

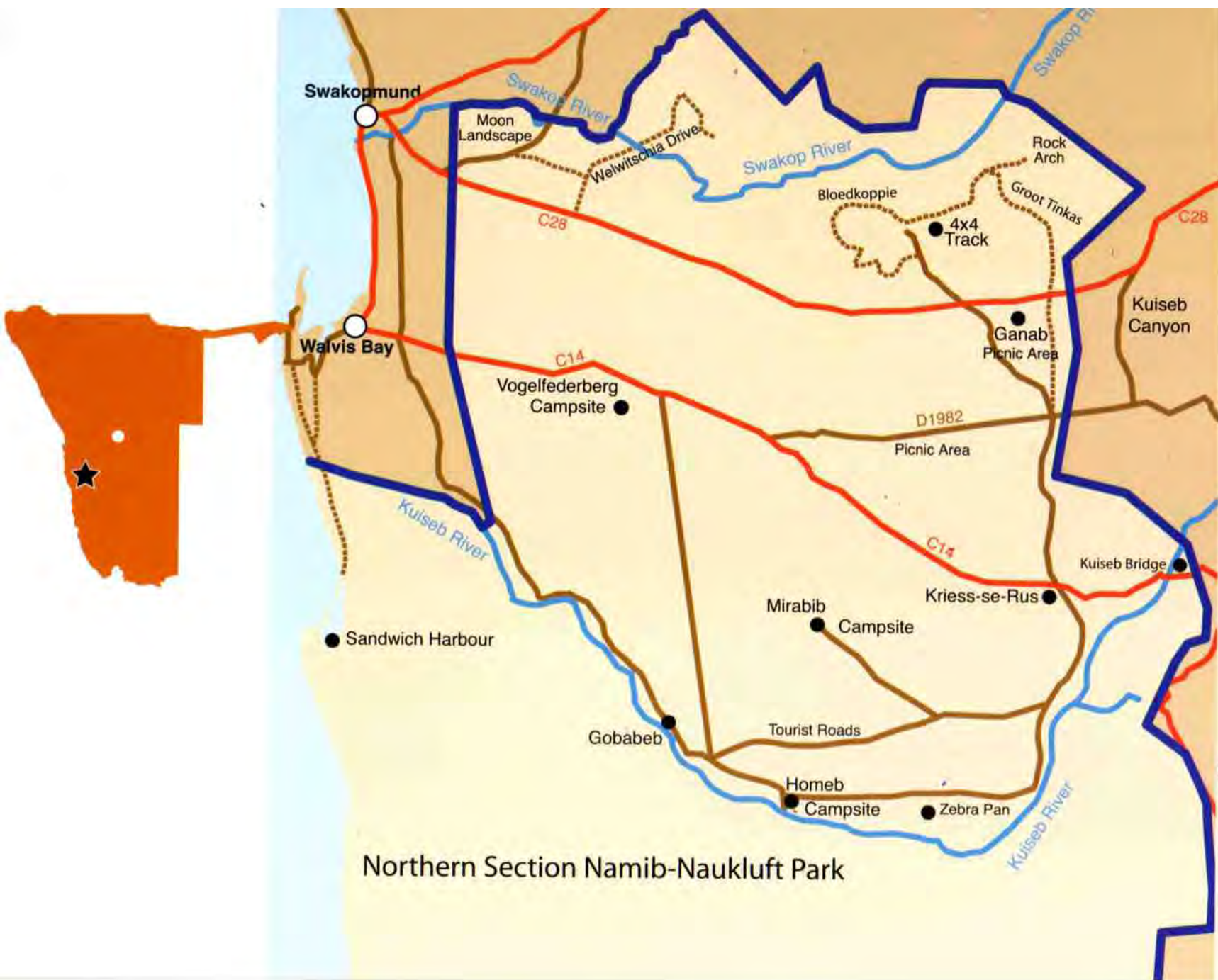
Namib-Naukluft Park

"For me, the Namib-Naukluft Park is so special because it's home to the flat plains of Garab, the spectacular Naukluft mountains and the largest dunes in the world. One should experience every bit of it!"

*Manie Le Roux • Chief Warden, Namib-Naukluft Park,
Ministry of Environment and Tourism*



Republic of Namibia
Ministry of Environment and Tourism



Northern Section Namib-Naukluft Park



17 km Waterkloof Trail



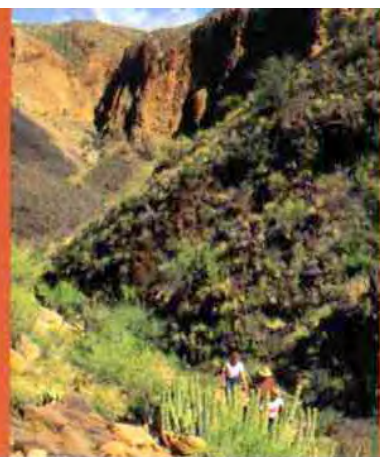
Discover the Namib-Naukluft Park

Savour the enormity, drama and grandeur of the Namib-Naukluft Park, Namibia's largest conservation area. With mountains, sand seas and riverbeds to explore, there is something for every adventurous spirit. Hike the rugged gorges and paths in the formidable Naukluft mountain massif or test yourself and your vehicle on the two-day, 73 km 4x4 trail. Photograph some of the planet's oldest and most peculiar plants on the Welwitschia Trail. Explore the Sesriem Canyon. Gaze at a multitudes of stars and soak in the silence and solitude of the Namib Desert at night. Slide down dunes in the Namib sand sea. After summer rains, encounter large herds of gemsbok, zebra, springbok, ostrich and even giraffe in the northern section of the park. Go birding at the marine sanctuary, Sandwich Harbour, home to up to 50 000 wetland birds including spectacular flocks of greater and lesser flamingos. Feel transported to another realm by the vast and inimitable gravel plains of the aptly named Moonscape. Explore

the isolated mountains that are sprinkled liberally throughout the park, search for unexpected botanical treasures, and be rewarded by awe-inspiring views of the Namib-Naukluft Park.

A land of contrasts and extremes

Rock hard and soft as flowing sand with rugged mountains and lapping waters, wet fogs and desiccating winds, Namibia's Namib-Naukluft Park is a stunning study in contrast and extremes. Ephemeral rivers rage through canyons without warning, while baking heat dominates each day. Early morning and late afternoon sunlight paints the dunes in dramatic hues and shadows, drawing photographers like a magnet. During the heat of the day, mirages cast inselbergs into a sea of shimmering silver. The ghostly tracks of an ox-wagon cart gouged into gravel more than a century ago bear testimony to time, and yet the wind whips away a footprint on the dunes before another can be laid.



A place of wonder and time

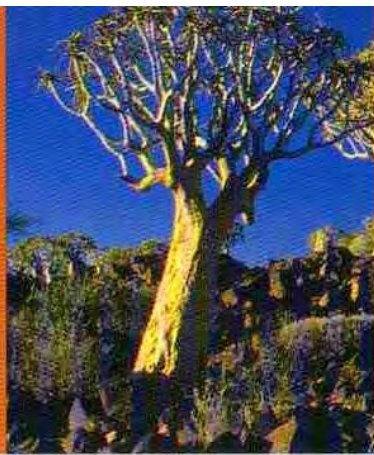
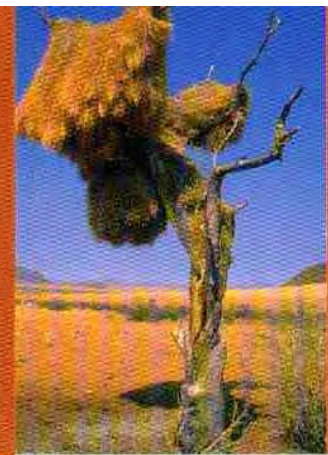
One of the most intensely studied deserts on earth, the Namib section of the Namib-Naukluft Park is debatably the oldest desert on earth. But here life has adapted to the extremes in fascinating ways. Animals burrow in the sand and, when the need for eyes is proven unnecessary, they develop without them. Baboons go for months without drinking water, while the *Welwitschia mirabilis* plants live for more than a thousand years on these seemingly inhospitable plains.

The Naukluft, which means 'narrow ravine', section of the park marks time in a more visible manner. Over time, rainwater cut through the rock and formed ravines. Today layers of igneous rock, quartzite, dolomite and shale are exposed on cliff faces and gorges. They are striking reminders of millions of years of calm and eruptions that mark the geological history of the Namib-Naukluft Park.

Conservation on a grand scale

One of Africa's largest protected areas, the Namib-Naukluft Park, covers almost 50 000 km² and protects some of the most varied and extraordinary ecosystems in Namibia, the only country in the world named after its desert! The Namib-Naukluft Park provides a sanctuary on a very grand scale to large mammals including black rhino (reintroduced to their former range in 2007 to mark the centenary of the park), Hartmann's mountain zebra, giraffe, gemsbok, and springbok. Predators such as spotted and brown hyaena, jackal, caracal, leopard and cheetah are also protected in the park.

Over 200 bird species have been recorded in the park. The Naukluft massif marks the southern-most range of many northern species such as Rüppell's parrot, rosy-faced lovebirds and Monteiro's hornbills. Mountain pools provide habitat for species not usually associated with a desert, such as African black ducks and



hamerkop. The park is also noteworthy as a sanctuary for raptors such as black eagle, black-breasted snake-eagle, booted eagle, and lanner falcon. The internationally important wetland at Sandwich Harbour is a safe haven for tens of thousands of rare, migrant and resident seabirds.

Desert plains, river washes and inselbergs are a botanist's dream. Succulents, lichens, seasonal grasses and plant species that may bloom once in the span of a human's lifetime, offer intrigue and wonder to the Namib-Naukluft Park.

A fascinating and fearless past

Most of the Namib-Naukluft Park is currently uninhabited, but there has been a human presence since Early Stone Age man (*Homo erectus*) visited, leaving behind stone hand axes as evidence of occupation. The coast also more recently supported small

clans of strandlopers, who lived off fish, birds, and other marine life, while the interior served as occasional hunting grounds for San and seasonal grazing land for nomadic pastoralists. European and American mariners, whalers, seal hunters and guano harvesters made use of Sandwich Harbour, one of only a few 'ports' in Namibia, attracted by the fresh water, safe haven from Atlantic gales and abundant bird life. Nama-speaking groups established strongholds in the Namib and fought German colonial troops in the late 1800s. Some scattered war wreckage still survives. Fearing internship by the British at the outbreak of WWII, two young German geologists, Henno Martin and Hermann Korn, hid in the Kuiseb Canyon for two and a half years with their dog, Otto, and a pet chameleon. An account of their Robinson Crusoe survivalist experiences can be read in Martin's book, *The Sheltering Desert*. Today, roughly 300 Topnaar people still live within the borders of the park, inhabiting 13 small villages along the lower Kuiseb River where they raise livestock and harvest !nara melons.



Environmental Care Code

Please adhere to the following:

- Stay on existing roads and tracks. The lichen and gravel plains are extremely fragile and tyre tracks can last for hundreds of years.
- Do not litter.
- Note that the collection of animals, plants and minerals is prohibited in all Namibian parks.

- Take precautions to avoid disturbing nesting raptors if mountain climbing. Lappet-faced vultures are particularly prone to panic.
- Adhere to the rules and regulations listed on your park permit.

Enjoy the wonders of this vast, fascinating park.

Getting there:

The Namib-Naukluft Park is approximately 200 km from Windhoek and can be accessed by many roads, major and minor. Entry permits for the Namib-Naukluft Park, including Sossusvlei and Sandwich Harbour, are required and can be obtained from the Ministry of Environment Tourism offices throughout the country or at Sesriem.

Facilities:

Campsites have very limited facilities. These are mostly concentrated in the northern section of the park. If camping, you must be fully independent – bring firewood, water and food. Ample private accommodation exists on the periphery of the park, ranging from the modest to the magnificent.

Fact File:

First proclamation date: 1907 with subsequent expansions

Size: 49 768 km²

Temperatures: Extremely variable. Days are generally hot (sometimes exceeding 40°C). Nights can be very cold.

Precipitation: Again, extremely variable depending on year and area. In some years no rain is recorded in parts of the Namib-Naukluft Park.

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