



At our home base in Namibia, the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) runs a comprehensive giraffe conservation programme. One important aspect focuses on monitoring and supporting the long-term conservation of Namibia's desert-dwelling giraffe. These giraffe roam throughout the northern Namib Desert in the country's northwest and our programme area covers a total of > 30,000km². The area is comprised of communal conservancy land in the east and extends into the Skeleton Coast National Park bordering the Atlantic Ocean to the west. It is confined by the Kunene River and the Angolan border in the north and extends south to the Hoanib River.

Namibia is well-known for its successful community-based natural resource management approach where local people gain management rights to their designated local land and natural resources including wildlife and plants. Approximately 20% of Namibia is managed and protected by communal conservancies, and over 46% of the country is under some form of private, communal, or public conservation management.



This collaborative conservation approach has contributed to large-scale habitat protection and positive populations trends of most wildlife in the country.

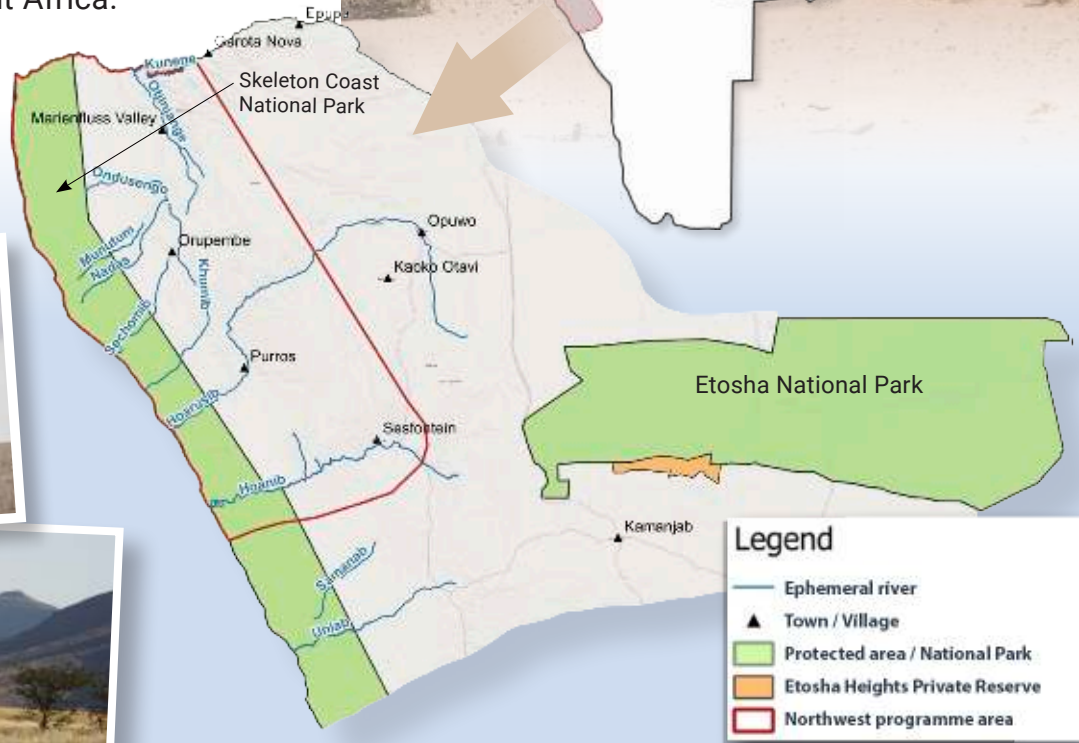
With only a few millimetres of annual rainfall, the northwest is arid to hyper-arid and all wildlife is well adapted to this harsh environment. However, these conditions mean that many species survive at the very edge of their adaptive abilities and as such the ecosystem is fragile. Climate change, historical poaching, and overgrazing have led to some degradation of the environment and impacts on wildlife. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most beautiful and remote refuges for Africa's remaining mega-fauna.

In this stark landscape of dunes, gravel plains and dry riverbeds, African savannah elephant, black rhino, lion, cheetah, and numerous other



species thrive, as does the desert-dwelling Angolan giraffe (*Giraffa giraffa angolensis*), a subspecies of the Southern giraffe (*G. giraffa*). GCF's long-term giraffe conservation monitoring and research programme – in fact the longest-running programme on giraffe in Africa – in this remote part of Namibia offers a unique and valuable opportunity to better understand them and, through what we learn, provide invaluable conservation and management lessons for other giraffe populations throughout Africa.

After years of drought, we were delighted to finally receive good rainfall and see all ephemeral rivers flow



TWIGA TRACKER IN NUMBERS

Operational GPS Tracking Devices

45



Sunburst used the largest home range

1,128km²



Present used the smallest home range

44km²



Recorded data points

120,640

Lynne walked the most

975km



Blondie walked the least

215km



Average distance walked over 6 months

474.2km



Average distance walked per day

5.25km



GIRAFFE PER RIVER SYSTEM

| | Females | Males | Juveniles | Total |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Hoanib River | 73 | 67 | 11 | 151 |
| Hoarusib River | 69 | 81 | 14 | 164 |
| Far North | 49 | 69 | 13 | 131 |
| Total: | 191 | 217 | 38 | 446 |

repeatedly during this year's wet season. This provides an essential lifeline for plants, wildlife, and local communities. With lots of additional food and water available and the rivers running, most giraffe temporarily moved away to higher grounds. Towards the middle of the year the giraffe started to return to the dry riverbeds, and we were treated to a baby boom with an additional 15 giraffe calves identified. Interestingly, many other wildlife species also experienced a similar boost in numbers – a typical trend in the bust and boom desert environment and a welcome sight after several tough years.

The giraffe population in northwest Namibia has increased steadily with 446 in our individually

identified database! All of this despite the local desert lion population resuming their legacy of hunting giraffe in the Hoanib River. Such is nature! Overall, there are many positive signs for the conservation of all these animals who have adapted to the harsh desert environments of Namibia's northwest.

We continue to see some of the largest movements and home ranges of any giraffe in Africa, especially further north in the area. All of which makes perfect sense as compared to other areas food is less in the dry northwest, and giraffe must walk further distances to survive and find mates. ■

NORTHWEST NAMIBIA PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

Total known giraffe population in Northwest Namibia



DNA samples collected



Total giraffe population sampled for DNA



Students & community members trained



Total giraffe sightings



Individual giraffe spotted



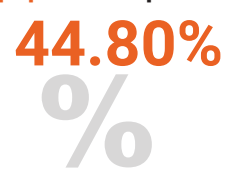
New adult giraffe identified



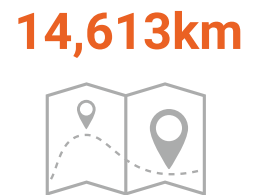
Field days



Percentage of giraffe population spotted



Distance travelled by field team



New calves observed



Average herd size

