



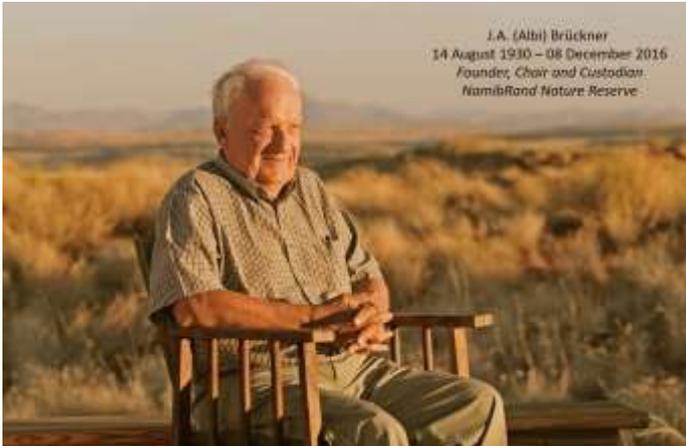
# THE BARKING GECKO



Newsletter of the NamibRand Nature Reserve

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S.R. Brückner

## ***In Memory of Albi Brückner***

Johann Albrecht (Albi) Brückner was born in Windhoek on 14 August 1930. Although he spent part of his childhood in Germany, he returned to Namibia to matriculate from the Windhoek High School. After completing a banking apprenticeship he changed careers and entered the field of engineering, starting out in product sales and working primarily in the south of the country. He joined the South West Engineering Company in the

late 1950s, rising quickly in the business, he built it into the multifaceted Namibia Engineering Corporation, of which he was the Chief Executive Officer and major shareholder.

During his long business career, Albi served as the Chairman of Air Namibia, TransNamib and the Commercial Bank of Namibia. During the same period he was an active member of Rotary; served on the Deutsche Hoehere Private Schule School Board and the Namibia Intressen Gemeinschaft.

Albi Brückner has an innate affinity with the natural environment and the wildlife which inhabits it. This is evident in his passion for the conservation of that environment; a passion which led to his appointment to the Board of the Namibia Nature Foundation in 1987, and service as Chairman from 1998 to 2002. He also served as a Founding Board Member of the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia from 1990 to 2002, and as Chairman from 1994 until 1998.

Albi developed a keen interest in southern Namibia during his early working years as a salesman for water pumps and diesel engines to farmers throughout the area. His love for the spectacular landscape and its wildlife culminated in the purchase of the Farm Gorassis in 1984. The region is arid. Pro-Namib and conventional stock farming is unsuited to the environment. Severe droughts are regular features and at the time of buying Gorassis, many adjoining farmers were hunting Oryx and springbuck to survive.

This decimation of the wild herds was of considerable concern to Albi and, as farmers were selling, a number of other farms were soon acquired. Initially Albi retained some cattle and a herd of Damara sheep, but soon realised that an alternative form of land use was required. While ecological sustainability was essential, so was financial viability.

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Wildlife, adapted to the arid environment and roaming over a large area without the hindrance of fences, was recognised as a possible solution to the future security of the land - it's conservation and sustainable utilisation.

By the mid-1990's Albi had conceived, planned and begun implementation of a large private nature reserve with multiple landowners - landowners who would provide the financial investment into the land that would constitute the reserve - legally registered and functioning under a strict Constitution that would protect its status and the integrity of its borders in perpetuity.

His vision held that the long term financial viability of the Reserve would come from the allocation of low volume, low impact, high revenue tourism concessions for the development and operation of lodges, camps and

the Reserve would come from the allocation of low volume, low impact, high revenue tourism concessions for the development and operation of lodges, camps and from careful management of the large mammal species such as zebra and hartebeest.

With the sale of the properties Vreemdelingspoort to Conservation Corporation, Draaihoek and Toskaan to Mr Jurgen Klein and Kwessiegat to Marianna Berker, the signing of the Articles of Association, top register all properties included into a section 21 Company (Association not for Gain), took place on the 23rd of November 2001.

Today the NamibRand Nature Reserve has restored 215,000ha (17 former domestic livestock ranches) of desert habitat; re-established the indigenous flora and fauna, including breeding populations of large predators such as leopard, cheetah, spotted and brown hyena and caracal, and implemented a long term, professional ecological and administrative management system.

The NamibRand Conservation Foundation was created as a private, non-profit trust. The Foundation raises funds independently and assists with financing ecological research and environmental education and awareness raising. One of the beneficiaries is the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) which operates out of a renovated farmhouse and a purpose built "Camp" that caters for up to 40 participants - mainly

school children - on courses at any one time. Tourism operations on the Reserve assist by collecting a daily park fee from visitors. Two luxury lodge operators, with a total of 62 beds in five camps and lodges, provide the bulk of the tourism activities. A hot air balloon operator; a horseback riding operator; a walking trails operation; a small, self-catering facility and two self-drive camp sites with restricted access to parts of the reserve, make up the remainder of the tourism component.

The governing body of the Reserve is the NamibRand Nature Reserve Board of Directors, on which Albi served as Chairman.

The vision of a NamibRand even before it was enunciated; the initial capital to purchase the land; the courage to keep going, to keep investing in the early years when not everyone shared his belief, when low density, high revenue, responsible tourism was a concept in the making - it was all driven by Albi. Profit was not the motive - as he has always maintained and lived by, the Reserve is there to conserve an ecosystem for the future, the profits must be made by the concessionaires not the landowners. However, a small park fee collected by guests visiting these tourism establishments which are based on a well-managed natural ecosystem, are what ensure the effective management, protection and survival of the NamibRand Nature Reserve.

NamibRand Nature Reserve is internationally recognised as a model for private sector conservation of large landscapes and for it's contribution of the unique and fragile Pro-namib ecosystem. It all comes down to the foresight, passion and drive of one man's drive to conserve a small piece of this Planet's natural heritage.

Albi Brückner deserves recognition for his achievements, specifically for the creation of NamibRand, but also for contributions over a long career serving the cause of conservation of wildlife and wild lands.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Albi's children. Christine, Andreas, Niko, Stephan and the entire Brückner family, you are in our thoughts and prayers in this difficult time.

Rest in peace Albi!

*Andreas Brückner & Nils Odendaal*



*All this beauty, on our doorsteps. Panorama taken close to Sossusvlei.*

*Lee Tindall*

## **Editorial**

What a year it's been all around. Not just for us, but for the world at large. There have been numerable conferences this year in the conservation fields, American elections (let's not talk about those too much), distressing wars and incredible acts against humanity and huge steps forward in certain industries. Highs and lows. For many 2016 can not end soon enough. While I am excited about the coming year and what it holds for us, for NamibRand Nature Reserve (NRNR), the Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape (GSNL) and those around us, I hesitate to wave goodbye to 2016 so quickly. It is the year in which we started with NRNR, a year in which we stood up to face the challenges and a year which has helped so much greatness, some firsts, some lasts and certainly some 'we're doing this again!'s

On our little part of earth we have had Kgotlas, Board meetings, GSNL meetings, game counts, game collaring, vulture tagging excursions, hope for rain, sadness for those perishing and dealing with the drought.

My hope for 2017 is that we continue to see growth in interest in conservation, in passion for nature and that we see a rise in those choosing to preserve, to value and to be in nature.

It has been an absolute privilege and joy to join NRNR and it is a wonderful feeling to be ending our year as part of this team.

It is also a sad time, as we mourn the loss of Albi Brückner, the founder and visionary who is the reason we are able to be apart of NRNR. Our thoughts are with his family and loved ones and those whose lives he touched. A dedicated man with a passion for life.

He will be missed, but his legacy will carry on and will be a reminder for us always, to carry on and to hope.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas time. Time spent with family, those close to us filled with happiness, sharing and joy.

*Lee Tindall*



*Out of the dark and into the light. View from the C27 cattle gate across the mountains*

*Lee Tindall*

## **News from the CEO**

### **December 2016**

The 8th of December 2016 will go down as a very sad day in the history of NamibRand as Albi Brückner suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on this day. Albi was the heart of the NamibRand Nature Reserve and he dedicated his life towards the conservation and preservation of this beautiful and unique area in the Pro-Namib Ecosystem for the last 32 years. Albi Brückner was our founder, chair and custodian and his conservation legacy will continue in this exceptional place. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Brückner family.

While the drought persists and the landscape is evermore turning into a true desert, the first drops of rain have fallen in the interior of the country. The weather forecasters have predicted an above average rainy season, so let's hope and pray for good rains on NamibRand! Although the dry landscape and the decreasing wildlife populations persist, tourism is booming in Namibia. Wolwedans has had their best ever season with record numbers of visitors to the Reserve. This bodes well for the finances of the Reserve as the collecting of park fees collected from guests enables us to run a financially sustainable, conservation initiative.

I was fortunate to attend the 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, the largest most comprehensive Conservation Congress in the world, held in Hawai'i, USA from 1 to 10 September 2016. The theme of the Congress, "Planet at the Crossroads," focused on the recently agreed collective challenge of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the next 15 years, which represents an ambitious agenda for improving human living conditions for all, without depleting the planet's natural assets beyond its capacity to recover. The Congress took place in two parts; the first part was a more open Forum where ideas and concepts were presented,

whilst the second was the Members' Assembly mainly to agree on IUCN business and motions. Read a brief summary of the Congress on page (9—11) this edition of our newsletter.

The Windhoek office of the NamibRand Nature Reserve has moved to 76-78 Frans Indongo Street - Nature House. We are sharing an office with Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA). All other contact details remain the same (see the last page of this newsletter).

As 2016 comes to a close, we would like to take this opportunity to **THANK YOU** for your support in making the NamibRand Nature Reserve the success that it is! We wish you all a relaxing festive season and a great start for 2017!

Yours in conservation,



Nils Odendaal  
Chief Executive Officer



*Namibian participants at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress. (pic by Lizanne Nel)*

*F.L.T.R. Johnson Ndokosho (Ministry of Environmental and Tourism - MET), Nils Odendaal (NamibRand), Dr Maklan Lindeque (MET), Angus Middelton (Namibia Nature Foundation), Elly Hamunyella (MET) and Ati Tjiuoro (MET)*

## ***A Word from the Warden Talking about the Drought***

## ***Water Saving Ideas Being Water wise***

With temperatures soaring across the Reserve the effects of the four-year drought are becoming increasingly noticeable. Herds of Oryx, where previously you might be able to spot one or two individuals that were in poor condition, are now largely made up of animals that are thin or showing obvious sign of malnutrition. The number of calves born a few short months ago has dwindled with only a few still remaining. However, this is the natural cycle of life in the desert, and while it may be hard to watch at the present time, I have no doubt that when the rains eventually do come the herds will bounce back stronger. Successive generations will be better adapted to survive longer and longer periods of drought as we face a rapidly heating planet. With the rest of the country beginning to experience some rain, I have no doubt that our turn will come and hope that the new year brings much needed relief to the Namib!

*Murray Tindall*



*Lee Tindall*

*Checking water points is an incredibly important part of what we do. It ensures the animals have a steady and reliable water source, as well as ensuring that we are aware of any leaks immediately.*

In this incredibly dry time, where water is scarce all over and where every drop counts. Here are some quick tips for water saving:

- Fix leaky taps immediately.
- Don't let water run unnecessarily while washing dishes or brushing teeth.
- Dishwashers and washing machines use an incredible amount of water, wait for a full load or wash by hand.
- Place a plastic dish in the sink and wash dishes in there instead. The amount of water saved is incredible.
- When showering, pop a bucket or tub in the shower and use this for filling cisterns or watering the gardens.
- Wherever possible collect rainwater in storage tanks and use this. Rainwater is awesome (when it rains).
- If possible divert your greywater to the garden and reuse it in this way. It's totally ok and if you're using bio degradable and eco friendly products even better.
- Short, quick showers with low pressure are very effective in reducing the amount of water we use.
- If you're watering a lawn or ornamental garden do so at night or early in the morning, it's cool and there will be less evaporation.

Water shortages no longer affect only a few cities or people, this is becoming a huge, wide spread problem. It's easy to sit back while you're unaffected, but once you're affected there is no reversing overuse and water wastage.

*Lee Tindall*

## ***Greetings from the South***

Greetings to all from the south of the Reserve. As we draw to the end of another dry year there is some optimism regarding the up coming rainy season. Apart from positive long term forecasts there are other positive signs. I see a lot of Bees in the garden as well as ants in and around the house.

Regardless the last three months have been busy in a very positive way. The 23 kilometres of fence bordering Aandstêr, Stellerine and Saffire, with Dina have been removed and what a difference it makes. It was well worth the wait. A new, and very scenic road has been established for Boulders game drives running due north from Vista and this is now the alternative route to Boulders instead of going west over the dunes. A new booster pump has also been installed at Aandstêr to compensate for the low water pressure. Wonderful hot showers! Work to fix up Rubens house has also been completed with a paint job inside, roof leaks fixed and a ceiling in the main bedroom. A separate garden just for Tomatoes has also been put up as they were not getting enough sun under the vines. Speaking of which we anticipate a very good grape harvest for those around in January!

Although I have witnessed it before in drought years there are a lot of young Gemsbok and Zebra which can also be a sign of rain to come. I am however sceptical of this theory as I have seen years that contradict it. We also had a Warthog sighting on Saffire which was a bit surreal, standing in the middle of an area completely void of any vegetation. The Giraffes seem to have spent most of the last period in the DDR area. We are also still experiencing rabid Aardwolf and had another one at Aandstêr over the weekend. Rabid Jakals however have not been sighted since March now and their numbers seem to be picking up again. It also appears that the Ludwigs Bustard is here for the mating season as many can be seen driving around the south. So life goes on miraculously in the desert and all we can do is stand back and wonder as we realize our frailty.

On that note we all in the south send greetings to all and extend a warm thank you for the co operation we enjoy working together. A happy festive season and joyous New Year to everyone.

*Peter Woolfe*



*Fence Removal*

*Peter Woolfe*



*Pumps and water collection points*

*Peter Woolfe*

## News@NaDEET

### RUG for Sustainability

On 31 October 2016, NaDEET (Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust) celebrated the end of a three year project together with their main sponsor, the European Union, as well as with teachers, learners, parents and the principals of the three participating Hardap Region schools. The event was to celebrate the end of the project as now a foundation has been laid for the chosen schools and their surrounding communities to apply and put into action what they have learned and experienced over the past three years. “A rug has been woven, that now needs to be used, for the schools and communities to save water and energy, to protect the environment and to use their natural resources sustainably. This is why we named the project “RUG for Sustainability”. The name RUG is the first letter of each of the communities that we worked with and they were the threads in our project”, explained NaDEET’s Director, Viktoria Keding.

“The European Union is proud to be associated with NaDEET and this project as it brings together two very important components: the social and the environmental development of communities”, said the Head of Finance and Contracts of the European Union in Namibia, Raniero Leto. Leto and his colleagues participated in the celebration on Monday evening at NaDEET Centre, which is located in the middle of the Namib Desert on the private NamibRand Nature Reserve. The Centre, surrounded by red sand dunes, provided a unique backdrop to this special celebration. For the past three years countless children from the partner schools have learned in theory and practice how to save water, the numerous ways solar energy can be used in daily life and how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

We chose the three schools from over 50 in the Hardap Region because we wanted to work with small schools in small communities. The schools in these villages are the heart of the community. With the help of the schoolchildren in these villages we were able to extend our reach to the teachers, parents, relatives and friends for the benefit of all involved and of course the environment. To support the community in practicing sustainability participants received solar lights, solar

ovens and fuel-efficient stoves. These, however, were earned through a “learn to earn” approach”, explained Keding. Through environmental education children and adults better understand the negative impacts that their actions can have on the environment. Nine school groups, five youth groups and seven community programmes, as well as an educator programme, took place at NaDEET Centre for Gochas, Rietoog and Uibes in the past three years in addition to the 42 outreach programmes.

In Uibes the schoolchildren now use a cup to drink water and have a container underneath all schoolyard taps to prevent water wasting. In Uibes and Rietoog the schools and communities now have gardens to provide fresh vegetables for all. A good waste management system has been started in Rietoog which also includes making recycled fire balls out of waste paper for the school feeding programme. In Gochas a solar cooking kitchen has been established to use renewable energy for school events.

Now it is the responsibility of the schools and the community members of Rietoog, Uibes and Gochas to build upon the project and to make it a long lasting success.



*Shawn Windstaan, teacher from N. Mutschuana PS in Gochas explains what he and his learners experienced at NaDEET to funders and local government officials.*



*Viktoria Keding handing over the certificates of recognition to the school principals.*

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## NaDEET moves to a new office in Swakopmund

Come visit us at our new office in the COSDEF Arts & Crafts Centre in Swakopmund. We intend to open our “Sustainable OpenHouse” which will demonstrate how to live a sustainable lifestyle in a real life model early 2017.



Victoria Keiding

NaDEET Head office

**NaDEET's Sustainable OpenHouse**

Step in and visit NaDEET's Sustainable OpenHouse! Learn more about sustainable living in town! Come and experience the differences between a sustainable and an unsustainable lifestyle! You will find a world of information and hands-on activities about reducing your impact on the Earth.

Come and visit our two model homes and see the differences yourself!

**COMING SOON!**

To get more information visit our new NaDEET head office here in the Cosdef Centre. Or contact us: +264 (0)81 367 5310 www.nadeet.org admin@nadeet.org Find us on

## Sossusvlei Desert Lodge Guide Training in action



Graham Vercueil and some of the SDL guides on top of the world!

Photo:SDL

Guide Training is an imperative exercise in today's tourism industry. Not only is it important for guides to be knowledgeable and to have an understanding of their environment, it is important the information they impart to their guests is accurate. With Google, social media and other means of media based info gathering, guests are now able to have pre-informed themselves and to check up on possible misinformation. Graham Vercueil, of andBeyond, is the guide trainer for the company and does a thorough and in depth job of it, encompassing all areas: knowing the ‘small’ things and understanding the ‘big’ ones.

Thanks to Graham and to Les for allowing us to use these photos.

Lee Tindall



Floyd pointing out Leopard Tracks on Vreemdelingspoort

Photo: Graham Vercueil



IUCN  
World  
Conservation  
Congress  
Hawai'i 2016

## Introduction

The 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress, the largest most comprehensive Conservation Congress in the world, was held in Hawai'i, USA from 1 to 10 September 2016. Nils Odendaal, Chief Executive Officer of the NamibRand Nature Reserve was fortunate to attend the Congress as a sponsored delegate. The IUCN with assistance from the United States Government was able to sponsor 520 participants to attend this important event. 10,225 people from 193 countries attended the event.

The theme of the Congress, "Planet at the Crossroads," focused on the recently agreed collective challenge of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the next 15 years, which represents an ambitious agenda for improving human living conditions for all, without depleting the planet's natural assets beyond its capacity to recover.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress meets every four years to bring together leaders from government, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, business, UN agencies and indigenous and grassroots organizations to discuss and decide on solutions to global environment and development challenges. Namibia is a State Member of IUCN (represented by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism - MET) and in addition has three NGOs who are also members (Namibia Nature Foundation, Cheetah Conservation Fund and the Namib Rand Nature Reserve). Namibia Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA) was also represented and took part in habitat conservation discussions with the Commission on Ecosystem services. The Namibian Delegation at the Congress was small but worked closely together as a well co-ordinated team, lead by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Dr Malan Lindeque.

The Congress took place in two parts; the first part was a more open Forum where ideas and concepts were presented, whilst the second was the Members' Assembly mainly to agree on IUCN business and motions.

## The IUCN Forum

The **Forum** is a hub of public debate that brought together people from all around the world to discuss and develop solutions to the world's most pressing conservation and sustainability challenges. It demonstrated innovative, scalable solutions from all areas and from all around the globe to address challenges at local and global levels – from small islands to entire regions, from individual to collective actions. The Forum was held from 2 to 5 September 2016 and included many types of events from high level dialogues to training workshops which explore the depths of conservation and innovation.

With the planet truly at the cross-roads Namibia can offer some solutions to the pressing problems of our times, but there are some tough choices to be made. Amongst the most pressing issues are the importance of hunting in Namibia, the financing of conservation and making our voices heard.

Although not applicable to NamibRand, hunting is important in Namibia not only in contributing to our common conservation objectives but in helping to drive rural development and improve livelihoods. But hunting is under threat often from well meaning protectionist who do not fully appreciate the complexities of nature. To address this, the members of Namibian Delegation worked hard to ensure that our Namibian voice was heard, Dr Lindeque mainstreamed Namibia's model of conservation and sustainable development in a number of workshops and events that he presented at including a workshop on Africa at the Cross Roads; Mr. Uatirohange Tjiuoro (MET) presented a poster on Sustainable use in conservancies, Angus Middleton (NNF) presented at a packed workshop entitled Does Hunting Have a Future?

and Mr Johnson Ndokosho (MET) was particularly effective at making interventions at a wide range of workshops and sessions. In all presentations the point was made that the sustainable use of Wildlife in Namibia, is not only good for conservation but good for rural development. It is also a very important part of our Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme, which helps drive rural development in some of Namibia's poorest areas.

The second major issue is one of financing, the designation of Namibia as an upper middle income country has obliged the Namibian Government to divert scarce resources towards providing basic services, this has resulted in a decrease in spending on the environment as a percentage of total government expenditure. Namibia provides a good example to the international community, almost 45% of the country is protected, Namibia has the only viable free ranging black Rhino population, the only wild lion population expanding in growth and area and an increase in Elephant from 7,000 in the 1990's to over 20,000 today. But this does not come without challenges, poaching pressure is on the rise, human wildlife conflict increasing and much more can (and must) be done to use our conservation successes to drive rural development and fulfil our common purpose of our presidents' Harambee Prosperity Plan. Namibia is showing the world what can be achieved in terms of conservation and sustainable development but this needs continued investment. Namibia's conservation success is not only a national success but is also a global gain and the Namibian delegation worked hard to have this recognised to try and get sustained investment in our conservation programmes.

Investment into communal areas, private land and state protected areas are required to drive forward our *Biodiversity Economy* that in turn feeds into all of our sectors, particularly tourism.

Despite the difficulties, membership of IUCN is a useful catalyst to project our conservation successes, connect with a wide range of organisations and individuals, to discover new ideas and innovations in conservation and to anticipate conservation (and donor) trends. Although the Namibian Delegation were highly efficient with only 7 people in amongst over 10,000 it was also clear that a closer regional collaboration will be more useful in the intervening period and certainly at the next Congress. Nils Odendaal of NamibRand Nature Reserve was therefore mandated to lead our engagement with the region and attended a number of regional meetings. Namibia will now start the process of setting up a National Committee

to engage with the region, provide a better leverage with IUCN and project our Namibian voice on conservation issues much more effectively.

The Forum was one of great learning with many ideas being refined and greater collaboration being initiated. **In this case conversation is very important for conservation.**

### **The Members Assembly**

The IUCN Members' Assembly is the highest decision-making body of IUCN. It brings together IUCN Members to debate and establish environmental policy, to approve the IUCN Programme and to elect the IUCN Council and President.

IUCN's membership currently stands at over 1,300 and includes some of the most influential government and civil society organisations from more than 160 countries, giving the decisions taken at the IUCN Congress a powerful mandate. Through motions (often brought forward by the IUCN Membership), Resolutions and Recommendations on important conservation issues are adopted by this unique global environmental caucus of governments and NGOs, guiding IUCN's policy and work programme and as well as influencing many other organisations around the world.

There were numerous other motions that are of importance to Namibia either directly or indirectly.

For species conservation, the motion on *preventing electrocution and collision impacts of power infrastructure on birds* supports the important work being done under the longstanding NamPower/Namibia Nature Foundation Partnership in dealing with these issues, there were also resolutions on poisoning and conservation measures for vultures that supports the work of the Ministry of Environment and the Namibia Vultures project hosted by the NNF. NRRR directors will recall that our previous wardens', Mike and Ann Scott are involved in preventing electrocution and collision impacts of power infrastructure on birds and that Peter Bridgeford is a key trouper in the conservation of vultures in Namibia.

*Continued on page 11*

There was also a motion on pangolins, which amongst other actors supports the work done by the Rare and Endangered Species Trust, directed by Mrs Maria Diekman from Namibia.

The motion on *Giraffids: reversing the decline of Africa's iconic megafauna* supports the work of the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, lead by Dr Julian Fennessy, based here in Namibia.

There were numerous motions on marine issues, with one contentious motion on establishing 30% of the oceans as (strict) marine protected areas, which Namibia is already some way to addressing anyway with the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area, Africa's largest.

Other important motions included calling for the establishment of South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary, as well as motions related to marine litter, biofouling and sustainable fisheries. There was also an important motion on *Protecting coastal and marine environments from mining waste* which is particularly relevant to the phosphate mining debate.

There were numerous motions on protected areas including providing greater recognition for private protected areas, such as the Namib Rand Nature Reserve. But also strengthening trans-boundary protected areas of which Namibia is part of several, including the Kavango - Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA), / Ais/Ais-Richtersveld and more recently the Skeleton Coast-Iona transboundary conservation areas. There was also a motion on recognising indigenous communities in relation to protected areas. The motion on *Protected areas and other areas important for biodiversity in relation to environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development* should help guide the government on these issues in national Parks, Private Protected Areas and Conservancies.

In relation to hunting the motions calling for a closure on "hunting" of captive-bred lions, thankfully not practiced in Namibia, is most welcomed as was the motion on the *Management and regulation of selective intensive breeding of large wild mammals for commercial purposes*. This motion explicitly calls for Governments to adopt a risk adverse strategy. Hunting in Namibia is re-

garded as a premium product because of its natural setting, wild animals and most Namibian hunters' adherence to the principles of *Fair Chase*, something that should be maintained at all costs. At the same time there was a motion recognising that the often quoted solution to livelihood and environmental issues, *Tourism*, comes with its own impacts which will further guide the work of our own domestic standard - EcoAwards.

The motion on *Recognising, understanding and enhancing the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in tackling the illegal wildlife trade crisis* speaks directly to Namibia's well world class Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme, whilst the motions on *Crimes against the environment*, Environmental Courts and Tribunals and *Improving means to fight environmental crime* should help Namibia and our partners in our efforts to combat illegal killing and trade of wildlife.

Namibia has a lot to share and learn from other conservationists around the world and the IUCN offers a useful platform for this. The Namibian delegation of IUCN hopes to grow in size and influence to support a more inclusive conservation agenda that is progressive in also supporting champions in conservation and ultimately the nature that we the people, of Namibia and the world, rely on for our sustenance and well-being.



A picture of the Member's Assembly in progress. Some 1,300 IUCN members debate and establish environmental policy, to approve the IUCN Programme and to elect the IUCN Council and President.

More information on IUCN, the World Conservation Congress and the motions mentioned above can be found at

<http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/>

## Witnessing a little Miracle

Sandra Lippert, of Tok Tokkie Trails sent us some wonderful photos recently of an Oryx giving birth in the dunes. What a once in a life time event to witness. Photos are taken by Julian Spillman, a guest on the tok Tokkie trails.

Lee Tindall



Resting her legs during the birthing process



Almost there



Just the legs left

## Oryx Information (Source and all credit: Wikipedia)

**Oryx** is a genus consisting of four large antelope species. Three of them are native to arid parts of Africa, and the fourth to the Arabian Peninsula. Their fur is pale with contrasting dark markings in the face and on the legs, and their long horns are almost straight. The exception is the scimitar oryx, which lacks dark markings on the legs, only has faint dark markings on the head, has an ochre neck, and horns that are clearly decurved.

The Arabian oryx was only saved from extinction through a captive breeding program and reintroduction to the wild.<sup>[1]</sup> The scimitar oryx, which is now listed as Extinct in the Wild, also relies on a captive breeding program for its survival.<sup>[2]</sup> Small populations of several oryx species, such as the scimitar oryx, exist in Texas and New Mexico (USA) in wild game ranches. Gemsboks were released at the White Sands Missile Range and have become an invasive species of concern at the adjacent White Sands National Monument.

### **Etymology**

The term "oryx" comes from the Greek word ὄρυξ, *óryx*, for a type of antelope. The Greek plural form is *óryges*, although *oryxes* has been established in English. Herodotus mentions a type of gazelle in Libya called "Orus", probably related to the verb "oruttoo" or "orussoo",<sup>[3]</sup> meaning "to dig". White oryxes are known to dig holes in the sand for the sake of coolness.

### **Species**

#### **East African oryx and Gemsbok**

The **East African oryx** (*Oryx beisa*) inhabits eastern Africa, and the closely related **gemsbok** (*Oryx gazella*) inhabits southern Africa. Neither is threatened, though the former is considered Near Threatened by the IUCN.<sup>[6]</sup> The gemsbok is monotypic, and the East African oryx has two subspecies; East African oryx "proper" (*O. b. beisa*) and the fringe-eared oryx (*O. b. callotis*). In the past, both were considered subspecies of the gemsbok.

### **Ecology**

All *Oryx* species prefer near-desert conditions and can survive without water for long periods. They live in herds of up to 600 animals. Newborn calves are able to run with the herd immediately after birth. Both males and females possess permanent horns. The horns are narrow, and straight except in the scimitar oryx, where they curve backwards like a scimitar. The horns are lethal — the oryx has been known to kill lions with them, and oryxes are thus sometimes called the sabre antelope (not to be confused with the sable antelope). The horns also make the animals a prized game trophy, which has led to the near-extinction of the two northern species.

## Interesting Pictures



View to Hyeana Waterhole

Lee Tindall



Sunrise at Keerweeder

Lee Tindall



Oryx at Moringa

Lee Tindall

### *Thank you!*

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed to this issue of The Barking Gecko by providing articles/information: Nils Odendaal, Murray Tindall, Viktoria Keding, Peter Woolfe.

The Barking Gecko is your newsletter and, as always, we invite you to keep on sending us your contributions of news and views, short reports, sightings, artwork and photographs.

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