

JOHAN SNYMAN'S TRIP REPORT : 9 DECEMBER 2015 – 10 JANUARY 2016

WARNING !

Please do not try to emulate this trip. It was not undertaken for recreational purposes and I travelled on my own in a solo vehicle. Under normal circumstances, you will not be able to cover these distances in a day, nor is it advisable to visit the area with only one vehicle.

Background

This trip consisted of 3 distinct parts, i.e.

- 1) For the 1st part I would be visiting the Caprivi region as I have to verify the location and condition of all the roads and tracks in the area for the book I am writing on north-eastern Namibia, and at the same time I'm also compiling a complete photographic record of all the roads, points of interest, and the commonly seen fauna and flora in the area. Plants also need to be visited during different seasons to enable photographs to be taken when they flower, bear fruit, etc.

A major problem is that large portions of the region is not of interest to tourists, but still need to be covered to complete the work. I have access to up-to-date maps of the proclaimed roads in the area, but up-to-date maps of the un-proclaimed roads and tracks are not available. The electronic T4A maps are not complete and some of the satellite images on Google Earth are outdated as they date back to 2004.

- 2) For the 2nd part I would be making a “short” detour on my way home, as I wanted to put up a small memorial plate for my late wife at Van Zyl's Pass.
- 3) For the 3rd part I would be travelling down to Cape Town to spend some time with my folks, visit some friends, take care of some business and also take a few trips down memory lane.

Preparations

As my Landy is comprehensively equipped, and packed, for overland travel all I had to do was to pack my clothes, food and drink, camera equipment, laptop, GPS's and satphone.

I intended to cover a distance of approximately 5000km on the first two parts of the trip. As this would mainly be a “working” trip I elected to travel on my own as I would not have time to do the “tourist things” that would be required if I took a passenger, or another vehicle, along.

Travelling solo does require a bit of forward planning as you can't leave home without a back-up plan, pre-arranged back-up services and reliable means of communication. The availability of fuel in the area was a bit of a concern, but I would have enough fuel on board to travel for at least 1500km.

Wednesday 9 December

I left Windhoek and travelled along the B1 to Otavi, where I turned off onto the B8 to Rundu. I camped at Kaisosi, and once again had a delicious dinner in their restaurant.

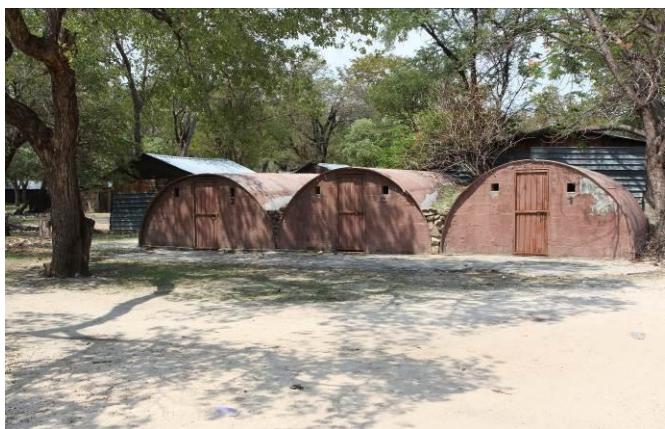


Total distance for the day was 736km (727km on tar and 9km on gravel) and my travelling time was 7 hours.
(Moving time and average = 6h57min and 105.9km/h)

Thursday 10 December

After a quiet night I made an early start and travelled along the D3402 to Divundu and then on the B8 to the Old Omega military base of 31Bn. It is sad to see how this place is falling apart. Then I followed a thick sand track through the Bwabwata National Park towards the Angolan border. I realised something was amiss when I started to encounter vehicles with Angolan number plates, and retraced my steps to get back into Namibia before I picked up problems From there I made my way along the B8 to the Susuwe Triangle, made a brief stop at the ruins of Fort Doppies of the Recces, before setting up camp at the Nambwa Community Camp.







Total distance for the day was 501km (192km on tar and 309km on gravel and sand) and my travelling time was 9½ hours. (Moving time and average = 8h13min and 61km/h)

Friday 11 December

After another very quiet night during which a few drops of rain fell, I made an early start. There was a bit of a thunderstorm just after I started driving with more rain. I logged the tracks that I have not driven on during previous visits to the Susuwe Triangle and then logged a track and a tar road on either side of the Kwando River between the B8 and the Angolan border and the B8 and the Zambian border. From there I made my way to Katima Mulilo, where I camped for the night at Caprivi Houseboat Safaris.



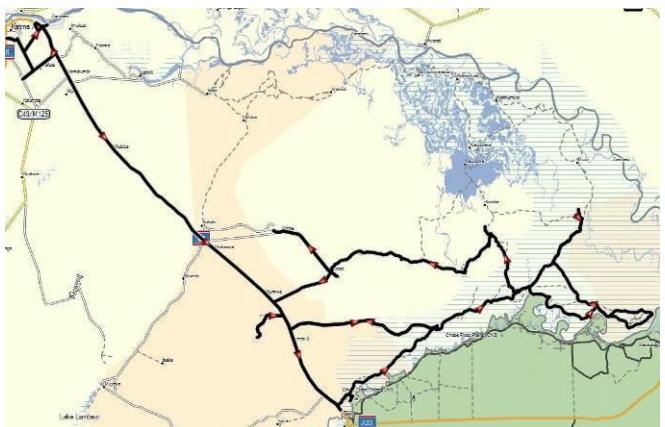




Total distance for the day was 311km (134km on tar and 177km on gravel and sand) and my travelling time was 11½ hours. (Moving time and average = 8h10min and 38.1km/h)

Saturday 12 December

I logged some of the roads around Katima Mulilo before making my way on the B8 to Ngoma and then started exploring some of the roads and tracks in the swampland east of the B8. During the afternoon it started raining heavily again and some of the tracks became extremely slippery. I camped at Camp Chobe for the night.

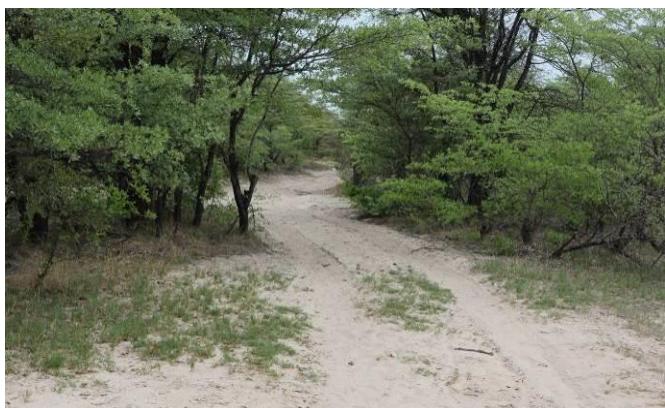
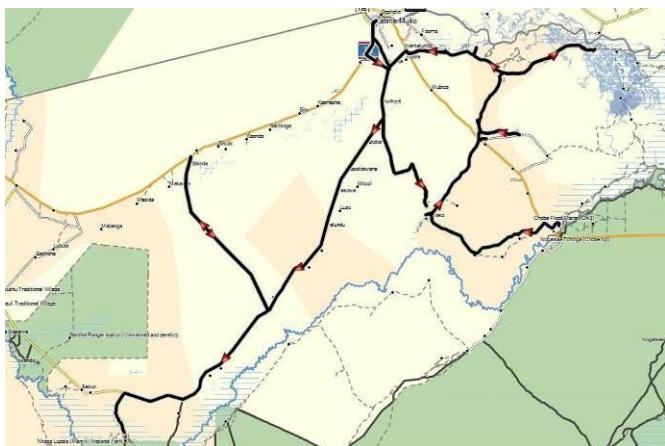




Total distance for the day was 353km (78km on tar and 275km on gravel and sand) and my travelling time was 12 hours. (Moving time and average = 10h36min and 33.3km/h)

Sunday 13 December

It started raining again during the night and I set off a bit later than usual. I logged the D3507, D3510 and the D3508 to Schuckmannsburg, the C49, the D3514 to Liambezi, the D3501 and the D3518 to Mamili. The bridges into Mamili have all been rebuilt since the last time I was there. I camped at the Rupara Community Campsite.

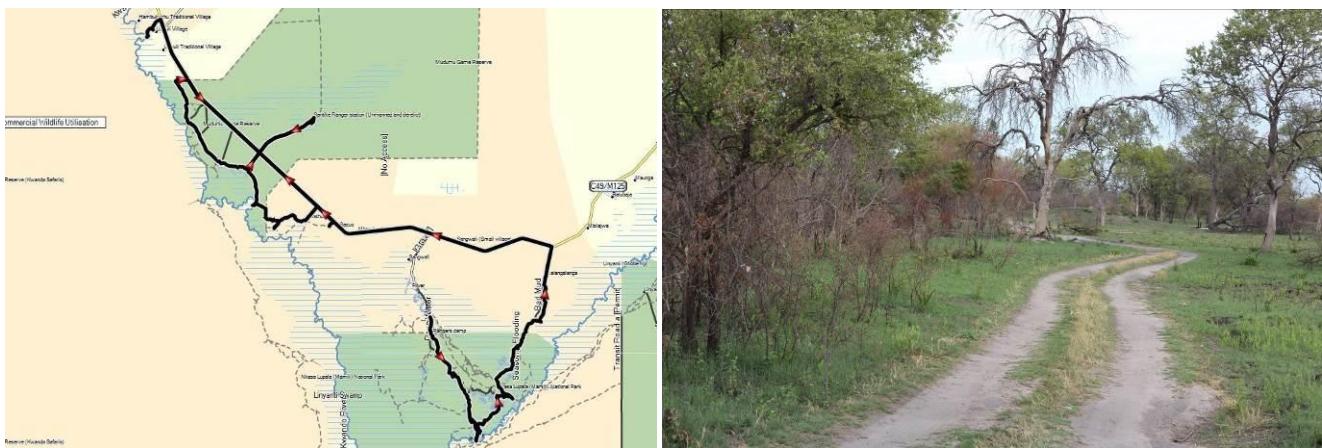




Total distance for the day was 540km (190km on tar and 350km on sand and gravel) and my travelling time was 11½ hours. (Moving time and average = 9h51min and 54.8km/h)

Monday 14 December

After another very quiet night, I explored some of the tracks in the Mamili National Park and then made my way along the C49 to the Mudumu National Park and from there to the Malyo Wilderness Camp on the banks of the Kwando River.

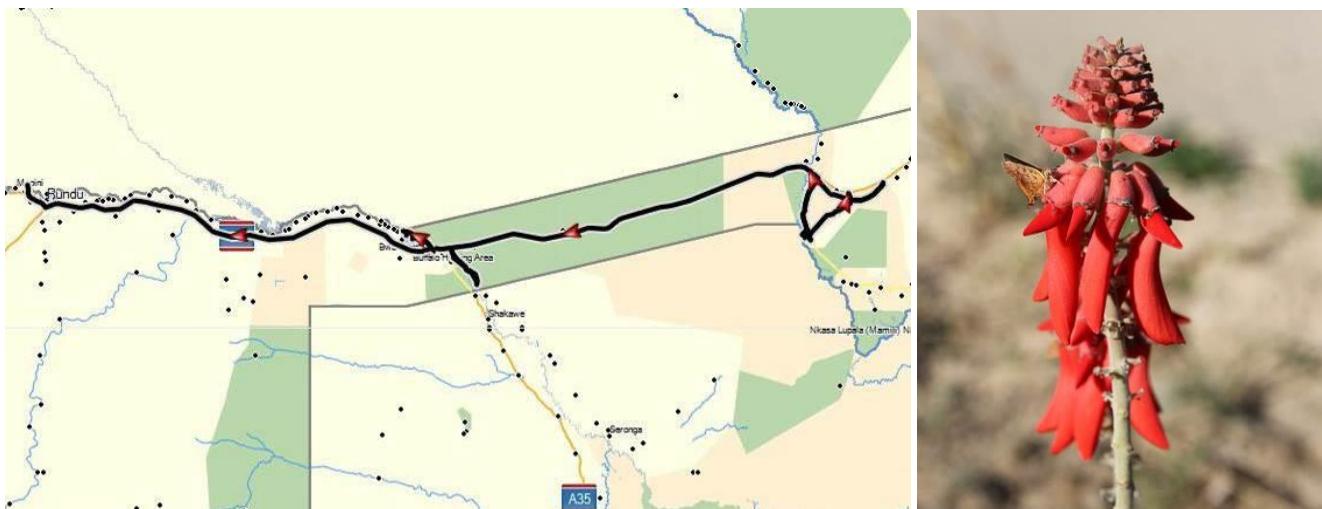




Total distance for the day was 208km (86km on tar and 122km on gravel and sand) and my travelling time was 11½ hours. (Moving time and average = 7h59min and 26.1km/h)

Tuesday 15 December

I made an early start and logged some roads and tracks in the immediate vicinity before making my way along the B8 to the Buffalo Hunting Area – the home of 32Bn. From there I logged the D3431 between the B8 and the Angolan border before making my way on the B8 to Rundu, where I set up camp at the Hakusembe River Lodge.





Total distance for the day was 683km (462km on tar and 221km on gravel sand) and my travelling time was 12½ hours. (Moving time and average = 10h03min and 67.6km/h)

Wednesday 16 December

I made an early start as this would be a very long day. I followed the B10, B1 and D3638 to Oshakati, where I did my military service in the early 1980's. From there I followed the C41 to Opuwo, the D3703 to Etanga and Otjitanda before following the track to Van Zyl's Pass. I drove to the viewpoint overlooking the Marienfluss where I set up camp for the night. Along the way I found the remains of a Metallian off-road trailer, and I could not help but wonder if its owner still thinks that it was a good idea to disregard the advice not to take trailers down the Pass. I sat overlooking the Marienfluss long into the night. It was my 13th time there, but the first time that I slept there.





Total distance for the day was 886km (700km on tar and 186km on gravel and rocks) and my travelling time was 11½ hours. (Moving time and average = 10h22min and 85.5km/h)

Thursday 17 December

After a very quiet night, I first attached a small memorial plate for Adri to a rock under a Shephard's Tree at the viewpoint before making my way down the Pass. I added another rock with our names on it to the pile at the foot of the Pass and then made my way via Rooidrom, the Marble mine, Otjihaa and Etanga to Opuwo. Along the way I found the remains of a Jurgens Xcape off-road caravan. From Opuwo it was tar all the way home via Kamanjab, Outjo, Otjiwarongo and Okahandja. I arrived home at exactly 24h00.





Total distance for the day was 985km (735km on tar and 250km on sand and gravel) and my travelling time was 17½ hours. (Moving time and average = 15h17min and 64.5km/h)

Friday 18 December

I took the rooftop tent off, unpacked the Landy, packed the Terios and went to bed at 04h00. I got up at 06h00 and was ready to leave at 06h30. I travelled via the B1 and N7 and stopped at the home of my parents in Durbanville, Western Cape, 15 hours later.

Saturday 19 December to Sunday 10 January 2016

These were a few hectic days. I cycled just about every day, went kayaking on Milnerton lagoon, Rietvlei and Langebaan, fished for trout in Du Toitskloof, garrick at De Mond and shad at Struisbaai, visited a few of Adri and my favourite places, visited friends and family, bought some more “shares” at ORMS, etc, etc

Conclusion

For the northern Namibia part of the trip, I drove a total distance of 5203km in 9 days. Of this, 3304km was on tar and the remaining 1899km on sand, gravel and rock. The average fuel consumption of the Landy was 7.24km/l.

For the remainder of the holiday, I travelled 5373km in 23days with the Terios. It's average fuel consumption was 10.37km/l, and that was with a kayak and a mountain bike on the roof !

As far as north-eastern Namibia is concerned, I have now travelled on every single road and track that I could find in this vast area of 122 000km² and from August 2012 to December 2015 I have driven a distance of approximately 42 000km to do so.



I still need to visit the area to gather some outstanding information and photographs, but the heavy work, such as ploughing through thick sand for hours, fording rivers, traversing swamps, clearing trees from the track, etc, is complete.

As far as Kaokoland is concerned, this was good-bye for the foreseeable future. This was one of our favourite parts of Namibia to explore and we did so many times. I have no desire to visit the area on my own.

This trip also brought about the end of the road for a number of things, and I made my peace with it during this time. I do not foresee that I will tackle another book on Namibia, so when this one is done and dusted, that's it. My days of heavy overlanding, on my own and often into uncharted territory, are over. My fully rigged Landy, most of my other camping gear and tour-guiding equipment is also for sale.