



NNF Newsletter: August 2009

In this issue:

- *NISD*
- *Go Green – Namibian Dolphin project*
- *Water points / game translocations*
- *Avis EE tour*
- *Staff News*



Namibia Institute for Sustainable Development

The process of creating a strategic alliance between the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and the Namibia Nature Foundation, to be called the Namibia Institute for Sustainable Development (NISD), is still underway. It is hoped that Deputy Directors for NNF and DRFN will be appointed shortly, and in time that an Executive Director for the Institute will be identified.



Game translocation in the Kavango Region

In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the ICEMA project, NNF has developed boreholes, reservoirs and drinking troughs in two conservancies: George Mukoya and Muduva Nyangana situated north of the Khaudom National Park, in order that drinking water could be supplied to the wildlife re-introduced in the two conservancies in July 2009 by MET and ICEMA.

The game re-introduction in Kavango Region was initially planned for September 2008, but was delayed owing to an outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth disease in the region. As a result, the Directorate of Veterinary Services banned the movement of game and livestock in and out of the region until July 2009, when more than 300 animals were trans-located by MET to these two conservancies. The wildlife included 41 Eland, 49 Zebra, 200 Impala and 100 Kudu. The Kudu, Impala and Zebra were captured in the Mahango and Mudumu National Parks, while the Eland were bought by MET from commercial farmers in the Khomas region.

The translocation of wildlife in the Kavango Region was witnessed by the Homba (Chief) of the Gciriku, the Kavango Regional Governor, the Director of Environmental Affairs from MET, the conservancy committees and members of the two conservancies, on 19th July 2009.

The Homba thanked MET and its partners for the support given to his community through the conservation of natural resources, from the registration of conservancies to the re-introduction of game in the area.



The Namibian Dolphin project

There are three dolphin species found in Namibian coastal waters, namely the Dusky, the Bottlenose and the Heaviside's Dolphin. Threats to dolphin populations include prey depletion, bycatch in fishing nets, pollution, uncontrolled eco-tourism and coastal developments that change the nature of their environment.

There is very little data available on the ecology of these species, and baseline data on the abundance, movements and habitat choice of all the coastal dolphin species of Namibia are needed in order to accurately assess their conservation status. Of particular concern is the Heaviside's dolphin, which is endemic to the Benguela current region.

The Namibian Dolphin Project is a study of the 3 species, and is being run in close collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR), Namibian NGOs and the local community, particularly commercial marine-tour operators. It is funded through grants from international and local agencies including the Namibian Coast Conservation and Management project (NACOMA), the Nedbank Go Green fund and the British Ecological Society.

The main study site is Walvis Bay, though comparative data are also being collected at Lüderitz.

The aim of the project is to estimate population sizes, and to investigate the habitat-use and behaviour of the dolphins as well as potential human impacts on their environment. Initial results from the 2008 pilot study have revealed clear differences between populations – for instance, the Bottlenose dolphin population is small (fewer than 100) and they mainly use the inshore environment along the open coast and the bay itself, where they are regularly seen feeding, while the Heaviside's dolphin population is several hundred to a thousand and mostly gathers at the tip of the bay, or is scattered further from shore.

These are preliminary results however, and much more work is needed to confirm abundance estimates, and to look at how habitat-use varies seasonally.

The Project is also working closely with CETN as well as MFMR and NACOMA to reinvigorate the strandings network, and to train people to assist in rescue and data collection from stranded dolphins.



Bottlenose dolphin swimming between the lines of an oyster farm in Walvis Bay. The farms take up space in the bay, and the impact on dolphin habitat use and feeding patterns is being investigated.



Two Heaveside dolphins leap off Pelican Point, in what is thought to be a competitive social display.



Avis Rent-a-Car / NNF partnership: EE Tour

The Nature Conservation first-year students from the Polytechnic of Namibia undertook an excursion in August 2009 to the Etosha and the Waterberg Plateau national parks.

The route encompassed various vegetation zones, and stops were made to investigate interesting plants in each of five zones. These included the Tambuti tree (*Spirostachys africana*) which is used in most cultures to repel wild animals, and the Moringa tree (*Moringa ovalifolia*) in a specially fenced-off area known as the Fairy Tale Forest or "Sprokieswoud". The Moringa tree is known for its water-clarifying properties, and also for its strange shape. The students were surprised to see how the vegetation changed and differed across the various zones. The five zones included Thorn bush savanna, Mopane savanna, Saline desert with dwarf shrub fringe, Mountain savanna and Karstveld, and the Tree savanna and woodlands. Animals spotted were many, from the large African Elephant to the Lesser Bush-baby, and the most exciting of all was the witnessing of a lioness trying to catch a Plains Zebra at the Salvadora waterhole in Etosha.

The group camped out in clearings behind the workshops at Otjovasandu and Okaukuejo, and the horse camp at Namutoni. They described how "matters improved at the Environmental Education Centre at Okatjikona, where we even had showers before going back to basics in the hides on the Plateau at Waterberg."

For the Game Counts, the students stayed in hides for 48 hours, which proved to be an unforgettable experience for many, with animals at times only 20 metres from the hide. "Seeing Buffaloes at such close range felt like an Animal Planet video clip, only with real smells and dust..."

The trip was a memorable one for all who took part. The students learned at first hand the importance of patience and silence when it comes to observing nature, and incidentally, that a couple of days without a shower never killed anyone. The trip report ends with the following heart-felt advice: "So if you are still unsure of a career path, you might well do Nature Conservation and join the wonderful group of people that are helping to take care of our marvellous natural resources. This is what we are studying towards just to show how much we love and care about Namibia and its marvels."



Omaruru Basin Management Project

The development objective of this SADC initiative, funded by DANIDA was to contribute towards sustainable development through the use of water resources in the context of social, economic and environmental objectives within the Omaruru Basin. The immediate objective during the project's implementation phase was to start up a Basin Management Approach for the Omaruru river basin, to establish a stakeholders' forum and to institute a Basin Management Committee. With this phase successfully completed, the project has been extended to the end of November 2009 in order to consolidate the outcomes, mainly with respect to enhancing ownership. A co-ordinator has been appointed who will be based in Omaruru to support the Basin Committee in achieving its objectives.



NNF Board and Staff news



Douglas Reissner (seated on right) with then-Minister of MET, Hon. Minister Konjore and Dr. Chris Brown of NNF; 2007.

The Board of Trustees and staff of the NNF bade farewell to Douglas Reissner at its August AGM this year. Douglas had served the NNF in various capacities, including as its first Director, and as Chairman of the Board for the past 8 years. In all, he had served the NNF for 18 years before stepping down from the Board this year, and we all extend our thanks to Douglas for his commitment and dedication, and wish him well for the future.





Nadine Faschina has joined the NNF to work in the Community Forest / Conservancy Liaison position, funded by the German Development Service, DED. Nadine studied International Agriculture with a focus on CBNRM, and conducted fieldwork in the Kunene Region for her PhD on conservancies and common property regimes.



Leeverty Muyoba joined the NNF in August this year to work on the Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) project, bringing with him over 14 years' experience of protected areas' management and concessions, and work with tourism operators working on conservation land.



Namibia Nature Foundation

76 & 78 Frans Indongo Street

P. O. Box 245

Windhoek

Tel: + 264 61 248345

Fax: + 264 61 248344

www.nnf.org.na