

CARNIVORE MONITORING PROJECT

Beginning of May a couple of hundred questionnaires were sent to farmers in the southern part of the Karas region. These questionnaires include a wide range of questions such as carnivore occurrence and numbers or carnivore related problems regarding livestock and other wildlife. We mainly want to gain information about large carnivores such as brown hyenas, leopard or cheetah, but included several small to medium-sized carnivores as well, since we realised that especially carnivores out of the latter two groups seem to be problematic.

The information gained through these questionnaires will provide us with data about carnivore occurrence, distribution, relative density and general attitude towards specific carnivores. Furthermore we distributed carnivore sighting forms to farmers, wildlife resorts and lodges to involve as many parties as possible in this inventory project.

Posters describing several carnivore species were sent to schools and presentations are planned for later this year.

Justina Anghuwo, our assistant for this project, also started to map inland areas of the Sperrgebiet for large carnivore signs. So far without much luck, but the area is vast and only intensive mapping will bring new results.

So far the feedback has been poor, but we are only one month into the game. Nevertheless, some farmers already approached us and will fill in the questionnaire and even offered to distribute some of the questionnaires to their neighbours, which is very much appreciated.

This study will also contribute to the Predator Conservation Trust's Large Carnivore ATLAS for the entire Namibia. They already analysed data from several years, but the southern parts of Namibia are underrepresented and the Brown Hyena Research Project aims to fill this gap.

We hope to be able to present the first results soon and will keep you informed about this important project.

Thank you to...

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for supporting this project. Kolette Grobler and Mania Trollip for spending hours to translate the questionnaire and sighting forms into Afrikaans, Seaflower for the use of their photocopy machine and the CCF, Robin Lines and Lise Hanssen for their advise in formulating the questionnaire.

SLOT TINS

N\$ 153-56 was collected in the Yacht-Club slot tin. Thanks to every body for their support, especially to Daggie.

ADOPTIONS

Volker Jahnke and Johann du Toit are supporting their brown hyena "Vojo" for another year. Thank you very much and I am sure, Vojo appreciates it.

GYPSY II AND HER CUBS



We know Gypsy II now for many years and she is definitely one of our favourite brown hyenas. Since 1997 she raised cubs of four litters successfully and last year we were very lucky to fit her with a GPS collar for a period of six months. Before retrieving her collar in February we already knew that she spent quite some time in one specific area. By plotting her GPS data later on the map, we could pinpoint where and when she had given birth. Since then, we have been checking the den site once every month. It is pretty inaccessible and therefore we can't observe the den site during night, when the cubs are out and therefore don't know how many she has got this time. But the older the cubs get, the more inquisitive they become and it will only be a matter of time until we will see them exploring the area around the den site on their own. Emma, the other breeding female of the Peninsula Clan is also often seen in the vicinity of the den, but when we exchanged her radio collar

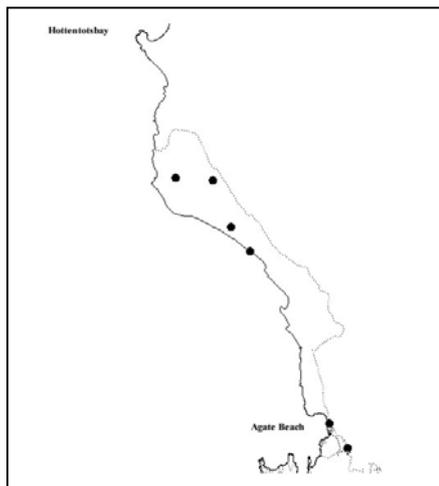
in March, she was neither lactating nor seemed to be pregnant. Emma is about ten years old now and limps a little bit since the end of last year. Her teeth are also pretty worn, but as brown hyenas can get as old as 16 years, we hope, that she still has a few more to come. We also started with our bait-marking project to determine this clan's territory boundary and will keep you informed.

Thank you to....

The OK Grocer for providing us with bait for the bait-marking study.

HOTTENTOTSBAY HYENAS

Remus, one of the brown hyenas, which was trapped and fitted with a radio collar near Agate Beach last year, is definitely living in the area south of Hottentotsbay. So far we don't know if his home range includes the Agate Beach area, as he might have only



been around there to mate with Minerva. Nevertheless it is planned to start with a study in this northern area next year. With the support of Hottentot Bay Investment CC and Benguela Enterprises CC, we will try to establish brown hyena density through camera traps and will fit one or two resident brown hyenas with GPS collars. As these brown hyenas don't have access to a mainland seal colony or refuse dumps, we expect a lower density than in our other study areas as well as a difference in their movement patterns and home range sizes. The camera traps will be mounted on tripods. The cameras are connected to an infrared sensor and as soon as a brown hyena walks through the beam, a photograph is taken from both sides. This will enable us to identify individual hyenas through the stripe pattern on their legs and natural ear notches. If this project proves to be successful, we will be able to use a similar approach in inland areas of the Sperrgebiet, where brown hyena density is also expected to be lower. Furthermore we might be able to detect other carnivore presence for our monitoring programme too.

Thank you to...

Hottentot Bay Investment CC and Benguela Enterprises CC for their support in financing this long-term project.

RALEIGH INTERNATIONAL AT POCKET BEACHES

In April, Justina and myself went to Baker's Bay to meet the Raleigh International venturers, who came to help with the Pocket Beach brown hyena monitoring project. Our plan was to map the mountain ranges east of False Plumpudding, to upgrade the igloo, which serves as our base, and to monitor brown hyenas at the Baker's Bay seal colony. During the three days we spent there, the east wind was blowing and the hyenas seemed to be as uninterested as we were to move. We only caught a glimpse of one brown hyena during all these days, so we had to concentrate on the mapping, which was a nightmare in the heat. Still, we found lots of latrines and resting sites in the mountains and even a den site, which was unfortunately not active.

Hallenge was nowhere to be seen or rather be heard and we figured out a week later, while doing aerial tracking, that he spends his time resting approximately 20km south-east of the seal colony, in an area without access for a vehicle. So no wonder, that we could not find him.

Nevertheless we had lots of fun and I am looking forward to meet the next venturers in June, when we will continue to map areas south of the Baker's Bay seal colony.



Raleigh venturers inside the igloo

Thanks to...

Trygve Cooper, the Raleigh International venturers and project managers for joining me in the field and keeping me away from my computer. Thank you also to Siemens and Shell Solar, who donated solar panels and accessories last year. We enjoyed having light inside the igloo, so that we could actually see what we were eating!

SAVE THE RHINO TRUST BROWN HYENA

Just a short update: Dr. Hartmut Winterbach and Bernd Brell from Save the Rhino Trust, finally darted one of the brown hyenas in Ugab in April. It is a young female and she was fitted with one of our radio collars. The collar works fine and she continues to visit the camp, so they can easily keep track of her. It is planned to do aerial tracking in future and it will be exciting to see, where this hyena moves.

WHERE IS NORBI?

We finally had to realise that we radio collared a nomadic living male last year: Norbi. Initially we thought, that he lives in the area around Bogenfels and not near Atlas Bay, where he was trapped. But we were too quick with our resolutions. He moves and moves.



Can you see him?

Ok, to put the story straight: he was trapped and fitted with a radio collar near Atlas Bay in September. After tracking him twice, we lost track of him until my students, which were based at Van Reenen Bay, approximately 70 km south, spotted him. We located him another two times in that area – nicely hidden under bushes - and again, lost track of him. Finally, we found him near Rotkop, but on our next tracking flight: nothing. So again, we don't know where he is. The only possible explanation is, that he does not belong to any of our brown hyena clans and lives a nomadic lifestyle. Wonder where he moves next, but we will keep you informed.

Thank you to...

Kathy Peard and Gino Noli for flying for hours and hours, ignoring the strange stomach feeling in the search for Norbi.

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

Again a big thank you to **Namdeb** for their continuous support, also in connection with the Environmental Information Centre.

Lino Scanavino from **Truckscan** helped us with building sand for our research station at False Plumpudding. The **OK Grocer** provides us with bait for our bait marking project at Gypsy's den site.

GraphPad Software, Inc. provided a free version of their GraphPad Prism software for our statistical analyses, which brings us a big step forward.

We received a generous donation from **Caltex**, which will cover a large portion of our petrol and car maintenance expenses. Caltex supports the project since the year 2002.

Thanks to **Benguela Enterprises CC** and **Hottentot Bay Investment CC** for financing our Hottentotsbay project. We are still in the planning phase, but will start latest in January 2005.

A big thank you again for accepting our slot tins goes to **Luderitz Yacht Club, Coastway Tours, Sandrose, Diaz Coffee Shop, Luderitz Safaris and Tours, Kolmanskop Coffee Shop, Caron Curio** and **Namibia Wildlife Resorts**.

THE BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND COMPANIES FOR THEIR HELP AND SUPPORT:

Namdeb	GraphPad Software, Inc.	Coastway Tours	Diaz Point Exploration	Kathy Peard	George Shimaneni
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		Luderitz SPAR	Gino Noli	Rene Rossler	
		Upstart Technologies		Ronel v.d. Merwe	
				Steve Appleton	

OUR LAST TRIP TO THE DESERT

by Barbara Kolar

These are our last two weeks and we are heading for a sad good-bye from „our“ colony.

We, Tanja and Barbara, are two German students taking part in the Brown Hyena Research Project. Our research area is a seal colony situated in the Restricted Diamond Area south of Luderitz, where we stay for three weeks each trip on our own. This is supposed to be a remote territory where just a handful of people are allowed to set foot in with a special permission of NAMDEB. For this reason we are provided with a radio, via which we get in contact with Ingrid Wiesel, our supervisor, in Luderitz every two days. During the day we stay in a observation hut, 20 minutes walk from the house, overlooking the seal colony and waiting for the object of our desire: the brown hyena. But this time it seems that the desert decided to prepare an easy parting for us: the first three days we were sitting in front of a thick white layer of fog, through which we just got glimpses of the hyenas foraging directly in front of us. The following three days, when we got rid of the fog, we were sitting in vain in our observation hut: no hyenas came along. Apart of this our radio was not working and we could not get in contact with Ingrid to tell her that we arrived well on our first evening. It neither was the cause of the fuses nor did it work when we connected it to the battery of the car. Our last option was to drive to the nearest mine seven kilometres away and call from their radio. As there was still fog on the second day we did not miss anything when doing the trip to the miners camp. But we found both the mine and the camp empty. It was Friday morning and it seems that we just had missed the workers on the way into their weekend. At least we left a message on their kitchen door that they could let Ingrid know about our healthy state as soon as they would arrive on Monday morning. From our point of view we had done everything possible to get in contact with the outside world, reasonably we did not think about a break off of our last stay. We did not know, that in the meantime Ingrid was worrying a lot and half of Luderitz was puzzling about our whereabouts. Saturday night, when we were fast asleep already, I woke up from a voice calling my name and asking if we are all right. I recognised Trygves voice, the Chief Warden of the southern Namib Parks. He radioed with Ingrid hours before and learned that she still did not get hold of us. At this time he was busy north of Luderitz, but he left at once to look after us. And now he was demanding some coffee and maintenance. While he informed Ingrid on his radio, I awoke Tanja and we prepared a midnight's tea-time. Eventually we drank a beer with him. The next morning we enjoyed the luxury of being brought by car to the observation hut. Trygve took our radio with him to Luderitz, which supposed to be brought repaired back one of the following days. Two days later we received our first parcel in the desert, when we came home in the evening we found a box with two (!) radios and a notice from Ingrid on our doorstep. The last sentence in the notice meant a little sarcastic we possibly could try to get in contact with her this evening. We could not help laughing when we learned that none of the radios was working anywhere. So we had to make the way to the miner's camp again. It was Tuesday evening and we found the camp occupied with three workers. But the unlucky patch went on. Because an antenna was pulled down somewhere their radio was not working as well. The good news was that they could call during business hours on another frequency. To not lose an observation day they would call her the next day instead of us and ask her how we should go on. Tanja and I would come around the next evening again to learn what Ingrid had told them. Apart from this the three workers invited us the next day for supper and offered us to shower at their place. This was an offer we found hard to reject. Even if it was just one week, the prospect of warm running water and, for me, some meat was seductive. Our thoughts turned to be true and we spent a nice evening with a shower, loud music, TV, company and a fantastic meal.

Ingrid allowed us to stay at the research station without the radio when we would call her as often as possible from the miner's camp. Eventually this was not necessary. Peter, one of the workers, repaired in the meantime the electricity at our house and the radio turned working again. It seemed that good luck had joined us again. And we had one more week to go in the desert.



The second week became a good one in view of our observations. We had a lot of hyenas at the colony and we even saw some of our „old friends“. There was Patti, the nervous one who even was afraid of seals and who mostly spent a couple of hours at the colony just feeding on scavenges. And there was the hyena we named according to our own names Tabba, she was cosy, we never saw her walking fast, but she was the one which we saw hunting most seals. There were some more, but it was this two who made us the nicest farewell present on our last day. They were both at the same time at the colony and spent few hours here. Tabba was most of the time foraging and feeding directly in front of our observation hut. Patti joined her, after watching anxious what the other was doing she took one of her prey items with her and disappeared. Some time later Tabba left, with a fully stuffed belly, the colony in her slow pace.

Now we drink our last sun-downer, which we spared for this special day, in the observation hut and watch the colony turning gold from the setting sun.

This was an exciting last stay, which we will never forget. We learned to see the desert and their inhabitants, animals and humans, in a different light. And we probably even fell in love with this place in spite of the wind, the sun and the sand.

Tomorrow will be a hard day for us...



BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT
Contact Details



BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT WEBSITE:

www.strandwolf.org.za

P. O. Box 739 Lüderitz
Tel.: ++264 (0)63 202114, Fax: ++264 (0)63 202114
e-mail: strandwolf@iway.na

If you would prefer to do a bank transfer, the details are as follows:

Brown Hyena Research Project – Commercial Bank of Namibia
Lüderitz Branch, Branch Code 161071
Account number: 1610 007182

ADOPTION AND DONATION FORM

Post form to Brown Hyena Research Project, P. O. Box 739, Lüderitz, Namibia or
e-mail to strandwolf@iway.na

- Adopt/Sponsor a brown hyena for one year (N\$/ZAR 1500-00, Euro/US\$ 250-00, £ 150-00)
- Become a friend of the Brown Hyena Research Project - annual fee: N\$/ZAR 500-00, Euro/US\$ 50-00, £ 35-00 discount for members from Namibia (60%) and other African countries (30%)
- I would prefer to donate N\$/ZAR, Euro/US\$, £

I enclose a cheque for the amount of N\$/ZAR, Euro/US\$, £

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Thank you very much for your support!