

Authors/Contributors to this document amongst others and in no particular order Tony Robertson, Robert Shadforth, Andre Brummer, Paulo Narcisi, Andy Chase, Wynand Pretorius, Jan Joubert, Herbie Hellstrom, Piet Steenkamp, Hierner Dillman, Pieter Hesingla

For members of www.tracks4africa.com

Date 2006.05.23

1. NOT KNOWING that this is a Malaria area and that there different types, some of which can kill you (within hours) if not promptly treated. There are only three rules for malaria:

- Don't let the little beasts bite you
- Don't let the little beasts bite you
- Don't let the little beasts bite you

Prior to visiting a Malaria area, consult your Doctor, then strictly adhere to the agreed action plan. During and after visiting treat any Flu like symptoms as the onset of a malaria attack and treat accordingly.

T4A Medical Advisor and expert on Malaria Paolo Narcisi
<mailto:narcisi@tin.it>

2. NOT KNOWING that daytime temperatures in these parts of Namibia can exceed 60 degrees Celsius.. that in case something goes wrong with the car you must carry enough drinking water.
 - To carry enough water is far more important than to carry enough fuel.
3. NOT KNOWING that without good maps and a good understanding of how to use them it is easy to get lost, run out of fuel and die of thirst or starvation (May 2003).
4. NOT KNOWING that driving on soft sand (riverbeds) requires lowering tyre pressure to 50% normal pressure... and as the day gets hotter, the sand gets softer, your speed is slower and your fuel consumption is higher.
5. NOT KNOWING that driving over terrain with sharp rocks and stones requires increasing tyre pressure to 150% normal pressure.. and it is always better to drive very slowly directly over these rocks instead of trying to avoid them.. because damage happens when the sidewalls of your tyre (only a few mm thick) rides up against a knife edged rock. Whereas the tread of a tyre is thicker and built to deal with these rocks.

So.. what is the optimum tyre pressure then ?.. There is no hard and fast rule. Every vehicle – load-tyre combination is different. Go and find out yourself.. but DO NOT go without a good MANUAL AIR PUMP !!!!!!! .. and DO NOT go without the tools and the know-how to fix a tyre and repair it on the spot... and DO NOT go with at least two spare wheels and a puncture repair kit.
6. NOT KNOWING.. and travelling in this area with TRAILER.. it will end up as yet another trailer wreck at Fort Sesfontein because you do NOT travel in Kaokoland/Damaraland with trailer.. not even the latest expensive 'off road' designs. Yes a lucky few have managed, but almost certain it wont be you!
7. NOT KNOWING why SMOKING near the Welwitchia plants is a NO-NO.. because a cigarette butt (stompie) thrown on or near these plants will burn down 10,000 years of growth.
8. NOT KNOWING.. That when you encounter badly corrugated roads, you DO NOT try to skirt around on the sides of the roads.. making it wider and wider == VEHICLE TRACK POLLUTION. The desert roads of Namibia are the worst example of this form of pollution....Don't make it worse.

9. NOT KNOWING the desert elephant found in riverbeds is NOT the same as their easy-going, used to cars and people, cousins in Chobe and Kruger. These guys have damaged vehicles and killed tourists and they will do so again.

The desert elephant of Namibia has a comfort zone of 500m (some even more) and the dry riverbeds belong to them and they don't like to be disturbed, not by rhino and least of all by the smell of diesel fumes and hot oil. Drive slowly and be alert. They can hear you coming but you must see them first and well in advance. An elephant encounter requires patience more than skill because these lords of the desert may take a long time to make their way past you and often they don't. Elephants have killed people in the riverbeds of Namibia and they will kill again. Experience is no guarantee for safety. There is legislation on the table to prohibit driving in the dry riverbeds.

Should the worst happen..... DO NOT get out the car..... rather take care of the things inside that can break or things that can hurt you when the car goes upside down.. the digital, the music CD's, the laptop, the coolbox, the beers !!!.. and DO NOT travel here without 5lt of engine oil.

10. NOT KNOWING...that Lions have been re-introduced and have returned to all the major coastal rivers of Damaraland and Kaokoveld".

When walking alone along the river or at night, elephants are not the only danger to look out for, especially the kids. This applies from the Ugab right up to the Hoarusib.

11. NOT KNOWING ...that the nice camping spot at Ovivero Dam (S17.59499 E12.89767)..is the drinking place for Himba cattle.. BUT... Himba cattle have adopted to feed as far as 35km away from water and only return to drink every second day.. sometimes third day. The return to water happens at night fall, sometimes much later.. over the last 5km they smell water and it makes them crazy, it becomes a stampede.. all over and through any camp of unsuspected campers. In June 2003, R 40,000 damage was done to a brand new 4WD. and some very (VERY) lucky travellers lived to tell the tale.
12. NOT KNOWING.. and camping on the nice soft riverbed sand.. It seldom or never rains here.. BUT thunder showers 120km inland.. and sometimes it is a wall of water.. Washing away the car, the trailer, the tents and the children. (Check the flow of these rivers on the T4A map and check for rain clouds on the distant horizon as well as flashes of lightning in these catchments areas)
13. NOT KNOWING.. that the water at "Gai-As Fountains" S20.78188 E14.07544 and S20.76742 E14.01982 is the only drinking place in many kilometres for mother Rhino and her baby. If you camp here under the only shade tree near the waterhole, Mother Rhino wont go to the water and baby rhino wont drink and it wont survive the long walk to the next drinking source. You will have caused the Baby Rhino's death... end of story.
14. NOT KNOWING .. and camping near or visiting Holy places of the Himba people. See Mt Ondua at S17.52381 E12.46149 and Mt Otjise at S18.76542 E13.74495 ...do this and you show disrespect to the Himba people.
15. NOT KNOWING .. and driving through villages and throwing sweets for the children..not only do you cause teeth to rot, but later if another vehicle does NOT hand out sweets the children start to throw stones at the cars.
16. NOT KNOWING .. and driving through long dry grass, the grass collects underneath the car around the exhaust pipe. In a short time it will catch fire and your vehicle will burn out. Where the grass is long, stop to check for grass collecting near or on the exhaust. This risk is higher when you drive petrol driven car because exhaust temperatures is much higher.

17. NOT KNOWING .. and driving off-track..on the pebble desert plains in Koakoland/Damaraland is the worst example of 'VEHICLE TRACK POLLUTION' in Southern Africa. A new vehicle track will be visible for the next 600 years because that is the time required for the desert winds to wipe out these tracks.
 - PLEASE STAY ON THE EXISTING TRACKS/ROADS. DO NOT MAKE NEW ONES.
18. NOT KNOWING.. that it is not a good idea to swim and cool down a bit in the Cunene river.. because there are crocodiles and one is certainly hungry. (Nov 2002 at White Sands S17.31068 E13.79421)
19. NOT KNOWING.. and driving at normal speeds on the main tar roads of Northern Namibia, which are NOT fenced and donkeys, goats and cattle are everywhere.. also on these road. Cattle strikes is a common phenomena. If it happens and your car can still go.. then go.. because the rule of Africa is different.. Here you will pay for losses of the farmer.. and you will pay on the spot.
20. NOT KNOWING.. and stopping to do some shopping at the main centre of Oshakati at S17.78545 E15.70738 . Petty crime or 'botstotsos' as the locals calls them .. have perfected the art of stealing. These guys are not criminals.. they are magicians.. and true masters of the art.. and they have written contracts with your insurance broker. They will not break into your un-attended car.. they take your things while you sit in the car watching them doing it.

PROBLEM = NOT KNOWING

SOLUTION = INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION

21. Obtain and study as much INFORMATION as possible on this area relating to issues of SAFETY, LEGISLATION, TRAVEL PERMITS, COMMERCIAL TOURISM and ENVIRONMENT.
22. It is NOT necessary for a permit to travel in Kaokoland/Damaraland but we recommend you enquire with the Directorate of Environment and Tourism. Offices in Windhoek S22.53686 E17.07638, Walvis Bay S22.94508 E14.50506, Swakopmund S22.67853 E14.52382 and Katima Mulilo S17.48912 E24.30418
23. A SATELLITE PHONE IS A MUST.. especially when travelling here alone and for the first time.
24. You may want to use sat-phone and email your daily position coordinate to <mailto:newdata@tracks4africa.co.za>
25. Please arrange for vehicle recovery before your trip with:
 - Braam Ellis (T4A member) Northern Auto Repairs, Oshakati S17.77107 E15.69142). Tel 09264 81 127 3836 <mailto:nar@iway.na>
 - Or
 - Lars Falkenberg. Kamanjab S19.62330 E14.84302, Tel 09264 67 330104 or 09264 81 283 2420 <mailto:falkuni@iway.na>
26. Get the latest T4A Map Pro Namibia (GPS map for Garmin receivers). The map shows road conditions (below). For trip planning use following average speeds:
 - Tar 80km/hr
 - Gravel 65km/hr
 - Off road 20km/hr
 - Not recommended 10km/hr
 - Dangerous/Extremely dangerous 0km/hr

27. Take note of the working of the T4A map.

ftp://ftp.tracks4africa.com/reading/zoom_levels.gif (417kb)

28. Get the T4A paper maps

Hotlink to map is not working.. sorry

Take note these are DRAFT maps and the data is more than 1 year old..
enquire with info@tracks4africa.co.za as there may be newer versions of
these maps.

wouter brand
tracks4africa