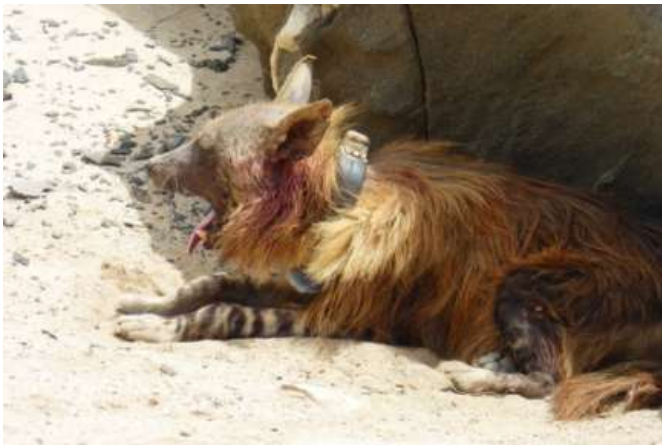


Obelixa – Our old Lady

by Inga Jänecke

In January, I had the pleasure to have a visitor, David from Australia, who is interested in GPS telemetry technologies, accompanying me on one of my field trips. I decided to take him out to E-Bay and try to track our animals there. We were able to locate KC at Green Valley Den, so I could show him how I determine from which direction the signal comes. He told me that there is not just one technique, but that different researchers use different techniques, depending on their species. We had a great day out. David was able to get a good idea of how we use GPS telemetry devices and I had the chance to learn a lot additional facts about GPS telemetry. Thank you, David, for making the effort and taking the time to visit!

Only a few days after David left, I had another visitor, who used to work for another research project in Namibia and asked us if he could join us on a day out in the field to see how we are operating. I also took him out to E-Bay and we decided to stay in the Manager's House for one night. During the day we were checking the camera traps in the E-Bay area and in the afternoon we went to the E-Bay plant, hoping to see one of the cubs or adult hyenas. Except for a beautiful sun set we didn't see a lot. The hyenas decided to not show up neither in the late afternoon nor in the early morning. Therefore, we continued to check the camera traps in the area. When we got to Bain's Bay riverbed we saw Obelixa lying under an overhang in the riverbed taking a nap. We sat there for quite a while and observed her. It is always a great experience to be able to show other people our brown hyenas, especially Obelixa.



Camera trap stolen

There is a reason why we don't like to set-up camera traps in public areas, but so far, we always felt safe setting up camera traps in the Restricted Area. Unfortunately, our Albatroskop camera trap inside the Restricted area was "removed". Equipment loss is bad enough, but data is irreplaceable.

Publications

Please have a look at:
Potgieter, GC, Weise, FJ, Wachter, B, Melzheimer, J, Wiesel, I, Stratfort, K (2017): Comment on Rust et al.: Human-Carnivore Conflict in Namibia Is Not Simply About Black and White. Society a&Natural Resources.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/ebvXp9jkncew6rmlhfUd/full>

Camera Trap Owners

We've sent out a questionnaire to find camera trap owners in Namibia (see below). We are also looking for farmers in the Karasburg constituencies and Hardap region, who are interested in setting one of our camera traps up on their farm. Please contact us if you are interested.

The Amazing Life at Our Spotted Hyena Den

by Ingrid Wiesel

We processed around 30 000 images of our camera traps at Garub collected between June 2015 and December 2016. Naturally the most amazing spotted hyena images and stories were “captured” at their den. Here we could observe one of the females carrying her two new-born cubs to another den in September 2016. Interesting enough, all five adult clan members, including our collared female Nya, visited the communal den together less than 24 h later:



Activity at the den was amazing and in the following weeks, we often captured all five adults together with three older cubs around the den, socialising, playing and also nursing their offspring:



In November, a female returned with one young cub, but we could not identify her. However, just two days later, the female that had moved her cubs in September, was captured again, carrying a young cub, so that we assume that those are the same animals:



The Namibia Wild Horses Trust set-up another camera trap facing the den entrance for a few weeks in November 2016. We retrieved fantastic video footage of two larger cubs and one small one. The fate of the other two cubs, one older and one young one, is unknown at present, but we will process new data collected between December 2016 and now in a few months time and will report more then.

GPS Collar Data Downloads

by Inga Jänecke

End of January it was time again to download the data from our brown hyenas' GPS telemetry collars. We weren't able to download the data for quite a while so I was even more excited to finally get the new data and to know what our hyenas have been up to the last couple of months.

On the first day of my search drives I was lucky enough to find KC resting at the scrap yard of the Elizabeth Bay mine and I was able to download here data. Already during the download I saw that she had a lot of gaps (times where no GPS fixes were taken) in her data set. When I had a closer look in the office, her data revealed that she had given birth to a new litter at the end of August. This kind of news is always exciting and it is great to see that our hyenas are doing so well.

The next day I was lucky again as I was able to locate Alaika in the Atlas Bay area. First, her signal came from Jungle Den direction, but as I approached the signal got weaker and Alaika slowly moved away from the den area. I started following her signal and I eventually was able to see Alaika lying just a hundred meters away from me under an overhang. As the wind was blowing quite a bit and I was standing downwind, she wasn't able to hear or smell me at all. So, I was able to download her data and while doing so watching her resting. It is always a special moment when you are lucky enough to see one of the skittish hyenas resting and not reacting to you at all. After I was able to download Alaika I kept on driving my telemetry route to find Luther and Clyde Too. In the afternoon, I was able to locate Clyde Too, but he was resting under an overhang so his signal was bouncing between the rocks and I wasn't able to trigger his download. After a while the wind started to pick up quite a lot and I had to postpone my search drive to the following day. As it always is the case, I wasn't able to locate Clyde Too at all the next day. However, I got Luther's signal after a while. Until then we haven't been able to do a successful download of his telemetry data yet and he has only been collared for the first time. I was really keen on finally knowing where he spends most of his time. On this day, Luther was resting in some hills that were quite a bit away from the road. I packed my equipment and started hiking into the direction his signal came from. After a bit of hiking his signal got stronger and stronger, but I wasn't able yet to trigger the download. Sometimes when the hyenas are lying behind rocks facing away from you it is almost impossible to trigger the download, even if you are really close. This was the case with Luther. I carefully started hiking in a large circle around him and trying to get the "line of sight", which we ideally need to have when triggering the download. I was really unfortunate, because when I walked over one ridge, a jackal saw me and started running. By doing so he alarmed Luther who also started running into a northern direction. At the point, I thought that I won't be able to download him any time soon, as it was the case with Clyde Too. I went back to my car to head back to town. As I was driving I left my receiver on because I was hoping to be lucky enough to get Luther's signal again. And it turned out I was lucky that day because I picked up a strong resting signal from Luther. Being even more careful this time I hiked towards him again and I was lucky enough to trigger the download. Afterwards his data showed that he spent a lot of time in the northern area of the Atlas Bay clan's home range.

After trying again to find Clyde Too the next day, who was not willing to cooperate, we decided to postpone his download to the end of February. So, end of February I drove out again to try and download him. The first day there was no sign of him anywhere in the area, but on the second day I was lucky and I could locate him in the area where I tried to trigger his download a month before. It was a perfect day with hardly any wind and I was really motivated to finally download his data. Unfortunately, the non-windy days in our area always mean that the hyenas can hear you from far. This was the case with Clyde Too. He already knew I was in the area when I was still far away, so he jumped up and ran away when I wasn't anywhere close yet. I didn't give up and took the roads which led into the general direction into which he disappeared. After a lot of driving and hiking on the highest hills, I got his signal again and tried once more to approach carefully and to trigger the download. The luck seemed to be on my side once more and I managed to trigger his download. Unfortunately, my luck didn't last for too long, as eventually Clyde Too got up and walked off. I only realised when the download got worse and worse and I eventually lost connection to the collar. Fingers crossed that I will be able to finally download his entire data during my next telemetry drive end of this month.

Modelling Study

by Inga Jänecke



One of our current studies' aim is to model brown hyaena abundance in the Tsau//Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park by testing different models using camera trap, GPS telemetry and genetic data. At the start of this study we chose for a non-random set-up of our camera trap, as we know that hyenas do not move randomly through the environment. Nevertheless, most models need a random set-up of camera traps, to not get biased results. Therefore, we chose to also set our camera traps up randomly. This random set-up



started in January, when I moved the 26 camera traps that are assigned to this specific study not further than 100m away from the previous position. I already checked the camera traps twice since the new set-up and although the animals in our area are used to camera traps standing

around, we got a lot of images of curious hyenas and jackals sticking their faces in the camera. Unfortunately, we also lost one camera trap at Green Valley Den to the young hyenas of the E-Bay clan. When I got to the site only the pole with the protective housing was still left and there was no sign of the camera trap itself. While I was walking through the vegetated valley to search for the camera, I heard something moving a bit away from me and when I looked up there were two cubs watching me very curiously. I knew I could stop searching for the camera, as it was likely to be deep down in their den by now.

Ontanda Environmental Information Centre

by Inga Jänecke



I had the great pleasure to be invited by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to give presentations to school children from secondary schools in Luderitz as well as Karasburg at the Ontanda Educational Centre at Kolmanskop. During these presentations, I told them about the brown hyena's ecology and their threats. Furthermore, I told them how they should behave if they encounter a brown hyena, which was particularly important for the



children from Luderitz, as they are more likely to encounter a hyena either in town or on the Peninsula. Furthermore, I showed them some of our exhibits we always take along, such as a brown hyena skull and hair, hyena and jackal footprints in plaster and a hyena collar. All in all, I think I triggered the interest of all children in the nature that is at their doorsteps and to understand how important all species are for an ecosystem to function.

For There is Nothing Lost, That May be Found

by Inga Jänecke



During my Telemetry drives I always hike up on high hills to increase my chances of getting the signals of our hyenas. One of these hills is located in the northern area of our Atlas Bay clans' home range. In 2013, we used to have a camera trap set-up in a beautiful saltpan valley in this area. Unfortunately, our hyenas always loved to destroy every camera trap that we set-up there and we were never able to find one of them – until now. During one of my hikes I found one of the camera traps that we thought was lost to the hyenas. As you can imagine it was completely destroyed and everything was corroded as it has been lying out in the open for almost 4 years now. Nevertheless, I was able to retrieve some images from the SD card which revealed one of the naughty hyenas that destroyed the camera trap. But finding one of these camera traps wasn't enough. When I hiked in this same area again a few days later I found a second camera

trap that the hyenas took. It felt like a Déjà vu and I couldn't believe my eyes. Unfortunately, the SD card of this camera trap got lost when the hyenas were playing with it.

Citizen Science Project Updates

by Ingrid Wiesel

As mentioned above, we finally managed to send out a questionnaire via the regional representatives of the Namibian Agricultural Union (NAU). Apart from getting brown hyena occurrence assessments, we are interested to find camera trap owners in Namibia, that are interested in sharing their camera trap footage regarding brown hyenas with us. With this project, it is as important to find owners that don't capture brown hyenas on their traps as owners that capture them. Such data, combined with the questionnaire assessments, gives us quite reliable presence and absence data that we can use to model brown hyena distribution in Namibia. The response and support has been amazing so far, but we still have a long way to go. Our main areas of concern, where sound data is missing are the Zambesi, Kavango West, Omaheke, Ohangwena and Hardap regions. If you know of potential collaboration partners there, please let us know, so that we can contact them directly.

At this stage, I would like to thank the following participants and share some of their images: Freddi Herzberg, Timm and Inéz Miller, Werner Rogl, Alexander Rogl, Barra Viljoen, Burkart Rust, Petro Slabbert, Doris Gladis, John Moolman, Joerg Gaugler, Phil van

Schalkwyk, Ferdinand Wittrock, Neurath Botha, Thys Blaauw, Uwe Rentel, Gudrun and Frank Heger, Heiko Emmel, Christian Baas, Merwe Fourie, Johan van Wyk, Michael Zimny, Andrew Campbell, Heiko Binding, MJP Hilbert, Piet, Christine and Ben Stoman, Rhyno Dreyer, Gys van Schalkwyk, Keith Newnham and Natacha Batault.



Sightings were reported by Michael Demtschuk and Peter Cunningham. Thanks very much to all participants and I hope to be able to share more exciting images soon.

FUNDRAISING

- **IVA** supported us again with € 500. I will present a talk about the importance of Citizen Science participation at their annual meeting in April.
- **Theo Klatte** continues to provide lenses for damaged camera traps. They work very well and this prolongs the lifetime of our equipment that suffers a lot in our harsh coastal desert environment.
- **Pescanova** and the **Lüderitz Spar** has helped us with storing bait for our annual darting season.



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