



for a living planet®



© John E. NEWBY / WWF-Canon

# NAMIBIA

## A new way of thinking in Namibia

Namibia is a country with many scars. Some of its people are amongst the poorest in the world, scratching out a living in harsh and challenging conditions. Civil war and political unrest have gone hand in hand with poverty, deprivation and the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Life is a constant struggle.

Wildlife has suffered too. In the 1970s and 80s, commercial hunting for ivory and rhino horn left animal numbers dangerously low. Local people gained little from this wave of relentless hunting, as under the former government all wildlife was owned by the state and residents of communal lands had no rights to benefit from it. Some resorted to poaching just to survive.



© Edward PARKER / WWF-Canon

## Bringing wildlife and people together

In 1990, Namibia gained independence from South Africa, and in 1996 the government gave local people the right to establish community-managed wildlife conservation systems, known as 'conservancies'. They could make decisions about the land and wildlife, set up commercial enterprises such as ecotourism and craft markets, and use the profits to pay wages and improve lives. Attitudes towards wild animals changed as communities began to realise species such as rhino, elephant and lion would attract tourists and bring much-needed income to their area. A new way of life began to emerge, bringing benefits for both wildlife and people.



© WWF-Canon / Folke WULF

## Caprivi – lush floodplains

Caprivi shares its borders with Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe and is surrounded by four rivers – Chobe, Kwando, Linyanti and the mighty Zambezi. It has a tropical climate, with high rainfalls from December to March. Among the great variety of wildlife found here are elephant, buffalo, lechwe, roan and sable antelope, sitatunga, wattled crane, kudu, baboon, lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, hippopotamus, hyena and crocodile.

Caprivi's indigenous people include the bushmen of the Khwe tribe, skilled trackers who can not only identify where wildlife have been, but also tell how many, of which sex and even whether the animals are healthy or not.

## Kunene – arid desert

Kunene borders Angola's Namibe Province in the north, and the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Landscape ranges from arid savannah to the Skeleton Coast desert. Wildlife includes the largest free ranging population of black rhino in the world. Other species include rare desert adapted elephant, and large carnivores such as lion, cheetah, and leopard, along with hyena, mountain zebra, giraffe, springbok, gemsbok and kudu. Over 68,000 people live here, including ethnic groups such as Himba, Herero and Damara.



## An African success story

*"Namibia's conservancies are living proof that people and wildlife can live alongside one another and thrive."*

Drew McVey, Namibian Programme Manager

Thanks to our supporters, WWF has been involved with conservancies from the very beginning, working with IRDNC to provide support across all levels, from helping conservancies draw up their constitutions, to training community game guards and assisting with wildlife translocation.

We have seen the conservancies we support grow to over 50, with around 30 more being established, collectively involving more than 250,000 people and over 12 million hectares of land. Today, people are able to support themselves and their families without having to resort to poaching, and wildlife is increasing, with rhino and elephant trebling their numbers. This is in stark contrast to places like Zimbabwe, which in 2009 lost on average one rhino per week to poaching.

**WWF's conservancy programme is an incredible and ground-breaking success story, and the generosity of committed supporters like you has played a major part in our achievements.**

*"Our wildlife are our diamonds."*

Conservancy member

The words above are heartening. Yet even though local communities now recognise wildlife as a valuable tourist attraction, a precious cow killed by a lion, or a field of maize trampled by elephants, can be devastating.

Some of our most important and rewarding conservancy projects involve developing harmless methods to keep wildlife away from crops, cattle and villages. They can be quite unusual:-



### Elephant:

Kunene's desert adapted elephants have longer legs and wider feet to help them cross sand dunes to reach water. Caprivi, together with northern Botswana and southern Zambia, holds around 200,000 elephants – the biggest population in Africa.

### Black rhino:

In 1982 only 60 black rhino remained in Kunene. WWF and its partners have been working for over 40 years to protect the remaining population and expand their range through activities such as anti-poaching programmes and translocation. Today there are nearly 1,400 black rhino in Namibia, and as our conservancy projects expand, numbers could increase even more.

### African wild dog:

Endangered wild dogs need large areas to sustain their population. But human expansion is fragmenting their habitat and reducing their natural prey. This makes domestic livestock an attractive target, which can cause conflict with farmers. WWF supports several projects to alleviate human-wildlife conflict.



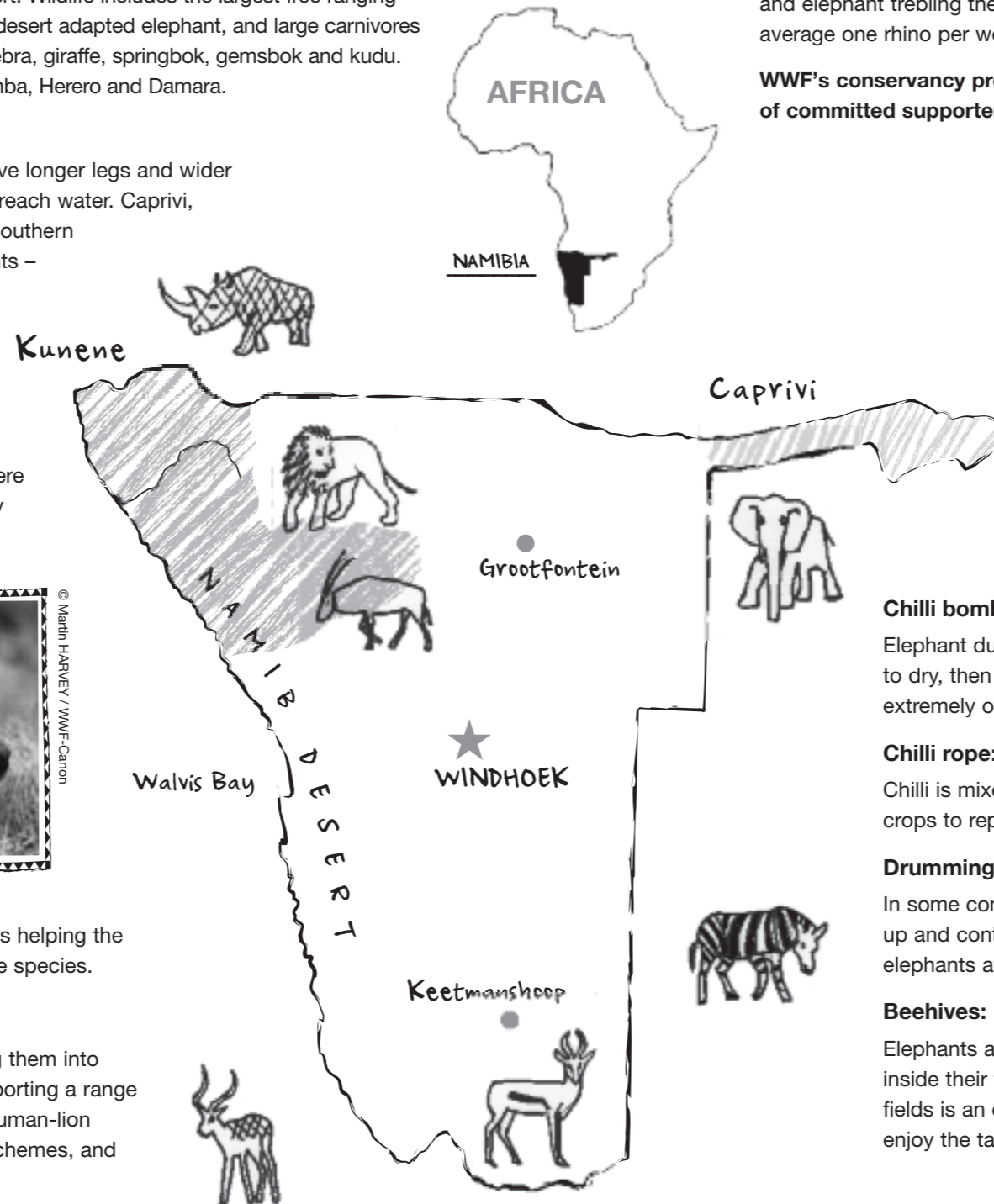
### Black-faced impala:

Numbers are now estimated to be fewer than 4,000, and WWF is helping the Namibian government develop a recovery strategy for this native species.



### Lion:

Livestock is easy prey for lions, bringing them into conflict with local farmers. WWF is supporting a range of community projects to help reduce human-lion conflict such as a livestock insurance schemes, and lion monitoring.



### Chilli bombs:

Elephant dung and chilli are mixed with water and left to dry, then placed around crops and burned. The extremely offensive smell keeps the elephants away.

### Chilli rope:

Chilli is mixed with oil and hung on ropes around crops to repel the elephants.

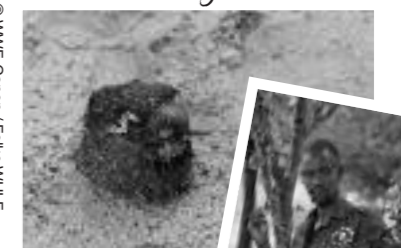
### Drumming:

In some communities, villagers take it in turns to stay up and continuously bang on drums to keep the elephants away.

### Beehives:

Elephants avoid bees because the bees sting them inside their trunks. So placing beehives near crop fields is an effective deterrent, and the farmers can enjoy the tasty side benefit of honey!

*A Smoking chilli bomb*



*Preparing a chilli rope*



*Drumming to keep the elephants away*

## Increasing wildlife numbers

An even distribution of wildlife across the conservancies is key to encouraging successful breeding. WWF and IRDNC assist the Government's Ministry of Environment and Tourism with the translocation of wild animals by ensuring the correct preparations are made. Our activities include mapping, monitoring and liaising with game guards. We have helped translocate nearly 4,000 animals, including black rhino, sable antelope and eland, across 15 conservancies to boost wildlife numbers.

© Martin HARVEY / WWF-Carlon



## Empowering the lives of women

Traditionally, the men of Namibia have held the monopoly on discussion and decision making for the local community. An important part of our programme involves helping women take on active roles within the conservancies. We provide ongoing training and support, including public speaking workshops, which give women the confidence to speak up and interact with others. Many women are now Conservancy Resource Monitors (CRMs), with key duties such as managing craft markets and monitoring local schools.

CRMs can be identified by their bright yellow bags, in which they store all their information. They call the bags their 'always', as they must always be at their side.

© Edward PARKER / WWF-Carlon



MAP HV

## Supporting a harvest of hope

*"Since the Omumbiri has started we don't need to borrow food from our neighbours. If we are hungry today, we can go and harvest and get money and tonight we can buy food."*

Hepute Kapukire, aged 90, Marienfluss conservancy

The Himba women of Kunene protect their skin by rubbing in red ochre, herbs and butterfat. They also perfume their bodies with oil from the resin of a small desert shrub known as Omumbiri (*Commiphora wildii*). This practice is now being developed within the conservancy as a means of creating much-needed income. Women harvest the resin that falls from the plants. This is then sent to France where it is developed for use in perfumes, by companies such as Estée Lauder.



© Drew MOVEY / WWF-UK

Harvesting takes place over a two-month period at the hottest, driest time of the year, and it can take a day or more to reach the Omumbiri plants on foot. We provide transport, food and water, and we also help the conservancies monitor and manage the annual harvest to ensure it remains sustainable.

*"The earth is not ours, it is a treasure we hold in trust for future generations"*

Namibian proverb

**Namibia's community-managed conservancies stand out as a beacon of what can be achieved through sustained effort and long-term commitment. They are also living proof that your support makes a real difference.**

But while our achievements so far are encouraging, we still have a long way to go and many challenges to overcome. We need to help existing conservancies become self-sufficient, enable new conservancies to emerge, and expand the programme across other parts of Namibia. But this takes time and money, and we are relying on your help once again.

**Please make a donation today and help ensure our conservancy programme continues.**