ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CONSERVATION
From Game Reserve No. 3 to Namib-Naukluft Park

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ABSTRACT
The proclamation, on 22 March 1907, of Game Reserves 1, 2 and 3 by the Colonial Administration in German South West Africa, had far-reaching implications for conservation in Namibia. Today, both the Etosha National Park and the Namib-Naukluft Park are world-renowned. The Namib-Naukluft Park has grown in size to almost 50 000 km², to be the largest formal conservation area in Namibia. This growth has taken place over a period of a hundred years, but most of this was after 1950. Today, this park encompasses some of the most visited areas in the country and protects huge expanses of unspoilt desert scenery.

Keywords
Game Reserve No.3, Namib-Naukluft Park, Namib Desert Park, Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park, Sandwich Harbour, Bernabé De la Bat, conservation, Division Nature Conservation and Tourism

Introduction
One hundred years ago, a decision reached by colonial civil servants, was to have a lasting impact on the environment and conservation in what is today the Republic of Namibia. Dr. Friedrich von Lindequist, a representative of Governor Theodor Leutwein, the Imperial Governor of the Protectorate of Deutsch-Südwestafrika (German South West Africa), issued a proclamation on 22 March 1907, relating to the establishment of three game reserves in the territory.

These protected areas became known as Game Reserves No. 1, 2 and 3. Game Reserve No. 1 was north-east of Grootfontein and protected the game in the Omuramba Omatako, an ephemeral river. Some references wrongly place Game Reserve No. 1 in the Caprivi (Bridgeford 1997). In 1958, Game Reserve No. 1 was deproclaimed in exchange for land to the west of Etosha (De la Bat 1982). Game Reserve No. 2 was the Etosha Pan and surrounding area. The last one, Game Reserve No. 3, is the subject of this paper.
Game Reserve No. 3

Game Reserve No. 3 was situated south of the Swakop River and east of the British enclave of Walvis Bay. In the proclamation by the German authorities, the borders of the area were not accurately defined, but use was made of the few known landmarks. The boundary of this reserve was five kilometres south and parallel to the southern bank of the Swakop River, as far as the farm Salem. This was probably because many people lived and farmed in and along the river. In addition, the Baiweg (Bay Road) ran parallel to and close to the river, disturbing wildlife and depleting the grazing. The eastern boundary was from Salem, through Onanis, south to Blumenthal and then in a south-westerly direction to the Kuiseb River over the Hope Mine. From the mine, 10 km south and parallel of the Kuiseb River until it reached the Walvis Bay boundary again. By making the boundary south of the river, it protected the animals moving between the river and the dunes. To hunt in the Game Reserve required written permission.
During and after the First World War, when the South African Military took over the administration of the territory in 1915, the status quo concerning the Game Reserves remained unchanged for many years. However, there was a law passed in 1916 to protect that unique plant, Welwitschia mirabilis (Proclamation 10 of 1916), many of them growing in Game Reserve No 3. This was the first law in the Territory to protect a plant. It is interesting to note that the proclamation ended with the words: “God save the King” and signed in “Windhuk” by the Administrator, E.H.L. Gorges.

The South African military administration reconfirmed the existence of the three game reserves proclaimed in 1907, when they published the Prohibited Areas Proclamation (Proc. 15 of 1919) (De la Bat 1982). This decree controlled entry into Ovamboland, Rehoboth and “in the several game reserves defined in the order of the Governor of German South West Africa … dated 22nd March, 1907”.

The civilian South West African Administration (SWAA) was established in 1925. This Administration repealed the laws relating to Game Reserves 1, 2 and 3 proclaimed by the German colonial government. However, Proclamation 26 of 1928 immediately reproclaimed these Game Reserves. Using points of longitude and latitude, kilometres and established points such as farms or mines, the borders were for the first time, accurately defined. The new borders of Game Reserve No. 3 closely followed the ones drawn in 1907.

Game Preservation

Between the two World Wars, conservation was concentrated on Game Preservation and most laws passed, related to hunting and the protection of animals, birds, reptiles and plants (Cosburn 1980). A Game Preservation Proclamation passed in 1921 (Proc. 13 of 1921), based on German laws, regulated the hunting and protection of game (Joubert 1975). In the early years, the South African Police were responsible for maintaining these laws. In 1927, the above Proclamation was repealed and replaced by a new Game Preservation Ordinance (Ord. 5 of 1927). Ten years later, another ordinance was gazetted, known as the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (Ord. 19 of 1937).

The first hesitant steps towards formal conservation took place with the appointment in 1947 of A.A. Pienaar as game warden for the Territory. He was an author, also known as Sangiro, who wrote adventure stories set in the wild. Another author of similar stories, Dr. P.J. Schoeman, followed him. During his tenure, a tentative start was made to develop Etosha. An important milestone was the passing of the Game Preservation Ordinance in 1951 (Ord. 11 of 1951). This detailed the establishment of a Game Preservation and Hunting Board of not less than five members. Their task was to advise the Administrator on matters concerning the preservation of game. The appointment of game wardens as honorary or public service officers was included. Dieter Aschenborn was appointed as assistant game warden and stationed in Etosha in 1952. He later became a well-known wildlife artist. A year later,
Bernabé De la Bat, a young biologist, joined the fledgling group. Both were appointed on a contractual basis. Only in 1955 did the SWA Administration establish a permanent unit, the Game Preservation Section, to oversee the Territory’s game and undeveloped game reserves, with De la Bat as the first chief warden (Schoeman 1996). In 1957, ‘Stoffel’ Rocher was appointed as assistant ranger at Namutoni and he rose through the ranks to become the chief warden of Etosha National Park in 1963. He was transferred to the Windhoek head office in 1967 and retired after a 31-year career as Deputy Director of Parks and Wildlife.

Schoeman (1996) states: “The history of formal conservation in Namibia revolves largely around one man, Bernabé De la Bat who ... saw the birth of the country’s first official conservation body and served as its Director until the early eighties. With remarkable vision, courage and foresight, he created a rich legacy of game parks, reserves and resorts, on which conservationists could build in years to come. He also laid the cornerstone for tourism in Namibia, today one of the country’s fastest growing industries”. There is no doubt Namibia is today reaping the fruits of this man’s vision.

In 1958, the “Parks Board” replaced the “Hunting Board” and had similar functions (Ord. 18 of 1958), but included civil servants from agriculture, police, native affairs, the chief game warden and members of the farmers’ and hunting associations. It also gave the Administrator the power to declare any area a game park and to amend the boundaries of a game park. Provision was made for the establishment and proclamation of private game reserves.

**Division Nature Conservation and Tourism**

The Game Preservation Section grew in size and importance, and it was upgraded in 1963 to the Division Nature Conservation and Tourism (Joubert 1975), with Bernabé De la Bat as the first Director. The sixties was a time of rapid growth for the conservation department and many new areas were proclaimed as game reserves. The proclamation in 1967 of the new Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ord. 31 of 1967) cemented an already firm conservation foundation. It defined the powers and duties of the Nature Conservation and Tourism Branch. It contained chapters on wild animals, game parks, indigenous plants, inland fisheries, protected and specially protected game, game birds and several other important subjects.

This ordinance reflected the changing conservation ethics, thinking and planning taking place in Southern Africa, with South West Africa taking the lead (Joubert 1975, De la Bat 1979). This new ordinance was a radical departure from previous laws. It gave ownership of game to the landowner, with the exception of certain species, provided the game was on the farm and the property adequately fenced. The farmer could also lease his hunting rights to a competent person and this in turn stimulated the trophy hunting industry. Until then, all game had belonged to the State. Game now had a monetary value and farmers had a financial incentive to protect animals on their property (De la Bat 1979). Many started restocking their farms and game numbers on commercial farms increased dramatically.
The next important step in the conservation field was the proclamation in 1968 by the Administrator of South West Africa, W.C. du Plessis, of several new protected areas or alterations to their boundaries (Proc. 19 of 1968). These were Daan Viljoen Game Park, West Caprivi Game Reserve, Hardap Recreational Resort, Gross Barmen Hot Springs, Namib Desert Park and the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park.

In 1975, the Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ord. 31 of 1967), that spurred the development of game farming in the country, was updated and replaced by the new Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ord. 4 of 1975). This ordinance, after 33 years, although outdated, still forms the basis of conservation management in Namibia. There have been many changes and innovations since Independence in Namibia, but the much needed, new Wildlife Act, does not appear to be ready for promulgation.

Another important milestone in 1963 was the establishment of the Namib Desert Research Institute at Gobabeb, situated on the banks of the Kuiseb River. Dr. Charles Koch, entomologist from the Transvaal Museum, was the driving force behind the establishment of the Institute and its first director. Dr. Mary Seely was the next Director and under her leadership, the Institute became internationally recognised for desert research (Schoeman 1996).

**Sandwich Harbour**

It is interesting to look into the colonial derivation of the name Sandwich Harbour. Long before the colonial period, Portuguese navigators and explorers had found and used the bay. The original Portuguese name was Port d’Ilheo (Africa Pilot 1868 in Kinahan 1991). Besides being a safe anchorage, it also had fresh water, a very important resource along the barren coast. Today, the only reference to this name is Ilheo Point, the tip of the sand spit forming the bay. The first documented record referring to it as Sandwich Harbour was on a chart published by Alexander Dalrymple in 1791. He was then hydrographer for the British East India Company and had obtained a simple sketch of the bay from the British whaling company, Samuel Enderby and Sons. This company caught many whales off what is today the Angolan and Namibian coast. One of their ships was the Sandwich and it is reasonably inferred that Sandwich Harbour was named after this ship (Kinahan 1991).

In 1851, a company from Cape Town, A. & E. De Pass, established a fishing business at Sandwich Harbour. Captain John Spence, the company representative, took the schooner *Prince Edward*, with equipment and fishermen, to Sandwich Harbour. Many tons of dried fish and shark oil were exported from here, through Cape Town to Mauritius. The company later became De Pass and Spence. During their tenure, they beached their coaster, the iron barque *Eagle*, close to their fish-drying site and used it as a storeroom. Because of the shifting sand, the remains of the *Eagle* are now many metres from the lagoon edge. The fishing industry at Sandwich Harbour declined and was abandoned by the company in 1878 (Kinahan 1991).
Another attempt was made to establish a business at Sandwich Harbour in 1888, when the Deutsch-Westafrikanische Kompanie built a meat canning plant on the narrow beach between the dunes (Lenssen 1999). A ship entered the lagoon with building material and machinery. A house and a canning plant were constructed. Cattle were purchased from the local inhabitants far afield, driven down the Swakop River and eventually along the beach to Sandwich Harbour, where they were slaughtered. However, the sand could not be kept off the meat, even when the wind was not blowing, which was not often. According to one employee, the tins were of inferior quality and did not seal properly, resulting in spoiled meat. In addition, by the time the stock arrived in Sandwich Harbour, after the long trek from Swakopmund and Walvis Bay without food and water, their quality had deteriorated. The canning plant ceased operating and the company was liquidated in 1891 (Conradt 2006).

During the German colonial period, guano was collected from six natural islands in the lagoon at Sandwich Harbour and shipped to Germany. After the First World War, the guano was sent to Cape Town. Besides the poor quality of the guano, due to large amounts of sand in it, the transport by motorboats through the mouth of the lagoon and the surf to the waiting cargo vessels was fraught with problems. The transport could only take place in calm weather and even then it was difficult (Terblanché 1980). During this period, in 1925, one of the people working at Sandwich Harbour was Otto Karlowa, after whom one of the islands was named. His three-year-old son Ernst spent several years growing up in this paradise along the coast (Schnurr 1996). After the Second World War, Ernst Karlowa returned to
South West Africa and eventually ended up, in 1963, working for the Sarusas Development Corporation, in what later became the Skeleton Coast Park. He left the coast and spent some time working in Windhoek. Here he met Bernabé De la Bat and as a result of this fortuitous meeting, he returned to his beloved Skeleton Coast in the autumn of 1973, as warden of the newly proclaimed Skeleton Coast Park (Schnurr 1996). In March 1981 he was transferred, with promotion, to the Swakopmund regional conservation office. In his new capacity, he often worked at Sandwich Harbour, his childhood playground (J. Lenssen pers.com.).

The right to exploit the guano changed hands several times. Attempts by another company to use a caterpillar tractor along the beach to the harbour in Walvis Bay proved unsuccessful. A Leyland four-wheel drive tractor lasted for six months, before it too was abandoned. This was in the period 1934-35, when 2 000 tons of guano were shipped from Walvis Bay. Fisons Fertilizers of Durban, with their head office in the Netherlands, purchased the concession in 1937. Fison’s pumped large amounts of money and sand into the enterprise. Using pumps imported from The Netherlands, they used sand to increase the size of natural islands in the lagoon. The outbreak of World War Two stopped work for three years, but despite this delay, the island was enlarged by another four hectares in 1942, bringing the total to eight hectares. By the end of the year, Fison’s had invested R118 000 in the project, a large sum of money at the time. This company had contracted Captain Hans Hansen to transport the guano to Walvis Bay on Studebaker trucks, using the firm sand of the beach at spring low tide as a “road” (Terblanché 1980).

There was a clash of interests at this time between Captain Hansen and Heinrich and Fritz Cruys of Walvis Bay, who all fished in the Sandwich Lagoon. Both entrepreneurs used nets and rowing boats. Captain Hansen claimed Cruys’s fishermen disturbed the birds on the guano islands and there were counter-accusations. Because of this problem, Fison’s management applied to the Administration to have the northern portion, where their islands were situated in the Sandwich Lagoon, to be declared a reserve to protect the birds and their interests (Terblanché 1980).

For 13 years the lawmakers had been quiet. Then, as a result of the clash of interests mentioned above, the SWAA redrew the borders of Game Reserve No. 3 in 1941 (Government Notice No. 114 of 1941). This time the boundaries were defined more accurately and the area enlarged. The northern boundary was once again five kilometres south and parallel to the Swakop River. The eastern boundary remained about the same, but when it reached the Kuiseb River at Nata, it went directly westwards until it reached the Atlantic Ocean at a point 22 km south of the waterhole Anichab, at Sandwich Harbour. From here it followed the coastline to the “southern boundary of the port and settlement of Walvis Bay”. However, this proclamation did not solve the problem, as the guano islands were not protected. A year later the boundaries were adjusted to include the lagoon and the islands in Game Reserve No. 3 (G.N. 181 of 1942). Captain Hansen was appointed the first honorary game ranger
to control the Sandwich Harbour area before he became ill. E.A. Haglund replaced him in October 1945. Many problems beset the guano industry at Sandwich Harbour and the silting up of the lagoon mouth was one the most serious. The last guano collected was in 1947 and in 1956 the SWA Administration withdrew the concession. The lagoon became shallower, the islands disappeared and so did most traces of the industry (Terblanché 1980).

In 1979 there were major boundary changes and the details are in the section below, titled Namib-Naukluft Park. From 22 km south of the waterhole Anichab at Sandwich Harbour, the boundary now extended 1 609 kilometres into the sea, measured from the low-water mark of the Atlantic Ocean and parallel to the shore until it reached the boundary of the territory of Walvis Bay, a distance of about 43 km, and then along the existing boundaries to the starting point (G.N. 118 of 1979). Although the lagoon at Sandwich Harbour was previously protected, the new proclamation meant the country now had its first marine protected area (Kinahan 1991).

**Namib Desert Park**

In 1962 the borders of Game Reserve No. 3 were again changed (G. N. 130 of 1962). The boundary was still five kilometres south of the southern bank of the Swakop River, but extended further east to the commercial farm boundaries and at Wilsonfontein 110 it turned southwards, following the said farm boundaries but excluding them. From the north-western corner beacon of farm 401 (also known as Elim or Reingeluk, northwest of Solitaire), the boundary was a straight line to Hudaob on the Kuiseb River and then along the left or southern bank as far as the water hole at Natab. The border was no longer 10 km south of the river, an important change. From Natab, the boundary was then a straight line until it reached the coast at a point 22 km south of the water hole Anichab at Sandwich Harbour. Rod Baxter was appointed as a ranger, but as there were no facilities in the Park, he lived in Windhoek (S. Roché pers. com.).

After 59 years, Game Reserve No. 3 ceased to exist with the publication of Proclamation 49 of 1966. However, it was reborn as the Namib Desert Park, with several important changes to its boundaries. The first of these was from the border of the Walvis Bay enclave, on a black rock outcrop known as Nuberoifkop, the boundary kept to the southern bank of the Swakop River and no longer five kilometres south of it. It excluded the small farms like Three Sisters, Goanikontes, Sunnyside, Riet and others, in and on the riverbanks, from the park. At the confluence of the Swakop and Khan Rivers, it followed the left or southern bank of this latter river to a point south of the present day Rössing Mine where it intersected the first surveyed farm boundary. It excluded all the farms such as Marmor Pforte 37, Modderfontein 131, Vredelus 112, Horebis, where it crossed the Swakop River, Wilsonfontein 110 and Onanis 121. The Welwitschia Plains, north of the Swakop River, with a large concentration of welwitschias and the Moonlandscape, were now in the park. The boundary followed the border between state land and the surveyed farms as far as farm 401, where it again turned.
Map showing the historical development of the Namib-Naukluft Park.
northwest to Hudaob on the Kuiseb River, along the southern bank to Natab and eventually to the sea 22 km south of the waterhole Anichab. Two officers, Senior Ranger John Dixon and Ranger Willem Goussard were appointed to patrol the Park, Sandwich Harbour and the coast as far as the Ugab River. They lived in Walvis Bay where there was accommodation.

The Welwitschia Plains and Ganab areas became the focus of tourism development in the early seventies. Ranger Chris Eyre helped build the partly underground shelters next to the airfield on the way to the Big Welwitschia. Fly-in tourists used these shelters and toilets and aircraft used this airfield when Swakopmund was covered in fog. At this time, Eyre stayed at the old Husab mine to combat poaching in the area and did horse patrols in the Swakop and Khan Rivers. He later moved to Ganab and as there were no facilities, bricked up a rock overhang to provide a living space (C. Eyre pers. com.). Today this overhang is used as a fuel store.

In about 1977, ‘Scotty’ Nel, a pasture scientist, was sent to Ganab to do research on the grazing and carrying capacity of the Park. He erected several exclusion plots in the Ganab area and in the Naukluft Mountains. Many of these plots are still in good condition and other researchers have used them over the years. At this time Ranger Allisdair Macdonald was stationed at Ganab.

An attempt to re-introduce black rhino to the Kuiseb River took place in 1973. One died and the other was eventually caught and removed a few years later (J. Lenssen pers. com.).

*Old mining camp on the coast.*

*Photo: Peter Bridgeford*
Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park

Further south, in the Naukluft Mountains, other developments had taken place. Many people living in the area knew these beautiful mountains, with perennial springs, huge pools of crystal clear water, shaded by immense fig and other trees and many wild animals. When the owner of the farm Naukluft, Robbie de Costa Blake died in the sixties, the Division Nature Conservation and Tourism submitted a proposal to the Executive Committee to buy the farm. This was approved (Minutes 326 of 10 May 1966), at R2,50 a hectare, if and when funds were available. The farm Naukluft was 21,986 hectares in size (Joubert 1980) and when it was purchased, it was named the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park (Proc. 19 of 1968). Naukluft was bought to protect the endangered Hartmann's mountain zebra Equus zebra hartmannae and the unique mountain habitat. One of the first rangers to be appointed in the Naukluft was 'Jaap' Meyer. He built the two-metre high game proof fence, using lengths of railway line as posts, along the southern boundary of Naukluft. To transport the material, he used donkeys and made the pack saddles himself. He was followed by Walter Piepmeyer and over the years, a host of other rangers. Obviously the boundaries of the new Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park were not ecologically sound and it could not be separated from the other farms making up the Naukluft Mountain massif.

During this period, the Goeie Hoop (ironically, Good Hope) Farmer's Union in the Maltahöhe district approached the SWAA and asked it to purchase certain farms bordering the Diamond area. This was because of recurring drought and the resultant invasion of their properties by hundreds of gemsbok Oryx gazella competing with their livestock for grazing. Farmers

Rock pool and waterfall called "Die valle".  

Photo: Peter Bridgeford
in the Naukluft Mountains had similar problems with the mountain zebra and additionally, these animals destroyed the fencing. The Executive Committee (Minute 187 of 23 March 1970) instructed the Division Nature Conservation and Tourism to investigate this complaint and make recommendations (Joubert 1980).

Conservationists seldom had the opportunity to influence events so positively as the survey by the Division’s researchers and management staff. They recommended all the farms making up the Naukluft Mountain massif be purchased and in addition, the farms on the western side of the mountain, adjoining the dune area. These would form a corridor from the desert to the mountains and open the age-old migration route. Other marginal farms to the west of Maltahöhe could be purchased to increase the grazing area for gemsbok (Joubert 1980). Because of financial and political reasons, not all the farms recommended by the Division’s researchers were bought. However, ten farms comprising the Naukluft Mountains and four others on the western side adjoining the dunes, a total of 128 456 hectares, were eventually purchased (Joubert 1980). Meanwhile, the Division Nature Conservation and Tourism were negotiating with the mining authorities and mineral concession holders, Consolidated Diamond Mines, to obtain a portion of Diamond Area No. 2, to link the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park and the Namib Desert Park. This was the area south and west of Sossusvlei and then northwards to the Kuiseb River. It included Tsondabvei and many kilometres of the Tsondab River (Joubert 1980).

Namib-Naukluft Park
The dreams of that extraordinary man, Bernabé De la Bat and his team of conservationists came true on 1 August 1979, when the Namib-Naukluft Park was proclaimed (G. N. 118 of 1979). The Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park and Namib Desert Park were deplored (G. N. 118 of 1979) and in their place, the new and enlarged 23 340 km² Park came into being. To put this into perspective, the Namib-Naukluft Park was now larger than the Etosha National Park.

From the border of the Walvis Bay enclave, along the southern banks of the Swakop and Khan Rivers, the border remained the same as in the previous proclamation. When it reached Farm 401, near Solitaire, and where it had turned northwest before, it now continued south along the boundary of Farm 401 and the other western-most farms bordering the Namib. Excluded from the Park were Môreweg, Escourt, Dieprivier and Weltevrede. When the boundary reached the south-western corner of Weltevrede, it followed this farm’s border east and north and continued around the Naukluft Mountain massif. A portion of Bläskranz, bordering the farms Arbeid Adelt and Naukluft, was incorporated into the Park. This was a strip of land east of Arbeid Adelt, around the southern side of Bläskranz tufa and waterfall and along the northern slope of the mountain until it reached the main road. A part of Zais, to the east of the district road, was exchanged for this part of Bläskranz. The owners of Bûlsport did not want to sell their portion of the mountain. The boundary thus went over
One hundred years of conservation

part of the mountain until it joined the farm Naukluft border along the district road on the southern side of the mountains. It followed the southern edge of the massif, bordering on Neu Onis, Onis, Neuras, Urikos, Goede Hoop, Oorwinning, Sesriem, Eensaam, Geluk and Vreemdelingspoort. Only a portion of Sesriem, west of the district road, including the Sesriem Canyon and the farmhouse, were incorporated into the new protected area. At the southernmost corner beacon of Vreemdelingspoort, “thence westwards to the point where the lines drawn due west from” — the above beacon “and due south from the waterhole Natab — intersect” (G.N. 118 of 1979). This area incorporated the Tsauab River valley, Sossusvlei, about 25 km of the Tsondab River and Tsondaibvei. The boundary from Natab was again a straight line to approximately 22 km south of the waterhole Anichab at Sandwich Harbour. However, this boundary now extended 1 609 kilometres into the sea and formed the first marine reserve.

At Sesriem, a number of campsites and ablution facilities were built. A fuel station, with hand operated pumps, sold petrol and diesel. The Park boundary was fenced from Felseneck, along the Sukse/Elim/Oorwinning border and down to Sesriem, to the west of the district road past the Canyon and then along the Eensaam/Geluk border to Vreemdelingspoort. The first tourist officers at Sesriem were the previous owners of the farm, the Truter. The front room of the house was used as an office. There were several good houses on the farms purchased and rangers were stationed at Felseneck, Sukse, Elim and later the senior ranger moved to Zais. Today, this is still the headquarters for the Naukluft section of the Park. At Ganab, during 1980, four prefab houses for rangers and six for the workers were erected. The old wooden prefab houses were kept for storerooms and relief staff. In 1984, an office block and a second shed were added.

The enlargement of the park was not without its trials and tribulations. Several permanent settlers in the upper reaches of the Swakop River had their properties expropriated in 1982. These properties and other infrastructure were evaluated, compensation paid and they were given alternate farms. As most did not have title deeds for the land they occupied, their eviction from the Namib-Naukluft Park was not a major issue. Rehabilitation and cleaning up of the five sites took a long time because of all the litter left behind. Deep trenches were bulldozed and 12 old vehicle wrecks and other scrap was buried (J. Lenessen pers.com.).

With the changing political scene and establishment of the Minister’s Council in 1980, the Division Nature Conservation and Tourism was upgraded and amalgamated to become the Department of Agriculture and Nature Conservation under leadership of the Secretary, Dr. Herbert Schneider. In 1980, the South West Africa/Namibia Government Service came into being. Bernabé De la Bat left nature conservation to become the chairman of the Government Service Commission, after being at the helm of the conservation department for 27 years. Sadly, he died prematurely two years later, at the age of 53. Polla Swart succeeded him as the conservation director.
In 1986 the Namib-Naukluft Park once again amended its boundaries (Government Notice 180 of 1986). Unlike the Etosha National Park, which was drastically reduced in size over the years, the Namib-Naukluft Park grew bigger and better. The Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) ceded the remaining part of Diamond Area 2, south of Sossusvlei and a large portion of the adjoining Diamond Area 1, as far south as the Aus/Lüderitz road, to conservation. This company had controlled this vast area, previously known as the Sperrgebiet, for many years through their diamond mining concessions. The addition of the new land more than doubled the size of the Namib-Naukluft Park to almost five million hectares or 49 786 km² (Bridgeford 1997).

The amendment extended the boundary south along the edge of the Namib Desert to include all State land but to exclude the commercial farms. From the southernmost corner beacon of Vreemdelingspoort, the boundary went south along 19 farms or portions of farms, over the Neisib Plains, to the main road a few kilometres west of Aus. It followed the northern boundary of the road reserve to due south of the trigonometrical beacon, Klammerberg 12, on the Kowis Mountains. Then northwards along this imaginary line until it intersected the 26° line of latitude, it then followed this degree of latitude until it met the high-water mark of the Atlantic Ocean. It followed the high-water mark until it reached the point approximately 22 km south of the waterhole Anichab at Sandwich Harbour and joined the previously proclaimed portion of the park. The block of land including Hottentot Bay and north to Gibralter Rock, formed by the imaginary line through Klammerberg beacon and the seashore was kept by CDM, as they were still prospecting and mining for diamonds along this stretch of coast.
The enlarged park now included the old mining settlements at Saddle Hill and diamond mines at Meob, Grillenberger, Charlottenfelder, Holsatia and Conception. The buildings at Fischersbrunn were retained by CDM. An agreement with the conservation authorities gave CDM personnel angling rights and the use of the facilities. The area around Meob was badly littered with the detritus of years of prospecting and sport angling. Chief Warden Achim Lenssen arranged with CDM and they sent a tyre dozer all the way from Lüderitz, over the dunes to Meob, to clear up the rubbish. A large hole was dug and all the vehicle wrecks, drums and other litter was buried.

After the proclamation of the new boundaries, the fencing of the eastern boundary of the Park began, from Farm 401 to the south. Every year, as funds became available, a section of this long boundary fence was completed. Most of the farms bordering the Park were occupied and illegal entry and over utilization of gemsbok from the protected area took place. To facilitate travel along this fence with vehicles laden with fencing material, Frans McNab and the author bulldozed a track through the vegetated dunes from Vreemdelingspoort to Wolwedans before construction commenced. The work was completed when the fence reached the main road at Aus. To maintain the many kilometres of this fence through the dune field, regular maintenance took place by rangers stationed at Sesriem and Sukses. Among these were Jacques Erasmus, Jaco Steenkamp and Tony Delport.

The farms Escourt, Môrewag, Kasupi and Toevlug, bordering the Park south of Solitaire, had changed hands several times over the years, but due to arid conditions, had never been
viable commercial successes, more so after the collapse of the karkul industry. In the early eighties, the SWAA decided to withdraw the farms from the agricultural market and the Administration for Whites established a research station on the four properties. It was dedicated to research the feasibility of farming commercially with gemsbok and ostrich. A few years after Independence, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, decided to close down the facilities. Negotiations by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism resulted in the farms being transferred to them and the four properties became part of the Namib-Naukluft Park, but were never officially gazetted. The many facilities on Escourt were upgraded and the Tsondab Training Centre was established. However, some time after Independence, a large number of ex-combatants were allocated to all Ministries. These new staff members were housed in the training facilities.

One of the longest serving wardens in the Namib-Naukluft Park was ‘Achim’ Lenssen. During his tenure at Ganab, many of the developments mentioned here, took place. He resigned in 1997 after 28 years dedicated service in conservation and 18 years at Ganab. Biologist Dr. ‘Hu’ Berry, who spent many fruitful years as a researcher at Okaukuejo in the Etosha National Park, was transferred to Gobabeb where he worked for 12 years.

One of the conservation highlights during the centenary year was the re-introduction of hook-lipped rhino *Diceros bicornis* into the Naukluft Mountains. They had historically occurred there, but had been eradicated by hunters. The rhino have settled down well and are utilising large areas of their former range.

**Tourist facilities in the Namib-Naukluft Park**

The campsite at Naukluft and the Waterkloof Trail is popular with local and overseas visitors. The Olive Trail was opened in the mid eighties. Work on a long hiking trail with overnight facilities through the splendour of the Naukluft Mountains, continued for several years. In 1989, the Administrator General of SWA/Namibia, Advocate Louis Pienaar, inaugurated the Naukluft 8-day Hiking Trail. Considered one of the toughest hiking trails in southern Africa, it remains a popular destination for serious hikers who enjoy a challenge.

In 1995, Director Polla Swart of Wildlife Management, of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, officially opened the first 4x4 trail in a conservation area. This two-day trail used old farm tracks in the Naukluft Mountains and overnight facilities were built in a valley on the plateau. Ranger Jaco Steenkamp and the staff from Zais and Naukluft did most of the work. In the Namib section of the Park, additional campsites were built at Mirabib, Bloedkoppie and Tinkas area. Two short trails, Tinkas and Rock Sculpture, were developed. Rangers Mark Berry and Ole Friede were instrumental in this development drive. Ranger Rob Davis spent three years, from 1984 to 1987, eradicating alien invasive Prosopis trees in the Swakop River (J. Lenssen pers.com.).
One hundred years of conservation

The camp at Sesriem expanded dramatically with the increase in tourist numbers. Offices, houses for staff, a swimming pool and kiosk, new ablution facilities and enlarged camp site tried to cater for the hordes of visitors, but never managed to do the Park justice. After Independence, the tourism facilities in conservation areas were taken away from the Resorts Section of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and given to Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR). In 2007, a lodge was built by NWR near the Sesriem Canyon and new ablution facilities at the campsite.

Discussion
From its humble beginnings in 1907, Game Reserve No. 3 grew over the next 100 years to become the largest conservation area in Namibia and among the largest in Africa. It is unlikely to expand any further, but Diamond Area 2, south of it, will soon be proclaimed the Sperrgebiet National Park. These two parks will link to the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park and form a conservation area from the Swakop River to below the Orange River in South Africa.

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Biography
Peter Bridgeford worked in the Namib, for the Namibian conservation department, for 23 years. He was stationed in Henties Bay, Skeleton Coast Park and was a warden in Namib-Naukluft Park, stationed at Zais, for 17 years. Another four years were spent on NamibRand Nature Reserve. He has been involved in vulture conservation for over 20 years and is still active in this field. He and his wife Marilyn have written and published three books on Namibian tourist attractions.

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