

CAMERA TRAPPING BROWN HYENAS IS NOT THAT EASY!!

We mounted three sets of camera traps between December 2004 and February 2005. The first set served as a trial set near Wolf Bay, approximately 20 km south of Lüderitz. We found a very nice site with lots of hyena activity and waited in anticipation for the first animals to walk through...nothing. The hyenas didn't seem to like the weird structure suddenly appearing next to their trail and decided to move around it. We actually thought they would be rather inquisitive and try to nibble at the equipment, so that we spent weeks beforehand making it "hyena-proof". But the hyenas were not the problem. They just avoided the trap and moved happily around it. Our problem turned out to be the harsh and moist climate. The camera lenses got sandblasted and the cable connections started corroding. So after just a few weeks, the cameras needed repairs. Erich Looser came to our help and removed the corroded material and repaired the cables. Windhoek Optics cut some filters to fit in front of the camera lens to protect it from further sandblasting. Still, we also had some "hyena-proof" cages built for the remaining equipment, as we still did not trust the indifference of the animals towards the equipment.



Hyena-proof cage

We decided to move the Wolf Bay trap to Bogenfels, mount the second one near the Kaukasib Fountain and the third one next to the Anigab Pan, close to a hyena den.

Weeks of developing photographs with only Gemsbok pictures taken followed. We changed the programming of the receiver regularly to find the right setting for hyenas. Then on the second Kaukasib camera trap check, Trygve Cooper discovered, that the "hyena-proof" cage around the transmitter was removed by the strong jaws of one of the animals. So, indeed, they are inquisitive and all our modifications were necessary – even more, we had to improve it. Luckily the transmitter was not broken, but unfortunately no photograph

was taken while the hyena was busy with the equipment as the film was already full.

We were on a mission to catch the culprit and we changed the setting again to avoid getting too many Gemsbok photographs. Then, finally, the last film revealed the culprit:



Approach...



And too interested in the camera trap to feel comfortable!

And, we did not only catch this one hyena, we got photographs of two animals, walking through the trap together. Altogether the Kaukasib camera trap already proved to be successful and we hope that the other two sets will show similar results soon.

Thanks to...

Steve Appleton, Erich Looser and Windhoek Optics for helping to modify the camera traps. Trygve Cooper and Marek Hrywniak for helping to choose the sites and to the hyenas for finally showing their face. The Namibia Environment Fund and Hottentotbay Investment/Benguela Enterprises sponsor this project.

SLOT TINS

The Lüderitz Yacht Club collected N\$ 100-30 and the Environmental Information Centre collected N\$ 78-18. Thank you very much for your contribution.

ADOPTIONS

Jürgen Syvertsen adopted brown hyena "DJango" in the Bogenfels area. We will try to fit this hyena with a GPS collar in April. Thank you very much for supporting the adoption programme.

BROWN HYENA TRAPPING IN THE KAUKASIB AREA

The Namibia Environment Fund sponsored two GPS collars for our project “Demography of brown hyenas in inland areas of the Sperrgebiet”. Hartmut Winterbach travelled to Lüderitz in March to help us darting two animals in the Kaukasib area. We had five nights to attract the hyenas to our bait, which was sponsored by Wilfried Erni. We expected these hyenas to be less difficult to catch than the coastal ones, as there is no overabundance of food in this area. But it is never as easy as it seems. The hyenas did not seem to be as hungry as we thought. Still on the second night, we caught a young female “Vicky” in an excellent condition and fitted the first GPS collar.



Working on Vicky (photo Jessica Kemper)

The following two nights were unsuccessful. Sleepless nights for us and no hyena in sight. Still, we usually saw hyena spoor in the area the next morning, which gave us hope, but the animals were not interested enough to go to our bait. As the final night approached, we moved the bait to a different location in the hope of attracting at least one more animal before we had to leave.

We were lucky. Just after midnight, Hartmut darted the second hyena “Alfie”.

But: we could hardly believe our eyes. We had never seen such an old animal, but for his age in a good condition. Nevertheless his eyes are not the best any more, but we hope that he will survive the next four months until the GPS collar drops off. We suspect that he might not move far from the fountain any more, but we will hopefully see what his movements are, after we retrieve the collar.



Alfie

Both GPS collars will drop off in August. By then each of them should have collected over 20.000 data points and we are very excited to learn about the movements of these inland hyenas, which probably differ quite a bit from the coastal ones.

Thanks to...

Hartmut Winterbach, Trygve Cooper, Jessica Kemper and Steve Appleton for sharing the night shifts to make getting some sleep easier. Thanks also to Wilfried Erni for sponsoring the bait and to the OK Grocer for storing it. Gino Noli and Kathie Peard circled around us to make sure the collars are working fine. The Namibia Environment Fund supports this project until September 2005.

HALENGE'S GPS COLLAR

We were so excited. Halenge's collar was supposed to drop off on the 6th of March. Gino and Kathie flew to make sure that the release mechanism triggered – and it did, but they could see that the collar did not drop off immediately, so they flew the next day to check whether it came off in the meantime. As they received the signal near the same position they saw Halenge the day before and as they did not get a visual of the hyena, we assumed that the collar dropped off. We drove to Baker's Bay a few days later and: no sign of the collar or the hyena or even a signal. What happened? First we blamed porcupines, as there was lots of activity and they are known for collecting things. You can believe our disappointment. We searched the area for hours and unfortunately had to give up. Gino and Kathie decided to fly again and, who is still running around with its collar: yes: Halenge! He does not seem to want to loose it, but we hope that he will shake it off soon, so that we can finally learn about his movements and life over the past year. So please, keep your fingers crossed!!

BROWN HYENA ROAD SIGNS

We've also got good news. After reporting about Dollar's death on the tar road, Namdeb offered to sponsor road signs along the tar road from Lüderitz to Aus. After discussing the issue with Roads Authority, they approved of the signs and will mount them soon. They will also cover the costs, but we will use Namdeb's contribution to erect a Wildlife Warning sign next to the road leaving Lüderitz.

We really hope that this will prevent some wildlife related accidents and will keep you informed about the progress.

SPOTTED HYENA

In December, we tried to trap one of the spotted hyenas at Garub with a boxtrap. Telanie, who is studying the wild horses in that area, watched the trap for many nights and was lucky enough to see at least two spotted hyenas, but none of them walked into the trap. We will continue trying and hope to be able to give you some more information about these fantastic animals soon.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTRE

Namdeb is sponsoring our Environmental Information Centre for the coming year. We moved to a new location at the Lüderitz Waterfront and are still busy re-structuring the Centre, but should have the new posters and a video corner soon. We printed new pamphlets, postcards and stickers with support from the Namibia Environment Fund.

Thanks to Namdeb for their generous support, to Rene Rossler for mounting the signs and to the Namibia Environment Fund.

NORBI



Gino and Trygve collecting Norbi (photo: Trygve Cooper)

As you all know, Norbi was our difficult Nomad, who disappeared out of range all the time. He was last seen at the seal colony at Wolf Bay by our student Jana, while he was foraging for seals. A few weeks later we got a message that a brown hyena with a radio collar was found dead on the road following the pipeline into the Koichab. I was at Van Reenen Bay that day and Gino and Trygve went to collect the hyena. We were all worried, that it would be another road-kill. But Norbi died of natural causes. He lost a lot of weight before dying and was possibly staying in that area, as there was fresh water available. We are very sad that we have to say good bye to Norbi, but it is a relief to know, that his death was natural.

Thanks to the people who reported the dead hyena and to Gino and Trygve, who collected Norbi immediately.

FUNDRAISING AND DONATIONS

Namdeb supports the Brown Hyena Research Project for another year. They are our longest sponsors and we are extremely grateful. Thank you very much. **Namdeb** also sponsors the Environmental Information Centre at the Lüderitz Waterfront for this year.

Caltex also continues to support our project with a very generous donation towards the fuel expenses. This donation is extremely important, as we are permanently extending our study area and therefore our fuel expenses increase from year to year.

We received another donation from the **Wild Horse Fund** through the **Namibia Nature Foundation** to purchase a monitor for the new computer, as the old one was not suitable for the new system.

The **Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust** continued their sponsoring for another year. Their contribution will go towards our GPS telemetry projects.

The **Namibia Nature Foundation/Sidewinder Films** continues to support our aerial telemetry project, which grows every year.

Our application to the **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund** was approved, although we have to re-submit the proposal, as we are trying to get co-funding to do a large scale project in inland areas of the Sperrgebiet.

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



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Contact Details



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If you would prefer to do a bank transfer, the details are as follows:
Brown Hyena Research Project – Nedbank Ltd.
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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e-mail:

Date: Signature:

Thank you very much for your support!
