

WILDEBEEST COUNTS : 1978

1. Dates : 6 - 10 March 1978
- 1.1 Areas : Entire plains area of Etosha
- 1.2 Persons : H. Berry
: M. de Jager
- 1.3 Aircraft : "Hughes 300" helicopter, carrying
2 persons.
- 1.4 Total count time : Approximately 27 hours
- 1.5 Total wildebeest counted : 2493
: Table 1 gives the detailed counts.

Table 1: Aerial census of Blue wildebeest in Etosha
during March 1978

AREA	TERRITORIAL AND BACHELOR - HERD BULLS	ADULTS AND IMMATURES	CALVES
Beisebvlakte	1 + 7	36	12
	8	27	6
	1+1+17+3+2		
	1 + 1 + 1	20	4
	1+1+1+1+2		
Andoni (on Owambo side)	1		
Andoni	1 + 1 + 1	107	25
Leeunes	1 + 1		
Okevis	1 + 1		
North of Fischer's Pan	1		
Aroe	1		
Twee Palms to Namutoni	1 + 1 + 1	37	9
	1+1+1+1+1+1+1	20	4
	13 + 1 + 1	24	5

AREA	TERRITORIAL AND BACHELOR - HERD BULLS	ADULTS AND IMMATURES	CALVES
(contd) Twee Palms to Namutoni	7	1	1
	2 + 1	25	7
	2	7	
		5	
	1 (lame in right foreleg)	13	5
	1 + 1	25	1
	40	11	
Namutoni airfield	2 + 2	35	8
Namutoni airfield to Doringdraai	26		
	1 + 1		
	2		
Doringdraai	1+1+1+1+1+1	41	12
	3 + 1	19	7
Klein Namutoni	1		
Chudop	1	21	5
		20	5
Okerfontein	1		
Agab	1		
Gobaub		12	1
Gobaubvlakte		5	1
Halali plains	1 + 1		
Broken Tree	4 and 1Y ²		
	1		
Gemsbokvlakte	1		
Gaseb		11	4
Stark's Pan	1		
Ombika East		7	3
Ombika West		5	

AREA	TERRITORIAL AND BACHELOR - HERD BULLS	ADULTS AND IMMATURES	CALVES
Okaukuejo to shooting range	1		
Okaukuejo airfield	1 + 23	8 ①	5
to Wolfsnes and Okondeka	11 + 2 1	18 ① 15 ①	4 12
Okaukuejo-Okondeka Leeubron triangle	1 ① +2+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1+1	3 ① 17 8 ①	3 2
Leeubron-Okondeka Adamax triangle	1+1+1+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1+1 3	30 ① 15	16 7
Adamax Pan - Logan's Island - Okondeka triangle	1+13+1+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1+4 1+1+1+4+1 1+1+1+1+1 1+1+1+1+1	6 30 3	4 8 1
Adamax-Okahakana -M'bari triangle	1+1+1+1+1 1+1	9 16 ①①	3 2
Adamax-Grunewald -M'bari triangle	1		
Adamax-Leeubron -Leeubron triangle	1+5	13 30	6 15
West of Leeubron road to rifle range	1 ① +1+1+6		
Grunewald-Sprokieswoud - M'bari triangle (northern Grootvlakte)	14 ① +2+1 1+1+1+1 2+1+1+3 1+3+1+1+1	18 16 80 8 18 8 ① 20 8 7	7 6 14 4 6 2 5 4 6

AREA	TERRITORIAL AND BACHELOR - HERD BULLS	ADULTS AND IMMATURES	CALVES
(contd.)	1+1+6+1	7	1
	4+3+1+1	14	1
	1+1+8+3	5	1
	1+1+1	8	3
	1+1+1	17	7
		22	5
		7 ①	
		18	4
		63 ①	15
		9 ①	
		40	14
		5	1
		8	5
		13	2
		45	8
Grunewald - M'bari -Eindpaal (southern Grootvlakte)	1+4+5	32	8
	120 ①①	65	8
	1+1+8+2+1	11	2
	1+2+1+1+1	37 ①	13
	1+1+2+1+4	19	9
	1+1+1+6+3	21	11
	1+1+4+1+2	6	
	1+1+1+2+1	36	5
	1	2	2
	9	4	
Safarihoek	1		
Onangombati		26	12
SUB-TOTALS	562	1 512	419
GRAND TOTAL	2 493		

KEY: ① = 1 yellow neckband (18 neckbands seen in total out of 60 wildebeest marked since June 1976)

①① = 2 yellow neckbands.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Percentage calves aged 1 - 2 months in the total population
= 16,8%

2.2 Percentage calves aged 1 - 2 months in the population
consisting of mixed herds only (territorial bulls and bachelor
herd bulls excluded) = 27,7%

2.3 Solitary, territorial bulls comprised 5,7% of the total
population (142 out of 2493), cf. 4,6% (March 77), 1,2% (Dec. 76),
1,7% (July 76), 3% (May 76) and 2% (July 74).

2.4 Bachelor-herd bulls comprised 15,6% of the total
population (388 out of 2 493).

2.5 Bulls in breeding herds comprised 2,9% of the total population
(72 out of 2 493).

2.6 The total number of full-grown bulls (> 2 years) was
601 = 24,1% of the total population.

2.7 There were 66 distinct breeding herds ranging from 2 cows
+ 2 calves to 107 full-grown + immatures with 25 calves. Each one
of these, except the 2 cows + 2 calves, had an adult bull in
attendance.

2.8 There were 68 herds containing 10 or more animals, with a
total of 2 034 animals in these herds = 83,3% of the total
population. Eight of these 67 herds were bachelor bulls (237
animals) and 60 were breeding herds (1 847 animals).

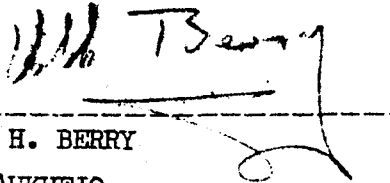
In March 1977, 79% of the population was in herds of 10 or more,
cf. 96% (Dec. 76), 89% (July 76), 88% (May 76). The largest
herds encountered were 132 animals (a breeding herd) and 120
(a bachelor herd).

2.9 The March 1978 count shows a decrease of 18,5% from March 1977 (3 059 to 2 493).

It is likely that this decrease is attributable, in part, to the loss of at least 281 wildebeest which emigrated via the Ekuma to Owambo in September 1977 and a further unknown number which emigrated via Andoni in November 1977.

The March 1978 wildebeest census is the lowest ever obtained for Etosha since helicopter counts were commenced in 1973.

2.10 This report is supplementary to the March 1978 census report for Etosha.



H. H. BERRY

OKAUKUEJO

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