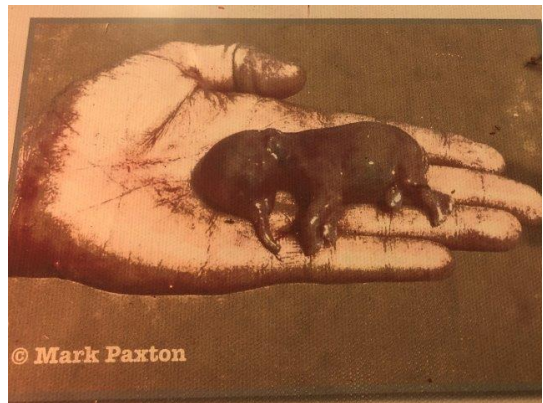


29.12.2020 Olifantrus, Etosha National Park

After the long drive yesterday, we take a day's rest. There is still drizzling rain from time to time, it would be hard to see any animals anyways. Unfortunately, there is also no wildlife showing up at up the fence; the Olifantrus camp is located in the middle of the bush. At least we see a huge centipede narrowly avoiding a collision with the Unimog tire. Well, yesterday's wildlife adventures are anyhow hard to beat.



At the camp there are a few interesting signboards, one shows a tiny elephant embryo.



In the afternoon a MAN Action Mobil pulls up at the camp and we get to know Penny and Armin from Switzerland. For a change, we are not the biggest...

30.12.2020 Etosha, Kamanjab

Our time in Etosha is nearing its end and we exit via the south-western Galton Gate. Of course, we do not leave without another game drive. At the Duineveld waterhole we are lucky to spot our last large male lion...



The lion does not linger around the waterhole for too long, so that a herd of Wildebeest dares soon after to approach the waterhole. However, they are disturbed by a Hyena...





As we continue to drive on, we see many vultures circling in the sky. Going further we discover some vultures along the track. A Springbok has lost its life last night and the White Backed Vulture are fighting over the carrion. Soon after a Jackal is going for his share of the carcass, the vultures can only look on. Finally, much larger vultures are arriving. These Lappet Faced Vultures are big and they push the smaller White Back Vultures aside.

Later we do some research about vultures and learn something new: Vultures are classified into two groups: The Old World and the New World. New World vultures are found in North and South America, Old World vultures are found throughout Africa, Asia and Europe. The biggest difference between the two groups is that Old World vultures don't have a good sense of smell and locate their meals by sight. In contrary, New World vultures have a good sense of smell and sharp eyesight. The lappet-faced vulture is big he weighs up to 13kg, stands 1.3m tall and has a wing spread of up to 3m wide.





The lappet-faced vultures have a threatening look and intimidating behavior. There is no doubt who is boss. Size matters. We watch the show for quite some time before we drive on.





At the Dolomietpunt waterhole just below the Dolomite Camps Zebras and Springbok move over the white sand landscape, a classical Etosha scene.



Finally, we depart the Etosha park through the south-western Galton Gate. We are heading towards Kamanjab where we want to stay at the Oppi-Koppi Rest Camp for New Year's Eve.

The owners of Oppi-Koppi have been Overlanders as well before they settled in Kamanjab, therefore they let all Overlanders with foreign number plate camp at their place for free. A really nice gesture we do appreciate! In return one would frequent their restaurant and bar.

31.12.2020 Oppi-Koppi Rest Camp, Kamanjab

Our neighbor at the camp is an ostrich who is curiously watching all our moves.



Kamanjab has two supermarkets, two fuel stations and a very good shop named “Impala Meat Market”, where they sell all kind of game. Finally, we can buy some Kudu- and Oryx-steaks and for the first time we try Eland filets.



Here at the rest camp we meet other travelers who ask us how the situation with the “animal traffic jam” at the Etosha waterhole finally ended - the waterhole which was occupied by the lioness in the scorching heat. They have seen us still standing there when they left. Unfortunately, we cannot tell them the end of the story.

The Oppi-Koppi offers a New Year’s Eve dinner of Oxtail prepared in a Potjie with Pap (corn-porridge) and rice. We have a relaxing New Year’s eve, sitting with other travelers around a big table – some normality just like during pre-corona times. A long missed experience.



1.1.2021 Oppi-Koppi Rest Camp, Kamanjab

Happy new year 2021! Next, we want to head into the Kaokoveld. Peter und Conny want to join us with their "Ubelix", so we decide to drive together for a while. The travel guide books recommend to drive up there with two vehicles, as this is one of the most remote areas in Namibia. The northern boundary of the Kaokoveld extends until the Kunene river, which marks the border to Angola. We are looking forward and start to plan a possible routing.

The Kaokoveld is home to the partial nomadic Himba tribe, which still lives a traditional lifestyle - although civilization is creeping up on them too. Especially, because they are a popular motif with photographers due to their traditional appearance. About 7000 Himbas live in an area of approximately 50.000qkm.

2.1.2021 Khowarib Gorge, Hoanib Dry River

In the morning we are busy with last minute preparations, shopping supplies and filling up Diesel as well as water. Then we start towards the Khowarib Gorge. We have to find the start of the track into the gorge then after a few kilometers we have to pass the 'Veterinary Fence' control post which is set up in the middle of nowhere. In order to control Foot and Mouth Disease, no fresh meat and eggs are allowed to be taken through this fence from the north to the south. As we drive in the opposite direction, we have no problems.



The landscape is interesting, we pass small settlements before we come to a large area with 'Fech Fech'. Fech Fech is a powdery sediment also called dry quick sand. Driving

through this material produces huge dust clouds and the visibility is zero. After rainfall a Fech Fech area is almost impassable, as the tires are smeared with the mud and have no more grip.



In the late afternoon we make camp for the night at the Hoanib dry riverbed. Except for three boys watching us from a respectful distance no one is passing by. When our fire wood is running low the boys are so thoughtful to collect more firewood for us. They drop the wood and turn around instantly without asking us for money or food!



3.1.2021 Khowarib Gorge, Ongongo Waterfall, Sesfontein

In the morning the three boys are back, most likely hoping for their reward. One of them has a badly ripped T-shirt and Conny is treating him a new one.



The next morning our journey through the Khowarib Gorge continues along the dry river bed of the Hoanib. The landscape is as impressive as we remember it from our first journey to this area many years ago. We are on the look-out for wildlife and soon we spot the first desert giraffes.



The landscape is changing and we see more and more green grassy areas. In several places there is even water standing in the riverbed. First we think there is no way through, but on the left side we see a few very vague tire marks. Our Unimog tucks his belly in and passes through without any problems.



The landscape is varying constantly, we are passing through more Fech Fech areas, narrow passages and a river crossing. We come through a few villages where children immediately run towards the track to beg or sell Arts & Craft – homemade jewelry, special rocks or antelope antlers.



Much too soon we exit this amazingly beautiful gorge at the settlement Khowarib. From here it is not far to the Ongongo Waterfall - a hot spring - where we have a refreshing dip. The nearby village „Warmquelle“ (meaning Warm Spring) has its German name for a reason.

Right next to the Ongongo waterfall is a nice camp site, newly renovated, but they have tripled the prices compared to previous levels and it seems there are no more tourists staying overnight, most visitors pay for a day visit to take a dip in the spring.



Refreshed and with most of the dust washed off, we reach Sesfontein (“Six Springs”) after 35 km. Here we can buy supplies and fill up with diesel. Sesfontein is marking the southern boundary of the Kaokoveld. This is a barren and vast land and the supply

trucks have to cover huge distances to reach certain areas. Often, they supply goods only once a week. Therefore, the local store here has no vegetables on offer except for onions.

Even here, Corona-hygiene-measures have been implemented. In front of many stores, there is a canister hanging, attached is a rope with a stick. If one steps on the stick the canister turns and water is poured out to wash hands. African knowhow!



I just want to take a photo of the Unimogs fueling up, as this chap walks by and gestures me suggesting that he wants to be photographed. He starts immediately to pose for a good shot. Of course, I do my best to make his wish come true. Please pay attention to his Mini-Potjie with the provisions for today's lunch.



Actually, we have driven enough for today, but Peter wants to continue to Purros, about 100 km away... The clouds are building up and soon the first rain drops start to fall. The colors of the landscape become soft colored shades of beige and grey.



In the evening we finally put up camp close to Purros near the Gomatum dry river bed. Later, it really starts to rain and we can collect a few liters of water in our watering can.

