



Darting Season 2018

by Ingrid Wiesel



We usually don't plan our darting season for the winter time because we are trying to avoid the cold and dark time of the year, as the nights are just that little bit too long to be able to stay awake all night in order to capture hyenas. This year though, the nights were long, but the warm east wind weather made up for it. Our darting team was also quite interesting: Kirk, Max and I as the core team joined by Rachael Hill from the US, Alessandro Alvaro from Italy and Marie Lemerle from France. What a mixture of personalities, traditions and accents, we certainly had some good laughs, for example when deciding whether pasta should be cooked al dente (European, especially Italian way) or soft (US way). We started with setting up bait at E-Bay to fit KC Sowande with a new satellite collar. Obelixa, her mother, is too old to be darted again and the collars of the two young males Kai-Alex and Lloyd should still be working.

However, the VHF signal that we received while searching for them to do data downloads, indicated that both males' collar battery voltages were low and we decided to try to capture them, too, to fit new GPS collars. KC Sowande, who is usually quite difficult to 'convince' to come close to the bait, was the first this year to get a new collar. She is in an excellent condition, but was neither lactating nor pregnant at the time of capture. We then moved to Atlas Bay, as Alaika also needed a new collar and we wanted to find Luther and Clyde Too, to see

whether their collar batteries were low, too. Despite several search efforts, we could not find the two males, and they also did not go to the bait, which could mean that they have moved out of the area. However, I rather think that the collars are not working any more, but we have to wait and see whether we capture them on our camera traps in future. After we had successfully collared Alaika, who was not in the best condition and also neither lactating nor pregnant, we moved back to E-Bay to try our luck with Kai-Alex and Lloyd. Both of them were very skittish when approaching the bait, but we eventually managed to capture both of them - it took some time though. These two males are KC Sowande's and Obelixa's offspring and have reached an age,



where they may emigrate soon. I have planned to do some extensive aerial telemetry with Gino next year to find all males that are missing in action and we would then also look for these two in case they disappear from E-Bay. At the moment though, they spend a lot of time at the territory boundary towards the Atlas Bay clan, so maybe one of them will join Alaika and her clan.

We've also set-up camera traps at most dens that are used by the E-Bay and Atlas Bay clan and will monitor both clans in detail. Obelixa is between 14 and 16 years old now. She was a regular visitor at the bait this year, also during the day. We were so privileged to be able to observe her, many of us said their silent good-buys, as it may have been the last time that we see her.

Thanks to Sue Cooper, Kathie & Kay Noli and Emsie Verwey for helping us in the field with camera trap set-ups, tracking and capture.

Baker's Bay Study

by Ingrid Wiesel

Our new study at Baker's Bay aims to collect baseline data to develop a tourism program with minimal impact on the target species, brown hyena, black-backed jackal and Cape fur seal. We are assisting the Ministry of Environment and Tourism with regard to the currently developed monitoring framework and tourism development plan for the area. We will closely monitor hyena behaviour to ensure long-term sustainability. More information can be found on our web page and we will post updates on Facebook.

We've set-up a total of nine camera trap so far. Three additional ones could not be deployed, as the seal colony was inaccessible at the time of our visit in July. We are also currently applying for funding for 10 additional camera traps in order to use sets at each location, which makes it easier and quicker to establish an identification catalogue for resident brown hyenas.

At present, three camera traps are set-up within the territory of the Dreimasterbay clan, five within the territory of the Baker's Bay clan and one along a corridor, that is used by inland animals to reach the Baker's Bay seal colony on occasional (or maybe regular) foraging trips.

At this point, we would like to share some of the amazing images that we have already retrieved from the site. One of the best visited spots is at 'The Drum' camera trap, placed along the corridor. Hyenas are pasting on this drum to mark their presence. We therefore get many images with hyenas sniffing deposited pastes or pasting themselves. 'The Drum' must smell like a book to the hyenas and is perfect for us to obtain identification images.



All other camera traps are also set-up at paste marks or latrines. We've already got some clear identification images, but it is far too early to give an indication about the number of hyenas in the area. Sue went for data downloads at the end of August and could at least access the seal colony on foot. We may be able to set-up the remaining three traps in October, when the next visit is planned. Who knows, maybe we will meet Luther, Clyde Too or even Kai-Alex and Lloyd there in future...



Pathways Conference

We presented a poster at the Pathways Conference – Human Dimensions in Goslar, Germany. The poster's theme was about the influence of social media on human-carnivore-conflict at Garub. We will publish the study soon and will then post a link on our web page. We will also report more about the spotted hyenas at Garub in our December Newsletter edition.

AGM

We've held our AGM at the beginning of July in Lüderitz. The meeting was well attended and we presented our new research projects and introduced Sue Cooper, who is going to service our equipment and act as a contact person in Namibia. Sue is based in Oranjemund and will travel to Lüderitz every six to eight weeks.

Donations

Crispin & Orti Clay renewed their sponsoring for Clyde Too for another year. I will do my best to find him and post news about his whereabouts.

Sue Cooper is going to do a camera trap study at the Orange River for her MSc starting later this year. **B & E International** were so generous to sponsor wooden poles to mount the traps. Thank you very much!



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:



Subadult hyena bringing food back to Green Valley Den



Adult hyena enjoying a sand bath at Jungle Den



Adult hyena carrying a seal pup past D-SPG 27



Inquisitive hyena seconds before 'stealing' the camera trap



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