

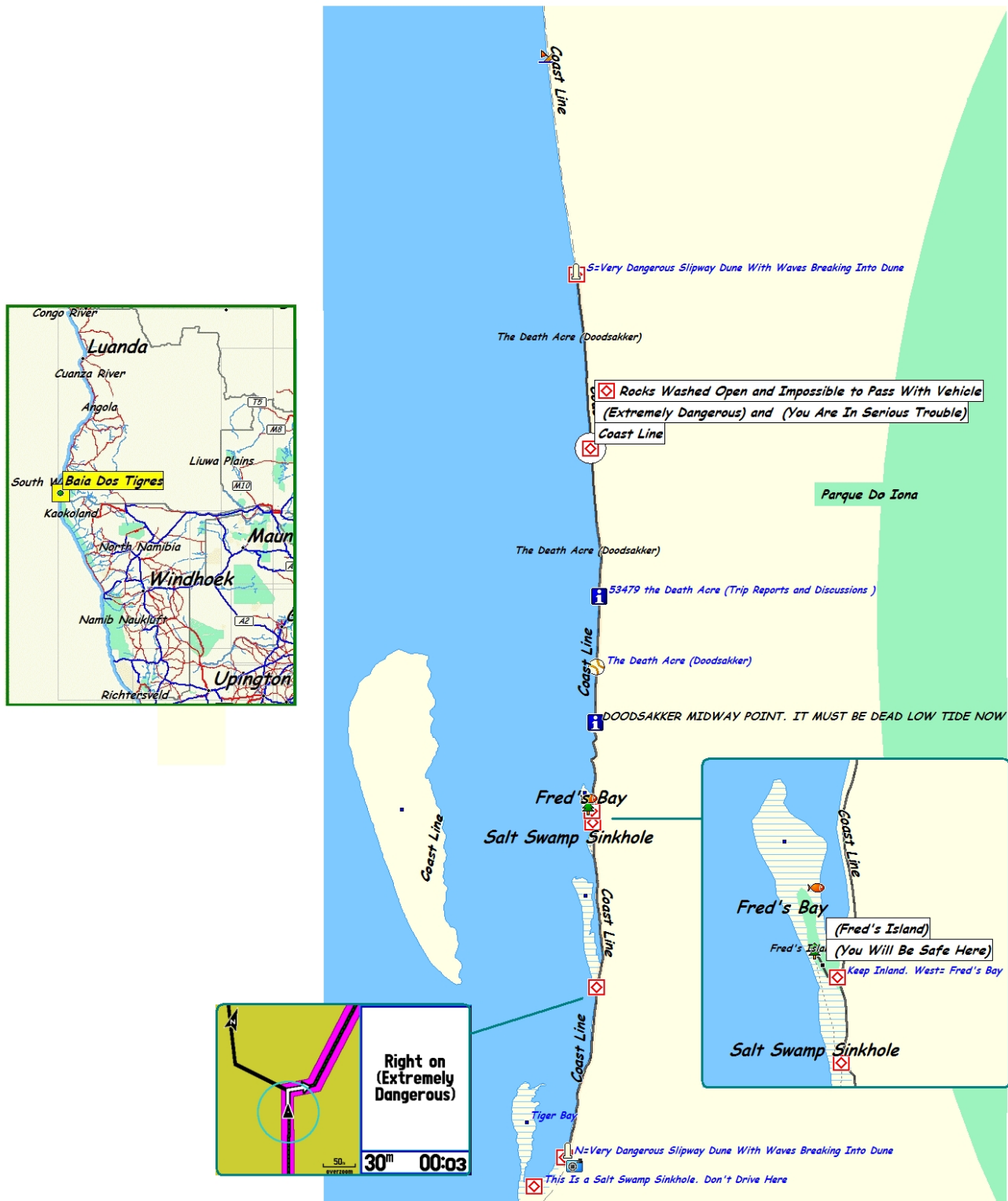
53481 The Dos and Donts of the Doodsakker (Death Acre) Angola

(S16.54642 E11.82243)

TRACKS4AFRICA

2008.06.30 .. this document is currently under revision

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1. Visit www.overland.co.za and other websites to study the trip reports on this route.
2. Download T4A Information basket <http://tracks4africa.com/misc/53479.zip> (12.2Mb)

Tracks4Africa does not recommend driving this route. It is extremely dangerous. Driving here has resulted in catastrophe and it will happen again. **DO NOT DRIVE DOODSAKKER It is extremely dangerous**

The only tour guide known to have guided countless travels through Doodsakker is Rico Sako from Flamingo Lodge (S15.56988 E12.01984) rico@asafaris.com . Please contact this tour guide and do NOT attempt to drive here without a tour guide specialists for this route.

3. It is strongly recommended to travel this route from NORTH to SOUTH i.e. from Tombua to Foz. and not from south to north. Due to the unpredictable problem of the sea exposing some rocks in the intertidal zone, transit by vehicles may be impossible or very difficult. As this hazard occurs some 12 km from the North exit point, the turning back is a 12 km trip to safety. Approaching from the south and discovering that passage is impossible means a 48 km back track.
4. The common denominator linking the disasters/ near disasters was traversing this Doodsakker from south to north. Missing the inland turns at each of the two 'false' bays (Hennie's Bay and Fred's Bay).. this results in delays. If this happens to you, then you're in trouble.
5. When traveling this route from north to south the risk of driving into the into the two 'false' bay's (Hennie's Bay and Fred's bay) is much reduced. However, when traveling South to North and concentrating so much on the deep sand driving on below the high water mark, you almost certainly will drive into the two 'false' bay's. Which, apart from getting stuck valuable time will be lost and high tide will most definitely catch up with you.
6. When disaster strikes on this route drinking water will be the issue. Take enough along also for the person(s) who must walk either to Foz or back to Tombua. (90km)
7. Do NOT travel this route without a satellite phone...and DO NOT travel here without a proper DRP (Disaster Recovery Plan)
8. Get the latest T4A maps Namibia/ Angola on http://www.tracks4africa.co.za/t4a_maps_pro.asp and enquire if there is a subsequent BETA release with new/additional information.

The map has modeled the route as 'routable' and select 'voice' ON because GPS will give turn instructions on the three critical places where Drivers usually go wrong especially when driving from south to north.

On the map is the 'Midway point' . It is advised to apply the GPS auto-routing in two stages. From start to midway point and from midway point to end, this way one can easily monitor progress through Doodsakker.

9. Do NOT attempt to find an inland by-pass for Doodsakker through the dunes. Apparently there is a dune corridor some 200m to 300m inland. Dune driving requires lots of skill and specialized vehicles.
10. Download Moon Phase details from : <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/MoonPhase.php> and note that Spring tides occur at Full and New moon phases while Neap tides occur during First and Last quarter phases.
11. Tide Tables for Mocamedes (now Tombua) can be obtained from <http://www.mobilegeographics.com:81/locations/3845.html> A small handy utility for displaying tide information when off-line can be downloaded from <http://www.flaterco.com/xtide/>
12. Ensure that you are midway through the Doodsakker at **LOW tide**.. You have two choices:- **Neap low** (occurs at first and last Moon quarters and gives the smallest difference between high and low tides) or **Spring Low** (occurs at New and Full Moon and gives the biggest difference between high and low tides)

For Adventure bikes, driving space is more critical and it may be best to drive at Spring Low. Spring Low will allow riding on the firm sand of low water but it will give high waves during high tide. But bikes can be rammed up the dune or dragged up manually.

For 4WD vehicles it may be best if you drive this route at Neap Low. This will give you less beach space to drive on than Spring low.. but at least you have fighting chance when things go wrong. When disaster strikes you ram the vehicles up the dune but the back wheels will barely be out of the water. Now you must wait for high tide to come and go and then you DON'T want a Spring high. NEAP high may be more merciful.

See photo below.. Voetspore (25 May 2008) vehicles rammed up the dune and the photo taken at Neap high tide. If this was Spring high this vehicle would have been taken by the sea.



13. Make sure that the exact time of low tide is correct.. Your tide table and the tidal information on your GPS may not be accurate.. This you must test the previous day (staying over at Tombua) with the fishermen and you *** must *** be at the water edge to make sure your tidal information is correct.

14. The route actually runs all the way from Tombua to Foz do Qunene but the Doodsakker is only 60km (from S16.28410 E11.81084 to S16.80876 E11.80157) where the dune gets close to the water, and where it opens up again. In Doodsakker at high tide there is no driving space between the dune and the sea because the waves actually break against the dune.

As result of wheel slip vehicle odometers record more distance than actually traveled and for bikes it will be much more. Make sure that you monitor your progress between these points, and be prepared to turn around if the sea has exposed impassable rocky areas.

If things go smoothly track logs indicate you will need 1hr 45min to 2hr to ride Doodsakker. So, departure from the two start/end points must be 1hr below dead low. Be it 'spring low' for bikes or 'Neap low' for vehicles, you must pass the mid-point as the tide turns.

15. The only (there may be more) known safe escape on the Doodsakker route is Fred's Island at S16.60131 E11.81826 . This is where Marius Odendaal stayed over for a day. This place is an excellent fishing spot but the wind can blow you away. There may be more of these safe escape points but they are not known to the T4A map.

16. Work out your recovery plans beforehand, that is, before you start on this section: Decide how you will recover, who will recover whom, and whether the whole party will assist with a recovery. Attach all recovery gear (straps, tow ropes, bridles, etc) both fore and aft before entering this area.

17. Ensure that you have good communications between all vehicles. Inter-vehicle radio communication can save you critical time, and give warning of problem situations before it catches the whole party.

Vehicles must travel at least 200m apart to allow vehicles behind to stop or take alternative routes should a vehicle in front get into trouble. One should also not take your time with a recovery and if it looks like one can't recover a vehicle best is to get as many vehicles as possible out of the area and only keep as few vehicles as possible at the problem spot, if any. Better to lose one vehicle than a whole convoy.

18. Make doubly sure that tire pressures are appropriate for your vehicle and payload over this section. Coming from North to South you would likely have refueled and re-watered at Tombua, and would therefore be heavily loaded. Don't over deflate but make sure you have tire pressures low enough to give a longer footprint. And

remember that high speed and low tire pressures can cause its own problems. For example, at 50% normal tire pressures max speed should be below 60 to 70 km/h.

19. Study the picture (below) and make sure you can recognize and distinguish sand covered mud plains from normal sand. These occur particularly around the bays (and Kunene mouth). Stay off the smooth lower sand covered mud.



20. Make sure you are aware of the “lay” of the beach. Due to the fact that there is a sharp drop off at the water with a lower section further back on the beach water flows onto the lower section much further up or down the beach causing the “marsh” condition even though it looks dry (picture 3). These areas become water logged and basically the sand is “floating” on water and if you are slow or heavy enough you break through.



