



Offspring At Tswalu

by Ingrid Wiesel

Our BTech student Kelsey Green has been monitoring our camera traps at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve since last year. In August, one of the tour guides, reported an active brown hyena den site in the eastern section of the reserve. Kelsey together with Dylan Smith organised to set-up a camera trap at the den to monitor activity there. As with our coastal brown hyena den sites, this one is beautifully situated with a spectacular view over the landscape.

On return for the next camera trap check in September, Kelsey downloaded the first images. There are at least three cubs at the den, but it is difficult to say at this stage whether they are from the same litter. They all look in a good condition though and interestingly enough, they are sharing their den with porcupines, who've got young, too. Brown hyenas move dens quite frequently and we only know of one more den location in that area so far. We will leave the camera there on a permanent basis to monitor activity

long-term.

Inga will be taking over from Kelsey, who is busy writing her thesis, so that our next visit to Tswalu is planned for October. Kelsey will present the results of her study at this year's De Beers Diamond Route Conference in Johannesburg and Inga will talk about brown hyena denning in general there, too.



Clyde Too

We managed to download Clyde Too's data and he is still spending a lot of time with Alaika in their territory, but is exploring the southern part of the Lüderitz Peninsula more frequently. He could be interested in switching clans and we will keep you informed.

Wallace and Lilinoe

We haven't recorded Wallace and Lilinoe on our E-Bay camera traps for a while and also haven't been able to find them to do data downloads. However, both have been photographed on traps further south and we will try to find them on our next trip at the end of September

Alaika and Luther

Alaika data shows that she has given birth to a new litter of cubs, but we haven't downloaded camera trap images from den sites yet. Luther is also around and we have received his VHF signal, but not managed to download data yet.

Nya and Zane Go Different Ways...

by Ingrid Wiesel

Inga went twice to the Garub area to download camera trap data and to attempt data transfers from Nya's and Zane's collars. On both occasions, she only received a signal from Nya's collar and Zane was also missing on our camera trap images. Downloading data from Nya turned out to be quite difficult, as the signal was bouncing badly off the large mountains. Inga tried her best, but had to give up both times – the area is very large with a limited network of roads making close approaches difficult. One needs to be line of sight with the animal in order to trigger data transfer via UHF and sometimes one just doesn't like to get too close to spotted hyenas on foot 😊.



Zane captured on one of N/a'an ku sê's camera traps (photo by N/a'an ku sê)

A few weeks later, Karl Fester from N/a'an ku sê mailed us an image of a collared spotted hyena that turned up on one of their camera traps far north of our study areas. The spot pattern revealed that it was Zane and he has been captured again on their traps since then. If he doesn't return to our study site, we will try to locate him in the new area to do a download, but we have also asked other research projects in the southern area to look out for him.

We've also started to collect scats to analyse spotted hyena diet in the Garub area. There are a lot of comments on the Namibia Wild Horses Foundation Facebook page about the impact of spotted hyenas on the horse population. One of the objectives of this study is this aspect, but we have to raise more funds to collar more hyenas next year to get meaningful results. We may also have an Honors student on site next year to maximize data collection and analysis.

Mining Area 1 Hyenas

by Inga Jaenecke

During the last months it was reported that brown hyena activity has increased at an old workshop in Mining Area 1 (MA1). As it is planned to demolish this old workshop in the near future the BHRP was asked to have a closer look at it, to determine if brown hyenas might be using this workshop as a den site and to set-up a camera trap in the area.

Therefore, I drove to Oranjemund end of August, to check the site myself. In advance everyone already told me that whatever goes into MA1 never comes out again. To prevent my equipment of getting stuck in MA1 I had to seal everything and make an equipment list in advance.

So early on a really foggy Tuesday morning, Liezl (who was escorting me into MA1) and I hit the road and drove to the old workshop. When we arrived there I was really impressed by all the equipment that was just left behind; it ranged from an old tractor, parts of old mining platforms to an old barrow. As it was still really foggy when we arrived, and brown hyenas are more likely to still be active during the day under these conditions, we had to be really careful about entering the old workshop itself, as well as walking between all the old constructions.

After a first walk around the workshop it seemed to be safe for us to enter the workshop through a backdoor, which would give any hyena inside the building (that didn't hear or smell us yet) the chance to run out through the open front gate. We were lucky, and no hyena was resting inside the workshop, so we took the chance to walk around and look for hyena signs. In and around the workshop we didn't find a lot of hyena signs, but of course we didn't give up that easily. The area around the workshop seemed to be the perfect playground for hyenas and once I started looking for hyena signs (such as latrines and paste marks), I couldn't stop making notes. There were so many really fresh paste marks on all the different structures, I was really impressed.

Once we were done walking in between all the old constructions, Liezl pointed out a really vegetated patch to me, where they have seen hyenas disappearing to. When I saw it, it immediately reminded me of our Green Valley Den, and I was sure that the hyenas in this area must love it as much as our E-Bay hyenas love their den.

So we started walking around the trees with keeping a fair distance, to not disturb any hyena that might be resting there. From far I could already see that this has to be a den site, as there was a large amount of carcasses lying around. At second view I saw the large amount of latrines around the trees. Once I noted all of them, it turned out to be 14 latrines in total, which was really impressive, as I have never seen anything like this before. Nevertheless, this didn't make my job of setting up a camera trap any easier. Normally we try to set-up our camera traps at latrines or paste marks, but how do you decide which latrine to choose if you have 14 next to each other and none of them looks more used than the other!? I finally decided to set the camera trap up next to the main game trail that leads to the den site, so we get a first impression of how much hyena activity we have in this particular area.

Although the main reason for my visit was to check the den site and set-up the camera trap, Liezl and I still had 4 additional positions to go to. These positions were retrieved from Darwin's GPS Telemetry data. As some of you might remember, Darwin was collared at Atlas Bay in 2012, but he disappeared shortly after being collared and was found again roaming MA1. At two positions we were lucky enough to find resting sites, but they didn't seem to be used that frequently anymore. At the third position, I initially walked past the GPS position, as I was focusing on a hill side which looked perfect for a hyena resting site. Just when I looked down on my GPS again, I realised, that I walked past the initial position, which was located 50m behind me. You might wonder how this can happen – I asked myself the same thing – but as you can see on the third picture beneath, there was just a large sand plain with truck tracks all over it. So I assume before they started mining this area, there must have been the perfect location for a resting site. A similar situation happened to us at the last position, as the GPS position was in the middle of an empty lake, which was covered with shells. It is fascinating how fast things change in MA1 and the hyenas there seem to cope with the situation well. After a long day of looking for hyena signs, setting up a camera trap and being on Darwin's tracks, we left the unique MA1 again.

I would like to thank Liezl again for escorting me into Mining Area 1 and helping me to find evidence of brown hyena presence in the area! I had a great day!



Obelixa

by Inga Jänecke

During my latest visits to the Elizabeth Bay ghost town, I often had the pleasure to see our old breeding female, Obelixa, lying either next to the ruins of the old plant or in some of the other buildings in the ghost town. So every time I heard her signal coming out of the old plants' direction, I stopped my car a couple of hundred meters away to not disturb her and then started walking towards the plant quietly. Every time I saw her, she was lying in the sun, next to a bush or bits of the ruins which protected her nicely from the wind. I

could see from far, that she was enjoying her late morning nap. A lot of times the wind direction was in my favour and I was able to get close enough to take pictures and to just sit there and observe her for a while. Often she didn't even look up while I approached, but she just kept on sleeping.

Another time I was driving through the ghost town, while searching for our other hyenas, and when I passed the old casino, I could see Obelixa lying in one of the entrances, looking at me. Of course she already heard me long time before I actually saw her. To not disturb her further, I pretended that I didn't see her and drove on until my car was out of her sight. I gave her 5 minutes to lie down again, before I walked back to a point from where I could see her. As I had hoped she lay down again, so that I was able to observe her for a while without disturbing her.

It is always incredible to see how relaxed Obelixa reacts when we see her and until now it has always been really special moments for me to see her.



Citizen Science Project Updates

by Ingrid Wiesel

Sightings are reported more frequently again since we have a contact person on site. We received 11 sighting reports between July and September 2016 from the following people: Hertha & Helmut Syvertsen, Mark Drysdale, Theo Klatte, Keith Newnham, Alfred Boehme, Estienne de Beer, Gerard Louw, Hennie Anthonissen, Liezl Maritz, Stuart Marsden via Florian Weise and Remi Leemans. Apart from brown hyena, leopard and spotted hyena were also reported. Thanks very much to all these participants and below are some images from these sightings.

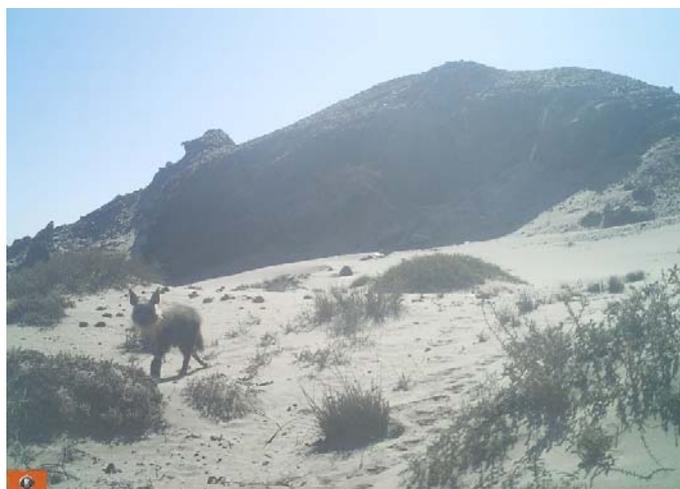


Photo by Hennie Anthonissen



Photo by Helmut Syvertsen

Camera Trap Images



Older brown hyena cub at Van Reenen Bay



Cheetah near Garub



Feral dogs in the Sperrgebiet, the same that we have captured on camera traps two years ago



Feral dogs in 2014



Cape fox

FUNDRAISING

- **Namdeb Diamond Corporation** supported us by covering the costs of **N\$ 7200** for necessary repairs on our Ford Ranger project vehicle.
 - **All for Nature Travel & Consultancy** has added our project to their programme and our first visitors donated **€ 300** to the project. Thank you very much.
-



Contact Details

www.strandwolf.org
www.facebook.com/BrownHyenaResearchProject
P. O. Box 739
Lüderitz
Namibia
Dr. Ingrid Wiesel
ingrid.wiesel@strandwolf.org

Inga Jaenecke
inga.jaenecke@strandwolf.org

Donations:

Brown Hyena Research Project – Nedbank Namibia
Bismarck Street, Lüderitz, 9000, Namibia
Lüderitz Branch, Branch Code 461610
Cheque Account
Account number: 11010015024
Swift code: NEDSNANX
BIC: NEDSNANXXXX
IBAN: 46161011010015024