

Symposium on animal movements and satellite tracking in Namibia



Background

The above Symposium was held at Otjikoto Education Trust about 74 km north of Otjiwarongo, Namibia on 23-25 November 2016. Thirty-eight delegates were in attendance (**Annex 1**) and 24 presentations were given, including an analysis of some of the common issues of interest emerging from the individual presentations. All presentations are available on the EIS at www.the-eis.com/searchresults.php?action=tracking_symposium.

During a workshop session at the end of the Symposium, the delegates shared their thoughts and ideas arising from the presentations given, and discussed what actions should flow from this Symposium. The sections below capture these reflections.

Thoughts and ideas

- Need to structure and disseminate relevant key tracking info to planners and decision-makers
- Need to identify key target audiences who should receive tracking info and design dissemination mechanisms accordingly
- Find ways of working together more effectively
- Bring different tracking data sets together to better present overall picture for benefit of people and large landscape management
- Use the different tracking data to influence fencing and land use

- Use multiple / composite tracking data to add value and benefits – “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”
- Better understand “boundaries” – e.g. unfenced roads, park borders
- How does wildlife respond to human presence and pressures?
- How to ensure security for sensitive information
- Where appropriate, look at cost and benefits – economic assessment (e.g. role of scavengers in providing ecosystem services)
- Keep up to date with international developments – techniques & technology

Agreed actions

1. Establish a “*virtual*” *animal tracking contact group* to communicate mainly via e-mail and other electronic media, to explore areas of fruitful collaboration, to perhaps meet from time to time if appropriate and to develop areas of possible work and information sharing. A starter list of potential members of the contact group and their e-mail addresses is provided in **Annex 2**. The initial coordinator of the group is **Morgan Hauptfleisch**.
2. Explore common *data storage and management systems* for animal tracking data, and provide guidance to researchers on which is the most appropriate for use in Namibia and southern Africa. A small team was appointed to consider this, comprising **Jörg Melzheimer, Alice Jarvis, John Mendelsohn & Laurie Marker**. Their report is attached as **Annex 3**.
3. A *summary paper* will be prepared based on the presentations given at the Symposium, covering the species, locations, questions, key findings, etc. A questionnaire will be circulated to all participants (and others who could not attend) to obtain further information. What were the key messages that came out of each set of work, who should these messages reach (e.g. decision-makers, other researchers, public) and what would be the best way of putting these messages across? **Morgan Hauptfleisch** has offered to prepare a first draft of this paper and will send out a questionnaire.
4. Set up a virtual *tracking ethics group* to develop guidelines on collaring and tracking animals. The group comprises **Ruben Portas (group convenor), Ortwin Aschenborn, the to-be-appointed MET Carnivore Co-ordinator & Kerri Wolter**.
5. Establish a virtual *technology support group* to assist local researchers on project design, appropriate technology, data management, analysis, and interpretation, etc. Members of the group will look to recruit an appropriately experienced post-doc to work with local MSc level students and researchers in MET, NGOs and local universities. The group comprises **Norman Owen-Smith (Wits), Monique MacKenzie (St Andrews), Morgan Hauptfleisch (NUST) & John Mendelsohn (RAISON)**.
6. *Base map layers* are important for tracking analysis to understand interactions with climate, vegetation, land use and many other factors. A set of general base maps would be useful as a common point of reference for researchers. **Morgan Hauptfleisch** to include a question in the questionnaire on what base map layers researchers need, and then **John**

Mendelsohn, Alice Jarvis and SASSCAL to look at what is available and what could be prepared, and these placed on the EIS for general access.

7. Explore the use of *Webinar* (online seminars) to get key messages out to target audiences. **Marina Tavolaro** to follow up and suggest and guide a practical way forward.
8. Vulture group (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana) have agreed to set up a *common data management system*. MET will encourage all Namibian vulture tracking data to be added. Momentum created will encourage others not to be left out. **Kerri Wolter, Pete Hancock, Maria Diekmann, Kenneth /Uiseb and John Mendelsohn** to collaborate.
9. Carnivore group (LCMAN) have agreed to carry out a *Red Data assessment of all Carnivores in Namibia*. MET will be an integral part of this, and a new MET carnivore coordinator will be assigned to work with LCMAN. This RD assessment will lead on to a national Action Plan for carnivores. This could look at tracking data management / sharing. **Chris Brown** to facilitate process.
10. VulPro, REST & MET will be exploring a *reintroduction initiative for the Cape Vulture*, with young captive bred birds from VulPro released at an appropriate site and fitted with trackers. Groundwork in Namibia needed to prepare for the project. **Kenneth /Uiseb, Maria Diekman and Chris Brown** to take the lead.