

14 July. (From Angola Diaries, Mandy Lebedes)



We had to leave
the spring tide
most of our
the last minute
This day was due



camp very early to ensure that we caught
for the dune crossing. We had all done
packing the night before so we just did
things and left camp just after sunrise.
to be the most spectacular of the whole

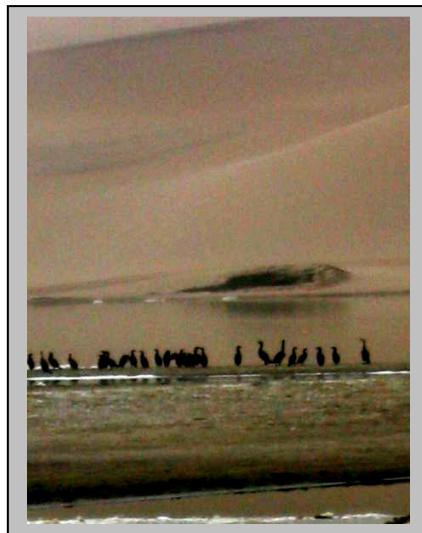
trip. The track took us along the coastline between the dunes and the sea. Many times the track was only wide enough for the car. It is magnificent and one became overwhelmed with photographic opportunities. The dunes changed in hue and vegetation. Eventually on reaching Baia De Tigres it was even more spectacular. This had a little island offshore and there was an inland salt-water lake to the left of the track. The bird life and nature was spectacular. Flamingos in their hues of pink flanked the lake while huge pelicans basked next to the sea. There were so many birds did not know where to look first. Huge flocks of cormorants took off from the water and flew in formation. Seals were playing in the water and fish were visible in the waves. It was an unspoiled nature's paradise. Our only hope was that with the influx of tourists it would not spoil this beautiful stretch of earth.

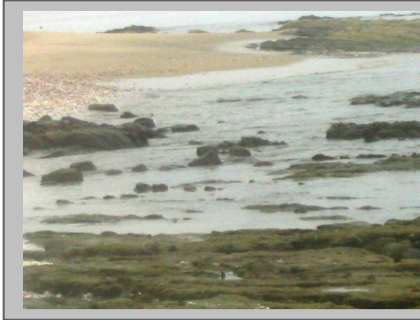
However here is an important cautionary:

We were very lucky not to encounter any difficulties along this stretch. It is very hazardous driving and with only a short window period of an hour of spring low tide to make the crossing, it poses huge threats for even the most experienced drivers.

There were huge piles of shells. Shells and crabs were bigger than we had ever seen. There were also huge beds of muscles and clams.

Unfortunately the driving was hazardous, as the spring tide provided a short crossing time and our time was limited.





FLAMINGOES

Breed colonially, typically in remote inhospitable sites. Nests are packed close together consisting of a turret of mud topped by a shallow cup in which a single egg is laid. They are monogamous and share nest building, incubation and caring for the young

PELICANS

Only two species breed at a handful of sites in southern Africa, mainly in trees and flood plains. They build flat nests of sticks and other plant material in which two eggs are laid. Sibling aggression usually results in the death of the second hatched chick

I would have liked to have spent many days photographing all I saw and soaking up the peace and tranquility. It was certainly something I will remember all my life.

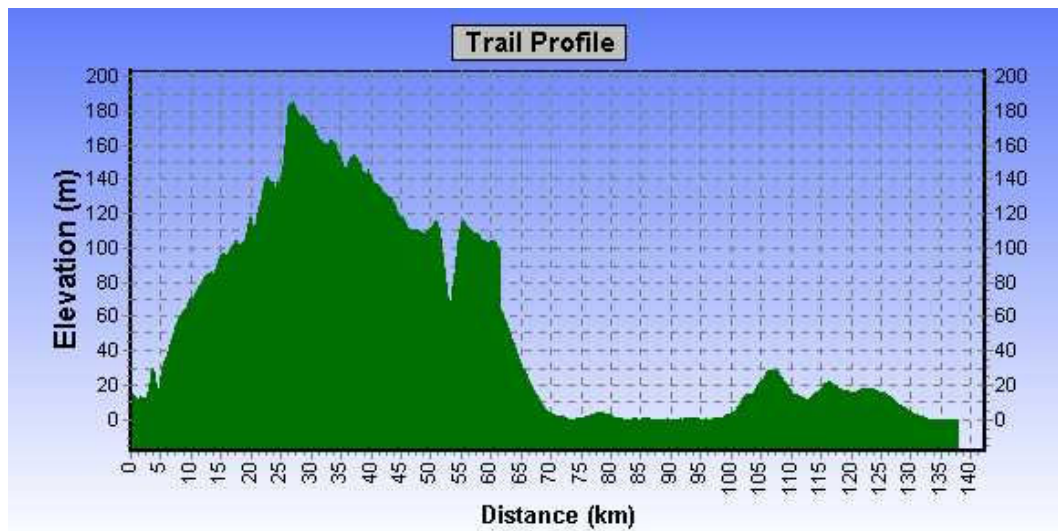
We finally reached a more open stretch of beach and secure in the knowledge that we could not be hemmed in by the sea again, we set camp for the night.

Driving statistics for this section:

Day	Date	Distance	Ave Speed	Time	Max Spd	Ascend	Descend	Min Alt	Max Alt	Fug Dist
7	13-Jul-03	138	31.8	04:20	80	>347	>366	0	185	138

Distance is the GPS measured distance for the section (in Km). Ave Speed is the average speed over the whole section (in Km/h), Max speed is the maximum speed achieved for this section (km/h). Time is the total driving time (not total travel time; it excludes stopped time) in Hours:Minutes. Ascend and Descend is the total altitude gain and total altitude loss (in metres) for this section. *For this day these figures are based on DTEM (Digital Terrain Elevation Model) data.* Min Alt and Max Alt is the lowest and highest altitude reached for this section (in meters). All this data is based on GPS measurements. The Fugawi distance represents the track distance also recorded using GPS input.

The following shows the track profile over this section (altitude in metres, distance in kilometres). The green sections show elevation data from the US military Digital Terrain Elevation Model (DTEM) (used because of loss of GPS data).



Track Description:

First section from Flamingo lodge to tar road is deep sand as mentioned before; see photos. Tar road to Tombwa is reasonable with some potholes. From Tombwa South track is very difficult to find and covers featureless terrain; see photo. GPS and map is necessary because there are multiple faint tracks. Area covers sand, gravel like sand but is hard enough for driving with lowered tyre pressures. Beach section is very soft sand, almost powdery soft just above high tide mark.



DAY 8: Tombwa to Baia dos Tigros, 2003-07-14 (Johan Strümpfer)

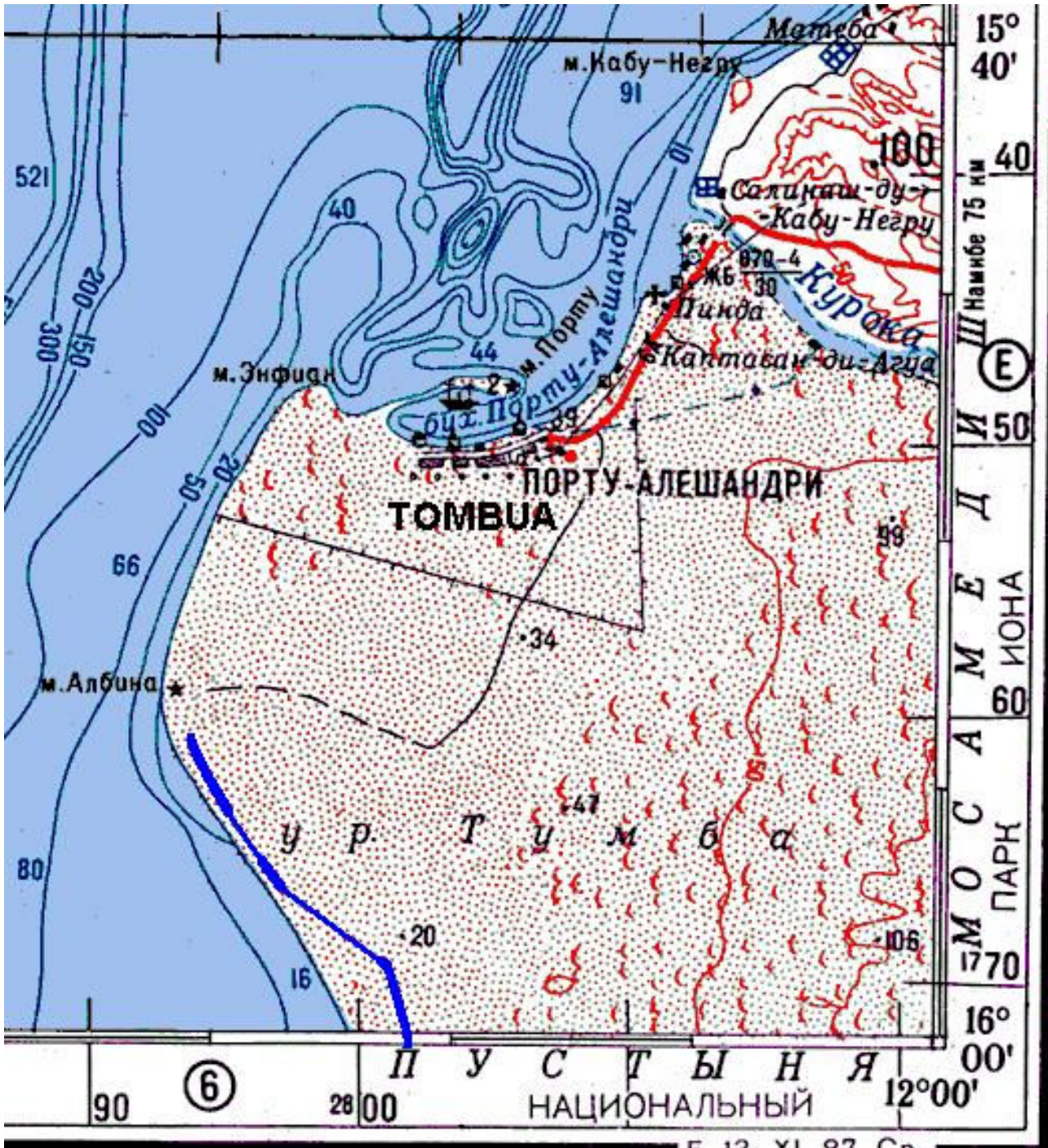


Overall map showing track in blue. Map is 1:25000000 scale of South Western corner of Angola.

Picture on the right is about 5 km from the start of the day's track.

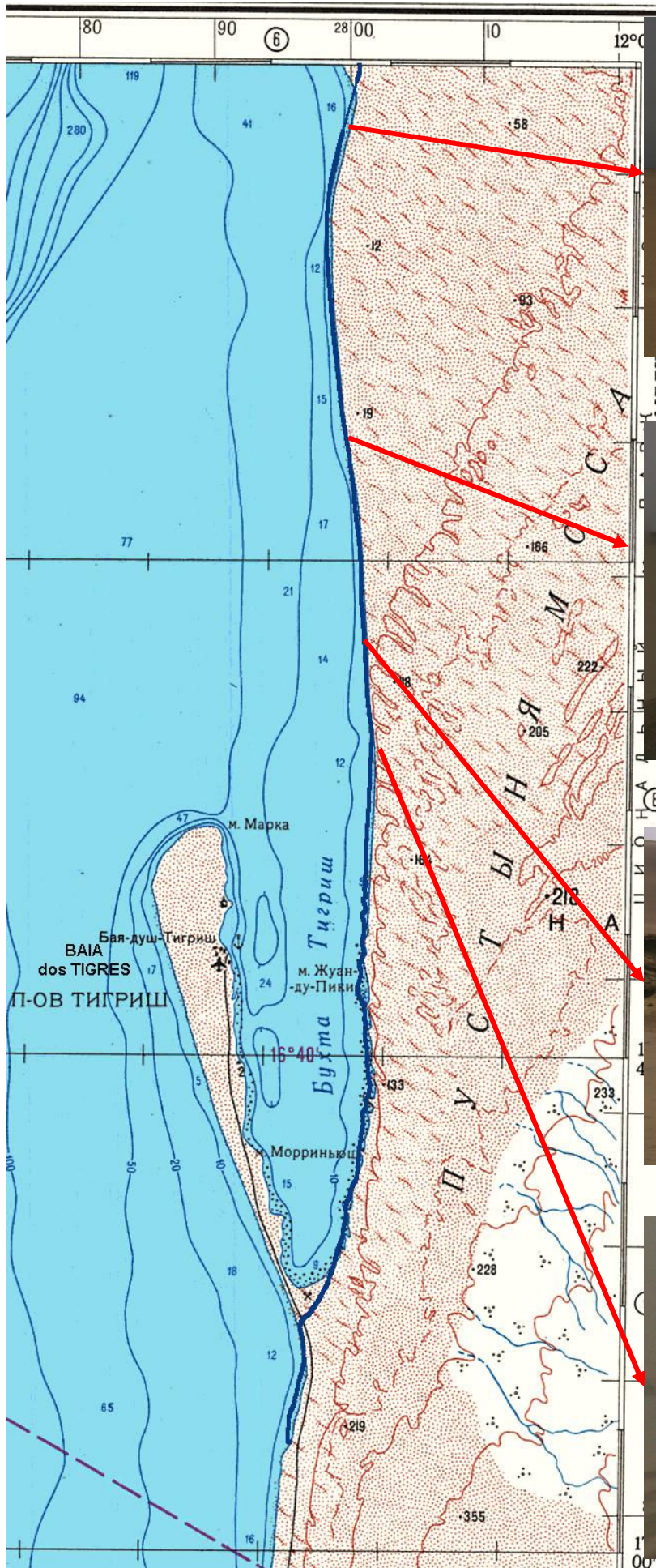
Detail track plot in blue below.

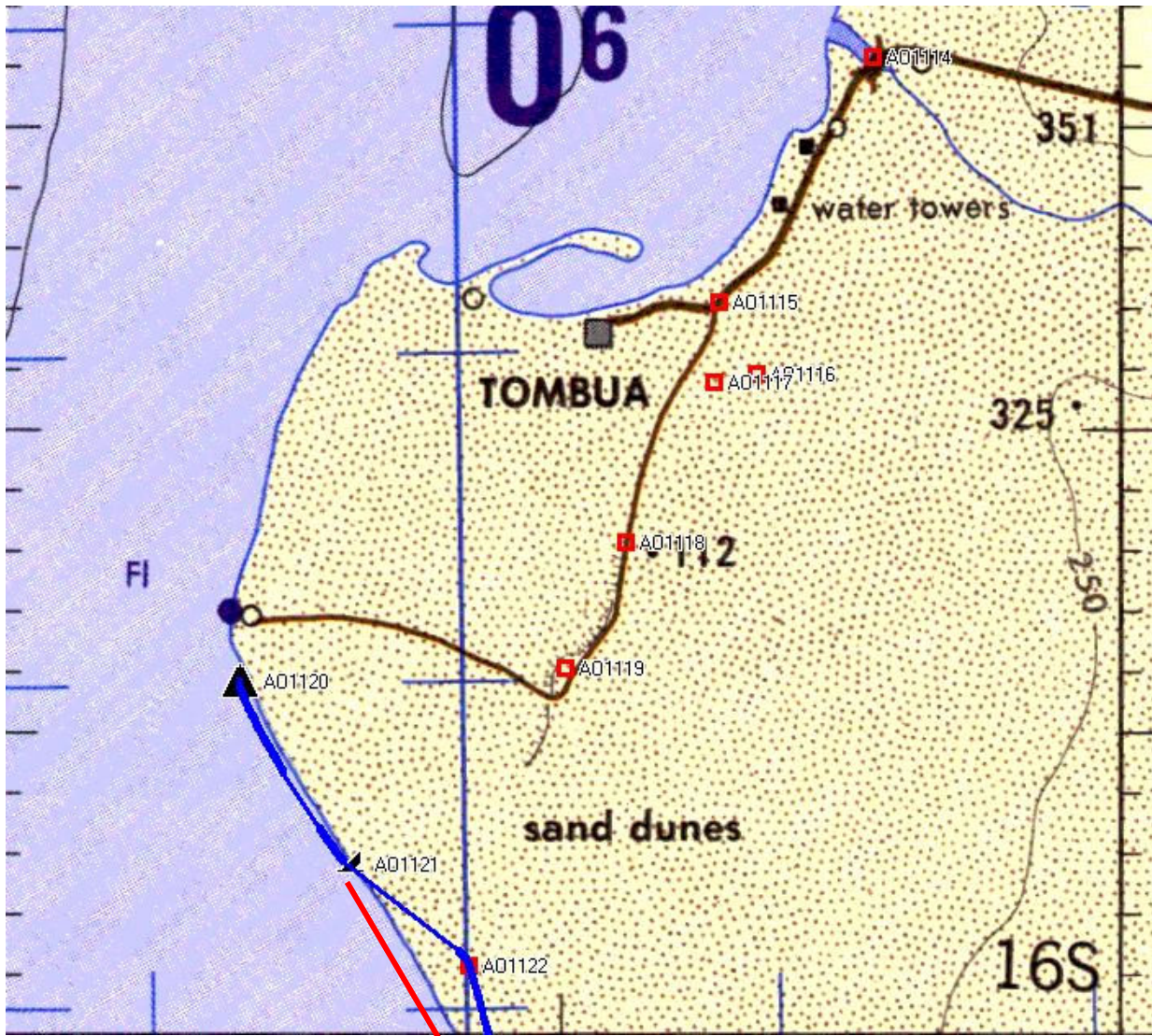




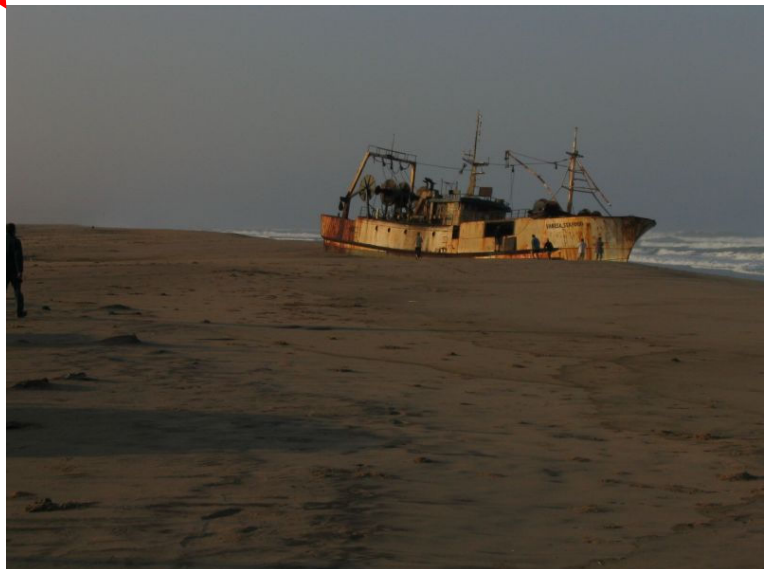
Deep sand characterized this whole section. Driving at the rear of 7 vehicles and trying to stick to preceding tracks made going difficult at times.

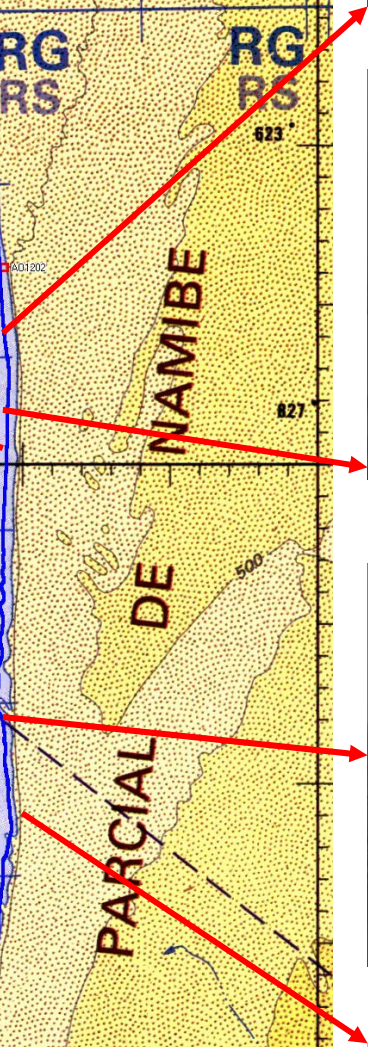
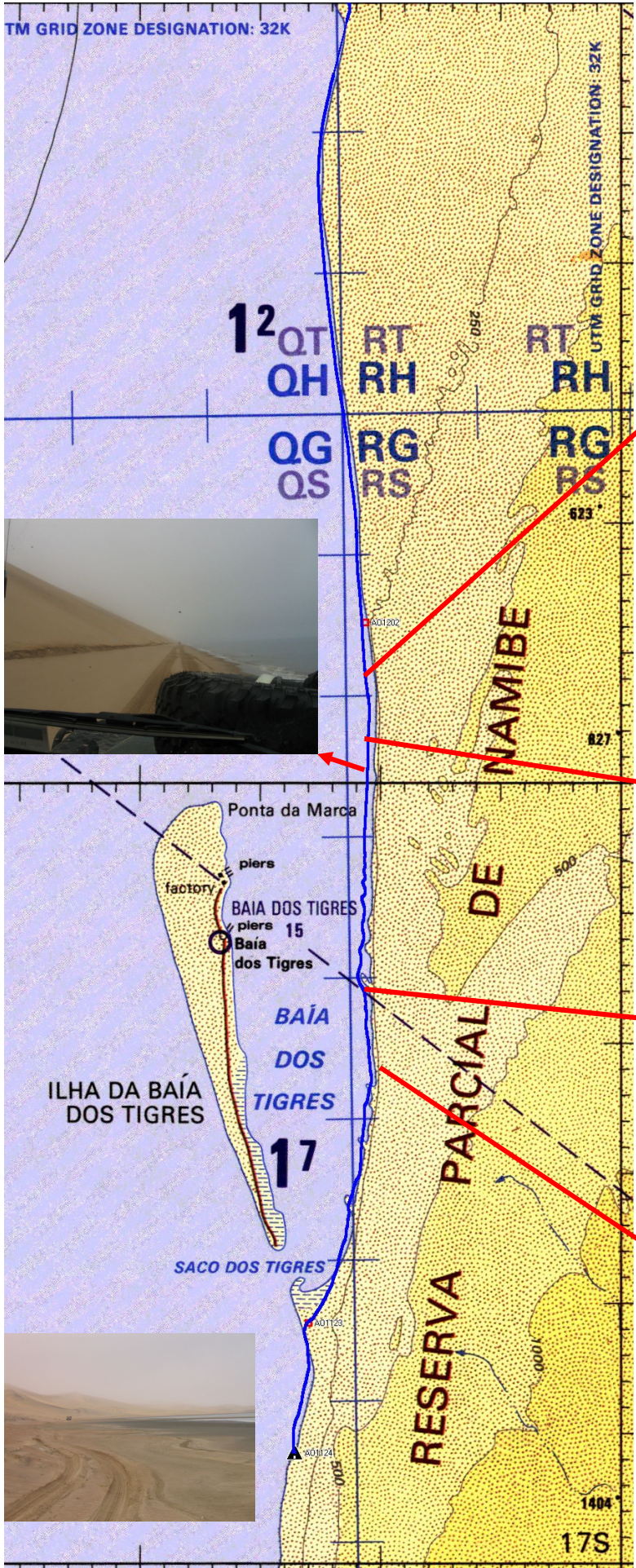






Detailed map showing location of waypoints encountered on this section.





Waypoints are listed below.

Waypoints: South of Tombwa to Baia dos Tigros:

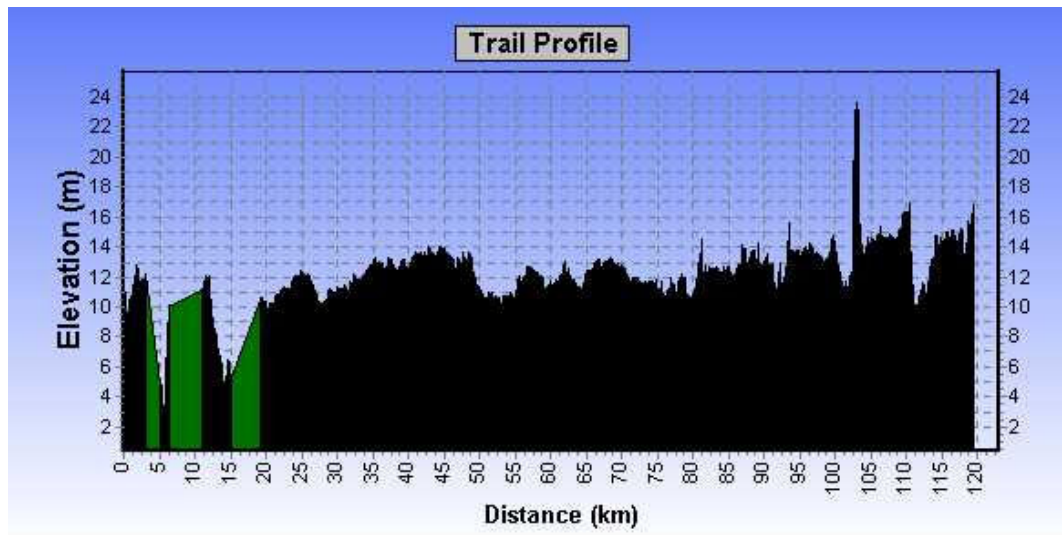
NO	NAME	COMMENT	LAT	LONG	DIST(km)	Bearing	TOT DIST
1	AO1120	CAMP 00:03 14-JUL-03	-15.9016854	11.7369711	0.0	0	0.0
2	AO1121	Vanessa Seafood wreck 08:45 14-JUL-03	-15.9518696	11.7699838	6.6	148	6.6
3	AO1122	INLAND TRACK PARALLEL TO BEACH	-15.9799147	11.8053299	4.9	129	11.5
4	AO1202	APPROXIMATE START OF DUNE	-16.3968773	11.8224586	46.2	178	57.7
5	AO1123	END OF DUNE AREA 11:32 14-JUL-03	-16.8451525	11.7829818	49.8	185	107.4
6	AO1124	CAMP 14:02 14-JUL-03	-16.9287194	11.7736691	9.3	186	116.7

Driving statistics for this section:

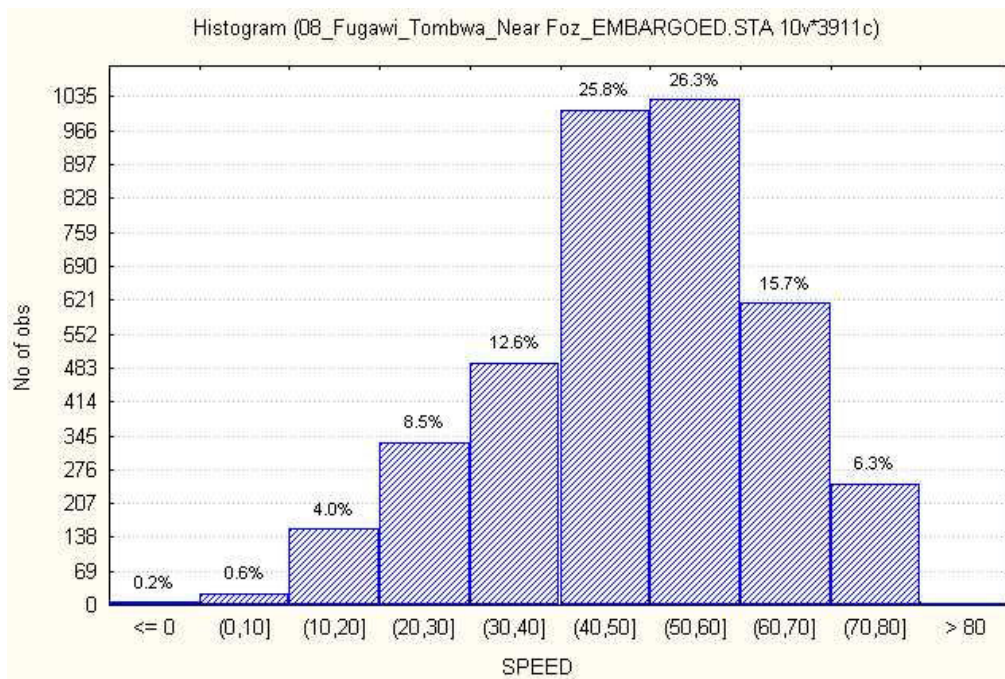
Day	Date	Distance	Ave Speed	Time	Max Spd	Ascend	Descend	Min Alt	Max Alt	Fug Dist
8	14-Jul-03	120	42.3	02:51	76.7	244	241	3	24	120

Distance is the GPS measured distance for the section (in Km). Ave Speed is the average speed over the whole section (in Km/h), Max speed is the maximum speed achieved for this section (km/h). Time is the total driving time (not total travel time; it excludes stopped time) in Hours:Minutes. Ascend and Descend is the total altitude gain and total altitude loss (in metres) for this section. Min Alt and Max Alt is the lowest and highest altitude reached for this section (in meters). All this data is based on GPS measurements. The Fugawi distance represents the track distance also recorded using GPS input.

The following shows the track profile over this section (altitude in metres, distance in kilometres). The green sections show elevation data from the US military Digital Terrain Elevation Model (DTEM) (used because of loss of GPS data).



The following shows the percentage of time the speed was within the indicated categories.



Track conditions:

Access to this stretch of beach was organised through the Flamingo Lodge. This area is within a national park reserve and is not open to access. In addition, passage is only possible during spring low tide. Whilst driving on the beach at any time could be dangerous if a vehicle gets stuck, getting stuck in the section from where the inland dune approaches the beach (Waypoint AO1202), to where it ends (AO1123) can be disastrous. There is no possible way a vehicle can be driven up the dune in this section. There are some sections (see photographs) where there is hardly a car width of space between the foot of the dune and the water, even at spring low tide. In these sections getting a vehicle past another for recovery would be problematic. This beach section is without doubt potentially very dangerous. It is so remote that there is no hope of outside assistance if you become immobile. We crossed this section without incident but we followed the tracks a very experienced guide, who traveled some 15 to 30 minutes ahead of us. Even without these guiding tracks the driving would have been much more problematic.

We would advise travelling this section only if accompanied and arranged by Flamingo Lodge personnel. Even then extreme care must be taken to be prepared and avoid getting stuck. The standard vehicle tyre pressures we followed were 1.2 Bar rear and 1 Bar front, for very heavily laden Defenders. Our vehicle's right rear tyre temperature went up to 58 degrees C on the fast sections (compared to 30 degrees of tyres working less hard). We also pre-attached recovery gear and unlocked HiLift jacks etc. for quick deployment.

This section of the trip was without doubt the most dangerous. It basically consisted of sand, mostly wet but in places quite soft. And no escape route for 50 km.

