



## 2019 Annual Conservation Report

**Prepared by:** Rachel Harris, Christin Winter, Christophe Pitot, Dr. Betsy Fox, Sabine Kuhn, Markus Shiweda, Shannon Diener

Correspondence regarding this report should be addressed to:

E-mail: [rachel@desertelephant.org](mailto:rachel@desertelephant.org), [christin@desertelephant.org](mailto:christin@desertelephant.org), [chris.pitot@desertelephant.org](mailto:chris.pitot@desertelephant.org), [sabine@desertelephant.org](mailto:sabine@desertelephant.org), [dr.betsy.fox@desertelephant.org](mailto:dr.betsy.fox@desertelephant.org), [markus@desertelephant.org](mailto:markus@desertelephant.org), [shannon@desertelephant.org](mailto:shannon@desertelephant.org)

Web: [www.ehranamibia.org](http://www.ehranamibia.org)

**Activities of EHRA's holistic conservation approach to a peaceful coexistence between the people and elephants inhabiting the Ugab River, Huab River and Okongwe area of Namibia's Erongo and Kunene regions.**



# Status and distribution of elephants

---

**Note:** The following data on the desert-adapted elephants of the Ugab and the Huab rivers are based on exact counts and known individuals from our photography ID database that is being updated on elephant patrols conducted twice every month since 2003.

During 2019 we spent 96 days in the field with the Ugab and Huab populations. GPS movements are recorded and plotted onto mapping software to display movement patterns. Full identification books have been produced for both populations, which include lineage for each elephant.

## Status of the resident Ugab River west population

Specific to note: **Only 1 bull of breeding age remains. New born calf mortality stands at 100% since 2014, out of the 9 births we know of all 9 calves died within a few days. Lack of breeding age females. This population is decreasing year on year.**

### 1) The Ugab River population (Current total: 24 elephants)

*This ephemeral river and its surroundings are inhabited by 3 breeding herds and 3 adult bulls, of which one moved into the Ugab River west region from the east in January 2019.*

#### a. MA - Mama Africa herd (11 elephants):

- . 4 adult females (all between 30-45 years of age)
- . 1 immature female (9 years)
- . 2 juvenile females (5 and 7 years of age)
- . 2 juvenile males (6 and 7 years of age)
- . 2 young males (MA-1/A2 and MA-5/A1) age 11 are spending time away from the herd, yet stay in close proximity.

#### b. G6 - Guantagab 6 herd (4 elephants)

- . 1 adult female (30-45 years of age)
- . 1 immature female (9 years of age)
- . 1 immature male (8 years)
- . 1 female juvenile

#### c. US - Ugab Small herd (6 elephants)

- . 3 adult females (35-50 years of age)
- . 1 immature female (10 years of age)
- . 2 juvenile females (both 7 years of age)

#### d. Bulls (2)

- . 1 prime breeding bull (B2: 35-40 of age)
- . 1 adult bull (B3: 20-25 years of age)

### Elephants that moved into the Ugab River from the east and the Huab River (3):

- . M3 (Porthos) – Adult male of 25-30 years of age. Moved in from the east.
- . O2-A4 – Young male of 20 years of age. Moved in from the Huab River (maternal herd is H2).
- . K1-A1 – Young male of 18-20 years of age. Moved in from the Huab River (maternal herd is H1).

### Elephants that moved out of the Ugab River (2):

- . MA-6 (Santosha) – Young male of 18-20 years. Has been seen in the Huab River.
- . G6-5 (Stellar) – Young male of 18-20 years. Has been seen in the Huab River.

### Elephants that died in the Ugab River in 2019 (3):

- . Male calf (mother MA-5) died 5-7 days after birth. (Dr Betsy Fox took post mortem samples with permission and supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.)  
Date of death: March 2019  
Reason of death: *Salmonellosis* (specifics attached to this report)
- . G6-4 (Juno) – Matriarch of G6 herd  
Date of death: 21.02.2019  
Reason of death: Unknown. Died 5 days after collaring operation.
- . B1 (Voortrekker) – Dominant breeding bull of Ugab River.  
Date of death: 25.06.2019  
Reason of death: Shot as a problem-causing elephant by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

### Status of the resident Huab River population

#### 2) The Huab River population (Current total: 32 resident elephants)

This river and its surroundings are permanently inhabited by 2 breeding herds and 5 bulls.

##### a. H1 - Oscar's herd (11 elephants)

- . 3 adult females (30-35 and 40-50)
- . 2 immature males (10-15 years of age)
- . 1 immature female (10-12 years)
- . 3 juvenile females (6, 4 and 3 years of age)
- . 2 juvenile males (one >2 years and one 3 years of age)

##### b. H2 - Rosy's herd (16 elephants)

- . 5 adult females (30-45 years of age)
- . 1 young male (18 years of age)
- . 2 immature males (13 and 14 years of age)
- . 2 immature females (8 and 9 years of age)
- . 3 juvenile males (6, 5 and 2 years of age)
- . 2 juvenile females (6 and 2 years of age)
- . 1 male calf

##### c. Bulls (5)

- . 3 mature breeding males (30-35 years of age)
- . 2 sub-adult males (16-20 and 21-25 years of age). *Of which one (D6) has not been seen since August 2017. Possibly dead.*

##### d. Non-resident: H3 – Tuskless herd (8)

Another herd known as “H3 - Tuskless herd” sometimes visits the Huab and Aba Huab River system. This herd is observed very infrequently and is assumed to live in and around the eastern part of the Huab River and might move north towards the Palmwag Concession.

##### This herd consists of:

- . 4 adult cows
- . 1 female sub-adult (20-25 years)
- . 1 male sub-adult (18 years)
- . 1 female juvenile (8-9 of years)
- . 1 male juvenile (5-6 of years)

### Elephants that moved out of the Huab River (2):

- . O2-A4 – Young male of 20 years of age. Moved into the Ugab River.
- . K1-A1 – Young male of 18-20 years of age. Moved into the Ugab River.

#### **Elephant that died in the Huab River in 2019 (1):**

- . O5 (adult cow from H2)  
Date of death: September 2019  
Reason of death: Unknown.

## **Summary of EHRA's community-based conservation activities in the southern Kunene and northern Erongo regions of Namibia**

---

### **Waterpoint protection programme**

EHRA constructed 15 protection walls during 2019 at the following farms (some farms had more than one wall) HendriksVelde, Bam Pos, Arbeid Abel Pos, Otjovahimba, Terrace Pos, Okonyenya, Okanuanbuku, Otjiperongo, Ozohorongo, Okanuanambuku, De Rust, Omungambo.

EHRA hosted 215 individual international volunteers who assisted in the construction of these walls and water points.

EHRA's Volunteer and Conservation Project is managed by Markus Shiweda, who has been in employment with EHRA for the past 2 years. Mr Shiweda is a Namibian national and has degrees in Natural Resource Management, Land Management from NUST and is currently undertaking his Masters in Applied Ecology from a University in Portugal.

### **Special activities**

- . Assisting the MET in the collaring of 4 elephants in the Ugab River and Okongwe region
- . Assistance to communities in Omatjete area, experiencing elephant visits for the first time. EHRA Director Hendrick Munembome slept in villages and helped move elephant away during a 2 week period.
- . Hosting 2 "World Café" Community workshops in collaboration with Dr. Michelle Henley and Ms Antoinette van de Water from the South African NGO Elephants Alive.

### **Education and Training - The PEACE Project**

#### *People and Elephants Amicably Co-Existing*

The PEACE Project has a new manager, Miss Shannon Diener, a Namibian national whose family farm is at Omungumbo, close to Omatjete. Miss Diener has a degree in Biology, Ecology and Geology from UNAM and a Masters in Natural Resource Management from NUST.

To date the project has trained over 1700 community members, school learners and teachers, conservancy game guards, MET employees and tour guides.

The schools that participated in the trainings are from Uis, Otjohorongo, Otjiperongo, Omatjete and Anixab.

The trainings are three days long and are completely free for community members and school learners.

#### **Launch of Elephant Guard Programme**

Our proudest achievement for the year is the launch of our Elephant Guard Programme. Elephant Guards were chosen from four different villages, a total of four (4) men and one (1) woman were nominated to represent their villages. Additionally, 2 men from the Bwabwata National Park were trained as Elephant Guards during



the two training sessions (sponsored by ATC Namibia). These guards undergo intense training with the aim that they conduct training on elephant safety in their areas, that are the first point of contact in any elephant related matter, and are able to contact EHRA and MET if there are incidents which they are not able to deal with alone.

Elephant guards learn mitigation methods and are expected to fix elephant damages where possible. So far the programme has been run on a voluntary basis. The initiative has been a huge success and we will now formalise the programme, where we envisage different levels of 'qualifications' and remuneration based on performance and level.



## MEET OUR LOCAL ELEPHANT GUARDS

Omungambu	Godlieb Tjiurutue
Sorris Sorris	Augustinho (Netto) Gaseb
Okongue	Rejoice Tjimune
Omihana	Herman Kasaona
Otjiperongo	Helmuth Kavendjii



Helmuth



Godlieb



Rejoice



Netto



Herman



Elephant Guards learning how to make a chilli/engine oil mix to protect vegetable gardens

**Details of PEACE Project seminars/training courses:**

Date	Project type	Region	Venue	Duration in days	Number of participants
5.2.-7.2.19	Community	Otjimboyo & Tsiseb	Base Camp	3	16
6.3.-8.3.19	Sorris Committee	Sorris Sorris	Base Camp	3	10
11.03.-12.03.19	Game Guard and Conflict Mitigation	Ohungu	Ohungu	2	4
15.03.-17.03.19	School Learners	Otjohorongo Primary	Base Camp	3	20
15.04.-17.04.19	Community	Cenored Employees	Sorris Sorris Office	3	16
18.04.-20.04.19	Community	Irene and Onverwag (Sorris Sorris)	Sorris Sorris Office	3	17
29.04.-01-05.19	Community	Ohungu	Base Camp	3	10
10.05.-12-05.19	Community	Ohungu	Base Camp	3	10
07.06.-09.06.19	School Learners	Otjiperongo	Base Camp	3	20
14.06.-16.06.19	School Learners	A. Gariseb Primary	Anixab Camp	3	20
17.06.-19.06.19	Community	Okombahe	Sorris Sorris Office	3	14
24.06.-29.06.19	Tour Guide Training	Kipwe, Mowani, TOSCO, EHRA	Base Camp	5	10
13.09.-15.09.19	School Learners	Omajete and Okongwe Primary	Base Camp	3	22
16.09.-24.09.19	Elephant Guard Training	All regions	Base Camp	8	10
08.10.-15.10.19	Elephant Guard Training 2	All regions	Base Camp	7	8
22.11.-24.11.19	Community	Otjiperongo	Base Camp	3	9
26.11.-29.11.19	Community	Okongwe and neighbours	Base Camp	4	18
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>62</b>	<b>234</b>

**School Development Programme**

EHRA continued to support A. Gariseb Primary School through financial support for school excursions and school leaver's celebrations, the loan of camping equipment, donations for school celebrations and a donation of 16 laptops and securing devices.

We took three voluntary groups to Okongue (please determine correct spelling and use it throughout! Above it is Okongwe) Primary School and repainted the entire dormitory block and built a playground. We also donated 80 mattresses. One laptop was also donated for the school secretary.

Support will continue for both schools into 2020.

## University interns from UNAM and NUST

EHRA is a partner of NUST and provides six-month work-integrated learning placements for the Nature Conservation Students. 2019 was the 10<sup>th</sup> year in which we provided internships. We also work with the Tourism students at UNAM and provide month-long placements.

The internship exposes students with a desire for a career in conservation to the realities of living in the field in camping conditions, of physical hard work and working with conservancies and the challenges to manage human – elephant co-existence.

## Namibian Employment

EHRA employs a total of 16 people, of which only 2 are non-Namibians. In 2019, management roles in three areas were given to Sabine Kuhn (Head of Marketing and Business Operations), Markus Shiweda (Field Conservation and Research Manager) and Shannon Diener (PEACE Project Manager) and Phillip Raath (Operations Manager), all Namibian Nationals.

## Solar Water Point and Education Centre Projects

EHRA secured funding from Rotary International Clubs to the value of N\$165,000 (including a donation of N\$10,000 from Swakopmund Rotary Club) for a project to replace diesel water points with solar pumping installations.

In addition, EHRA secured further funding of N\$1million for the project from a corporate sponsor in the UK. The corporation has also sponsored the building of a community education centre, N\$1million, for the primary use of the PEACE Project at the EHRA base camp. Both projects are underway.



The community at Okaserawe with the first of EHRA's donated solar water pumps



## International Elephant Foundation Conference SA 2019

EHRA attended and presented a slide show about our conflict mitigation methods at two international conferences in 2019. In January, EHRA was invited to speak at the Tuskers Outdoor Conference which was hosted by Elephants Alive (SA) and Elephant for Africa (Botswana). In October, EHRA presented its work at the International Elephant Foundation (IEF) Symposium. Much interest was shown in our work, in particular the PEACE Project and its success. EHRA was also invited to join a workshop on the EEHV Virus and is now part of a working group, with MET also involved.

Additionally, in February 2020 EHRA was invited to present at the Pathways Conservation Conference in Kenya along with other Namibian representatives from the Cheetah Conservation Fund and NUST.



### **Thank you to the support and good cooperation of:**

Ministry Environment and Tourism

Conservancy Partners (Sorris Sorris, Tsiseb, Otimboyo, Ohungu, Ojetu)

Chief Zeibeb and Daure Daman Traditional Authority

Mr Frank Bockmuhl – For consultant services on Solar Water Pump Project

International Elephant Foundation

Catherine Edsell – EHRA UK Ambassador

King Alfred's School, London

WildArk Foundation and NUII – N\$2million for Solar Water Pump Project and Education Centre

N\$165,000 Rotary International for Solar Water Pump Project

N\$36,000 Balance Wines for PEACE Project

N\$115,000.00 – Hand-in-Hand Fonds and Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz e.V. (Germany) for the building of an education centre

N\$154,000.00 – Prince Bernhard Nature Fund (Netherlands) for PEACE Project



N\$170,000.00 – International Elephant Foundation (IEF) for PEACE Project

Second-hand camping gear from ASCO car hire worth N\$15,000.00

N\$60,000.00 – ATC Namibia (Tour Operator) for training of Elephant Guard