



September 2002



The Barking Gecko

Newsletter of the NamibRand Nature Reserve

Volume 3, Issue 3

Water in Moringa Valley

Moringa valley is situated on the northern part of the farm Toskaan and had a productive borehole, called Moringa-water, till 1999. What exactly happened in the borehole is difficult to say, but in that year, it collapsed or was filled with soil by the stream that is only three metres away. It was a good rain year but the stream certainly did not run in at the top. It is more likely that it found its way through the loose sediments and entered the hole below the borehole casing. Namib farmers were always poor and to save costs a new borehole was only fitted with a short length of metal pipe or casing. Many holes have only six metres or less of casing.

Whatever the reason may be, the borehole was lost and the valley had no water. It was decided by the Board to drill a new hole and Mr W. Metzger was instructed to do the work. For one reason or another, he only drilled there at the end of January this year. The first hole was sunk only eight metres east of the old hole and was still dry at a depth of 85 metres. We moved the drill rig 10 metres west and water was struck at 50 metres, the same level as in the old hole.

This time casing was put in until it reached solid rock, at a depth of 24 metres. A solar pump was installed and again the animals in that valley now have water. Kudu, two species of zebra, oryx, springbok and the baboons have been seen there in the last month.

I would like to thank Mrs Dodds for sponsoring this development financially. Her concern for wildlife and willingness to assist the Reserve are greatly appreciated.

Achim Lenssen

Tribute to "Ability"

I didn't contribute to the last Barking Gecko; which was almost devastating but, I just didn't hand in my assignment!!

"With time comes healing" are words we so often hear when something sad happens in our lives, and these words, most of the time, hang in the air and few people know what to do with it at that specific moment!

I would like to change that phrase to "time creates ability". This was my experience almost four years ago and most of you know the history and have at one or other stage had some of my "Art" in your hand. The ability to celebrate life, but also to create, has changed the view on this sometimes upside-down world completely. Not only is nature so much part of our everyday existence, but also the characters and creatures we share it with.

My lesson is, use character and creature to celebrate ability and use ability to celebrate life. Thank you all for supporting this idea.

Hermann Cloete

Fairy Circles

The riddle of the Fairy Circles has as yet, not been solved. Although the answer may some day be found, many people enjoy the mystery surrounding these Fairy Circles and some even hope that this may remain so for a long time to come. As long as we do not know why Fairy Circles occur, we can continue creating our own theories and discussing their origin at length. I have taken an extract from the *South African Journal of Science* 97, January/February 2001 just to keep the phenomenon surrounding Fairy Circles alive

Ursi Lenssen.

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Origin of the enigmatic, circular, barren patches ('Fairy Rings') of the pro-Namib

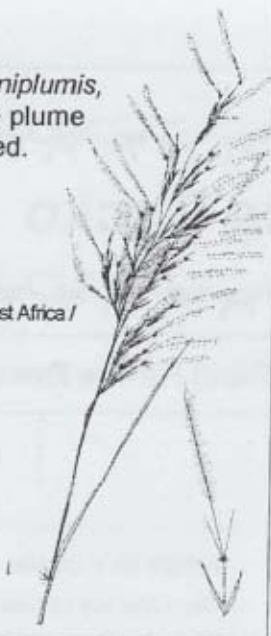
We have studied the enigmatic, circular barren patches on the edge of the pro-Namib Desert in Namibia. An aerial photograph of the Wolwedans area (25°4.5'S, 15°59.5'E) showed that the patches had an average diameter of 6.1m and an ordered distribution with an R-value of 1.68, suggesting a termite-associated origin. We postulate that there is an active evolutionary process of circular patch formation, involving genesis, growth, maturation and extinction. *Stipagrostis uniplumis* seedlings, growing in the moist inner soil of barren patches, after rains, appeared to lack root side-hairs when compared to similar plants growing outside the patch and these seedlings invariably died when the rains subsided. Growth experiments with *Cynodon dactylon* in inner and outer soil samples showed that these grass

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Place Names In Use On NRNR (continued from July issue)

Stipagrostis uniplumis, showing one plume magnified.

From:
Grasses of South West Africa /
Namibia.
M.A.N. MÜLLER



seedlings could survive cycles of dehydration and hydration only when growing in outer soil. Seedling in the inner soil collapsed and died under similar conditions. This suggested that there is a biological factor in the inner soil, which inhibits resistance to dehydration, possibly through inhibition of side-root growth and/or maintenance. We postulate that termites are linked to this biological factor in some unknown manner and that the barren patches have an evolutionary advantage for the termites by acting as water traps. Direct experiments showed five-fold more water in soil samples from the barren patches than between them. Preliminary attempts to indicate or isolate the putative abiosis factor with HPLC were not successful and more sophisticated analytical techniques are called for.

C.F. Albrecht, J.J. Joubert and P.H. De Rycke

Two Pumps

A water point on Aandstêr, some 5km north west of the homestead close to the boundary with the farm Dina. This place had two wind pumps, one to draw the water out of the borehole and into a large reservoir and the second to pump it from the reservoir up a long incline to another storage reservoir. Both wind pumps are up for sale now as a new solar and wind powered system was installed in January 2002. This new dual power system does the work of both pumps. The name must stay as we now pump with solar power or wind power (or both) at Two Pumps.

Vista Reservoir

A water point on the farm Aandstêr, at high elevation, from where one has a fantastic 360-degree panoramic view. The water here comes all the way from Two Pumps, 4km away, and flows by gravity another 6km due west.

Swartkop

A reservoir far to the west on Aandstêr close to hills that have the dark, volcanic, dolerite rocks tumbling down their sides. Water comes from Vista Reservoir.

Prosopis

How can we name a place after an exotic, alien, intruder plant species? We did not; it was the previous owner of Aandstêr. He named the water point because the hardy prosopis trees were the only ones that managed to survive in the extreme south west of the farm. One must remember that the prosopis tree, which has its home in the USA, is extremely hardy, highly

nutritious and evergreen as well. Many farmers in arid and hyper-arid regions plant them for their properties. The fact that they are dangerous intruders and very hard to eradicate is often overlooked.

Hamburger Hill

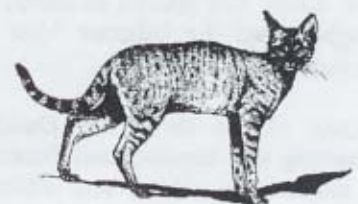
In the valley that runs through Vreemdelingspoort towards Sossusvlei lies a small hill at the boundary with the Namib-Naukluft Park. Flanked by high red sand dunes to the left and high rocky slopes to the right this narrow valley is closed off effectively by this fence. Many carcasses of Oryx lie around here. Steven of Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge came up with this name after reading about the Vietnam War. In future editions we will look at some of the farm names, their meaning and possible origin.

Achim Lenssen

"Die Kat Kom Weer" – The return of *Felis lybica*

A few mornings ago, I saw some tracks around the Wolwedans Dunes Lodge (WDL) that indicates that some cat is roaming around at night. Reading the "newspaper" most mornings on my early walks, I observed that it must be two cats and that they've made WDL their permanent residence. A few nights ago this was confirmed by the call – katermaai- of our new residents. Lots of questions the next morning from guests who asked who was keeping domestic cats, and if this was allowed!! I am still busy explaining that the African wild cat make the same "noises" as our domestic cats, when our two new residents appear and make their way to the waterhole. In silence through our field glasses, we all observed these two beautiful animals stalking sandgrouse and rock pige (spec. doves). No success, but sure great entertainment, not only for me but also our guests. The excitement of Africa's big cats turn guests to Africa on, but these two smaller versions prove that no matter what size of a cat, when it returns the excitement is great!!

Hermann Cloete (April 2002)



Felis lybica

Conservation and Reserve News

In the April issue, it was mentioned that Koos Erasmus had been appointed as Maintenance man on the Reserve. On 1/05 he resigned, realising that the post was not quite the type of work he had in mind. We decided not to fill the post again, but rather give our junior employees more responsibility and at the same time, a good pay rise. So far, this seems to have paid off well. It was also decided that in order to fulfil their duties more competently, they needed to have a valid driver's licence. Most of our junior staff can drive quite well, but are not licenced to do so on public roads. As they cannot read or write Ursi was prepared to teach them the

theoretical side, to prepare and enable them to pass their tests. Right from the start Markus, Abraham and Willem enjoyed being taught everything necessary to get their learner's licence. Many hours of hard work from both sides was rewarded. On Thursday 15th August, Achim took Markus, Abraham and Willem to Mariental. What a relief for all of us when each of them passed their test without any problems. So now, it is up to Achim to polish their driving skills and teach them to park a vehicle before they can pass their final exam.

Ursi Lenssen

From the Guest book at Keerweder

It has been a truly magical and spiritual experience of this amazing place, where colours and light are forever changing and one feels part of an almost infinitesimal, extraordinary experience, at the beginning of time. It is a place of grandeur and purity, touched and sacred, a stunning beauty. I believe this is a true monument, a very important one to preserve forever, for All and the Planet. Thank you for a great hospitality. I shall come back.

Kuki Gallmann
29th July 2002

Kuki Gallmann, author of several books, one being "I dreamed of Africa", was born near Venice and studied political sciences at the University of Padua. Fascinated by Africa since her childhood, she visited Kenya first in 1970, and returned to live there in 1972 with her husband and son. As a tribute to their memory, she founded the Gallmann Memorial Foundation, with the specific mandate of creating on Ol Ari Nyiro ranch in Laikipia an example of the harmonious coexistence of man and the environment through exploring new ways of combining development and conservation. The Foundation promotes and sponsors education for Kenyans. An active conservationist, in 1989 she was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark by HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for her major and continuing contribution to the survival of the black rhinoceros in Kenya and for promoting research work for Nature conservation in general, with special attention to elephants and the use of local plants for medicinal purposes. She lives on Ol Ari Nyiro ranch in Kenya with her daughter and eight dogs.

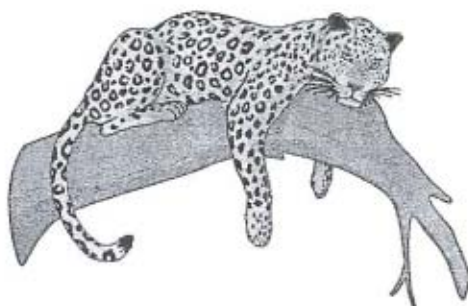
Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) sighting

On 25 July 2002, we were driving from the Toskaan house along the road towards the west, on our way to the Moringa water place. About 1km from where the road passes through two small rocky outcrops, we saw a leopard leaping across the road, at a distance of approximately 50m and from south to north towards the mountain on our right. It stopped when about 150m from the road and as the grass was quite high we saw it stretch its neck to look over the grass at us for about 2 minutes. I took two photos (not developed yet) and hope that they come out. It was 5pm at that time. The leopard was in good view when it first crossed the road and it was not a very big specimen, perhaps a female or young male. It then vanished between the high grass and could not be found again, even using our binoculars.

Continuing on our way to Moringa we came across six Hartmann's zebra approximately 1.5km before the lower waterhole. The tanks were full, but the pump was not running because of the sun setting early. On our other farm Felseneck (Okahandja) we have seen leopards before and are sure that there must be more around Draaihoek and Toskaan.

The tracks of a spotted hyaena are around our house at Draaihoek quite regularly now.

J. & D. Klein, Draaihoek



The forever changing colours in the Namib

Unlike in Europe, we do not experience the different seasons of the year with the first buds showing on shrubs and trees in spring, followed by a burst of various shades of green and multicoloured flowers to announce the start of summer. With autumn, leaves change their colour to the most beautiful shades of reddish-orange-brown and by winter these fall and lie scattered under forests and trees.

In the Namib, all the various colour changes are happening very discreetly and may go unnoticed to the unobservant eye. In spring, we may experience a new-felt range of colours announcing new life. When thick, white clouds start appearing, and the first rains come, the plains may soon show the first signs of light green. If the rains are ample, the first flowers will appear, not in abundance, only here and there. In summer the colours tend to get brighter, the sky may become hazy due to dust particles or the smoke from veld fires. By midday all colours will blend into a yellowish flare and due to the heat of the sun, the "fata morgana" may even fantasise a blue sea here and there. With the coming of autumn, the colours become more pronounced and of a pastel hue. During winter the landscapes are often crystal clear, the skies more blue, the dunes more orange-reddish, and the mountains – these may be anything from reddish-mauve-purple-pink-orange-dark blue or lilac depending on the time of day. Then towards evening, a red-fire ball in the west may end the day for all. The nights gratefully show us galaxies of stars, which no one living in cities will ever behold. The millions of stars shining as bright little suns all over the skies show us a beauty nowhere else to found.

Ursi Lenssen

NamibRand bird atlas project

Following in the footsteps of the very successful Southern African Bird Atlas Project (SABAP), it was decided in early 2001 to implement a bird atlasing project on NamibRand Nature Reserve. This was to update the records of birds of the Reserve.

The SABAP started in 1983 and ended in 1993. This was the largest biodiversity project ever conducted in Africa and one of the most successful of its kind anywhere in the world. The six nations of southern Africa worked together and the

result was the publication in 1997 of the landmark 700 page, two volume Atlas of Southern African Birds. The SABAP dataset comprises 147 605 checklists and 7 332 504 individual records.

Two concessionaires from NRNR, Marc Dürr of Tok Tokkie Trails, and Vernon Swanepoel of Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge were instrumental in setting the ball rolling. NRNR covers six-quarter degree squares (15°x15°). A data sheet was devised and accompanied by a map clearly showing the boundaries of the six

squares, made available to guides, rangers, concessionaires, and other staff. The database is computerised and managed by Marilyn Bridgeford.

There are several reasons why the project was revitalised. Atlasing for SABAP stopped in 1993, almost 10 years ago. From 1997 to 2000, the Namib experienced exceptionally high rainfall, in fact, in many places the best in over 20 years. The high rainfall with the

Continued on page 4

concomitant increase in food plays a very important part in the distribution of birds. Another factor, is that until 1993, several of the farms making up NRNR were still productive commercial farms. As a result, they were not as intensively atlased and the less common and shyer species were not recorded. Now there are guides, rangers, concessionaires and other staff who are interested in birds, the list is growing longer and longer.

Although the project has only been going for a few months, the distribution range of several species has increased markedly from information available in the SABAP atlas. These include White-tailed Shrike, Cape White-eyes, and European Golden-oriole, Ashy Tit and Plum-coloured Starlings.

So, if you are a birder, help us update our records and keep those bird lists coming.
Peter Bridgeford

Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre

About three years ago, I spent a couple of days at the Family Hideout on Die Duine with some friends. On our way out, we stopped at Tok Tokkie and were kindly invited for tea. That cup of tea has changed my life considerably. I asked Elinor the innocent question: "So, what made you actually decide to live here and run a business?" And for the next 1½ hours I was told all about how Elinor and Marc loved the area, but felt they wanted to give something back to the Namibians. From the first day at Tok Tokkie, they were not only pursuing setting up a business, but wanted to establish the NamibRand Desert Awareness, Education and Research Centre. This was wholeheartedly supported by the CEO, but first Tok Tokkie had to be set up. The NamibRand Conservation Foundation (NRCF) in the meantime was to collect funds for this project. As Elinor pointed out, the Dürs were mainly interested in the educational side of the centre.

Elinor explained to me the idea of an environmental education centre (EEC), and I was very intrigued by the idea. At round about the same time, I became actively involved in the NamibRand Nature Reserve as a member of the executive committee and must admit that I lost track a bit of the EEC, as we were busy restructuring the Reserve and turn it into a non-profitable Section 21 company. But whenever I saw Elinor and Marc at our annual meetings, we would inevitably discuss the possibilities and progress. Last year Tok Tokkie was up and running in such a way that the Dürs felt they could now put some energy into the EEC.

It was a bit disheartening that the NRCF

somehow was not making too much progress concerning the Desert Awareness Centre, and the idea was born that it may well be a way out of the pending situation by just starting with the education part and add the other components on, as funds became available.

In February this year Elinor had been to a course of SADC REEP, and when she came back to Windhoek, she wanted to share these ideas with the CEO, who unfortunately happened to be in Europe at the time. Elinor knew I was on the Board of Directors of the NamibRand Nature Reserve Association (NRNR) and I had always been enthusiastic about the idea of an EEC, so she contacted me and asked if she could come and see me. And thus I had another cup of tea! Elinor presented me with a full proposal for setting up an EEC at Die Duine and wanted my critical remarks on the matter, before she presented this to the Board of Directors. Her enthusiasm rekindled mine that had dimmed down a bit, as I had been busy with other things, and I was more than happy to support her and Marc as much as I could.

I took the proposal to Swakopmund and discussed the matter with Jürgen and Dorothé Klein, knowing that they felt strongly about conservation and took a keen interest in the happenings of NamibRand. Jürgen, being the practical man he is, started to ask a lot of questions and I realised that it was not enough to be enthusiastic about an idea – I needed a lot more background and knowledge. A friend of the Kleins was invited and interrogated about the matter. She is a teacher at the Swakopmund School and has a lot of experience with youth groups and environmental excursions. She had also set up an EEC with learners from her school, and gave us valuable hints and important points to consider.

And before long I realised that I was not watching this favourably from the outside, but had jumped right into the middle of the circle, spinning around and trying to find a way for this to be turned into a reality. Suddenly it was no longer "Elinor and Marc", it was "we" and that we included Dorothé Klein as well. Then there was Viktoria Paulick and Andreas Keding, who joined the gang, Viktoria, having set up the Africat EEC and Andreas holding a Diploma in Natural Resource Management. They had reached a point in their lives where they wanted to make a change, and the idea of changing to Die Duine, building an EEC and getting involved in conservation was not only intriguing to them!

Now came the time to turn all that enthusiasm into practicalities. First of all we needed to convince the Board that this was a viable idea, which would also benefit the Reserve that had just turned

into a non-profit organisation, committed to conservation.

At the Board meeting there was an in-depth discussion and the CEO Mr J.A. Brückner happily presented the result to Elinor at the following AGM. It was a great experience for us to see, how all concessionaires welcomed the project and were more than happy to help us in any which way they could. The first major hurdle was overcome – we were given permission to build and run an EEC on Die Duine, subject to the conditions that we would produce a proposal and viability study, not put up any permanent structures and that the whole project would be re-evaluated in December 2003. We would act as independent concessionaires, but would be exempt from concession fees, as the whole project would require donor funding.

The next months were spent writing one proposal after the other, and we also managed to secure the funding required for the first year. Mr Klein, Mrs. Berker, Mrs. de Winter and the NRCF prepared to loan us altogether almost all that we will require to set up the centre and employ Viktoria and Andreas for one year to build and run the centre.

At this stage, we are still deep in paper work. A donors' brochure has been designed that will be available in English, German and French. After long deliberations, it was decided to found a trust, the Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre Trust. This now is pending with the Registrar. A concession agreement between the NDEEC and the NRNR Association has been drawn up and will hopefully be negotiated and signed in the near future.

Our next step is now to approach donors and sponsors, and building is to start on the 2nd of January 2003. We will open the centre in April 2003.

In conclusion I'd like to say a bit about the NDEEC. Namibia is a semi arid country. Even the most productive land in Namibia is vulnerable to over utilization both by industrial and farming enterprises. The desert gives the most clear and extreme example of the vulnerability of the Namibian eco system. By creating an understanding of the sustainable utilization of resources in an extreme environment, skills can be applied to manage sustainable utilization in a less extreme, but still vulnerable situation.

Within the last decade, the approach to education in schools has changed significantly. The learner-centred approach with "hands-on" experience is replacing the method of teachers just handing down information. This means that increasingly the learners are leaving

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the classroom for more practical studies.

The Project will instil environmental awareness in the youth, irrespective of nationality, ethnic group or income group. Allowing skills to be taught on how to manage this interaction and keeping the balance. This will bring about an attitude change to our interaction with the environment. This will be done by:

1. Stressing the importance of the environment, those that use it and how to look after it.
2. The future leaders of our country are thereby given the opportunity to make informed decisions about their future heritage.
3. The Centre will provide teachers with a programme that is closely linked to the current school curriculum and use the learner-centred approach to introduce the study of desert ecosystems.
4. The Centre will promote efficient and appropriate use of natural resources, especially in an arid environment to ensure sustainable long-term use.
5. The Centre **must be** accessible to all Namibian learners regardless of their means. This cannot be achieved by a commercial operation. To repay our capital outlay, the price charged for each learner would put the programme beyond the reach of most Namibians. Thus **invalidating the aim of increasing environmental awareness among the whole Namibian population.**

The NDEEC will run a three-fold programme:

1. Education of school children
2. Training of teachers in the learner-centred approach and the experiential learning method; co-ordinating with them the required school curriculum and the contents of courses run at the EE Centre; maximising the preparation of learners for their outdoor-courses at the Centre for maximum benefit
3. Training of interested parties who wish to set up their own EE Centre in the experiential learning method, the learner-centred approach, the running and organisational side of such a centre, fund-raising and other administrative issues; the aim is to establish a kind of certificate and found a network of EE Centres, such making it easier for donors to fund to a central organisation that can then distribute funds according to the needs of its accredited members.

We started out with a great idea – now we are busy turning that idea into reality. We would like to use this opportunity to thank everybody who has supported us so far, and remind you all that we need all the help we can get.

Chris Berker



Landowner Profile: Kwessiegat: Marianne Elisabeth Berker

Marianne Berker met her husband (Chief Justice Hans-Joachim Berker) on a skiing holiday in Kitzbühel and followed him to then South West Africa not knowing what to expect. With him, she travelled Southern Africa extensively and learned to love the arid regions of the south west of Namibia. Marianne is a qualified interpreter but since she got married, she took the full time job of supporting her husband in his career and hobbies. At the same time, she managed to raise three children. Vivienne lives in Switzerland and works as a geriatric nurse. Christiane is a qualified psychologist having chosen to live in Windhoek, after fifteen years in Europe. Katja lives in Johannesburg with her daughter Maxine Julia, running a small Lodge.

One evening, about seven years ago my mother called my sister and me together and announced that she had to discuss something with us. She told us that Mr. Brückner had come to see her. He raved about a farm south of Sossusvlei on the envisaged NamibRand Nature Reserve, the most beautiful landscape, mountains, plains and dunes, and explained that this would be more of an idealistic investment into conserving the area and protecting the wildlife. Mr Brückner wanted to create this ideal haven for the conservation of wildlife and needed investors. As old friends, he knew that Marianne might well be interested.

It had not been long since the death of my father, and as we sat there, we thought about the many times we had been to Sossusvlei with him. He had loved that part of Namibia, had loved the pro Namib. There was no doubt in our minds that he would have supported the idea of creating a private conservation area and certainly would have gotten involved. And so, the family decided to become part of that dream – we became the owners of Kwessiegat.

I joined my mother at the founder meeting of the NamibRand Nature Reserve, and she also became a founder member of the NamibRand Conservation Foundation. After some years, she passed the responsibilities on to me.

My mother has always felt a deep commitment towards the conservation of Namibia. She supports the environmental education centre (see more on that in the article about the Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre) and

takes a keen interest in all conservation activities executed by the concessionaires.

When my mother is on NamibRand, she makes sure she can have a picnic at her favourite place, Bushman Koppie. As we sit and marvel at the view over the plains into the dunes, we inevitably begin to dream, designing a small house where we could sit out on the veranda, indulge in the sunset and bathe our souls in the tranquillity around us, while the bat-cared foxes were busily going about their business. So, who knows, one day we might. Until then we enjoy being part of a big family, all living the same dream, following ideals and believing in true conservation and protection.

Christiane Berker

"A First Solo!"

As most of my fellow inhabitants of this beautiful NRNR know, I'm a hobby artist. I decided to take it a step further and organised a solo exhibition of my works!

My teacher, or better "art tutor" was at that stage - time I've lived on the NRNR and specifically at Wolwedans - not only nature surrounding us, but also the people that live here and all the guests that we host here. The excitement came from them, most of my work travels back to Europe, USA, UK and RSA as a memoir and invitation for people to return and to support not only Wolwedans (WD) as a product, but also our Conservation efforts.

I didn't have any big paintings or sketches at that stage, but disciplined myself to do at least two works in the morning before the working day started and one in the evening. At this stage I have sent the invitations and had my works at Annelize Kendzia for mounting and preparation. Annelize was very excited and also the guests I have consulted were excited about the works that I had shown them.

29 April 2002

Nerve-wracking as I stayed back at Wolwedans to attend our management meeting and only left that afternoon for Windhoek. One day to do all the pre-prep for my exhibition and see the people who assisted me in getting the 33 works ready for the great evening on 1.05.2002.

1 May 2002

A fantastic day, the exhibition is set up, friends and family arrived from all-over to assist and I am as nervous as someone that is waiting for the "head-master" to announce either a success or failure

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Newsletter of the NamibRand Nature Reserve

P.O. Box 40704
Windhoek
Namibia



Editor: Mandy Brückner
Phone: +264 (0)61 226803
Fax: +264 (0)61 232890
Email: ambruck@mweb.com.na

Editor: Ursi Lenssen,
Farm Keerweder
Phone: 264-6638 ask for 5702

"A First Solo!" (continued)

Thanks a million to all my dear friends
and family for that great evening. Life
and what we do in the short time we
are here, is only worth the time with
friends and family, like the one I know
and that support me!

Hermann Cloete
(May 2002)

"The wildlife of today is not
ours to dispose of as we please.
We have it in trust and must
account for it to those who
come after us."

Website
www.namibrand.com

Poetry Corner

"The Gamewarden and 2IC" - with more apologies to Lewis Carroll

The sun was shining on NamibRand
Shining with all his might:
He did his very best to make
The sand dunes smooth and bright-
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The gamewarden and 2IC
Were walking close at hand;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand
'If this were only cleared away,'
They said, 'it would be grand!'

'If Marylin and Ursula
Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose,' the warden said,
'That they could get it clear?'
'I doubt it,' said the 2IC,
And shed a bitter tear.

'Oh, Oryx, come and walk with us!'
The warden did bequest.
'A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
We'll go a little west:
We cannot do with more than four
To shoot them level best.'

The eldest Oryx looked at him,
But never a word he said:
The eldest Oryx winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head -
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the camel thorn bed.

But four young Oryx hurried up,
All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their

faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat-
And this was odd, because, you know
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oryx followed them,
And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, until-
The 2IC he looked at them and said,
'how you must stand still!'

The gamewarden and 2IC
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a dune
Conveniently low:
And all the little Oryx stood
And waited in a row.

'The time has come,' the Warden said
'To talk of many trials:
Of windmills breaking down and
Fairy rings for miles.
And why the repeater gets so hot
And why no Cheetahs we have got
And tourists with no smiles.

'But wait a bit,' the Oryx cried,
'Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!'
'No hurry,' said the 2IC.
They thanked him much for that.

'A .302,' the warden said,
'Will stand us in good stead:
A few strong men to help us load
But keeping very mute -

Now, if you're ready, Oryx dear,
We can begin to shoot.

'But not at us!' the Oryx cried,
Turning a little blue.
'After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do!'
'The night is fine,' the warden said.
'Do you admire the view?'

'It was so kind of you to come!'
The warden said with glee.
'How can I shoot so many beasts?'
He asked the 2IC.
The 2IC said nothing but
'We will enjoy the feast!'

'It seems a shame,' the warden said
'To play them such a trick.
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!'
The 2IC said nothing but
'Your shooting's not so slick!'

'I weep for you,' the warden said:
'I deeply sympathise.'
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his steaming eyes.

'Oh, Oryx,' said the 2IC,
'You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again!'
But answer came there none-
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd shot at every one!

Elinor Dürr

"Tribute to a friend"

... you have the name
friend and you also
deserve to be called Friend!

you that make time to listen,
time to advise, also time
to correct and time just
to say nothing.

you that always have the
light in your eyes when
we meet... the excitement
of being together....!!

you when we are not
together that carries me
in your heart and thoughts.
you that calls me by
my name in good times
and sad times....!!!

friend ... you deserve
to be called Friend!!
Hermann Cloete
(May 2002)