

JOHAN & ADRI SNYMAN'S BUSHMANLAND TRIP REPORT : 17 – 21 OCTOBER 2013

WARNING !

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

Background

I have seriously started to work on my book covering North-Eastern Namibia and have basically completed the skeleton of the book with the data and photographs we have collected over the past 6 years of travelling in this vast region covering an area of approximately 122 000km². I have now entered the phase where we need to verify the location and condition of all the roads and tracks in the area (even ones we have driven on before), and at the same time are also compiling a complete photographic record of all the roads, points of interest, and the commonly seen fauna and flora. Plants also need to be visited during different seasons to enable photographs to be taken when they flower, bear fruit, etc.

We are fortunate in the sense that large portions of the region is close enough to our home to be accessed over weekends, although these portions are becoming less and we will soon be entering a phase where we will have to take leave to afford us the time to travel on the rest of the roads and tracks.

Preparations

We decided to undertake this trip 4 days before we departed. Our Landy is fully equipped, and packed, for overland travel and we can be ready to travel at the drop of a hat. All we have to do is pack our clothes, food and drink, and camera equipment. Travelling solo, as we do most of the time, does require a bit of forward planning and you can't leave home without a back-up plan, pre-arranged back-up services and reliable means of communication.

Thursday 17 October

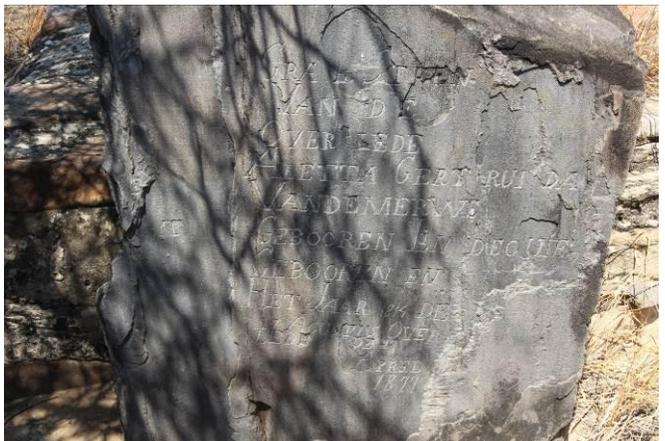
We left Windhoek after work, and made our way to Buitepos on the B6 highway. We had an uneventful drive and camped at Zelda's for the night.



304km for the day (301km on tar and 3km on gravel) and our travelling time was 3 hours.

Friday 18 October

We made an early start and made our way to Buitepos where we refuelled the Landy and also filled 4 x 5L containers with diesel. From here we travelled along the D1779 to the M119, which we followed to Tallismanis. Their fuel pumps were dry ... From here we followed the D1692 to the Botswana border and visited Rietfontein before returning to Tallismanis and following the D3814 to the Botswana border. From here we travelled north on the D3831 along the Botswana border. The sand was heavy going in places. We pitched camp along the track for the night and witnessed a spectacular thunderstorm and a bit of rain.





474km for the day (20km on tar and 454km on gravel and sand) and our travelling time was 12 hours.

Saturday 19 October

We made another early start and travelled along the D3831 to the M114 and followed this and the M113 in a northerly direction. We passed through 2 veterinary control gates along the way. Immediately to the south of the Nyae Nyae conservancy we turned east on a track to the Botswana border and then followed the track alongside the border in a northerly direction to the Dobe border post. Along the way we skirted the Aha Mountains. From Dobe we travelled west towards Tsumkwe. Along the way we punctured the right front tyre with a piece of wire. No problem to fix it without even removing the tyre from the vehicle.





We visited the Nyae Nyae pans. It is very dry, with only a few isolated spots that still have water. We encountered several small herds of elephant and the area looks like a war zone with large numbers of trees that have been extensively damaged.





374km for the day (4km on tar and 370km on gravel and sand) and our travelling time was 12 hours.

Sunday 20 October

We first drove the Baobab route and stopped at several of these large ancient trees. From there we made our way south again on the M113, M114 and M131 to the campsites of the Harnas Wildlife Foundation. Along the way one of the turbo hoses on the Landy ruptured, but this was a minor inconvenience as we had a spare available, and in the end it delayed us by about 10 minutes.





401km for the day (all of it on gravel and sand) and our travelling time was 10¼ hours.

Monday 21 October

After a night filled with the roaring of several lions, we accompanied the staff of Harnas on the morning feeding drive. They provide a safe haven for predators that have come into conflict with farming activities and it is a huge, and expensive, task caring for all these animals.



We then had an uneventful drive home via the M131, D1667, D1663 and D1535.

365km for the day (79km on tar and 286km on gravel and sand) and our travelling time was 5¾ hours.

Conclusion

This has been a demanding, yet memorable, trip with my favourite travelling companion to an interesting part of Namibia, and I now have enough data and photographs to keep me busy for a few weeks. We are already thinking about the next trip.

We drove a total distance of 1918km during the 5 days, of which 404km was on tarred roads and 1514km on gravel and sand roads and tracks.
