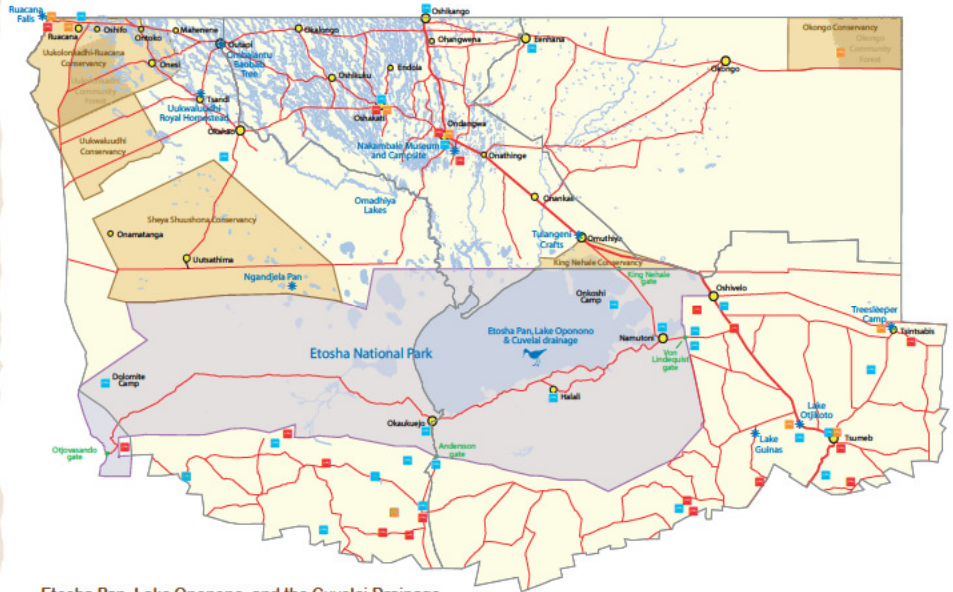


Wildlife and tourism in the Cuvelai~Etosha Basin



Historically, tourism in the Basin has focussed almost exclusively on wildlife in Etosha. In recent years many tourism enterprises have started in the Basin, including cultural and craft-based attractions in conservancies, community forests and elsewhere.

A community-run campsite near the dramatic Ruacana Falls (above) and a traditional dance show (left) illustrate the changing face of tourism in the Basin.



Etosha Pan, Lake Oponono, and the Cuvelai Drainage was designated a Ramsar wetland in 1995. In terms of the international Ramsar convention, the ecology and hydrology of these wetlands are of national and global importance.

- Places of interest
- Hotel, lodge, tented camp, tented lodge
- Hotel, campsite, caravan site, self-catering
- Ramsar Site
- B&B, guest farm, guest house, rest camp



A breeding colony of thousands of cattle egrets south of Uukwangula.

Life in the Basin depends heavily on flooding which transforms the *iishana* and pans into important wetland habitats.

Many animals and plants have very short life cycles to capitalise on the water before it dries up. For example, some frogs complete their reproductive cycle in only 22 days.

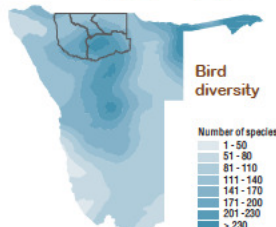
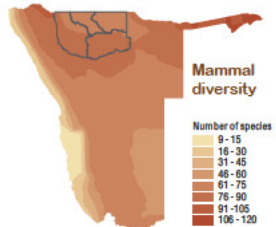
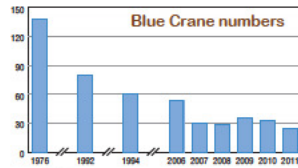
Many species lie as eggs in the dry mud for years. Once water arrives, they can hatch, grow and produce new eggs within 24 hours. Fairy shrimps and about 60 other tiny crustaceans do just that and they, in turn, are important food for water birds that arrive from thousands of kilometres away.

Etosha Pan becomes a shallow lake in years of exceptional flooding, and is then one of only two regular breeding sites in southern Africa for lesser and greater flamingos. One million flamingos have been recorded on Etosha Pan.

During floods, fish move south with water from Angola. 49 species of fish occur in the Basin.



Many of the wetland birds are Red Data (i.e. threatened) species. All of Namibia's Blue Cranes live on the grasslands around Etosha Pan and the Omadhiya Lakes. Only about 30 cranes remain.



Etosha National Park

This is Namibia's premier tourist attraction, attracting over 200,000 visitors per year, of which around two-thirds are from overseas. The variety and abundance of wildlife in the park, including charismatic elephants, cheetahs, rhinos and lions, is the major attraction.

The park was proclaimed in 1907 and now covers 22,935 km². Two new camps and the King Nehale gate have been opened recently.

The camps are managed by Namibia Wildlife Resorts while wildlife surveys, fire control, anti-poaching and waterhole maintenance is done by the Ministry of Environment & Tourism. The Etosha Ecological Institute at Okaukuejo coordinates research in the park.

Game numbers

The number of animals is influenced by many factors, such as the availability of water and food, and losses due to predators and disease, in particular anthrax. This table shows the estimated population size of elephant, gemsbok and giraffe between 1998 and 2005.

Species	1998	2000	2002	2004	2005
Elephant	2,200	2,350	2,600	2,050	2,350
Gemsbok	3,650	7,300	6,800	5,000	4,300
Giraffe	1,500	2,800	3,200	3,550	2,750

Number of visitors

