



Obelixa

by Ingrid Wiesel

Obelixa deserves a special spot in this newsletter. She had disappeared for some time last year and because of finding a unidentifiable carcass of an old hyena at the E-Bay plant, we assumed that she had died. However she surprised us all when we eventually captured her on camera trap images again, and just recently, we received reports from Namdeb that she has made the E-Bay mine her new 'home'. She is regularly seen there, often followed by jackals.

Her clan members will certainly be close by. Their core area around E-Bay ghost town is very close to the mine. Obelixa most probably still finds food at E-Bay beach and possibly uses the fresh water that is available at the mine.

KC Sowande, her daughter, also still lives in the area, but has not been breeding for the past two years. We have planned to fit her with a new satellite collar this year, as her old one stopped sending data in October last year. We are not sure whether the two subadult males Kai-Alex and LLOYD (KC's and Obelixa's sons from 2015) have left the clan, but there are still two young hyenas from KC's last litter in 2017 around.

It is truly amazing how well Obelixa is still doing. We have alerted Namdeb to report any sightings of her, so that we can monitor her whereabouts as closely as possible.



Obelixa at E-Bay mine (photo: Reinhardt Kaufman, Namdeb)

Baker's Bay

by Ingrid Wiesel

Marie Lemerle was supposed to start with her Phd study at Baker's Bay in April, but due to the new travel restrictions has to postpone the start of her field season. She has however, already identified over 40 individual hyenas from camera trap images that were taken in the area between Van Reenen Bay and Baker's Bay from 2009 until now. A very good source of image material came from the film companies, that we have advised and escorted into the area over the years. So a big thank you to all of them for sharing their photo and film material with us. Just recently, Jean-Paul Roux escorted the BBC to Baker's Bay and therefore I can show you some of the fantastic sightings that he had while staying at Baker's Bay, including quite seldom seen behaviours:



Before and after: young hyena trying to protect its prey and losing the challenge...

Hyena cooling off in the sea

Garub

by Ingrid Wiesel



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Caspar and her cub have been wisely avoiding the former core areas of the Garub spotted hyena clan after all other clan members were killed (see previous newsletters). Therefore, it was a highlight to see that they are back and start exploring the former areas of their home range after an absence of nearly one year.

We will continue to monitor the area with camera traps and once we can go back out into the field, we will also try to do some longer-term observations at the former den sites.

The Ministry has formulated a management plan for the Garub horses, which also contains management suggestions for spotted hyenas to mitigate conflict. So far, we have not heard any details and whether some of the horse management strategies have already been implemented. We sincerely hope that we can avoid a

similar conflict scenario than the one that happened one and two years ago in order to give the spotted hyenas a chance to remain at Garub.

Darting Season 2020

Our darting season was planned for the beginning of April this year. Kirk Suedmeyer was ready to travel to Namibia and the Kansas City Zoo had sponsored two satellite collars to fit to brown hyenas at Baker's Bay for our tourism development study. However, by the middle of March we all new that we would have to postpone our darting season. In the meantime, I was hoping that Marie would still be able to reach Namibia to start with field work at Baker's Bay, so that not all was lost, but unfortunately, we will have to rely on our camera traps to collect data until we are able to get out into the field again. The camera traps are all in a very bad condition and will need replacing soon. We have applied for funding to replace some of them, but are still waiting to hear back.



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At present, we are keeping our schedules open for October to fit the collars, so we sincerely hope that traveling will be possible by then again.

Baker's Bay: Introduction to some Individuals

Here are some good shots from our camera traps at Baker's Bay that we can use to establish an ID catalogue:



Boston (photo: Jean-Paul Roux)



Brisbane (still images: Offspring Films)



Dubai (photo: Keith Newnham)



Paris



Windsor



Melbourne

Melbourne has been a long-term visitor to camera traps at Van Reenen Bay and Bogenfels between 2010 and 2017. In 2018, Melbourne was captured at Baker's Bay and has since then not been captured at Van Reenen Bay.

Bosten (see also the camera trap image above) has been captured on camera traps at Bogenfels and Dreimasterbay between 2013 and 2017. Bosten made one visit to Van Reenen Bay in 2017 and has since only been captured at camera traps at Baker's Bay. Bosten is also frequently filmed by film companies foraging at the seal colony.



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