



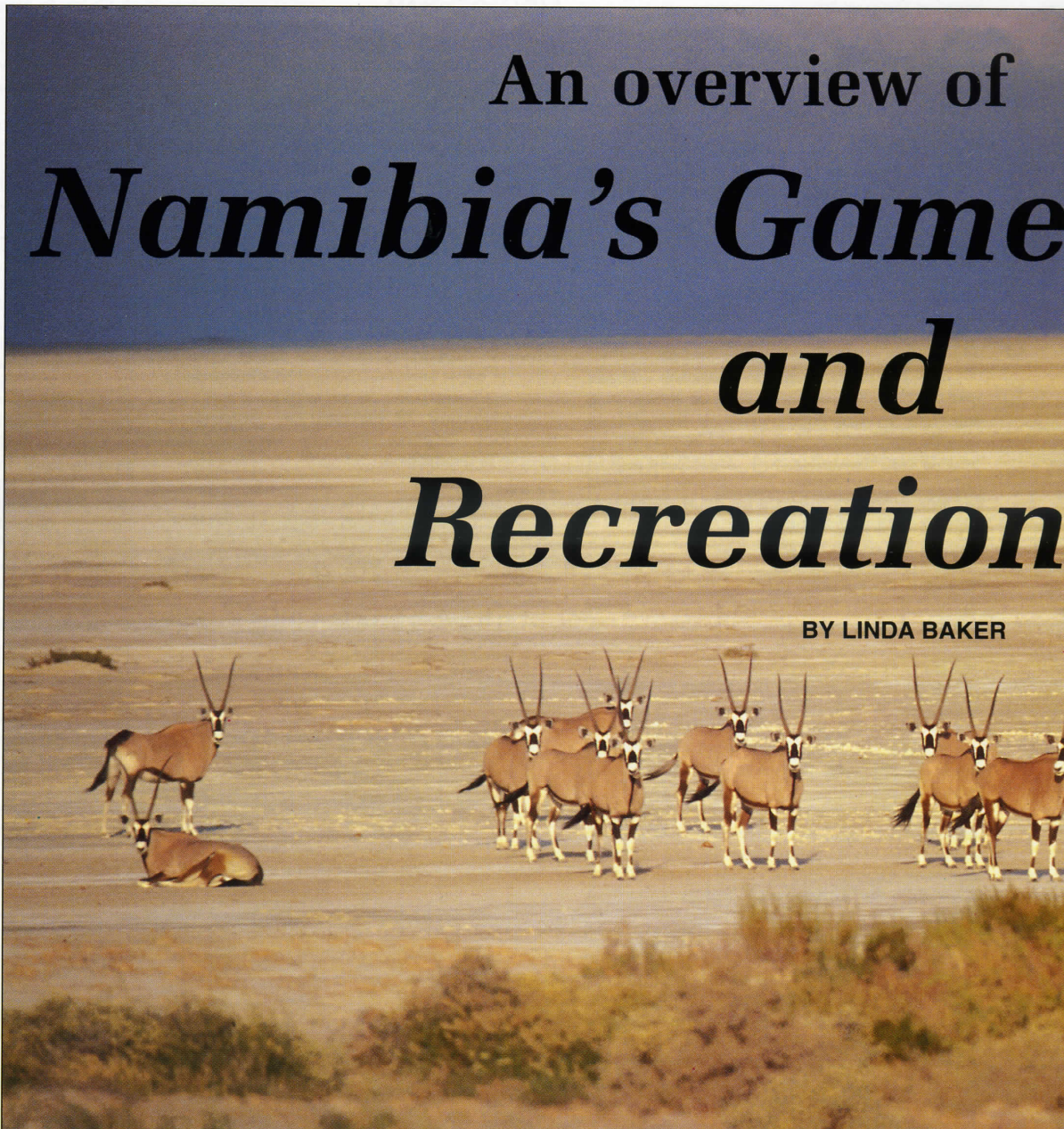
LINDA BAKER

The Author: Linda Baker worked for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for six years - first as a game ranger and then as the Ministry's Media Officer. She has been one of the main coordinators of Namibia's World Environment Day programmes. Linda is currently a publicity consultant with the Directorate of Environmental Affairs.

WITH many African countries competing for the same tourist market, Namibia has one asset with which few countries can compete. Pristine landscapes where space and solitude are plentiful, enable tourists to enjoy a relaxing holiday without scores of tourist buses spoiling the atmosphere.

Apart from the scenery, the country's diversity of wildlife is a major draw-card. Successful conservation measures, within and outside parks, have led to healthy game popula-

93 240 km². Boundaries were changed in 1947 and again in 1956, increasing its size to 99 526 km². With the implementation of the Odendaal Plan the size of the park was reduced by a massive 77 percent. Today, the park covers an area of 22 270 km². Saline pans cover 23 percent of the park's total area, with the renowned Etosha Pan spanning 4 590 km². The large variety of animals and the unique opportunity to photograph them against the starkness of the pan attracts thousands of tourists annually. Etosha has 114



An overview of *Namibia's Game and Recreation*

BY LINDA BAKER

A feature of Etosha National Park is the huge saline pan, which covers 20 % of the reserve. The pan is home to various species of wildlife, such as oryx.

tions. There are 21 parks and recreation areas in Namibia representing 13 different biomes. About 13,6 percent of Namibia's total surface area of 824 295 km², has been proclaimed as conservation areas.

ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

Etosha National Park is the most visited conservation area. Proclaimed as Game Reserve No 2 in 1907, Etosha originally measured

mammal species, 340 bird species, 110 reptile species, 16 amphibian species and one fish species.

During the dry season, which lasts from May to October, large numbers of animals congregate at the waterholes along the edge of the pan. During this period waterholes provide the only surface water and visitors are guaranteed sightings of a large number of species.

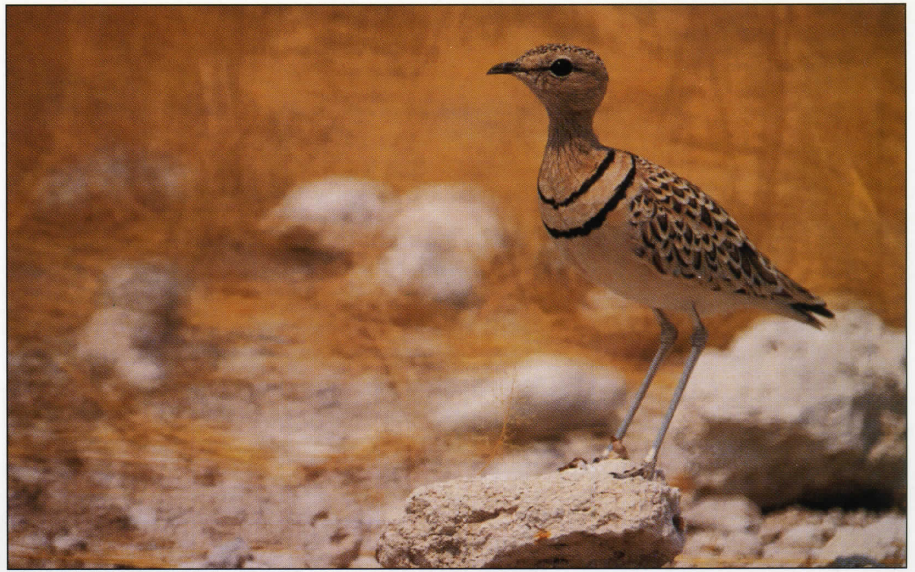
From November to April, which is known as the wet season, there is enough surface water for animals to disperse. Game viewing is often disappointing during this season, with sightings of only zebra, wildebeest, springbok and oryx at waterholes near the pan. In the wooded areas, tourists could glimpse eland, kudu, red hartebeest and black-faced impala. Predators are well-represented in Etosha and include lion, leopard, cheetah, spotted and brown hyaena, black-backed jackal, Cape fox, African lynx and African wild cat. Among the

Parks Areas



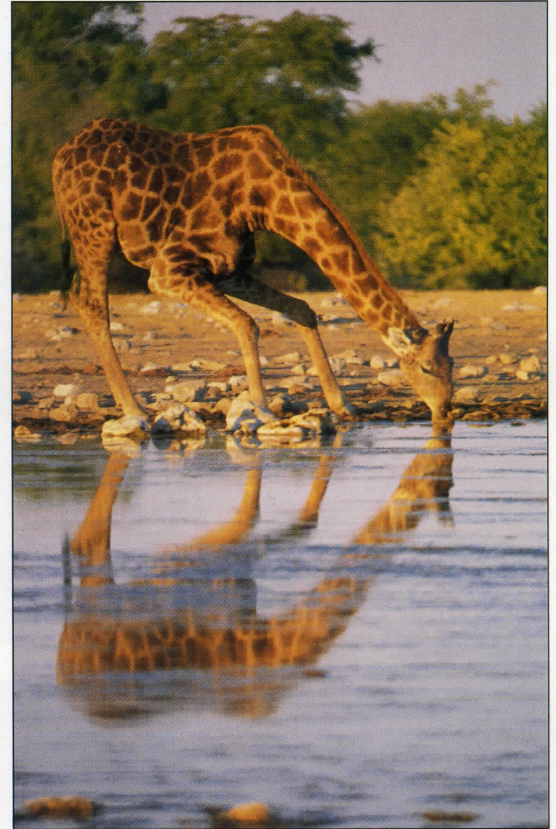
Wynand du Plessis

specially-protected animal species found here are roan antelope, black rhinoceros, elephant, giraffe, klipspringer, black-faced impala and Burchell's and Hartmann's zebra. About 400 mm of rain falls between December and April. The average maximum temperature for December is 39°C, while temperatures remain below 30°C between December and April. The lowest mean temperature of 6°C occurs during July.



Wynand du Plessis

The elusive Double Banded Courser is common in the short grasslands to the south and west of the Etosha Pan. Like all ground nesting birds, this species is well camouflaged, relying on its cryptic coloration to avoid terrestrial predators. A total of 340 bird species have been recorded in the park.



Wynand du Plessis

Etosha has a population of more than 1500 giraffe. These ungainly browsers are vulnerable to predators when drinking, and are usually nervous at waterholes.

Etosha has a growing black rhino population. Although these animals are mainly nocturnal, they are regularly seen at waterholes during the day.



Claudia Auer

Vast grass plains and shrubs surround the pan. The bush is deciduous with mopane changing into mixed bushveld. One of the most fascinating plants in the park is the moringa tree, *Moringa ovalifolia*. A bizarre forest of these unusual trees, situated near Okaukuejo, is aptly termed Fairy-tale Forest.

Etosha's three tourist camps – Okaukuejo, Halali and Namutoni – each have their own distinct character. Bungalows and camping facilities, as well as a swimming pool, restaurant, service station, kiosk and shop are found in each camp. Okaukuejo, the park headquarters with the Etosha Ecological Institute, is the most popular camp. Its

famous floodlit waterhole, where sightings of elephant, black rhino and lion are common, adds to the uniqueness of Okaukuejo.

Halali, once known as the Cinderella of Etosha, is becoming increasingly popular since the development of the Moringa Waterhole at the camp. The grounds are spacious and shady.

The most photographed camp is undoubtedly Namutoni, with a beautiful white German colonial fort and a newly established waterhole. The grounds are grassed, with tall makalani palms fringing the resort. All resorts were extensively renovated and redecorated in 1995.



Willie & Sandra Olivier

Okaukuejo with its inviting swimming pool, comfortable bungalows, shop and restaurant, is one of Etosha's three rest camps.



Jen & Des Bartlett

Occasionally parts of the Etosha Pan fill with water, and flamingos arrive in their tens of thousands to breed.