

**NORTHWESTERN NAMIBIA DESERT-DWELLING
ELEPHANT AND GIRAFFE PROJECT**

SEPTEMBER 2004

COLLARING/DE-COLLARING EXERCISE

TRIP REPORT

To: Namibian Elephant and Giraffe Trust File
Via: Dr Pauline Lindeque, Director
Specialist Support Services
Ministry of Environment and Tourism

c.c.: Dr Fanuel Demas (MET)
H.O. Reuter (Wildlife Veterinarian)
Purros Conservancy Committee
Mr Richard Fryer (MET)
Dr Betsy Fox (MET – Outjo)
Mr Steve Braine (Hobaterre Lodge)
Mr Garth Owen-Smith (IRDNC)
Mr Dave van Smeerdijk (Wilderness Safaris Namibia)
Mr Chris Brown (NNF)

From: Keith Leggett – Elephant Study - Project Manager
Trip Dates: 20th – 30th September 2004
Report Date: 1st October 2004

BACKGROUND

The objectives of the collaring exercise were as follows:

- (a) Remove 8 GPS collars from elephants collared in September 2002
- (b) Re-collar 5 elephants with new GPS collars, 4 in the Hobaterre Game Reserve area and 1 in the Purros area.
- (c) Remove as many giraffe GPS collars that could be found.

OBSERVATIONS:

Summary

The elephant recovery and collaring exercise was successful in both Hobaterre and Purros areas, with down times between 7 and 40 minutes. In the Hobaterre Game Park area, four large males (approximate ages 25 to 45) were collared with one female elephant (approximately 25 years old) collar recovered. While in the Purros area one adult male was re-collared and three collars recovered, two males (between approximately 15 and 50 years of age) and one female (approximately 25 years of age) were recovered.

In the Hobatere Game Park area Mr. Steve Braine and his staff assisted the researchers in the collaring process. In the Purros conservancy area the community and conservancy committee were consulted prior to the collaring operation and they were also involved in the collaring process.

Two giraffe collars were recovered. One was recovered in the Purros area and the other in the Hoanib River. The collared recovered in the Purros area was found in the veld and the collar from the Hoanib River was recovered from a giraffe near the Mudurib bore hole.

KEY PERSONNEL

Researchers

Keith Leggett

MET Staff

Richard Fryer

Dr. Betsy Fox

Helicopter Pilot

Jockel Benz (Heli Flying Services)

Veterinarian

HO Reuter

Collaring Advisor

Diets Okhuysen

Community Members (Purros Conservancy Area)

Ernst Kasutjaiva

Hobatere Game Park Staff

Mr Steve Braine

Observers

Todd Carmichael

Kay White

Rebecca Caudle

Melanie Adams

Oliver Ross-MacDonald

David Ross-MacDonald

Louise Egerton

Christie Harman

Vella Tjumbuya

Gerard Labuschagne

Jason De Carteret

Gerson Kasona

Tristan Cooper

Marco Grunert

COLLARING OPERATION

Roles

Researchers

The researcher (Dr Leggett) were responsible for the preliminary research, selection of the animals to be collared/re-collared, assisting in the collaring and for the overall management of the operation.

MET Officials

Mr Fryer was responsible for the collaring and capturing of individual animals (assisted by the researcher) and to ensure that none of the Ministry Ordinances were breached. Dr Betsy Fox assisted in the collaring process of the elephants in Hobatere Game Reserve.

Helicopter Pilot

Mr Benz was responsible for the flying, aircraft safety and determining the optimum operating conditions for the helicopter.

Veterinarian

Dr HO Reuter was responsible for all animal health issues. He was also responsible for all darting, drug dosage and ear marking of elephants.

Collaring Advisor

Mr Okhuysen a representative of African Wildlife Tracking assisted the researcher and MET official in the collaring of the elephants.

Observers

The observers were along to observe the collaring operation, but did not physically participate in the collaring.

Collaring

20th September 2004, Monday

All participating researchers, MET official, Helicopter pilot, Veterinarian, Collaring Advisor and observers assembled in Outjo at the Namibian Elephant and Giraffe Trust headquarters.

21st September 2002, Tuesday

13:00 - all participants arrived at Hobatere Game reserve.

17:30 – EKM-02 was identified near to the Hobatere Lodge borehole.

Date:	21 st September 2004
Location:	Hobatere Game Reserve
GPS Co-ordinates:	-19.32064°S, 14.36755°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	40-45

Comments

The elephant appeared in good health and recovered rapidly with the reversal drug.

22nd September 2004, Wednesday

07:30 – Fixed wing flight with Steve Braine in search of collared elephants.

08:00 – EKF-01 identified and de-collared. Due to the isolated area in which the elephant was located, only the vet and helicopter pilot were involved in the de-collaring. No biological data was collected on EKF-01.

13:00 – EKM-01 was observed near the lodge. It was decided to wait until the cool of the day before de-collaring this elephant.

15:30 – EKM-01 was darted from Hobatere Game Lodge and collapsed 400m away.

Date:	22 nd September 2004
Location:	Hobatere Game Reserve
GPS Co-ordinates:	-19.32966°S, 14.36759°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	45-50

Comments

The bull elephant was probably a little older than EKM-02 and also appeared to be in good health. The elephant recovered rapidly with the reversal drug.

17:30 – continued looking for EKM-03 the only collared not so far observed.

23rd September 2004, Thursday

0700 – Searched all morning for EKM-03, he was not found.

17:30 – Fixed wing flight with Steve Braine. EKM-03 was found near the confluence of the Honib and Otjivasandu Rivers (12km from the south western corner of Hobatere Game Reserve).

24th September 2004, Friday

07:30 – Another fixed wing flight to confirm the location of the EKM-03. It was decided to dart and collar another bull in the same area as EKM-03.

09:30 – EKM-03 was found and de-collaring/collaring commenced.

Date:	24 th September 2004
Location:	Confluence of Honib and Otjivasandu Rivers
GPS Co-ordinates:	-19.47198°S, 14.24320°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	20-25

Comments

The young male (bull) elephant was also in good health. The elephant recovered rapidly with the reversal drug.

10:00 – A second elephant was located within 200m of EKM-03. It was decided to collar this elephant. The collaring and biodata for the selected elephant were as follows:

Date:	24 th September 2004
Location:	Confluence of Honib and Otjivasandu Rivers
GPS Co-ordinates:	-19.47190°S, 14.24336°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	40-45

Comments

The first time this elephant has been collared. He appeared to be in good health.

25th September 2004, Saturday

Travel day from Hobatere Game Reserve to Purros area.

26th September 2004, Sunday

07:30 - Steve Braine flew with HO Reuter and identified where the collared elephants were. Meeting with Purros Headman and Ernst Karutjaiva for the Purros Conservancy accompanied the collaring crew. WKM-10 was found near to the Purros Community Campsite and it was decided to de-collar and re-collar this male.

Date:	26 th September 2004
Location:	Nr. Purros Community Campsite
GPS Co-ordinates:	-18.71777°S, 12.933719°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	40-45

Comments

Appeared to be in good health.

17:30 – A signal was received from a giraffe collar near the campsite. No giraffe were observed in the area and a ground search ensued. The collar was recovered after a search of 45mins.

27th September 2004, Monday

07:30 – the helicopter and HO Reuter took off and found WKF-18 about 40km from the Campsite. They recovered the collar. No biological data was obtained from this elephant.

09:00 - WKM-21 was found opposite Purros village. The de-collaring and biodata WKM-21

were as follows:

Date:	27 th September 2004
Location:	Hoarusib River
GPS Co-ordinates:	-18.76395°S, 12.93707°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	45-50

Comments

WKM-21 was not re-collared. He appears to have an injured right hip as he had a difficult movement when he walked. He also collapsed on his sternum rather than on his side.

9:45 – WKF-16/a1 was located within 400m of WKM-21 and was de-collared.

Date:	27 th September 2004
Location:	Hoarusib River
GPS Co-ordinates:	-8.74874°S, 12.93765°E
Sex:	Male
Age:	15-20

Comments

WKF-16/a1 was not re-collared. He was the only elephant that appeared to miss his collar. After he came out of the influence of the drug he checked repeatedly for the collar.

28th September 2004, Tuesday

am – moved the de-collaring effort from Purros to Amspoort in the Hoanib River.

17:30 – a collared female giraffe was found and identified about 5km to the west of the Mudurib borehole. Using the collaring team the collared was recovered in 5 minutes from start to finish. Other collared giraffes were searched for but not found.

29th September 2004, Wednesday

07:30 – Other collared giraffe were searched for by helicopter, but none were found. It was decided to stop the search at 08:30.

09:30 - Return from the Hoanib River to Outjo.

30th September 2002

Completion of the collaring exercise and all participants dispersed.