



Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

Update September 2024

This year is rushing by and we have already reached the end of the third quarter, so time for another quarterly update on our field-based Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP). Field conditions vary a lot during different times of the year. While Namibia is not known for its wet conditions, we generally expect to receive some rain during the rainy season from January to March or sometimes as late as April. Then in May, temperatures drop and we experience very cold nights until about August during the Namibian winter. This period provides ideal conditions for outdoor activities in the bush, with abundant wildlife and often rather pleasant temperatures, however, mornings can be very cold! Now, as we transition into the final quarter of the year, it is getting hot, dry and often windy – but this is also a sign that the holiday season is in sight. This year, we are expecting the programme to quieten down from early November. Schools will close at the end of November already as there will be a national election on 27 November and exams will be written before then. This will give our team time to catch up on things and recover from a busy field season before their well-earned break.



But at the moment, it is DRY – Namibia is experiencing yet another drought and the dams in Daan Viljoen Game Reserve are totally empty and dry. Luckily, we still spot a lot of wildlife during our field days. Our hike follows the dry riverbed of a seasonal river that flows only during the rainy season. During the dry months, these riverbeds still function as “oases” as the vegetation along the banks

provides food and habitat for a variety of animals, particularly herbivores. Our recent sightings included a black mamba and black hairy thick-tailed scorpions. Both sightings create a lot of excitement with all the school children, and we seize the opportunity to tell them about how various species adapt to their dry environments.



In 2024, nearly 3,000 students and their teachers have participated in KEEP, including both returning and new school groups. This year, we welcomed six new schools and five new groups, including three environmental clubs from high schools in Windhoek. We believe that the recurring participation reflects the programme's impact and value derived from it by many schools in the Khomas Region, while new groups indicate that our message is reaching a broader audience, enhancing environmental awareness in Namibia.





In September, KEEP welcomed the first-year Nature Conservation students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) once again. Since 2018, the first- and second-year students have visited our programme every year to gain firsthand experience and insights into the challenges of implementing effective environmental education, which is a key component of their Environmental Education module. Additionally, we also hosted members of the Namibian Youth Chamber of Environment, a youth division of the Namibia Chamber of Environment (NCE). These aspiring young professionals joined in September to improve their local environmental knowledge. This trip was organized by the Khomas Regional Coordinator, who sought to provide them with real-world experience in environmental education and the skills necessary to make a difference in their communities. Our goal is to educate as many young Namibians as possible, while also welcoming passionate individuals who are committed to making a positive impact on the environment now and in the future. Hosting such groups is very inspiring for our team and we always learn a lot too.



In other news, we are excited to introduce a new member of the KEEP team. Sibolile Sankombo, who holds a degree in Environmental Biology from the University of Namibia (UNAM), joined us in August as an intern. His academic background and passion for the environment will greatly enhance our efforts to increase environmental awareness.

One of KEEP's goals for the year is to support our participating schools in implementing environmental activities that yield tangible results from their participation in KEEP. Thus far, we supported several schools in Windhoek with initiatives such as tree planting, gardening, and clean-up campaigns and we plan to collaborate with more schools before the year concludes. This approach will not only allow us to effectively measure the programme's impact but also inspire students and teachers to start putting into practice what they learn during their KEEP outing.



As the year is slowly coming to an end, we have a few groups booked in for October before we will wrap up for the year as things have already started to slow down due to the upcoming exams.

As always, a big thank you to all our generous donors for their continued support.



GALANTHUS FOUNDATION



Wilhelma
Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten
Stuttgart



IOWA'S WILDEST ADVENTURE

