



Baker's Bay Study

by Ingrid Wiesel

The first rounds of camera trap checks have been going well. There are plenty of brown hyenas around and they are definitely interested in the sites that we chose to set-up the traps. However, the weather seems to be the main enemy to our old camera traps at present. We try to service the traps every two months, but the frequent storms in spring damaged quite a few fresnel lenses and sandblasted the actual camera lenses. Only one camera became the 'victim' of a hyena attack though. All in all, the sites are working and we will just have to invest in new camera traps next year.

Our main aim at present is to establish an identification catalogue and for this, we need good quality images to clearly identify the stripe patterns on the animals' forelegs. I'm also quite excited to see if we will 'meet' some 'old friends', such as Rodin, whom we collared at Dreimasterbay and who could still be alive, as well as any of the six individuals from the Dreimasterbay identification catalogue from 2014. The Baker's Bay seal colony is definitely part of their home range.

We will also apply for funding to fit satellite collars to two or three individuals next year. Capture there will certainly be more difficult than at E-Bay or Atlas Bay. We've already tried last year, but only for two nights, with no success. The animals are extremely shy and we may have to adjust our methods to have a fair chance of collaring them.

In the meantime we wish you:



MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Garub

by Marie Lemerle

This year, I have been studying the Garub spotted hyenas for my master's thesis. The aim of my study was to investigate the consequences of the diversionary feeding of the hyenas on their population and their movements in the area. I went through more than 440 000 images taken from the camera traps since 2015 and was able to identify and recognize all the members from the clan. This was very interesting to do, as I have been able to know which hyenas were born in Garub, the ones who emigrated or immigrated, and also to get to know each member individually. I also had a lot of fun with some images, especially with photos of cubs at the den or with the hyenas taking their baths in the troughs! While I was there, I spent many nights out trying to observe them. The cubs were the most curious and came to investigate the car, however the adults kept their distances. Most of the time I could hear them, but not see them. I will always remember the first night that I spent out alone at the diversionary feeding site.



It was late and dark, I started to fall asleep and closed my eyes. Then I heard a noise just outside the car, opened my eyes and looked through my window, and there was this hyena (Hansie) looking at me. This was such a special moment, I felt so many emotions at the same time: excitement, surprise, happiness and also a bit of fear! Hansie became my favorite hyena, she was always the most curious and took this habit of coming to my window almost every night.



She was also the funniest one, always playing in the troughs. I got very attached to these spotties and it was very hard for me when they got killed. I still think about them every day. Conducting this study was an amazing experience for me, and I learnt so much. Now that I'm back in France, I just can't wait to leave for Kenya in 2019, where I will continue studying spotted hyenas.

Alaika

I'm scanning Alaika's satellite collar frequently to see whether she will raise a new litter, but it seems that she has stopped breeding, similar to Obelixa, who is about the same age. I managed to find her at her favourite resting site near a temporary spring at Bain's Bay though. She rests there almost every day after having been foraging at the Atlas Bay seal colony. I can certainly understand why, the hummocks there look very inviting.

Obelixa

Every time I travel to our study site at E-Bay I expect not to see Obelixa again. She somehow evades our camera traps and I therefore have already twice assumed that she had died. Similar this time: We had not captured her on the camera traps since July and therefore, I was very surprised to see her at E-Bay at the end of November. She still seems to find enough food and her daughter KC Sowande often spends time close to her. I keep my fingers crossed that I'm able to see her on my next visit in March again.

Oranjemund Study

Sue has already checked the camera traps that are set-up at our new study site at the Orange River mouth twice. Due to the dense vegetation, settings have to be adjusted, but she has already captured brown hyenas and black-backed jackals on the traps, as well as a Cape fox. We hope to be able to establish an inventory of carnivores and will report more next time.

Camera Trap Image Selection

by Ingrid Wiesel

Here are the latest images from our camera traps in the Atlas Bay and E-Bay clan territories:



Jackal and flowers at Green Valley Den



Jackal calling at its den



Adult hyena carrying a seal pup past D-SPG 27



Single jackal litter near Wolf Bay



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