

## BROWN HYENA WARNING SIGNS ARE UP!

After our favourite brown hyena Dollar was hit and killed on the tar road near Haalenberg in December last year, we applied with the Namibian Roads Authority to have brown hyena warning signs mounted next to the road. First the representatives were not sure, whether a new animal image on a warning sign would find approval, but after two months of anticipated waiting, they decided in our favour and even accepted our design of a walking brown hyena. The signs were ordered and ready by the middle of May. We arranged to meet Mr. Wolfgang Hartmann and Mr. Deon Maritz from the Keetmanshoop Roads Authority office at Haalenberg at the 27<sup>th</sup> of May to erect the signs. Smit Electro from Bethanie was contracted to mount them at our previously identified spots.



Brown hyena warning sign at Haalenberg.

We met at Haalenberg at 10:00 in the morning and I couldn't wait to see the signs. They were fantastic, I just didn't realise, when I drew the design that the hyena should actually move towards the road and not away from it. Wouldn't have thought that so much thinking and planning goes into road signs. Still, I think it might be a "good" mistake, as we hope that in future brown hyenas will have crossed the road before a vehicle might hit them.

Altogether four warning signs were mounted. Driving towards Lüderitz, you can find the first sign at Haalenberg and the next one near Rotkop, just after you pass the Namib Sub-station. Driving out of town, the first sign can be seen before the turn-off to Kolmanskop and the second one at Rotkop again. Most road kills happened near Haalenberg and Rotkop in the past and we hope that these warning signs remind the drivers to drive cautiously.

As there is no fence along the tar road between Lüderitz and Aus, wild animals can move freely and are more frequently seen on the road. We had an increase in jackal road kills near Lüderitz recently, but also birds and antelopes are hit by vehicles. We will still discuss the possibility of having a general wildlife warning sign mounted next to the road at the Lüderitz town sign and will discuss this with the Town Council in near future. Namdeb will sponsor this sign and we hope that the Town Council will approve of our idea.

*Thanks to Wolfgang Hartmann for reviewing our application, Deon Maritz and Smit Electro for organising the mounting of the signs. Thanks to Namdeb for initially offering to cover the costs, but all costs were carried by Roads Authority.*

## ANIGAB CAMERA TRAPS

The hyenas around the Kaukasib fountain are not the only ones being puzzled and extremely interested in our camera trap equipment. We thought that we had experienced and finally overcome all possible difficulties involving our equipment and the hyenas, but were taught wrong again. This time, the cages protected the camera and infrared unit fine, but the cables were pulled out by either brown hyenas or jackals and ripped into pieces. Therefore our first camera trap check at Anigab only revealed bits and pieces of cable and no photographs. Not much we could do, so we re-set the equipment and hoped for the best. Just as we reported from the Kaukasib fountain in the last newsletter, the brown hyenas had nothing better to do than inspecting the trap. They just can't leave the equipment alone, even though it is already out there for three months. Wonder what is going on in their minds...



Brown hyena captured by the camera trap at Anigab.

## SLOT TINS

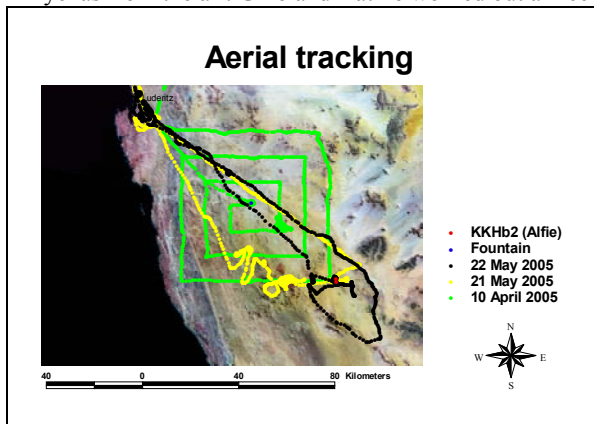
Grillenberger's Bottle Store collected N\$ 114-50 in the slot tin. Thanks very much.

## NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Morag Burrell from Oranjemund became a friend of the Brown Hyena Research Project. Thank you very much for your support.

## WHERE ARE THE KAUKASIB HYENAS?

It can't be too difficult to track brown hyenas or can it? Vicky and Alfie were fitted with GPS collars at the Kaukasib fountain in March. The study area is pretty open, many plains and some very nice mountain ranges and inselbergs. When we tested the VHF reception of the collars, we could get a fine signal over more than 20 km. Therefore we were not too worried about tracking the hyenas from the air. Gino and Kathie worked out a nice search pattern (green line), and off they went.



To all our surprise we didn't receive a signal for either one of the hyenas. The search grid was already that large, that we first thought the collars failed, but two collars failing at the same time didn't seem plausible. The inland areas can be extremely hot during day, so we assumed that the hyenas might have been resting in caves or deep resting sites and on the next two flights Gino and Kathie concentrated to search around mountain ranges and inselbergs – again with no luck. Slowly we got worried. Hours and hours of flying and no sign of the hyenas. Then – finally – at the end of May, we were lucky. We received Alfie's signal in the Klinghardt Mountains and found him resting approximately 30 km to the east of the mountain range. What a relief: first of all we found one of them and secondly the collar seems to be working fine. Nevertheless, no signal of Vicky yet, but it seems as if the hyenas followed the game that moved away from the fountain after the rains.

We will fly again in July and if we find Alfie again, we decided to release the collar, which is equipped with a remote drop off system. We can then download the data and will hopefully get an idea, where to search for Vicky, as we assume, that she uses a similar area than Alfie. Finally I would like to mention, that we were all very surprised to find out, that Alfie, a very old male, moved 50 km from the site, where we initially darted him. What a distance to walk.

*A big thanks to Gino and Kathie, who spent hours in the air, struggling with east wind conditions, surviving sharp turns and for not giving up despite the disappointment of not finding the animals. Thanks to the Namibia Environment Fund, who supports this Project and to the NNF/Sidewinder Films for contributing to the aerial telemetry costs.*

## HALENGE'S GPS COLLAR RETRIEVAL

It seems as if all of you really kept your fingers crossed, as we finally managed to retrieve Halenge's GPS collar at the end of March. Gino tracked him with his plane on many successive occasions until he finally did not see the hyena any more, but spotted the collar lying in the sand (from the plane..!). We drove to the recorded GPS location and there the collar was. We were more than happy, but quickly saw, that the battery box was damaged. A big hole was visible, obviously caused by a bite from another hyena. The next few hours, driving back to town to hopefully download data were therefore full of tension. It seemed to take ages between plugging the device into the computer and the first signs of download – but there was data stored on the collar. Nevertheless, the data collection stopped in January instead of March, so we assumed that the battery box was damaged then. Still, we retrieved over 2500 data points with amazing results. Halenge's home range is 460 km<sup>2</sup> and he moves 25 km inland from the coast. He mainly forages along the coast – as expected, but visits the seal colony less frequently than we assumed.



Kathie, Gino and the GPS collar.

*Thanks to Gino and Kathie, to the Nedbank Go Green Fund, NNF/Sidewinder Films and Namdeb for supporting the coastal brown hyena project.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTRE

The Environmental Information Centre is up and running again, with new opening hours. On week days, we are open between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. On Saturdays we are open between 10 and 12 a.m. Fabienne, Ester and Paulus share the work and are there to assist you with any questions about the Lüderitz environment.

*Thanks to Namdeb especially to Schalk Hugo, Alex McKay, Dolph van Wyk and Wimpie Schlechter for helping with the posters and videos. The Namibia Environment Fund sponsored the printing of pamphlets, postcards and stickers.*

## REMUS AND MINERVA

We got a phone call from Elaine Wiechert informing us, that a possibly injured and collared brown hyena was seen by her daughter Monika near the rubbish dump. We went out immediately to investigate and after a long search in complete darkness, we found Remus resting nicely behind a bush. Luckily he was not hit by a vehicle, which would have been extremely bad, as we had just mounted the warning signs on that day. Remus usually lives in the area around Hottentotsbay, but seems to wander down into Minerva's area at the moment. With a bit of luck, we might have a litter of cubs soon...

## RALEIGH INTERNATIONAL MEETS HYENA PROJECT AGAIN

As unlucky as we were in finding the GPS collared hyenas around the Kaukasib study site, the more luck we had during our first mapping trip. We met the Raleigh International venturers at Trygve's camp near the Kaukasib fountain. We decided to concentrate our mapping efforts on mountains and decided to walk the Münzenberg and Tsabiams mountain areas.



Brown hyena den site at Münzenberg.

We found many fresh paste marks in the Tsabiams mountains, several latrines and resting sites as well as a large and well used, but inactive brown hyena den in the Münzenberg. One of the groups also stumbled across two porcupines at their den site. We all saw snakes and some of us found fresh brown hyena tracks. Altogether a very successful trip.

*Thanks to Raleigh International for their great help and enthusiasm in mapping the new study area for brown hyena signs. Thanks to Trygve Cooper and Steve Appleton for joining us on this trip and guiding the groups.*

## WOLF BAY STUDY

I am Jana, and I was the master student of the Brown Hyena Research Project in the Cape fur seal breeding season 2004/05. My home was for about three month a little wooden hut, overlooking the Wolf Bay seal colony and my life was there, in between the seals, observing, measuring, counting or simply watching, being only eyes, learning day by day more about these highly fascinating animals - wind shaken, sand blasted, sweating on the rare days without wind, surrounded by the silent desert hills, my heart wide open like the incredible view

on the ocean right in front of me. On most of the days, I was the happiest girl in the world.

I have seen tragedies like young pups slowly starving to death, thin bunches of bones in a bag of fur, whose mothers did not return from their feeding trips to sea, and pups boiling in the sun in their black fur, to young to go for a cooling swim, simply dying right next to me; and I have seen the miracle of the beginning of new life, in between the crowd of noisy animals, of playing, suckling, copulating.

I was laughing at the ridiculous mating display of the crowned cormorants, nesting in between the rocks, moved by the struggle between a slim black-backed jackal, who tried to drag a sleeping pup away (the pup won!) and stunned by my seldom encounters with brown hyenas, slowly pacing through the seals, carefully grabbing an unattended pup, disappearing over the desert hills, the long fur brushed by the wind.

I kept on running into favourite hyena "Dollar", or he kept into running in me, both climbing around rocks and both suddenly frozen, sharply inhaling air at the sight of the unexpected close encounter, me looking rather stupid with my 1 meter wooden measuring board and my long seal catch-pole, covered with shit and birth fluid from head to feet.

I was challenged by the attacks of territorial bulls, which sat first suspiciously glancing towards me, and as I entered an invisible core area, came running, a 300 kg-fat-and-muscle rocket, me yelling, swearing and in the end running off, a broken catch pole in the hand.

And I was embarrassed by the gentle ignorance of some seal mothers, which simply made it just by non-violent resistance impossible for me to catch their pup, making me feel like a really stupid human being, putting my nose in business that was obviously not at all mine.



A seal colony is an overwhelming symphony of smell, of noise, of interactions, of 1000 little stories happening in the same time, of life and death as close together as I have never seen it

before. I am extremely thankful that I could make this unique experience.

I would like to thank the Brown Hyena Research Project, especially Ingrid Wiesel for her full practical and theoretical support, Jean-Paul Roux for all the helpful and interesting discussions, Namdeb for the permission to enter the

“Sperrgebiet”, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources for their cooperation, Marie and Hannes from the Lüderitz Backpackers for their kind welcome and the price reduction, Frank’s joinery for my two catchpoles and René for building my measuring board.

## FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

The **Nedbank Go Green Fund** and **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund** decided to support the Kaukasib/Klinghardt Mountain demography study. They approved of our proposal and we are waiting for the final confirmation. We also applied to the **Namibia Environment Fund** for the continuation of their support. We will hopefully know of their decision by the middle of June.

Thanks to the **Beppo Family** for their generous donation. Thanks also to Mr. and Mrs. Koch for supporting the project.

**Lino Scanavino** sponsors our tyre repairs. **African Wildlife Films** donated second-hand camera equipment for our help during their filming project at Van Reenen Bay.

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

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

Namdeb	Namibia Environment Fund	Forbidden Land	Wild Horse Trust	Alex MacKay	George Shimaneni
Caltex	Fund	Coastway Tours	Upstart Technologies	Gino Noli	Gisela Wolters
Siemens	GraphPad Software, Inc.	4x4 Adventures	Diaz Point Exploration	Kathy Peard	Kolette Grobler
Shell Solar	Benguela Enterprises	Namibian Breweries	Seaflower	Jessica Kemper	Norbert Klosta
Predator Conservation Trust	CC	BHP Billiton	Coastal Electric & Hardware	Jean-Paul Roux	Wilfried Erni
OK Grocer	Hottentot Bay Investment Cc	Divpac	Nest Hotel	Trygve Cooper	Erich Looser
Trucksan	Wilderness Safaris	Raleigh International	MET	Volker & Daggie	Lino Scanavino
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund	Wildlife Trust	Luderitz Bay Shipping & Forwarding	MFMR	Jahnke	Jürgen Syvertsen
Commercial Bank Go Green Fund	Namibia Nature Foundation	First National Bank	Luderitz Safaris & Tours	Johann du Toit	Morag Burrell
	Sidewinder Films	Luderitz Yacht Club	Riaan Laubscher	Frikkie Kraamwinkel	Beppo Family
		Luderitz SPAR	Andrew Cunningham	Rene Rossler	
		Windhoek Optics		Ronel v.d. Merwe	
				Steve Appleton	

**Nedbank Namibia  
Go Green Fund**



Application for funding



**Namibia Environment Fund**



## BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS:

[www.strandwolf.org.za](http://www.strandwolf.org.za)

P. O. Box 739 Lüderitz

Tel.: ++264 (0)63 202114, Fax: ++264 (0)63 202114

e-mail: [strandwolf@iway.na](mailto:strandwolf@iway.na)