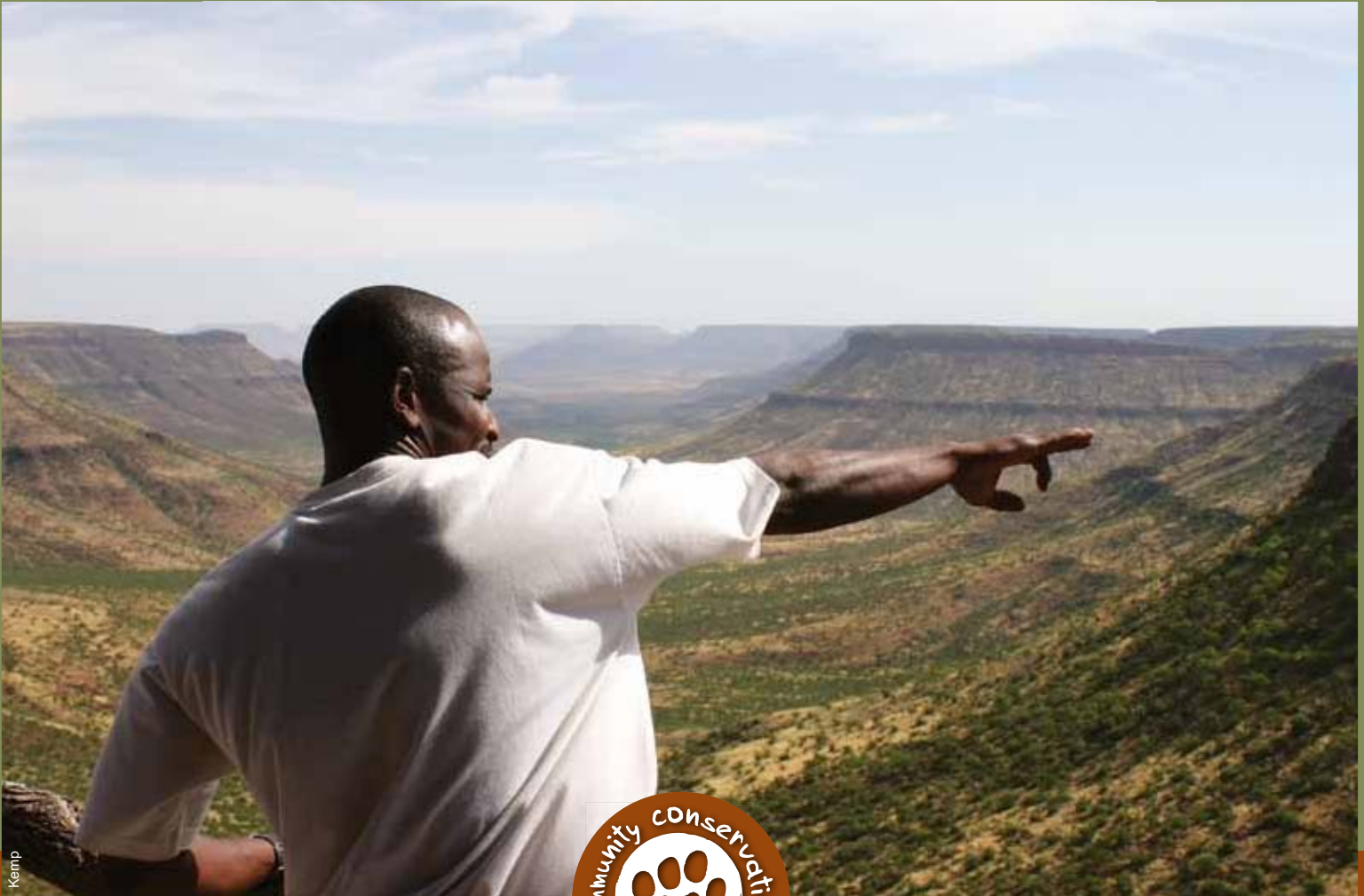


Living with wildlife –  
the story of #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy



Kemp



#Khoadi-//Hôas – after the Khoekhoegowab phrase for 'elephants corner'



# Living with wildlife – the story of #KHOADI-//HÔAS CONSERVANCY

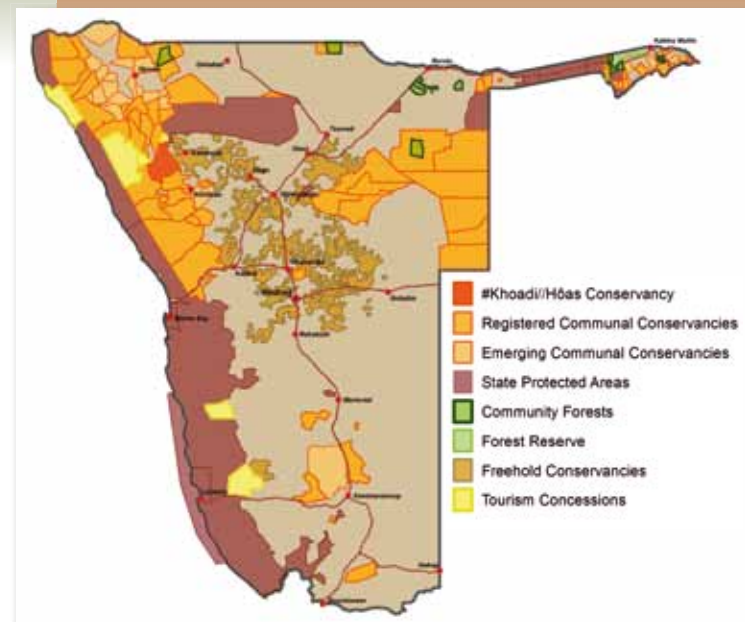
Conservancies enable conservation and development over large areas...

## MILESTONES AND SUCCESSES

- 1990** – the Grootberg Farmers' Union is formed
- 1996** – policy changes allow communal area residents to benefit from wildlife and tourism by forming conservancies
- 1998** – #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy is registered in June
- 2000** – the Forum for Integrated Resource Management is established
- 2000** – #Khoadi-//Hôas becomes part of the annual North-West Game Count
- 2001** – implementation of the Event Book monitoring system in #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy
- 2002** – gemsbok are translocated to #Khoadi-//Hôas
- 2004** – #Khoadi-//Hôas becomes financially independent and is able to cover own operating expenses
- 2005** – Grootberg Lodge opens, making #Khoadi-//Hôas the first conservancy in Namibia to fully own its own lodge
- 2005** – Hoada Campsite, a community campsite, opens
- 2007** – #Khoadi-//Hôas is one of the first conservancies in Namibia to reintroduce black rhino
- 07/08** – eland and black-faced impala are reintroduced into the conservancy
- 2008** – the Ministry of Environment and Tourism awards the rights to the Hobatere Tourism Concession to the conservancy

## QUICK FACTS

**Region:** Kunene  
**Size:** 3,364 square kilometres  
**Approximate population:** 3,200  
**Main language:** Khoekhoegowab  
**Date of registration:** June 1998



## A CONSERVANCY IS...

- a legally registered area with clearly defined borders and a constituted management body run by the community for the development of residents and the sustainable use of wildlife and tourism
- managed by a group elected to serve the interests of all its members
- a place where residents can add income from wildlife and tourism to traditional farming activities
- a place where wildlife populations increase as they are managed for productive gain
- a place where the value of the natural resources increases, enhancing the value of the land
- a forum through which services and developments can be channelled and integrated
- zoned for multiple uses to minimise conflict and maximise the interests of all stakeholders

# #KHOADI-//HÔAS offers an enchanting mix of

## PEOPLE



interesting cultures and dynamic communities committed to sustainability - people living in #Khoadi-//Hôas share a common vision for managing their area and its resources

## PLACES



vast, diverse and spectacular landscapes – the Etendeka Plateau, the Klip River... a healthy environment diversifies economic opportunities and drives economic growth

## & WILDLIFE



charismatic, free-roaming wildlife – elephant, black rhino, giraffe, predators and plains game.. wildlife can generate a variety of benefits for local people

people are living with wildlife, are managing natural resources wisely and are reaping the benefits...

## A LITTLE HISTORY

Prior to Namibia's independence in 1990, communal area residents had few rights to use wildlife. Wild animals were often seen as little more than a threat to crops, livestock and infrastructure, as well as community safety. Ground-breaking legislation passed in the mid-nineties laid the foundation for a new approach to the sustainable use of natural resources. By forming a conservancy, people in communal areas can now actively manage – and generate benefits from – wildlife and other resources in their area, encouraging wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. While a conservancy is a natural resource management structure, it is defined by social ties. Conservancies unite groups of people with the common goal of managing their resources. Today, over 60 communal conservancies embrace one in four rural Namibians, underlining a national commitment to both rural development and conservation.

#Khoadi-//Hôas covers 3,364 square kilometres and is home to about as many people, most of whom speak Khoekhoegowab, a language

shared by the Damara and Nama. The area that is today the Conservancy is likely to have been utilised by the Damara for centuries. In the second half of the 1800s, Topnaar and Swartbooi Nama entered the region from central Namibia to settle at Sesfontein to the north and Fransfontein to the south, respectively, and had a considerable influence on the region. The German colonisation of Namibia from 1884 and the South African administration of the country after World War 1 heavily influenced settlement patterns, with land in the area being allocated as white farmland. Some of these farms were subsequently reincorporated into the Damaraland 'homeland' created after the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission of 1964.

The registration of the conservancy was initiated by the active local farming community, the Grootberg Farmers' Union. The request to form a conservancy was submitted to government without the help of an external support organisation, and #Khoadi-//Hôas was registered as one of the first four conservancies in Namibia in 1998.





## RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS

Conservancies  
are living landscapes...

All **cultures** are dynamic, continually changing livelihoods, traditions and even languages over time. The Damara were amongst the earliest residents of what is today Namibia, and stock farming started becoming their central livelihood activity at least a century ago. Two Nama groups, the Topnaar and Swartbooi, who also depended on livestock, settled in the north-west in the second half of the 1800s and exerted a significant influence on the overall region. #Khoadi-//Hôas lies half way between the Topnaar base at Sesfontein and the Swartbooi centre at Fransfontein and the modern community living in the conservancy was probably shaped in part by these, as well as by the forced resettlements of the colonial period.



Felton

*to the distant horizon, ranges upon ranges of layered, flat-topped basalt mountains glow deep red in sunset colours, hinting at the volcanic upheaval that created them millions of years ago, as Africa started to become Africa... the views from the rim of the Etendeka Plateau are truly breathtaking*

Much of the spectacular **environment** of the #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy was formed by cataclysmic events that heralded the separation of the supercontinent known as Gondwanaland around 120 million years ago. Between 132 and 125 million years ago, an unimaginable series of eruptions from volcanic fissures deposited extensive lava fields across what later became the edge of south-western Africa. The lava eruptions accumulated as a series of basalt layers, now wonderfully visible as the western edge of the Etendeka Plateau around the Grootberg Mountain, the most distinctive landmark of the area. The metamorphic gneiss complexes and granites which underlie the eastern two-thirds of the conservancy formed much, much earlier — between 1,650 and 2,500 million years ago — and are amongst the oldest in Namibia. The elevations of the age-old hills of #Khoadi-//Hôas range between 600 and 1,600 metres above sea level, and the varied topography, rock and soil types offer a great diversity of habitats for both plant and animal life. The dramatic but challenging environment generally has shallow soils, resulting in difficult farming conditions. Low rainfall and high evaporation rates have created a distinctly arid

environment. Annual rainfall ranges between 250 millimetres in the north-east and 100 millimetres in the south-west. Over three-quarters of all rain falls during the first three months of the year, but varies tremendously from month to month, year to year and place to place. This often forces wildlife to move over large areas in search of food, way beyond the boundaries of the conservancy.



Felton



Denker

*quietly following two expert guides across hours and kilometres of wild lands, with a tingling anticipation steadily building — until suddenly, the ancient-looking pachyderm is there ahead, big and close and beautiful... rhino tracking is one of the great wilderness experiences of Africa*

Since the establishment of conservancies, **wildlife** numbers in communal areas have rebounded from historic lows prior to independence. #Khoadi-//Hôas is especially rich in wildlife, which includes desert-adapted elephant, black rhino, giraffe, mountain zebra, eland, kudu, gemsbok, black-faced impala, springbok, duiker, steenbok, klipspringer, warthog, ostrich and baboon. Predators include lion, leopard, cheetah, jackal, spotted and brown hyaena. A high

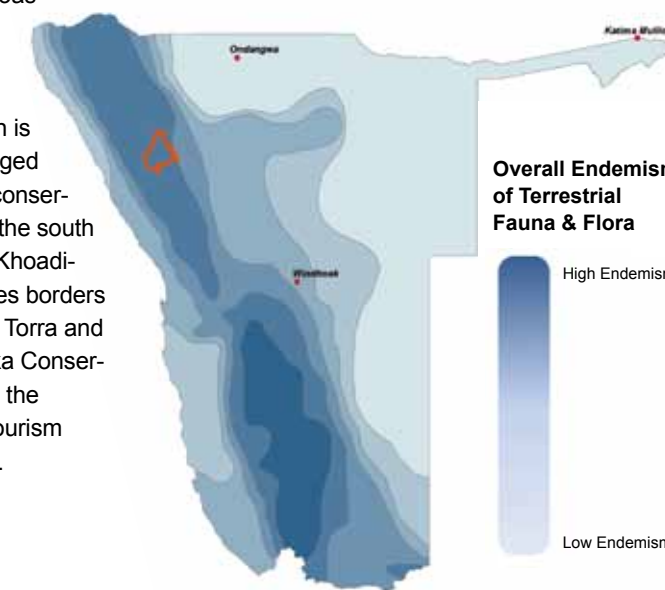


Felton

degree of endemism has developed along the Namibian escarpment, and the diverse habitats of the conservancy are home to a variety of birds, including many of the country's near-endemic species such as bare-cheeked babbler, Carp's tit, rosy-faced lovebird, Rüppell's parrot, Hartlaub's francolin, violet wood-hoopoe, Rüppell's korhaan, Damara hornbill, Monteiro's hornbill, white-tailed shrike, Herero chat and rockrunner. More than half of the scorpions, 25% of the reptiles, 30% of the snakes, and over 40% of the lizards occurring in the area are also endemic.

Plant life in the conservancy is as interesting and diverse. Around ten endemic trees occur here, including several *Commiphora* species. Mopane dominates much of the conservancy, while other distinctive species include kobas, bottle tree, ringwood and shepherd's tree.

**Around #KHOADI-//HÔAS...** The conservancy lies south-west of Etosha National Park and shares a very small border with it, as well as with the adjacent Hobatere Tourism Concession. To the east, #Khoadi-//Hôas borders onto private farmland, a part of which is jointly managed in freehold conservancies. To the south and west, #Khoadi-//Hôas shares borders with //Huab, Torra and Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancies and the Etendeka Tourism Concession.





# LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT

Conservancies  
empower rural people...

Khoekhogowab is spoken by a little over ten percent of Namibia's national population. The language is spoken by both Damara and Nama, but the circumstances that resulted in the shared language are uncertain. Extensive movements around Namibia by both Damara and Nama have continuously reshaped communities. Before the availability of permanent supplies of borehole water in #Khoadi-//Hôas, the people living in the area were semi-nomadic pastoralists, often on the move in search of greener pastures. Nowadays, the conservancy residents live in permanent settlements or *poste* (an Afrikaans word for the cattle posts in earlier times) scattered across 44 former



for renovations, purchased and loaned breeding stock to improve the livestock quality in the conservancy, and has developed a soup kitchen to provide food for the elderly. Trophy hunting and shoot and sell hunting provide important cash income to cover conservancy running costs.

Access for visitors is provided by the very scenic C40 gravel road between Kamanjab and Palmwag, which traverses the spectacular Grootberg Pass to descend from the Etendeka Plateau into the lower lying landscapes on the eastern fringes of the Namib Desert. This is one of the most popular tourism routes into the Kunene Region. A number of smaller gravel roads provide good access to much of the eastern half of the conservancy, while the rugged south-west is only accessible by four-wheel drive on organised game drives.

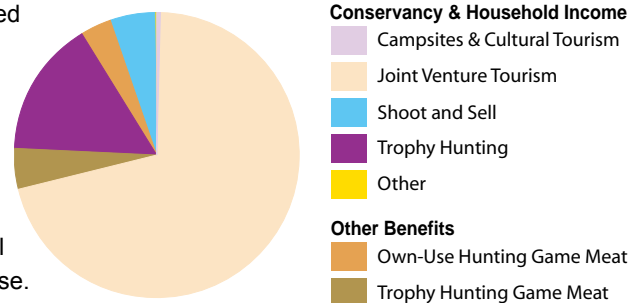
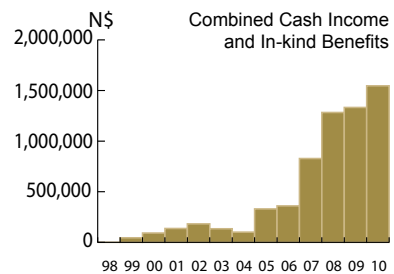
*#Khoadi-//Hôas facilitates access to diverse training and capacity building, empowers individuals, especially women, to actively take part in decision-making, as well as instilling a renewed sense of pride in cultural heritage*

*the conservancy creates a range of new livelihood options for its residents, including employment and income from tourism, guiding, craft production and other sales and services based on the sustainable use of natural resources*

private farms which constitute the conservancy and the !Gaiodaman Traditional Authority area. In the 1960s and 1970s, the South African administration purchased these farms and incorporated them into the Damara 'homeland'. Some people voluntarily moved to this homeland, but others were forced to resettle there from elsewhere in Namibia by the South African administration.

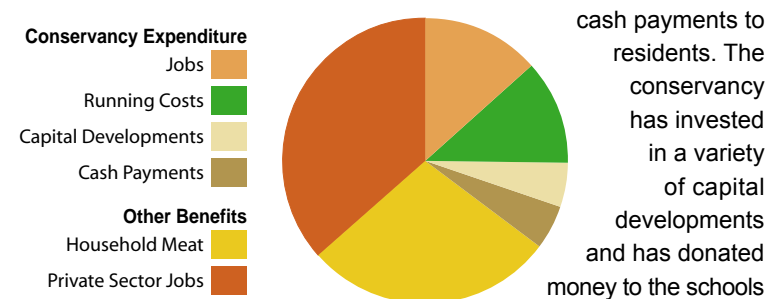
Development was sorely neglected in communal areas during the German colonial period and the South African administration of Namibia prior to independence, an imbalance still evident today. Two *poste* in #Khoadi-//Hôas, Erwee and Anker, have slowly developed into larger settlements, which today provide a limited range of facilities and services. Several hundred people live in the settlements, each of which has a primary school, a clinic and a few small shops. There are two more primary schools, a larger clinic and a variety of shops in Kamanjab, less than 50 kilometres east of the conservancy, while the towns of Khorixas and Outjo, a little further afield to the south and east provide access to public hospitals, secondary schooling and a broader range of facilities and services. Residents of #Khoadi-//Hôas have

reasonable access to borehole water, but water supply remains a limiting factor, as boreholes are expensive to drill and maintain, and often yield only limited supplies. Settlement and farming activities are highest in the north-east of the conservancy, with the more rugged and arid south-west reserved more for wildlife and natural resource use.



Farming with goats, sheep and cattle is still very much a part of most livelihoods in #Khoadi-//Hôas, often supplemented by small scale gardening, as well as by income from employment, pensions and remittances. Farming is difficult in the harsh environment, and the conservancy has significantly improved the livelihoods of many people in #Khoadi-//Hôas. Numerous jobs have been created in the tourism industry and the conservancy itself employs more than ten people. The conservancy distributes meat from trophy hunting and own-use hunting, as well as some

cash payments to residents. The conservancy has invested in a variety of capital developments and has donated money to the schools



Grootberg Lodge, a hidden treasure perched on the convoluted edge of the Etendeka Plateau, with panoramic views over the Klip River valley, provides wonderful tourism accommodation. It is the first lodge in Namibia to be entirely owned by a conservancy, and was built with funds provided by the European Union. The lodge is managed for the conservancy by private tourism operator Journeys Namibia through a joint venture agreement. The lodge creates the main income source for the conservancy, as well as providing significant employment and training opportunities. Journeys Namibia also manages Hoada Campsite as part of the agreement. The campsite is tucked away amongst granite boulders along the road between Kamanjab and the Grootberg Pass. The lodge and campsite create ideal stop-over options on the way to or from the north-western Kunene Region, but are also a real attraction in their own right, especially by offering visitors the unmatched experience of tracking black rhino. In 2008 the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) awarded the rights to the Hobatere Tourism Concession on the northern border of the conservancy to #Khoadi-//Hôas, opening up another important income opportunity to the community.

*Benefits to the conservancy and its members come from a variety of sources. Sources and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as agreements with private sector partners, and market fluctuations. The pie chart shows the main benefit sources in 2010.*

*The conservancy spends money and provides community and individual benefits in various areas. Areas and amounts vary from year to year, depending on factors such as conservancy income and priorities. Private sector jobs are created through agreements with private sector partners. The pie chart shows the main expenditure and benefit areas in 2010.*



# MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Conservancies facilitate sustainability...

The management structure of the conservancy consists of a management committee of 17 people who hold office for a five-year term. An executive committee of six members, with the traditional authority acting in an advisory capacity, makes most of the day-to-day decisions within the conservancy. Decisions are based largely on information from the many monitoring mechanisms used to collect data on wildlife and grazing resources, as well as key aspects of the conservancy's institutional development. Conservancy employees include eight environmental shepherds, an environmental shepherd coordinator and an information officer. #Khoadi-//Hôas is divided into smaller representational areas



*the #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy provides vital structures for managing the communal natural resources of the area in a way that enhances development and ensures sustainability*

to improve communication with the widely scattered settlements. The conservancy shares offices with the Grootberg Farmers' Union (GFU) and works together with the GFU on a variety of land use issues.

**Activities...** The GFU first recognised the opportunities that wildlife management approaches held for farmers and initiated the formation of the conservancy. The GFU and the emerging conservancy worked with the MET, other government agencies and NGOs to pioneer a cooperative management approach, which later became known as the Forum for Integrated Resource Management (FIRM). A more coordinated approach to rural development resulted, including the management and development of water infrastructure, rangeland, livestock, wildlife and tourism. The FIRM approach has been further developed and replicated elsewhere in Namibia, but today the method is often more narrowly focused on livestock and rangeland.

To facilitate effective land use and reduce conflicts between different uses, the conservancy has been zoned into a number of areas, including a large farming and multiple-use zone, and different wildlife zones for exclusive tourism and trophy hunting activities. The stunning Klip

River valley has been set aside as the wildlife and tourism nucleus. Reintroductions of wildlife, including eland, black-faced impala and black rhino, have significantly boosted the value of the area for tourism.

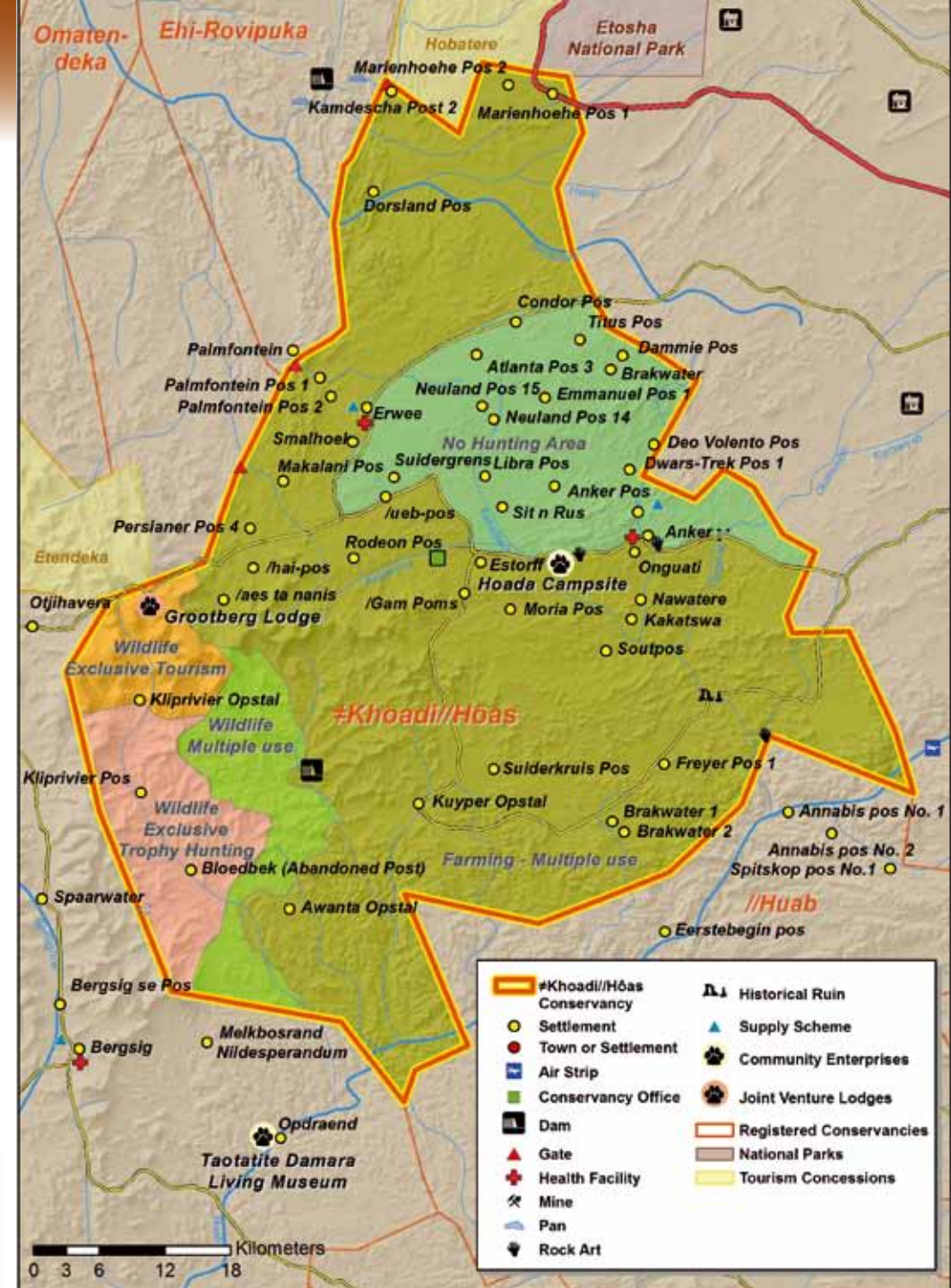
The environmental shepherds undertake active natural resource monitoring throughout the conservancy, including monthly fixed route patrols done on foot across the rugged and largely waterless terrain. The shepherds also monitor grazing and livestock conditions, and address issues related to water supply. Most of the gathered information is entered into the Event Book monitoring system, recording a variety of data such as game sightings, human wildlife conflict, poaching incidents, game utilisation and any other data deemed important by the conservancy. The data is aggregated into monthly and annual reporting charts that facilitate adaptive management.

The conservancy is part of the annual North-West Game Count, carried out by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) in collaboration with the conservancies and with the support of NGOs. The census is the largest annual road-based game count in the world, covering over 7,000 kilometres of road transects in an area of around 70,000 square kilometres.

*the conservancy uses a mix of modern technologies and traditional knowledge and skills to enable healthy wildlife populations, a productive environment, and the effective management of natural resources*

The MET works with the conservancy and other stakeholders to set annual quotas for using wildlife, based on information from the game counts and the Event Book. This allows the conservancy to carry out hunting to supply residents with meat, as well as entering into trophy hunting concession agreements with hunting operators.

#Khoadi-//Hôas strives to actively mitigate human wildlife conflict and has invested heavily in measures to prevent or alleviate problems caused by elephants and predators. Protective walls have been built around water infrastructure and water points for elephants have been established to discourage them from visiting water sources at settlements. Through the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, a new system of providing financial offsets for losses is now being implemented. The conservancy receives a fixed lump sum from the MET and is responsible for paying out offsets to residents upon receipt of a claim. This must be accompanied by a report completed by game guards investigating the incident, and all claims are reviewed by a panel before payments can be made.





## CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES...

Conservancies  
are full of opportunities...

The variety of environmental assets and cultural resources in the #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy provides untapped potential.

**Challenges...** #Khoadi-//Hôas faces the challenge of balancing farming activities with the environmental limitations of an arid ecosystem, as well as optimising benefits from natural resources amongst a society with a long tradition of livestock herding. Stocking rates are very high in many areas of the conservancy and pastures have been overgrazed, particularly around the *poste* and water points where livestock congregate. The close cooperation with the Grootberg Farmers' Union

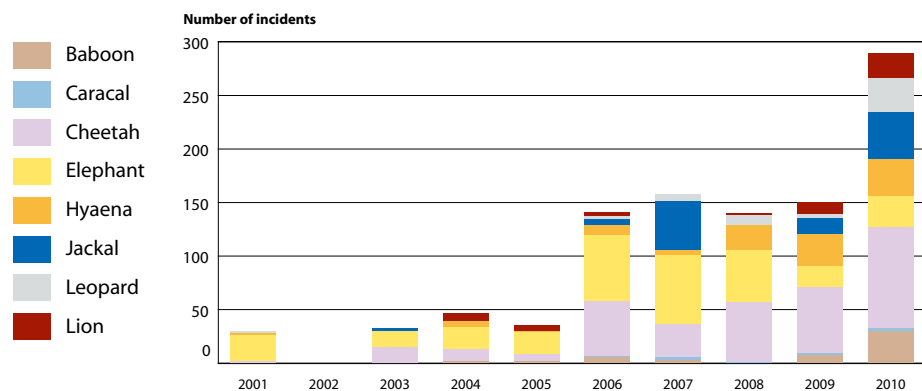


*#Khoadi-//Hôas harbours great potential to overcome some of the development challenges that the area faces – and the conservancy is the ideal structure to coordinate many of the developments*

enables #Khoadi-//Hôas to address this issue in a coordinated way.

Human wildlife conflict is perhaps the largest challenge for the conservancy, yet this tends to be the case where ever people coexist with wild animals, especially if these include elephants and large predators. Elephant conflicts have been reduced in the conservancy through dedicated waterholes for wildlife and the protection of water infrastructure. The diversity of predators causing conflicts with livestock, while a real challenge for residents, also indicates a significant conservation success — as a result of increased benefits from wildlife, predator populations have shown important recoveries across much of the north-west. Importantly, elephants and predators are of great value, both to the ecosystem and tourism, and in the long run benefits gained from them should outweigh the costs of living with them, if people outside national parks are to continue to tolerate the presence of dangerous wildlife.

Located on a key tourism route into the north-west, #Khoadi-//Hôas has a variety of **opportunities** to increase benefits from existing tourism traffic, as well as drawing more people into the area. Grootberg Lodge and Hoada Campsite already offer excellent accommodation options, and Hoada is currently being upgraded to provide more facilities. Craft sales can generate important income, especially for women, and



*Human wildlife conflicts are monitored using the Event Book and clearly indicate the main conflict species.*

## ... AND THE FUTURE

The Concessions Policy of the Ministry of Environment & Tourism has enabled communities to benefit from neighbouring state controlled resource areas, and the Hobatere Tourism Concession, a high-value wildlife refuge on the western border of Etosha National Park, holds great opportunities for the conservancy to increase community benefits. Negotiations are currently being held with tourism operators to explore management options for the existing lodge site, as well as new development possibilities in the concession.

With the support of the private sector, the community-owned Grootberg Lodge has already established itself as a great destination, with rhino tracking being a defining experience — not only for #Khoadi-//Hôas, but for a visit to Namibia. By further enhancing

*strategic development that maximises the area's tourism potential while mitigating pressures on the environment can facilitate a bright future for #Khoadi-//Hôas Conservancy*

ways to develop this sector are being investigated. #Khoadi-//Hôas is also exploring opportunities such as vegetable gardening and other products and services that can be offered to the tourism industry. Local cultures are always of interest to visitors, and some cultural tourism products such as village visits could be developed to diversify the visitor experience.

the tourism experience in the conservancy and capitalising on neighbouring Hobatere, #Khoadi-//Hôas can enable a bright future for the conservancy and its residents.

**Come to #Khoadi-//Hôas — be part of the future...**





Etosha Pan

HOBATERE  
TOURISM  
CONCESSION

ETOSHA  
NATIONAL PARK

Erwee

Hoada Campsite

Conservancy Office

Anker

Kamanjab

Grootberg Lodge

Klap River

Huab River

[www.namibiawildlifesafaris.com](http://www.namibiawildlifesafaris.com) | [www.nacso.org.na](http://www.nacso.org.na)

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