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# Walking for Elephants

Fundraising Desert Trek Challenge

28.09. – 04.10.2019



**7 days – 125 kilometers – Exclusive wilderness – Conservation**

Join us in one of the most wild, remote and heart-opening places in Namibia. You will help us to continue our work in securing a future for Namibia's unique but critically endangered desert elephants and safe guarding the lives of the people that live with them.

## How it works

The cost to participate in the trek is **£2000** pounds sterling, this includes all transfers, accommodation, food and equipment whilst on the trek. Excluded are flights, insurance, and tented accommodation and food once back in Swakopmund. Advice will be given on getting the best flight deals. For those who would like to fundraise, support is available through sponsor forms and fundraising ideas, once you sign up you will be mailed a pack full of ideas, kit list and training advice to help prepare you for the challenge.

## Itinerary

The route starts near the foothills of the Brandberg and leads in a north-westerly direction into the sand dunes, and further towards Doros Crater. From there it swings west towards Hyena Camp, from where it turns south to end at the Ugab River. Total distance is a measured 125 kilometers.

**Day 1 - Saturday 28 September: total distance 5 km**

We collect the group at the accommodation in Swakopmund around 9am and transfer to the start of the trek at the foot of the majestic Brandberg Mountain. At 2573m this massive volcanic feature is the highest in Namibia and will dominate the route as you make your way towards the Skeleton Coast.

From where the coach leaves us we will walk 5km to our camp overlooking the Ugab River and our first night under the stars. Tonight the group will be briefed by EHRA staff about the challenge, the route, the area and in particular the desert elephants.



**Day 2 - Sunday 29 September: total distance 20km**

After an early rise and breakfast we split into our walking groups and head across the dune field's with dramatic views of the Ugab River Valley and the stunning Brandberg Mountain, Namibia's highest mountain at 2573m. We will walk 12km to our lunch spot.

This afternoon's walk follows the escarpment line taking us out of the dune fields. We pass deserted farms, signs of the first white settlers, who managed to eek out an existence in this very foreign terrain. Camp is under a lonely Mopani tree with more stunning views for sundown!



**Day 3 - Monday 30 September: total distance 24km**

We rise early to face a long and tough day. Today's walk heads towards the Guantagab River through rugged sedimentary hills, scattered with *Commifora* trees looking like miniature Baobabs. This area is frequented by the desert adapted Black Rhino, (*Diceros Bicornis Bicornis*). Nearly hunted to extinction in the 80's their numbers are up to around 130 individuals walking free in the northern part of the Namib Desert, but with home ranges of up to 750 square km's and their secretive nature, we would be lucky to even see their tracks. Tonight we camp amongst granite outcrops in the wilderness area south of Doros Crater, an afternoon's walk of 15,4km.



**Day 4 - Tuesday 1 October: total distance 20,9km**

Today is the big day! To summit Doros Crater. The group will wake up very early to make the most of the cooler part of the day. This area is frequented by giraffe, kudu and oryx so if lucky you will see these wonderful animals!



You will be met at the foot of the crater for a last water drop! You will then follow Mountain Zebra footpaths up the rim of the crater, walk through the caldera and over the opposite rim for some amazing views towards the Skeleton Coast. You will be able to see lunch spot from the top of the crater!!! From the top it will take you around 1.5 hours to descend.

After lunch you will have a well-deserved short walk of around 6km following an ancient elephant path to our camp, through beautiful granite features and the most wonderful desert vistas.

After dinner there will be a talk on astronomy, as the night's sky in this area is renowned for the plentitude of stars and incredible visibility. (Dependent on the moon this may happen on another night).

### Day 5 - Wednesday 2 October: total distance 20,5km



This morning's walk takes us towards the Mikberg, following game trails through typical Damaraland landscapes. Here we find the ancient *Welwitschia mirabilis* plants eking out an existence on the plains. After lunch we walk through fascinating geology and onto the Doros Plains where we are likely to see herds of giraffe, zebra and oryx. Our camp is a sand stone outcrop once inhabited by bushman and is EHRA's most favourite camping spot in the desert! For sunset, we walk up a ridge to a breathtaking viewpoint watching the mist roll in from the Atlantic Ocean.

### Day 6 - Thursday 3 October: total distance 22km

Our last full day! Today's walking takes us down to the Ugab River again, through valleys of folded sediments covering over 200 million years of geological history. Lunch is in one such valley after 15,4km, from where we continue to our camp close to the linear oasis of the Ugab. In this area the famed Desert Elephant roam, and we will tread carefully! The afternoon's walking is stunning as we weave our way through canyons, with water springs and beautiful scenery. Tonight there is a slide show about the elephants and the work EHRA does.

### Day 7 - Friday 4 October: total distance 11km

A final walk out of the river valley brings us to the Brandberg West Mine where our vehicles await us for the journey to the small town of Swakopmund on the Skeleton Coast. Total distance to Swakopmund is 230km and travel time will be approximately 3 hours. Swakopmund is an interesting little town with lovely cafes, restaurants, and great shopping! This evening we will have our gala meal and celebrate in style! Maybe even some dancing for those whose feet are up to it!



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## About EHRA

**EHRA is a Namibian registered not for profit organization** (reg no: 21/2003/603) which aims to protect and create harmonious relationships between local subsistence farmers and the resident herds of desert elephants. Conflict arises over the scarcest of desert resources – water. This leads to elephants (often the breeding bulls) being shot, which spells disaster for a species taking its first footsteps on the fragile road to recovery, after years of hunting almost wiped out the entire population. Through 2006-2008 over 22 male bull elephants were shot either as trophy hunts or 'problem' animals. This has resulted in only one breeding bull remaining in the area, Voortrekker, whose life was saved thanks to funds raised by EHRA's 2008 trekkers, which enabled us to purchase the permit that would otherwise have been sold to a trophy elephant hunter.

To resolve this problem EHRA is now working closely with the government to ensure effective measures are in place to provide ACCURATE data on elephant numbers and movements to ensure the survival of this amazing species. Funds raised from the trek in 2011 and 2013 were used to enable EHRA to continue work in the field through the



provision of essential vehicle back up for our twice monthly, weeklong elephant patrols. In 2017 funds were used to purchase a vehicle for the **PEACE Project**.

Funds raised by your efforts in 2019 will be used predominantly to fully implement our **Elephant Emergency Response Unit** to secure the long-term survival of Namibia's critically endangered desert elephants. EHRA's **Elephant Emergency Response Unit** will identify, train and fully equip '**PEACE Guards**' that will be qualified to give immediate help to people suffering from conflicts with elephants. It will further invest in installing radio communications within all of our partner conservancies plus fund any activities related to enhancing the peaceful co-existence between people and elephants.

We would also like to use the funds to further fund our educational program, The PEACE project which provides workshops and training on elephant behavior to local communities.

Through committing to this challenge you will be helping to protect the lives of the desert elephants and their neighboring Namibians. In return we promise you a week you will remember for the rest of your life.

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## Details & Contact

**Dates:** 28.09. - 04.10.2019

**Price:** £2.000

**Type:** Adventure & Camping

**Food:** Catered, campfire

**Length:** 125km in 7 days

**Contact:**

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