



Wildlife Conservation Volunteering - Mangetti

Background

The N/a'an ku se Foundation has, since 2008, worked tirelessly to engage Namibian landowners and livestock farmers on the topic which provides the greatest challenge to the conservation of endangered wildlife: The Human-Wildlife Conflict. The impact of human activities on native wildlife has never been more apparent than it is in respect to two of Africa's iconic species; the African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and the African Elephant (*Loxodonta africanus*) both of which have endured decades of suffering through conflict with human activities.



In a bid to alter this, researchers from N/a'an ku se have been working in the Mangetti Complex, northern Namibia, to understand better the levels, and causes, of conflict between these two species and the local population.

Volunteers will assist our researchers in monitoring the movements and activities of elephant and wild dog. Using GPS and VHF technology, motion-sensitive trail cameras and traditional spoor (footprint) tracking techniques, come and delve into the lives of the World's largest land animal and one of Africa's most endangered carnivore species.

Environment

The Mangetti Complex comprises two main areas;

- Kavango Cattle Ranch (KCR); a para-statal farm conglomerate administered by the Namibia Development Corporation (NDC) in the Kavango region of northern Namibia. This is a working cattle ranch with more than 17,000 head of cattle.
- Mangetti National Park (MNP); a protected wilderness area to the east which is home to many native antelope and predator species.



In total, the study area comprises more than 2,000 km² of north-eastern Kalahari woodlands and mixed acacia savannah. The vegetation is thick and dense allowing even the largest species of wildlife to easily remain undetected.

Wildlife Conservation Volunteering - Mangetti



Activities at the Mangetti

Camera trapping

The use of motion-sensitive trail cameras is an essential part of ecological wildlife monitoring. Non-invasive in nature, they capture and record vital images of the many and varied species inhabiting the environment. Working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, they are particularly useful for recording the presence and densities, of difficult to observe species such as the African wild dog. Camera Trapping allows us to identify individuals from unique coat patterns, thereby providing more accurate data for population estimates and levels of breeding success.



GPS monitoring

Currently we are monitoring one adult elephant cow which was fitted with a GPS satellite tracking collar in May 2018. Every early afternoon the information relayed by the collar via satellite must be downloaded to monitor the movement of the herd and identify any possible conflict, and/or damage to infrastructure, which may have occurred and to inform landowners around as well as management and farmers at KCR.

We are in the process of planning the next phase of African wild dog monitoring which will involve the capture of high-ranking pack members to fit GPS tracking collars for intense monitoring which will allow us to map range size, habitat use and potential conflict with surrounding landowners.



VHF telemetry tracking

Regular tracking, via the VHF transmitter beacon fitted in the collars on one female elephant, allow us to document the locations and movements of the herd which numbers more than 100 individuals. It also gives us the opportunity to approach the herd safely and attempt to document visual recordings using an aerial video drone. With this information we can make detailed observations of herd size, structure and composition.



Wildlife Conservation Volunteering - Mangetti

Spoor (footprint) tracking

Wildlife is just that; WILD! As such they rarely stand around waiting to be observed and photographed. It is therefore important to perform detailed ground searches of areas to locate and identify the spoor (footprints/tracks) left behind by their passing. This is the first, and often most important, step in monitoring the activity and movements of focal study species to determine where further work must be carried out.



Conflict assessment



Making detailed records of all occurrences of conflict, whether perceived or actual, is important in making clear plans for the conservation of endangered wildlife species such as elephant and African wild dog. It is only by understanding the underlying causes of persecution in response to conflict that a coherent and detailed plan can be created which will produce positive and measurable results in conservation.

This may take the form of recording and photographing specific conflict incidents such as damage to infrastructure by elephants or the predation of livestock by wild dogs.

Outreach

Understanding the attitudes of local farmers and landowners towards species such as elephant and African wild dog is essential to producing a clear plan of action for their conservation. Only by getting out onto the farmland and talking to local land managers can we hope to find practicable solutions to the current conflict between humans and wildlife.



Wildlife Conservation Volunteering - Mangetti



Accommodation

Situated centrally in the Kavango Cattle Ranch sites the Mangetti village where the researcher(s) and volunteers are accommodated in one of the management houses. The house has electricity and running water; the hot water is supplied through a wood-burning water boiler or 'donkey' as it is commonly known.



Food



Meals are a simple affair in the Mangetti. Breakfast will consist of cereal, tea/coffee and toast. Most days packed lunches (sandwich & fruit) will be prepared by volunteers and staff to be eaten in the field. Everyone takes turns to cook the main evening meal and clean up afterwards. There will usually be a traditional Namibian 'braai' (barbeque) one evening during the trip.



Transport

N/a'an ku sê Foundation, P.O. Box 99292, Windhoek, Namibia.

Namibia Charity no.: 21/2007/256. UK Charity no. 1142421 VAT 4432160-01-5

T: + 264 (0) 81 261 2709 E-Mail: bookings@naankuse.com Website: www.naankuse.com

Wildlife Conservation Volunteering - Mangetti



The Mangetti Research project runs on a seven-night schedule with transfers to Mangetti departing from the N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary every Wednesday morning. The driver brings you to Otjiwarongo where one of the Research coordinators waits for you. After switching cars and a quick stop at the grocery store to buy provisions for the week, you drive up to the Mangetti site. Volunteers returning to the farm, leave with the Research coordinator on Wednesday morning and drive to Otjiwarongo to meet the driver bringing the new volunteers. Volunteers can stay at Mangetti for multiple weeks.

Important Information for Everyone

*Volunteers should be equipped to work under any weather conditions, including cold winters and long hours in the sun (please check prevailing weather conditions at your time of travel). The Mangetti is a **high-risk Malaria area** from **November to March** and **anti-malarial medication** is strongly recommended (we recommend you get the medication in Namibia and take it only when leaving for Mangetti, not beforehand). Suitable insect repellents should also be brought. All volunteers should ensure adequate health insurance cover for visiting Namibia and that relevant immunisations are up-to-date. Except for emergencies, volunteers have no access to the internet. Local currency can be obtained at the international airport upon arrival.*



The program at the Mangetti runs for at-least 7 nights starting every Wednesday. Two weeks or more are suggested to fully experience the Mangetti Project. Pre-bookings are recommended due to limited availability and can be made at the time of your booking

Or

Add the Mangetti to your project itinerary in the office upon your arrival at the Sanctuary

We look forward to welcoming volunteers to the Mangetti!