

NEWSLETTER MARCH

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Dear clients,

2022 flies off and we are already in the third month of the year. We did many courses/conferences lately; a wildlife para-professional weekend, our animal crime scene course, South African Wildlife Veterinary Congress... Good times where we learned a lot, and got to share our knowledge! In this newsletter we also write about an interesting job we had with spotted hyenas, and we (re)inform you about our WhatsApp groups.

Kind regards, the Wildlife Vets Namibia team

SPOTTED HYENAS

Recently we had the opportunity to work with some spotted hyenas, a species we don't often work with! Darting at night is not so easy and quite stressful... A "Midazolam" laced carcass was laid out for the clan. These tablets cause the animal to become sleepy/drowsy for about 3-4 hours, with the aim that the hyenas would stay at the carcass while we darted them. Another advantage of these tablets is that they increase appetite, making them also less likely to leave the carcass. A telemetry (tracking) collar was fitted to the darted animals.

It is not so easy to distinguish a male from a female hyena. In general females are slightly larger, but this is often difficult to see in a solitary animal or in a clan with members of different ages. What makes it difficult is that female hyenas look like a male; they have a pseudo-penis. This is basically a clitoris which is shaped like a penis, and can become erect. They don't have a vaginal opening, and urination, mating and giving birth (!) all happens through this pseudo-penis. We wrote about this bizarre feature in our [June 2019 newsletter](#).



Immobilized hyena female © U. Tubbesing

During the immobilization of these hyenas, we had the chance to check their sexes properly – this we do by looking at the tip of the 'penis'. In females the tip is more square-shaped or blunt, while in males the tip is pointed. When hyenas greet each other and they are very excited, they sometimes get erections (both male and female). When you are lucky enough to see this behaviour, you will be able to see if they are male or female based on this difference.

Another way of differentiating is that females, after their first litter, often have a pink scar on their pseudo-penis. The birth canal is only 2.5 cm in diameter, and the tissue often tears when for the first time a 0.9 kg cub squeezes through... This leaves a pink scar tissue.



Above you see the female's pseudo-penis, on the right a male's penis © M. Bijsterbosch



Pink scar on the female's pseudo-penis

© [K.E. Holekamp](#)

Wildlife Vets Namibia WhatsApp groups



Join our regional WhatsApp groups!
How does it work?



When we are called out to a farm, or have a prospective job in an area, we notify the group.

If you happen to have a job that needs to be done and you want us to come, call us, or send a message.



Save km, Save \$\$

The more farms that join in on one trip, the cheaper the travel cost for all!

Our regional groups are:

- North of Windhoek
- East of Windhoek
- South-east of Windhoek
- South of Windhoek



Are you a farmer/farm manager, and you want to be added to one of the regional groups? Or you want more info? Feel free to contact us!

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WHATSAPP GROUPS

For the new readers of our newsletter... We would like to inform you about our regional WhatsApp groups; we have 4 different groups, standing for 4 different regions:

- 🐾 North of Windhoek (Okahandja/ Otjiwarongo/Outjo/Tsumeb etc. area)
- 🐾 East of Windhoek (Omitara/Witvlei/ Gobabis etc. area)
- 🐾 South-east of Windhoek (Dordabis/ Nina etc. area)
- 🐾 South of Windhoek (Rehoboth and south)

When we are called out to a certain area, we will notify this group. If you happen to have a job that needs to be done, you can jump in and share kilometre costs. These groups will only be used to notify that we will be working in a specific area. To respect your privacy, we won't mention names or farms, just the area where we will be working in. If you want us to come, or have a question, please contact us directly and do not use this group. We are sure you agree that there are already too many 'chat'-groups taking up our time!

The more farmers that join in on one trip, the more \$\$ is saved by everybody! If you want to be added to one of the groups, sent us a message 😊



Around the **third week of April** we will be in the South of Namibia. If you are located in the South, and you want us to come to your farm let us know! Then we can make the most optimal route and everybody can share kilometre costs.



WILDLIFE PARA-PROFESSIONAL WEEKEND 2022

25-27 February we had an awesome weekend at Erindi Private Game Reserve. This weekend was meant for e.g. (wildlife) veterinary para-professionals, animal health technicians, vet nurses and people working closely with wildlife. The aim of this weekend was multiple. First of all, such gatherings are important to gain knowledge and exchange experiences. It also gives those participants registered with the Namibian Veterinary Council the chance to earn Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points. Another important point is to enhance contact between professionals in the field; sharing knowledge, asking questions and especially sharing problems is very important in any line of work. Only when we work together we can all improve in what we do.

Various speakers presented lectures. Professor Stegmann, an expert in veterinary anaesthesiology from [UNAM](#), spoke about medetomidine (a drug that, in combination with other drugs, is used in the immobilization of animals) and monitoring of immobilized animals. Ulf spoke about vaccinations in wildlife and making blood smears (this is a type of blood test that provides a wealth of information about an animals' health/disease status). The participants then had the opportunity to practise making blood smears.

Armand Barnard from [EMTSS](#) (Emergency Management Training and Specialist Services) did a practical on first aid in the field. He discussed many topics, from CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) to applying bandages, splinting limbs and much more. A very valuable and hands-on lecture! The course participants then also presented interesting lectures focusing on their respective fields of work, covering topics from cheetah work-ups, carnivore- and pangolin research, rhino horn abnormalities and collecting blood.

We also spend considerable time in the field, where an injured male lion was darted and treated. We also darted and treated an African wild dog who had a wound likely caused by tick bite. We further immobilized and treated a lame sable bull who had ticks in between the hooves. This provided the participants with an excellent opportunity to practise their immobilization monitoring skills and practise collecting blood. Professor Stegmann brought several monitoring devices with that gave the participants more insight in what parameters one can measure during an immobilization.

All in all an interesting and fun weekend. We are already looking forward to the 2023 Para-Professional weekend! A big thanks to all the participants, the lecturers and to Erindi for the wonderful venue!



Lecture by Ulf on how the immune system works. Before one can understand how vaccines work, one must understand more about the natural immune system!



Mr Barnard checks if the participants are doing the CPR correctly



ANIMAL CRIME SCENE AND EVIDENCE HANDLING COURSE AT ETANGO RANCH

On the weekend of 4-6 March we presented our first Animal Crime Scene and Evidence Handling course for the year at [Etango Ranch](#). This course is meant for people that might become involved in (rural and animal) crime scenes, such as farmers, managers, APU members and reservists. We focus on animal crime scenes such as poaching and stock theft, but the lessons we teach you are applicable for any crime scene (e.g., stolen solar panel).

We started the course with an introduction lecture to show that crime scenes are quite complex, and with a lecture on DNA. In this lecture we taught the participants the importance of DNA, and how easy it is to accidentally deposit your own DNA on a crime scene, and thereby possibly making yourself a suspect! We also presented a lecture on doing a forensic post-mortem. In the afternoon we had two lectures on crime scene photography, and we went out into the field to practise photography with professional photographer [Dirk Heinrich](#). He taught the participants some basic tips and tricks, and went over the entire photo-documentation process of a crime scene. It's not so easy to take proper photos of crime scenes, some photos are technically quite difficult to take; think of shoe prints, or evidence that lies hidden, half in the shade and half in the sun. The tips provided by Dirk provided the participants with a number of easily applied options!



Day 2 focused specifically on crime scene handling and evidence preservation as well as collection. These are two (quite heavy) lectures which were followed up by lectures on body language, and writing reports and court appearance, where we give tips and tricks on how to deal with court cases. The afternoon practical once again focused on photography of shoe prints and tyre tracks. In addition, the participants made casts of shoe prints, which provide a permanent piece of evidence of the perpetrator's shoe. Participants also practised making imprints of car tracks and the collection of pieces of evidence.

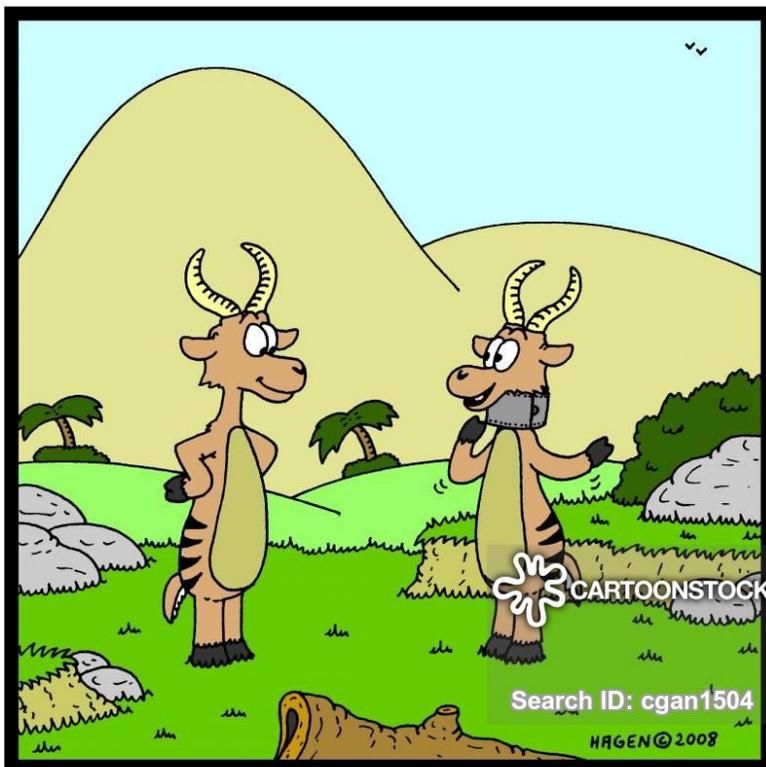


On Sunday, the final day of the course, the participants had to handle a set “crime scene” from A to Z. We staged a house break in, where certain items were stolen and they had to do the follow-up. Unintentionally we gave the participants quite a tough time since the soil was hard, which made tracking shoe prints a daunting task. This forced the participants to change tactics. They performed a grid search of the scene which enabled them to find all the pieces of evidence! A herd of cows further complicated things by trampling all over the scene. This served as a good example of the importance of securing and processing outdoor crime scenes quickly and effectively!



We would like to thank all the participants for joining the course, Dirk Heinrich for taking up the photography part of the course, and of course Etango Ranch for the wonderful venue!

13-15 May we will present another Animal Crime Scene course at [Kifaru Bush Camp](#), in the Outjo district. If you are interested, feel free to contact us for more information.



It's a stainless-steel collar: A few lions have lost teeth trying to go for my jugular...

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