

# TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



## KUNENE KALEIDOSCOPE

9 DAY/8 NIGHT SAFARI TO THE KUNENE REGION OF NAMIBIA



### TRIP SUMMARY

Day 0 : Arrival at Wereldsend for briefing and introduction to conservation in the area

Day 1 : Rhino trekking in Torra, then onto Sesfontein through Damaraland towards the Hoanib River – searching for elephants, lions, oryx, giraffe and other animals.

Day 2 : Head to the Puros Conservancy, game viewing and meeting fascinating local people on route.

Day 3 : Follow the Hoarusib River and the Etendeka Mountains through dramatic scenery and landscapes. Meet local people and again view the unique flora and fauna.

Day 4 : More time spent in this area meeting the local people and viewing the wildlife

Day 5 : Follow the course of the Gomatum River through Puros to the Giribis Plains (with their mysterious fairy Circles).

Day 6 : Spend time in Marienfluss up to the Kunene River and the Angolan border, returning to Etambura

Day 7 : Explore the area close to the camp, seeing life up close.

Day 8 : Follow the course of the Gomatum River through Puros to the Giribis Plains (with their mysterious fairy circles) and onto Sesfontein's stunning Ganamub Mountain Camp.

Day 9 : After a leisurely breakfast it's a game drive back through Sesfontein and the Palmwag Concession to Wereldsend.

**Please note that activities in the conservancies described on particular days are flexible and interchangeable as these are not “staged” but depend on the current day to day activities and events of the communities themselves.**

## **DETAILED ITINERARY**

### **Day 0**

We meet late afternoon at Wereldsend, historic base camp of IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation) from where the now national community-based conservation program was piloted in the early 1980s. See the graveyard of bones, a reminder of the massive commercial poaching of the 70s and early 1980s that came close to wiping out the desert adapted elephant, black rhino and other megafauna. Hear how rural communities turned this situation round.

**Overnight : Wereldsend Camp (semi permanent tented camp)**

### **Day 1**

We rise before the sun is up and join Torra Conservancy game guards looking for desert-adapted black rhino and other fascinating animals and plants. Part of this adventure might entail covering some of the terrain on foot. This morning might also be our first encounter with the somewhat rare Hartmann’s Mountain Zebra.



We then travel north, through the red basalt hills that characterise Damaraland to the village of Sesfontein (which means six springs). This is an opportunity for those who wish to visit a local “supermarket”. Our journey continues north and into the dry bed of the Hoanib River, a linear oasis with majestic Ana, Leadwood and Camelthorn trees marking its course.

The remainder of the day is spent exploring, searching for elephants, lions, giraffe, oryx and other wildlife which seasonally use this ephemeral river’s resources. In the late afternoon we climb out of the river bed and make our camp at the foot of high hills providing us with a fantastic view across the Hoanib Valley.

**Overnight : Wild camping in Huanib Valley**

### **Day 2**

We travel down the Hoanib riverbed and then go north on a lesser known route, taking us through harsh and majestic landscape towards the 3 568 square kilometre Puros Conservancy. This vast area, with a population of less than 300 Himba and Herero herders, is one of the conservancies that own our company and we will be hosted here for the next two nights.

We have a choice of activities which will be tailored to suit your special interests - wildlife or people or both. You may want to climb a dune hummock or drive up to sundowner hill, with its spectacular desert view. Spend the evening around the campfire in the Puros Conservancy Camp, where elephants may stroll past your tent. Chat to our conservancy host, who will bring us up to date with conservancy activities and village life. This is a good opportunity, if you are interested, to obtain insights into the real conservation problems and their local solutions.

**Overnight : Puros Camp (semi-permanent tented camp)**



### Day 3

Set out early with our conservancy guide for the Hoarusib Canyon, searching for elephants, lions and other animals. Seeing how domestic stock and wildlife share the land will provide us with a better understanding of the challenges of making a living in Puros Conservancy. Call in at the local shop and perhaps meet Michael, a local teacher who will share with us the challenges facing the school in this remote settlement. See Puros village which has elephants to thank for the water tank and taps in the settlement. Visit a small business run by Himba women and take advantage of a shopping opportunity. **Overnight : Puros Camp (semi-permanent tented camp)**

### Day 4

We take a scenic drive up the Hoarusib River, past the mountain “Karonda Namanga” which means “you cannot climb it with a spear”, then cross the flank of the Etendeka Mountains and descend into the Khumib dry riverbed, into scenery reminiscent of the Wild West.

Our route, through dramatic landscapes, passes small Himba settlements and we may see goats browsing with springbok nearby or a line of ostrich high-stepping past peacefully grazing cattle. We plan to explore the little known Okonjombo Conservancy. Our host will meet us somewhere along the way and we will find out what’s happening when we get there. **Overnight : Bush camping in Okonjombo.**

### Day 5

After breakfast, we drive on a little known route through Okonjombo Conservancy. We learn about Himba cattle culture and the challenges facing these people and the environment. Depending on the season, we might see cattle being watered from deep wells in the dry river bed. This rough and rugged track, a challenge in itself, takes us through some dramatic scenery towards the Onjuwa Plains. We traverse the “holy” plains normally dotted with livestock and springbok peacefully grazing side by side until we reach Orupembe Conservancy. Here we will spend the next two nights at “Etambura Camp”, Namibia’s first Himba-owned camp, on a hilltop with views that will take your breath away. Relax in comfortable accommodation units, each with an en suite bathroom and private deck area. KCS guests have exclusive use of this camp! Meet our conservancy hosts and spend an interesting evening at the fire talking to Himba game guards or conservancy staff. **Overnight : Etambura Camp**



## Day 6

Today we will be traversing the rocky Hartmann's Pass to Red Drum, a major intersection in the middle of nowhere! Now we are in the Marienfluss Conservancy, another owner of KCS. See the mysterious Fairy Circles and experience an unparalleled sense of space. Enjoy the solitude of remote plains dotted with ostrich, springbok and gemsbok. You may see giraffe, zebra and kudu. If time allows we will stop at one of the really remote Himba villages for a social exchange.

This route takes us to the perennial Kunene River, the border between Namibia and Angola. This incredible wild river, which has gouged its route through a desert, has its origin in the Angolan Highlands and abounds with crocodiles. It is a lifeline for both people and animals in Angola and Namibia. Elephants used to live here but were poached in the 1960s and 70s. The safety of elephants has been secured in the Hoanib and Hoarusib Rivers and now an ambitious elephant corridor project implemented by IRDNC and the conservancies, with BBC funding, hopes to entice these great beasts back to the Kunene River.

We visit the rapids looking for birds and crocodiles before making our way up the breathtaking Marienfluss Valley past the Holy Mountain. One is overcome by a sense of vastness with red sand and grass-covered plains stretching as far as the distant Otjhipa Mountains. We then meander through granite hills returning to Etambura via the Hartmann's Pass. **Overnight : Etambura Camp**



## Day 7

Time for an unhurried breakfast before visiting a herding settlement. People here don't rise before the sun is up. The Himba are semi-nomadic so depending on the season and the pattern of rain, we may need to drive to a camp in a remote location, or the village may be a short stroll away. The people we will meet are owners of KCS so our cultural exchange is imbued with mutual dignity; you are a guest not just a tourist.

Here too we may be able to watch cattle being watered in this dry world where every drop counts or just sit down and talk to people outside a dung-plastered hut. Our translator will be at your side and there is time to ask questions and gain real insights into how people live here. Remember that your lives are as interesting to your hosts as theirs are to you so be prepared to answer their questions.

In the months of December to April, we may be able to take part in the annual harvest of resin from commiphora wildii – the perfume plant or myrrh made famous by the Bible's three wise men. Hear how IRDNC, the local support NGO, has assisted conservancies to earn a regular yearly income by sustainably harvesting and marketing this valuable product to international cosmetic companies. **Overnight : Etambura Camp**

## Day 8

After a hearty breakfast, we head south, traversing vast and silent plains. We pause briefly in Puros, before following the course of the Gomatum River and cross the spectacular Giribis Plains with its mysterious Fairy Circles. We overnight at Sesfontein Conservancy's Ganamub Mountain Camp built on a hillside among granite boulders. Immerse yourself in the sounds, scents and flavours of an African night around a crackling campfire, knowing your presence is making conservation sustainable for the people and animals who share this vast region.

**Overnight : Ganamaub Mountain Camp**



### Day 9

After a leisurely breakfast we travel via Sesfontein and past the game-rich Palmwag Concession area back to Wereldsend.

#### Includes :

Breakfasts, light lunches, snacks, dinners, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages



**TRACKS SAFARIS**  
WE GET YOU CLOSER

