

# COMMUNITY CONSERVATION NEWS

*"Sustainable Conservation Through Community Action"*



*Looking back on the past 6 months, we are overwhelmed by the unwavering support we received and continue to get from our donors and partners.*



*ALWAYS grateful for the achievements that the conservancies have made as well as inspired by the enormous efforts IRDNDC staff put in every day to address the most challenging issues the conservancies face.*

# REINTRODUCTION OF GIRAFFES IN THE NORTH WEST CONSERVANCIES STRADLING THE ESCARPMENT

## »» CAPTURE AND RELEASE OF GIRAFFES

The Ongongo and Otjiu-West conservancies had since gazettement requested for the reintroduction of giraffes in the landscape because historically giraffes used to roam this area. Due to illegal hunting and movement of people these majestic creatures were decimated and today there is no trace of them in the immediate area. Hence immediately after gazettement in 2012 they approached IRDNC asking for the return of giraffes to their land. Through the years these communities have demonstrated a strong commitment to protect the existing wildlife which includes Springbok, Kudu, Mountain Zebra, and Oryx.



*Ongongo chairlady giving gratitude to IRDNC and expressing her joy of this mementoes event. They had camped near the release site waiting for the truck to arrive.*



*The four Giraffes jumping off the truck into their new home with style.*



*Darting from the Air by Sarah Ferguson*

Moreover, they have shown a commitment to protect elephants that have dispersed up the Hoarusib River into the landscape of adjoining conservancies- despite some elephant - human conflict challenges. Their commitment to conserving wildlife kept them hopeful that one day they would be able to see giraffe roam their landscape again. This long coming dream was made a reality with support from:



**ETOSHA HEIGHTS  
PRIVATE RESERVE**



*Handling of Giraffe after darting – administration of antidot, taking record of vitals and other essential measurements and blindfolding for herding into the chariot and eventually into the truck.*



# SHARING SPACE

**"COMMUNITIES LEAD THE WAY TO A NEW ERA OF LANDSCAPE-SCALE CONSERVATION"**

*By Di Tipping-Woods*

**Chief Kenamurire Kasaona**, a traditional leader, conservancy member, and liaison for Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) says he is proud of how Namibia is righting historical wrongs. In giving conservancies responsibility for managing wildlife, Namibia began to restore precolonial practices.

The full article is accessible here: [https://wwfafrica.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf\\_may2023\\_namibia.pdf](https://wwfafrica.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_may2023_namibia.pdf)



## ➤➤➤ PEOPLE'S PARK

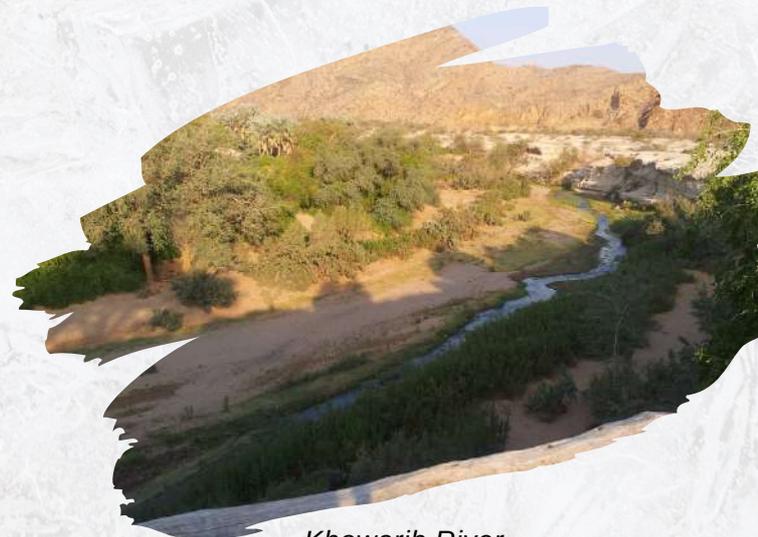
Working alongside the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), and with the support of WWF and a host of other organizations, the conservancies hope to secure the legal status of Ombonde and, in doing so, establish their right to control access to defined wildlife areas. At present, unguided cross-country tourists drive through for free. Establishing tourism zones to which the conservancies have sole management rights, says Muzuma, would bring in much-needed jobs and development and “change the living standard of the people on the ground.” In addition, under the future park’s management plan, community members would continue to be able to use the area for emergency livestock grazing in the event of drought - a constant threat in this arid landscape.



*Photo by James Kydd*

“As Namibians, we have done things that no one in this world has done before. We have secured wildlife species that went extinct in other countries. They live outside protected areas and are free roaming in their natural habitats. It’s a victory for us to see conservancies putting more land aside for conservation. These are all ordinary people, cattle herders who have walked the talk of community-based natural resource management and want to take the next step”.

*By John Kasaona, Executive Director*



*Khwarib River*

## HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTH WEST

In Namibia, IRDNC has used electric fencing and community patrolling to protect farms from elephants, but this has had limited success and pressures are constantly increasing. By contrast, in Tanzania, Honeyguide has had extraordinary success in supporting farmers on the edges of community-owned and managed Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) to deal with elephants to the extent that they have seen as much as a 90% decrease in crop destruction in the areas where their approach has been implemented.

➤➤➤ **Read more** <https://www.honeyguide.org/human-wildlife-conflict-prevention/>

IRDNC has requested Honeyguide to provide support to develop its capacity to manage human-elephant conflict through the same approach. IRDNC has selected rangers from Communal Conservancies in the Northwest to have first-hand experience with how the Honeyguide approach works in order to enhance their capacity to better manage elephants in their conservancies. This project is funded by the International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED) who has also been working on HEC both through its implementation of a Darwin Initiative project on HEC insurance and through participation in the IUCN Human Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence Taskforce and various community conservation forums in Southern Africa. IIED recognises that IRDNC is not alone in wishing to build its capacity to manage HEC and thus sees the potential for development of additional training material that could be widely disseminated to other community-focused conservation organisations.



Arrival of the Honeyguide staff in Namibia. From the left, Mr. John Kasaona (IRDNC Executive Director), Mr. Kateto (Honeyguide), Josephine (IRDNC), Mr. Lemuta (Honeyguide) and Mr. Pehii (IRDNC)



Scoping visit to communal conservancies in the Kunene region



## UNSUNG HEROES OF THE FIELD: SAFEGUARDING RHINOS IN KUNENE

In the vast expanse of Kunene, where black rhinos roam freely in communal conservancies, a remarkable team of unsung heroes are tirelessly working to protect these majestic creatures. The success stories we witness today are the direct result of unwavering commitment and collaboration between the conservancies, local communities, Namibian Police (Nampol), Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), and the dedicated Rhino Support Team from the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC).

**Mr. Fares Kangombe**, a team leader, and **Mr. Kaurorua Tjavara** are unsung heroes. These two extraordinary individuals form an integral part of the rhino team, traversing an average distance of 2,261 kilometers per month. Kaurorua, proudly donning his traditional Himba attire during patrols, stands tall with a deep sense of pride in his contribution to rhino conservation. Their passion for their work stems from their love for rhinos and a burning desire to ensure future generations can witness these magnificent creatures. Their ultimate wish is to witness an increase in rhino populations and put an end to the menace of rhino poaching.



Regular awareness meetings are held with local communities to actively engage them in rhino conservation efforts. These meetings serve as platforms for sharing information on rhino sightings, tracks, carcasses, and suspicious vehicle or human activities. Tracking rhinos is not an easy task, as these creatures cover vast distances in search of food and water. Challenges arise in some areas where rhinos become skittish at the sight of vehicles or people, prompting the team to conduct additional awareness talks in those specific regions.

The dedication and hard work of these unsung heroes are crucial in safeguarding the future of rhinos in Kunene. They are the silent protectors, ensuring the survival of these iconic animals for the future generations.

Let us recognize and salute Mr. Fares, Mr. Kaurorua Tjavara, and the entire rhino team for their tireless efforts in preserving the rhino population and actively involving local communities in this vital conservation mission.

# CONSERVATION HERO SHINES BRIGHT: RITJEUAVI TJININGIRE

## ➤➤➤ GOSCARS - THE GRASSROOTS OWEN-SMITH COMMUNITY RANGER AWARDS

In the heart of Etanga Conservancy, a hero is making waves with his unwavering dedication and remarkable achievements. **Ritjeuavi Tjiningire** is a true force to be reckoned with in the field of conservation. This young, energetic, and trustworthy field officer has captured the hearts of his colleagues and is leaving an indelible mark on the landscape.

Etanga Conservancy owes a great deal of its success to the diligent efforts of Tjiningire. Thanks to his timely reporting, the conservancy received High Wildlife Conflict (HWC) offsets a staggering three times last year. His commitment to his role as a field officer is unparalleled, leading his team of game guards with enthusiasm and coordinating fixed and foot patrols with a cheer. Through his exceptional leadership skills, poaching incidents have significantly decreased, allowing the conservancy's wildlife to thrive.

Despite the conservancy's limited resources, including the absence of a vehicle, Tjiningire encourages the game guards to undertake long-distance foot patrols. Their passion for the job and the pride they take in their work are evident, especially as they have only recently started receiving salaries through a COVID-19 grant. Their dedication is a testament to Tjiningire's influence and the positive working environment he fosters.

Beyond his fieldwork, Tjiningire goes above and beyond his role as a field officer. With no formal manager in place, he selflessly assists the management committee in the day-to-day operations of the conservancy. His dedication extends even further as he represents the conservancy at national forums, such as chairpersons' forums, ensuring its voice is heard on a broader scale.



Tjiningire's exceptional commitment and outstanding achievements were recently recognized at the prestigious 2023 the Grassroots Owen-smith Community Ranger Awards (GOSCARS) awards. His contributions to the conservancy earned him an honorary mention, along with a well-deserved **N\$2000.00** reward. This recognition serves as a testament to his remarkable efforts and further motivates him to continue exceeding expectations. His journey is a shining example of how one individual's passion and commitment can make a significant difference in protecting our precious natural resources.