

#### 11.4. 2018 Mata Mata

For most of the day we are busy fixing our water tank. As Jürgen likes to fix things and has quite some experience with campers we are glad about his support. Together we inspect once more the tank, with a portable compressor we increase pressure in the tank to see where the water flows. It is impossible to locate the leak exactly, so we decide to seal the tank from the inside as good as we can – actually, as far as we can reach the inside of the tank through the maintenance hole. Head first Jürgen hangs inside the tank and tries to apply Sikaflex. He is lefthanded and can therefore reach some of the corners in the tank better than Werner. Now we have to wait until tomorrow until the sealant is dry and hope that we have fixed the problem.



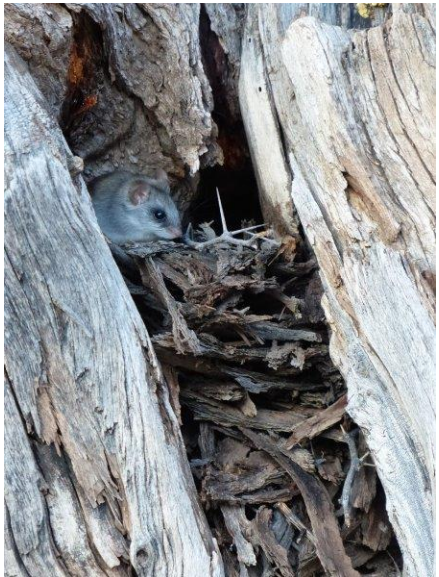
#### 12.4.2018 Mata Mata

Here in Mata Mata we also meet Dirk again, who we first met in Nossob while Cheetah-watching. From him we learn about the „small border crossing“. This is the possibility to cross the border to Namibia on foot even without having to show our passports. On the other side one can walk to a farmstall about 500m away to buy some fresh meat. How funny, to be able to cross borders on foot. Of course, we have to try this out and walk passed the border guards waving at them.



In the afternoon comes the Moment of Truth. It is time to refill our water tank and see if our repair was successful. Unfortunately, we did not succeed, water is still coming out where it's not supposed to come out – shute. A big thank you to Jürgen for his efforts, it would have been so nice if it all would have worked out. We decide now to drive directly to Windhoek and see if we find someone who can fix our tank. We have heard about the solution to spray the entire tank from the inside with a sealant or alternatively we could build a new and smaller tank into the existing one...

At least the tree rats cheer us up a bit. These rather small animals look more like mice than rats. They are nocturnal animals and come out of their nest as soon as the sun sets. They race up and down the tree faster than we can follow them with our eyes.





### 13.4.2018 Mata Mata

During our last morning game drive we catch a glimpse of the back of a male lion before he disappears over a dune. It's a pity, that we were so busy with our tank that we had no chance to do as many game drives as we wanted to. Rain has turned the tracks into small rivers...



After our morning game drive, we cross the border to Namibia at the Mata Mata check point. Passports and Carnet were stamped already in Twee Rivieren, therefore border



formalities on the South African side are completed quickly. Our departure is as usual documented in several thick books which are filled in by hand.

The immigration form on the Namibian side has really the question „How much money do you plan to spend in Namibia?“ Hmm... what to fill in? The road authority is charging a road toll, the police stamps our Carnet, everything is going smoothly without any hick ups. Naturally, at each border crossing one is a bit nervous if all will go well or whether some major discussions are to be mastered.

And as soon as we are in Namibia we come across some wild life...



#### 14.4.2018 Gochas, Stampriet, Mariental

It's about 500km to Windhoek. The good gravel road is leading us through the dry Auob river valley passing endless fences and some farms.

For our lunch picnic we stop at Gochas which gives a rather desperate impression. Except for the fuel station almost all shops are closed, most buildings locked up and windows smashed. But we consider to get a job at the local bank as we would have to work only one half day a week!

Off we go towards Mariental and unfortunately have to give "Wandervogel" a miss.







Suddenly, Werner breaks hard! There is a Cape Cobra lying on the road. Werner the snake whisperer dares to get pretty close with the camera to get the best shot.



The closer we get to Mariental the worse the weather gets. We park a few kilometers from the city. The whole night thunderstorms are passing by with heavy rain. The noise of the lightning and loud rolling thunder keep us awake throughout the night.





**15.4.2018 Rehoboth, Windhoek**

As we want to continue driving in the morning, a little surprise is awaiting us. The heavy down pours during the night have turned the soil into mud and as we start driving we just sink into the mud. In heavy rain Werner is looking for some material to put under our tires. ‘Luckily’, there is a lot of rubbish laying around. An old truck tire and a broken plastic chair help our Unimog to dig itself out of the mud – with 4-Wheel-Drive, all diff locks engaged and in first gear we just make it out of the mud. Phew, that was close... Would have been pretty uncool to get stuck here and not somewhere in the bush.



Via Rehoboth, formerly founded as a missionary station, we drive towards Windhoek. The closer we get to the capital the more traffic develops and suddenly there is “Big City Feeling”.



We check into the ‘Urban Camp’, a centrally located camp site, which is well known to many travelers as supermarket, restaurants, shops and the famous „Joe’s Beer Garden“

are located within walking distance. The camp is a bit narrow for bigger rigs, but we find a good place – right in the middle of it all.



#### 16.4. – 1.5.2018 Windhoek

In Windhoek we hopefully find a solution for our leaking water tank. In addition, the Unimog needs some maintenance and we have a long list: Oil change, tire exchange, removal of balancing powder, greasing, alternator, cruise control and much more.

The next few days we spend mainly in the industrial area and drive from A to B, to get things done and talk to people about solutions and ideas for the tank problem. We tell the same story about 100 times and have to empty the truck equally often to show people the problem. Meanwhile we find our way around pretty well, as we have visited Mast's Garage, Uli's Electrical Services, Thread Tyres, M+Z Mercedes Benz, Namibia Tyres, Bachmus Oil, Swachrome Welding, Paco Engineering, Edelstahlbau, Megabuilt, Cymot, Buildit, Sika Namibia, MegaTech, Pupkewitz Lifestyle, Nirosta as well as Implacor. One recommendation leads to the other.



In the Northern Industrial Area we experience for the first time how daring the local thieves are. Of course, we have heard many stories but to experience it first hand is something different. While we stand on the right side of the car, on the left side a tall black guy stretches his long arm to check if our door is open. We yell loudly „Don't touch the car“, while he plays innocent, pretends to admire our car and walks off.



As we want to drive off another black guy fiddles around at the back of our truck. The trick is to lure us out of the car so we check what's going on at the back while his companion climbs into the front cabin and grabs what he can find. But we do not fall for this old trick. We have learned to be extremely careful at all times and lock all doors even for a very short exit. However, such a daring attack in broad daylight at a busy crossing we did not expect.

The shopping trolleys converted into barbeque stalls are to be seen everywhere in the industrial area. There are hardly any restaurants or kiosks here. We also tried the sausage, didn't taste too bad, one pays per 10 cm piece...



After a lot of thinking and talking to many people while considering all the information we got, we decide to cut a large opening into the floor of our cabin, then cut open the water tank and seal the tank from the inside ourselves. We find the address of the Namibian Sikaflex Distributor via the South African office where we can buy activator and primer, in the local DIY-store we get Sikaflex11FC. Then we start the project.

Cutting openings into the floor and into the tank with a grinder, makes quite some noise. Luckily the camp site is rather empty at this time. But first, we have to remove the Sikaflex which we have applied in Mata Mata and clean the tank. It's a painstaking work and takes almost a whole day. Thereafter we apply the activator and then primer, both have to dry before we finally apply the Sikaflex sealant. The latter has to dry for 3-4 days.







To avoid getting too bored while the sealant is drying, we switch between the Urban Camp and the camp site Elisenheim. The Urban Camp is centrally located in Windhoek, but is getting a bit narrow and crowded at times. Elisenheim, approx. 15km north of Windhoek, offers more space and more of „camping feeling“. The onsite restaurant is highly recommendable, it serves traditional German dishes and is a popular outing spot for people during the weekend.

We make use of the waiting time for a major laundry and after four days fill water for the first time into the tank. We are quite nervous, but soon after there is careful optimism: no leaking water to be detected (at least now while standing).



## 2.5.2018 Gross Barmen

Our tank seems to be sealed, but we have to wait for another week till next Monday, as many companies are closed for a whole week during the holidays of May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>.

We use the time to visit Gross Barmen, located about 100 km North of Windhoek. Gross Barmen was founded in 1884 as a missionary outpost for the Herero. Today, it consists of mainly the huge hot spring facility with restaurant, meeting rooms, holiday bungalows and a camp site. The facilities are not busy, the restaurant is empty and we doubt that many meetings take place. The camp site is sterile and without any shade. But, considering we are in Africa, they have state of the art swimming facilities with a huge cool outdoor pool, and big hot indoor pool and sauna. With such great facilities the waiting time passes by very quickly. In fact, it is not bad at all to have a forced break. The only decision we have to make is: Hot pool or cold pool?



### 7.5.2018 Windhoek

Finally it is Monday, we drive back to Windhoek and ask the Nirosta Company to manufacture a stainless steel lid for us to close the large opening we still have in our tank. Initially, we wanted to weld nuts to the inside of the tank so we can screw in the bolts. But that does not work out as welding to the top of the inside of the tank is too difficult.

We change plans and cut a thread into the top plate of the tank, so we can screw the bolts in. This takes longer than expected, but in the afternoon we are ready to go. Back at the Urban Camp we screw back in the wash plates which is quite a fight as they are very balky. We only finish late evening and are totally exhausted.







### 8.5.2018 Windhoek

But we are still not finished. We have to seal the lid, which means the same procedure with activator, primer and Sikaflex has to be applied. Then we have to wait again until everything is dry.



### 9.5.2018 Windhoek

Tomorrow we want to finally start traveling again as we are already more than three weeks in Windhoek. The lid should be dry enough to withstand the pressure of the water while driving. There is not much more we can do just hope and pray that the tank is tight.

As we refill our water tank, we realize that very little water coming out of the tap, it has no pressure, but the pumps are working. In order to find the problem, we disconnect the filters, test with and without hose connected, test the pumps from a separate bucket and finally find out that the pre-filter is totally blocked. As we still have the main filter we can take out the pre-filter cartridge and everything works again normally. Luckily, it is not a bigger problem. Seems like us and water – that's a never ending story.