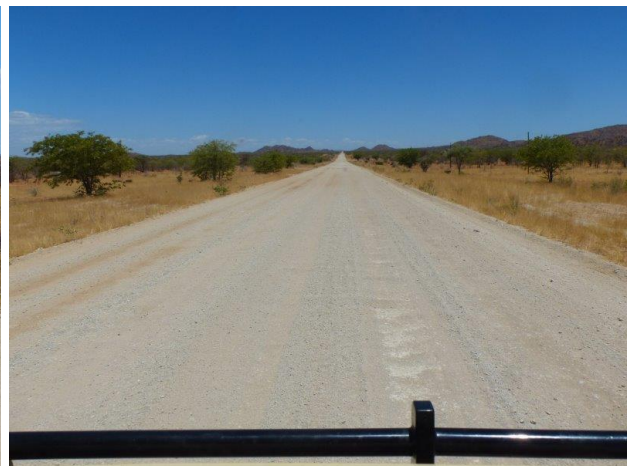


### 1.1.2022 Oppi-Koppi, Kamanjab



### 3.1.2022 Fingerklip

With nice company and lots of chatting about African overlanding topics the days at Oppi-Koppi have passed very quickly. Now it is time to hit the road again, we are going South and drive from Kamanjab on the C35 via Fransfontein towards the Ugab river, so far unknown territory to us.





We stop at the “Ugab Terrace Lodge” for a cold drink. The terrace provides a stunning view over the Ugab Terraces and the Ugab Valley with its table mountains. One just has to conquer the very steep and narrow driveway up to the lodge!



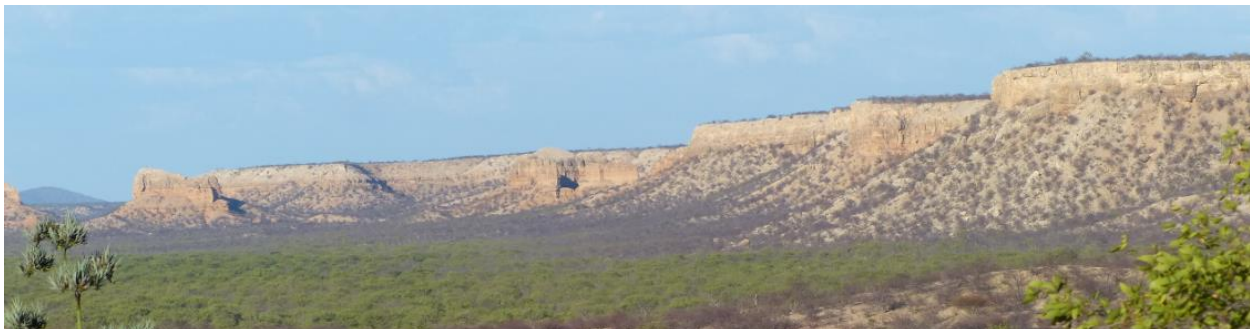
The landscape is breathtaking and reminds of Arizona. Millions of years ago the Ugab river was once carrying water. In the background one can see the famous „Fingerklip“ rock.



The „Fingerklip“ is a 35m high rock, poking straight into the air like a finger, hence the name. But it looks like as it could tip over any day soon...



A few kilometers down the road there is the “Vingerklip Lodge”. As the name suggests, from here one has a very good view of the Fingerklip. Of course, we have to stop here. We are not seated for long when someone shouts “Elephants”! Everyone rushes up to a higher terrace to get a better view. Through our binoculars we discover the two elephants, but unfortunately they don’t visit the waterhole of the lodge. Obviously, they are not thirsty and pass by quickly.



A few kilometers down the track we find a place for the night.



#### 4.1.2022 Khorixas

Around noon we arrive in Khorixas, the little town has a new OK Foods supermarket and meanwhile two fuel stations. We did not expect such a well stocked supermarket in this area; a good opportunity to stock up our supplies.



Fueled up, we look for the start of the 4x4 Doros Crater Track; we are roughly located in-between Twyvelfontein and Brandberg in Damaraland. The track is at times hardly visible, then again there are clear marks from other cars. Some very used tracks however just lead to the next village. The path changes between sandy and rocky, between red and white patches. At a creatively decorated junction we turn right.

Our progress is slow, as we drive very carefully and attentively around any sharp looking rocks to avoid any possible damage to the side walls of our tyres.



Late afternoon we reach a small plateau which offers a great view and we decide it is enough bumping around for today and set up camp. It took us much longer to reach this point than we had anticipated.

Someone has obviously tried to settle here earlier; the ground slab of a small hut is still existing. It's a very nice location for a house, but obviously they didn't spend any thoughts about the water supply... We manage to barbeque our dinner and eat outside, but soon it is just too windy and cold, that we have to retreat inside our cabin.



### 5.1.2022 Doros Crater

Slowly we continue our drive towards Doros Crater and enjoy the beautiful landscape. On a little hill someone else tried to settle and build a house. It must have been many years ago probably at a time when there was a water source somewhere close by. Otherwise, how could you want to live here?





In the middle of the desert, we come across a man-made waterhole built very elaborately and with great efforts. It means that there must have been more surface water here previously or a borehole. Who has built this structure and when? We would love to know more about the story behind.



Closer to the crater we find more animal tracks. We go on game-drive-mode and indeed discover some springbok and a young oryx as well as giraffes. It is always satisfying to spot animals in this wild desert area, like seeing a deer or a rabbit at home. Finally, we reach our destination, a camp close to the edge of the Doros Crater. It is an idyllically located campsite in-between large boulders. It is not possible to drive into the Doros Crater, therefore we turn around and head south again.





On our way South we are willing to take a small detour to avoid the “Divorce Pass”. It is supposed to be a very steep and narrow pass with high risk to damage a tyre. Well, the pass has gotten its name for a reason. On our route we pass by a few remains left behind by human settlers.







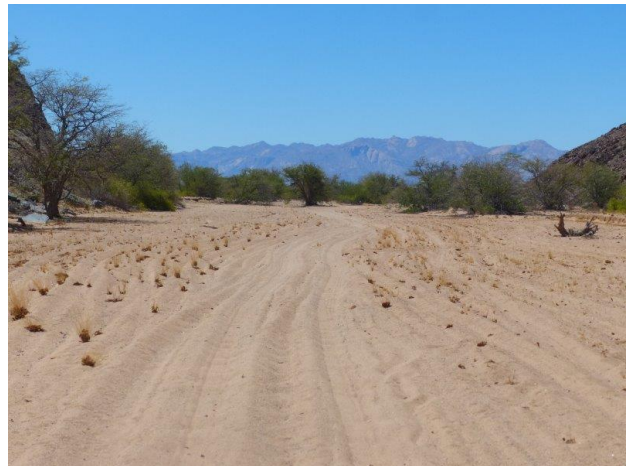
In the afternoon we find a water hole which is fed by a solar pump. Maybe it is used by a lodge to visit during their game drives. Already on the way here, we noticed some large animal tracks. We decide to stay here for the night and park strategically not far from the waterhole with a good view.

Our plan works out, at dusk a rhino approaches very quietly and cautiously. Later three giraffes join in. We have an undisturbed view from our roof window. The strong wind blows in the right direction so the animals do not get our wind and are undisturbed by our smell.



## 6.1.2022 Ugab River

The next morning, another giraffe and a group of baboons show up at the waterhole, before we continue to drive on. Not too far down the track a sign informs us that we are leaving the Doro!Nawas Conservancy area.



En route, a few more ruins of very adventurous settlers can be found.





Red sand was blown on to the darker rocks and the landscape shows beautiful shades of red and grey.



Soon there is less sand and the track gets very rocky until we reach a hair rising pass with big steps and washed out holes as well as narrow turns. And this after we especially took a detour to avoid the Divorce Pass! This pass is not much better.

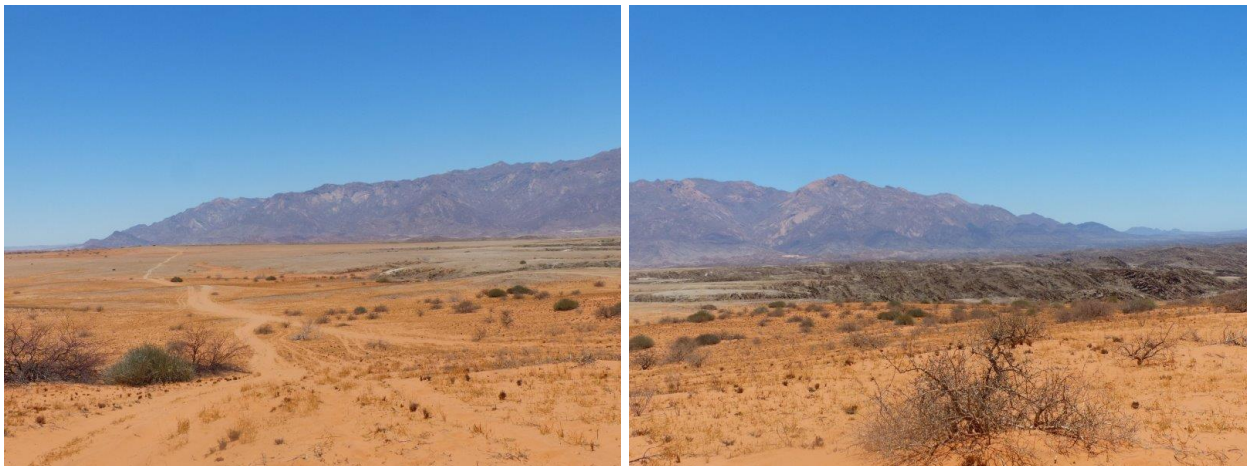
Very slowly we are driving down step by step and turn by turn. Some of the rocks which look dangerous to our tyres we remove by hand. With slow and controlled speed, we manage to drive down the pass and are very relieved that all went well.





Around another bend, we find ourselves up on a ridge and have a fantastic view of the Brandberg, but also of the track ahead of us. Our planned route leads right into the large rocky area and through a few valleys, it looks rough and narrow. To the left however is a relatively wide and open sand track, this looks definitely more attractive to us.

Despite the fact that we actually want to head west we decide for the easier track to the east. We definitely do not need another steep and rocky pass or a flat tire. The Ugab dry riverbed runs in the north of the Brandberg. If we manage to get into the Ugab riverbed, we could drive west in there.



Our plan works out, we find an entry into the Ugab riverbed and can turn to the west. The detour was also shorter than expected. Driving in the dry riverbed is the best, the tracks are mostly soft sand and are wide enough.

The Ugab has a population of desert elephants and we drive slowly to not miss them. We look for fresh markings, analyze the age of the elephant droppings and check especially the shady areas below large trees, where they usually try to hide from the sun.



Finally, we are lucky and find some desert elephants in the biggest shade under large trees. Later they cross the riverbed and move on. When they are gone, we take their place under the tree as the smart elephants have indeed found the shadiest spot.



We are just setting up our camp when there is a blowing sound next to our car. What strange noise was that? We have a look around and see an elephant right in front of our kitchen window. Then we realize, the elephants are all around our car, maybe the herd has returned from their outing. We quickly and quietly shut all the windows. They take their time examine our truck, one bumps with his trunk against the cabin wall – looks like he is checking what kind of material we are made of.





After the elephants inspected us thoroughly, they slowly move on. What a wonderful experience!

In the late afternoon, when the greatest heat starts to subside, usually strong winds start to blow. Unfortunately, the wind blows up huge dust clouds from the dry river bed. A few kilogram of sand and dust land not only in and on our car, but also on our barbeque with the meat. Supposedly, sand is cleaning the stomach, isn't it.



It is getting dark and we are just stowing away our stuff after the BBQ as only by chance we notice the big elephant bull, he has almost reached our truck. We haven't been in the truck that quickly before. It is always fascinating, how quiet these huge animals can move around. Only ten minutes earlier and the elephant would have been walking behind our backs when we were still having our dinner.

Surely, tonight we will dream of elephants.