



NAMIBIA SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

65: 1–12
January–December 2024

NEWSLETTER
NAMIBIA SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

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Frank Wittneben

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Dear members and friends,

We look back on another very busy and successful year, especially as many preparations commenced for our 100th anniversary next year.

To prepare ourselves for 2025, it was decided that much-needed renovations to the premises should be done this year as well as taking the opportunity to give our building a facelift. In addition to an urgently required new coat of paint on the inside and outside of the building, some structural changes have been made. Not only will the technical setup of the hall become a lot more professional, but the office space has also been redesigned to allow for better working conditions. In an effort to become more inviting to the public, the entrance has been strikingly redesigned with construction still under way. We would like to invite you all to take a look at the newly redesigned premises.

The minutes and Chairman's report, as well as the various reports of the working groups presented at the Annual General Meeting (held in August this year), serve to inform all members of what has transpired at the Society over the last 12 months. Furthermore, we are very pleased to welcome a new team member, Cristin Henckert, who will be assisting us with the publishing department, events, and the routine running of the Society.

One bus tour, offering a closer view of the north west of Namibia in June, and a 4x4 self-drive and camping tour through the unequalled beauty between Lüderitz and Walvis Bay, were fully booked and left the participants in awe.

We would like to highlight the Astro group this year, for organizing a record number of well-attended events, particularly in connection with Space Week in October. You can read more about this on page 49.

As with the preparatory work for the renovation of the building, the Kuisieb Publishers have been busy preparing many "treats" for 2025. At the beginning of this year an updated edition of the widely popular *111 Roadside Plants* by Antje Burke was delivered. In May, the novel *The Scattering* by Lauri Kubuitsile was published. This book was followed by a new edition of *Reptilien Namibias* by Alfred Schleicher. In addition to a lot of new and updated information on the reptiles, the book has also been given a new look. *Gaub*, written by Hans Hilpisch and our in-house librarian Armin Jagdhuber, followed towards the end of the year. The publisher's latest publication is the English translation of *Die Nama unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft* written by Michael Vaupel: *The Nama under German colonial rule*. We would like to sincerely thank the Goethe-Institut and NCE for part-financing some of our publications.

A lot of effort was spent during the year to strengthen cooperation with other institutions. Among others, there was good collaboration with the Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, and the Namibia

Library and Archives Services. We hope for fruitful and longlasting collaboration in the future.

An exceptional donation received this year was the very valuable insect collection from mainly the Otavi area. Dr P.A. Basson had spent many years meticulously collecting, cataloguing and preserving hundreds of insects, which will form part of the national database of insects in the zoological department of the National Museum of Namibia. Read more on page 58.

The Board and staff of the Namibia Scientific Society would like to thank all members and friends for their support. We say farewell to the members that left us and welcome all our new members who joined this year. We hope to hear from and see you all next year, when we celebrate 100 years of existence!

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The opinions expressed in the articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Namibia Scientific Society.

Dieter Springer: 24.03.1933–23.09.2024

Ruth Moldzio

“Lasst uns, die er nun zurücklässt, deshalb nicht in tiefer Trauer versinken, sondern sein Wirken feiern und uns freuen, dass wir ihn ein Stück des Weges begleiten durften. Das hätte er so gewollt.” Marc Springer – Allgemeine Zeitung 01.10.2024

With these words Marc Springer, son of Dieter Springer, closed off his obituary on the life and impact of his father; an impact felt in the lives of many Namibian people and the organisations to which he was affiliated.



The people who knew Mr Springer can attest to the hardworking, determined and reliable personality he was. One event that particularly reflects his fortitude was when the Springer Chocolate Factory (founded in 1958) burned down in 1976. He went to the greatest lengths to rebuild the factory and ensure that the employees kept their jobs. Not only was he successful, but the factory grew to become known internationally for the delicacies it produced.

It was this kind of determination that was evident in all he touched, including all the honorary functions he fulfilled, of which there were many. The Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Schulvereine (AGDS), Deutscher Kulturrat, Lions Club Windhoek, Namibia Development Corporation, and Namibia Scientific Society were just a few of the boards on which Mr Springer served.

In 1997 he joined the board of the Namibia Scientific Society, and soon took on the position of treasurer. His meticulous nature and willingness to assist soon made him an invaluable member of the committee.

With earnestness and an absolute sense of responsibility, all financial aspects of the Society were scrutinized, analyzed and adjusted where necessary; but his dedication to the Society did not end there. Mr Springer was also instrumentally involved in securing funds for projects and assisting with everyday



queries and tasks, to the extent that he physically crawled on floors and along walls to ensure construction work met the highest standards.

After 15 years of service, Mr Springer retired from the board of the Society in 2012, and was awarded honorary lifelong membership as a token of appreciation for his unwavering dedication.

The Namibia Scientific Society is able to look back on 99 years of existence because of the care and commitment of members like Mr Springer. We honour him for his dedicated involvement and celebrate his tenacity and loyalty, the results of which we still reap today.

New Team Member: Cristin Henckert

Greetings,

I'm Cristin Kurt Henckert, the newest addition to the Namibia Scientific Society team. I was born and raised in Windhoek, where I attended St George's Diocesan School in primary and then St Paul's College from grade 7 through to the end of my high school career. After completing grade 12 in 2020 I went to the University of Pretoria to pursue a law degree. However, I didn't have peace with this decision and felt a strong call rather to go to Wellington, South Africa, to take part in a discipleship school named 'Leap Discipleship Year'.

Today, a portion of my time is spent at the Society where I fill the role of marketing assistant, but I help out in the various legs of the Society. This entails taking minutes in meetings, proof-reading texts for the publishing committee, setting up and managing the technical side of things during evening presentations (as some of you may have noticed) and a range of other tasks. Outside working hours I spend my time working towards a theology degree through an online seminary named the South African Theological Seminary. Moreover, I am actively involved in my church, Crowded House Family Church.

I am passionate about my faith in Jesus Christ. I wouldn't be the man I am today if it were not for the saving message that the Christian faith proclaims. I also love people and enjoy meeting new individuals. In addition, I enjoy exercising, watching sport, and spending time with friends.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the Namibia Scientific Society family and commit to giving my utmost best while I am employed at this historic organization.



Maria Fisch celebrates her 100th birthday

Ruth Moldzio



Our long-standing honorary member, senator, and author, Dr Maria Fisch, was born on 12 December 1924 in Menzel, Germany, and is celebrating her 100th birthday in Swakopmund this year.

The ethnologist and doctor of medicine has received numerous accolades, including the Benemerenti Medal (Pontifical Medal of Merit) for special services to Christianity in 1966 and the Federal Cross of Merit from the Federal Republic of Germany 1st Class in 2009.

Decades of working as a doctor and ethnologist in northern Namibia resulted in an immense fund of knowledge of the people of the Zambezi (formerly Caprivi) and Kavango regions. Much of this knowledge has been put into writing and published, one of the books being *The Hambukushu of*

Namibia's Kavango East Region, released by Kuiseb Publishers in 2022.

She has been a member of the Namibia Scientific Society for over 60 years, during which time she also served on the society's board for a lengthy period.

We wish Dr Maria Fisch good health and much happiness.



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the 99th Business Year 2023/24

on Thursday, 15th August 2024 at 19h00
at Namibia Scientific Society, 110 Robert Mugabe, Windhoek

Present: Thirty-nine members, one non-member in person; virtually, via Zoom, seven members and two non-members joined. The register is available for inspection at the NSS office.

Apologies: Twenty-three members and invited guests sent their apologies. A list of apologies is available in the NSS office.

Minutes: Ruth Moldzio

1. Welcome

The Chairman of the Board, Prof. Michael Backes, welcomed all members present, especially welcoming corporate members, representatives of study and regional groups, and representatives of partner organizations.

He stated that more than fifteen members were present, so the quorum requirements were met. The meeting could therefore proceed.

2. Additions to the agenda

Members present were asked if any matter should be added to the agenda under Miscellaneous. The following point was added:

Honorary Membership – 12.1

3. Discussion and Approval of Minutes of AGM held on 7th September 2023:

It was stated, that the minutes had been distributed with the *Newsletter 2023* and were also available to those attending on their way into the hall. The minutes were approved without changes, as proposed by Gudrun Middendorff and seconded by Hanjo Böhme.

4. Annual Report of the Chairperson

The Annual Report of the Chairperson was presented by Prof. Backes.



Prof. Michael Backes, Chairperson
of the Namibia Scientific Society
(Photo: Berndt Schneider)

The Chairman mentioned several highlights in his report, such as security improvements to the society building, member numbers, the new pension fund for employees, KOHA database development, improvements to the backup strategy currently underway, publications, presentations, special donations, and excursions.

The complete report will be published with the Minutes in the *Newsletter 2024*.

The report was acknowledged by the attending members accepted as proposed by Bertchen Kohrs and seconded by John Irish.

5. Annual Reports of the Study Groups

Prof. Backes presented the Annual Report of the **Astronomy Working Group**.

Gudrun Middendorff, chairperson of the **Namibia Ornithology Group (Namibia Bird Club)**, presented the Annual Report of the Bird Club.

On behalf of Alfred Schleicher, Dr Roger Swart presented the Annual Report of the **Herpetology Work Group**.

Ester Gustavo, Chairperson of the **Namibian Hydrogeological Association (NHA)**, presented the Annual Report of the NHA.

All presenters were applauded and reports were noted. The reports can be viewed at the offices of the Society.

6. Annual Reports of the Regional Groups

The report of the **Tsumeb Museum** was presented by Frank Wittneben.

The report of the **Grootfontein Museum** was presented by Guido Röschlau.

The **Lüderitz Museum** could not deliver an annual report as no quorum was reached at their AGM.

All reports of the regional groups were acknowledged and are available at the office.

7. Presentation, Discussion, and Approval of the Financial Report

The Annual Financial Report for the financial year April 2023–March 2024 was presented by Luzane Bock from BeanCounter CC, our bookkeeping company.



Ester Gustavo, Chairperson of the
Namibian Hydrogeological Association
(Photo: Berndt Schneider)

Mrs Bock highlighted that:

- A record increase in investment has been recorded
- the investments of the society recorded interest received of over N\$ 2 300 000, while donations amounted to close on N\$ 2 100 000 for the financial year

She concluded that the cashflow position remained very strong, a positive growth had been recorded, and she was confident of the positive financial growth of the Society in the years to come.

The Annual Financial Report was accepted without amendment, proposed by Dieter Ludwig, and seconded by Rob Johnston.

8. Appointment of an Auditor

Prof. Backes suggested that the Society's financial matters remain with Bean-counter Financial Services CC, as reliable and good service has been received over the past year. This was seconded by Mr Ludwig and all members present agreed by acclamation.

9. Determination of the Membership Fees

The Board proposed that the membership fee should remain unchanged, as the last increase was implemented in 2023. It was noted that the membership fee of N\$ 3,500 for corporate members agreed upon at the last AGM was unconstitutional and that this amount should be amended to N\$ 4,000 (as per Constitution). The members present agreed and hence the fees for 2024/2025 shall be:

N\$ 400.- for Namibian members

N\$ 4,000.- for corporate members and

€ 25.- for foreign members

50% rebate to be offered to pensioners and students.

10. Approval of Actions of the Board

Mr Böhme proposed the approval of the actions of the Board. He remarked that he “does so with a big smile”. He stated that the members of the Board and the staff had done an exceptional job and as a member he thanked the board members and staff for a job very well done, especially those who had done so without remuneration. Dieter



Hanjo Böhme (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

Ludwig seconded the proposal. The proposal was unanimously accepted to great applause by all members present.

11. Election of Board Members

Prof. Backes thanked Mr Böhme for his kind words and informed those present that for the past year the following members had served on the Board of the NSS:

- Prof. Michael Backes (Chairperson)
- Frank Wittneben (Vice Chairperson)
- Theo Schoeman
- Michael Hasheela
- Alfred Schleicher
- Heike Urich
- Guido Röschlau
- Dr Roger Swart
- Zandré Duvenhage



Doran Schoeman (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

During the year, Alfred Schleicher resigned as an active member of the Board but had volunteered to assist as a co-opted member.

In line with the Constitution, the two-year terms of duty of Guido Röschlau, Theo Schoeman, and Dr Roger Swart came to an end. While Theo Schoeman was not available for re-election, the other retiring members had been nominated for re-election. Furthermore, nominations for Doran Schoeman and Pieter Francois du Plessis had been received. All members nominated briefly introduced themselves, after which Prof. Backes proposed the acceptance of all nominations, as this would bring the total number of Board members to the maximum of nine members (as allowed per the Constitution). All members present agreed by acclamation.

12. Miscellaneous

12.1 Honorary Membership

Prof. Backes stated that according to the Constitution

§4 The Committee shall have the right at each AGM to propose Honorary Members to be elected, who shall have to be approved by the voting members present at such Meeting by simple majority ...

The Board proposed that Honorary Membership be granted to Theo Schoeman. He joined the Board of the Society in 2012, immediately taking on the position of treasurer of the Board before accepting the position of chairman in 2016, which he held till 2022. Members applauded and unanimously accepted the proposal. Theo Schoeman had joined the proceedings via Zoom and gave a short message of thanks.



Pieter Francois du Plessis (Photo: Berndt Schneider)

13. Centenary of the Namibia Scientific Society

Prof. Backes reminded the members that the Namibia Scientific Society will turn 100 years old in 2025. He highlighted that over the last year a great deal of time had been spent by Board members, staff, specialists, and interested members, on preparing special events for this great achievement. Turipamwe Design Studio had been tasked to create coherent branding for the Society and a building committee had been assembled to plan and organize refurbishment of the building.

Some plans and images were presented, showing the envisaged changes. These are to optimize the use of space, as well as provide adequate ablution facilities, and create a more inviting facade.

Furthermore, all members were asked to save the 1st of March 2025 in their calendars for a grand event and to look out for special activities and highlights planned for 2025.

To end the official proceedings, Prof. Backes thanked all members and guests for their attendance and invited all for a happy get-together.

The AGM was concluded at 21h00.

Annual Report of the Namibia Scientific Society September 2023 – August 2024

Compiled by Chairperson Prof. Michael Backes

Dear members and friends of the Namibia Scientific Society

Our business year runs from 1 April to 31 March. At the end of March 2024, we thus completed our 99th business year.

The following report, however, covers the period from the previous AGM until today.

Our highlights are as follows:

- Members
- Staff
- Upgrades & Renovations
- The Library
- Kuiseb Publishers
- Events and Excursions
- Social Media
- Other Matters
- Finances

Members

As this is a members' association, our members come first. We wholeheartedly thank and acknowledge all of those who have stayed with us during the past year. Once again, we can present a slight increase in membership numbers.

At present those are:

Local members:	567
Pensioners:	119
Students:	50
Foreign members:	62
Honorary members:	13
<u>Corporate members:</u>	<u>24</u>
Total members:	835

We have several representatives of corporate members present and would like to take this opportunity to thank them wholeheartedly for all their support, be it financial or in our daily business.

Staff



There have been some slight changes to the staff complement. Unfortunately, Malilo Limbo and Hannah Iitula left the Namibia Scientific Society, but we also have a new staff member. Cristin Henckert has been hired as marketing assistant as of the 1st of July of this year.

Regarding staff matters, we have set up a pension scheme for our staff members as we believe this is important and we need to take proper care of our staff members.

Our current staff consists of:

- Ruth Moldzio as CEO

the office staff:

- Elfi Schneider
- Cristin Henckert
- Rosalia Nangolo, and
- Ernestus Hamutenya

and the library staff:

- Armin Jagdhuber
- Annegret Enengl
- Gunter von Schumann, and
- Johannes Willibard.

Upgrades and Renovations



Our renovations include the installation of a battery system to complement the solar photovoltaic (PV) system that was installed on our roof during the previous financial year. This has greatly minimized the ever-recurring small glitches and power spikes and cuts, which were repeatedly causing damage to our electronic equipment.

Thanks to the PV system, and the accompanying battery system, the

Namibia Scientific Society is no longer buying electricity from the municipality, as sufficient electricity is produced in-house.

This year also ushered in the upgrading of the security system of the Scientific Society. A new alarm system, including several new beams, was installed to adequately protect the building and its contents. The alarm system is now also linked to a new CCTV system which can be monitored remotely, allowing selected staff members to check on their phones when a disturbance is picked up and decide if someone from G4S needs to be sent to investigate.

We are currently busy on an upgrade to follow the 3-2-1 data backup strategy. The 3-2-1 strategy means that any item of data will be available threefold: one primary source data and two backups. The copies will be on two different storage types, one of which will be off-site to ensure the safekeeping of the data if something were to happen to the property, e.g. a fire or natural disaster. We believe this upgrade will soon be completed.

Furthermore, we can report that a small termite situation has been successfully dealt with.

Professionals from Rentokil were hired and with about 60l of poison these critters were successfully banished from our offices.

The Library

More than 2,900 books, 30 maps, 4,000 slides, and 2,000 photos have been donated to the library during this year and are currently being catalogued. We want to thank all those who have made donations to the library. A special vote of thanks goes to Windhoek Buchhandlung, Peter Mostert, and Franz Irlich.



In addition, Gudrun Middendorff also deserves a very special “Thank you!”, as she spent endless hours sorting and captioning all the photos of birds that we have in our large photo collection.

It is worth mentioning, in addition, that a very valuable entomological collection was donated last year. This came with some challenges as we don’t have quite the facilities for either storing or displaying these

types of collection. We therefore approached the zoological department of the National Museum. We are currently in the process of drafting an agreement between the two institutions so that we will retain ownership of the collection, but lend it to the museum to be stored and displayed.

The collection is currently being catalogued by experts and all the information of the cataloguing will then also be stored in our library database.

Kuiseb Publishers

We would also like to thank all the members of the Publishing Committee:

- Heike Urich (also a Board Member)
- Kay-Leigh de Sousa
- Charmaine !Gamxamûs
- Cristin Henckert
- Miriam Hutterer
- Ingrid Kubisch
- Marika Reiff
- Sylvia Schlettwein
- Helen Vale
- Gunter von Schumann, and
- Erika von Wietersheim

We want to thank wholeheartedly all these members for spending so many hours reading, evaluating, editing, and proofreading the manuscripts.

We would also like to thank the Editorial Board of our Journal and particularly Prof. André du Pisani, Prof. Piet van Rooyen, and my dear colleague Dr Roger Swart from our Board for all the work that goes into editing our Journal.

Another vote of thanks goes to Dr Robert West. Many thanks for making sure that the language editing is also done in a very professional manner.

Thank you all.

The following publications were processed during this year:

New Publications

- *Katima* – Sylvia Schlettwein
- *The Scattering* – Lauri Kubuitsile

Revised Reprints

- *111 Roadside Plants* – Antje Burke
- *Reptilien Namibias* – Alfred Schleicher

Reprints

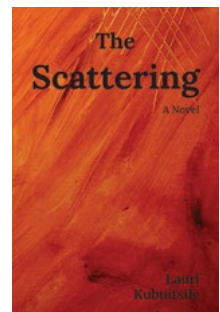
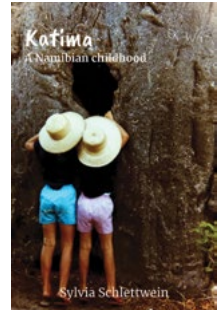
- *Der weiße Buschmann* – Peter Stark
- *Überlebenskampf in der Namib* – Willem Esterhuizen

Publications currently in Print

- *The Nama under German Colonial Rule* – Michael Vaupel

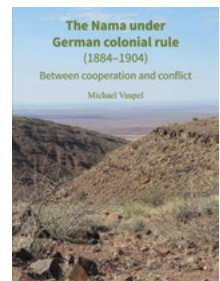
Other publication

- *Newsletter 2023*
- *Journal, vol. 70 – 2023*



The following E-Books have been processed for Amazon

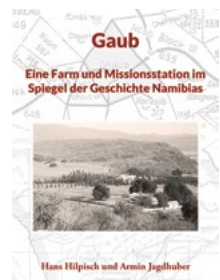
- *Der weiße Buschmann* – Peter Stark
- *Rocky Point* – Peter Bridgeford
- *Überlebenskampf in der Namib* – Willem Esterhuizen, and
- „Wo sind die Herero geblieben?“ – Hans Hilpisch



Unfortunately, Amazon quite recently and erroneously disabled our account, so we are in negotiation with them to make sure that we can continue selling our e-books there.

Publications currently in progress

- *Newsletter 2024*
- *Journal, vol. 71 – 2024*
- *Gaub* – Hans Hilpisch and Armin Jagdhuber
- *Omuntu nenge Oshiluli?* – Andrew Niikondo
- *Identification guide to Insects, Arachnids, and other Arthropods* – Klaus Birkhofer, John Irish, and



Tharina Bird

- *Conservation Pioneers in Namibia* – Peter Bridgeford
- *Conservation and Tourism in Namibia: The Early Days* – Peter Bridgeford
- *Namibia – Land of many Cultures* – E. von Wietersheim & C. I!Gamxamûs (eds.)
- *The Shipping Industry and Wrecks along Namibia's Coast* – Gunter von Schumann, and
- *Das alte Südwestafrika* – Heinrich Vedder

We want also to thank the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) and the Goethe Institute for their financial support of the *111 Roadside Plants* and *The Nama under German Colonial Rule*, respectively.

Events and Excursions

I want to highlight a couple of our outstanding events. Last year there was the Space Week, mainly organized by the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology, where we participated as the Namibia Scientific Society and offered viewing of Saturn with our telescopes and our members' telescopes to more than 150 visitors.

There was the International Food and Crafts Bazaar in May, which was organized by the Association of Diplomatic Spouses. We had a stall to promote the activities of our society.

Then, we had two tours that were quite well received, being the bus tour to the fascinating north-west of Namibia, and just this month the tour between Lüderitz and Walvis Bay. Furthermore, you might have noticed, we are striving to offer more and more of our presentations, not just on our premises, but also streaming them online. The online versions are relayed live, as well as being available later via our YouTube channel.



Social Media

Talking of YouTube, our social media platforms, which include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and X (formerly called Twitter), continue to see a rise in subscriptions, and the most seen post during this year was our call for papers for our Journal with more than 4,400 impressions on Facebook.

The numbers for social media:

- 4,869 active Facebook followers,
- 251 Instagram followers
- 230 followers on X (formerly Twitter),
- 137 YouTube subscribers.

Other Matters

Another extended project of which we are proud is the STEAM-education project, that we are now hosting for the third year running. In collaboration with Mindsinaction and funded through ExxonMobil, well over 160 children living in rural areas were exposed to robotics and programming. This was conducted and facilitated by Mindsinaction and overseen by the Namibia Scientific Society.

One wonderful surprise we received was by Ulrich Lehmann. This member of the Society one day informed us that, instead of asking for presents for his birthday, he had asked everyone rather to contribute money which he would donate to us. This amounted to the large sum of N\$26 000. THANK YOU very much!



Finances

The financial report was presented by Ms Luzane Bock. But let me just tell you now that, again, quite substantial donations were received and a record increase of our investments was realized, giving us an increase in total cash over the last eight years of more than N\$6 million. And with that, I come to the end of this part of the report.



Final words from the Chairperson

I want to say a very big thank you, firstly, to my fellow committee members, who have spent their time steering this wonderful ship of ours during the year. Thanks for your efforts, given without any remuneration. Then we want obviously to thank the magnificent staff we have here, who do great work and don't shy away from any tasks that the board might ask them to do.

Lastly, but surely not least, a big thank you to all of you as members for assisting us. First and foremost, there are obviously our corporate members and then all others who help in one way or the other, be it embassies, colleagues at various NGOs and NPOs, colleagues at foundations, companies, other societies, our working groups, the media and press, bookshops; and all others that I might have forgotten to mention now. All of you deserve a big hand of applause.

Annual Report: Astronomy Working Group

by Prof. Michael Backes

The year 2023/2024 was a successful year for the Astronomy Working Group. Altogether ten public events were organized, and also in terms of public outreach continued success can be reported.

Star Gazing/Astronomical Events

Several fully booked star-gazing evenings were organized in 2023 and 2024 at the Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory (CHMO) of NSS Honorary Member Sonja Itting-Enke, just south of Windhoek. These were led by Lutz von Dewitz, Simon van der Lingen, and Alex Arnold.

10/11/2023	<i>View the 4 Gas Giants (Planets)</i>
11/11/2023	<i>View the 4 Gas Giants (Planets)</i>
28/06/2024	<i>Deep-Sky-Objects at the CHMO</i>
29/06/2024	<i>Deep-Sky-Objects at the CHMO</i>

Public Lectures

During the year we were able to offer five spectacular presentations, including one talk in cooperation with the Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre (FNCC):

19/10/2023	<i>Space Talk on Cosmic Rays</i> by Prof. Mathieu de Naurois, Deputy Director of the H.E.S.S. telescopes (CNRS/LLR & Ecole Polytechnique, F)
27/02/2024	<i>Black hole astrophysics with a millimetre telescope in Namibia</i> by Prof. Rob Fender (University of Oxford, UK & University of Cape Town, ZA)
30/04/2024	<i>Moons of our Solar System</i> by Simon van der Lingen
11/07/2024	<i>African Indigenous astronomy and calendar making</i> by Dr Motheo Koitsiwe (North-West University, ZA)
25/07/2024	<i>Astrobiology: Life in the Universe</i> by Prof. William Welsh (San Diego State University, California, USA)

Excursions

The **World Space Week** is celebrated every year from 4 to 10 October. This year the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST)

organised events that emphasize the positive impact of space science and technology on the betterment of human existence.

We took this opportunity to run, for the first time, the telescopes donated by Robert Johnstone. On the evening of 4 October 2023 about 150 guests gathered at the Mercure Hotel. Amongst them were 80 learners from all over the country, who were invited by the NCRST to participate in organized events of the Space Week. The evening began with a talk by Lutz von Dewitz, who talked about the astronomical activities in Namibia and introduced Saturn, its rings and moons. Afterwards everyone had the

opportunity to see Saturn and its rings and moons with their own eyes from the parking area of the hotel. With the support of Alex Arnold, Simon van der Lingen, Lutz von Dewitz, and myself, four telescopes could be set up. While two of the telescopes belong to the Namibia Scientific Society, the other two are in private possession and were kindly made available specifically for this event. In addition to the observations with the telescopes, many very active and interesting astronomical discussions were held and many questions could be answered by the astronomers.



Lutz von Dewitz and Michael Backes at the Word Space Week (Photo: Miriam Hutterer)

The **17th Southern Star Party** will be organized from 6 to 9 September 2024 at Gross Barmen. You are all welcome to join us for a whole weekend of star gazing, interesting talks on astronomical topics, seeing the solar flares through a solar telescope, and explanations of how different types of telescopes work.

Collaborations and Partnerships

The Namibia Scientific Society through the Astronomy Working Group is a partner of the AMT Mobile Planetarium project. This immensely successful project has meanwhile reached more than 16,000 visitors and was awarded the 2024 Annie Maunder Medal for Outreach by the Royal Astronomical Society (UK). The Namibia Scientific Society hosted the planetarium during the training of new presenters, conducted by Prof. Joanna Holt of the Netherlands Research School for Astronomy (NOVA).

During the 32nd General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union, held in Cape Town (August 6–15, 2024), the Namibia Scientific Society was represented at the Namibian booth, coordinated by the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST).

Outreach

The website¹ as well as the Facebook page² of the astronomy section have been regularly contacted: To date, 6,262 visitors have seen the website (compared to 5,706 last year; +10%). The Facebook page has 1,579 regular followers (compared to 1,499 a year ago; +5%) and is especially useful for promoting events.

The presentation by Prof. Rob Fender on Black Holes was recorded and published on the YouTube channel of the Namibia Scientific Society. So far, the video has been watched 235 times.

Further, many thanks go to Lutz von Dewitz and Simon van der Lingen for providing the astro news, so that a monthly astro newsletter is distributed on our website and is regularly highly commended by the recipients.

In addition, a WhatsApp Channel³ has been implemented to provide information about astronomy-related events at the Namibia Scientific Society as well as to provide the monthly astro news to the followers.

Clear skies!

1 www.astronwg.wordpress.com

2 <https://www.facebook.com/astro.nwg>

3 <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaEoPIV3AzNYGPHCKa3a>

Annual Report: Reptiles and Amphibians Working Group

by Alfred Schleicher

As in previous years, this year's annual report of the herpetological working group for reptiles and amphibians covers the events of the second half of last year (2023) and the first half of this year (2024).

Due to the persistent drought in the country reptiles and amphibians are extremely difficult to locate in their traditional habitats. Observing the animals is and has accordingly been difficult.

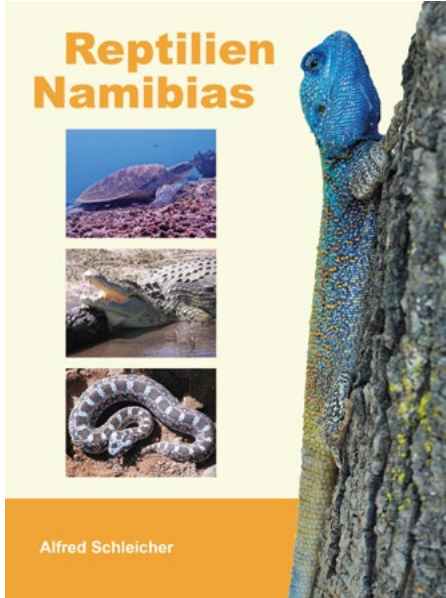
Nevertheless, the research project on Namibia's tortoise species continues unabated. For example, the Bushmanland tent tortoise (*Psammobates tentorius verroxii*) was successfully bred both this year and last year. The experience gained was passed on to interested participants and experts through specific presentations at various institutions.

The reptiles of Namibia enjoy constant admiration among nature lovers. This is also reflected in the remarkable sales of the book – *Reptiles of Namibia*. It is therefore with great pleasure that we can look forward to reprinting the German-language edition of the reptile guide. In addition, this new edition has been revised.

As in previous years, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their excellent and gratifying co-operation.

I would also like to thank the members of the Namibia Scientific Society for their interest in the various programs offered by the Society.

Stay tuned – because we, too, always endeavour to provide you with new and interesting information.



Annual Report: Namibian Hydrogeological Association

by Ester Gustavo

This report captures activities that the Namibian Hydrogeological Association, (NHA) undertook during the period 2023-2024.

The Council met several times during this period (both virtual and face to face meetings); the meetings were well attended; and a quorum was always recorded.

The activities undertaken are as follows:



1. The NHA AGM 2024

- The AGM was held on the 28 February 2024, virtually.
- At the AGM, the president was re-elected, and the 2023 council members chose to continue with their duties. In line with the NHA succession plan and capacity building, the NHA continues to promote the implementation of the shadow council, aiming at a smoother transition when the time comes.
- The council for 2024 comprises:
 - Ester Gustavo (President)
 - Dr Josefina Hamutoko (Vice President)
 - Michael Cloete (Secretary)
 - Bertram Swartz (Treasurer)
 - Mike Ndongo (Ordinary member)
- The shadow council for 2024 comprises:
 - Gettie Shiinda (Shadow President)
 - Vacant (Shadow Vice President)
 - Vacant (Shadow Secretary)
 - Abednego Shinana (Shadow Treasurer)
 - Pierre Botha (Shadow Ordinary member)

At the end of February 2024 the NHA had 34 paid-up members. Continued growth is celebrated. A few more members joined during the year.

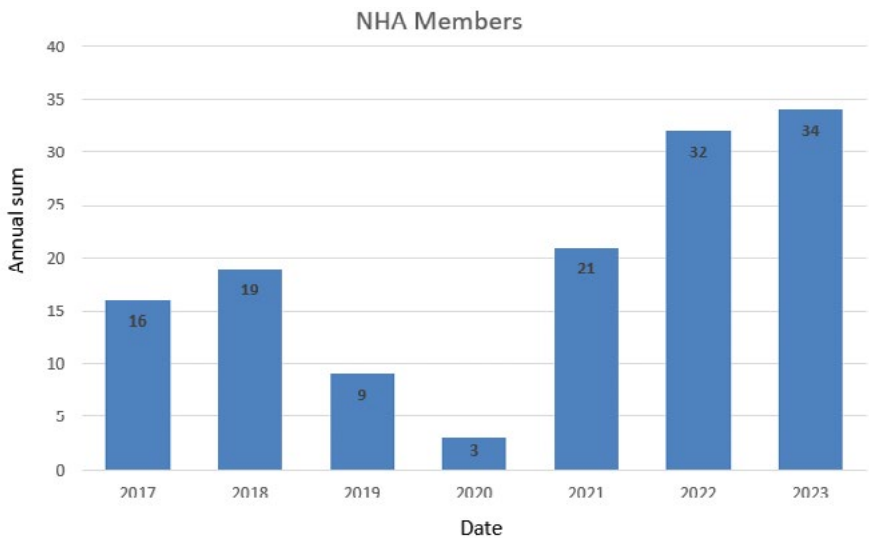


Figure 1: NHA Membership over the years.

2. International Association for Hydrogeologists Congress 2023

From 17 to 21 September 2023 members of NHA took part in the International Association for Hydrogeologists Congress, which was held in Cape Town, South Africa. This was an opportunity to meet with global hydrogeology experts, to further the study of hydrogeology (as per our objective), and to network and forge new professional contacts. Meeting the iconic John Cherry, and Everton De Oliveira remain highlights of the congress.

The field trips were an added bonus, as the City of Cape Town has been having a water crisis since 2016 much like that of the Central areas of Namibia, and visiting their Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) schemes in Atlantis brought it closer to home, not only in relation to the drought, but also with reference to our own MAR run by the City of Windhoek.

A team of eight hydrogeologists from Namibian made it to the conference:

- Two from the private sector

**NHA SPONSORSHIP
IAH CONGRESS
2023**

Cape Town, South Africa, 18-22 September 2023

For
1 x Professional Hydrogeologist and 1 x Student Hydrogeologist
ALL EXPENSES PAID

Conditions of eligibility:
An accepted abstract by IAH
Paid up member of NHA
Namibian Professional or Student Hydrogeologist

**Submit Approved Abstract and Motivation
to:**
Dr. Hamutoko at:
nha.namibia@gmail.com

Motivation Limit: 300 words

Due Date:
14 May 2023

- Two from the academic sector
- Four from the public sector

Five of the eight presented papers, both oral and posters, while others were panellists.

The NHA fully funded a student and professional to present their work at the Congress, while the rest of the team had funding from various sponsors such as their respective employers, UNESCO, and SADC - GMI.

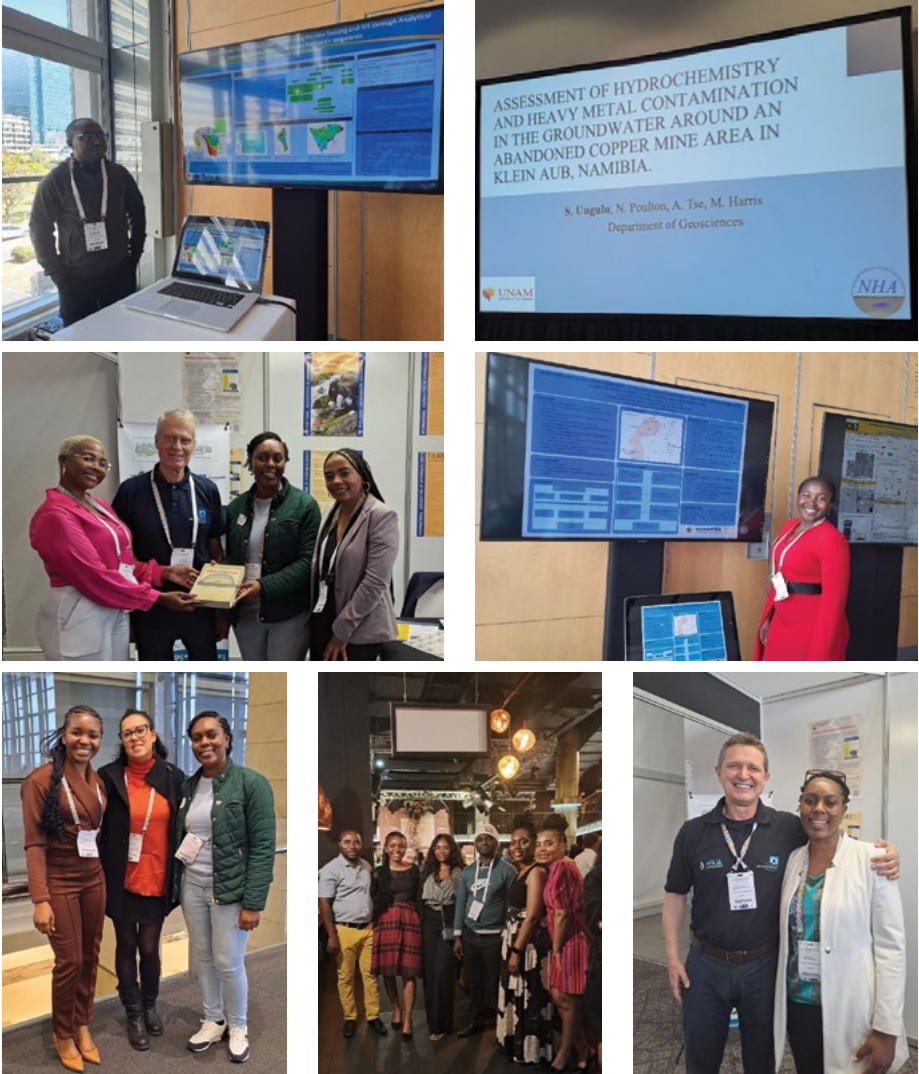


Figure 2: Moments at IAH Congress, Cape Town

3. CAG 29



Figure 3: CAG 29, Group picture

From 26 to 29 October 2023, the 29th major biennial Geology Conference (Colloquium of African Geology) took place in Namibia. Twenty-eight of these conferences have taken place previously, eighteen in Europe and ten in Africa. The 29th was the first in Southern Africa, and in Namibia. NHA supported CAG 29 by being part of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

Taking advantage of the international audience attending the colloquium, the NHA organized an additional half-day workshop for women in Geoscience. These geological careers have their challenges when it comes to women, and we are working on making sure that the women embarking on the career are equipped with the skills (technical and soft) that allow them to thrive in the industry.

The workshop addressed the notion: *Why women can't have it all*. To some this a question, to others it's a dare, but at the end of the session we were able to conclude that women can have it all, just not all at the same time.



Figure 4: Women in Geoscience Workshop



Figure 5: Workshop in session discussing the vital questions around the workshop theme.

Some practical ways were shared on how to harness each season of their lives, whether as a corporate mom, a single woman in management, or a professional returning to the industry after an extended maternity break.

The workshop was attended by about 25 women in different stages of their careers and from different geoscience fields.

4. Publishing Seminar

Publishing Seminar
2nd November 2023

Journey to publishing in a
Scientific Journal

PRESENTERS:

DR. DIGANTA SARMA

DR. JOSEFINA HAMUTOKO

16H00-18H00
nha.namibia@gmail.com

NHA
NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF
GEOLOGICAL ENGINEERS

Register by:
30th October 2023
<https://forms.gle/LbQkr9NBbLdMrVjTA>

Figure 6: The Journey to publishing in a scientific journal.




One of the NHA's core values is to promote technical excellence, and peer reviews is one of the best options to achieve this.

Attending these international conferences has made us realise that publishing is really common only among the colleagues in academia, or the older technical experts. There is a great deal of work done in different sectors, but much of the work ends with the reports after the project is completed. This spills into a potential to duplicate work, instead of focussing on the data gaps. Our call to action was to remove the fear around publishing by exploring what type of data can be published, how to find a publisher, and what pitfalls to look out for, especially after a conference when institutions approach one to publish one's work.

This is a new venture, still hard ground, but we will keep chipping at this concrete, because there is amazing work done locally, but there is not much

to show for it other than unpublished reports. Assistance in this regard is welcomed, such as co-authoring to build confidence and drive home the message of why publishing is important. We are eager to work with experts. The session was held in November 2023, with about 25 people attending the virtual seminar.

5. Groundwater and Wells class



Johnson Screens
A brand of Aqueplence Group


Groundwater & Wells Class
16 November 2023
08H30
Namibia Scientific Society

A One-day Workshop

FOR:

- ✓ Water-Well Professionals
- ✓ NHA members
- ✓ Non- NHA members
- ✓ FREE

Register by:
30th October 2023
nha.namibia@gmail.com








Figure 7: Groundwater and Wells Class group Photo.

Groundwater Consulting Services (GCS) in association with Johnsons Screens was instrumental in helping us reach the next milestone. This was a one-day seminar, held on 16 November. The Johnson Screens Groundwater and Wells Class is targeted at water-well professionals engaged in the design, construction, operation, and ownership of large-capacity water wells used in water production and Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR). The workshop consisted of a series of lectures tied to the life cycle of a water supply well. This was held in the Scientific Society Hall and attended by hydrogeologists from GCS, SLR, MAWLR, CoW, and NamWater, as well as students.

6. World Water Day 2024

The world water run is an activity that we have added to our annual calendar. With the support of the //Ae-Gams sports club we were able to organise another 5 and 10 km run/walk at the Elisenheim Estate. The walk/run, which was held on 23 March 2024, gave us a platform to introduce NHA, as well



as to leave the runners with a word of caution about using water wisely and being cognizant of our national water challenges.

7. FORECAST

- Hydrogeology and hydrology lecture series 2024-2025
- Khomas Regional Science Fair- August 2024
- IAH Congress - Davos, Switzerland - September 2024
- Women in Geoscience- International Women's Day - March 2025
- Water Resources Management Act Workshop 2024
- Reach out to Hydrologists

These activities ensure that we grow in our technical expertise, forge networks, and develop mutually beneficial collaborations. Conversations with the relevant people spark ideas which we believe will lead to solutions to our local water challenges.

Thank you.



Figure 8: NHA members that took part in the Hydrogeological World Water Run/Walk (group photo).

Annual Report: Namibia Bird Club

by Gudrun Middendorff

Good evening members and guests. Welcome to our Annual General Meeting of the Namibia Bird Club.

International Earth Day was celebrated on 22 April 2024. The slogan for the day was 'Planet versus Plastic', with a proposal to reduce plastics by 60% by 2040, to restore ecosystems, and to safeguard biodiversity. It serves as a reminder of environmental protection and sustainability. A healthy environment ensures healthy Fauna and Flora, meaning that abundant bird species are found in healthy surroundings. It is also an urgent call to action to preserve and not destroy what we love. What can we do? Start with your own pavement and keep it clean.



In total nine morning walks were conducted with Sunday outings took to the following locations: farm Prospect, farm Drei Krone (an outing together with the Botanical Society), farm Onduno, Plot Neuweiler, Farm Finkenstein and Aredareigus Nature Estate (known as Regenstein and Finkenstein Estate).

The first long weekend outing was at Camp Vrede, close to Dordabis; the next in September at Donkerhuk in the vicinity of the Namib Naukluft Park; and the last at Fritzposten in the Khomas Hochland, which served as our year end function.

The Birders' Get-together took place at Taranga Lodge, west of Rundu. The presence of a Ross's Turaco at the location convinced many to make the long journey. The guest of honour was Trevor Hardaker, who impressed everyone with his vast knowledge. Luckily the Ross's Turaco showed well for all the participants.

All our outings serve multiple purposes: to build knowledge on birds, to atlas pentads¹, and to educate owners, employees, and fellow travellers. That brings me to the subject of atlasing: our country has some 10,571 pentads of which only 2,234 (21.13%) have been covered in full protocol. Of those 48 % have one full protocol card, 17 % have two cards, 8% have three cards, and 27 % have four or more cards. Atlasing entails listing – making a full protocol card with as many birds as possible in an area of approximately 7 by 9km via BirdLasser – a free app on one's phone. This card is submitted and the data collected serves research and analysis by various people. The distribution maps can be

¹ A spatial unit used by the African Bird Atlas Project

updated and the conservation status of bird species established. Additionally, important bird and biodiversity areas can be reassessed. The data serves as base for environmental impact assessments. The SABAP 2 Project is based at the University of Cape Town and funded by the FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology. We, the Citizen Scientists, collect valuable data for ourselves and for our children. Join us in “birding with a purpose”!

Our bird club calendar has been a great success. Each year we invite members and hobby photographers to submit their best pictures. The Biomarket in March last year was well visited and brought some welcome funds into our account.

The garden bird project started in August 2023. The main aim is to record all species in a garden for a certain period, and repeat quarterly. Observers from Rosh Pinah, the coast, farms and lodges, and Windhoek city and surrounds took part. Clearly the difference between winter and summer is marked by the presence of the migrants.

Each year the bird club supports our rehabilitation stations with a donation to support their educational effort. These centres are run by Liz Komen at Narrec, Sandra Dantu from Seabird Rescue Centre in Swakopmund, and Jessica Kemper from the Seabird Rescue Facility in Lüderitz. Injured or stranded birds are cared for, fed, and gently nursed back to health. When they have recovered sufficiently, these birds are released back into nature.

Since last year one of our committee members, Innes Louw, has visited several schools, made contact with teachers, and given talks about our rich bird life. Some pupils have joined our walks at Avis Dam and their feedback is profuse.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my committee for their exceptional commitment and support. We are all volunteers offering our talents in our free time. Our gratitude goes to the helpful staff of the Namibia Scientific Society, also for the use of this venue. Our biggest advertising platform is Social Media; currently we have 302 members in the Birding Namibia WhatsApp Group.

Some of the Events in 2024



The Namibia Scientific Society had the honour of receiving an insect collection by Pieter Arnoldus Basson (Photo: Elfi Schneider)

Namibia Scientific Society
It's time to shine

The Namibia Scientific Society invites interested academic authors to submit articles to our Journal.
The Journal (ISSN: 1018-7677) is a cross-disciplinary journal and publishes research in all fields related to Namibia.
For further information please visit our website:
www.namscience.com/journal/forauthors
The deadline for submissions is 13 May 2024.

CALL FOR PAPERS
Namibia Scientific Society Journal 71 – 2024

The Journal of the Namibia Scientific Society (ISSN: 1018-7677) is a cross-disciplinary journal and publishes research in all fields related to Namibia. Published since 1925, it is the longstanding academic journal in Namibia and is distributed to libraries in various countries, e.g. Germany, South Africa, Kenya, Australia, Switzerland and USA.

It currently 70 volumes, articles have been published in research fields like Agriculture/Veterinary, Architecture/Urban Design, Climate/Weather, Conservation, Drought/Famine/Water, Geography, Heritage management, History (SVA/Nam-bio-related), (Bio) Sciences, Vegetation.

All contributions must be based on original research and are subject to peer-review.

Deadline for submission: 13 May 2024
For more information: www.namscience.com/journal

NAMIBIA
SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

Call of papers received an amazing 4,444 reactions on social media

January

February

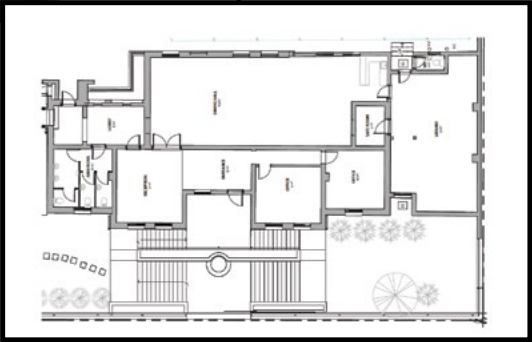
March



Capturing of stonetool collection and detailed accompanying information has been successfully completed and can now be viewed on our website (Photo: Armin Jagdhuber)

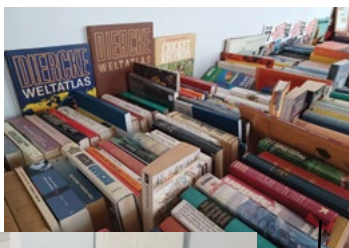


Launch of Mindsinaction/ExxonMobil/NSS STEAM project for 2024 (Photo: Mindsinaction)



Various subcommittees are founded to prepare for the 100 year anniversary in 2025, and address building maintenance requirements

Flea market in our hall (Photo: Elizabeth McLaren)



The Scattering book launch: Sylvia Schlettwein, Keamoetsi Molapong, author Lauri Kubuitsile and her daughter, Amanda (Photo: Elizabeth McLaren)

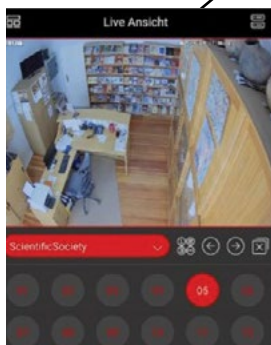


Our stand at the The Association of Diplomatic Spouses of Namibia International Food & Craft Bazaar (Photo: Elizabeth McLaren)

April

May

June



A new CCTV camera system was installed and the Alarm system upgraded

The participants of the *The fascinating northwest of Namibia* Tour (Photo: Armin Jagdhuber)



NSS is represented at the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union in Cape Town by our board members Prof. Michael Backes and Zandr  Duvenhage



Star Gazing evening with Lutz von Dewitz at the Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory (Photo: Cristin Henckert)



Presentation: Archaeology in the Sand Sea: Updates on research and dating of the sites south of Gobabeb; Armin Jagdhuber, Cristin Henckert, Ruth Moldzio and George Leader (Photo: Allgemeine Zeitung)

July

August

September

Annual General Meeting of the Namibia Scientific Society including a presentation on proposed renovations and improvements



Visit from the Elia M Neromba Senior Secondary School (Photo: Lizabeth McLaren)



Noteable collaborations this year included the American Embassy, the Brazilian Embassy, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, National Library and Archive Services

Construction commenced mid September and is ongoing (Photo: Cristin Henckert)



Clyde Forster and Zandr  Duvenhage at the International Space Week

October

November

December



Booklaunch: *Gaub at Gaub*
(Photo: Martin Rust)



Inauguration of the Eenhana Campus of NUST (Photo: NUST)



The fascinating north-west of Namibia

A carefully crafted tour by the Namibia Scientific Society in collaboration with Sense of Africa

Katja Lanz

30 May to 9 June 2024

Windhoek – Erongo Mountains – Brandberg – Ugab River – Twyfelfontein (UNESCO World Heritage Site) – Sesfontein – Epupa Falls – Opuwo – Oshakati – Tsumeb – Windhoek



As we gathered in anticipation of the tour to the northern parts of Namibia, I felt honoured to have the privilege of compiling a comprehensive report of the countless heart-warming experiences along the way. Although I have been in the country less than five months, the crew felt that it would be appropriate to have a fresh perspective on the country. The introduction to the country provided me with an exceptional opportunity to learn about the incredible richness of north-western Namibia, its geography, history, geology, and plants; not forgetting the diverse cultures.

On the morning of 30 May, waiting patiently at the departure point, nine adventurous women and one curious man assembled for a journey to the north-west of Namibia. The air was alive with the promise of discovery as we boarded the 22-seater bus. Ah, but there was a twist; yours truly, the newcomer, made a fashionably late entrance. Nevertheless, our journey commenced punctually. Leading us into the vast landscapes of Namibia was none other than Armin, our friendly guide and jack-of-all-trades, professional driver, gravel road expert, and a fountain of knowledge. His tales, woven with humour, painted vivid pictures of Namibia's complex history. Alongside him was José, our ever-present assistant and navigator whose keen eye and camera lens would record and capture our journey in snapshots of fleeting moments and timeless landscapes.

After departing from Windhoek our first halt was at the remarkable church in Karibib. Besides the unique architecture of this building, the trilingual Bible verses (German, Nama, Herero) stand out. Unfortunately, this beautiful



church is left unmaintained, only providing shelter for various species of birds. Thank you Namibia Scientific Society, for organizing us access to this spectacular gem in Karibib.

Continuing on our way we approached the town of Omaruru on the Omaruru River. On its bank lies Erongo Mountain Winery, with its welcoming atmosphere and pleasant aromas of wines and whisky; here we discovered the intriguing taste that elephant dung imparts to whiskey, which turned out to be a great conversation starter during our delightful wine-tasting session. We were also privileged to see at first-hand how different types of whiskeys are distilled. Driving through Omaruru, we learnt that this place with deep historical roots also holds the personal histories of our guides Armin and José. With Armin cleverly using the clock to point out historical landmarks - “At 2 o’clock you will see ...” - and José passionately guiding us through the Rhenish Mission House, recounting tales of missionary history and bygone eras, their deep connection to Omaruru resonated in every word spoken, highlighting the profound significance this place holds for them.

Later on, at Omaruru Guesthouse, we enjoyed the first of many evenings of delicious dinners in wonderful company. On 31st May we ventured westward along the rugged tracks of the Erongo Mountains. Our road led us to Okombahe, where village life unfolded before us. The tidy local church named after the famous Martin Luther and the sight of schoolchildren lining up at the food counter offered glimpses into everyday life. Witnessing the water-cooled predecessor of the refrigerator and the cast-iron three-legged pot underscored the privilege of experiencing their world up close. After refreshments at the Cactus & Coffee Teagarden in Uis, surrounded by flowering quiver trees and the striking Bushman poisons (*Adenium boehmianum*), we marvelled at the gradual rise of the majestic Brandberg from the barren landscape as we drove towards it. Due to an unplanned detour we also had a chance to stop at the foot of the Brandberg, which allowed us a close-up of the majestic mountain. Turning back, we eventually made it to Ondjamba Hills on time and there we nested up for the night. Ondjamba Hills is cleverly integrated into its natural surroundings. Here, between the wind and chill of the hill, a magical stillness descended at 9 p.m., offering a peaceful end to our day.

Saturday, 1st June



As dawn broke, the Brandberg's colours shifted spectacularly, painting the landscape with hues that seemed almost unreal. Setting off early, we journeyed in two vehicles, with guides, along the diverse, winding, dry riverbed of the Ugab. It wasn't long before we encountered the first of many majestic African bush elephants (*Loxodonta africana*). One particularly bold young bull repeatedly challenged our presence, injecting a sense of exhilaration into our adventure. Amidst the towering mountain formations, we paused for a serene tea and coffee break, while Armin captivated us with tales of historical events and geological transformations spanning centuries and millennia. Our reverie was momentarily interrupted by the sight of two black-breasted snake eagles (*Circaetus pectoralis*) gracefully soaring above us. For those who couldn't get enough of the breathtaking views, a sundowner tour was offered, inviting us to soak up the stunning vistas and reflect on the day's unforgettable experiences.

Sunday, 2nd June

The next morning a relatively short stretch of our journey brought us to Twyfelfontein. From this point onward I frequently found myself seated next to botanist Luise Hoffmann. Just as on the previous trip, she remained the undisputed authority on tree identification. The indispensable reference book, *Trees & Shrubs of Namibia*, was always within reach, allowing us to identify and closely examine the diverse flora around us. Here in Damaraland, the Damara broom euphorbia (*Euphorbia damarana*) flourishes spectacularly. Furthermore, the mopane tree (*Colophospermum mopane*), abundant in the north-west, was beginning to showcase its stunning autumnal colours. At the Damara Living Museum we discovered that almost every part of this predominating tree is utilized. The Damara people, who introduced us to their ancient customs, lead a fascinating double life, seamlessly balancing modernity and tradition. Their performance, though staged, was vibrant and captivating. The female members of our group enjoyed traditional makeovers, and José nearly lost our bus during a ritual game of Owela (Ikhus). Our adventure continued to



the Twyfelfontein UNESCO World Heritage Site, where our local guide unravelled the intricate symbolism behind the unique rock paintings and engravings (petroglyphs). To our amazement, water did indeed flow from the “unreliable source”. The approach to the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge was nothing short of dramatic, winding through impressive rock formations and setting a grand stage for our arrival. The evening buffet, bustling with crowds, was a stark contrast to the serene landscapes we had been exploring, reminding us of the vibrant and varied ways in which beauty can be experienced and celebrated.

Monday, 3rd June

En route to Sesfontein, our journey provided sightings of springbok and strikingly dark-skinned giraffe gracefully pacing along the roadside. Passing through Palmwag, we crossed the Red Line, marking the western veterinary border. At Warmquelle our fearless guide Armin led us along a scenic 6km trail, navigating hills and valleys, to the enchanting waterfalls at Ongongo. Suitably named in the Herero language, the falls held a truly “magical” allure. While some ventured into the water willingly, Alrun, in a moment of unintended grace, found herself immersed fully clothed yet admirably composed. After a lovely swim, the Fort Sesfontein Lodge welcomed us with a tranquil courtyard shaded by palms. Despite the old German fort’s current state of slight neglect, its historical charm was profound. Against this backdrop Armin entertained us with tales of the fort’s past and amusing historical anecdotes. Though four of the six cited sources remain elusive, Sesfontein itself, regrettably, lacked its usual appeal during our visit.



Tuesday, 4th June

Our journey towards the northernmost point of our tour was marked by the graceful presence of ostriches crossing our path. During a refuelling stop in Opuwo, the rich tapestry of Namibia's diverse tribes unfolded before us. Himba, Owambo, and Herero people, decorated in both modern and traditional attire, mingled seamlessly in the streets and supermarkets. The harmonious coexistence of these ethnic groups was a captivating sight. It was here that Armin shared his tales of Vita-Tom alias Oorlog-Tom adding depth to the sparse Wikipedia entry about this historical figure. Moreover, as we navigated the winding Joubert Pass, we encountered a breathtaking diversity of trees, making it clear why a botanical exploration at a slow pace, preferably by donkey, would be a rewarding endeavour. The landscape constantly changed around us, with majestic baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*) becoming a more frequent sight. Through the dust and heat we finally reached Epupa. After traversing hundreds of kilometres of sun-baked terrain and dry riverbeds, the appearance of the Kunene River felt surreal yet deeply welcoming. Here we encountered the invasive Madagascar rubber vine (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*) for the first time, a sign of ecological challenges in the region. Nestled beside the Gondwana Omarunga Epupa Falls Camp, under the canopy of makalani palms (*Hyphaene petersiana*), we were spellbound by the first sight of the waterfall, adorned with a rainbow at its easternmost edge. Although unable to view the falls in their entirety due to our location, the misplacement by Gondwana led Armin to negotiate two bottles of champagne as compensation. With champagne glasses in hand, we basked in the natural spectacle unfolding before us.



Wednesday, 5th June

In the morning we were fortunate to receive an invitation to visit an authentic Himba village. Welcomed warmly by the numerous wives and children of a Himba chief of the village, it was evident that he had gone ahead with the cattle. This wasn't a staged performance, but a genuine glimpse into original tribal life, expertly translated by our Himba guide. Despite their traditional lifestyle,



the women and children showed a keen interest in the modern world, captivated by the images and videos on our mobile phones. Both Margret and José impressed us with their dance skills, bringing laughter to the young Himba women whose faces blushed even redder. Once we had left, the aroma of the ochre-butter fat mixture that nourished their skin lingered in our memories. In the afternoon we ascended a nearby hill offering a breathtaking view of the expansive array of falls and pools below. The beauty of this natural wonder cannot be captured by cameras, but left us in awe until after sunset. As we reluctantly departed, a blood fruit tree (*Terminalia prunioides*) adorned the landscape, adding a final touch of splendour before our descent.

Thursday, 6th June

As we returned to Opuwo, the capital of Kaokaland, the sight of Himba women in the supermarket felt oddly familiar after our immersive village visit. A highlight awaited us at Scents of Namibia, where we witnessed a shining example of successful community engagement; utilizing nature's resources sustainably, including mopane and commiphora, the project empowered Himba women to earn income while delighting customers with exquisite oils and creams proudly labelled "Made in Namibia." At the serene Opuwo Country Lodge we took time to reflect on the experiences of the past days. Despite a few of our company having picked up ailments, the icy infinity pool beckoned, offering a refreshing respite, and the perfect stage for yet another breathtaking sunset.

Friday, 7th June

As we embarked on another day of exploration, our journey led us through a tapestry of Namibia's landscapes and cultural treasures. Our first stop was the Ruacana Power Station, where a passionate Nampower employee enlightened us about the powerhouse behind 60% of Namibia's electricity. Excitement filled the air as each of us eagerly participated in safety checks, blowing into tubes and donning smart safety helmets for an immersive experience.



Our route took an unexpected turn to the Ombalantu Baobab near Outapi. Despite being encircled by a secure fence, the sheer grandeur of this ancient giant left us awestruck, amplifying the majesty of its fellow baobabs dotting the landscape. Venturing inside through a large trunk opening, we marvelled at its historical role as a refuge, post office, church, and even a kindergarten, a testament to its enduring significance. Traversing the vibrant Four O region, we were struck by its bustling activity and dense population. Freya Lund, our fellow traveller, offered a commentary based on her personal experience, grieving at the encroaching fences that now spoiled the once picturesque vistas, and recalling fond memories of a more open and scenic past. As the day wound down, we found sanctuary, nestled in spacious tents, at the Nakambale Adventure Lodge. The evening unfolded with the aroma of freshly baked pizza from a wood-fired oven, a delicious reward after a day brimming with exploration and the experience of Namibia's rich heritage.

Saturday, 8th June

On our penultimate day we embarked on a jam-packed itinerary, which left us overwhelmed yet exhilarated. We began at the Finnish Mission and cemetery, situated conveniently next to our lodge. Captivated by our guide's passionate storytelling, we absorbed every detail of the Finnish missionaries' profound legacy and their interactions with the local community. From there our journey led us to the vibrant Ondonga village for an all-too-brief visit before pressing on to Tsumeb. Along the way a quick stop at Oshivelo provided the perfect moment to savour the last remnants of our biltong, before crossing the red line.



In Tsumeb the curator, Anneliese Bruns, led us through a journey of discovery at the Tsumeb Museum, each exhibit a testament to the town's rich history and cultural tapestry. Anneliese's narratives breathed life into each artefact, weaving a vivid tapestry of the past. Our exploration continued at the Tsumeb Mineralogic and Mining Museum (TMMM), guided by Jens Frautschy, into microscopic realms where ordinary rocks revealed extraordinary beauty under ultra-violet light, evoking cosmic landscapes and sparking our imagination. The day culminated in reflection at the Minen Hotel bar, where we gathered to unwind, share stories, and marvel at the day's revelations. Over refreshments we recalled a day brimming with educational treasures and sensory delights, grateful for every moment of our unforgettable journey through Namibia's cultural and natural wonders.

Sunday, 9th June



On our six-hour drive back to Windhoek, we reflected on our nine-day journey with warmth and nostalgia. Margret Hoffmann's delicious cookies and cake made their final appearance, adding sweetness to our conversations and memories. Despite a slight hiccup and a faint burning smell from the bus, we returned safely. Grateful to everyone who made this trip possible and our lively fellow travellers, we returned to Windhoek with lasting bonds and cherished experiences.

From central Namibia to the remote corners of north-west Namibia, our journey had been an unforgettable adventure. Guided by Armin and José, we explored rugged mountains, serene rivers, and encountered vibrant wildlife and communities along the way. Each day brought new wonders: ancient rock art at Twyfelfontein, the majestic Epupa Falls, and the rich culture of Himba villages, just to mention a few. We immersed ourselves in Namibia's heritage, tasted local flavours, and learned stories of resilience and tradition.

As we bid farewell, we carry memories of friendship and discovery. This journey has deepened my connection to Namibia's past and left us eager to return and explore more of its natural beauty.

Reflections on the Recent Renovations at the Namibia Scientific Society

Cristin Henckert



Activities have been buzzing at the Namibia Scientific Society over the last few months of the year. However, the busyness was different from what one would normally expect. It was not the prospect of many evening presentations or special events that led to the buzz, but the drilling of holes, repainting of walls, and assembling of scaffolding – all part of the building renovations undertaken by the Society ahead of its centenary.

Owing to the fact that the Society's office is an old building, the renovations were given the green light to ensure the effective continuation of the Society's activities for another 100 years. Many regulars at the Society would agree that there was some wear and tear in and around the

building, so changes ranging from a new coat of paint on the walls and roof to renovating the hall were justified.

The building plans included both aesthetic and functional changes. When the architects, relevant members of staff, and Board members gathered to discuss the building plans, it was unanimously agreed that the new design should have a more inviting feel to it. This is why regular users of the front (old Namibian Academy for Tourism and Hospitality) entrance would notice that it was filled in, allowing for one bigger entrance. In addition to that alteration, the garden is also undergoing a makeover that will result in more scenic - and more Namibian - vegetation populating the front entrance. Since the building needed repainting in any case, it gave us the chance to change the colour scheme from green and white to a more minimalistic white with grey.

Moreover, the renovations will usher in changes to the inside of the building that will create a smoother workflow once completed. The hall is undergoing an interior makeover, which will include new ceiling panels and lighting. What's more, the building will also house a wheel-chair friendly bathroom, making the restroom more accessible for everyone. Further internal changes



will allow for the renting out of the hall without disrupting the operations by the Society's staff.

The much-needed changes to the Society's building have been a long time coming, not only because the building is about 110 years old according to records. The Society is on the verge of a new chapter in its existence, and its 100th anniversary in 2025 will likely evoke much reflection on the past century. For close to 100 years the Namibia Scientific Society has been a custodian of the exchange of information between scientists and laymen. Building on this history, there is an opportunity for stakeholders of the Society to imagine its future, including that of our building. It was therefore felt that carrying out these needed upgrades – from both a functional and an aesthetic point of view – would admirably complement the Society's 100th birthday.

The Namibia Scientific Society shares its Educational Mandate

Elizabeth McLaren

For the first time the Namibia Scientific Society participated in the annual Diplomatic International Food & Craft Bazaar, organized by the Association of Diplomatic Spouses of Namibia (ADS) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), on 18 May 2024. Hosted at the NUST Hotel School and open to the public, the bazaar saw more than 25 countries set up stalls presenting informa-



tional items and selling their respective national foods, accessories, and crafts. Various participating countries also presented music and cultural showpieces.

This annual bazaar allows Namibians to get a taste of the cultures and activities of other countries. With “Education – the passport to your future” as the theme of this year’s bazaar, the Namibia Scientific Society deemed it important to take part in the event as its mandate is centred around the collection and dissemination of scientific and historical information about Namibia. In support of the educational message the Society spread the word about its services, which include free public talks on scientific topics, its extensive reference library, and its publishing house, Kuiseb Publishers.

True to its slogan, “Science for Society”, the Society added to the bazaar’s festivities by enthusiastically engaging with attendees; exhibiting a spread of informational materials on its activities and working groups; selling some of its published books; and handing out children’s publications to interested young ones.

The Society also committed to donate a collection of books to NUST’s Eenhana Campus, according to their needs, with the handover to be organized in the near future.

While team members of the Society enjoy connecting at special events such as this bazaar, the Society remains open and accessible to anyone on weekdays at 110 Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek. Organizations and individuals can also sign up to become members of the Society, in person or online, for more benefits such as access to excursions and discounts on books.

There's Always Space for More: A look back at World Space Week 2024

Cristin Henckert

The annual World Space Week kicked off on 4 October 2024 and the Namibia Scientific Society (NSS), through its astronomy working group or Astro Group, had a hand in a few of the exciting events that took place. Observed from 4 to 10 October globally, World Space Week celebrates science and technology in the realms of space exploration by promoting space education and related outreach initiatives.

Namibia has always had an amazing night sky, thanks to its mostly cloudless nights and dry air which absorbs less light, allowing stars to be seen more brightly. In recent times, these night skies have been utilized all the more by astronomers, the country having seen a surge in astronomy-related activities. The mention of the High Energy Stereoscopic System (H.E.S.S.) and the Africa Millimetre Telescope (AMT), along with its mobile planetarium programme, are a case in point.

The NSS has been one of the key players in astronomical activities in Namibia, often hosting astronomy talks and stargazing evenings. In 2023 the NSS hosted joint activities with the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) for World Space Week, including a telescope evening held at the Mövenpick Hotel, Windhoek. This marked the start of a relationship with the NCRST that would lead to a five-year program regarding World Space Week.

First on the agenda for this year's World Space Week was the visit to the Cuno Hoffmeister Memorial Observatory on 4 October 2024, with twenty pupils from Suiderhof Primary School being granted the opportunity to see and experience the historic site. The official opening of World Space Week, hosted by the NCRST, took place on 7 October 2024, with representatives from several organizations having an interest in science and technology education meeting at the Mercure Hotel for presentations centred around World Space Week.



Board member Zandr  Duvenhage and Chairman Michael Backes together with student planetarium presenters during the World Space Week in Namibia (Photo: Zandr  Duvenhage)



Clyde Forster at the DHPS

The school events that followed were also a great success. The mobile planetarium team had the privilege of showing over 480 learners from two schools the wonders of our universe. Moreover, two members of the Astro Group presented talks at Pionierspark Primary School and Deutsche Höhere Privatschule Windhoek (DHPS), which resulted in 133 Namibian learners being exposed to astronomy.

The highlight of World Space Week was certainly the “Evening with the Telescopes” event on 10 October 2024. About 120 pupils, parents, and interested onlookers eagerly grav-

itated around our local astronomers as they aligned their telescopes on the Moon and Saturn. It was a delight to see so many scholars participate in the viewings. Even more exciting was the look of awe on people’s faces after they had just seen the rings of Saturn for the first time. It was safe to say that the general feeling that evening was one of wonder and gratitude as participants looked up at the starry expanse.

With a successful World Space Week 2024 in the rearview mirror, the question of what lies ahead may be posed. Given the success of the “Evening with the Stars”, the Astro Group aspires to host more of these events in the future, and the NCRST is strongly considering launching a Namibian Space Week that would run in addition to World Space Week. The Astro Group and NCRST are also jointly working on connecting with the International Space Station in the hopes of putting school learners in contact with an astronaut in space in real time!

These are just a few plans in the pipeline. However, each plan, initiative, and successful event brings the Astro Group, NCRST, and other relevant stakeholders closer to the mandate of promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among Namibian youth. The NSS extends its gratitude to all those who participated in World Space Week 2024. May we keep looking up!

Books published this year

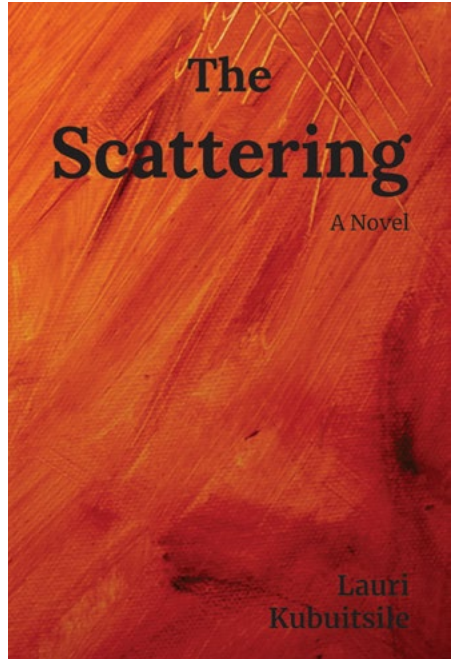
The Scattering A Novel by Lauri Kubuitsile

South-West Africa, 1904: When German colonial authorities issue an extermination order, the Herero are forced to flee into the desert and seek safety in British Bechuanaland. Tjipuka, a young Herero mother, escapes the massacre with her baby, but is captured and put to work in the death camps in Lüderitz. There she has to find the courage – and the will – to survive against all odds.

The Transvaal, 1899: Riette's nursing ambitions are crushed when she is forced into marriage with an older neighbour. When he is taken captive and their farm is set ablaze during the Second Anglo-Boer War, she and his daughter must face the horrors of the British concentration camps.

Against the backdrop of southern Africa's colonial wars at the dawn of the twentieth century, *The Scattering* traces the fates of two remarkable women whose paths cross after each has suffered the devastation and dislocation of war.

Moving and intimate, Kubuitsile's novel provides a fascinating glimpse into the indomitability of the human spirit.



English • 228 pages • ISBN 978-99945-76-91-3 • 120 x 190mm
Price: N\$290 • Price for members: N\$250

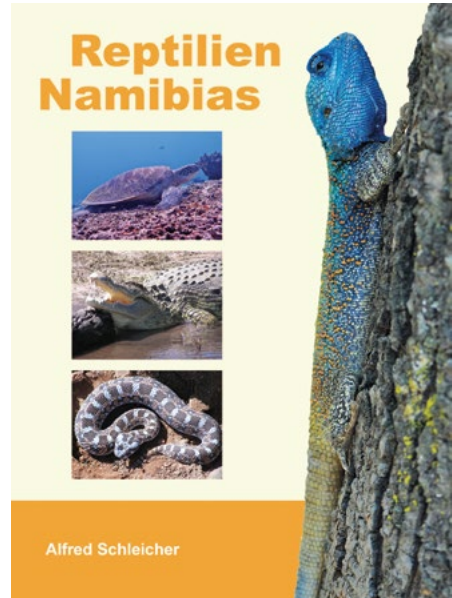
Reptilien Namibias überarbeitete Ausgabe von Alfred Schleicher

Namibia ist bekannt für seine große Artenvielfalt an Reptilien, seien es Schildkröten, Schlangen, Echsen oder Krokodile. Auf 272 Seiten mit 480 Farbfotos, Verbreitungskarten und einem Index informiert dieses Buch umfassend über die Verbreitung, Lebensgewohnheiten und Lebensräume, Ernährung und Fortpflanzung der vielfältigen Reptilien Namibias sowie über die Bedrohungen, denen sie ausgesetzt sind. Bei Giftschlangen informiert der Autor auch über die spezifischen Giftarten und was im Falle eines Schlangenbisses zu tun ist.

Ein Muss für jeden Haushalt und alle Reisenden in Namibia

Der Autor Alfred Schleicher ist vor nunmehr 30 Jahren von Deutschland nach Namibia ausgewandert. Seitdem betreibt die Familie ein Reise- und Fotosafariunternehmen. Die faszinierende Natur Afrikas mit ihrem unglaublichen Tierreichtum hat die Familie schon immer in ihren Bann gezogen. Von Kindesbeinen an sammelte der Autor Wissen über Reptilien mit besonderem Interesse an Schildkröten. Zahlreiche Feldbeobachtungen sowie die erfolgreiche Nachzucht gefährdeter einheimischer Schildkröten führten zu wertvollen wissenschaftlichen Daten und waren der Anstoß für dieses Buch. Alfred Schleicher leitet seit vielen Jahren die herpetologische Abteilung der Namibia Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft.

Deutsch • 276 Seiten • 480 Fotos & Karten • ISBN 978-99945-76-95-1
170 x 240 mm
Preis 380 N\$ • Preis für Mitglieder: 325 N\$

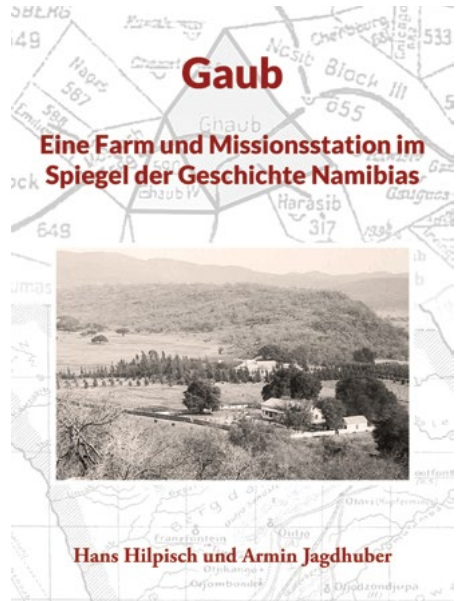


Gaub

Eine Farm und Missionsstation im Spiegel der Geschichte Namibias von Hans Hilpisch und Armin Jagdhuber

Mit diesem Buch wird die Geschichte der Missionsfarm Gaub (auch: Ghaub) beschrieben, die 1895 mit dem Zweck gegründet worden war, neben der Missionierung auch den Schutz der dort ansässigen Damara (Bergdama) und San (Buschleute) vor den Herero zu gewährleisten. Nur wenige Jahre später blühte Gaub wirtschaftlich auf und wurde unter Leitung des bekannten Missionars Dr. Vedder sogar Standort der „Gehülfschule“, um die Seelsorge im Land durch eingeborene Evangelisten zu verbessern. In dieser Doppelfunktion erreichte sie Vorbildcharakter und war in ganz Deutsch-Südwestafrika und darüber hinaus bekannt.

Mit den Verwerfungen, die durch den Kolonialkrieg mit den Herero, die beiden Weltkriege, die Weltwirtschaftskrise, Perioden schlechten Wetters und andere Gründe verursacht wurden, trat im Laufe der Jahrzehnte der Kampf um das wirtschaftliche Überleben der Farm immer mehr in den Vordergrund. Schließlich wurde das große Anwesen 1996 verkauft und ist heute eine Lodge in privaten Händen mit einer angeschlossenen Rinder- und Gemüsefarm, die noch immer geprägt ist von ihrer bald 130 Jahre langen Geschichte.

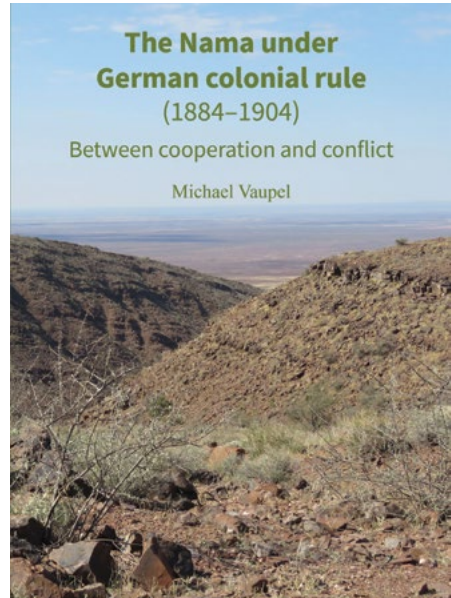


Deutsch • 304 Seiten • Fotos & Karten • ISBN 978-99945-76-98-2
148 x 210 mm
Preis 390 N\$ • Preis für Mitglieder: 330 N\$

**The Nama under German colonial rule
(1884–1904)**
Between cooperation and conflict
by Michael Vaupel

During the period 1884–1904 in German South West Africa, Hendrik Witbooi and Theodor Leutwein were the central figures on the Nama and the German side respectively. They fought alongside each other, and they fought against each other – and respected each other.

What was the general situation between Nama and Germans in German South West Africa at that time? This book examines this question on several levels such as the economy, the military, personal contacts and jurisdiction – with some surprising results.



English • 104 pages • ISBN 978-99945-76-96-8 • 148 x 210mm
Price: N\$280 • Price for members: N\$240

Reprint of *The Scattering* released by the Namibia Scientific Society

Elizabeth McLaren



Keamogetsi Molapong, Lauri Kubuitsile and Sylvia Schlettwein

The Namibia Scientific Society recently launched the reprint of *The Scattering*, a work of fiction by Motswana writer, Lauri Kubuitsile, and produced by the Society's publishing house, Kuseib Publishers. The launch event included a music performance by Kubuitsile's daughter, Amanda; a reading from the novel by the author; and a book-signing opportunity. The book was also discussed by a panel featuring Kubuitsile and accomplished Namibian storytellers, Sylvia Schlettwein and Keamogetsi Molapong.

In her opening remarks Schlettwein shared the pride of Kuseib Publishers in being selected by Kubuitsile for the reprint. She added that with the novel's heart being in Namibia, they had brought *The Scattering* home with this second launch.

A visit to Lüderitz, a conversation about Shark Island, and a chance encounter in Nairobi are just some of the events that led to the development of Kubuitsile's novel. Following two women, Tjipuka and Riette, through their experiences of colonial war in southern Africa, the book explores resilience in the face of agony.

To mark the reprint of *The Scattering*, Kubuitsile answered a few questions about her historical novel.

Q: What inspired you to take on this subject matter?

A: Before I wrote *The Scattering* I was mostly writing children's books, and genre mystery and romance, and I really had no intention of taking on something serious like historical fiction. One year we went to Lüderitz for a family camping trip and the next year I went to the Cape Town Book Fair where I spoke to the late Namibian author, Jane Katjavivi, about that trip and her book, *Undisciplined Heart*. She was the one who actually told me what Shark



Lauri Kubuitsile,

Island was and I felt bad for not knowing this history as a citizen of southern Africa. After I got back from the book fair I started researching for myself and forming a story in my head.

As I started to do the research, there was more information on Riette's side, the Second Anglo-Boer War, but less on the German-Herero War, so I thought I couldn't do this book and it stayed in the back of my mind. Around this time, I went to Nairobi for the Storymoja Festival, where I befriended a man who asked me what

I was working on. I said that I was working on this book, but I couldn't find research on the German-Herero War, and, can you imagine, he could recommend academic resources! When I got back to Botswana I went to some archives and, once I had the research and the story was forming, I thought I could do this. I, actually, then, wrote three historical novels in a row, the last one being unpublished.

Q: Given the heavy content in the novel, what was the most rewarding part of writing it?

A: True, it is hard stuff. One thing I think is important is that it's really about the two women and how war affected them and changed their lives. In a lot of historical records women are absent, so I think historical fiction is a way that we can make those connections. Writer Hilary Mantel did a series of lectures about how historical fiction fills in the gaps in historical records, which were often written by the "bosses". They decided what went into historical record and what did not.

It was also important to show that women have agency. If that's not in the records, then maybe we have an obligation to write it in historical fiction.

Q: With this being a reprint, what responses have you received from readers since the novel's first publication?

A: Some have said that it is hard to read, because it is sad. There was a Herero librarian who said that he made sure his family members had read it. Another young Herero lady had shared that she did not know this history. It was not my intention for the book to have an educational purpose, but it has happened. It depends, though. Initially, when the book came out in 2016, some said that maybe I wasn't the person who was supposed to write this; but in fiction we all



A reading from the novel by the author, Lauri Kubuitsile



Music performance by Kubuitsile's daughter, Amanda

write other people's stories, so I think that kind of thinking has sort of fallen away.

The book was also recommended by The Walter Scott Prize, and winning at the Sharjah International Book Fair in Dubai was big. Since then, more African writers have become involved in that book fair so I am proud to have been one of the first.

Q: What do the main characters mean to you?

A: Tjipuka is important, because I believe she is an amazing woman with such resilience. She keeps getting back up. I also get tired of some of the social descriptions of motherhood, so I respect her for the choices she makes regarding her child in the end.

When Riette has her speech about war, that's basically me talking. I think that war is a human failure, always, and while men start the wars, women clean them up.

Q: After first publishing with Penguin, what made you opt for a relatively smaller publisher for the reprint?

A: In general, for trade publishing, I've decided not to use big international publishers operating in South Africa any more. It's different for my educational publishing, but I prefer smaller publishers in the region for my trade fiction. It's important that orders are filled, especially in countries outside of South Africa, like Namibia and Botswana. I also know Kuiseb Publishers and have good connections with them.

Report on the Basson Insect Collection

John Irish, Research Associate, National Museum of Namibia & Hileni Shivolo, Entomologist, National Museum of Namibia

An insect collection accumulated by P.A. Basson was donated to the Namibia Scientific Society in late 2023. The Society asked one of us (JI) to assess the material, which was found to be scientifically valuable and worthy of preservation. Because the Society does not have the facilities or expertise, a conditional agreement was reached facilitating further study and preservation of the material by the National Museum of Namibia. Since then we have been processing the material, and report here on initial identifications. Sadly, while we were doing this, the collector passed away.

Dr Pieter Arnoldus Basson (1931–2024) was a qualified veterinarian who grew up on a farm in the Grootfontein district, and worked for many years as State Veterinarian in Namibia. Affectionately known as ‘Dok Piet’, he investigated numerous parasites, diseases, and poisonous plants affecting both livestock and wildlife. He was an exceptional researcher, and the author or co-author of more than 80 scientific papers. Among his most important discoveries was the identification of the causal agent of the cattle disease gedoelstiasis, a.k.a. ‘uitpeuloog’ (Basson, 1962). He was the first collector of numerous parasites, some of which were named after him, including:

- *Ratemia bassoni* Fiedler & Stampa 1958, a louse of zebras.
- *Oestrus bassoni* Zumpt 1961, a nasal bot fly of different antelopes.
- *Parafilaria bassoni* Ortlepp 1962, an eye-infecting parasitic nematode of springbok.
- *Loxanoetus bassoni* Fain 1970, an ear mite of elephants.

He also co-described a nasal bot fly of wildebeest: *Oestrus dubitatus* Basson & Zumpt 1969.

After his retirement in 1996 he moved to farm Varianto near Tsumeb. The current insect collection was started there and consists mostly of material from



Varianto and surroundings. He also allowed other entomologists to collect on Varianto, who in turn described new species found there, including:

Cysteochile bassoni Deckert & Göllner-Scheiding 2006, a lace bug.

The collection as donated to the NSS covers a wide variety of insects and other arthropods, and is especially valuable for the host plant notes that accompany many specimens. Following the high level identifications reported on here, more detailed species identifications are expected to take many more years. There is no doubt that the collection still holds much potential interest.

A complete list of the collection can be found on our website.

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The Namibia Scientific Society's Library – A Review of the year

Ruth Moldzio

After 99 years of existence the Namibia Scientific Society's reference library proves to be ever more in demand for research on various Namibia related topics and for scientific and historical information related to Namibia.

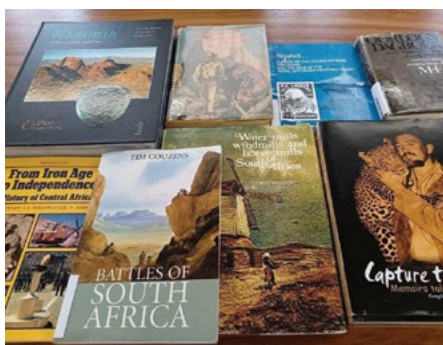
Not only can we gratefully report a steady expansion of our collections across various fields, we have also received a high volume of requests for information and assistance from individuals, groups, schools, and other institutions in their research pursuits.

Thanks to the adaptable, integrated library system (ILS), Koha, collections of all kinds could and can in future be added to our library's database as well as allowing online access from all over the world. The setting up of our own internal Koha server not only guarantees access, but has also enabled us to back up our data and run our library systems more smoothly. The database is continuously updated with the arrival of new books and resources, while bigger collections of archive material are processed as quickly as possible. The addition of a new slide scanner in November 2024 will allow further top-quality digitizing of slides.

Other successes during the year included our book flea market, where members of the public could freely take their pick of books donated to the Society over the years. Thereafter, some of the remaining books were donated to the Little Library Concept and Umbrella Initiatives, which collects books for other NGOs. The Lions Club collected the last of the books which had not yet found a new home. We extend our gratitude to all these organizations for distributing these books in their respective capacities and hope that a lot of people now have a chance to put their noses into the pages of a book.

We sincerely thank all the generous members and friends who thought to bring their books, periodicals, pictures, and maps to our library. Tremendous care is taken in protecting these materials as well as in processing and cataloguing them as quickly as possible – as our donors would notice.

The donation of every single publication, picture, and map is highly appreciated, as these enrich our library resources year after year, allowing accessibility to much-sought information.



STEAM Partnership Project Report

Ndaudika Mulundileni

Introduction

The Namibia Scientific Society in partnership with ExxonMobil and Mindsin-action resumed and facilitated the implementation of the STEAM Partnership Project in 2024, for the third consecutive year. The STEAM partnership project aims to expose Namibian learners to STEAM Educational activities, through hands-on, integrated, and dynamic modules on Robotics, Coding, Electronics, and Prototyping, and has reached well over 500 children thus far. The need for Coding and Robotics exposure is driven by the necessity to equip learners with skills that align with the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Project Overview

The STEAM Partnership Project this year targeted 160 learners across the Kunene, Khomas, Okavango East, and !Karas regions. The STEAM boot camps introduced students to the fundamentals of robotics, covering mechanics and the basics of computer programming to manage sensor inputs and motor outputs. By acquiring these skills, learners are equipped to engage in problem-solving and creative thinking. The hands-on, immersive nature of these boot camps ensures that students not only understand the theory behind robotics and coding but also gain practical experience.



Implementation and Methodology

The project was rolled out through targeted STEAM Boot Camps in each region, featuring a structured curriculum that balanced theory with practical application. A problem-based approach encouraged students to apply critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative skills, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the STEAM fields. The Boot Camp Modules were not structured coherently, allowing scholars, that might have missed a class to still follow and understand the rest of the classes.



The project also implemented a feedback mechanism where educators and facilitators continuously assessed the learners' progress, identifying areas of improvement to refine future boot camps.

Outcomes and Achievements

Initially targeting 160 students, the STEAM Partnership Project surpassed expectations, enlisting a total of 240 students and demonstrating both its scalability and popularity. The project envisaged to engage 40 students from each of the regions. While in the Kunene, Khomas, and Okavango East regions an average attendance rate of 80% was achieved, a remarkable 120 students from the !Karas region attended all of the modules offered. This expansion in this region was made possible through the support and meticulous organization of the Oranjemund Private School, which took it upon themselves to include many other local schools in the community. Once again it was evident how the project provided an environment where students could explore and realize their potential as future innovators and problem-solvers, by fostering critical thinking and promoting hands-on learning.

Challenges and Recommendations



While some schools demonstrated eager and absolutely reliable assistance with these two-week-long boot camps, other schools showed a much lower level of support, thus resulting in unorganized venues, time-consuming interruptions and in lower attendance. It would be beneficial to develop a system to address attendance chal-

lenges by improving communication with learners and guardians regarding the importance of consistent participation. Certain regions also faced limitations in access to essential infrastructure, such as adequate desks, and suitable classroom spaces, which required adaptations in curriculum delivery. By establishing a mechanism to understand and address the root causes of absenteeism learners could be supported in maintaining continuity, not only in these boot camps, but also in their entire education.

While the boot camp format provided an intensive learning experience, its limited duration makes in-depth knowledge impossible. We thus aim to consider introducing follow-up sessions in the possible next phase of the project.

To foster consistent support and engagement from all participating schools, it is envisaged to involve teachers more actively in the boot camps. This could include offering teachers training on STEAM topics and methods for integrating it into their regular curriculum, thereby enhancing both the immediate impact and long-term value of the program.

Conclusion

The partnership between the Namibia Scientific Society, ExxonMobil, and Mindsinaction has once again successfully provided many learners the opportunity to gain an insight into STEAM education, fostering a generation that is better prepared to meet future technological and societal challenges.

The STEAM Partnership Project has proven to be a valuable initiative in advancing STEAM education in all regions of Namibia, reaching well beyond its original goals, and it is the hope that many more children can be reached in the near future.

Events 2024

- 27.02.2024 Prof. Rob Fender: *Black hole astrophysics with a millimetre telescope in Namibia*
- 29.02.2024 Bird Club talk, Dr Lucy Kemp: *Southern Ground Hornbill - Endangered large terrestrial bird*
- 14.03.2024 Prof. Geoffrey Manley: *Understanding the evolution and function of ears, including our own*
- 26.03.2024 Michael Falser, Technical University of Munich: *From Windhoek and Daressalam to Tsingtau and Samoa – German Colonial Building Cultures in a Global Perspective – A Critical Evaluation of Primary Sources*
- 27.03.2024 NEWS talk, Ndelimone Ipinge & John Pallett: *EIA Tracker – Making EIA info more accessible*
- 09.04.2024 Enno Aufderheide: *Alexander von Humboldt: Fidget, Humanist and Scientist*
- 15.04.2024 Autism Association Namibia in collaboration with NSS: Sybille Lindner: *Neurodiversity: Colourful people pretending to be normal*
- 24.04.2024 Namibia Bird Club AGM and talk by Linda van den Heever: *Lead poisoning in southern Africa's Cape and White-backed Vultures*
- 25.04.2024 NEWS talk: Dr John Yabe: *Pollution from lead mines – Kabwe (Zambia) and mining towns in Namibia*
- 30.04.2024 Simon van der Lingen: *Moons of our Solar System*
- 14.05.2024 Book Launch *The Scattering* with author Lauri Kubuitsile
- 21.–23.05.24 Book Flea Market
- 06.06.2024 Karl Hartmann: *Sea Level Rise - is my coastal property safe?*
- 03.07.2024 Stephanie Grosvenor and Kirsten Pearse: *Beyond Symptoms: Four Key Principles to Optimise Your Health at Any Age*
- 09.07.2024 George Leader: *Archaeology in the Sand Sea: Updates on research and dating of the sites south of Gobabeb*
- 11.07.2024 Dr Motheo Koitsiwe: *African Indigenous astronomy and calendar making*
- 17.07.2024 Namibia Bird Club: Jolanda Veldhuis & Ruben Fijn: *The Your Tern Project - From science to nature conservation*
- 25.07.2024 Prof. William Welsh: *Astrobiology: Life in the Universe*
- 22.08.2024 Prof. Sera Markoff: *Observing the unobservable: a black hole primer*
- 29.09.2024 NEWS talk: Ruben Angala: *Do Pangolins have a future?*
- 17.09.2024 Book launch: The Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Dr Willem Odendaal and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung invite to the launch of the Basel Namibia Studies Series' latest title: *"Beggars on our*

- own land ...” Tsumeb v Government of the Republic of Namibia and its Implications for Ancestral Land Claims in Namibia*
- 22.10.2024 Book launch: Hans Hilpisch & Armin Jagdhuber: *Gaub - Eine Farm und Missionsstation im Spiegel der Geschichte Namibias*

Excursions

- 30.05.–09.06.2024 NWG bus-tour: The fascinating north-west of Namibia
01.–09.2024 Between Lüderitz and Walvis Bay – rough coast, shipwrecks and unequaled nature
- 04.–10.10.2024 World Space Week: Stargazing – A night with telescopes

Others

- 18.05.2024 International Food & Craft Bazar 2024
09.07.2024 School visits Namiba Scientific Society

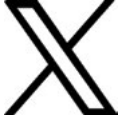
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The Namibia Scientific Society has created a WhatsApp Channel. This will only be used to inform about upcoming events at the Society. To join, please scan the QR-code.



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Corporate Members/Korporative Mitglieder

Corporate Membership was introduced for businesses and institutions wanting to support the Namibia Scientific Society in its mission to promote education, scientific research and public awareness with regard to current and cultural issues in Namibia. Credit is given to the following businesses:





**The Board and Team of Namibia
Scientific Society wish all members
and friends a Merry Christmas
and a prosperous New Year!**

**The Namibia Scientific Society will
close on Tuesday, 24th December
2024 at 13h00 and reopen on
Wednesday, 15th January 2025.**



**Namibia
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Society**

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