

## 25.1.2021 Aba-Huab, Twyvelfontein

Of course we do a game drive first thing in the morning, hoping to see more of the elusive desert elephants. Soon we come across fresh elephant footprints and screen the surroundings attentively. The still low sun on the horizon is blinding us a bit, but we are not being disappointed. Soon one of us is shouting: "Eeeelephant"!

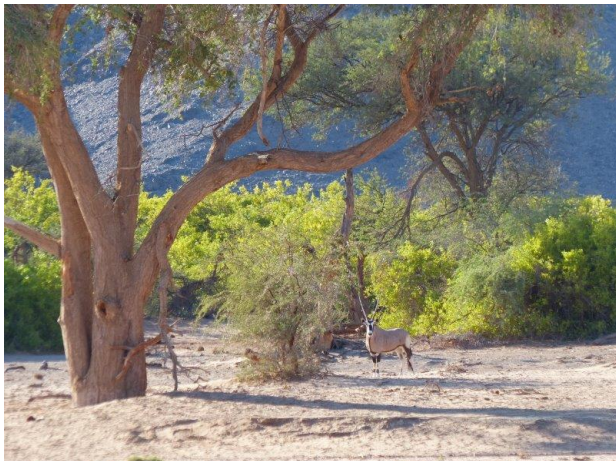




Incredible, to be so close to these wild animals. Elephants always move silently, hardly making any noise when walking through the bush. One cannot hear their steps only the breaking of a branch when they feed. The newest branches on the very top of the tree are of course the tastiest.



Big trees are growing in the dry river bed, it almost looks like being in a park. However, the more westward we move the less elephant tracks we can see. On more oryx is our last wildlife before we drive out of the riverbed in De Riet.





In De Riet we are asked to register in a big book. The lady at the reception informs us quite pushy, that they live from tourists and would take everything, food, clothes and money....



After registration we look for the track leading us back into the riverbed. A reasonably used track turns in the right direction and we follow it. With a bit of searching for the right direction we get back into the Aba Huab. From here we follow the riverbed until we reach Twyfelfontein.

The region around Twyfelfontein is renowned for its prehistoric rock paintings and many engravings. 2007 these rock engravings were listed as a “UNESCO world heritage site”, they date back over 2000 years. There are also abstract engravings like dots in a row or circles with a line, they have probably served as a calendar or marked a water hole with a spring or river feeding it. Interesting enough the Australian Aborigines had developed similar symbols. There is nothing special about the village of Twyfelfontein; it has a pub, a soccer field and the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge.



After swallowing so much dust over the past few days we drive straight to the Twyfelfontein Lodge for a cold drink. The lodge is nicely integrated in the landscape and build creatively around the existing rocks. On the property are a few rock paintings

as well as engravings which can be viewed. Unfortunately, at the lodge they do not offer camping.



The rock paintings show giraffes, ostriches and zebras which are easy to identify. It is fascinating to be so close to pre-historic history.





Here at the lodge our Unimog meets a few of his cousins, all 404 models. With the dramatically low number of tourists, there is not much to do for them lately. Anyway, we pose for a family photo.



What do people actually do all day long in a place like Twyvelfontein? There is literally nothing, the surroundings are just desert, except for the bar where of course most of the action is taking place...







Just behind Twyvelfontein we find a nice spot to set up camp, close to the Mowani Mountain Camp, which is – as so many others – closed for the time being.

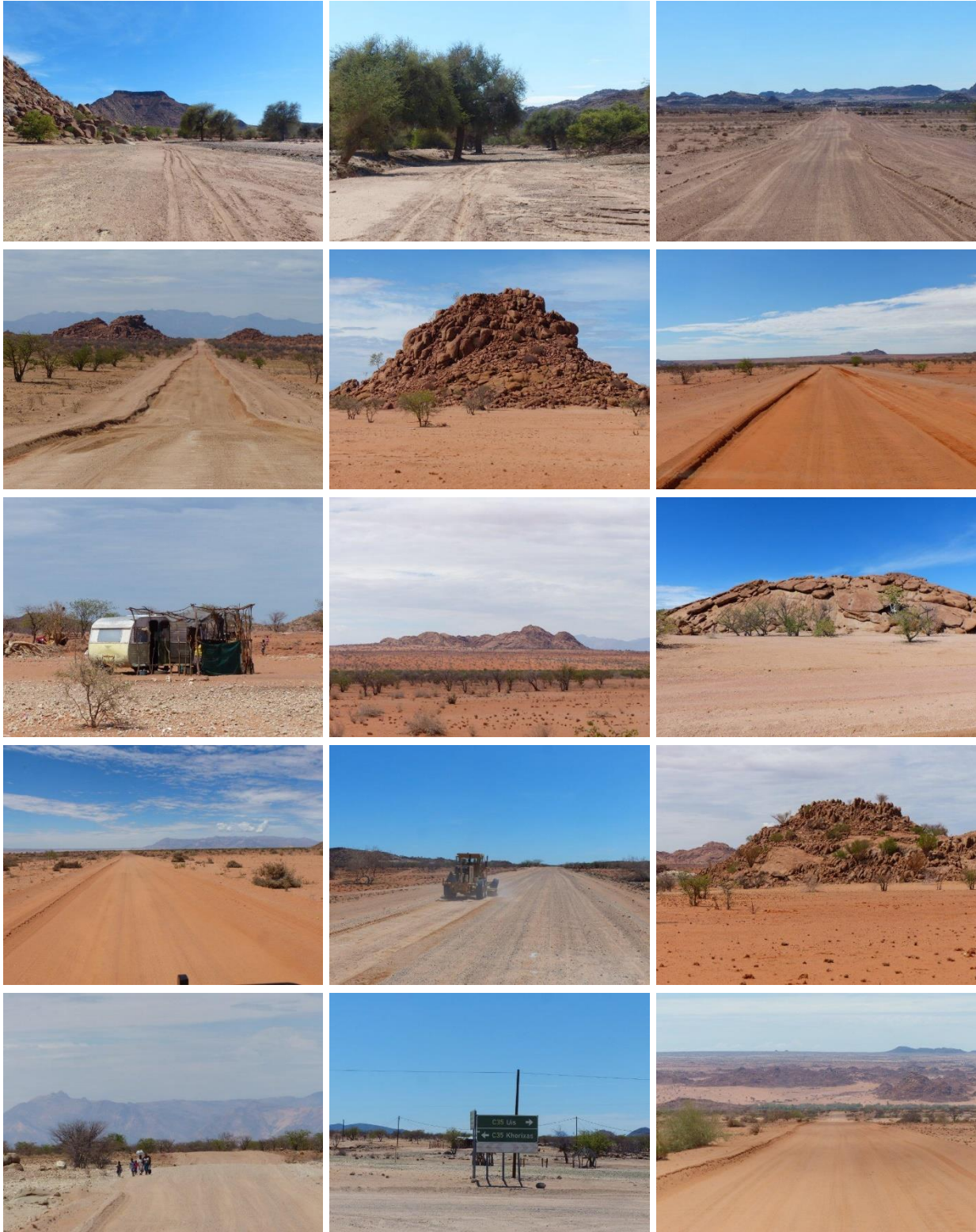


## 26.1.2021 Uis

Today we drive to Uis, a little town in Damaraland located at the edge of the Brandberg massif. The Brandberg mountain range is expanding over an area of 450qkm. The highest peak is the Königstein, 2575m high, at the same time it is also the highest mountain of Namibia.

First, we continue to drive up the Aba Huab riverbed – we meanwhile love driving in riverbeds – then the track leads us further through spectacular desert landscape with interesting rock formations. Today we are lucky, about 40 km of the track have been recently graded and it is pleasure to drive on a smooth road for a change.







There are different theories how the Brandberg (“Burned Mountain”) got its name. One theory is that at dusk the mountain looks like it is on fire. Another theory is that is so dry here, that everything around it looks burned. Also, on the mountain there are many black places, which look as if burned. The black color is caused by a chemical reaction between some minerals in the rock.

Soon we see the Brandberg massif in its full range and beauty.



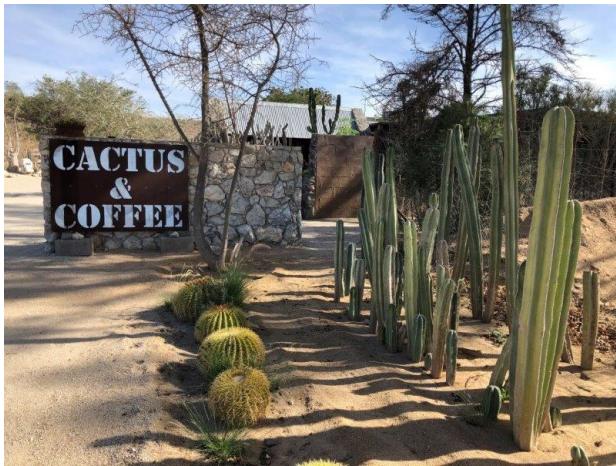


When approaching Uis one notices already from a distance a huge snow white hill just behind the city. As it turns out, this white hill is the mine tailings of the local tin mine. From 1923 until 1991 tin ore was mined here, but the prices fell to a level where the operation of the mine was not profitable anymore. However, the infrastructure of the mine was kept in place, in the hope that one day mining here would be profitable again. They had to wait for quite a while but indeed in 2019 the mine was put back into operation.



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In Uis we visit the campsite “Daureb Isib” of the “Cactus & Coffee”. On this campsite each site has a sun roof with own bathroom.



### 27.1.2021 Uis

A little tragedy is associated with Uis. A group of travellers arrived in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to where is now Uis located. They made their evening meal on a campfire from the branches of the bush Euphorbia Damarana (or locally known as Damara Milkbush) and went to bed. Unfortunately, none of the 20 travellers awoke the





next morning. Euphorbia bushes are very common in Damaraland but they are also highly toxic, except for rhino and oryx who can feed on it. It says, if the milk of the bush comes into contact of an open wound it can kill a person. The food the travelers cooked on the fire was intoxicated and they were also inhaling the poisonous campfire smoke during their sleep. Their graves are still located where it all happened.

We have been piling up our laundry since we started this trip... So today there is no more excuse, today is Laundry Day.





## 28.1.2021 Uis

On the billboard of the local supermarket in Uis we find a poster with information about the new 30N\$ bank note. In the Kaokoveld we were offered such a bank note, but didn't really believe such a note existed and declined it – this must be a silly counterfeit. However, to celebrate 30 years of independence in Namibia, a 30\$ bank note was indeed officially issued!



Another challenge without further ado, is our diesel tank number 2. When we drive on tank 2 it seems that the engine does not get enough diesel. The problem is not the diesel filter, we changed it already, that would be too easy... Werner disassembles the diesel fuel line piece by piece, we then pour diesel through each piece to see if there is a blockage. But nothing. We are close to giving up, there is only one last piece of fuel line with a connector left. Oh well, we also take this part out. As always, it is the very last bit which caused the problem. We are able to flush out dirt and plastic parts as well as pieces of metal. Finally, we solved the problem! We must have collected all these pieces at African fuel stations....



## 29.1.2021 Ugab River (Ost)

We are on our way to Ugab River, located east of the Brandberg. Also, in the Ugab there are supposed to be desert elephants but not as numerous as for example in the



Hoanib river. We fuel up and head for the Brandberg mountain range. With the Ugab River we can add another dry river bed to our “driven-dry-river-bed-list”.



We find a nice camping spot next to a lot of elephant dung, but unfortunately no elephant shows up. As usual, in the afternoon the desert wind turns up strongly and shovels tons of sand and dust into our faces and cabin. Lesson learned, next time we have to watch the wind and the wind direction before choosing our campsite. We still manage to light a campfire for our dinner.

