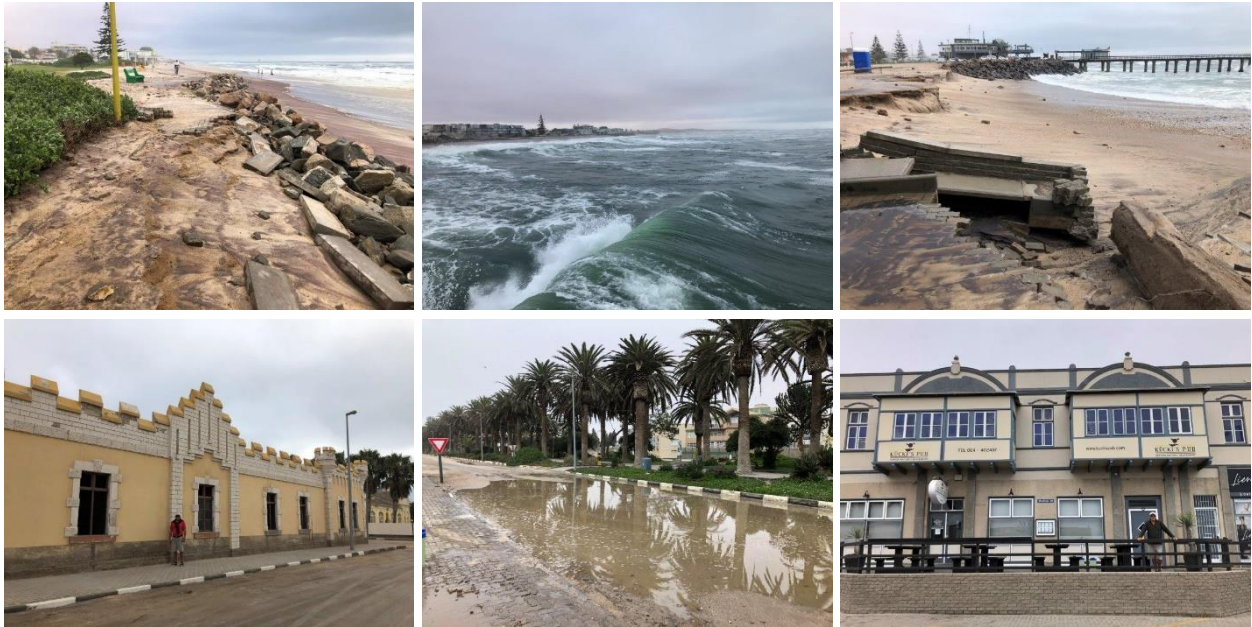


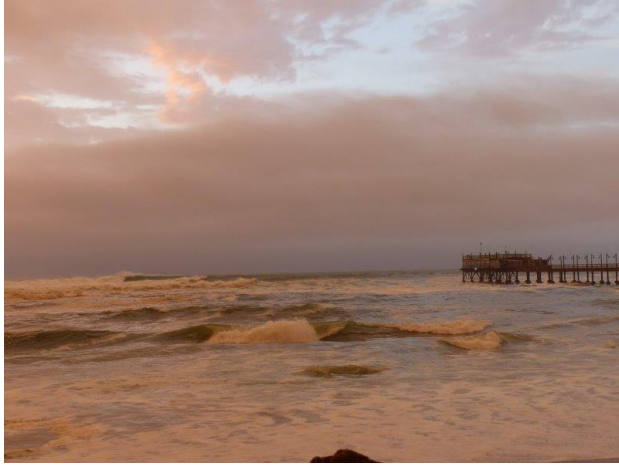
19.1.2022 Swakopmund

The weather forecast has announced a spring tide and we are not the only ones, who want to witness this force of nature. The spring tide has caused quite some damage to the walkway along the beach promenade. It is unusually warm and due to the rain quite humid as well. This time at the coast we won't get the anticipated break from the heat.



The storm must have blown lots of sand and dust into the air. At sunset, the sky is filled with an eerie yellowish light, it almost looks like something is burning somewhere. What an interesting natural phenomena...





22.1.2022 Namib Naukluftpark

The high amount of rain received over the past days and weeks have brought the wild endemic lilies on the Sandhof Farm to life. We always wanted to visit this truly special nature event. Already last year there was enough rainfall for the lilies to bloom, but it would have been too far for us to drive there. Now Detlef and Chris from “Team Red Bull” plan to drive there and we decide to join them. In Namibia one is seldom “close by” something and maybe the distance of 450 km to get there is considered “pretty close”.

Via Walvis Bay and the Tumas Plains we get to the Kuiseb Canyon. During the Second World War, Henno Martin and Hermann Korn were hiding in this canyon. Being German citizens the two wanted to avoid being detained by the British. The memoirs about their adventures “The Sheltering Desert” is an interesting read.





The usually dry Kuiseb river which flows through the Namib-Naukluft National Park and the Namib desert to Walvisbay is running! Only during years with very high rainfall the Kuiseb river is reaching the Atlantic Ocean. It was in 2011 that the river for the first time after decades reached the sea again!



To see so many dry rivers carrying water is quite an experience for us. We are getting all excited and stop at almost every river...





A long day driving is coming to an end and late afternoon we find a nice camping spot amidst great landscape close to the Rostock hills.



23.1.2022 Solitaire, Maltahöhe

Today we continue our drive to the Lilies. After a few kilometers, we reach the Gaub Pass, which was the day before yesterday still mentioned in the local newspaper as it became unpassable due to the large amount of driftwood blocking the bridge. Earlier, we worried already, whether we would be able to get through, but the bridge has been cleared quickly with the help of farmers from the area.





Shortly after the Gaub Pass we once again cross the Tropic of Capricorn and stop for the obligatory photo.



The C14 leads us through spectacular desert landscape all the way to Solitaire. The rain brings unusual green colors into the yellow-brown desert as the grass starts to grow immediately after the rain.



The tiny desert village Solitaire is located at the intersection of the main tourist routes C14 and C19. Solitaire consists of a fuel station, cafe, bakery, a shop with essentials and a lodge. It is the only fuel station for many kilometers around. Their apple crumble is world famous and Solitaire with its collection of vintage cars offers tourists many rewarding photo opportunities. Despite being very remote far away in the desert it is usually a busy place.

It is obvious that the tourists are missing. Just a handful of cars are parked up, the café and the bakery are closed and the apple crumble doesn't taste as fresh as before. However, they are still recording each drop of rain.

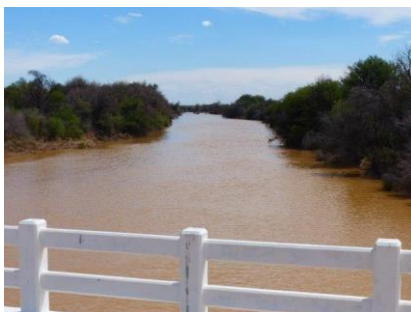


SOLITAIRE

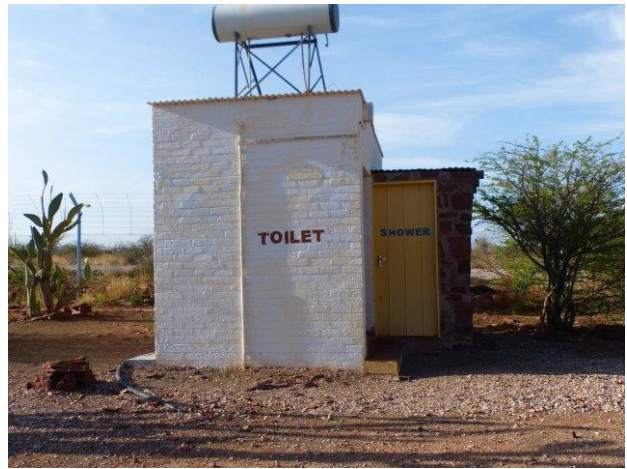
Year	Total Rainfall (mm)	Latest Rainfall (mm)	Date
2009	223MM	17.10.19	6MM
2010	135MM	06.12.10	
2011	479MM	10MM	12.01.21
2012	130MM	18MM	13/01/21
2013	58MM	16mm	07/02/21
2014	101MM	5mm	11/2/21
2015	87MM	20mm	11/2/21
2016	68MM	4mm	13/2/21
2017	116MM		
2018	76MM		

RAINFALL 2020		2022	
Feb	0.5	18/01	20
MAR	28	19/01	14
APR	47	29/01	10
MAY	15	27/01	28
JUL	11		
OCT	46		
	13		

Many large puddles of water line our drive to Maltahöhe and most rivers are running. On a farm are many of the rare Sabel antelopes, we stop to watch them for a while.



Late afternoon we reach Maltahöhe, where we meet “Team Red Bull” at the Oahera Art Campsite. The small local campsite has cold showers and a large shop with local handicrafts as well as a restaurant. The campsite has a very relaxed feel.



24.1.2022 Sandhof Lilien

From Maltahöhe it is a roughly 40km drive to the lilies. The pad is at places very muddy and now we know where the many muddy cars we have seen on the road come from.





In short: The wild lilies on the Farm Sandhof are truly spectacular! They only bloom when the clay pan is filled with water. If it does not rain enough only a small part of the flowers will bloom. If it rains too much the lilies are actually drowning. We did not expect the lilies to cover an area of 770 ha and to stretch out all the way to the horizon.





Together with lilies the Red Spotted Lily Weevil beetle comes to live. He is living off the lilies only (mainly the leaves) and totally depends on them. Once the bloom is over and the lilies have withered, the farm stock is allowed to graze on the remaining plants. The biomass brings enough fodder to last the farm stock for three months. (The farm owns about 100 sheep, 80 cattle and 350 goats.)



The bloom of the Sandhof Lilies is a real “happening”, visitors are coming and going, some bring their picnic into the water and everyone takes lots of photos. It is hard to leave this magic place, but we still have to drive to the Lapa Lange Game Lodge in Mariental.

Also here, they are waiting desperately for guests, most staff had to be released. The lodge works with minimal staff to keep everything running as hardly any income is generated. If unexpected guests arrive (like us), a standby team is called together and if necessary, the gardener will be promoted to waiter. When we order a bottle of Merlot the gardener-cum-waiter asked us “white or red”?!

25.1.2022 Rehoboth

We want to return to Windhoek, which means we have another long day of driving ahead of us. Via Kalkrand and Rehoboth we drive on the B1 northbound. The route is rather monotonous and boring, the traffic luckily not too busy. Only the trucks overtaking us, offer a little bit of excitement. The trucks are considerably bigger and longer than in Europe and are called interlinks. After overtaking us, the trucks often veer quickly back to our lane with not much distance between us. Each time, we are a bit worried that one is misjudging the distance, swerves in too early and would push us from the road. Close to Windhoek we find a camp with a view.

