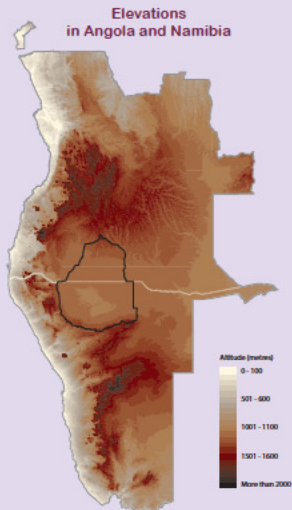
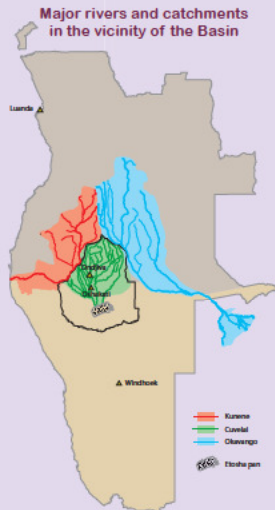


Overview of the Cuvelai-Etosa Basin



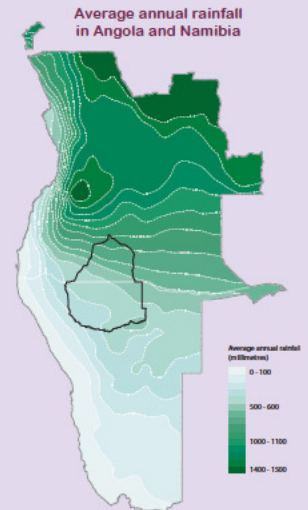
The Cuvelai-Etosa Basin is the southern half of a much larger depression, usually called the Owambo Basin by geologists. This broader Basin is an extension of the massive Kalahari Basin spread across thousands of kilometres of central southern Africa.



The Cuvelai, Kunene and Okavango Rivers drain parts of the Angolan *planalto* highlands. Flows of the Cuvelai and Okavango end in the Kalahari Basin, while the Kunene reaches the Atlantic Ocean.



The Owambo Basin largely falls within the Kunene Province in Angola, and inside the Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and Oshikoto Regions in Namibia. A substantial part of the Basin's economy is derived from cross-border trade, especially at Oshikango/Santa Clara.



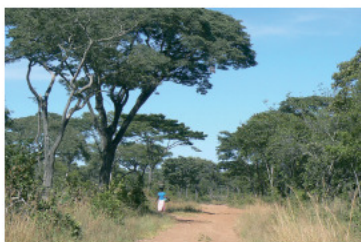
Rainfall in the Basin varies between about 900 millimetres per year in the north and 300 millimetres in the south. Variation in rainfall is greatest in the south while the north more frequently gets reliable falls of rain. Most rain falls between January and March in the south and October and March in the northern areas.

Major features of the Owambo Basin



The Owambo Basin can be defined in two ways. One definition focuses on the Basin's topography and its surface waters. The section of the Cuvelai in Angola has been defined that way.

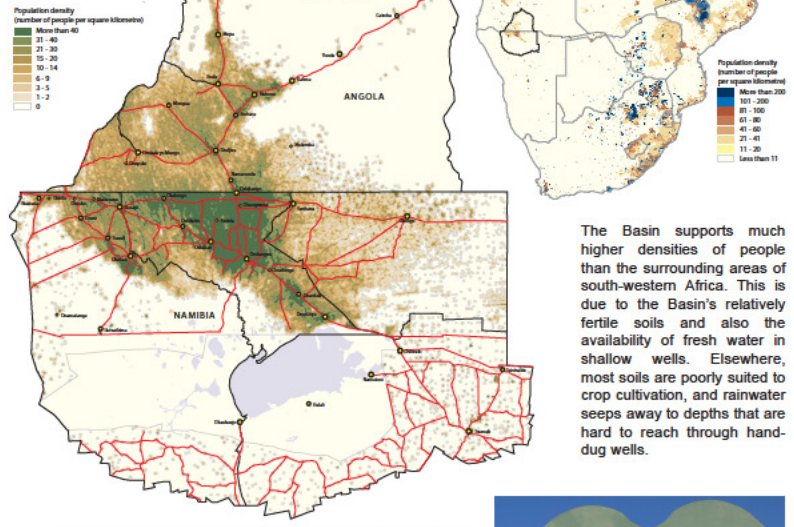
The other definition is based on underground bodies of water, called aquifers, and flows of water beneath the surface. It is on this basis that the four Namibian sub-basins are defined. Each sub-basin has characteristic underground aquifers and the delimitation thus helps to identify shared ground water resources which can be managed by people in each sub-basin.



Miombo woodland is dominant in the north of the Owambo Basin

Population densities in the Owambo Basin

An estimated 1.2 million people live in the Basin: about 70% in Namibia and 30% in Angola.



The Basin supports much higher densities of people than the surrounding areas of south-western Africa. This is due to the Basin's relatively fertile soils and also the availability of fresh water in shallow wells. Elsewhere, most soils are poorly suited to crop cultivation, and rainwater seeps away to depths that are hard to reach through hand-dug wells.

The last and perhaps most famous king of the Kwanyama people was Mandume Ya Ndemufayo, who was born in 1894. His reign began in 1911 and ended with his death in 1917. Mopane (omusati) leaves adorn the monument which marks his grave lying to the east of Namaunde.



The Cuvelai (shown here) and Mui Rivers are the only perennial rivers in the Basin. Both drain the northern parts of the Basin where altitude and rainfall are highest.

