



## Surprise Visit to our Study Area

by Ingrid Wiesel

Checking camera traps is always exciting and it is as if one is opening Christmas presents every time one downloads and finally views the photographic data. We have posted many interesting and also funny images and we had some surprise visitors in the past. Last year, we captured an aardwolf at Albatroskop, but this year's end of the year surprise was even greater: we captured a cheetah on a camera trap that is approximately 45 km south-east of Lüderitz and 13 km east of the coast. According to Florian Weise it seems to be a female, but it is none that he could identify from Nja'an ku se's ID catalogue. We will definitely be in close contact with them to report further sightings and to find out whether they pick this individual up on their camera traps around their southern study sites. We haven't been able to review all data from this year yet, so maybe we even have other species to account for in one of our next newsletters.



HCO ScoutGuard  
Cheetah at Grillental

10.09.2015 22:47:16

### **Diamond Route Conference**

We presented our poster "Baseline data to model brown hyena density from the Tsau//Khaeb National Park (Namibia) and Tswalu Kalahari Reserve (South Africa) at this year's Diamond Route Conference in Johannesburg (<http://www.diamondroute.com/research-conferences.htm>).

### **Road-kills**

A possibly pregnant or lactating female was killed on the tar road between Oranjemund and the border post in October. Other hyenas have been seen in the area and Namdeb is going to investigate if there are signs of a den site close by.

### **HELP NEEDED**

We are still looking for funding to refurbish two GPS telemetry collars for our darting season in 2016.

*If you are interested in supporting the project please contact Ingrid at [ingrid.wiesel@strandwolf.org](mailto:ingrid.wiesel@strandwolf.org)*

## Spotted Hyena Predation Study at Garub

by Ingrid Wiesel

The wild horses at Garub have been suffering greatly from the drought that Namibia has been experiencing. Many of you will possibly follow the updates of the Namibia Wild Horse Foundation (<https://www.facebook.com/NamibiaWildHorses/?fref=ts>) on Facebook. So far two foals born late in 2014 and eight out of 16 mortalities of foals born in 2015 can most certainly be attributed to spotted hyena predation. At present, we are able to identify five adult spotted hyenas and the fantastic news are that these hyenas have offspring of various ages. One of the camera traps has been set-up at a suspected den site, but that site was inactive when we visited it in June and despite knowing of this site for years, I never observed denning activity there, however my visits were very infrequent. With using

camera trap technologies, it is finally possible to monitor such sites over long periods of time and finally my suspicion was confirmed and we started capturing images of spotted hyena cubs in September this year.



HCO ScoutGuard 9.25.2015 8:55:20  
Adult spotted hyena and four cubs greeting each other



HCO ScoutGuard 10.21.2015 6:06:07  
Porcupine visitor at the spotted hyena den

Bettina Wachter from the Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research estimated the age of the cubs as between 3-4 months, 5-6 months and 9 months. The hyenas have left the den in the meantime and we are very excited to find out where we pick them up next. Since then, we recorded other visitors at the den including a brown hyena, a very rare sight in the area, and a leopard.



HCO ScoutGuard 10.28.2015 0:54:50



HCO ScoutGuard 11.24.2015 23:34:54

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## Obelixa and KC Update

by Ingrid Wiesel

Obelixa and KC were both fitted with an Iridium satellite collar in June. It is just amazing to be able to see on a daily basis, where they have been and what they are doing. Obelixa for instance gave birth to a new litter at the end of August, just one year after she had given birth to her previous litter. However, we are not sure about the fate of her cub/cubs, as we haven't been able to review the camera trap images from the area yet. Her movement data indicates though that she is still denning. KC, too, gave birth at the end of September, but data transfer suddenly stopped. We are a bit concerned that something happened to her, but it seems more likely that the collar was damaged or malfunctioning. We will hopefully pick her up on our camera traps soon and if she still wears her collar, we will try to remove it in March next year, during our next darting season. We have applied for a grant with the Kansas City Zoo to contribute to the purchase of Iridium collars, one of them would then be fitted to KC. Other than that, we have planned to remove Alaika's and Clyde Too's collars, as they will reach the end of their battery lifespan soon. It is not clear yet, whether we will be able to continue to fit collars to animals of the Atlas Bay clan, but if we manage to raise enough funds to refurbish the two remaining collars, we will certainly do so.

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## New Project Vehicle

by Ingrid Wiesel



Northern Area Manager Brad Wood handing over the vehicle keys to Jean-Paul Roux

Namdeb generously donated a second hand Ford Ranger to replace our previous project vehicle, which had reached the end of its lifetime. After the annual Namdeb Stakeholder Meeting, held in Luderitz at the end of November, the bakkie was officially handed over by Namdeb's Northern Area Manager Brad Wood to our project's representative Jean-Paul Roux.

We are so grateful for this donation, as we have several upcoming field work projects to start next year, where we urgently needed the transport for. Inga Jaenecke will start in February to collect data for her PhD and she will report more herself once she is on site. Our new MSc student Timo Abel will work on brown hyena olfactory communication and Titus Shaanika will work on nutrient exchanges between the ocean and the coast using stable isotope techniques. We will keep you up to date about their projects in future newsletters.

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## Tswalu Kalahari Reserve Collaboration

by Ingrid Wiesel

Our camera traps at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve have been working well and we had a total of 65442 images from 1235 trap days to analyse taken between June and September 2015. Jackal and brown hyena were the carnivores mostly detected on the traps of a total of 14 recorded species. At present, I'm analyzing the carnivore data to run models to estimate each species' abundance within the reserve. I will also analyse herbivore data, look at activity patterns and habitat use. The camera traps will be removed for servicing this month and I will set them up in June next year again. As always, our camera trap images also make for good stories, such as a whole pack of wild dogs visiting a hyena latrine, leaving all their scents behind, which were thoroughly investigated by a brown hyena a day or two later. We also captured a brown hyena carrying at least two cubs to a new den and observed three cheetah cubs playing in front of the camera, watched by the careful eyes of their mother.



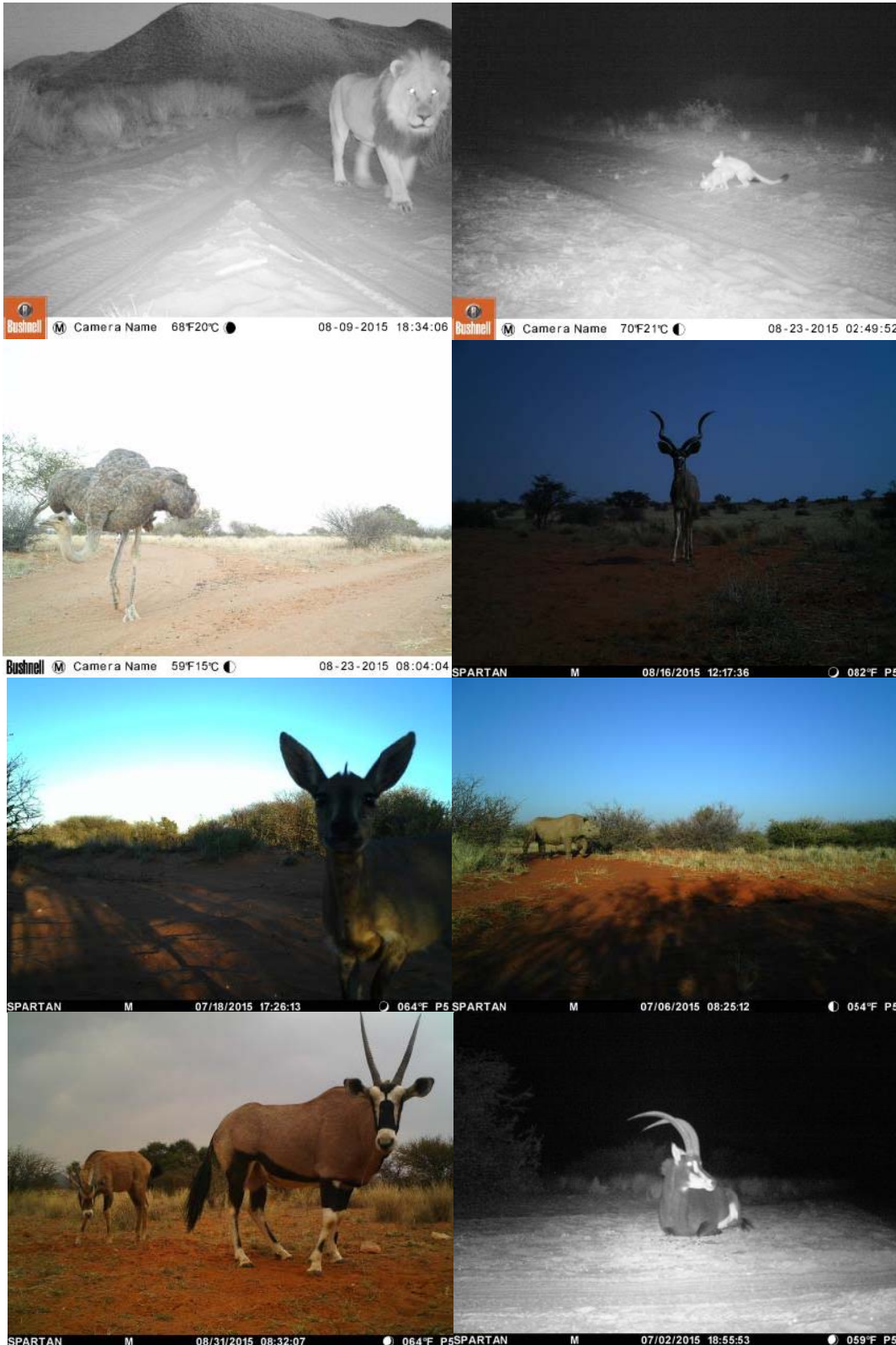
I will receive the next data set for analysis soon and we will then be able to judge how successful this study has been so far. But at this stage I would like to thank the staff at Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, Kelsey Green, Dylan Smith and Gus van Dyk, and also Duncan MacFadyan at the De Beers Head Office in Johannesburg for their continuous support and help.



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## Merry Christmas and a Good Start into the New Year

Working for so many years in the coastal areas of the Namib Desert, it is extremely exciting to see so many different species on our camera traps in South Africa and as a Merry Christmas for this year, I would like to share some of these with you. Thanks very much for all of your support and we hope for an exciting new year and many new stories.



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## FUNDRAISING

- **Tony Edmunds** donated N\$ 1000 and **Heini, Sigi und Brigitte Soltau** donated N\$ 5000. These donations will contribute to the refurbishment of our GPS telemetry collars. Thank you very much.
  - **Crispin and Orti Clay** continue to sponsor Clyde Too with N\$ 1500. Thank you very much for your continuous support.
  - **PICES Environmental Services** from South Africa donated N\$ 5000.
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## THE BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND COMPANIES FOR THEIR HELP AND SUPPORT:

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Klein Aus Vista  
Namtib Biosphere Reserve



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