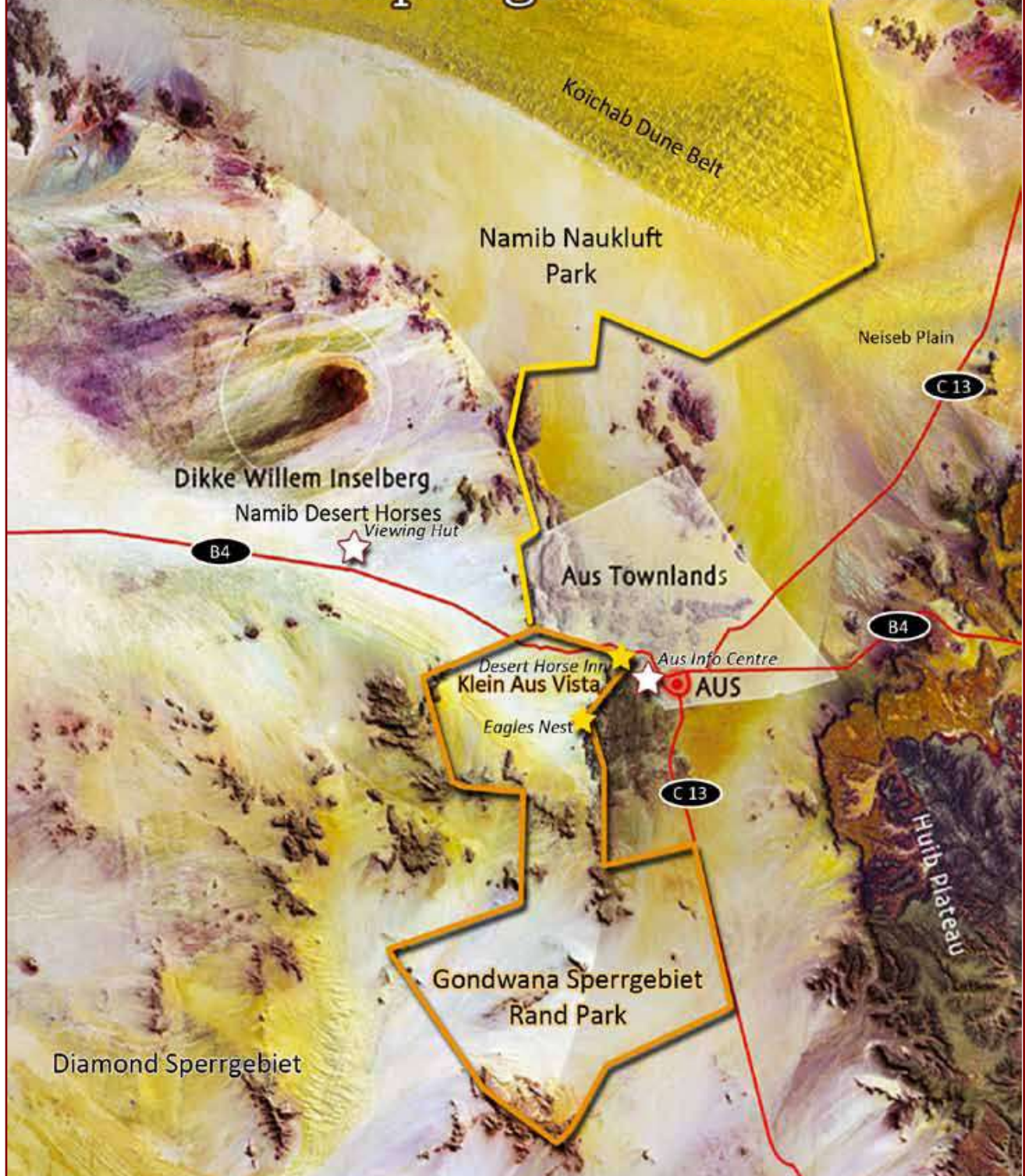
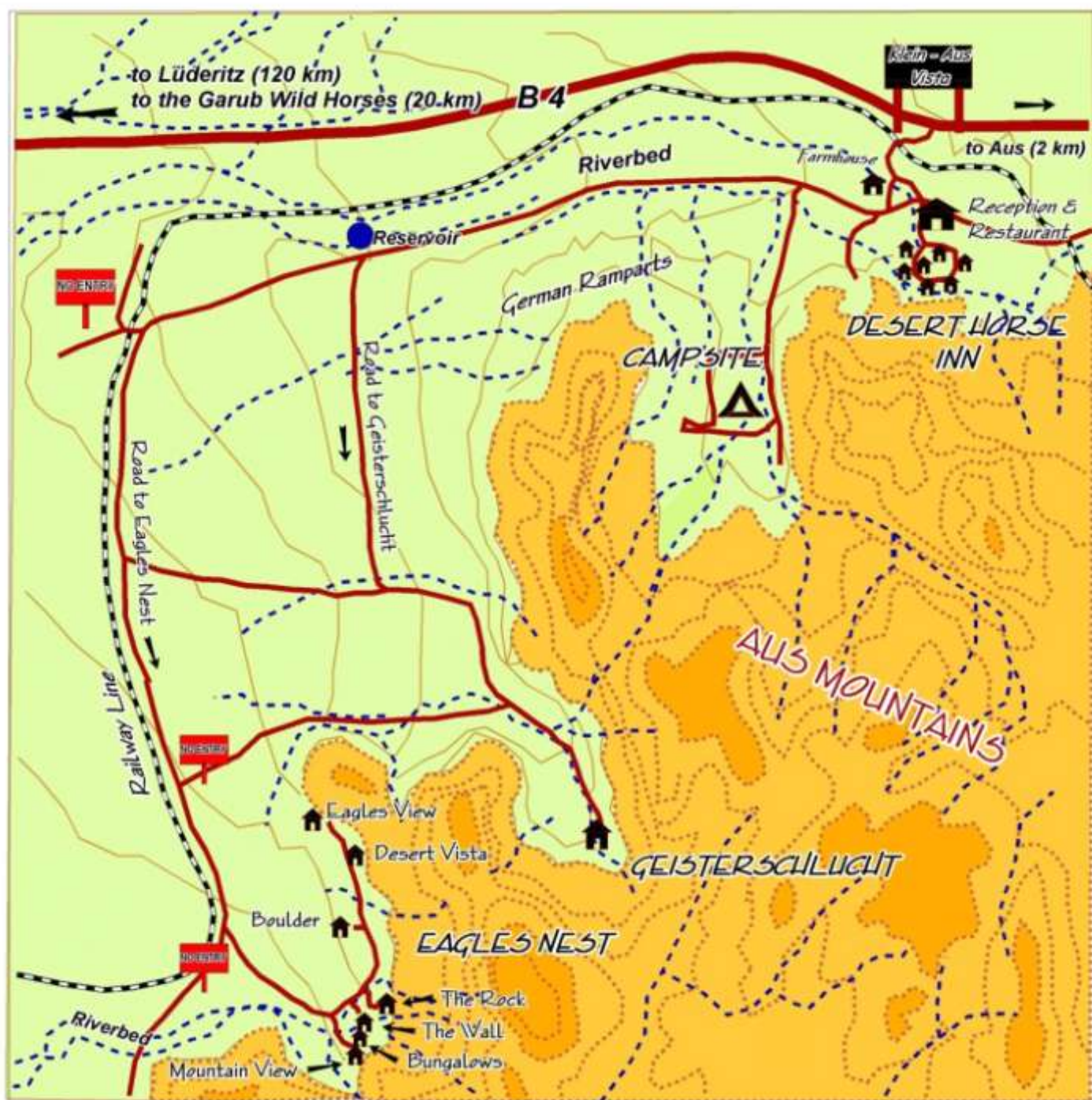




Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park





Welcome to Klein-Aus Vista

-  Mountains
-  Desert Plains
-  Water courses
-  Tar road
-  Farm roads





A Note of Welcome



We are proud to welcome you here at Klein-Aus Vista !

The lodge Klein-Aus Vista is on the Namibian tourism map since 1998 and has continuously grown since.

We are a family -owned and -run tourism business that operates on the privately owned 53 000 ha *Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park*, which is part of the larger Gondwana collection marketing group.

To the Northwest our park neighbours the Namib Naukluft Park where the Wild Horses roam free, one of the main attractions in our area.

We offer diverse accommodation from campsites to double rooms to exclusive rock chalets, catering for different sectors of the tourism market.

Relax with a sun-downer on the wooden deck before joining us for a savoury 3-course meal in our country cuisine restaurant. After dinner, gather around the Wild Horse Bar and Lounge where strangers could become friends.

For information on tours and activities in and around Aus, please refer to the Activities section of this volume or enquire at the reception for more details.

You will further find some useful and interesting information on the history of the area and of Klein-Aus, and on the fauna and flora and landscape history.

Please enjoy reading up on our beautiful area – may it be as interesting to you as it is to us living here!

The Swiegers family and its friendly staff wish you a pleasant stay!

List of Adventures and Departure Times

	Summer	Winter
Sunset Drive	17:30 – 20:00	15:45 – 18:30
Half Day Drive	6:00 – 10:30	7:00 – 11:30
Full Day Drive	6:00 – 14:00	7:00 – 15:00

HIKING:

- *Sunset Trail*: starts from the the campsite (4km, 1 hour) – **RED** arrows
- *Schutztruppe Trail*: starts from the campsite or Geisterschlucht (10 km, 3 hours) – **YELLOW** arrows
- *Geister Trail*: starts from Geisterschlucht or Eagles Nest (12 km, 4 hours) – **GREEN** arrows
- *Eagle Trail*: starts from Eagles Nest (12 km, 5 hours) – **BLUE** arrows
- *Mountain Trail*: starts from Eagles Nest or Geisterschlucht (6 km, 2 hours) – **BLACK** arrows
- *Schanzen Trail*: starts from Desert Horse Inn (5 km, 2 hours) – **BROWN** arrows

PLEASE NOTE: Eagle Trail and Geister Trail are only for **ADVANCED HIKERS !!!**

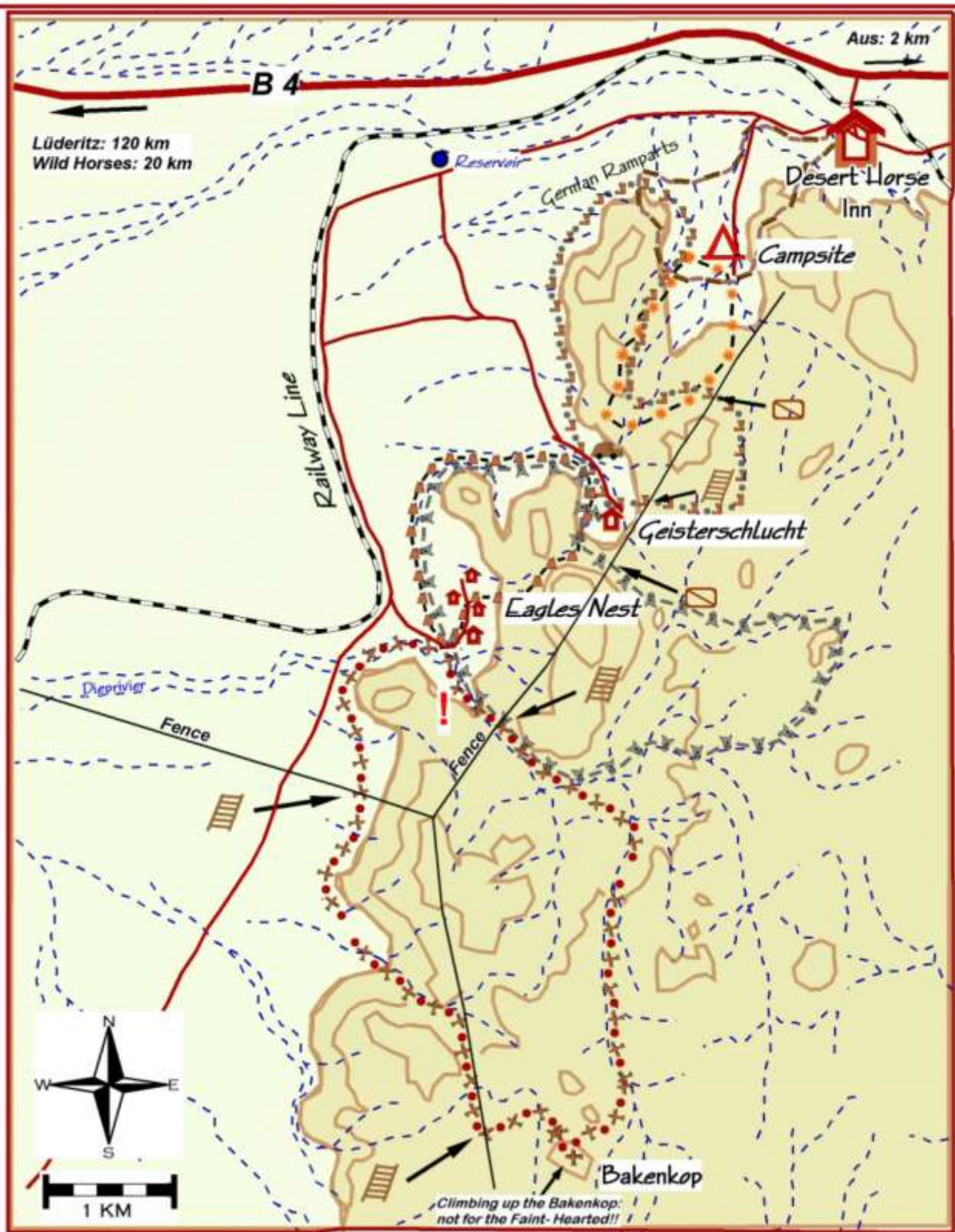
All trails are marked - not guided. If you require a guide, please book in advance

Meal Times

	Summer	Winter
Breakfast	7:15 – 9:30	7:15 – 9:30
Lunch	12:00 – 14:00	12:00 – 14:00
Dinner (<i>Set Menu</i>)	19:30 – 22:00	18:30 – 21:30

Please book in advance for meals!

If you are Vegetarian or if you have any special dietary requirements, please inform us in accordingly!



Hiking Map



SUNSET TRAIL - 1 HOUR, 4 km (follow the RED arrows)
(START: Campsite)



SCHUTZTRUPPE TRAIL - 3 HOURS, 10 km (follow the YELLOW arrows)
(START: Geisterschlucht or Campsite)



GEISTER TRAIL - 4 HOURS, 12 km (follow the GREEN arrows)
(START: Geisterschlucht or Eagles Nest)



EAGLE TRAIL - 5 HOURS, 12 km (follow the BLUE arrows)
(START: Eagles Nest)



MOUNTAIN TRAIL - 2 HOURS, 6 km (follow the BLACK arrows)
(START: Geisterschlucht or Eagles Nest)



SCHLANGEN TRAIL - 2 HOURS, 5 km (follow the BROWN arrows)
(START: Desert Horse Inn or Campsite)



CAUTION: Steep slope
(only for advanced hikers)



FARM ROADS



DRAINAGE LINES



LADDER



GATE

Map by: Christine Wulff, 2007



Aus - A place with many facets

THE HISTORY OF AUS

The history of Aus can be best described by alternating phases of economic success and social welfare of certain population groups and decline and insignificance of the settlement, followed by a next period of bustling activity.

1. AUS DURING PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL TIMES

For a long time the area of Aus hosted an important fountain for hunter-gatherers and nomadic Nama tribes who came by on their long way towards the coast. They called the place !Aus, what is loosely translated as "snake fountain". The fountain in the Aus mountains was the last good and reliable water source before entering the desert.

Small archaeological sites and rock paintings in the area document human occupation already long before European colonization. Stone tools and potshards, scattered at many places indicate small shelters that were semi-permanently oc-

cupied by hunter-gatherers and semi-nomadic tribes. Southern Namibia and in particular its coast had been the starting point for Namibia's economic colonization. In 1488, the Portuguese navigator and discoverer Bartolomeu Diaz landed at the Namibian coast and erected a cross on a stormy cliff close to a bay he named *Angra Pequena* (small bay). This sheltered bay at the otherwise inhospitable southern coastline would later host the town of Lüderitzbucht.

In the following hundreds of years, traders occasionally came to *Angra Pequena* where they traded goods with local Damara and Nama.

In the 18th and 19th century, due to European influence, the peoples of southern Namibia underwent a major social change from a kinship-based and pastoral society to a disrupted and underdeveloped group that became heavily dependent on missions and European trading goods.

In his *Namibian Chronology*, DIERKS notes, that: *"natural resources are irreparably destroyed (between 1760 and 1880 immense populations of seals, elephants, rhinoceroses and even giraffes in southern and central Namibia are wiped out). Old, well established skills such as the digging of wells with hard labour (or the manufacturing of household utensils) are lost with resulting dependencies on springs and fountains which again lead to the closure of whole settlements(...). New diseases are introduced from the Cape, i.e. smallpox, venereal diseases and alcoholism."*

In the meantime, missionaries travelled to Aus to investigate the potential of snake fountain. However, plans to plant wheat at Aus remained unrealized due to lack of enough water and care for the crops.



Stone tools found around Klein Aus
(Picture: Christine Wulff)

A phase of economic and infrastructural development begins

In 1882, a merchant from Bremen, Adolf Lüderitz, envisaged the potential of the southern coast as a trading gate towards the inland and planned to erect a station. Only one year later, Lüderitz' employee, Heinrich Vogelsang purchased the bay of Angra Pequena and surroundings from the Nama Captain Joseph Fredericks II of Bethany, including all mining rights in the sale.

The treaty had been a fraud - the German tradesman exploited the Captain's ignorance of the difference between a German mile (1 mile: 7,149 km) and the English mile (1,609 km) and claimed huge portions of land, including the area of Aus.

When Lüderitz visited Angra Pequena for the first time in October 1883, he also travelled inland to Bethany and stopped at the Aus fountain. It is noted, that Lüderitz with his companions found a Nama settlement in Aus, round huts nestled in a dry riverbed. The land belonged to the chief of Bethany who preferred the good water and grazing of Kubub and Aus, because the area was free of animal pests. Lüderitz' companions found copper at the prominent Aus neus (*a rocky outcrop just west of the today Aus*) but the deposits were not sufficient to be commercially exploited.

Soon after, Aus developed into a trading post, in order to link the interior (*already settled by missionaries*) with the coast.

Due to unsettled conditions regarding mining rights and land claims, the German government

promised to protect the territory sold to Lüderitz and hence supported German colonialist undertakings in Namibia. In August 1884, the German flag was officially hoisted at Angra Pequena. Immediately Lüderitz started to erect trading posts farther inland in Bethany, Aus and Kubub. They all made losses due to the limited purchasing power of the Nama who were engaged in an endless warfare with Herero tribes of the north.



Ox wagons on the Angra Pequena Bay Road

(Picture: courtesy Manfred Goldbeck)

While "protection" treaties between Germany and indigenous communities were signed and the "Congo Conference" in Berlin 1885 confirmed Germany's right to use the territory as a protectorate, the Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi vehemently opposed to sell any ground to the Germans and to sign protection treaties, which led to increasing tension and to the arrival of the first German Schutztruppe soldiers in 1888. In 1890, Germany officially declared its protectorate a "Crown Colony".

In this now beginning phase of diverse negotiations, skirmishes, open battles and the brutal defeat of the Ovaherero at the Waterberg in 1904, many development activities took place in the South of the colony. Lüderitzbucht became an important trading post, roads were upgraded and Kubub, just south-east of Aus became an agricultural station, breeding wool sheep and horses for the newly founded "Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft". The Kubub stud and post office were later turned into a military station after its destruction by Witbooi's troops.

In October 1904, life in the South of Namibia was



Camel troops were used to control the HINTERLAND between 1904-1914

(Picture: Walter Rusch collection)



shaken by the outbreak of the Nama-German War. Fearing, that the Nama peoples would experience the same fate as the Ovaherero, Hendrik Witbooi finally took up his arms and fought the colonists. Germany reacted with a hasty reinforcement of its troops and got involved in a guerilla warfare with the Namas; the war carried on for years with skirmishes again and again flaring up at different places.

In 1905, Germany approved the construction of the Lüderitzbucht- Aus railway line in order to reduce transport costs and to serve the increasing numbers of soldiers. Most Schutztruppe enforcement troops now disembarked at Lüderitzbucht. After Hendrik Witbooi was killed in 1905 and the skirmishes became less, the troops also turned their focus on securing the transport link between Lüderitzbucht and Aus. Native prisoners of war were forced to work for the railway and many died along the railway line. It is documented, that 2,014 Nama and Ovaherero prisoner



Hendrik Witbooi

were forced to help building the railway between 1906 and 1907; 1,359 of them died. Many more prisoners died in the concentration camp on the wind-swept and rocky Shark Island in Lüderitzbucht due to mistreatment, malnourishment and physical exhaustion.



The Schutztruppe

A continuing development for Aus

The new railway connection was officially opened in November 1906, which brought an economic push for Aus: hotels, cafés, shops and a post office opened their doors.

Traders and released Schutztruppe soldiers bought land around Aus and significantly contributed to the growth of the urban centre that functioned as a provisional and trading point.

In 1911 most land in the area was surveyed and allocated, also Boers from South Africa settled here then.

When the first diamond was found along the railway line on the 14th April 1908, many small and large diamond companies developed. This development offered many related economic opportunities for the Aus area; e.g. farmers started to deliver meat or milk products to the newly founded Kolmanskop Diamond Mine, 10 km east of Lüderitzbucht. Karakul sheep, introduced to the colony in 1907 also became an essential trading good.

Aus developed into an important urban centre with a police station, hotels, church, trading facilities, and crafts shops. Even a German school was opened in Aus in 1911; today the large building on the western outskirts of Aus hosts the Outdoor School.





A phase of decline for Aus

When the First World War started in 1914, many economic activities had to cease in Aus. Coming from the west, the South African troops reached Aus end of March 1915, after the town had been evacuated a couple of days before. Before, the Schutztruppe had been digging trenches and erecting ramparts all around Aus in order to defend the town. The remnants are still visible today close to the old town centre and on Klein-Aus Vista.

2. AUS UNDER SOUTH AFRICAN RULE (1915 – 1990)



The Prisoner of war camp

A short phase of development for Aus

The South African troops occupied Aus in 1915 and established a Prisoner of War Camp after the German forces had surrendered. The reservists of the Schutztruppe were allowed to turn back to their homes, while active troop members and the police were interned at Aus.

The history of the P.o.W. internment camp has been well documented by BRUWER (2003), and the ruins of the camp are still visible just east of Aus. The prisoners of war built shacks and huts against the cold, cultivated vegetable gardens and founded a sports and theatre group.

For Aus, the little urban centre with about

20 houses, two hotels and about 6 shops and warehouses, a time of bustling activity started with the establishment of the P.o.W. Camp.

However, an influenza outbreak in October and November 1918 took many lives among the prisoners and officers. In total, 55 prisoners and 50 members of the garrison lost their life due to the influenza. They are buried on the old local cemetery just north of Aus (watch out for the sign-board: Commonwealth War Graves).

A phase of general economic stagnation in Namibia that also affects Aus

After an interim period of South African military rule between 1915 and 1918, South Africa was confirmed as the mandatory power by the League of Nations (now United Nations). Shortly after, South Africa assumed ownership of the railway system and declared itself as the sovereign power in South West Africa (SWA).

In 1919, almost half of the German population was expelled from the territory, and in 1920 the former German colony was handed over to the South African Union as a C-Mandate. With the result that South Africa could administrate the territory as an integral part of its own country for the following 70 years.

No major investments into infrastructure were made during this time. Intentionally, the Union settled South African farmers and former soldiers in the mandated territory of SWA, but kept development low. The drilling of boreholes from the 1920s onwards made it possible to also settle people in less productive areas such as along the Great Escarpment, along the Restricted Diamond Area (Sperrgebiet) and the eastern border of SWA. Most of these settling activities proved to be economically unviable. The rest of South West Africa served as a producer for the Union. The focus was set on meat production, channelling into the creation of subsidised "meat monocultures", whilst other agricultural development was very low during this time.

With the upcoming motorized traffic, small settlements lost their function as stop-overs for the railway, while other settlements and towns along

already existing trunk roads became more important. Petrol stations and garages were built along these routes.

With the development of a railway connection between South Africa to SWA and the sole focus on the port of Walvis Bay, the town of Lüderitzbucht quickly lost its transport function, which led to a substantial economic decline. The railway line between Lüderitzbucht and Keetmanshoop lost its role as a provisioning backbone and dilapidated in the following decades. With being peripherally located and without an economically strong hinterland, Lüderitzbucht had no chance to remain economically strong.

This reflected on the strategic role of Aus as well. Even the lead and zinc, being exploited in Rosh Pinah south of Aus, were now transported on trucks to Walvis Bay which aggravated the economic isolation of Lüderitzbucht and its hinterland, continuing until independence in 1990. Aus could only retain its existence and provisional function due to its distance to other urban centres.

A phase of development for Aus

However, in the early 1950s, as the western world rebuilt itself after economic crisis and World War II, the Karakul trade experienced an absolute boom in the country. Farmers in the southern SWA could suddenly sell the pelts for good prices and many became rich almost over night. Supporting the booming karakul market, Aus

experienced an internal revival and provided the necessary infrastructure.

Also during this time, the South African Union started to enforce its segregation policy of the apartheid regime and instructed the development of the black township of Khaubeb north of the B4. The road functioned as a buffer zone between the "white" and the "black" residential areas of Aus.

Under the South African administration, ethnically segregated homelands were established, leading to the development of a number of poverty-stricken communal areas throughout the country. As a result, many urban centres experienced an influx of male contract labourers who needed to support their families, which could not sustain a living in the homelands.

A time of decline for Aus

The times of flourish came to an end when the karakul market collapsed in the 1980s due to anti pelt campaigns in Europe, when mining activities were relocated from Kolmanskop to Oranjemund and severe droughts hit the country. The already low amount of traffic, passing Aus towards Lüderitzbucht became even less without the diamond mine. Since the 1980s, many businesses in Aus had to close down due to lack of a sufficiently funded clientele, and schools closed due to lack of pupils since many people moved away in the attempt to make a better living elsewhere.

3.



*The former black township of Khaubeb
(Picture: Manfred Goldbeck 2004)*





INDEPENDENCE AND POST- INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENTS IN AUS (1990- TODAY)

On the 21st of March 1990, the territory of South West Africa was released into independence and renamed into Namibia. The apartheid policies were completely removed when a multi-party presidential democracy established itself in 1990 under the Presidency of Sam Nujoma. However, Namibia still suffers from its apartheid legacy in many different ways.

A continuing time of decline for Aus

First, independence did not offer significant changes for Aus. The economic decline was still continuing. In 1994, the village of Aus was even demoted to a settlement, meaning the loss of self-government. Today, Aus is governed by the regional council of the Karas Region, located in Keetmanshoop. Efforts are currently made to regain village status.

The way up again?

Today, a positive development for Aus is that zinc ore and lead from Rosh Pinah and the new Scorpion Zinc Mine south of Aus are again transported to Lüderitzbucht. When South Africa had to release its protectorate into independence, but kept Walvis Bay as a special economic zone, changes had to be made in the transport routes for trading goods, leading to the revival of the harbour of Lüderitzbucht. The ore is transported on the road by trucks. Due to the severe dust development, the road between Rosh Pinah and Aus was tarred to optimize its capacity for the trucks, and the dilapidated railway line between Aus and Lüderitzbucht is currently being rebuilt. Furthermore, the community-based tourism and development project in Aus aims at achieving broad-based financial and social benefits for the community while in the same time conserving the natural resources. Private tourism businesses in Aus and surroundings are doing well as more and more tourists visit the Southern Highlights.

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE IN AUS LIVE OFF?

Farming:

Agriculture is not an important part of Aus' economy anymore. Since Aus is an urban community, farming by residents can only be carried out on a small scale and generally does not have a commercial background. This perspective excludes the surrounding commercial farmers who in general are not residents of Aus.

Low carrying capacity and lack of water makes farming difficult on the Aus townlands. Horticulture is not practiced commercially in Aus or on the townlands.

Animal husbandry by previously disadvantaged residents is more common, but local livestock owners indicated, that they usually do not sell. A household survey, conducted in communal lands of the Karas region, reports that about 70% of interviewed households only sell livestock when they are in direct need of money.



Goat Kraal east of Aus, animals returning from grazing in the evening
(Picture: Christine Wulff 2005)

Predators and cold snaps can pose a threat to smallstock. One serious cold snap, reported for June 2004, led to the loss of more than 200 smallstock amongst the Aus farmers, when sudden rain and freezing weather conditions hit the area. According to a household survey, there is no livestock- owning household in Aus that solely sustains its livelihood from animal husbandry. Hence farming activities in Aus and its townlands are mainly of subsistence nature.

The Industry and the Tertiary Sector:

Currently there is no industry in Aus and its vicinity. However recently, explorations were made in the area regarding the uranium content in the calcrete paleo-channel of the Koichab. The Kubub and Aus granite gneisses and other intrusive granites in the area are known to be radioactive and that their erosion material has been deposited in the paleo- channel of the Koichab as uranium-rich carnotite. It is to question though, if these enterprises, if realized, will much contribute to Aus' economy and if it always justifies the potential negative environmental impact (personal opinion!).

The service sector and construction works are more important for the settlement. The main employers are currently the Trans Namib Holding (railway), roadworks, the Marmer Junior Secondary school and the Outdoor School, the settlement council, the police and the tourism industry.

Regarding tourism, Klein-Aus Vista is the largest tourism enterprise in the area and currently employs around 50 community members. The Bahnhof Hotel and Namib Garage also offer quality accommodation and restaurant services to guests and jobs to local residents

There are also several small shops and shebeens (local bars) located in Khaubeb, that generate income for local individuals and are therefore an important factor for the local informal economy. However, shebeens in Namibia received a somewhat negative reputation; they are said to assist alcohol abuse with its side- effects such as adverse health impacts and increased domestic violence. The Namibian government currently tries to regulate these businesses with forcing owners to apply for official licenses and not easily handing out new licenses.

Various additional livelihood strategies secure households apart from cash income; more than half of the Aus households depend on more than one activity to sustain their livelihoods. The less livelihood activities households have, the more important is the cash income, which is generally

a characteristic of urbanized households. However, the community of Aus, being so marginally located and with commonage land at hand, can diversify its livelihood strategies in a rather rural way.

Important household activities are formal and informal employment, receiving pension or remittances, the collection of fuel wood, livestock production and the collection of edible or medicinal plants.

THE POPULATION

Population figures for Aus are somewhat nebulous. In the National Population and Housing Census from 2001, the population number in 2001 was estimated 691 residents.

However, the residents of Aus themselves estimate a much higher population number. School children and employees, staying away from Aus most of the year, are returning home at specific times of the year.

About 200 households try to make a living in Aus. Most residents of Aus live in the former black residential area of Khaubeb; a smaller part of the population resides in the old town centre or in homesteads on the townlands.

Literacy rates amongst interviewed household heads are comparatively high, only 18 % did not receive any formal schooling.

Households in Aus are dominated by young peo-



*Kindergarten Farewell Party in Aus
(Picture: Christine Wulff)*





ple. 71 % of household members are in the age between 0 and 34 years; the largest group being in the age of 0- 14 years, making up about 34 %.

Languages spoken

Population groups in Namibia are generally not ethnically distinguished any longer, but by their language spoken. The main languages spoken in Aus are listed in the table below.

Main languages spoken in Aus in % of population, including changes from 1981 to 2001 according to the National Population Census of 1981 and 2001

Main languages spoken:		
	in 1981(%)	in 2001 (%)
Nama/ Damara	38	33
Oshiwambo	13	17
Afrikaans	40	49
Other	9	1



The Afrikaans speaking group is the strongest, followed by the Nama/Damara language group. Most likely, this is due to the fact that Aus lies in the traditional settling area of Nama speaking groups, and furthermore that many Afrikaans speaking people were settled in the former German dominated regions during apartheid. This resettlement programme of the apartheid era was designed to break the majority of German speaking communities and to resettle farms that were previously occupied by expelled Germans. Influx of Oshiwambo speaking people on a larger scale only happened after independence when people were free to settle where ever they liked.

Oshiwambo speaking people also moved into the South due to problems of overpopulation in the north and because they were offered jobs in formerly Nama/Damara dominated areas.

Lifestyles

Lifestyles in Aus are characterized by a mixture of urban and rural, modern and traditional elements.

Differences among the social groups are obvious and are sometimes aggravated through differing income levels and ways of life. The settlement needs to be called a fairly modern urban centre where true traditional lifestyles did not survive; the settlement activities of the Germans from 1883 onwards initiated the slow death of traditional lifestyles.

The majority of the population lives in Khaubeb, the formerly black "location", either in the brick houses (erected during apartheid and onwards) or in houses made from corrugated zinc plates. Khaubeb is also the part of town where the night-life and active community life is going on, the old town centre in comparison appears rather sleepy and is dominated by Afrikaans speaking white or coloured people and government workers.

Contemporary lifestyles in Aus integrate traditional cultural elements with urban livelihood strategies, which poses an interesting mixture that can best be experienced in Khaubeb. The following depicts general contemporary lifestyle features.

- Animal Husbandry

Traditionally, the keeping of smallstock is an important feature in semi- nomadic societies. In the past, the Nama societies of southern Namibia depended on subsistence cattle and sheep farming, supplemented by hunting and gathering activities. Goats were only acquired much later from eastern Tswana tribes. Milk from the livestock was traditionally drunk fresh and was not allowed to turn sour, as being usual amongst the Ovambo and other Bantu cultures. However the Nama societies lost many of their livelihood practices and skills during the era of missionary



activities and colonization.

For a long time, the Nama peoples in the area were sheep and cattle farmers, but poor rangeland conditions and prevailing droughts in the 20th century made many local farmers shifting to goats. Goats are generally hardier than sheep and can still produce under very bad conditions and are thus preferred today.

The agro-pastoral Ovambo societies of the north of Namibia relied on subsistence crop farming and livestock rearing, mainly large stock. Large stock is seldom slaughtered and is mainly regarded as a status symbol.

Livestock traditionally functions as a bank and large herds show the wealth of the household. Today, due to difficult access to banking infrastructure, rural communities still keep their money mainly in form of livestock.

During apartheid, different ethnic groups were restricted to established homelands; Nama societies were predominantly concentrated in several reserves in the Karas and Hardap regions. In these communal areas the keeping of livestock has been the major, however restricted, livelihood strategy.

During apartheid, the situation in Aus was different, since native people were only allowed to live in or close to the town when they had work. In general, they were not allowed to keep livestock close to the town, since the scarce grazing resources on the townlands were reserved for

white inhabitants.

Most livestock-owners in Aus only started with animal husbandry in the last 2 decades.

Many non-livestock owning households indicated that they wish to own livestock as well: a household survey report notes that 54 % of respondents wish to keep livestock, but 53% just cannot afford buying stock under current conditions. Thus one can assume that livestock is still an important part of the local lifestyle and a common practice in diversifying livelihood strategies.

- Religion

During the 20th century, most of the Nama, Damara and Herero tribes of Namibia were exposed to intensive Christianisation. Even though many of them joined Christian denominations, traditional religious elements are still found in modern religious views. A common phenomenon is a fusion of the Christian and the traditional religions. Besides believing in the Trinity of the Christian religion, many Nama in Namibia still believe in traditional gods and their powers and further worship ancestral spirits. The fear of ghosts, who might materialize in particular animals is still strong.

The church plays an important role for many residents of Aus, disregarding the different ethnic backgrounds. Several religious denominations occupy buildings in the old town centre or in Khaubeb, leading an active church life. Singing and dancing are important features in the different religious communities and unify many residents during church services every Sunday.

- Handiwork

The production of handicrafts or arts is currently not a regular practice for most of the households. Nevertheless, residents indicated that there are several products that are made locally for own use. These range from hand-made clothes and shoes, over jewelry, ornaments and baskets to donkey carts and woodwork. Horns from hunted game or domestic animals are turned into snuff holders and skins are processed into several different leather products. Being asked why people



Nama Culture Group

did not use existing skills commercially, it was unanimously stated that lack of funds and equipment, ignorance of markets and lack of workshop facilities are hampering the establishment of small enterprises. Klein-Aus Vista tries to motivate individuals to produce products that can be sold in the curio shop.

- Ethno-botanical knowledge

Collection of indigenous plants has always been an important element of Namibia's indigenous cultures. Knowledge on medicinal and edible plants was transferred from generation to generation and was vital for the survival during times of ailment and hunger. The wild foods (food supplements gathered from the environment) were an essential part of the diet.

Elderly community members can still have significant botanical knowledge, but many young people, growing up in urban centres have little connection to the natural heritage and furthermore often feel that traditional knowledge is replaced by scientific knowledge anyway.

Residents of Aus stated, that collection of plants is still taking place, but some species are said to have become less. This was confirmed during the household survey, where most respondents indicated that they are regularly collecting medicinal plants, fuel wood or succulents for their gardens. The most important medicinal plants collected are *Sutherlandia frutescens*, *Aloe spp* and *Hoodia sp*. Other species were also mentioned, but only by their local name.

There are many more plant species occurring in the area that have well-known healing virtues. Please refer to our brochure on useful plants in our area.

- Folk tales and local stories

Story telling and folk tales have an important part in the Khoisan culture. San, Nama and Damara own a large repertoire of folktales that for instance tell of the famous trickster Heitsi Eibib or Haiseb (also referred to as the Nature God) or are instructive stories about animals. Different ani-



Ovambo Culture Group

mals represent different characters that are continuously featuring in the different tales.

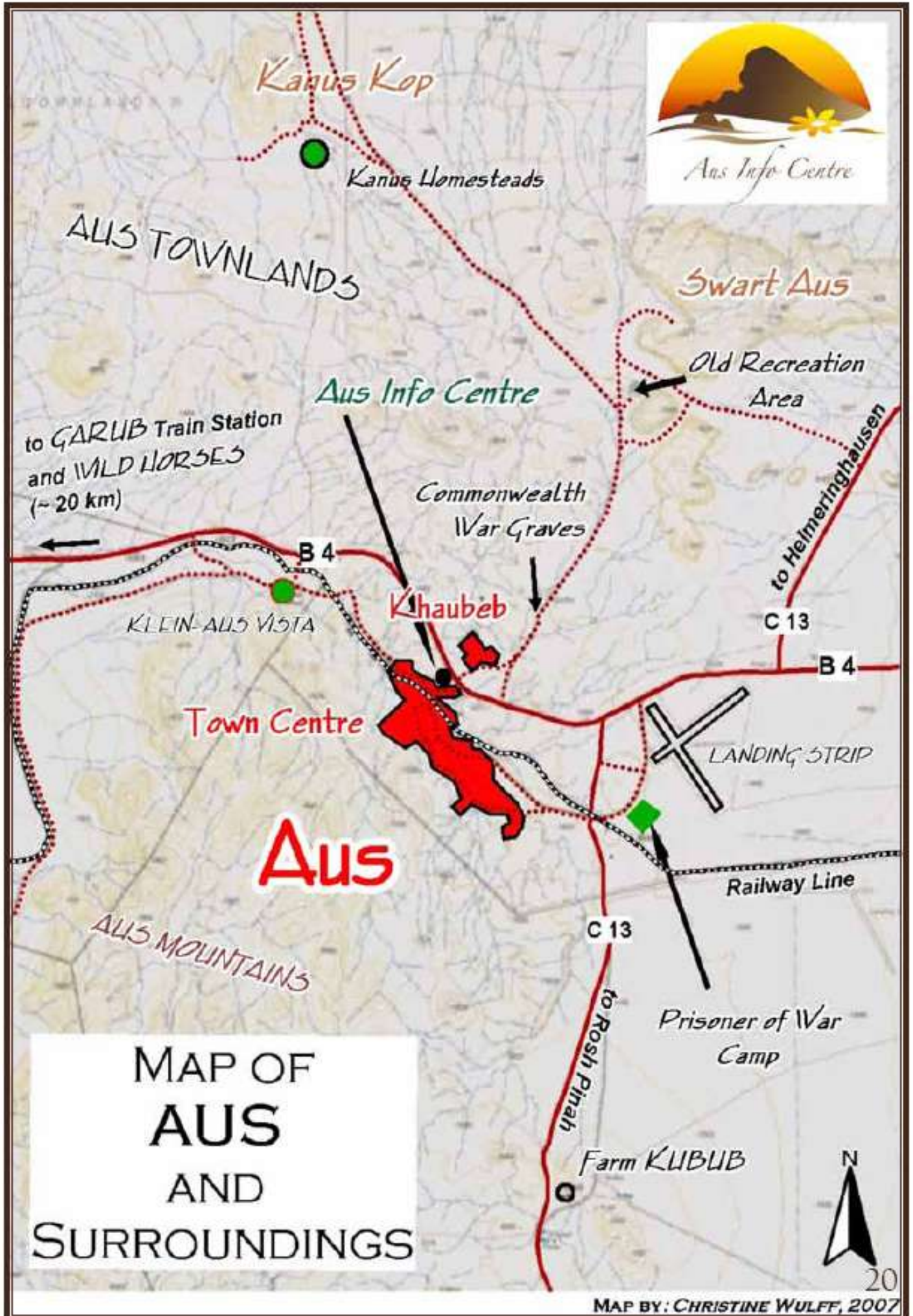
Apart from folk tales, there are countless stories told that deal with important local incidents throughout Namibia. Stories are often told around the fire in the night. The fire is an integral part of Khoisan tradition; many households constantly have a fire burning, which is the core element of homeliness and vitality of the household. Today, Aus has two cultural groups that sing and dance (and are telling stories in their songs) at local events and sometimes for groups at Klein-Aus Vista.

Preserving culture through tourism was considered important by the community, but it is however also important to consider modern lifestyles in Aus as part of the local identity.

Source

Wulff, C. 2006: *Promoting Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development through Geotourism? A Geotourism Concept for the community of Aus (Karas Region, Namibia).* Masters Thesis in Geography, Hamburg





One Night in Aus

WRITTEN BY
LAWRENCE GEORGE GREEN

Taken from the book "To the river's end"
Chapter Fifteen
(Approximately 1960's)

I am wandering away from the Orange River again, northwards this time, leaving the river at Sendeling's Drift and following the old, rough missionary trail for 120 miles to Aus.

Aus is the German word for "out", and when you reach the mountain village of Aus you are out of the Namib Desert. Yet that easy explanation did not satisfy me. I went deeper into the origin, and found that the Hottentots have a word Aus pronounced with a click, and meaning the "Big Snake". This bowl in the mountains was known to them as click-Aus long before the Germans entered the country.

Nevertheless I was pleased to arrive Aus from Luderitz, for the first twenty miles of the desert journey ranks as an ordeal. The officer in charge of the Diamond Detective Department escorted me in his jeep and pushed me up a steep sandhill when I stuck. Without that help it would have meant a long struggle with the encroaching dune. One fearsome stretch of sand on this route is called the "lange jammer", the long grief; and another part, where sharp rocks jut up from the sand, has been

named "the piggeries".

The Germans spent £ 10,000 a year on cleaning the railway line of sand, and the South African Railways still have to maintain large gangs of shovellers. You can drive through the Kalahari without encountering the sand problems which must be solved on the main road between Luderitz and Aus.

Camels hauling wagons often took a month to reach Aus from the coast in the early days. The ruins of the old forage stations and water depots are still dotted across the desert. Donkey transport proved more satisfactory: but in 1906 the railway

reached Aus and put an end to a chapter of painful pioneering. The main train takes eight hours to cover the eighty-six miles uphill from Luderitz to Aus. In other words, the time-table has not been altered for forty years.

Aus village, 4,700 feet above sea level, grew up round the railway station. The wooden houses like chalets, and especially the quaint wooden Bahnhof Hotel, give

a Swiss atmosphere to the place. I spent a night at the Bahnhofs, and heard the story of Aus from a man who had lived in the district since 1904 --- certainly the oldest white resident. Herr F. P. Izko, with his shaven head, black eyebrows and moustache, peaked cap, leather jacket, beer and cigar, made me see Aus as an outpost of adventures.

It has the coldest winter climate in South-West Africa. Sometimes the snow is three feet deep, and



*The train passing Aus on the way to Luderitz
(Picture: Christine Wulff 2005)*



Izko remembers the bitter winter of 1904, when a whole part of trekkers and their oxen perished in the snow four miles from Aus. Travelling in such weather, Izko covered his camels with blankets and lit fires round them ---- and then found three dead camels in the morning.

Among other peculiarities of Aus weather are the earthquakes and the windstorms. Izko told me that his wife was thrown off her chair on the farm during an earthquake a few years ago, and the tremor left a six-inch gap in his dam. One wind-storm raged almost incessantly for eight months and left the veld bare.

Izko has been a soldier, transport rider, diamond digger and farmer. His farm is fifty-six miles from Aus, but the air is often so clear that he can follow the lights of a car leaving the village. Farms are enormous in this district, for the rainfall of four inches a year does not provide rich grazing. You need 10.000 morgen for your karakuls on the fringe of the Namib at Aus, and one farmer has 60.000 morgen. Izko bought his land at ninepence a morgen.

Springbok migrated past Aus in millions early this century. They ploughed up the veld with their hooves and destroyed the grazing; so the Germans turned machine-guns on the springbok hordes. Izko saw herds of gemsbok two thousand strong in those days; and you can still find six or eight hundred in a heard near Aus.

The mountains round Aus give shelter to many leopards, and lions have not yet been exterminated, Izko told me how "Sterk Hendrik" van der Merwe, the strong man of the district, strangled a leopard with his bare hands; and how another farmer shot and trapped fifty-six leopards within two years. Twelve years ago Izko was told by his labourers that there was a lion on his farm. His wife would not allow him to go to the spot alone, so he accompanied him ---- and shot the lion.

But Izko's most desperate encounter was with a gemsbok. He wounded it with last cartridge and then tried to kill it with a chopper. The gemsbok's horn pierced Izko's leg, and he could not move for six weeks. At last a Bushman named Eikamab, employed by Izko, offered to treat the wound. He

used a queer preparation of herbs and powdered gemsbok horn. Izko was cured.

Eikamab is still in Izko's farm. Four feet in height, he claims (like other elderly Bushmen) to be centenarian. He was a middle-aged man, says Eikamab, when the trader Luderitz arrived at Angra Pequena. That was in 1883. Long before that he acted as guide for Cornelius, leader of the Bethanie Hottentots, on desert hunting expeditions.

There are Bushman paintings in the mountains round Aus, and ostrich egg shells, beautifully painted, may be picked up in the caves. But to find the homes of wild Bushmen you will have to travel into the lonely mountains between Aus and the Orange River ---- and even then you will seldom see these elusive little people.



Aus had a large garrison when the Germans were at war with the Hottentots. It is the only place in South-West Africa immune from horse sickness, and the German cavalry barracks, were built there. "In this bar," recalled Izko with pride, "there were four barmaids, all very busy."

The garrison at Aus in 1914, when the South African troops landed at Luderitz and penetrated the Namib, was larger still ---- possibly 4,000 men. Izko had to climb the isolated mountain called Dikke Wilhelm (after Kaiser Wilhelm II) to set up a heliograph station. The South Africans expected a bitter struggle for Aus; but the Germans retreated after a mere skirmish, and left General McKenzie in possession of this valuable base on the inland plateau.

After the German surrender Aus Nek, just outside the village, became the internment camp for part of the defeated army. It was so cold in the tents in winter that the German received permission to build 500 mud houses. You can still see the ruins of these tiny buildings beside the road at Aus Nek; and it is not hard to imagine the monotonous years that 1,700 soldiers lived through in that bleak spot. The engineers in the camp built a clock large enough for a town hall, using all sorts of oddments for the machinery. When the clock chimed, as it did every quarter of an hour, the sound rang through Aus a mile and a half away.

There was an aerodrome with a powerful wireless station at Aus Nek as far back as 1914, and a German pilot named Fiedler made a number of flights over the South African lines. During the 1939-1945 War the Aus aerodrome was used again --- this time by the South African Force Squadron patrolling the coast in search of submarines. So the relics of two wars from a roadside contrast; the old mud huts, and beyond the modern aircraft runways.

Reports of gold in the mountains round Aus started a rush in 1917, but although many claims were pegged, not one was found to be payable. Aus still lives in hopes of gold and copper discoveries. The only profitable mining in the area at present is a graphite deposit.

Aus once had its own mineral water factory, but now the water is sent to Luderitz for bottling.

The Aus farms supply Luderitz with mutton, and vegetables are grown on smallholdings in the village.

On the outskirts of Aus I noticed a Red Cross sign, and learnt that this was the little hospital which the late Dr. O. von Lossow started out of his own pocket. This brilliant German surgeon and physician flew to England as a consultant during the last illness of King Georg V. Soon afterwards, tiring of Hitler, he settled in Luderitz.

Dr. von Lossow, though not really wealthy, made a point of giving his professional services free to everyone. He would not even cash a government cheque. Rich and poor received the same skilled attention. One of his patients had to be sent to Cape Town for treatment, and Dr. von Lossow hired a special railway coach to ensure a comfortable journey. He preferred going on foot to see his patients, and was often observed trudging out to Kolmanskop, a distance of ten miles, carrying his instruments.

All Luderitz subscribed for a gift of silver plate when it was announced that Dr. von Lossow had married the sister in charge of the Aus hospital. The wedding gift was displayed in a shop window. Then all Luderitz mourned when news came that the beloved doctor had been drowned while bathing during his honeymoon. He left £10,000 but he must have spent far more on his patients.

Another sign of benevolence in Aus is the Roman



The Bahnhof Hotel in Aus around 19__





Catholic mission in charge of Father Ball. This elderly man became a priest late in life after a business career. In 1930 he bought the ground on which the mission stands, and received funds to build the church nine years later.

Father Ball lives with his flock in the utmost simplicity. An occasional cigar is his only luxury. He has twenty Bushman children at the mission, and several adults who run away immediately at the sight of a stranger. One old Bushman woman always remains, however, and I saw her sitting in a "skerm" in the courtyard. There she eats and sleeps, moving indoors only when it rains, and never doing a stroke of work. Father Ball declares that his Bushmen are pure-blooded specimens, and that several scientists have visited the mission to study them. All the native races of South-West Africa are represented among his congregation of more than 250 people. Finally there is the wooden Bahnhofs Hotel, so full of character and memories. Over the door in the bar, where I am sitting with Herr Izko drinking light Windhoek beer, is a magnificent ship model. She is the five-masted Potosi in full sail, once the largest sailing ship in the world and the pride of Germany. What is she doing here with a desert between her and the sea? Izko says a bored sailor, interned at Aus, made this model more than four feet in length. It is complete, even to the oars in the lifeboats. Having made it, the sailor exchanged it for a case of beer. The Potosi still gi-



Aus around 19__

ves a nautical touch to this Alpine inn at Aus. The village is full of carvings, woodwork and other oddments from the internment camp. There are handsome carved chairs in the hotel bar, and a massive sideboard that must have made a wagon-load when it came up from the coast. In the hotel garden, just outside my room, is a round pond with goldfish half covered with lilies and surrounded by bamboo, acacia and desert plants. I should like to have been in Aus when there were four barmaids serving the beer. Izko says those were great days. Baron von Wolf, the man who built a castle in the wilderness to the north of Aus, stood at this bar and refreshed himself during the long journey to Duwisib. And there was another baron who always wanted to sell his title for a bottle of champagne.

To-night they are playing chess in the bar. This outpost in the mountains is quiet save for the evil wind that batters against the wooden walls. I must be thankful, however, for to-night there is no snow. Aus is quiet after adventurous interludes; but Izko has made me see shadows in the bar. Diamond prospectors, soldiers in field-grey and khaki, transport drivers coming in for their first drink after the fortnight's ox-wagon trek from Luderitz, swaggering Prussian officers and a thirsty old sailorman parting with year's work for a case of beer.

Aus is only a little village in the mountains, but I would gladly pass another evening in the bar at the Bahnhofs Hotel, listening and picturing the episodes in the life of a pioneer village.



Soldiers inside the prisoner of war camp.

The History of Klein Aus

The settlement of Aus is located on the edge of the Great Escarpment, snuggled against the Aus Mountains where, in the early times, natural springs delivered water to bypassing Nama and San people.

The name !Aus is derived from the Khoisan language and means "snake fountain". Most likely the Germans could not pronounce that word and it became "Aus", which also expressed their relief when they, coming from the coast, had safely arrived "aus der Wueste" (out of the desert).....

Later, when Aus lost its importance as a trading and provisional post, people used to make jokes on Aus' costs, such as: "mit Aus ist es aus" (that's it, Aus has had it).

However, there were and still are people who loose their heart to this little village at the mountain edge ...

Dora Bolz writes:

"The heat of the day that was stuck in the house forced us to sit outside. Until late at night, we sit outside and marvel at the infinite starry sky. Sometimes, in nights of full moon, we walk the 3 km from Klein-Aus through the illuminated rock landscape to Aus to visit friends. When we are lucky there is a slight breeze, because Aus is lying on 1447 meter above sea level and 126 km away from the coast. Even if the dry heat of the day feels unbearable, every evening, you admire again the colourful panorama of the sunsets"

In 1905, when Germany approved the construction of the Luederitz- Aus railway line to reduce

transport costs, an increasing numbers of ships land at the brand new jetty in Luederitzbucht, bringing more and more Schutztruppe soldiers.

On one of these ships, the Lulu Bohlen, full of soldiers and horses is the 24 -year old Adam Bolz who lands in Luederitzbucht in 1906. Adam Bolz was born in 1882 close to Dortmund. After serving the royal infantry in Metz, he decided to volunteer for service in the German colony. Landing



Farewell photo of Adam Bolz in Germany (1906)

in Luederitzbucht must have been a bit of shock for the young man; farewell photos in front of a painted tableau that he had been taken of himself suggest a romantic Africa with waving palm trees, grassy plains and shady acacias.

The reality looked rather sobering. Because there is not enough water and grazing at the coast, the soldiers immediately have to proceed to Aus, getting used to the harsh desert environment on their way inland. On the way, the soldiers become saddle sore and so thirsty, that they drink whatever water they could get. After two days, they arrive

in Aus exhausted, sunburnt and with terrible diarrhoea. From people with more desert experience, they get the advice to drink condensed milk right out of the can. You can still find those cans on Klein-Aus and surroundings.

After a while, the vast open plains of the desert let Adam feel so free and happy that he decides to never return to Germany.





When the Schutztruppe forces were reduced in 1908, he decides to settle down and buys the farm Klein Aus from the German farmer Herr Bergemann. He starts to speculate with cattle and a bit later, opens a dairy and a butchery. He rides long distances and together with his companion Dirk Thibot drives cattle to Aus, which could be transported further by train to Luedritzbuht. While building a clay house on the farm, he sleeps under a piece of cloth, sheltered from the nightly breeze.

The new railway connection between Luederitz and Aus was officially opened in November 1906, which also meant an economic push for Aus. Hotels, cafes, shops and a post office opened and life became more comfortable.

The arrival of a train in Aus is always an important occasion. Long before the train enters the station, the locomotive utters a loud whistle, which is audible from far away. Then, curious residents flock to the train station in order to see if someone arrived whom they know and to exchange the latest gossip and news. Even a kiosk for refreshments opens at the Aus train station. When staying over lunch or night, the passengers can rest at the Bahnhof Hotel or Germania Hotel. Both hotels burnt down later, but whilst the Bahnhof Hotel was rebuilt, the foundations of the Germania hotel today carry the Roman-Catholic church.



A kiosk in Aus.

On invitation from the male population, more women come to the colony, the demand for German women to marry was difficult to cover and the German "Frauenbund" helps to find these brave women.

Dora Bolz writes:

"With their long white dresses, dainty buttoned boots and Art Nouveau prams, the European women add a surrealist note to the men's hard, rough and dusty world."



Mathilde Behrens
(Picture: Dora Bolz)

In 1908, the young Mathilde Behrens arrives in Warmbad to become the assistant of a Mrs. Boehmer, wife of the district magistrate. When the magistrate is transferred to Luederitzbuht, Tilly moves to Aus. Soon after, she meets Adam and they fall in love. In 1910, they marry and in 1911, they welcome their first son. Adam assists Tilly with the birth of all of their 5 children and the two are grateful that all their children are strong and healthy – infant mortality is still very high that time and there is no proper hospital in Aus yet. Some large tents close to the animal kraals serve as a hospital, but conditions are far from being hygienic.



Adam Bolz (left side) building trenches at Klein Aus

Adam and Tilly try all sorts of business, for instance selling cake and coffee to train passengers in Aus, taking in children from Luederitzbucht who needed to get away from the wind and humid conditions, or, with great success, sausage making. They also deliver milk products to the newly founded Kolmanskop Mine. The dairy products are loaded on the train and sent down to the coast.

Years later Adam buys the farm Ausweiche from the Railway Company and also begins to farm with Karakul sheep, introduced to the colony in 1907.

When the First World War began in 1914, many economic activities had to cease. Coming from the West, the South African troops reached Aus end of March 1915 after the village had been evacuated a couple of days before. The retreating German soldiers blew up the railway line, which delayed the arrival of the South African Union troops. One can still find pieces of the old railway tracks lying around on Klein-Aus Vista, completely destroyed and bent.

Adam Bolz serves again in the Schutztruppe and digs trenches and builds ramparts in the vicinity of Aus (still visible today). After the surrender of the Germans, active German troops as well as the police are interned at the Prisoner of War Camp in Aus, but luckily Adam Bolz can go home and carry on with farming.

At some stage, the Bolz family even hides and feeds two prisoners that had escaped from the internment camp. The unlucky escapers suffer a few days hidden in a rock chamber in a small riverbed between Desert Horse Inn and our campsite before they are caught and brought back to the camp.

The Bolz family become experts in the Karakul economy and one daughter (Friedel) and one son actively take part in the farming.

When Tilly and two of her daughters visit relatives in Germany, Adam decides that he wants to surprise her and builds their permanent home on the farm Klein Aus, which can still be seen today, shaded by a large Blue gum tree.



The private safety garnison at Klein Aus

Then, in 1939 the heavy cloud of the World War II darkens the southern sky and Adam Bolz and one of his sons, Fritz, are deported and interned in South Africa. Now Mathilde and her daughter Friedel have to take over all the different tasks on the farm and Friedel even assists other farmers' wives in the area that shared the same fate. Times are difficult, but members of the South African Air force, stationed in Aus exchange petrol for milk from Klein- Aus, which makes life a bit easier.

After seven years of internment, Adam and Fritz come back home, Friedel marries a Karakul tradesman and moves to the farm Tiras and Fritz takes over Klein-Aus.





Adam Bolz retires and lives in the small house that you see when entering the Klein-Aus homestead. Later, Friedel and her husband move back and take over the general store in Aus, which they keep for 25 years. Her husband even becomes mayor of Aus. Friedel also manages the Bahnhof Hotel in Aus for a while.

Fritz builds the new farmhouse on Klein Aus (now our restaurant), much to his fathers' dismay who thinks this was an unnecessary investment and that the old house was fine enough. Adam Bolz dies in 1961 and is buried next to his wife in the cemetery of Aus.

Friedel and her husband later live in Luederitz where she manages a guesthouse until she retires. Fritz and his wife Dora farm on Klein Aus until they sell the land with the dairy and the livestock to the Swiegers family in 1983 and move to Johannesburg.

Today, Dora Bolz, also born in Aus lives with her son in Mafikeng (South Africa). She did amazing research on the history of Aus, its surroundings and people, which culminated in a book "*Hard soos kameeldoringhout*" (As hard as camelthorn wood). Up to now, this book is unfortunately only available in Afrikaans.



Friedel Druker

Tannie Friedel Druker passed away 2008 in Luederitzbucht of old age, however, before she died, she told us many anecdotes and stories around the life on Klein-Aus. We are grateful for all this information, as it keeps the history of our land and its people alive for us.

Sources

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The farm house on Klein Aus before the UMBAU (around 19__)

A New Era Begins

In 1983 things change on Klein-Aus: the farm receives a new owner. The Swiegers family buys the 10 000 ha farm at the end of that year from Fritz Bolz.

A little look back ...

The family already looked back on a long history living in southern Africa. One side of the family, being of Dutch and German origin already came to Africa in the 17th century.

Grandfather Jan Swiegers came to Namibia in 1922 after fighting against General Lettow-Vorbeck in East Africa. He worked as a police officer and diamond detective at Witputz and Sendelingsdrif (close to Rosh Pinah) – a hard life of patrolling on camels and camping outside for long weeks. He married late, but had three children with his wife. When he retired from the police service, he bought a rocky farm named Akam between Bethanie and Aus, which his eldest son Willem Petrus Jacobus took over when he died. Willem, just 18, was thrown into managing the farm and did his best to care for his mother, sister and younger brother.

During a tennis event in Maltahoehe in 1962, Willem met the young Sophia from Usakos. Again they saw each other in 1963 in Bethanie, when

Sophia worked there as a teacher and fell in love. In 1964 Willem married Sophia Francis Reichert in Pretoria and took her back to Akam. Sophia mastered her new life on the farm well and gave birth to 5 children who enjoyed the rocky paradise as their huge playground.

However, the children also had their chores, for example moving rocks out of the road when

Grandpa came to visit, searching for lost sheep, helping mom in the flourishing and beautiful garden or opening all 10 gates from the farmhouse to the main road when they drove to town one in a while. Sophia and Willem always made sure that there was a new little gate opener when the previous one had to go to boarding school ...

Times were not always easy. Heavy droughts in the 1970's and 1980's threatened the survival of the sheep and the financial survival of the farmers.

However, farmers could apply for grazing in

other areas of the country that were better off. In times of this so-called Emergency Grazing government gave drought stricken farmers permission to graze their livestock for instance in the Sperrgebiet (Diamond Restricted Area).

Willem and Sophia Swiegers got to know the



The Swiegers Family at Francis TAUF 197_





area around Aus during these times of drought when the family trekked with all its sheep and necessary household items to the allocated piece of land – and

fell in love with the vast plains and inselbergs of the Southern Namib...

Despite the hardship of raising the children in a caravan and tent, constant lack of water, dust storms and heat, Sophia Swiegers still gets a particular glow in her eyes when telling about the times in the Sperrgebiet.

During these times, the family also stayed a little while on Klein-Aus and became friends with the Bolz family.

The Swiegers family moves to Klein-Aus...

When the chance arises, Willem Swiegers buys Klein Aus and moves the whole household including his wife Sophia, his three sons and two daughters and all the livestock to the new farm.

Taking over the farm, the small dairy and some of the cattle means new challenges for the family, which had up to now only farmed with Karakul sheep.

Sophia Swiegers develops the dairy step by step and delivers milk products to Aus and Luederitz. During the weekend, the children, back from school assist their mother.

Sophia also starts to bottle fruit juice from concentrate that she imports from Cape Town.

Distribution of the farm products is always difficult, so every week Sophia packs the car and drives to Luederitz herself.

When Willem, the youngest son comes back home after finishing his agricultural studies in South Africa, Sophia puts the dairy and juice business into his capable hands.

Later on, Willem hands it over to his older brother Piet, who expands the business further and begins to also bottle water from one of the boreholes on the farm. This liquid silver is pumped up from about 140 metres deep, after filtering

through aquiferous rock for thousands of years. Through all the years, Willem senior expands the cattle farming and carries on with Karakul breeding until the Karakul market crashes in 1985.

After experiencing the breakdown of the Karakul industry (*the Karakul sheep were known as the "Black Diamonds"*) and severe droughts, Namibia's South seems to have fallen into a deep economic sleep. Many people have to leave their farms and try to make a living somewhere else.



Willem Swiegers sen. during the ostrich farm period

However, in the early 1990's the ostrich industry starts to boom. With Namibia's independence, the law, restricting ostrich exportation by others than the South-African ostrich cartel is finally abolished.

Willem (Snr) sees the opportunity and starts to farm with ostriches, also exporting their eggs to the United States where one of the sons, Piet, is running an Ostrich Quarantine facility in Miami. Up to U\$250 are paid for a potential fertile egg. This industry however already collapses in 1996 and many farmers loose a lot of money.

On Klein-Aus Vista, only one ostrich couple is left of the once flourishing trade. Sir William and Delilah live in the camp close to the reception and entertain our guests with their dancing abilities and, once in a while, with their cute offspring.

With no political barriers left after independence, Namibia's tourism industry slowly begins to take shape. This poses a huge chance for the scenic Southern Namibia, which still suffers from

the droughts and economic failures as mentioned above.

Venturing into tourism...

Smelling new opportunities, Willem Swiegers (Jnr) enters the tourism market in 1995. Backed by his mother Sophia he builds a campsite and three rustic hikers' cabins, namely Feral Horse Chalet, Geisterschlucht and Eagles Nest.

Tourists enjoy the newly marked hiking trails through the Aus Mountains or experience the vastness and silence of the desert plains from horse-back.

After seven years spent overseas, Piet returns to Klein Aus in 1998 and joins his brother in the tourism business. Putting together ideas, skills and energy they develop the family business into the viable and successful lodge Klein-Aus Vista.

At Eagles Nest more rock chalets are built, each in a unique and rustic stile. Willem, together with his assistants break the rocks by hand from a specific place on the farm. As the business grows, 20 more rooms are added to the Desert Horse Inn in 2006.

In 2000, the farmhouse, until then lodging the family, is transformed into the Restaurant and first 3 rooms of the Desert Horse Inn.

Sophia and Willem Swiegers build a new house on top of the hill behind the restaurant and now overlook the bustle down at the lodge. They are always at hand with their most appreciated help and advice.

In 2001, Willem's girlfriend Ingeborg moves to the farm and assists in making the family business a success; she is responsible for the finances and booking systems. The two marry then in 2003. Recently Willem and Ingeborg have welcomed a new generation of Swiegers' on the farm, which adds a new sweetness to the family cake. Johann, the eldest brother, then a high school headmaster in Keetmanshoop makes a career change in 2003 and joins the family business. However, in 2009, Johann leaves the tourism business again to take over a butchery in Keet-

manshoop.

In end of 2006, another family member comes "home". Daughter Francis returns from South Africa and is now also part of the family business. She is responsible for the kitchen and the house-keeping department. Her husband Danie takes care of the maintenance and the wood workshop. In 2007, Piet marries Christine, who assists with bookkeeping, the curio shop and decorations.

But all the small tasks of the humming everyday life at the lodge could not be fulfilled without the capable hands of all our effective and friendly staff members.

About 50 people, mainly women from the community of Aus care for keeping up our standards and catering for all our guests' wishes. There are some career options for our staff here and we motivate our local employees to climb the career ladder close to home, instead of having to leave for larger towns and cities, since Aus is a good place to live and to raise children.

We hope that you enjoy your stay at our owner- managed lodge and wish you a safe further journey through our beautiful country!





The Endless View

LANDSCAPE HISTORY

Namibia's South is known for its vast open landscapes with mountain ranges and inselbergs protruding from wide gravel plains that are interlaced with riverbeds and uncountable small drainage lines. And – last but not least – there are dunes, part of the huge and ancient Namib Sand Sea or solitarily lined up as longitudinal dunes and sand ramps crawling up the numerous small mountains.

About 2 Billion years ago, most of the Earth was covered with water, only single cratons looked out of the primordial sea and formed the first stable parts of the Earth's early crust. During the following geological history, due to plate tectonic movements, the cratonic areas grew and combined to form supercontinents, that later broke apart to generate new independent continents. The first important orographic events in southern Africa were the development of two metamorphic formations, the *Vaalian* and the *Mokolian*, forming the oldest visible bedrock of Namibia. In southern Namibia, the *Mokolian* formed the *Namaqualand Metamorphic Complex*, which is prevalent in the Aus area. For instance, the Aus mountains, made of granitic gneiss are part of this complex. A special feature here are the prevalent garnetiferous biotite gneisses, also called *Augengneiss*. You can look out for these speckled rocks around Eagles Nest and the campsite. Inside the mountains,



The Kolchab Dune Belt

you can find a variety of coarse granite gneisses, pink quartz-feldspar rocks, quartz veins, biotite schists and dark amphibolites.

After long periods of erosion, volcanism, glaciation and orogeny, the old Gondwana supercontinent finally broke apart.

With the divergence of Africa and South America, the Atlantic Ocean developed and the Namibian coast was formed. Due to the parting of the continents, the fringe of the continental shelf rose upwards which helped forming the bowl-like structure of the *Kalahari Basin*, with the *Great Escarpment* as the edge of the bowl.

West of the escarpment we find the vast erosion plains that stretch down to the coast.

On a small coastal strip and off-shore, we find diamonds that were transported by the Orange river from the Kimberley area into the ocean and then deposited along the shores. With the rising of the continental shelf, the shoreline was continuously rising as well – that is why there are diamonds further inland in little valleys that previously formed shallow bays.

Landscape forming processes in southern Namibia show typical phenomena of the arid zone geomorphology. Due to the huge proportion of exposed bedrock, physical rock weathering and wind transport are the most important processes here. Yet the processes occur selectively strong due to local variations of vegetation cover, temperature, humidity and winds, further slope and aspect and finally varying structural properties of the different rocks.

Flying sand, being carried by the strong winds in the area contributes to rock weathering processes that often result in abrasive forms such as rock sculptures. The centres of origin of the sand are often left as desert pavements, while the centres of deposition show sand ramps, single sand

dunes or sand seas.

Changing temperatures during day and night and during the year lead to temperature induced rock surface expansion and contraction. The result is exfoliation and split rocks, in particular found in granitic material. Exfoliation can be seen in the typical granitic boulder structures around Eagles Nest, being referred to as onion-skin weathering. Moisture as a forming agent results in mechanical salt weathering and chemical weathering, showing in splitted rocks, desert varnish and cavernous weathering forms. You can see a fully split rock when walking on the Mountain Trail towards Geisterschlucht.



During the break-up of Gondwana, there were wetter periods in Namibia, that allowed substantial chemical weathering; vast amounts of material were transported into the ocean by large river systems. With drier climatic conditions, the rivers were not able to transport the material anymore, which can be observed in the Koichab riverbed north and east of Aus and also in the smaller river systems on Klein-Aus Vista. The relief got widely buried under the sediments, and increased evaporation fostered the development of calcrete crusts, to be seen down at the Wild Horses.

Soils are generally shallow and production is low due to the hampered chemical weathering and lack of rain. In lack of a sufficient organic topsoil layer, plant litter on the surface plays an important role in stabilizing top soil and promoting soil fertility and water infiltration. Is the litter removed by livestock or human impact, fertility is significantly reduced and water run-off and erosion are increased. You can see that especially along roads.

THE CLIMATE AND HYDROLOGY

Climatic conditions in Aus can be best described as cold winters with frosty nights, occasional snow, strong winds and fairly hot but dry summers with balmy nights. Lying at the fringe of the desert, it is affected by the desert's arid conditions with low summer rainfall; but on the other hand it benefits from winter rainfall and from occasional fog moving in from the coast.

In 1916, a General Joubert who has been stationed in Aus during winter, noted the following:

„(-) there seems to be no prevailing wind, and the wind may blow from three to four different directions in 24 hours, and vary from a calm to a storm. Dust and sandstorms are very frequent, and the occupants (of the Prisoner of War Camp) are often smothered in the sand. The temperature varied in September (1915) from 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the tents to freezing point. During one week there was snow, sleet, rain, mist, heat, sandstorm. According to the experience of our troops who are stationed here during the winter, ice and frost are of nightly occurrence”

Luckily, we are not exposed to the weather anymore like the prisoners were...

Groundwater is scarce and relatively deep, because the area lies on a high altitude (around 1.400 m.a.s.l.) and on top of a watershed. In the fractured bedrock around Aus, groundwater resources are limited and can be easily overutilized. Klein-Aus Vista has several boreholes that have to be utilized wisely and carefully in order to provide a sustainable water supply.

Recommended reading

- Grünert: Fascination of Geology
- Grünert: Namibias faszinierende Geologie

These books are available in our shop.

Source

Wulff, C. 2006: *Promoting Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development through Geotourism? A Geotourism Concept for the community of Aus (Karas Region, Namibia).*
Masters Thesis in Geography, Hamburg





Wild Horses of the Namib Desert

Relentlessly, the sun is beating down on the desert land. Rocks, rubble, sand; here and there a shrivelled shrub or a tuft of yellow grass. The Wild Horses in the area around Garub have a tough life. Rain is usually scarce and unreliable and years of drought are of regular occurrence. However, when the sun begins to set and the vast Garub plains are dipped in golden light, the horses seem to enjoy their habitat, playing, chasing each other, grooming and grazing.

HISTORY

Theories of the origin of the Namib Horses abound. A more romantic of the theories tells of a ship carrying thoroughbred horses that ran aground south of Lüderitz, and that these horses made their way through the desert to Garub. Another favorite anecdote is that the wife of Baron von Wolf who built the castle at Duwisib, opened the farm gates and set free his nearly 300 horses who ran off into the desert - also to Garub.

But considering the nature of horses, they tend to stay in the area they know as long as there is food and water, and will emigrate to neighbouring areas as a result of population pressure or food and water scarcity.

Therefore the most likely origin of the Garub horses is from horses that were lost in the vicinity of Garub and Aus, which leaves us looking at the people moving through or colonizing that area in the beginning of the 1900's.

This would include Nama herders, transporters, German farmers, the German Schutztruppe and Allied forces.

Considering the necessity of quite a number of horses to start a viable population, First World War activities between Aus and Garub seem to be the most likely contribution to the population.

A recent discovery in the archives could shed some light on the origin of these horses. At the time of the First World War a force of 10 000 Union soldiers with 6000 horses were stationed at Garub for 5 weeks.

A German aircraft dispatched bombs into a herd of 1 700 horses at Garub. It is believed that a number of these horses were not re-captured and formed the core of what we today refer to as the Namib Feral Horses.

Kubub station close to Aus was a horse stud



Kubub was a horse stud to breed mainly working horses and racing horses from ___ to ___

under the management of Emil Kreplin (*mayor of Lüderitzbucht from 1909 to 1914*) who supplied workhorses for mining purposes and racehorses for Lüderitzbucht. In the chaos of evacuating Aus before the Union troops marched in, some of these Kubub horses might have added to the



development of the horse herd at Garub. Today's horses show distinctive features that were already characteristic in those Kubub stud horses. Most likely, all these dispersed horses formed a herd and more or less stayed in the area. The surviving horses of the group formed the core of the feral horse herd of Garub. Problems for the horses occurred only later, when farmland was fenced off in the 1950s and they became restricted to the desert areas.

Important to note is that over the past 90 years other horses could have joined their ranks as well. Oral history records that feral horses were already roaming the area in the mid 20s.

For the first 70-80 years of their existence the horses lived predominantly in the Sperrgebiet Diamond area, which made them reasonably inaccessible to hunters and horse capturers – a saving grace for these horses. They also survived as a result of the goodwill of a few key people who ensured that there was water at Garub; one central figure was Jan Coetzer from CDM, who showed personal interest in the well being of the feral horses.

In times of drought, the horses often caused headlines far beyond the country borders. After rather unlucky captures and feeding schemes during drought, the horses and possible measures for their care were discussed at an expert meeting in November 2005. The question was also raised again if the horses should be there in the desert at all.

They can only survive in the harsh environment because of human assistance and in comparison with the game roaming in the park, they are an alien species in the desert. Plans to remove the horses were then dropped however. Since then, the horses are recognized as an own species and a huge tourist attraction and as such, they create earnings and jobs for local people in the Aus community. However, saying yes to the horses also means yes to their preservation. Recommendations were given for improved management. Sensible capture without serious damage to social structures, an additional water point and feeding as crisis management were mentioned. It was further agreed that a reference value for a stable population is 130 individuals, with short-term fluctuations between 80 and 180 horses.



ECOLOGY

The horses today reside in a core area of 350 km² of which the area north of the tar road belongs to the Namib Naukluft Park, the southern stretch to the Sperrgebiet National Park. This area is part of the Southern Desert vegetation type (*biome*) with patches of Succulent Karoo vegetation; it features vegetated sand dunes, gravel and calcrete plains with single inselbergs of which the mountain "Dik Willem" is a well-known landmark.

Trees mostly occur on the mountains, dunes and along dry river courses, the most remarkable tree is the Camelthorn Tree (*Acacia erioloba*).

The 3 main grass species that the horses utilize are short and tall bushman grass (*Stipagrostis obtusa* and *S. ciliata*) and weather love grass (*Eragrostis nindensis*). In some years after good winter rain, several species of annual flowers appear to paint the desert.

Indigenous game still occurs in the horses habitat and includes gemsbok (oryx), springbok, ostrich, steenbok, klipspringer, black backed jackal, bat eared fox, spotted hyena, leopard, rabbit, gerbil and other small mammals. Most of the bird species occur in the mountainous areas, which form a more diverse habitat.

Numerous insect species occur on the plains and are usually small and well camouflaged.

With the need for water, the horses are restricted to a certain area around one water point and the troughs at the public viewpoint.

In general the rainfall and thus the vegetation abundance decrease from East to West across the desert, it is clearly noticeable as you drive from Aus to Lüderitz. Due to the unpredictable and patchy rainfall during summer and winter, the horses move around within their habitat following the rain.

The availability of grazing and the prevailing temperatures influence the drinking frequency of the horses. When grass is abundant close to the troughs, they will drink every day. When grazing is far and temperatures low most horses will only drink once every third day.

The Namib horses spend most of their time grazing (71%) in times with average food availability. The rest of their time they spend sleeping (17%), playing and for comfort behaviour (3.5%) and trekking to the water (8.5%). When food is good and plenty, they decrease the time spent grazing and increase playing and comfort behaviour.





POPULATION DYNAMICS

It is estimated that the population of horses has fluctuated between 50 and 280 horses during their 90 years of existence.

The first census of the horses on record is an aerial count done in 1985 when 168 horses were counted, after that most likely the highest number of horses occurred in 1991 when 276 horses were counted. Several died during the 1992 drought and 104 were captured and sold for domestication.

Since December 1993 the horses were individually identified and accurate records of all births and deaths have been kept which showed that the population varied naturally between 89 and 149 horses.

The population consists of several family/breeding groups/bands and bachelor stallions. The breeding groups consist of one or more adult stallions, adult mares, their offspring and other juvenile fillies or colts; sometimes an "outsider" stallion also associates with the group. The breeding group size varies between 2 and 12 individuals. Bachelor stallions live alone or in small groups up to 4 individuals, they are not associated with a breeding group. The number and frequency of occurring group changes increase with human interference (such as captures) and severe stress during droughts.

The number of foals born each year depends mainly on the rainfall during the previous year



Population Statistic 2009

Male: 103

Female: 79

Total: 182

Foals '09: 8

Died '09: 2 Foals, 2 Stallions

Groups: 28

Bachelors: 25

and the number of breeding mares. Mortality rates are high, especially during the droughts such as in 1998. Under normal conditions the survival rate for foals is 70% and for adults under 20 years it is above 95%.

During droughts this changes dramatically and survival of foals drops to 25%; the rate also rapidly decreases for adults older than 15 years.

Deaths of several horses during droughts are a necessary natural population control method.

Removal of wild horses to domestication is not an ideal solution since it causes stress within the wild population as well as adaptation problems for the removed horses. Of the 104 horses removed in 1992, almost half had died within 5 years due to difficulties of adaptation to the changed conditions.

Mares in the herd have a greater energy demand when they carry and raise foals and therefore are affected by nutritional stress and old age much earlier than stallions. The male biased sex ratio among the Namib horses is in reality an advantage to the population since it contributes to genetic variability by the formation of smaller breeding groups rather than a few big groups.

Due to natural cycles and causes we will occasionally see sick or lame individuals or foals, which do not make it because they are too weak. We do not interfere with these natural phenomena and leave dead animals as a food source for the hyenas, jackals and leopards.



SOME RULES WHEN VISITING THE HORSES



In order to ensure the horses' and your own safety, please respect the following as listed below:

- Take special care on the tar road as horses may cross.
- Do not get too close to the horses at the drinking trough at Garub. Keep a distance of at least 30 meters.
- Do not touch any of the horses. If they come close themselves, please go a few meters away.
- Tourists often cause foals to be separated from their mothers. Keep your distance for your own protection, too.
- The horses are not aggressive, but serious injury may happen through their careless movements or kicks.
- Please refrain from feeding at all times. Feeding results in competitive behaviour and can cause colic in the horses, which are not used to other food.
- Kicking and biting one another puts foals at great risk.



To learn more about these stunning animals, please visit the Aus Info Centre, go on a guided tour with us and visit the website dedicated to the Wild Horses

www.wild-horses-namibia.com

The website also provides information on the Relief Fund for the Wild Horses:

You can actively help to preserve the freedom of the Wild Horses. Your donations will be used for

- steps to monitor and regulate the horse population for long-term preservation
- feeding operations during droughts to safeguard essential numbers
- research projects aiming at better understanding the horses and their habitat and improving their protection
- measures for increasing information and awareness among the public



You can either pay directly into the mentioned account, or slip a few coins into our donation can at reception.

Klein-Aus Vista further sells items related to the horses and a certain amount of each item sold goes to the Horse Fund.

Thanks to: Dr. Telane Greyling, Manfred Goldbek and Sven-Eric Kanzler

The Flora

Klein- Aus Vista is situated on the fringe of the Great Escarpment. In this area three biomes mingle and host an immense variety of plants.

Here the fragile ecosystem of the Namib Desert, the Nama Karoo with its rich displays of endemic annual flowers and xerophytes and the Succulent Karoo with its immense variety of succulent plants and other xerophytes meet. This high diversity results from the zigzagging boundaries of the winter rain area and the locally varying patterns of rocks, slopes, aspects and soils.

The Succulent Karoo biome stretches from the Cape Flora Reserve in South Africa along the coast into Namibia up to the northern boundary of the Sperrgebiet. With over 6000 plant species, and an unknown number of animal species, the Succulent Karoo is the world's most diverse arid environment. Further on, about 40 % of the species are endemic to the biome.

With this stunning diversity and high levels of endemism due to a complex array of habitats, the Succulent Karoo has become the first arid ecosystem that is recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot. Many of the species are threatened by human impact, including overgrazing, mining, illegal collection of wild plants and animals, uncontrolled tourism and further the impact of climate change. Awareness raising and local community projects help to relieve the pressure on this amazing ecosystem.

Klein Aus Vista sees itself in the lucky position to manage 51 000 hectares in this variety of dry-land ecosystems that have been transformed into a private nature park, called the Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park.

With good winter rains, the area transforms into a breathtaking flower carpet, sporting arrays of purple, pink, yellow, orange and white.



The Succulent flowers around Klein Aus in springtime



SOME USEFUL PLANTS OCCURRING ON KLEIN-AUS VISTA AND SURROUNDINGS

Sutherlandia frutescens

(*Fabaceae*)

A: *kalkhoenbos, kanherbos, wilde keurtjie*

E: *cancer bush*

G: *Krebsbush, Blasenstrauch*

Sutherlandia frutescens belongs to the pea and bean family (*Fabaceae*), which is known for fixing nitrogen in the soil through symbiosis with bacteria. It grows best in dry stony grasslands and occurs in both summer and winter rainfall areas. Often it is found on disturbed areas. The papery seedpods are dispersed by the wind.

This plant is widely known in southern Africa, has been used by many ethnic groups and received as many names. For hundreds of years, the Zulu warriors in South Africa used the plant to relax upon returning from battles. Its Zulu name „insiswa“ means „the one which takes away the dark“ and refers to its ability of relieving depression and sadness.

Sutherlandia frutescens is also the most collected medicinal plant in Aus and has an astonishing variety of healing virtues (see below). It was also treasured by European settlers as a cure for several small illnesses and for cancer, giving it the name of cancer bush or kankerbos.

The original inhabitants of the Cape, the Khoisan and Nama peoples, mainly used it as a decoction for washing wounds and took it internally to bring down fevers. Later, it was found out that the plant has many other healing attributes and it remained an important medicine until today. Its complex chemical compounds are scientifically researched and proven to be effective in the treatment of symptoms of serious illnesses such as cancer, TB or HIV/Aids. Utilized parts are the whole fruits that will be chewed, and the dried and ground whole herb, transferred into an infusion or tincture. The plant is also commercially harvested and processed into pills or teas.

● Traditional uses:

- mental and emotional stress
- irritability, anxiety and depression
- symptoms of flu
- asthma, tuberculosis, bronchitis
- constipation, heartburn, gastritis, diarrhoea
- urinary tract infections (gonorrhoea, cystitis)
- diabetes
- gout, rheumatoid arthritis and osteo-arthritis
- cancer (improves quality of life in patients with malignant tumours)
- hot flushes and irritability in menopause

● Modern medicinal research findings:

- treats wasting in TB, cancer and AIDS patients (improves appetite, resulting in weight gain and enhances mood, sleep patterns and exercise tolerance).
- has anti-viral, anti-microbial and anti-diabetic activities
- works as an energy booster
- relieves anxiety and depression





Hoodia spp (Apocynaceae)

KhoiSan: !Khoba, Xhoba

A: Bobbejaanghaap, bitterghaap, bokhorings

E: Hoodia

Hoodia spp is a spiny and perennial stem succulent. It naturally occurs in semi-deserts and is endemic to the arid zones of southern Africa. The plant is patchily distributed in different habitats such as sand and gravel plains and rocky outcrops.

It is slow growing, has a bitter taste and produces straw or maroon coloured flowers that smell of carrion, thus attracting flies as pollinators. The papery seed capsules are produced in October and November; its hairs work as a parachute for easy dispersal by wind and birds.

There are several Hoodia varieties occurring in southern Africa. But only Hoodia gordonii became famous because of its effect as an appetite and thirst suppressant. It is said that already early tribes of hunter-gatherers and nomads in southern Africa appreciated this effect. Hoodia gordonii has been widely and energetically researched and is cultivated in South Africa and Botswana.

Due to its medicinal virtues, Hoodia gordonii became a highly sought after plant in modern societies, suffering from obesity. The traditional knowledge of the desert tribes and the plant resource itself became exploited for western markets. Problems of illegal harvesting and illegal trade already widely occurred, which made the affected states of Namibia, South Africa and Botswana negotiating with major pharmaceutical companies to establish an innovative system of controlled harvesting and local processing. All Hoodia species are protected in Namibia, trade and harvesting require special authorization.

● Traditional uses:

- eaten as fresh food
- appetite suppressant (Hoodia gordonii)
- thirst quencher
- provides a state of alertness
- aphrodisiac
- cure against abdominal cramps,
- cure against hemorrhoids, tuberculosis, indigestion, hypertension, diabetes, colds

● Modern uses as:

- appetite suppressant (Hoodia gordonii)





Aloe spp (Aloaceae)

A: Aalwyn
E: aloe
G: Aloe

There are many different aloe species occurring in southern Namibia. For instance, the tree aloes became pretty famous: we know them as quiver trees. San tribes used to hollow out the stems and used them as quivers.

Smaller aloes with their distinctive oblong and succulent leaves and sticky leave sap are known for their various medicinal uses. Nowadays, we find aloe juice sold in health shops and as an ingredient in many cosmetic products.

● Traditional uses:

- as a laxative (sap)
- urinary incontinence (chopped leaves as a tea)
- arthritis, eczema, hypertension and stress (leaves and roots)
- treating skin ailments, bruises and burns (pure leaf sap or mixed with vaseline, externally)
- sinusitis and conjunctivitis (sap internally)
- treatment for gonorrhoea (sap and root)
- used as a remedy for horse sickness (leaves)
- a jam (chopped leaves cooked with sugar)



Cotyledon orbiculata (Crassulaceae)

A: plakkies, krimpsiektebos, varhoor
E: pig's ear

This succulent shrub can have round or oblong leaves with a waxy covering and bright red flowers. The plant can be a medicine or a poison. When eaten in quantities, it can cause tiring, trembling, impairment of kidney function, tachycardia and rapid breathing. In case of severe poisoning, animals bloat and develop cramps and can remain paralyzed for weeks or even die of this condition.

● Traditional uses:

- earache, toothache, sore throat, inflammation (juice)
- epilepsy and heart diseases (fresh juice or homeopathically; the plant's toxin works as a central nervous system depressant)
- intestinal worms (single leaf eaten)
- syphilis (leaf decoction internally)
- warts and corns, abscesses and boils (heated leaves or poultice, externally)



Eriocephalus spp
(Asteraceae)

A: kapokbos, wilde roosmaryn
E: wild rosemary

The perennial shrub preferably grows on clay and granite slopes and is very drought tolerant. The grey leaf colour reflects sunlight, thus reducing the surface temperature, tiny hairs covering the leaves trap moisture and aromatic oils reduce the water loss. The oblong leaves contain highly aromatic tannin, and on warm days the plant is usually visited by many bees, collecting nectar from the many little flowers while also pollinating the plant.

The shrub, widely distributed in the dry areas of southern Africa, became famous for its distinctive and strong scent that reminds of rosemary. Therefore European settlers called the plant wild rosemary or wilde roosmaryn, since it also almost has the same healing virtues as rosemary. The fruits of all *Eriocephalus* species develop fluffy heads that look like cotton wool or snow, giving the plant its other Afrikaans name of kapokbos (kapok= snow). It is said that the fruits were even commercially collected to stuff pillows. For medicinal purposes, fresh or dried twigs and leaves are used in a decoction or a tincture.

- Traditional uses:
 - coughs and colds (usually as tea, internally)
 - flatulence and colic (usually as tea, internally)
 - has invigorating effect on skin and hair (externally)



Kleinia longiflora
(Asteraceae)

A: sambokbos
G: Besengreiskraut

This succulent shrub shows long and narrow striped stems and tiny leaves that are shed. It develops hairy flowers and fruits on the tips of the stems. Despite its strange looks, this plant belongs to the daisy family. If overdosed, the plant's alkaloids can cause liver cirrhosis.

- Traditional uses:
 - body wash for childhood diseases (infusion from stems and leaves)
 - as sitzbath for women suffering from inadequate bleeding
 - for leg oedema (pounded stems as leg bath)
 - stomach complaints (root decoction)
 - insanity (root decoction)
 - to induce vomiting in cases of suspected poisoning (decoction)
 - digestive upsets (as tea or as enema)





Galenia africana
(Aizoaceae)

A: geelbos, kraalbos, perdebos
E: yellow bush
G: Kralbush

Galenia africana is a small shrub that has oblong sticky and aromatic leaves. With ageing, the leaves change colour from a fresh green to a yellow-green. This leaf succulent is widespread in southern Africa. In dry winters, the yellow-green leaves are a dominating element in the vegetation. For its colour it is also called yellow bush or geelbos. Another name in Afrikaans is kraalbos and refers to its habit of colonising damaged areas such as livestock kraals or trampled areas. It is recognized as an active invader. Besides other *Galenia* species, *Galenia africana* occurs in all habitats on Klein-Aus Vista. The extensive distribution of *Galenia* here is a sign for disturbed rangeland conditions deriving from the sheep farming in the past.

Galenia spp can threaten small stock significantly, since it is poisonous for sheep and goats. It is classified as a hepatotoxic and causes liver and heart damages. Symptoms in small stock are a swollen abdomen through water collection, apathy and ruminal stasis.

Besides being toxic, *Galenia* also has medicinal attributes. Overuse can however cause blisters on the oral mucus membranes.

● Traditional uses:

- toothache and for mouth cleansing (leaves chewed or as a mouth rinse)
- headache and fever (as decoction or infusion)
- eye infections, skin diseases (externally as lotion)
- to cleanse wounds (externally as lotion)



Psilocaulon spp
(Aizoaceae)

A: asbos, loogbos, seepbos
E: ash bush, soap bush

This stem succulent has been traditionally harvested and burnt: its alkali-rich ashes were used to prepare lye soap.

In some rural areas in southern Africa, soap is still produced this way and the harvested plant is also used as firewood and as a shelter around living areas in order to keep animals and strong winds out.

The fruits of all *Psilocaulon* species have a hygroscopic capsule that opens with strong rain. These weedy mesembs are often indicating disturbed habitats.



Mesembryanthemum guerichianum
(Aizoaceae)

A: *brakslaai*
E: *ice plant*
G: *Salzsalat*

This low-growing and very fleshy succulent received its English name from the appearance as if it is covered with ice crystals (bladder cells). The Afrikaans name means "brackish salad" and refers to its juiciness but salty taste. It is edible but can cause oxalic acid poisoning. The older the plant gets, the higher the salt content in the cells becomes.

The annual succulent has large green and fleshy leaves and produces large white or pinkish flowers and papery hygroscopic capsules. It is widely distributed in the desert habitats and is said to often indicate disturbed areas. Due to the alkaloid content, in the past the leaves were used to remove hair from hides in preparation for tanning and softening.



Sarcocaulon spp
(Geraniaceae)

A: *boesmankers*
E: *bushman's candle*

This low-growing stem succulent displays bright, but delicate flowers in yellow, salmon or pink during the months of winter rain. During the growth period, it displays tiny leaves that persist as strong thorns.

The stem bark has a waxy texture and is flammable. The hardness of the bark protects the plant from sandblasting and it burns with a bright and smoky flame, the smell reminds of incense.

The completely dry bark is a marvellous assistant in kindling fires. Look out for the hard, translucent and dark yellow pieces lying around. One species is also said to prevent miscarriage.



Acacia erioloba
(Fabaceae)

A: Kameeldoringboom

E: camelthorn tree, giraffe thorn

G: Kameldorn

The large tree is widely distributed in southern Africa and is commonly known under the name camelthorn tree or kameeldoringboom. The name refers to the Afrikaans name for giraffe (kameelperd). It received the name due to the fact that giraffes love to browse on the large canopy of the tree.

The tree is a flagship species and symbol of Namibia. The harsher its habitat, the more gnarled its trunk and expressive its appearance becomes. Young branches carry long and paired thorns and small feathery leaves. It occurs in a wide range of habitats, including woodland, grasslands and savannah. Most often it is found along dry river courses. The distinctive half-moon shaped velvety seedpods develop from its little round yellow flowers that cover the tree especially in September and October. The wood is very dense and has a hard dark core and no termite can destroy the wood.

The camelthorn tree is an important supplier of firewood for rural and even urban people in Namibia. The wood is also used as building material and for fencing. Further, the tree offers shade and provides nesting places for birds, especially for sociable weavers. The seedpods and leaves are important fodder supplements for animals during drought times. It is also said that cows, feeding on the seedpods increase their milk production. The bark produces a gluey substance that is edible for humans and animals alike.

Due to their manifold uses, camelthorn trees are in threat. Disregarding, that logging of trees on state land is prohibited and that camelthorn trees are protected under the Namibian Forest Ordinance, people are dependent on firewood and thus use this resource extensively.

● Traditional uses:

- headaches (burnt and ground bark, internally)
- lung conditions and coughs (leaf tea)
- stabbing chest pains (inner bark and thorns boiled together)
- diarrhoea (bark decoction)
- wound-healing effect (wood ash)
- ear infections (crushed seedpods, internally)
- tuberculosis, tooth ache (root, internally)
- gonorrhoea (gum)
- substitute for coffee (grounded and roasted seeds)
- perfume (powder from inner bark)



Boscia albitrunca

(Capparaceae)

A: witgat

E: shepherd's tree

G: Weisstamm

This tree is commonly known as shepherd's tree, since it provided shade for shepherds, herding their stock in almost treeless areas of southern Africa.

It is one of the few trees that is found in almost all habitats and can also grow on the slopes of dunes where it contributes to nutrient cycling. Its white bark and small dark and evergreen leathery leaves make the tree standing out and also gave it the Afrikaans name witgat for its white trunk. From August to September, the tree is covered with a mass of small yellowish flowers, succeeded by light brown fruits with a brittle shell.

Besides its various uses by humans, the tree is heavily browsed by game and domestic animals and hosts larvae of certain butterflies. The tree is protected by the Forestry Ordinance.



● Traditional uses:

- as syrup, flour, porridge or coffee substitute (made from boiled, ground or roasted roots)
- to produce curdled milk or promote fermentation of beer (pulverised roots)
- source of vitamin (fruits or flower buds, preserved in vinegar)
- wound healing (crushed leaves)
- to bring down high fevers (crushed leaves as a body wash)
- headaches (boiled leaves as steam bath)
- epilepsy (unripe fruit)
- upper and lower respiratory tract infections (branches and leaves chewed)

Source

Wulff, C., 2006: *Promoting Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development through Geotourism? A Geotourism Concept for the community of Aus (Karas Region, Namibia)*. Masters Thesis in Geography, Hamburg

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The Fauna

Our area, does not belong to the famous centres of Namibian wildlife where tourists come to visit the "Big Five" (lion, buffalo, elephant, rhino, leopard), since most of these species are lacking here. The attraction of the area lies in the general species diversity and especially in the many small animals that adapted marvelously to the harsh desert conditions.

Due to specialization and adaptation to the arid conditions, there are high levels of endemism found within the fauna. Endemic fauna occurring in the wider Aus area includes 1-3 bird species; 13-16 reptiles; 3-4 scorpions and 3-6 mammal species.

MAMMALS

Large herbivorous mammals occurring in the area are oryx, springbok and in much lesser frequency kudu. Domestic mammals are horses, donkeys and cattle. The omnivorous baboon also frequently occurs.

Populations of elephants, rhinoceroses, zebras and giraffes are said to have occurred here but were wiped out in southern Namibia during the 19th century by the early traders.

Smaller herbivorous mammals are steenbok, klipspringer, rabbits/hares and various small rodents, such as dassie rat, gerbil and sometimes rock hyrax. Other small mammals are ground squirrels, mongooses, bat-eared fox, porcupines and honey badgers. Winged mammals in the area are several bat species, living in the many crevices and niches of the rocky outcrops. Smaller domestic mammals are sheep and goats.

CARNIVOROUS MAMMALS

The most important predators in our area are spotted hyena, brown hyena and black-backed

jackal. Leopards can also occur in the shelter of the mountains. Smaller predators are genet, civet, polecat and African Wild Cat.

BIRDS

Birds make up a large part of the local fauna. There are said to be between 51 and 80 different bird species occurring here. A famous avian representative is the herbivorous ostrich. Other species are crows, several chats, finches, bustards, starlings and larks. The Barlow's lark for instance is strictly endemic to the Succulent Karoo. Furthermore there are different birds of prey hunting in the area, for example harriers, eagles, hawks, kestrels and owls. Lapped-face vultures can be observed close to the Koichab dunes.

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Due to the dry conditions, amphibians do not play a huge role in our area. However there are frog and toad species adapted to the arid conditions, which can be observed after efficient rains when they use the seasonally available water for breeding.

There are approximately between 51 and 60 different reptile species occurring here. Of these, there are about 5-6 different tortoise species, 31-40 lizard species, 21-30 snake species.

INVERTEBRATES

Invertebrates are an essential part of the ecosystem functions, for they ensure decomposition of plant litter, seed dispersal and pollination. Important representatives of the invertebrates are spiders, scorpions, solifuges, centipedes, millipedes and insects such as flies, wasps, bees, bugs and beetles which often take over the role of pollinators. Further there are crickets, dragonflies, moths, butterflies, locusts, grasshoppers, ants, termites and tiny collembola living in the soil.

SOME ANIMALS LIVING AT KLEIN-AUS VISTA

The following shows a selection of animals, ranging from tiny termites to graceful gemsboks that can be commonly found on Klein-Aus Vista and surroundings.

Take your time to explore our area on foot, by car or even by sitting on the veranda of your room.



4 - 10 mm



6 mm



13 mm

Body: 10 cm
Tail: 10 cm



Common Termites

(Family Termitidae)

These soft-bodied insects usually have a pale brown colour with a darker brown head and are found in colonies. Here in Aus and surroundings, termites do not build huge chimneys for ventilation, they only build very low mounds in bright orange or dark brown, depending on the soil colour. The real social life of the termites is happening below the surface, where huge termite cities criss-cross the underground.

Termites live mainly from grass and seeds, which they cut with their sharp mouthparts and drag it under ground. In our arid part of the world, termites are extremely important for the local distribution of moisture and nutrients because they concentrate organic matter underground. Thus they indirectly influence plant distribution since they locally optimize growth conditions for various plant species.

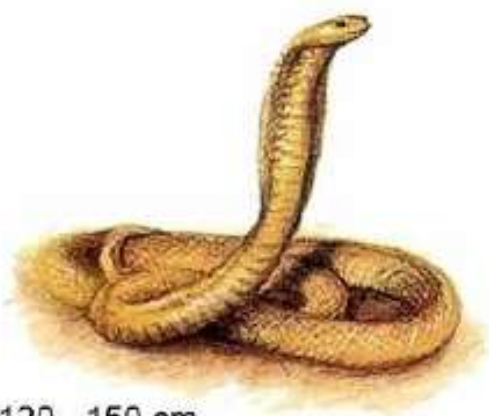
On the other hand they can have quite a destructive impact on our grazing resources. Termites carry away dry plant material in large amounts, and what is left will be blown away by the strong winds, if no rain is following in the next season.

Striped Mouse

(Rhabdomys pumilio)

These curious fellows are day active and sport 4 distinctive lighter strips on their backs. They move rapidly across the open spaces around the lodge where they forage on plant material, but also do not say no to little insects or bread crumbs and such. With the good rainy seasons of the previous years, they produced many young ones during the balmy summer months. In a period of dry years, their populations will decrease again significantly.





120 - 150 cm

Yellow Cape Cobra

(*Naja nivea*)

This slender and yellowy-brown snake can get up to 150 cm long and its bite can be pretty dangerous. The venom is neuro-toxic. It rears and spreads its broad hood before attacking. It can be seen during day along roads, under or in trees and between rocks when it hunts for small vertebrates and even other snakes. It is also known for raiding sociable weaver nests, so be careful when you stand directly under a large nest.



70 - 90 cm

Puff Adder

(*Bitis arietans*)

This thick-bodied snake is a lazy and bad-tempered fellow and is well camouflaged. Different to other snakes it normally does not move away before you almost step on it – it might only give a deep warning hiss and bites readily. Its cell-destroying venom causes massive swelling and pain. So be careful when walking through high grass or swerving around dark corners at night.

Its beautiful pattern shows dark brown and pale-edged chevrons on a lighter brown to beige body colour.

Puff adders are normally active at dusk when they ambush small mammals.



7 - 10 cm

Nama Padloper

(*Homopus sp. nov.*)

The only endemic tortoise in Namibia, the Nama padloper is found in the Aus area, which is of high conservation concern since all tortoise species are at risk in Namibia. There is even a touristic route named after this little tortoise, the Nama Padloper Route.



Southern Rock Agama

(*Agama atra*)

This plump-bodied and dragon-like reptile can be easily identified by its blue head, which is especially showy in breeding males. It is particularly funny to watch agamas making push-ups while sitting on rocks.

We often see them sitting on the rocks in our back garden, trying to catch small insects, which they then gulp down in one bite, licking their round snouts afterwards.



Common Barking Gecko

(*Ptenopus garrulous*)

We do not see them often, but we hear them clearly "barking" in warm summer nights when the males call the ladies while sitting in the entrances of their sand burrows. The shape of the burrow acts like a megaphone.

It has a round and yellow-brown speckled body with a smooth and short tail. Its feet do not have the adhesive pads as the nocturnal geckos that we often see on the ceilings and walls. By the way, nocturnal geckos eat a lot of insects, so actually they are a useful and harmless roommate.



Namaqua Chameleon

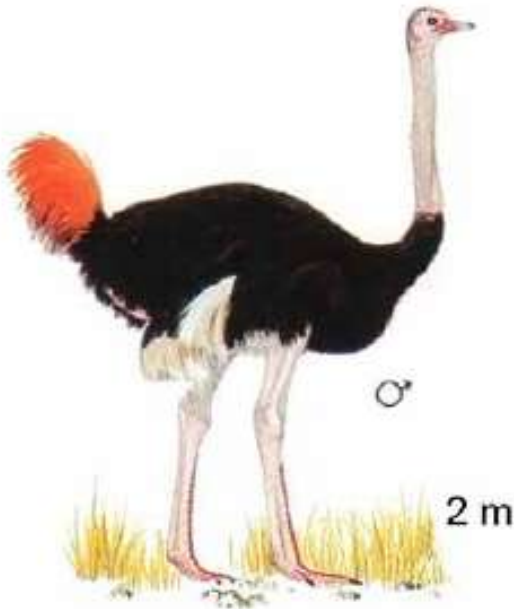
(*Chameleo namaquensis*)

This bulky-bodied chameleon is only found in arid regions and shows a distinctive knobby ridge along its backbone and a triangular head with strong jaws. It gobbles down large numbers of grasshoppers, beetles and even small lizards. When disturbed, it can extend its body to look bigger and can utter an aggressive hiss. The Namaqua chameleon is a champion of changing colours: in the morning when it is still cool, the chameleon turns almost black to absorb the sun's rays and to warm up. As the day gets hotter, it changes colour until it eventually becomes grey or even white which helps to reflect the heat.

Chameleons lay eggs in soft sand such as in road reserves, meaning that they have to occasionally cross the road.

When driving on our land, please have consideration for our little neighbours.





Ostrich

(*Struthio camelus*)

Ostriches are the largest birds on earth, but despite their wings, they are birds that cannot fly. However, the wings still have some use - ostriches use their wings to impress the other gender, to protect the hatchlings, to droop them for cooling or to play "wounded bird" in order to divert the enemy's attention away from the hatchlings or eggs. While the females have a greyish brown feather coat, the males are black with white wing tips and a white tail. Most of the time, we see them running on their big, three-toed feet, avoiding conflict situations. However, ostriches are excellent kick-boxers and their kick is extremely powerful.

The males utter a call that is something between a roar and a boom and sounds rather unnerving if you do not know what it is. When you sit on our restaurant terrace, you will most likely hear our ostrich Sir William "talking".



Spotted Eagle Owl

(*Bubo africanus*)

When up late, you may see these owls sitting on our entrance posts and checking out the happenings below on the ground. They can get up to 50 cm in height and with their large yellow eyes they see everything moving below and help us to keep the striped mice at bay. They sport feathery pointy ear extensions, which are clearly visible against the night sky.

In the silence of the night, you can hear their "wh-hu-whooo" -call traveling over the premises.



Pale Chanting Goshawk

(*Melierax canorus*)

This resident, pale-grey and red-legged bird of prey is a common sight on Klein-Aus Vista. It preferably perches on treetops or posts and watches out for potential prey. It even forages on the ground in search for small prey, peering under rocks and bushes. In the breeding season adults call loudly and melodiously while perching ("kleeeuw, kleeeuw, kleeeuw, klu-klu-klu").



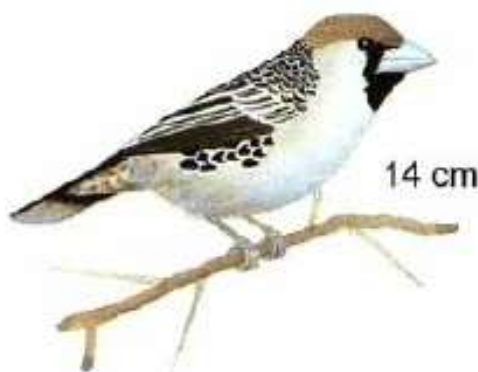
84 cm

African Black or Verreaux's Eagle

(*Aquila verreauxii*)

This fairly common resident gave the name to Eagles Nest. Watch out for its dark nests, clinging to the smooth and steep rock face above and south of the chalets.

This large black eagle has got a white V mark on its back and in flight it shows characteristic narrow-based wings with brownish parts towards the tips. You can see them gracefully circling over the Aus mountains and gorges, usually silent and in pairs.



14 cm

Sociable Weavers

(*Philetairus socius*)

Have you already seen their huge apartment blocks hanging in large camelthorn trees or telephone posts?

These little busy birds like to live closely together in big grass nests with hundreds of chambers with their entrance from below. These nests are superbly insulated; while outside temperatures rise and fall from blazing hot in summer to icy cold in winter, the temperature inside the nest hardly changes.

The Pygmy Falcon particularly seems to admire the nest structures and is often found to be moving into one of the unoccupied apartments. You can clearly see where it lives by looking for the white droppings at the entrance. The weavers welcome the falcons for they keep away predators such as snakes. In and out during the day, when dusk falls, the weavers are returning home, excitedly exchanging the happenings of the day with a loud chatter, twitter and chirp, before absolute silence spreads over the colony. Good night, little birds, see you tomorrow!

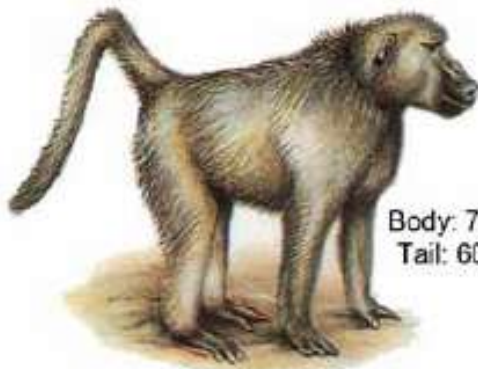


80 cm

Porcupine

(*Hystrix africaeaustralix*)

Porcupines are busy bodies, if however only from dusk till dawn. These gourmets especially take a liking in gardens and pot plants. We normally only see their foot spoors, gnawed-off plants and once in a while they honour us with leaving behind one of their black and white quills.



Body: 75 cm
Tail: 60 cm

... They sport long and thin wiry hairs on their head and shoulders while the rest of the body is covered in thick quills that can be noisily raised when feeling in danger. When foraging, porcupines rather rely on their noses and ears since their eyes are pretty small. They dig large burrows that are shared between the family members.

Baboon

(*Papio ursinus*)

These clever, curious and quite sizeable canines are not always our best friends. With their "screwdriver" fingers they are able to open latches, boxes, jars and even camera traps. They normally stay in the mountains surrounding us but when the fodder situation gets bad, they lose their respect and come down to "check out" Eagles Nest and Geisterschlucht. Their two-syllable alarm call is audible pretty far and sometimes it sounds as if the baboons are mocking us.

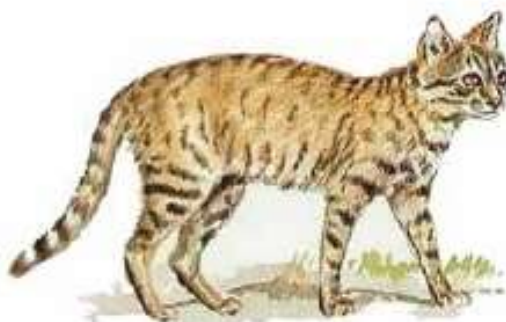
Baboons have a greyish brown coat, long and square noses with large teeth and live in big troops with complex social structures.

In the beginning, mothers carry their babies under their bellies, later the youngsters ride on their mothers' backs while the significantly larger males protect the troop.

African Wild Cat

(*Felis sylvestris*)

If you come across them somewhere in the open veld, you might think: "oh shame, what does the pretty pussycat do out here?" They almost look like a striped domestic cat, but have however longer legs and much stronger jaws. Their coat is a yellowy grey with darker stripes and an orange colour at the back of their ears. They hunt mammals up to rabbit size, reptiles, birds or invertebrates. Wild Cats live solitary and are normally only seen after sunset. They sleep in dense plant covers, rock crevices or holes in the ground. They tend to be quite curious and do not shy away from fights or even mating with house cats. They may turn half-domestic when they are growing accustomed to a place, but we should not fully trust their strong jaws and extremely sharp claws, which they would use when feeling annoyed.



Shoulder: 35 cm



Body: 36 cm
Tail: 26 cm

Striped Polecat

(*Ictonyx striatus*)

These curious little fellows are creatures of the night, but when catching them in the beams of your car headlights, you can marvel at their black and white stripes on back and face. They are mainly living from insects. We mainly know of their presence on Klein-Aus Vista because they use to defend themselves with a spray of stinking secretion from their anal glands. Sometimes, our dogs come home with a guilty look on their faces and sporting this distinctive perfume, however knowing they would have to sleep far away from us for a couple of days. And believe us, tomato cocktail does not really help against the smell...



Shoulder: 30 cm

Bat-Eared Fox

(*Otocyon megalotis*)

This only up to 30 cm high fluffy-haired fox has got slender black limbs, a black muzzle and bushy tail and – huge ears, making up to nearly one third of its height. Sometimes, the first thing one sees is a pair of big ears sticking out of the grass, before one gets to see the pointy little snout. The big ears can detect insects by the sound they make, even underground. Bat-eared foxes try to avoid the heat of day and usually forage during night, eating mainly insect larvae. They walk slowly with their heads tilted forwards, and when they hear something interesting, the drop down until the ears almost touch the ground. One often sees more than one as they are social animals and prefer to live in larger families.



Shoulder: 38 cm

Black-backed Jackal

(*Canis mesomelas*)

There are many traditional stories told in Namibia around the jackal and it is known for its cleverness, but not necessarily for its courage. The name comes from its black and grey mantle over the back, while the rest of the body shows a light brown.

The omnivorous jackal with its taste for fresh meat is not particularly loved by small-stock farmers and its nightly high pitched long-range call sometimes evokes a shiver in humans. Depending on the availability of food resources, jackals also devour on seal pups along the Luederitz coast and would also try to open the hard shell of ostrich eggs while rolling them against rocks.





Shoulder: 80 cm

Spotted Hyena

(*Crocuta crocuta*)

Have you already read about Oona, our collared spotted hyena in the Garub area? Spotted hyenas with their high shoulder, huge front paws, distinctive spotted coat, strong jaws and rather big round ears are also known for their vocalization that sounds like a chatter and giggle. They are first class predators, and normally like to live and hunt in groups. However, in our area they often move around alone and scavenge because of scarcer food resources, talking to each other over large distances with a hair-raising "whoooo-oop". Female hyenas have a pseudo-penis and scrotum, which makes gender identification not easy. When giving birth, the scrotum has to rip open. In order to stay cool during hot days, hyenas urinate on the sand first to cool it even more before lying belly-down on the surface.

Having the reputation of being fearless and fierce, spotted hyenas can be surprisingly shy and skeptical when one wants something from them, like catching and trying to collar them ...

Brown Hyena

(*Hyaena brunnea*)

These brown and long-haired hyenas are much smaller than spotted hyenas and might, from a distance, look like a large shaggy dog with striped legs. When you drive to Luederitz, you will see the signboards warning of potentially crossing brown hyenas. Please drive carefully, as brown hyenas are scarce.

They normally roam around as lone wolves, and while they have strong jaws for hunting, they prefer to scavenge on carrion, seal pups along the coast or reptiles, sometimes even checking out the Luederitz town food supplies and scaring the local dogs. On Klein-Aus Vista, we even had them biting on power cables, maybe this looked interesting to them?

In contrast to spotted hyenas, they do not rely on fresh water, which is the reason that they can live in the inhospitable coastal desert. If you want to find out more about these shy and quiet predators, please visit the Hyena Information Centre in Luederitz.



Shoulder: 80 cm



Shoulder: 52 cm

Steenbok

(*Raphicerus campestris*)

The first thing that catches our eyes is the steenbok's big translucent ears with its prominent veins that look like leaves of a beech tree.

Only the males show small upright horns and usually one sees steenboks in pairs as they can become mates for life.

Wanting to be as inconspicuous as possible they use to bury their faeces and urine. Being territorial, they browse and graze pretty selectively, but also dig for roots and tubers with their sharply pointed hooves.

We usually see them early in the morning or evening in riverbeds or shelters, shyly looking at us with their huge eyes.



Shoulder: 60 cm

Klipspringer

(*Oreotragus oreotragus*)

Those compact little acrobats are found in our mountains and koppies, where they can be seen leaping up steep slopes and boulders as if it is nothing or standing on high rocks, checking out the world below with their pointy muzzle held high. When they feel alarmed, they utter a piercing whistle, normally leading to more than one head popping up behind other rocks.



Shoulder: 1,4 m

Kudu

(*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*)

Since we live in an area with not many trees and bushes, we do not see kudus very often. However, when dusk sets in, we can be lucky and come across these majestic browsers in our riverbeds or in the shelter of large rocks and trees. Kudus can get up to 1.4 meters in shoulder height and show distinctive vertical white stripes over the back and the nose. Only the bulls have the wide and beautifully spiraling horns and a long beard down to the chest. The females are a bit smaller and only join with the bulls during the breeding season. Kudus are amazing jumpers and gliding gracefully over a fence from still-stand is a piece of cake for them.



Shoulder: 75 cm

Springbok

(*Antidorcas marsupialis*)

This graceful little antelope got its name from leaping vertically on all four skinny legs ("pronking"), while lowering its head and lifting its tail. It shows a white belly for reflecting the heat radiating from the ground, framed by a dark brown stripe and a cinnamon back and neck, going over into beautifully turned horns. Springboks love open grasslands and even the sparsely vegetated areas close to Luederitz since they can survive without drinking water. They graze and browse on grass and shrubs, but also eat roots and desert melons for moisture.



Shoulder: 1,2 m

Gemsbok

(*Oryx gazella*)

Like the springboks, gemsboks are also independent from drinking water and can be found in most barren landscapes and conditions that few other animals can tolerate. When the grazing conditions are good and during the breeding season, we can see larger herds roaming our desert plains while the animals rather go alone when conditions are bad. For moisture, they dig for roots and tubers and forage on desert melons. During the heat of the day, gemsboks are mostly seen standing in the shade of trees or rocks, wagging their horse-like black tails.

Both bulls and cows have long and straight horns, which can be used as a dangerous weapon. Their beautiful dark and white striped faces go over in a thick neck and compact light grayish brown rump, while the belly and the lower legs are white to reflect the heat radiating from the ground. Gemsboks have their own amazing built-in air condition that allows the body temperature to rise well above the outside temperature so that they do not lose valuable water through sweating and panting while keeping the heat-sensitive brain cool. Blood pumped from the heart passes through a special cooling system in the nose similar to a car's radiator before it reaches the brain.

Sources

- Carruthers, V. 2008: The Wildlife of Southern Africa
- Newman's Birds of Southern Africa 2002
- Walker, C. 2007: Signs of the Wild
- Marais, J. 1999: Snakes and snake bite in Southern Africa
- Clarke, N. 2007: A Desert Safari

These books are available in our shop.



BIRDS of AUS & SURROUNDINGS

With acknowledgement to SA Birding CC

Roberts	English Name	Afrikaans Naam	Deutscher Name
1	Ostrich	Volstruis	Strauß
8	Little Grebe	-	Zwergtaucher
55	White-breasted Cormorant	-	Weißbrustkormoran
62	Grey Heron	-	Graureiher
63	Black-headed Heron	-	Schwarzkopfreier
67	Little Egret	-	Seidenreiher
71	Cattle Egret	-	Kuhreiher
83	White Stork	Witoeiwaar	Weißstorch
96	Greater Flamingo	-	Flamingo
97	Lesser Flamingo	-	Zwergflamingo
103	South African Shelduck	-	Graukopf-Rostgans
106	Cape Teal	-	Kapente
112	Cape Shoveler	-	Kapitüfelente
117	Mareca Duck	-	Mareca-Ente
118	Secretarybird	Sekretarisvoël	Sekretär
124	Lappetfaced Vulture	Swartasvoël	Ohrengeier
127	Blackshouldered Kite	Blouvalk	Gleitsaar
131	Verreaux's Eagle	-	Felsenadler
136	Booted Eagle	Dwergarend	Zwergadler
140	Martial Eagle	Breëkoparend	Kampfadler
143	Blackheaded Snake Eagle	Swartborstslangarend	Schwarzbrust-Schlangenadler
149	Steppe Buzzard	Bruinjakalsvoël	Mäusebussard
152	Jackal Buzzard	Rooiborsjakalsvoël	Felsenbussard
162	Sth Pale Chanting Goshawk	Eleelsingvalk	Weißbüchel-Singhabicht
168	Black Harrier	Witkruisvalk	Mohrenweihe
171	Peregrine Falcon	Swerfvalk	Wanderafalie
172	Lanner Falcon	Edelvalk	Lannerfalie
178	Rednecked Falcon	Rooineelvalk	Rothalsfalie
181	Rook Kestrel	Kransvalk	Turnfalie
182	Greater Kestrel	Grootrooivalk	Steppenfalie
183	Lesser Kestrel	Kleinrooivalk	Rötelfalie
186	Pygmy Falcon	Dwergvalkie	Zwergfalie
200	Common Quail	Afrikaanse Kwartel	Wachtel
226	Common Moorhen	-	Teichhuhn
228	Red-knobbed Coot	-	Kammbleßhuhn
230	Kori Bustard	Gompou	Riesentrappe
232	Ludwig's Bustard	Ludwigse Pou	Ludwigstrappe
235	Karoo Korhaan	Vaalkehaan	Namatrappe
258	Blacksmith Lapwing	-	Waffenkiebitz
264	Common Sandpiper	-	Flußuferläufer



Roberts	English Name	Afrikaans Naam	Deutscher Name
266	Wood Sandpiper	-	Bruchwasserläufer
269	Marsh Sandpiper	-	Teichwasserläufer
270	Common Greenshank	-	Grünschenkel
272	Curlew Sandpiper	-	Sichelstrandläufer
274	Little Stint	-	Zwergstrandläufer
284	Ruff	-	Kampfläufer
297	Spotted Thick-knee	Gewone Dikkop	Kaptriël
299	Burchell's Courser	Bloukopderwvertjie	Rostrennvogel
301	Doublebanded Courser	Dubbelbandderwvertjie	Doppelband-Rennvogel
344	Namaqua Sandgrouse	Kelkiewyn	Namaflughuin
348	Rock Dove	-	Haustaube
349	Speckled Pigeon	Kransduif	Guineataube
354	Cape Turtle-Dove	Gewone Tortelduif	Kapturtaube, Gurmtaube
355	Laughing Dove	Rooiborsduif	Senegaltaube
356	Namaqua Dove	Namakwaduijie	Kapitubohm
367	Rosy-faced Lovebird	Rooiwangparkiet	Rosenpapagei
492	Barn Owl	Nonnetjie-uil	Schleierteule
400	Cape Eagle Owl	Kaapse Ooruil	Kapuhu
401	Spotted Eagle Owl	Gevlekte Ooruil	Fleckenuhu
411	Common Swift	Europese Windswael	Mauersegler
413	Beadfield's Swift	Muisdeurwindswael	Damarsegler
415	Whiterumped Swift	Witluiswindswael	-
417	Little Swift	Kleinwindswael	-
418	Alpine Swift	Witpenswindswael	Alpensegler
425	Whitebacked Mousebird	Witluismuisvoël	Weißrückens-Mausvogel
426	Redfaced Mousebird	Rooiwangmuisvoël	-
438	European Bee-eater	Europese Byvreter	-
465	Acacia Pied Barbet	Bonthoutkapper	Rotstirn-Barbvogel
486	Cardinal Woodpecker	-	Kardinalspecht
500.3	Karoo Longbilled Lark	Karoolangbeklewenik	Karru-Langschnabellerohe
502.1	Barlow's Lark	Barlowse Lewerik	Barlow-Lerohe
503	Dune Lark	Duinlewenik	Dünenlerohe
506	Spokeheeled Lark	Vlaklelewenik	Zirplerche
507	Redcapped Lark	Rooikoplewenik	Rotscheitelerohe
508	Pinkbilled Lark	Pienkbeklewenik	Rotschnabellerohe
511	Stark's Lark	Woestynlewenik	Kurzhaubenlerohe
514	Gray's Lark	Namiblewenik	Namiblerche
516	Greybacked Sparrowlark	Grysruglewenik	Nonnenlerohe
517	Blackeared Sparrowlark	Swartoorlewenik	Schwarzwangenerche
518	Barn Swallow	Europese Swael	Rauchschwalbe
526	Greater Striped Swallow	Grootstreepswael	-
529	Rock Martin	Kransswael	Felsenschwalbe
533	Brown-throated Martin	-	Braunkehl-Uferschwalbe
541	Fork-tailed Drongo	-	Trauerdrongo
547	Cape Crow	Swartknaai	Kapkrähe



Roberts	English Name	Afrikaans Naam	Deutscher Name
548	Pied Crow	Witborskraai	Schildekrähe
551	Grey Tit	Piet-tjou-tjou-grysmees	Kapmeise
567	African Red-eyed Bulbul	Rooioogtiptol	Maskenbühlbül
586	Mountain Wheatear	Bergwagter	Bergschmätzer
587	Capped Wheatear	Hoëveldslaaipwagter	Edelschmätzer
589	Familiar Chat	Gewone Spelcvreter	Rostschwanzschmätzer
590	Trusso Chat	Woestynspelcvreter	Namibschmätzer
592	Karoo Chat	Karoospelcvreter	Bleichschmätzer
595	Anteating Chat	Swartpiek	-
614	Karoo Scrub-Robin	Slangverdikloer	Karruhekensänger
621	Chestnut-vented Titbabbler	Bosveldtjeritlik	Meisensänger
622	Layard's Titbabbler	Geysteritlik	Layards Meisensänger
643	Willow Warbler	-	Fitis
651	Long-billed Cuckoo	-	Langschnabel-Sylvietta
654	Karoo Beemomela	Groenbrossanger	Langschwanz-Beemomela
669	Greybacked Cisticola	Geystragtinkinkie	Bergzistensänger
685	Black-chested Prinia	Swartbandlangstertjie	Brustbandprinie
686	Karoo Prinia	-	Fleckenprinie
688	Rufous-eared Warbler	-	Rotbäckensänger
695	Marico Flycatcher	-	Maricoschnäpper
688	Rufous-eared Warbler	Rooioorlangstertjie	Rotbäckensänger
697	Chat Flycatcher	Grootvlieëvanger	Maricoschnäpper
713	Cape Wagtail	-	Kapstelze
717	Longbilled Pipit	Nicholsonse Koester	Langschnabelpieper
732	Common Fiscal	Fiskaallaksmann	Fiskalwürger
741	Brubru	-	Brubru
746	Bolmakierie	Bolmakierie	Bolmakiri
760	Wattled Starling	-	Lappenstar
770	Palewinged Starling	Bleekvleekspreeu	Bergstar
788	Dusky Sunbird	Namakwasuikerbeldjie	Rußektarvogel
796	Orange River White-eye	Garniep Glasogie	Oranjabrillenvogel
799	Whitebrowed Sparrowweaver	Koringvoël	Mahaliweber
800	Sociable Weaver	Versamelvoël	Siedelweber
801	House Sparrow	Huis mossie	Hausperling
803	Cape Sparrow	Gewone Mossie	Kapsperling
804	Sth Greyheaded Sparrow	Gryskopmossie	-
806	Sosyfeathered Finch	Basardmannetjie	Sohnunbärtchen
814	Southern Masked Weaver	Swartkeelgeelvink	Maskenweber
856	Redheaded Finch	Rooikopvink	Rotkopfsamane
870	Blackthroated Canary	Bergkanarie	Angolagirlitz
876.1	Damara Canary	Bontkopkanarie	Damara-Girlitz
878	Yellow Canary	Geellkanarie	Gelbbuchgirlitz
879	Whitethroated Canary	Witkeellkanarie	Weißkehlgirlitz
885	Cape Bunting	Rooivlerkeestreekoppie	Kapsammer
887	Larklike Bunting	Vaalstreekoppie	Lerchenammer



What to do in Aus

THE AUS TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE



Do not miss out on visiting the Aus Information Centre, close to the turn-off to Aus.

Photo-displays will enlighten you on the history of the area, the Namib Wild Horses, our stunning wildlife and fauna and the diverse people of Aus with their specific culture and lifestyles.

Claudia Baisitse, the charismatic manager of the Info Centre and her friendly staff personally welcome you and show you around. After informing yourselves on the peculiarities and attractions of the area, enjoy a coffee, cool drink or light meal at the centre, which is open 7 days a week.

We as community members of Aus are proud of the Info Centre, which had been realized as a community project and effort and helps to generate income for the otherwise still rather poor Aus community!

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

Just outside Aus towards the East, you can visit the graves of German and South African officers and soldiers. Most of them died during the influenza outbreak in 1918. Watch out for the brown signboard, saying "Commonwealth War Graves" and follow the dirt road until you reach the first cemetery on your left hand side.



PRISONER OF WAR CAMP

The remnants of the internment camp from World War I can be seen close to the tar road to Rosh Pinah and are declared a National Monument. When the Germans were interned in the camp during 1915 – 1919 and built themselves clay houses and founded sports and theatre groups. You can still see some of the ruins, however, the weather took its toll when the roofs of the houses were gone. Catch the atmosphere of by-gone times and try to imagine the hardship of surviving the rough climate on the open and windswept plains.

Recommended reading

- Bruwer: *Kriegsgefangenenlager Aus 1915-1919*
- Bruwer: *Prisoner of War Camp Aus 1915 - 1919*

These books are available in our shop.





RESTAURANT & BISTRO

Bahnhof Hotel Aus

The historic Bahnhof Hotel presents itself in a modern, elegant format, combining rich history and traditional comfort with excellent service and a la carte cuisine. Light lunches, daily fresh bread and cakes from our kitchen are best enjoyed on the sundeck.

- Tel: 063 - 258 091 or 081 235 6737
- E-Mail: bahnhof-hotel-aus@iway.na
- Website: www.hotel-aus.com

Namib Garage

We serve meat and fish, vegetarian pasta, a dessert and our "Aus Special" and we have a fully licensed bar.

The Namib Garage Bistro & Coffee Shop is also open in the evenings, when there are bookings:

Mo - Sa, 19:00 - 22:00

Kindly ask reception to book in advance at:

- Tel: 063 - 258 029
- or 081 283 2969 / 081 274 3992

Aus Info Centre

Bistro and Coffee Shop, offering light meals, snacks and cold drinks, including beer. The Aus Info Centre also has a Curio Shop and Kiosk and opens:

Mo - Fr: 8:00 - 17:00

Sa & So: 8:00 - 14:00

- Tel: 063 - 258 151 or 081 205 2351
- E-Mail: ausinfo@namibhorses.com

Klein Aus Vista Restaurant

The Klein Aus Vista Restaurant offers light lunches from 12:00 to 14:00. It includes sandwiches, salads, meat with chips and different desserts. We serve a 3 course set menu for dinner. Bookings for the dinner are required. We also have a fully licensed bar.

GROCERIES

Namib Garage & Petrol Station

- Basic grocery supplies
- Basic car parts

Mo - Fr, 8:00 - 18:00

Sa: 8:00 - 15:00

So: 9:00 - 14:00

**THE PETROL STATION
IS OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Kubub Verspreiders

- Basic grocery supplies
- Basic drug store

Mo - Fr, 8:00 - 12:30 & 14:00 - 17:00

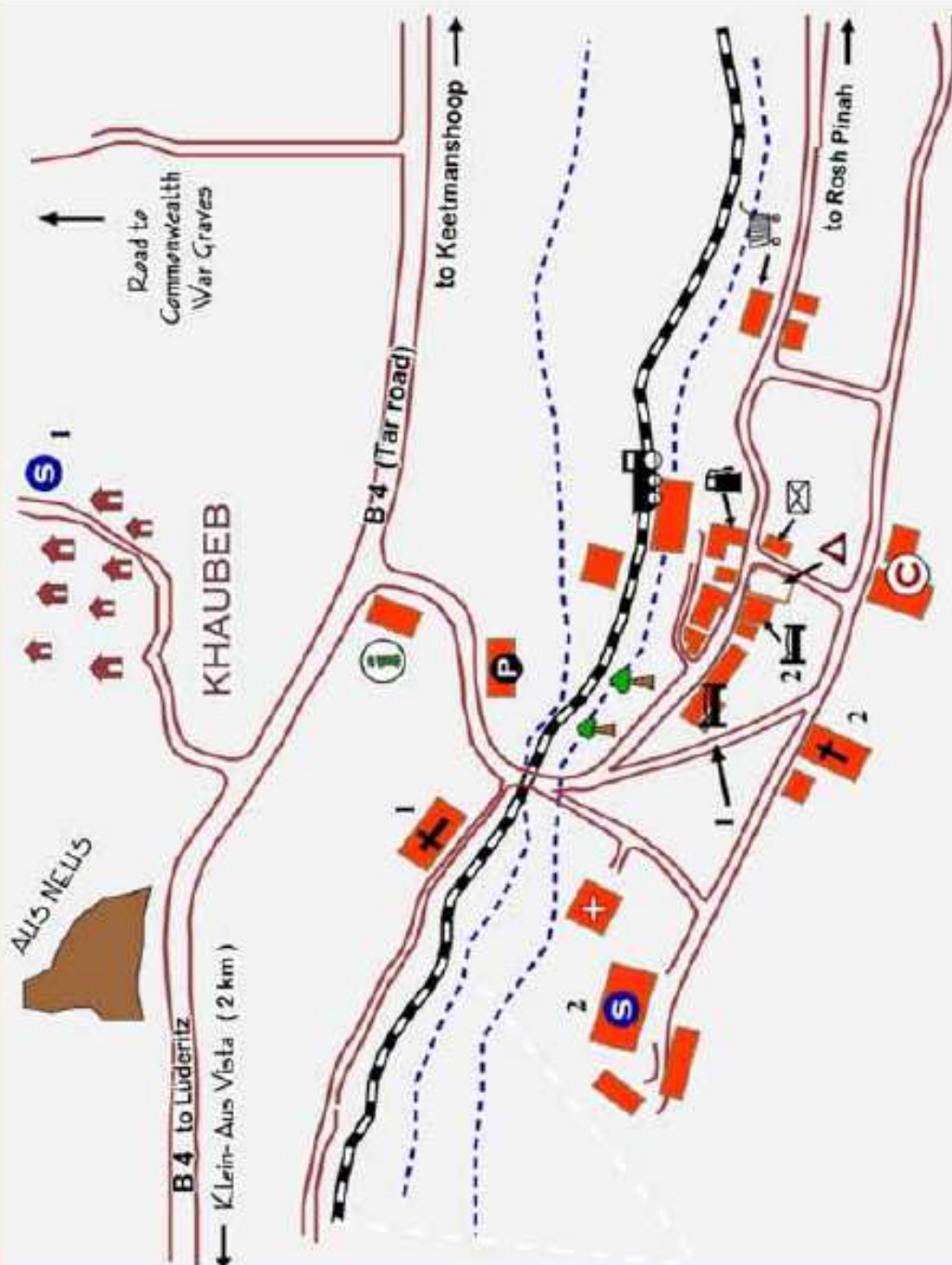
Sa: 8:00 - 13:00





MAP KEY

	Roads		Aus Info Centre		Namib Garage - Petrol Station Workshop & Shop
	Railway Line		Accommodation		1. Buhuf Hotel 2. Namib Garage Guesthouse
	Riverbed		Campsite (Namib Garage)		Kubus Verspreiders - General Dealer
	Aus Info Centre		Post Office		Clinic
	Namib Garage - Petrol Station Workshop & Shop		Police Station		Church
	Accommodation		School		Settlement Council and Town Hall
	1. Buhuf Hotel 2. Namib Garage Guesthouse		Old Park		Railway Station
	Campsite (Namib Garage)				
	Kubus Verspreiders - General Dealer				
	Post Office				
	Clinic				
	Police Station				
	Church				
	School				
	Settlement Council and Town Hall				
	Old Park				
	Railway Station				



THE SETTLEMENT OF AUS

Map by: Christine Wulff 2007



Kolmanskop



Opening times:

Guided Tours in English and German
(Duration: 45 minutes):

Mondays – Saturdays	9:30 and 11:00
Sundays and Public Holidays	10:00

After the first diamond was found in 1908, many fortune seekers tried their luck in the desert sand. Diamond companies mushroomed everywhere along the coast and one of the larger ones started to mine around Kolmanskop. The place received its name from the transport rider John Coleman who lost his wagon and some of his oxen there in a heavy sandstorm.

To prevent homesickness and provide comfort for the German employees, a whole town was built in the desert where no tree nor shrub was found and where water had to be brought in from far. In its heydays, Kolmanskop boasted grand houses for the richer part of the inhabitants, shops, a kegelbahn (bowling), restaurants, sports facilities, train station and a huge hospital with the most modern X-ray machine.

Visitors of those times reported: *"Fashionably attired in well-cut outfits, the better halves on the diamond kings walked through the deep sand, their right hands held their feathered and flowered hats in place against the pressure of the wind."*

Visit this stunning relic from the by-gone heydays of diamond mining. After a guided introductory tour, you can explore the houses yourself. Marvel at the beautifully painted walls, the huge casino and the dunes, which now try to take over the houses. Also make a turn at the smaller houses and the school at the end of the town.

Recommended reading

- Schoeman/ Kolb: Kolmanskop
(available in English or German)
- Noli: Wüstendiamanten
- Baericke: Lüderitzbucht 1908 – 1914
- Honeyborne: Abenteuer, Spuk und Diamanten
- Honeyborne: Gateway to Adventure

Please note that the Kolmanskop Gates close at 1.00 o' clock.
The Ghost town is closed in the afternoon!

What to do in Lüderitz

BOAT TRIPS

Sail on the schooner "Sedina" or the "Sturmvogel" or take a trip with "Hannah" around Diaz Point to Halifax Island, home of the Jackass Penguin. On this trip you can encounter the Heaviside Dolphin, a colony of Cape Fur Seals and a host of bird life. The guide will entertain you with stories of long ago. The "Hannah" and the "Sturmvogel" are available for private charter trips as well.

All boat trips are weather permitting!
Bookings at:

- Atlantic Adventure Tours ("Sedina")
- Diaz Trails ("Sturmvogel")
- M.O. Morgan Marine Services ("Hannah")
- or Lüderitz Safaris & Tours

HISTORIC TOWN TOURS

The tour takes 2 hours. Please book at Atlas Tours & Transfers or Diaz Trails.

PENINSULA TOURS

Historic overview and stops at designated beaches, view penguins, dolphins, seals and sea gulls. Bookings at Atlas Tours & Transfers.

DAY TRIP TO BOGENFELS

The largest coastal rock arch in Southern Africa. Bookings at Coastways Tours.

DIAZ POINT

Explore the many small bays south of Lüderitz town on your own. Visit the windswept Diaz Point where the Portuguese seafarer Bartholomeu Diaz erected a cross in 1488. You can take a break at the Diaz Coffee Shop and Oyster Bar before looking out for dolphins and sea lions in the bays below the lighthouse. Enjoy amazing sunsets over the Atlantic Ocean and take a walk along the beach of Grosse Bucht.

4x4 TRIPS

Exclusive self drive / catering (guided) 4x4 trips into the Northern Namib Desert to Saddle Hill and Spencer Bay 140km north of Lüderitz and also Walvis Bay. 4 pax minimum.
Bookings at Coastways Tours.

GOERKE HAUS

This period-furnished art nouveau house (1909) situated in "Am Diamantberg" Street is open:

- Mo - Fr, 14:00 - 16:00
- Sa & Su, 16:00 - 17:00

(closed on Public Holidays)

FELSENKIRCHE

This historical German Lutheran Church was built in 1912 and displays beautiful stained-glass windows.

- In Summer Time: Mo - Sa, 17:00 - 18:00
- In Winter Time: Mo - Sa, 16:00 - 17:00





LÜDERITZ MUSEUM

The museum is situated in Diaz Street and opens:

- Mo - Fr, 15:30 to 17:00

LÜDERITZ SAFARIS & TOURS

The information office and Souvenir/Curio shop, situated in Bismarck Street is open every day. It provides tours in and around Lüderitz, or further inland. Prior booking recommended.

In Summer Time: Mo - Fr, 8:00 - 12:30 / 13:30 - 17:00

In Winter Time: Mo - Fr, 7:30 - 12:30 / 13:30 - 16:30

Saturday: 8:00 - 12:00

Su & Public Holidays: 8:30 - 10:00

- Tel: 063 - 202719 or 081 - 129 7236 (after hours)
- E-mail: ludsaf@africaonline.com.na

COASTWAYS TOURS

Bookings are essential and must be done 1-2 weeks in advance - with clearly legible passport copies of all participants for permit applications. Permits are required on entering the Sperrgebiet National Park.

Day tours take from 9:00 to approximately 17:00.

- Tel: 063 - 202 002 or 081-122 9336
- E-mail: lewiscwt@iway.na

ATLAS TOURS & TRANSFERS

Tours available on request from Mo - Su.

Prior bookings recommended.

- Tel: 063-202 212 or 081-219 9628
- E-mail: kira@mweb.com.na

DIAZ TRAILS

All tours are conducted in English, German & Afrikaans and involve some hiking.

Departure time for „Sturmvogel Boat Trip“: 9:00

Duration: 4 hours

- Tel: 081 - 254 0808
- E-mail: sturmvogel@iway.na

ATLANTIC ADVENTURE TOURS

Departure time for „Sedina Boat Trip“: 8:00

Duration: 2 - 2½ hours

- Tel: 063-204 030

M.O. MORGAN MARINE SERVICES

Sunset Cruises with the „Hannah“:

Summer Time: 17:00 - 19:00

Winter Time: 16:00 - 18:00

- Tel: 081 - 128 6622



SHOPPING

- Curios:
 - Lüderitz Safaris & Tours
 - Rocky Shores
 - Sandrose
- Groceries:
 - Spar
 - OK Grocer
 - Portuguese Market

RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

- Barrels
- Nest Hotel (Penguin Restaurant)
- Diaz Point
- Zum Sperrgebiet
- Ritzi's
- Bogenfels
- Kapps Hotel
- Diaz Coffee Shop
- Bay View

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