

IRDNC Kunene

For close to 40 years, IRDNC has strived to increase the rights of rural people in the remote and arid Kunene Region to use and own their natural resources, and to manage these resources sustainably. We believe that a healthy natural resource base lays a foundation for rural development. This is fully optimised when natural resources are secured outside of protected areas and will ensure a vibrant local economy and improved livelihoods of individuals.

About the Kunene Region...

The arid and semi-desert north-western Kunene Region comprises 115,260 km² and has 88,300 inhabitants. Four out of its six constituencies are involved in community based natural resource management. The Kunene is the third poorest region in the country, with a poverty rate of almost 40%.

The Kunene Region has many tourist attractions and tourism is a key development sector due to the region's spectacular mountainous landscapes and free-ranging wildlife. The Kunene Region is home to the world's largest population of free-roaming black rhinos. Namibia's famed desert dwelling elephants also occur, along with several ungulate species.

A severe drought lasting close to five years has decimated livestock and wildlife in the Kunene Region. In the 1980s, the region's wildlife rebounded after a similarly devastating drought that was exacerbated by poaching.

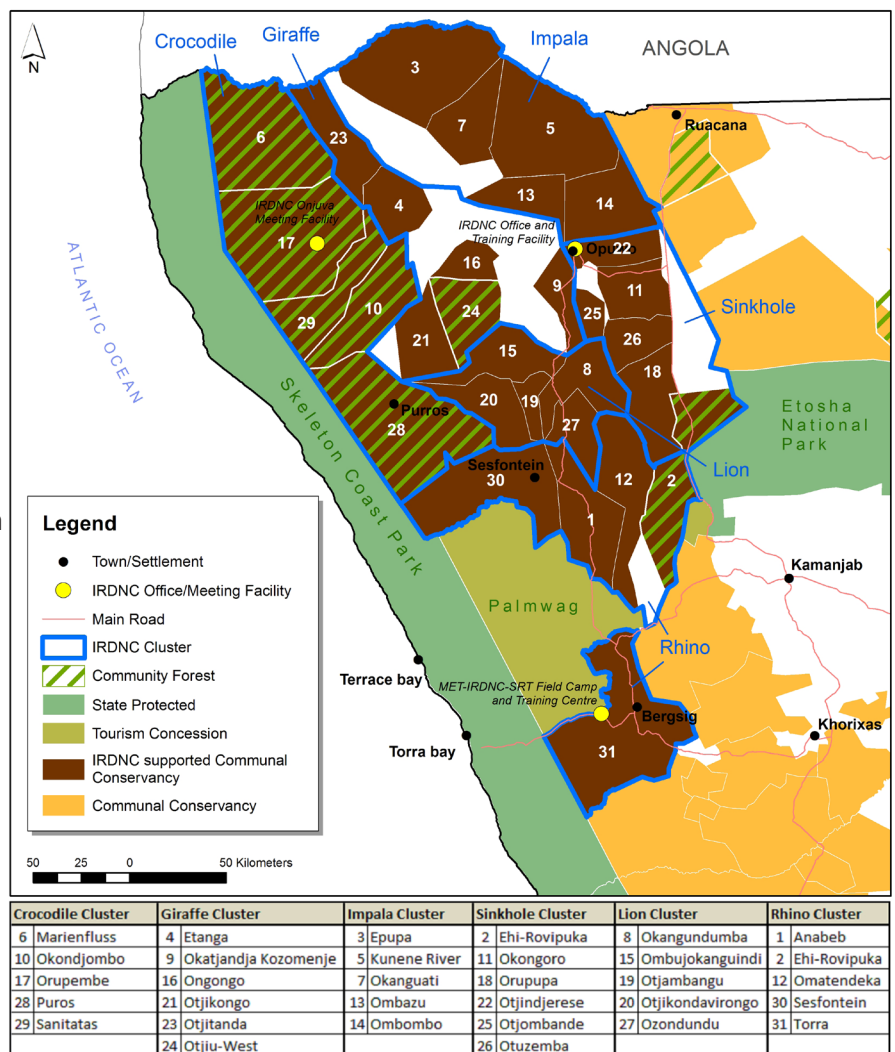
About our work...

IRDNC has helped to establish and now supports 30 gazetted conservancies, covering 35,106 km² and several more emerging conservancies in Kunene. Our work reaches over 50,000 people. Our field teams are each responsible to support one of five clusters of conservancies in the region.

17 of the Kunene conservancies generate their own independent income, mostly from a mix of tourism and conservation hunting. The remaining 13, which are positioned in areas that have lower tourism potential, do not have any revenue from hunting or tourism.

Not a single black rhino has been poached in the Kunene Region for more than two years. More than 11 would-be poachers have been apprehended by local communities.

IRDNC's management team in the Kunene are: Lucky Kasaona (Acting Assistant Director), Basilia Shivute (Operations Manager), Oiva Hamunyela (Financial Administrator), Lina Kaisuma (Coordinator – Giraffe Cluster), Alluh Uararavi (Coordinator – Crocodile Cluster), Eben Tjiho (Coordinator – Lion Cluster), Dave Kangombe (Coordinator – Impala Cluster) and Russell Vinjevoldt (Human Wildlife Support Coordinator).



Aside from our **key priorities of increasing community involvement, improving governance and expanding benefits reaching households**, our additional initiatives in the Kunene are:

Black rhino...

- Rhino-based tourism enterprises and new innovative income streams to communities
- Increasing wildlife crime awareness and building pride in wildlife
- Improving monitoring of rhinos

Elephants...

- Developing the Highlands Tourism Projects with conservancies that earn little or no income, and piloting a Payment for Ecosystem Services project around elephant conservation
- Working with conservancy game guards to monitor elephants and mitigate human-elephant conflict
- Supporting a coordinated approach to the management of 'arid mountain elephants' in north west Namibia

Lions...

- Establishing a specialised team to monitor lion movement
- Working with farmers to mitigate livestock losses and respond to incidents of conflict with lions
- Piloting a unique Early Warning System using satellite collars, loggers and Early Warning Towers that alert communities when lions are near

Indigenous Natural Products – A social enterprise generating income for harvester groups, mostly made up of women from marginal conservancies

- Supporting commercial harvesting of highly valuable plants including Devil's Claw and Commiphora
- Processing plants into essential oils used in the perfume and cosmetic industry at the IRDNC-initiated Opuwo Processing Facility

Kunene Conservancies Income by Category 2018

