

19.9. 2018 Windhoek

We arrive in Windhoek a bit exhausted from the night flight and Manfred picks us up (we store our Unimog at his place). We are eager to see our Unimog again and wonder if we were able to contain the ant infestation we left behind. The Unimog starts without any problem and we drive to the Urban Camp where we unpack our bags, store everything away, try to find the things we left in the car and get the truck ready for our next trip.

Our main reason for visiting this time is the Carnet de Passage, our Unimog has to leave the Southern African Customs Union. We initially planned to travel to Zimbabwe to renew our carnet, but local friends recommend us to rather visit Zambia. Zimbabwe is still a little too unstable; on top there is a Cholera outbreak happening this very moment. Zambia is also a bit closer which would save us a bit of driving.

21.9.2018 Okahandja, Otjiwarongo

After the Unimog is stocked up with food, water and Diesel we are ready to roll. The good news is, our water tank is tight and we can't see one single ant anymore! We have to cover some distance, it is about 1300km to Katima Mulilo... At that very Northeastern tip of Namibia lies the Caprivi Strip, there are the border crossings to Zambia and Zimbabwe. We would still have the option to visit either of these two countries, once there we just have to turn right or left.

In the afternoon we have a break at the „Kameldorn Garten“ restaurant in Otjiwarongo. As we want to continue the Unimog does not start. What, already on Day One we have a problem with the truck?! We just drove over 200 km... Dr. mech. Werner locates the problem quickly; the battery must be the culprit and not the relais. We take out the battery of our generator to replace one of the two starter batteries and the test confirms: the battery has only 10.6 volt which means that one cell must have dropped dead. The question is now where to buy a new batterie? We are in a relatively large town, but of course such things always happen on a Friday afternoon, when all shops are closing early. Despite being a quarter to 6 pm, we drive to Bosch Diesel Electric and are very



lucky. All staff are still in the shop as they planned to do an inventory, however the software system is down. The friendly people still sell us a new batterie.

It has gotten late and soon it will be dark, therefore we ask one of the friendly staff



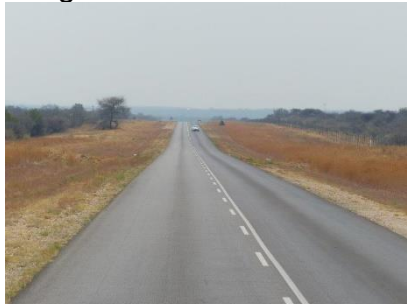
member if we would be allowed to camp in front of the shop. He doesn't recommend us to do so, especially because it is Friday evening (=party time). He suggests to drive to the Riding Club Otjiwarongo, there is space and his bar. We are not sure if "his bar" is where he is a regular or if it is really his own bar. Whatever, we follow him. It's like hitting the jackpot, Patrick indeed owns the bar at the Riding Club and we can camp in of the horse paddocks which has tables, braais and even power. Of course, we feel indebted to consume as much as possible at his bar.

22.9.2018 Otavi, Grootfontein, Roy's Camp

In the morning some horses join us on the paddock, what a nice view during breakfast. Patrick is already back at 8:00 a.m. to clean up the bar, what a tough job he has. We thank him very much and hope to be back, as we pass through again on our way to Windhoek.

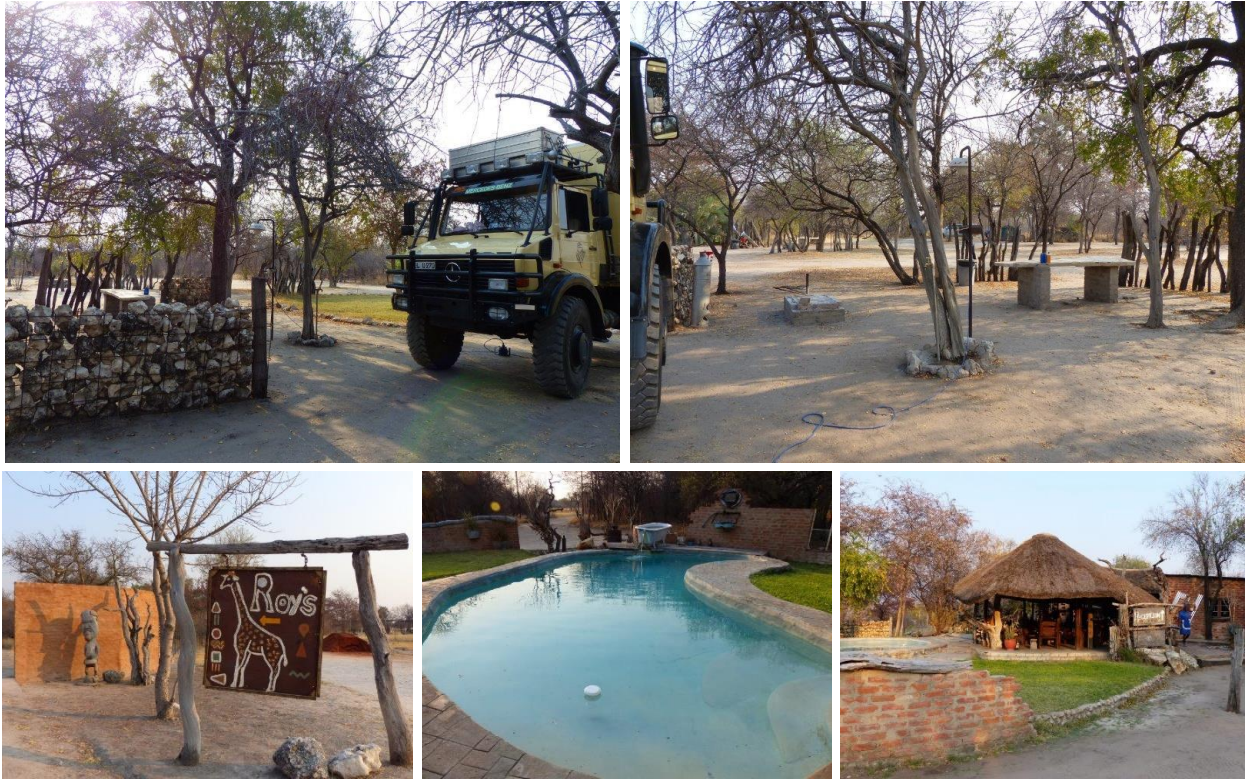


Via Otavi and Grootfontein we drive on straight roads in a northeasterly direction. With every kilometer going up North it gets hotter and hotter...



Around Otavi is the main crop growing area of Namibia. We see large center pivot irrigation systems, which irrigate the fertile soil.

Our destination for today is Roy's Camp, approx. 50km behind Grootfontein. Here the Malaria area begins, we have to take more precaution to not get bitten by mosquitos. Roy's Camp is nicely set up and decorated with a small pool and a water hole for the game viewing, as well as the possibility to hike or bike on the property.



For the sundowner we walk to the water hole and are lucky to see a few Duiker antelopes as well as a herd of five Elands, whom we watch until it is dark.

23.9.2018 Rundu, Katere, Shamvura

In the morning the water hole is only frequented by some guinea fowl; thereafter we do a 4.5 km hike around the camp which is signposted.



During our game walk we only see one antelope.



Through endless bush savanna we drive on the straight road towards Rundu. About half way between Grootfontein and Rundu is the Kavangoland Veterinary Control Station.

Travelling from North to the South it is not allowed to take any meat or dairy products, but in opposite direction it is allowed. North of the veterinary fence the entire land is communal pasture, which means there are no fences and the animals roam around freely. In the North Foot-and-Mouth-disease as well as TB are prevalent and because of the communal pasture hard to control. In the South all land is in private hands and all animals are registered and tagged.

As soon as we pass the fence the scenery becomes African. Small villages with their round huts are lining the road. We have to slow down all the time for donkeys, goats and cattle. The land is overgrazed as it is not managed.





We drive to Katere to a camp site called Shamvura located along the old unpaved road along the Okavango. The North of Namibia is densely populated and it is hard to find a freedom camp site. Shamvura has a few nice, big campsites, but everything is a bit run down, especially the water system which is so rusty that not only our hands smell rusty after washing, they even take on a rusty colour.



24.9.2018 Divundu, Nunda River Lodge

Today we only drive about 90 km from Shamvura to Divundu to the 'Nunda River Lodge'. Just after Divundu the long and narrow Caprivi strip begins, about 400km long and only 50 km wide. This Caprivi Strip is a special political construct put down in the "Helgoland-Zanzibar Contract" between Germany and England in 1890. In this deal Helgoland was exchanged with Zanzibar, at the same time the Caprivi Strip gave Germany access to the Zambezi river. The Caprivi strip is bordered in the North by Angola and South by Botswana.

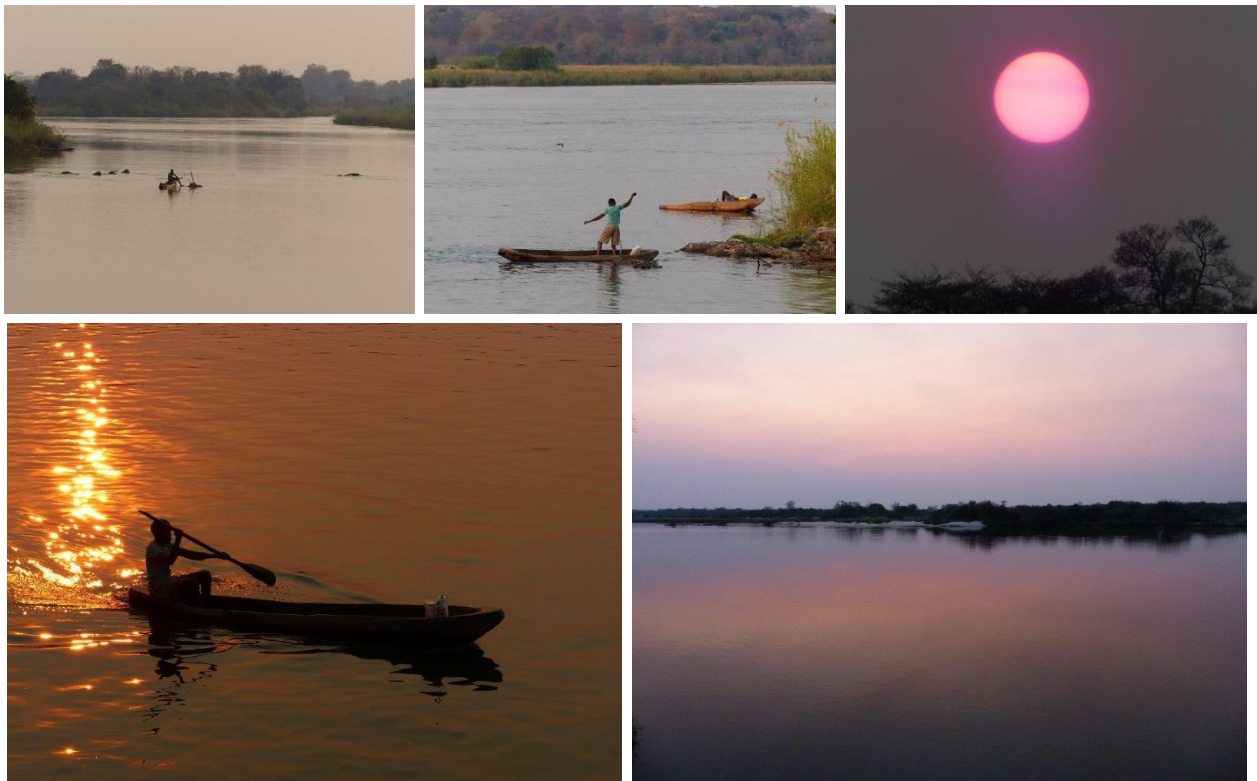
After the end of the civil war in Angola (1975 – 2002) when peace was re-established the Caprivi Strip was turned into the Bwabwata National Park. When we first visited the Caprivi Strip in 2001 we were only allowed to traverse the area to Katima Mulilo in an armed military convoy.

In today's Bwabwata National Park it is still not allowed turn right or left and leave the Trans-Caprivi-Highway. Instead, one has to continue driving for 200km until Kongola. This would have been too far for us today.

The Nunda River Lodge is a pleasant, well managed camp with a swimming pool and a large terrace with river view. It's not too bad being in the camp early for a change.



For the sundowner we enjoy the fantastic view of the Okavango river. We see a few Hippo ears and watch the local fishermen in their Mokoro, a log boat. The Mokoro is widely used in the Okavango Delta, where the water is often only 50cm deep. The Mokoro is propelled with a punt pole and can be mainly used only for one year before it starts to leak. Therefore, Mokoros are now made more often from fiberglass, which resembles real wood astonishingly well. This is also done to save the last big trees.



25.9.2018 Kongola, Malyo Wilderness Camp

Today the road is leading us straight east from Divundu until Kongola, along the Caprivi Strip. The drive is a bit monotonous, the only distraction are the villages along the road and a few livestock crossing the road.

The road is flickering with heat. We see regularly large burned areas along the road and ask ourselves if there are still people throwing burning cigarettes out of their cars?



As the legend goes... God was extremely furious, when he created the Baobab tree so that he put the Baobab upside down in the soil with the roots pointing towards the sky.

A Baobab tree can become up to 1.600 years of age and grow 40 m high. It can weigh up to 270 tonnes and the tree trunk is fire-proof against bush fires.



From Kongola it is possible to drive directly to Katima Mulilo or one can take the detour leading through the Southern tip of the Caprivi strip. This road is passing via Mudumu National Park and Mamili Nkasa Rupara National Park to Katima Mulilo.

We decide for the detour and want to stay at the Namushasha Lodge campsite, but it is unfortunately fully booked. The neighboring lodge Camp Kwando has no more free camp site available either. Well, this is the downside of our traveling style to never book anything in advance. Finally, we find an opportunity to camp in the Malyo Wilderness Camp. The access road to Malyo leads us on a very sandy track to the Kwando river where we are a bit shocked to find the bridge in an unusable stage. We only realize after a few minutes that there is a river crossing a bit further down.



The Malyo Camp is huge and located directly at the river. Except for a group of three South Africans there is no one here. It is pretty relaxed, but very hot.



26.9.2018 Mudumu National Park, Nakatwa Camp

We want to visit the Mudumu National Park, which is just around the corner. Of course, first we miss the Park Tourist Reception as we only see the huge new gate but overlook the little fading sign on the right hand side of the road. As we reach the Nakatwa Camp the rangers tell us that we have to drive 15km back to the entrance gate to register... The Mudumu National Park is pleasantly good value for money; we pay 90N\$ (about 6EUR) entrance fee for two persons which includes camping.

We choose the Nakatwa Camp Nr.1, which has a nice view of the river Kwando. On the other side of the river is Botswana. The Camp Nr.1 is near the ranger station. In 2015 a local tour operator from Swakopmund, Andi Meier, and his girlfriend were robbed and he was killed on camp site No 3 which is a bit further away. Therefore, we prefer to stay closer to the armed ranger station.



Meanwhile the park is also patrolled by military commandos who try to get poaching under control. Poachers who do not stop but run are shot immediately, it is the only way to fight poaching they say.

The Hippo Pool is living up to its name. We are lucky, more and more Hippos are appearing and are grazing in the water and even on land.



Our camp fire in the evening is helping to keep the many insects away. However, at 40C in the shade, a camp fire is less fun.

We hear the Hippos splashing, grazing and munching in the river next to our camp, they eat their grass quite loudly. A Hippo has to consume about 130kg of biomass every day. Luckily our camp site has a very steep river bank so they would not come for a surprise visit...