rural settlements. Base map © Jeff Muntifering, 2019, for Future Pasts research, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.2. Popularised through the memoir *An Arid Eden* by well-known conservationist the late Garth Owen-Smith, ‘the Arid Eden Route’ has become a way of framing and selling tourism in north-west Namibia as ‘Unimagined. Unexpected. Unexplored’. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 2.11.2014, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.3. Map showing the 1955 positioning of the Police Zone boundary (marked in red), which permitted the north-westerly expansion of the commercial farming area (in orange) into the area now demarcated as the Palmwag Concession. The yellow-shaded area on land variously designated as “native reserves”, as well as part of Game Reserve No. 2 in the north-west, was intended as a livestock-free zone, but was difficult to police. Source: Map 7 from Miescher (2009: 282, used with permission), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.4. Map showing the expanded commercial farmland area in north-west Namibia: the north-west boundaries of the surveyed farms mark the 1955 Police Zone boundary, and farm 702 is “Palmwag Farm”, now the site of Palmwag Lodge. The names in blue mark the ephemeral westward-flowing rivers of this area. Source: Adapted from Sheet 6, Fransfontein, Surveyor General’s Office Windhoek, undated, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.5. The image above shows the former dwelling place of !Gao-!Unias, now Palmwag Lodge, the location of headman Simon !Hawaxab’s livestock *kraal* in the 1950s, and the present-day lodge water-tanks; the image below shows the landscape of the !Uniab River, now a prominent part of the Palmwag Tourism Concession, showing !Gao-!Unias/Palmwag Lodge upstream, and the location of *!nara* (*Acanthosicyos horridus*) melon plants downstream. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including data from Landsat / CopernicusData SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Imagery starting from 10.4.2013. © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.6. Some key former dwelling places positioned within and near to the Palmwag Tourism Concession, in between the Skeleton Coast and Etosha National Parks. The black place-markers indicate former (and current) living places; the red dots crossing the !Uniab mark the cutline at the western edge of the 1950s commercial farming area; the red boundary lines mark the borders of communal area conservancies, and the fainter red line marks the current veterinary fence. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, including Google Maps data © TerraMetrics 2022, © Etosha-Kunene Histories, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.7. The former Kai-as settlement in the Palmwag Concession. Information from multiple visits and discussion with especially Franz |Haen !Hoëb, Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb, Ruben !Nagu Sanib, Sophia Opi |Awises and Filemon |Nuab. Prepared by Sian Sullivan, with Google Maps imagery 2023, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.8. The late Andreas !Kharuxab, former headman of Kowareb, pictured in 1999 and with his family in 1992. Photos: © Sian Sullivan, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.9. Ruben Sanib sits at the grave of his grand-father Markus Aukhoeb Ganuseb at the former living place Soaub in the Palmwag Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, 15.5.2019, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.10. The crosses on this map show the locations of graves of known ancestors in and near to the Palmwag Concession, many of which are of known and named ancestors. Author’s research data, including Google Maps data © TerraMetrics 2022, © Future Pasts, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.11. Map showing proposed ‘elephant-dams’ north of the new commercial farming area, marked by the thick black line. Source: © NAN SWAA WAT.74.W.W.71/4 *Game Reserve: Kaokoveld Game Reserve. Triangle — Kowares-Warmquelle-Grootberg*. Dams for elephants in the Kaokoveld Game Reserve. To the Director of Water Affairs 28.8.1958, used with permission, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.12. The map on the left, shows the existing ‘native reserves’ in west Namibia, namely Sesfontein, Fransfontein, Otjohorongo and Okombahe, that were to be joined into a single ‘homeland’ called ‘Damaraland’ as shown in the map on the right, thereby also including the known places between the Hoanib and Ugab rivers shown in Figure 13.6. Source: adapted from Figures 9 and 27 of the Odendaal Report (1964), out of copyright, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.13. Edited sketch-map of ecologist Ken Tinley’s 1971 proposals for creation of a Kunene Park and Kaokoveld Park in north-west Namibia (the latter connected with Etosha Park in the east), from which inhabitants should be removed to a ‘Himba-Herero Homeland’ and a ‘Nama Hottentot Homeland’, whilst retaining much of the surrounding ‘white farming area’. Source: adapted from Tinley (1971: 10, public domain article at <http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/17211>), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.14. ‘Plan for land apportionment in N.W. South West Africa’. Source: adjusted from sketch map in Owen-Smith (1972: 35, public domain article at https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/AJA00382353_9803), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.15. ‘Damaraland recommended land use’. The shaded area south of Sesfontein is the land proposed as a ‘Game Reserve area’. Source: Loxton et al. (1974: Figure 4, publicly shared consultancy report), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.16. ‘Building a land bridge’. Public domain image downloaded from <https://www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/summer-2023/articles/moving-forward#popup1>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.17. Advert for ANVO Hunting Safaris. Source: scan from SWA Annual (1983: 22), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

13.18. Mid-1980s brochure produced under the Damaraland Regional Authority (DRA) advertising specific tourism routes through Damaraland and depicting a combination of spectacular landscapes, wildlife, cultural heritage and livelihood practices. Source: DRA (n.d., used with permission), CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

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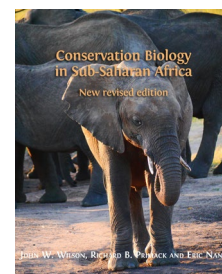
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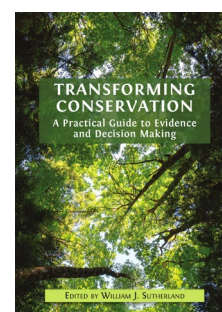


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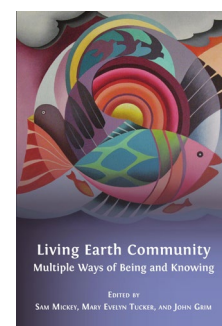


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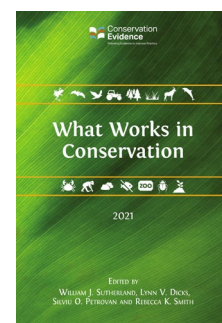


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