

# NEWSLETTER DECEMBER

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Dear clients,

It is the time of year again that we start with Christmas wishes! We hope you have some time to relax during the holidays. Like every year, in December we present a year overview. Every job we do is a highlight, but we guess you won't have time to read a whole book, so we made a small selection 😊 We also tell (and show!) you all about our latest game translocation to Angola.

Kind regards, the Wildlife Vets Namibia team

## MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A WONDERFUL 2023!

Dear all,

And suddenly 2022 is almost done! We hope that this year was a great improvement after the difficult Covid years. It is wonderful to see that guests from all over the world are coming to Namibia again, and we hope this trend continues in the new year. The only thing we still need is some good rains, so let's hope the weather predictions for a good raining season are correct! We would like to thank you very much for your support and trust in our services, and we look very much forward to be of your assistance again in 2023. Have a wonderful Christmas, and an even better 2023!

Best regards,

Ulf and Mariska



## WHAT A YEAR... 2022!



**January** This sable had a massive [tapeworm cyst](#) on its neck... A challenging 'bush' surgery, as it was right next to the jugular vein! The cyst was removed, the wound stitched up and the sable healed well.



**February** A species we don't work often with... African Wild Dogs! A whole pack was darted, blood- and DNA samples were taken and some got a collar on.



**March 2022** seems to be the year of the predators for us. This year we worked with lions, leopards, cheetahs, African wild dogs, spotted- and brown hyenas! This spotted hyena got a GPS-VHF collar.



**April** We have a portable ultrasound machine that we can bring on request. Here we are checking if this golden wildebeest cow is pregnant.

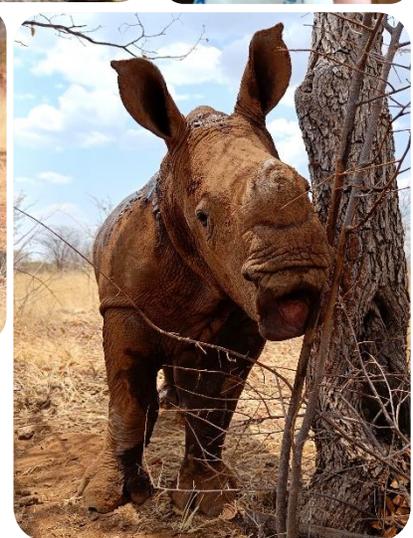
**May** This dog was operated on his eyelids. He was suffering from entropion, which is a condition whereby the eyelids turn inward, causing irritation. Under supervision of this rhino the surgery was successful!



We also presented our Post-Mortem and Animal Crime Scene and Evidence Handling course. A French film crew was present for the crime scene course, check their trailer-video [here](#).



**June Alert...** cute rhino photos coming up! The reason behind these photos are however not so nice. This little calf named Venasha was only 1 day old when she was abandoned by her mother. We immobilized the mum and put them back together, but the next day the mother took off again. Now the calf was so weak that we had to intervene. The calf went to the Rhino Momma Project. Venasha had a rough start, as she was unable to keep her temperature and glucose levels up. After many sleepless nights she was getting stronger.



Venasha was then introduced to orphan Lily. A few months later, as you might have heard, tragedy struck as Lily died of complications after a heavy parasite infestation. This parasite, living in the gut, is very resistant and the first case reported in rhinos. Venasha also has the bug, but so far she is doing well. She has already become a big lady of over 200 kg!



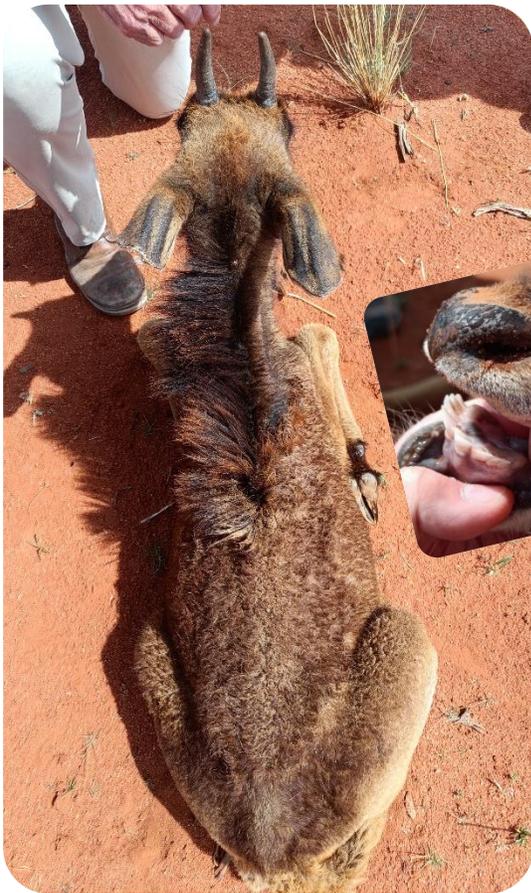
**July** Check out this impressive sable bull, he measured a whopping 50”!

**August** We took blue wildebeest, impalas, nyalas, sables and giraffes on a 3200 km trip, from Namibia, via Zambia all the way to the DRC! An exhausting but exciting trip! Watch the video of our journey [here](#).





**September** We darted zebras that we translocated to a game farm in Angola. The advantage of darting animals for translocations is that we can dart young, strong individuals. Young animals travel better, and adapt easier in a new environment. Zebras are not the easiest species to dart, as they are strong, heavy animals that do not go down that easily. Luckily drug mixes are getting better and better, making for a smoother anesthesia and thus recovery.



**October** Darting oryx in the Kalahari! The dart gun that Ulf uses has a range finder scope on it. Based on how far the animal is, a level of CO<sub>2</sub> gas is set. The dart gun has an extra long barrel on, allowing Ulf to take further shots, up to 80-90 meters!



**November** We had an interesting case... When you look at this sable calf on the left, how old do you think it is...? Don't cheat... first look at the photo 😊

.....

This calf is already 10 months old, but barely weighing 30 kg! We checked the hearth and the blood values, but all were normal. It is likely that this calf did not get enough milk, and did not grow properly. Another possibility would be that this is a case of dwarfism in sables – which to the best of our knowledge never has been reported.

**December** We have done quite a lot of giraffe work lately. To move a giraffe to another place, we first dart it. Once its down, we place a face mask and halter on, and wake it up. Then it is time to go walking! We don't like to use a lot of ropes, we feel that the halter rope to guide the giraffe, and a rope tapping the hind legs to make it go forward works very well. This is much less stress for the animal. We walk the giraffe into a field trailer, from where we can drive short distance, or we load the giraffe from the field trailer into a big giraffe trailer, if we travel far.



## ANGOLA GAME TRANSLOCATION

This season we have done three game translocations to Angola! One to the Lubango area, the next to the Kwansa-Sul area and the last to the Cuando Cubango. The last one, which was to the [Cuatir Conservation Project](#), we went along. In this article we like to take you with on this trip! If you rather watch then read, check out our video [here!](#)

We took giraffes and kudus to the Cuatir reserve to give the existing populations a boost and to enhance the genetic diversity. We started by catching the giraffes, who were darted from the helicopter. Giraffes are sensitive to the drugs we use, so we work as fast as possible – everybody in the ground team has its own job; the giraffe get a face mask, ear plugs, injections, DNA samples were taken and a solar-powered GPS ear tag was placed by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. All this happens at the same time, so we can wake the giraffe up as quickly as possible. Once its standing, we walk it to the trailer. The kudus were also darted from the helicopter. Thanks to the experienced capture team from Mount Etjo Safari Lodge, we were already done by midday, and drove non-stop to the border.

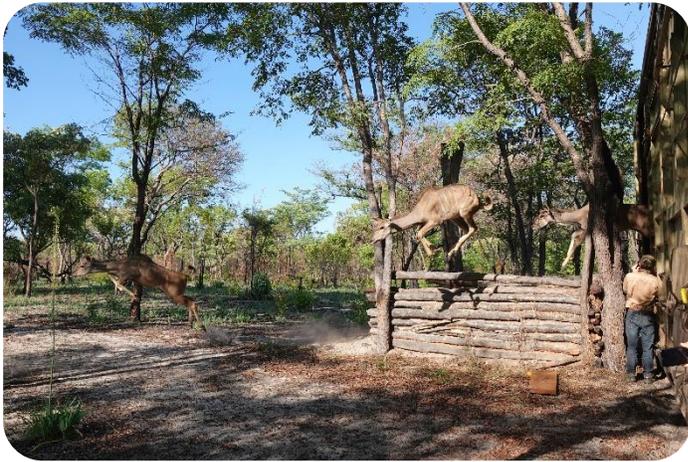
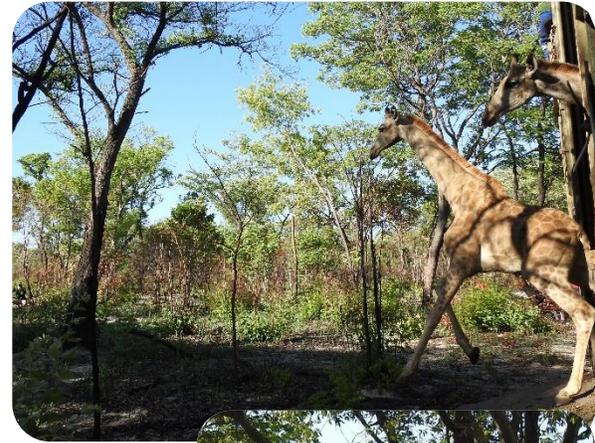


Crossing borders in Africa is always frustrating... but not this time! Both the Namibian and Angolan border officials worked very efficient and within 2h we were in Angola! This is a record time, and we cannot thank all the officials enough for this!

The road in Angola was not long, but... challenging to say the least. Heavy sand, muddy parts, potholes, diverting from the main road to side roads and back... As we had giraffes on board (a domino taxi) we had to drive extra carefully, and it took us about 7 hours to cover 106 km! After the 106 km we had to cross the Kavango river. One of the reasons why this translocation is so late in the season, is to ensure that the river level is low enough so that we can cross it. A very powerful 6x6 truck, also known as 'the grasshopper' came to help us to cover the final part of the trip. The 6x6 pulled our trailer through the river, and then the last 43 km through very heavy sand. The driving went very very slowly, and we only reached the reserve in the morning hours. We don't like to offload at night, so we decided to give the animals some rest and release them the morning.



The best moment of any translocation is the moment when you open the doors and the animals are released. After weeks of planning, preparation and sorting out paperwork - finally, the animals are able to roam free, and enjoy fresh grass and leaves! When we opened the door, the first two giraffes first checked out the place before coming out. The other two giraffes were a bit more in a hurry, and with a gentle gallop they ran off into the forest. Next were the two groups of kudus, who could not wait to get out! It is always such a great moment seeing the animals get off the truck in good condition!



We stayed a few days in the Cuatir reserve, what an amazing place! This, to a large extent untouched reserve has a large variety of habitats; from the river to floodplains, to grasslands and a forest with ancient large trees. We got to see many bird- and wildlife species. We are very sure the Namibian animals will adapt well.

A game translocation is not something one does alone – this truly is a team effort. We want to thank our driver and animal caretakers Frederick and Romario, and all others involved – from the Namibian and Angolese involved ministries and state veterinarians, those arranging permits, border officials and of course to the Mount Etjo Safari Lodge team for assisting with the capture and the Giraffe Conservation Foundation for supplying the solar-powered GPS ear tags. A special word of thanks goes to Stefan van Wyk and his Cuatir team for their support and trust in our services! They manage an amazing reserve which is well worth a visit! Click [here](#) to visit their website.

We made a video about the translocation, you can watch it [here](#) via YouTube.

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IN AN EFFORT TO "GO GREEN,"  
WE'VE MADE IT A HYBRID!

