

(13) 14.

72/09/12-20 Park

AIRIAL CENSUS SEPTEMBER ( 12 - 20 SEPTEMBER 1972)

1. This count was carried out by R. Reid and J. du Toit; J. Hofmeyer covered the Otjivasandu area and Kaross - Khoabendus camp; J. Hugo covered the area north of the 19th parallel west of Ekuma. M. de Jager was the pilot. Map 1 shows the order in which the blocks were covered.
2. It has not yet been possible to work out a system of counting blocks throughout the Park, but work is proceeding on them. The idea of these blocks is:
  - A. that a more accurate picture of distributions of the various animals can be obtained from one count to the next, and
  - B. it is hoped to so design them so that the minimum of movement will have taken place between adjacent blocks during the time interval between the counting of the adjacent ones.
3. The totals obtained for various species in this count are attached. The differences between the figures obtained in this count and those for recent previous counts are more of a reflection of the differential ease in seeing various species with the seasonally changing vegetational aspects, than a true reflection of changes in actual numbers. In the case of the Kaross - Khoabendus camp, the variations in figures over the previous count was largely due to the fact that the helicopter was used this time instead of the Super Cub; this lends considerably greater accuracy to the results and affects especially the figures for kudu, mountain zebra, eland, impala and roan.
4. Distributions of large concentrations have again changed somewhat since last month. Especially noticeable was the concentration of more than two thirds of the Wildebeest population around Gobaub waterhole. There was also a large concentration of zebra and quite a few kudu in the vicinity. About two thirds of the Park's population of elephant were found on and north of the 19th parallel, especially in the west. Almost a quarter were found in the north-east corner in the Onguma area and a few west of Halali, around Charitsaub. Almost a third of the Wildebeest were near the Pan in the vicinity of , and more than a third on Andoni, around Fischers Pan and north and east of Namutoni. The rest were distributed a few north of Okondeka, a few between Springbokfontein and Namutoni, a few round Gobaub and a few east and west of Okaukuejo. Most of the eland are in Kaross - Khoabendus, with some in the Olifantsbad area. The Namutoni population of impala were not seen from the air, but counted at a later date from the ground. In contrast to the wildebeest, Gemsbok are far more evenly distributed over the Park, with a large number in Kaross - khoabendus. The decrease in Springbok numbers reflects increasingly difficult veld conditions for spotting these animals. The converse is true for kudu.

5. The zebra concentrations seen around Poacher's point in the previous count are no longer there. There is very little game in the sector south of the road parallel between the western Ombika loop and the escarpment near Otivisandu. There is very little north of Okondeka and across the northern boundary and there is a similar empty area between Gobaub and Jalali. There are no large concentrations on Grootvlakte, but Gambia, Gobaub and Gembokvlakte areas as well as the area of the road, had large concentrations of game.

6. The following is a comparison of the results of the previous 2 counts with the present one, for the main areas:

	June 1972	Difference	July 1972	Difference	Sept '72
Okondeka	11000	- 950	10558	- 1747	8811
Okongobong	3612	- 1159	2453	+ 456	2919
Gombok	1725	+ 79	1795	+ 15	1810
Okonkond	3102	+ 35	3137	- 457	3059
Okonkond	302	+ 12	294	+ 10	304
Okonkond	218	+ 87	505	+ 427	332
Okonkond	523	- 36	487	+ 114	601
Okonkond	435	- 14	419	+ 444	863
Okonkond	257	- 40	210	+ 119	329
Okonkond	210	- 22	178	+ 160	338
Okonkond	155	-	153	+ 65	219
Okonkond	107	-	107	+ 7	114
Okonkond	35	- 15	15	+ 41	56
Okonkond	648	- 133	515	- 36	459