

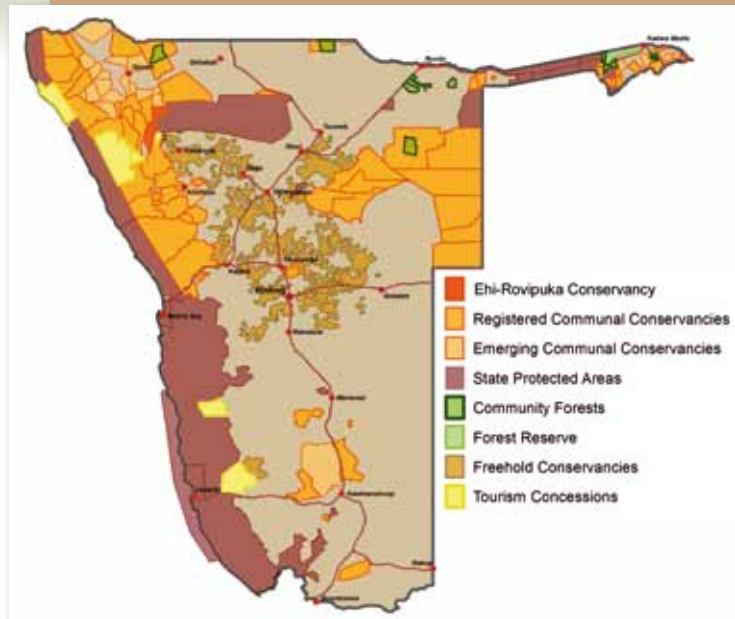
Living with wildlife –
the story of **Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy**



Ehi-Rovipuka – Otjiherero for 'the place of wildlife'



Living with wildlife – the story of EHI-ROVIPUKA CONSERVANCY



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

Conservancies

enable development and conservation over large areas...

MILESTONES AND SUCCESSES

- 1996** – policy changes allow communal area residents to benefit from wildlife and tourism by forming conservancies
- 2001** – Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy is registered in January
- 2001** – Ehi-Rovipuka becomes part of the annual North-West Game Count
- 2002** – implementation of the Event Book monitoring system in Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy
- 2005** – eland are reintroduced into the conservancy
- 2006** – gemsbok are translocated from neighbouring Etosha National Park to the Ehi-Rovipuka and Otuzemba Conservancies
- 2006** – work begins on human wildlife conflict mitigation strategies, with Ehi-Rovipuka piloting a model (known as HACCSIS) that can be applied in other conservancies
- 2006** – ICEMA supplies funding for the construction of a hunting camp
- 2007** – black rhinos are reintroduced from the Palmwag Tourism Concession and Etosha National Park to their historic home ranges in the Ehi-Rovipuka and Omatendeka Conservancies north of the veterinary cordon fence
- 2007** – black-faced impala, Burchell's zebra and giraffe are translocated to the conservancy from Etosha National Park
- 2010** – Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy begins planned grazing
- 2010** – the Hobatere Roadside Concession is awarded to the Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy
- 2010** – the conservancy upgrades its offices with solar power, toilets and showers, cell phone boosters, and a meat handling facility

QUICK FACTS

Region: Kunene

Approximate population: 2,500

Date of registration: January 2001

Size: 1,980 square kilometres

Main language: Otjiherero

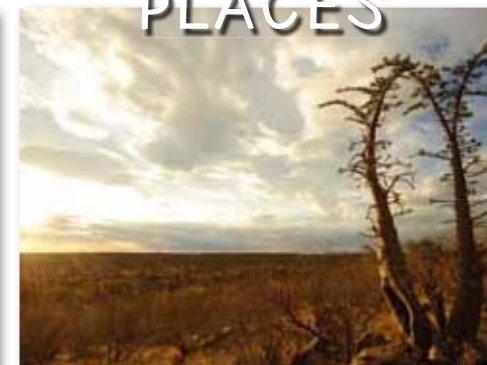
EHI-ROVIPUKA offers an enchanting mix of

PEOPLE



interesting cultures and dynamic communities committed to sustainability - people living in Ehi-Rovipuka share a common vision for managing their area and its resources

PLACES



vast, diverse and spectacular landscapes – mountains, ephemeral rivers, mopane woodland... a healthy environment diversifies economic opportunities and drives economic growth

& WILDLIFE



charismatic, free-roaming wildlife – elephant, black rhino, lion, leopard, diverse plains game, endemic birdlife... wildlife generates 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.

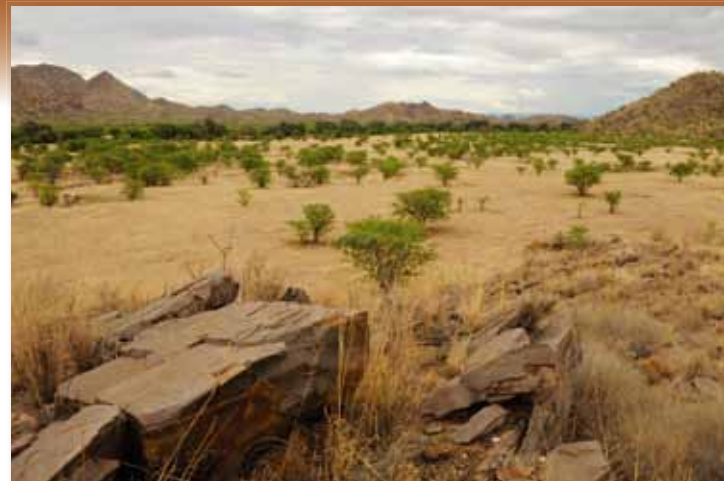
Ehi-Rovipuka covers close to 2,000 square kilometres and embraces around 2,500 residents, most of whom speak Otjiherero. The Herero first

came to Namibia around 500 years ago and settled in north-western and later central Namibia. In 1907, the German colonial administration declared 'Wildschutzgebiet Nr. 2', a huge game reserve stretching from the Atlantic to the eastern fringes of Etosha Pan, and from the Kunene River in the north down to the Hoarusib River. The reserve covered more than 80,000 square kilometres and was probably the largest wildlife reserve in the world. In 1958, it was reduced in size, no longer reaching the Kunene but still stretching to the coast between the Hoanib and Ugab Rivers, and was renamed Etosha Game Park. The area received national park status in 1967, and was finally reduced to its present size in 1970, when the recommendations of the South African administration's Odendaal Commission of 1964 were implemented, creating ethnic 'homelands' throughout Namibia. The Ehi-Rovipuka community was influenced by these developments in a variety of ways, but can finally begin to benefit from their position as a conservancy on the western border of Etosha, today Namibia's greatest tourism attraction.

RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS

Conservancies are living landscapes...

The **culture** of the Herero is a distinct feature of the Namibian cultural panorama. Herero women in their traditional headgear and long, flowing Victorian-style dresses in bright colours present wonderful images of a proud heritage. Herero are traditionally semi-nomadic pastoralists, and cattle have always been central to their way of life, with social status being directly related to the number of cattle owned. The community of Ehi-Rovipuka has retained a strong sense of cultural identity, and women in traditional dress, herds of long-horned cattle, as well as mud and thatch houses painted in geometric patterns, are all prominent features of the area. Another interesting element of Herero



Herero women in bright and beautiful traditional dress, tending their vegetable gardens; proud pastoralists, herding their long-horned cattle across mopane savannah... the landscapes of Ehi-Rovipuka are infused with the culture of the Herero

culture is the complex system of bilateral descent, which links individuals to two distinct groups of relatives. Inheritance is effected through the mother's lineage, while leadership and land use are patrilineal concerns.

The **environment** of Ehi-Rovipuka shows great variation. The conservancy lies just beyond the westernmost periphery of the Cuvelai Basin, a vast landlocked drainage system that covers much of southern Angola and northern Namibia and culminates in Etosha Pan. The fringes of the Namibian escarpment, which extends as a jagged edge along the length of the country, rise as rugged ridges across Ehi-Rovipuka and create the western rim of the Cuvelai Basin. The hills are interspersed with large plains of yellow grass and mopane savannah in a picturesque landscape of tranquillity. A large area of pans in the north of the conservancy hints at the habitats found further east. The ephemeral watercourses of Ehi-Rovipuka drain rainwater to the west and quickly grow into impressive rivers – which remain rivers of sand for most of the year and only carry water for short periods. The Ombonde in the south of the conservancy is the largest and is a tributary of the Hoanib,

one of Namibia's best known ephemeral rivers. The highest peaks in Ehi-Rovipuka reach close to 1,500 metres above sea level, while the surrounding plains lie at around 1,200 metres. Rainfall in the area is relatively low and unpredictable, with an annual average of between 250 and 300 millimetres.



sand rivers lined by gnarled old ana trees, meandering across plains of yellow grass flanked by rugged hills; elephant and lion, black rhino, leopard and giraffe, both mountain and plain's zebra, a diversity of antelope... Ehi-Rovipuka is the place of wildlife

Since the establishment of conservancies, **wildlife** numbers in communal areas have rebounded from historic lows prior to independence. Ehi-Rovipuka is home to a great variety of charismatic game, including four of the Big Five – elephant, black rhino, lion and leopard. Giraffe, and both Hartmann's mountain zebra and Burchell's zebra occur here, as well as many of Namibia's antelope species such as eland, kudu, gemsbok, hartebeest, black-faced impala, springbok,

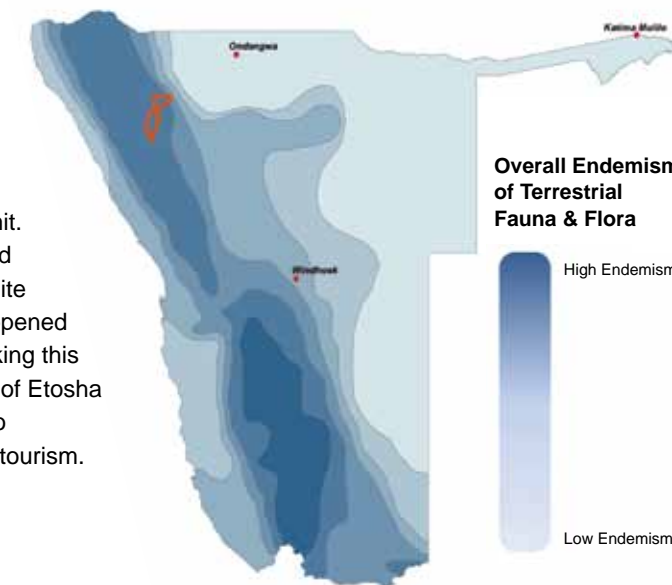


duiker, steenbok, klipspringer and Damara dik-dik. Baboon, ostrich and warthog also occur. Cheetah, serval, caracal, spotted and brown hyaena, and jackal make up the contingent of predators. Situated on the eastern fringes of the escarpment, the conservancy also provides habitat for many of Namibia's near-endemic birds, including 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.

Large parts of the conservancy are dominated by mopane savannah, but the rugged hills support a great mix of vegetation, including *Commiphora* and *Euphorbia* species, shepherd's trees and the enigmatic bottle tree. Huge ana trees, camel thorn and leadwood grow along the courses of the larger ephemeral rivers.

Around Ehi-Rovipuka... The conservancy runs along the boundary of Etosha and also borders onto the Hobatere Tourism Concession, as well as other conservancies to the west. Until recently, western Etosha

had no tourism facilities and was accessible only with a special permit. This changed when Dolomite Camp was opened in 2011, making this unique area of Etosha accessible to mainstream tourism.

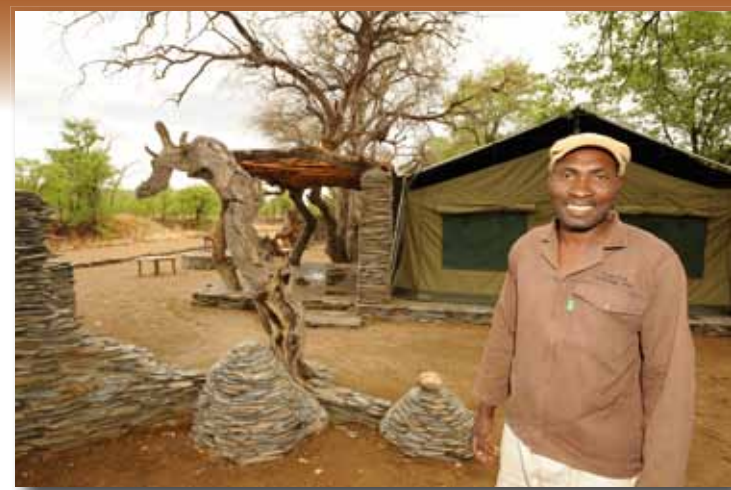




LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT

Conservancies
empower rural people...

The Herero people suffered disastrous losses during German colonial rule, and for a time were deprived of all land and livestock throughout the German colony, causing huge cultural and social upheaval. While ethnic 'homelands' were created during the South African administration of Namibia, these often had only very limited correlation to settlement patterns prior to the arrival of Europeans. Hereros are today widely dispersed around much of Namibia, and Otjiherero is spoken by around ten percent of the national population. The area that is now the Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy has been used by Herero communities for a very long time, although it was a part of the extensive Etosha Game Park

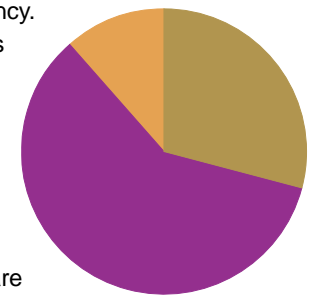
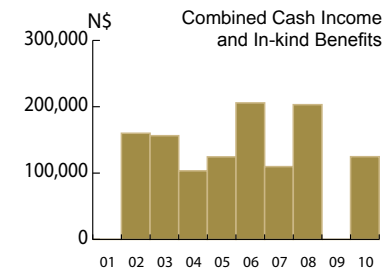


Ehi-Rovipuka facilitates access to diverse training and capacity building, empowers individuals, especially women, to actively take part in decision-making, as well as instilling a renewed sense of pride in cultural heritage

until 1970. The reserve originally created by the Germans did not exclude people, and Herero pastoralists were able to use western Etosha for emergency grazing during times of drought until the early seventies. Today, a high fence, completed in 1973, separates the conservancy from the national park, keeping livestock out and inhibiting wildlife movement.

The area received very little development attention prior to independence, as development in communal areas was sorely neglected during both German rule and the South African administration of Namibia after World War 1. Although a tar road passes through the conservancy, residents live far from larger towns. Otjokavare is the biggest settlement in the conservancy, but provides only limited facilities and services, including a primary school, a clinic and a few small shops. There is another primary school at Otjetjekwa, while a mobile school allows children in remote areas to access primary education, yet most children leave Ehi-Rovipuka to complete their education in towns. Kamanjab is the closest town, located around 80 kilometres to the south, but also offers few facilities beyond a petrol station, a few shops, two primary schools, a clinic and a police station. Opuwo, the regional capital of the

Kunene Region, lies around 170 kilometres north-west of Otjokavare and provides access to a hospital, a number of schools, and a variety of supermarkets and other private and government facilities and services. Access to water is a limiting factor in the conservancy. Boreholes supply ground-water to most residents, but they are



Conservancy Income
Trophy Hunting

Other Benefits
Own-Use Hunting Game Meat
Trophy Hunting Game Meat

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.



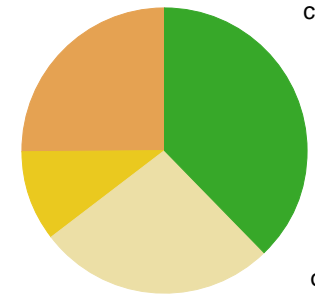
the conservancy can enable a range of new livelihood options for its residents, including employment and income from tourism, guiding, craft production and other sales and services based on the sustainable use of natural resources

expensive to drill and maintain, and often yield only limited supplies. This, combined with the low rainfall, limits both agriculture and settlement patterns in the conservancy.

Livelihood activities in Ehi-Rovipuka are centred around livestock, but include a variety of other activities and income sources. Large gardens supply maize, watermelons, beans and other vegetables and create an important income for people. These activities are supplemented by income from employment, government pensions and remittances. The conservancy has

Conservancy Expenditure
Jobs
Running Costs
Capital Developments

Other Benefits
Household Meat



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. The pie chart shows the main expenditure and benefit areas in 2010.

jobs and income in the tourism and trophy hunting industries. The conservancy currently generates most of its income from trophy hunting, offering an excellent hunting product with a large variety of trophy species. The conservancy owns the beautiful hunting camp, and some of the staff employed by the hunting operator are being trained to become registered hunting guides. Game meat from trophy hunting as well as own-use hunting is distributed to member households, the schools and the traditional authority. The conservancy has also donated meat to schools in emerging neighbouring conservancies, which can not yet benefit from wildlife in their area. The conservancy has organised computer courses for all its staff, provides transport assistance for people needing to go the hospital in Opuwo, and has organised financial assistance through the government's Game Products Trust

Fund to fence the primary school at Otjokavare, as well as equipping it with solar panels. The conservancy has also distributed cash payments to its members.

The C35 tar road leading along the western border of Etosha from Kamanjab to Opuwo and Ruacana provides excellent access for visitors to the area, while small tracks through the conservancy lead west to the Hoanib River and Sesfontein, but require four-wheel drive and are recommended only with the services of a knowledgeable guide. There is currently no fixed tourism accommodation within Ehi-Rovipuka, but this is likely to change soon. The conservancy was awarded the rights to the Hobatere Roadside Concession by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET), and now has the opportunity to develop a joint-venture lodge and campsite with direct access to Etosha via Galton Gate. This has the potential to generate a variety of benefits, including significant income to the conservancy and employment for residents. The recently established Dolomite Camp provides accommodation within Etosha, opening new routes for mainstream tourism that can also benefit the conservancy.



MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Conservancies
facilitate sustainability...

The Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy is divided into five blocks for management purposes. The **management structure** consists of the 12 member conservancy committee, made up of two representatives from each block and one representative from each of the two traditional authorities of the area. The involvement of the traditional authority representatives ensures an excellent relationship with traditional leadership structures. A smaller six member executive committee focuses on short-term management and the appointment of staff. Employees include five community game guards, a field officer, a holistic range management officer, an office administrator and a guard. The



the Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy provides vital structures for managing the communal natural resources of the area in a way that enhances development and ensures sustainability

conservancy has its own office at Otjokavare. A mix of solar and generator power installed by the conservancy supplies electricity. The conservancy owns a vehicle to carry out its activities, and receives a variety of support from field-based NGO, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC).

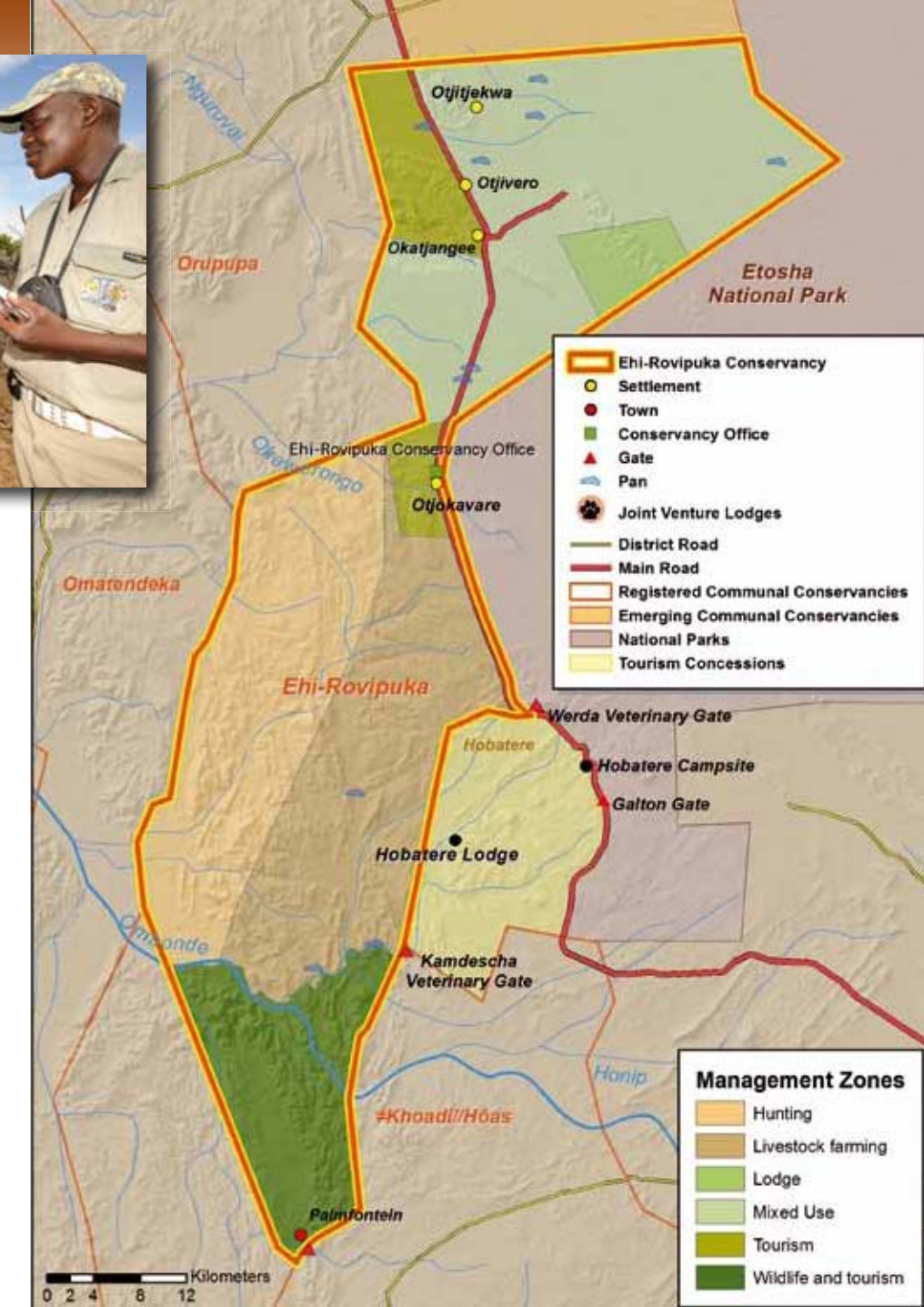
Activities... The conservancy has been zoned for different land uses, including livestock farming, hunting, tourism and mixed use. The zoning facilitates effective land use and avoids conflicts between different activities. The first community game guard was employed by IRDNC in this area in 1990, long before the formation of the first conservancy. Conservancy game guards now undertake active natural resource monitoring throughout the conservancy, including vehicle patrols carried out in collaboration with the MET. Monthly fixed route patrols are done on foot across the rugged terrain, at times together with IRDNC and MET staff. Through the patrols, a variety of data is recorded as part of the Event Book monitoring system, including 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. In addition, some high-value species, including black rhino, lion and black-faced impala are monitored by species experts working with the conservancy, using satellite tracking technology, camera traps and traditional methods. The conservancy is part of the annual North-West Game Count, carried out by the 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. Based on the game count and Event Book information, the MET sets annual quotas for using wildlife. This enables the conservancy to carry out own-use hunting to supply residents with meat, as well as entering into trophy hunting concession agreements. A meat handling facility at the office allows game meat to be processed before it is distributed. The conservancy's game guards actively investigate poaching incidents, which has reduced poaching to isolated events and has led to a number of arrests. Ehi-Rovipuka is part of a holistic rangeland management project implemented by IRDNC. The project seeks to rehabilitate areas affected by overgrazing and to ensure the sustainable use of rangeland.

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 conservancy strives to actively mitigate human wildlife conflicts and receives financial and logistical assistance from the MET to achieve this. With support from IRDNC, Ehi-Rovipuka was one of the first conservancies in the north-west to implement the Human Animal Conflict Conservancy Self Insurance Scheme (HACCSIS) to provide some financial offsets for losses from wildlife. Through the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management, a new system is now being implemented in collaboration with government. 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. All claims are reviewed by a panel before payments can be made.



CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES...

Conservancies
are full of opportunities...

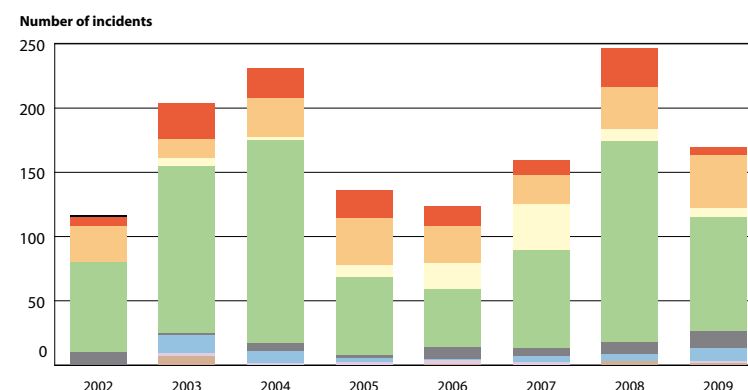
The wealth of natural resources in Ehi-Rovipuka, complemented by a fascinating cultural heritage, provides largely untapped potential.

Challenges... The conservancy's environmental wealth also creates one of its major challenges: human wildlife conflict. This is a challenge where ever people coexist with wild animals, but is especially prevalent when large predators and elephants are present. Predators are not easily compatible with livestock farming and cause considerable losses. While hyaenas are responsible for the most incidents in Ehi-Rovipuka, lions feature most prominently in the perceptions of people, as

strategic developments that unlock the area's tourism potential, while mitigating the costs of living with wildlife for local people, can facilitate a bright future for Ehi-Rovipuka

they present not only a danger to livestock, but also human life. Leopard, cheetah and jackal also cause significant losses, especially amongst small stock. Elephants raid fields and gardens, and often damage water infrastructure in an attempt to access drinking water. Yet predators and elephants are of great value, both to the ecosystem and tourism, and people are more willing to live with them if in the long run the benefits gained outweigh the costs. Mitigation measures such as herding livestock and keeping it in secure enclosures at night, as well as protecting gardens and water installations against elephants, can effectively reduce incidents. Ehi-Rovipuka is working with conservation NGO Africat to improve the awareness of predators and to implement a monitoring programme to help farmers understand predator movements. The project also works with two other conservancies and seeks to train people from each conservancy to become predator monitors. Ehi-Rovipuka is looking to turn a challenge into an

Wild Dog
Lion
Leopard
Jackal
Hyaena
Elephant
Cheetah
Caracal
Baboon



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



Ehi-Rovipuka Conservancy has great potential as a tourism gateway between the wildlife spectacle of Etosha and the living landscapes of the north-west

combined with the resources within the conservancy, create further potential for diverse developments.

A variety of **plans** already exist, with tourism developments related to the Etosha Roadside Concession being the most promising. A joint-venture lodge on the western boundary of Etosha, which can offer both the unparalleled wildlife viewing within the park and the living

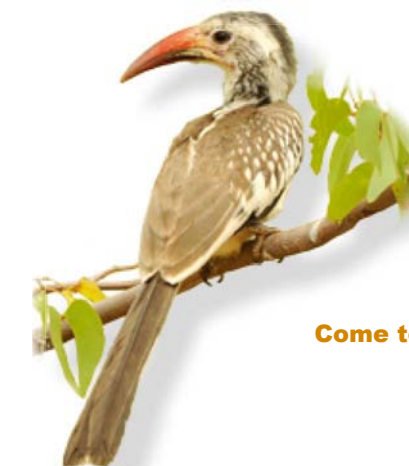


landscapes that communal conservancies embody, can create a wonderful and unique visitor experience that also provides significant benefits to the local community. Through the concessions policy of the Ministry of Environment & Tourism, park neighbours now have a variety of new opportunities to benefit from resources to which they had historical access, which was denied by the formation of the park.

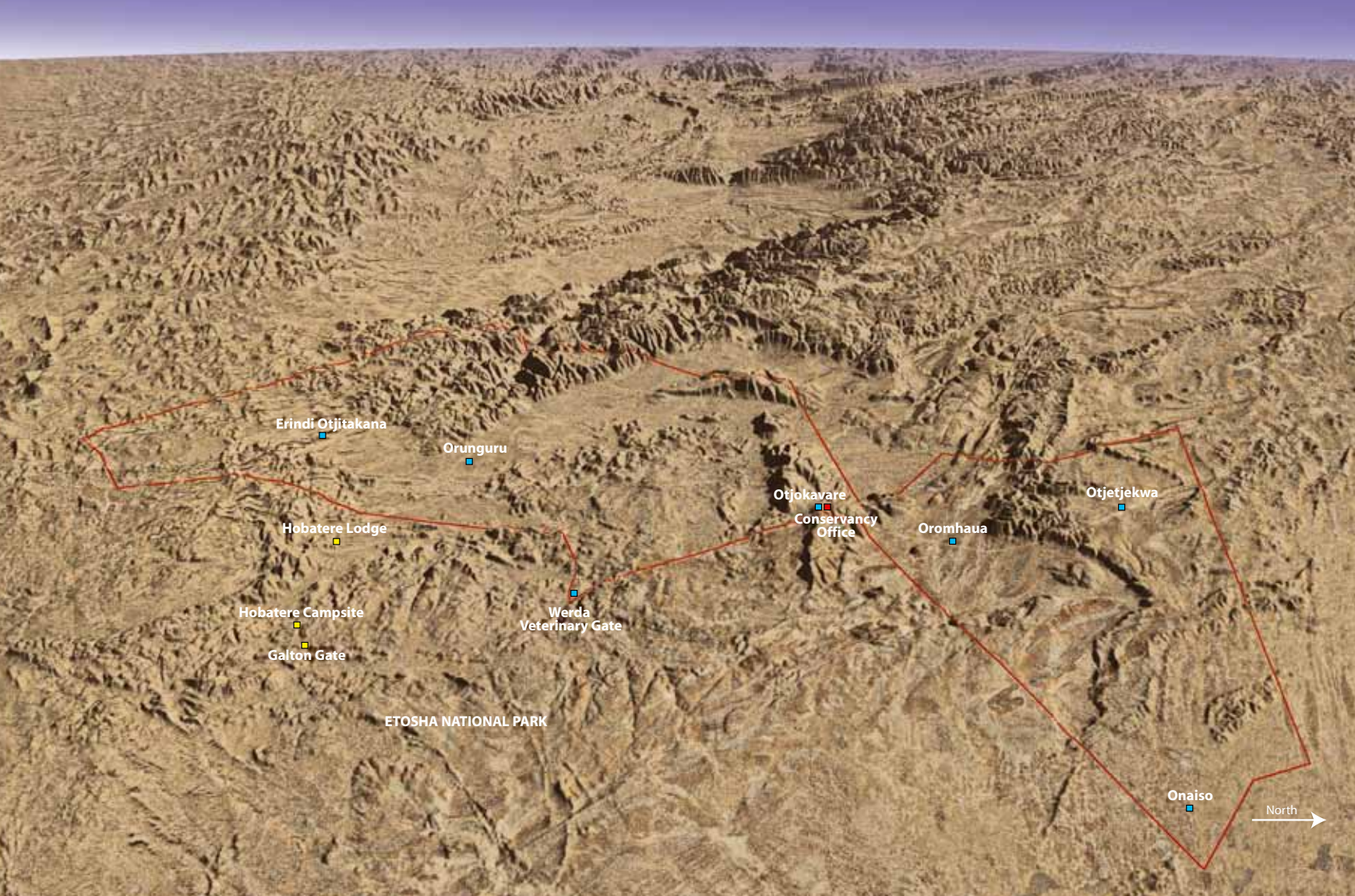
Craft development is another sector the conservancy would like to pursue. Craft producers are already working together with the conservancy, and there a plans to develop a craft centre in the area, which combines production and sales. Crafts can become an important source of income, especially for women. Cultural tourism has generally been neglected in Namibia, and the conservancy plans to develop a

living museum that makes the heritage of the Herero accessible to visitors, while at the same time enhancing a pride in traditions amongst the local community.

Trophy hunting has been the main source of income for the conservancy for many years. While hunting is an integral part of African heritage and trophy hunting can always remain an important activity, tourism may soon be able to unlock a greater diversity of livelihood options that can facilitate a bright future for the conservancy and its residents.



Come to Ehi-Rovipuka —
be part of the future...



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Norad

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