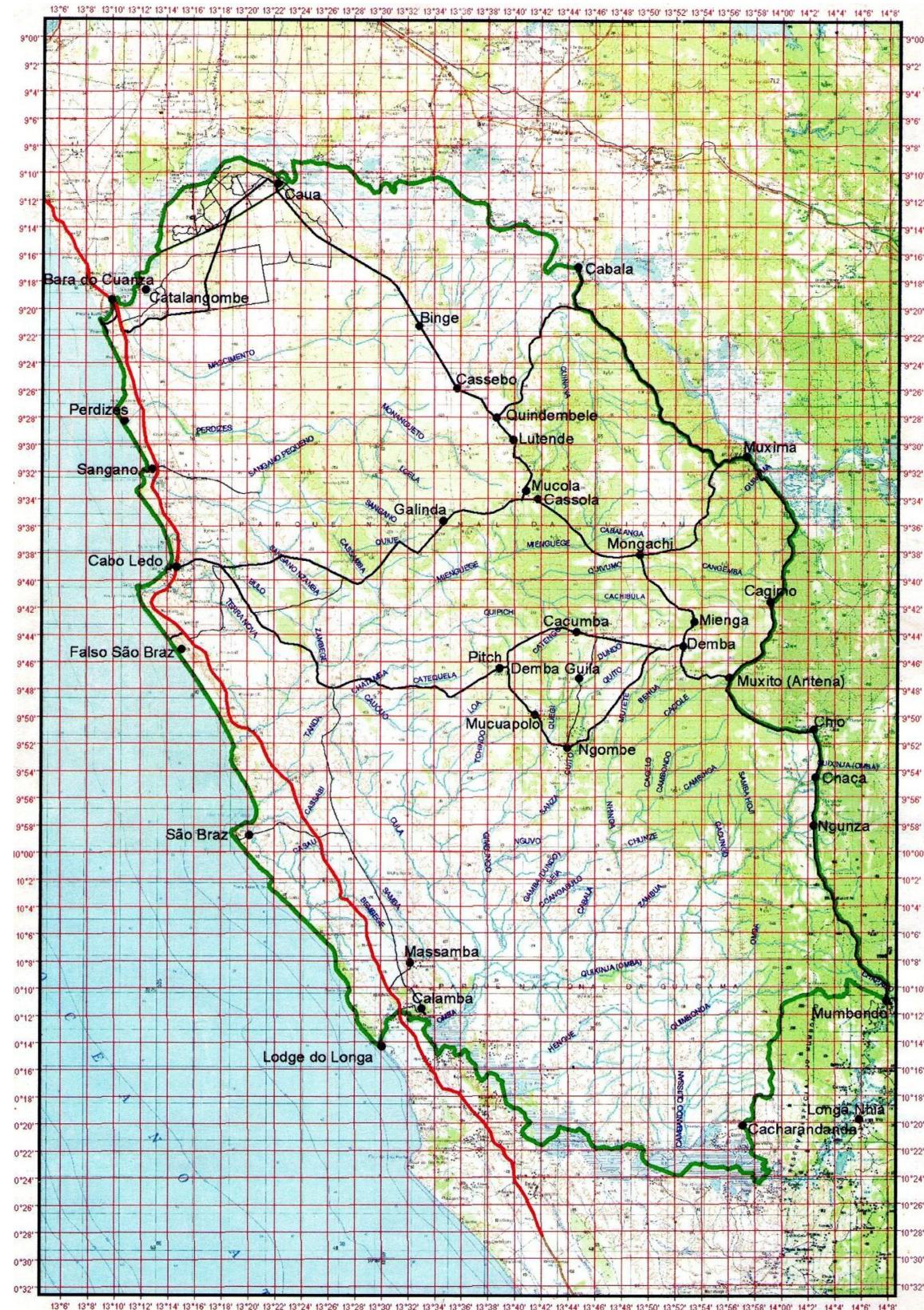


Report on Kissama National Park – by Roland Goetz | 2012

The following report gives a brief overview of the work I have been involved in at Kissama National Park, Angola between 5 March 2002 and 4 September 2012.

Map of Kissama National Park, Angola.



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Affirmative action in South Africa resulted in my retrenchment as CEO of Msini Holdings Kwazulu in December 2000. I then contacted Maggie Bryndt, and Vance Martins of the Wild Foundation who I knew were involved in conservation projects in Africa. Sending them my curriculum vitae as a previous member of the SA Special Forces I already had an established connection with the SF League.

Soon after this I received a telephone call from Prof. Wouter van Hoven (University Of Pretoria) requesting me to attend a meeting with him. Wouter told me that he had been contacted by Maggie, Vance, and Col.Cristo Roelifsa (Ex 5v RECCE and Head of Greys Security Angola). These people were the founding members of Kissama Foundation, in Angola.

Wouter informed me about Operation Noah's Ark. The first leg of wildlife had already been flown to Angola from South Africa to rehabilitate Kissama National Park. Future plans were to relocate animals to a total of six National Parks within Angola. Kissama National Park had been re-opened by the Angolan President Edwardo dos Santos on the 16 December 2000. Wouter said that over 2 years 35 Elephants, 8 Eland, 12 Zebras, 12 Wildebeest, 12 Kudu, had been introduced into a small special conservation area set aside in the extreme North of the Park. Kissama National Park is 10,000 sq km encompassing 120 km of Coast Line. Proclaimed as a National Park by the Portuguese in 1958, it was one of Africa's great parks until civil war began in 1975. Most of the larger game had been slaughtered leaving only a few red buffalo, elephants and smaller game such as duiker, bushbuck, and reedbuck in its South-East corner.

Wouter stated that the working conditions in Angola were complicated. The South African management team he had originally appointed had left after a short period finding these conditions too challenging. This created positions now filled with corrupt Angolans who had no idea of managing a National Park. This investment was now at risk, and would I be able to take on the challenge? A few weeks later I was on a plane bound for Luanda and Kissama.

On the 5 March 2002 at a Board meeting I was appointed as the Director Kissama National Park. At that stage I could not speak Portuguese, and had very little understanding of Angola's culture. I had no idea what was install for neither me nor the park. My first impression was that the park was in a shamble. To give an example of what I had to deal with:

- The park ecologist, Dr Dolcinio (who assumed himself as head of the park) informed me that a crayfish was a fish. During the week he worked in Luanda, as a Colonel in the Angolan National Police Force. Over weekends he would come to the Park with his girlfriends and friends hosting parties, using park supplies and equipment. Naturally he was not happy to have me appointed as Director of Kissama national Park.
- Problems included unruly staff with no system of governance controlling hours worked, food, fuel and supplies issued by The Angolan Army FAA. The Staff were divided into three groups.
 - Field Rangers - Including Cooks, Store men, Mechanics, Drivers etc.
 - Tourism Staff - Lady Cleaners, Guides, Reception Staff etc. All working in a 50 bedded tourist camp at Caua with a restaurant, and camping facility.
 - General workers

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There were three roll -call lists, with three call-up areas. Chiefs were being bribed to attend them

present at work when in fact they were not. I altered this to a single roll call. A parade every break of day at 07H30 was held and all were expected to be present where I could review the day's work ahead. Unless a sick certificate was provided from a doctor they were considered absent, and their salaries were deducted accordingly. We are seen as a Military Unit obtaining food rations such as sacks of rice, maize meal, boxes of tinned foods, vegetables, milk, fresh meat, fish, fuel (diesel, petrol, and various lubricants), etc.



Tourism Facility Caua Camp

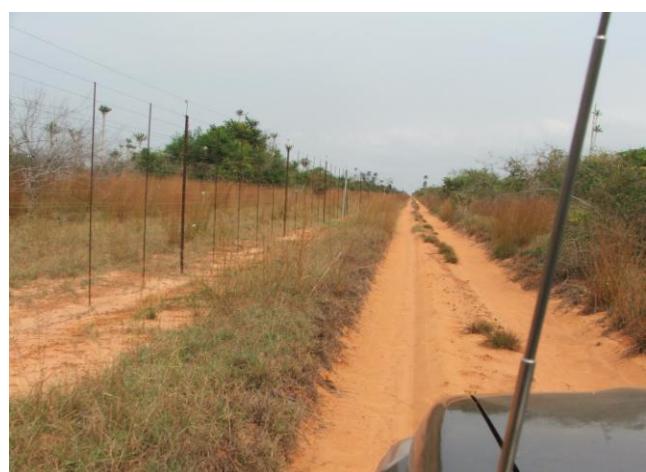
Initially when I arrived in Kissama food supplies were being stolen and sold by corrupt staff members, the remaining staff complaining to me they were hungry having no food. This prompted me into rationing supplies and reorganising staff

into divisions (Field Rangers, Gate Guards, Logistic, Transport, Human Resources, Community workers, Finance, Administration and Communications). All the Stores were now under lock and key manned by a responsible store man who reported directly to me. To provide fair distribution forms were now needed to purchase weekly required rations. In a short time a food reserve was established.

By identifying a few responsible staffing members I promoted them into leadership roles. I was also fortunate that Snr. Gois a former 5 Recce was appointed by Greys Security and seconded to Kissama Park as head of security. His assistance helped me learn to speak Portuguese.

Now having staff management restructured, better systems in place I commenced basic training programs, teaching:

- Responsibilities of a Field Ranger
- Environmental education
- Angolan Labour Law
- Importance of community relations
- Social Responsibility staff
- Electric fence maintenance
- Maintenance to transport
- Maintenance by Plant Staff



21 km fence for special conservation area

Once these basic were operational Anti-Poaching patrols were commenced outside of the Special Conservation Area. These were conducted on foot or by vehicle, boat or helicopter patrols. We then developed awareness and importance of the traditional communities living within the park. This includes approximately 9000 local community members together with a large population living on the park boundaries. Regular meetings were set up with the Sorbas (Ward Heads) from both inside the park and those living as river communities.

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Kwanza River



Vechicle and foot patrol South East of Kissama

Through discussion with local communities and the established contact with the US Embassy in Luanda a Community Tourism Project developed. The Ambassadors funds allowed for the purchase of an outboard motor (to propel a large community canoe), crockery, cutlery, plastic tables, chairs, cooler boxes etc. Tourists visiting Caua Camp were transported in the community canoe to a village along the river where they were hosted by the Sorba. Tourist paid a fee to be served a traditional meal and entertained by the community through singing and dancing.

Through projects like this the local communities begun to see Kissama Park having benefits as an important resource. This encouraged protecting the park against illegal activities such as poaching, charcoal making, use of sea turtles (and their eggs) and cutting down of mangroves reserves etc. The environmental control over the Park has thus improved over the 10 year period. This however it is being hampered by the lack of trained field rangers. Currently there are only 14 rangers to patrol 1 Mil. Ha.

Discipline needs constant reinforcing amongst staff members. On one occasion I caught a group of 3 field rangers stealing from our limited fencing stores. Despite this in accordance with Angolan Labour Law they were dismissed. However they refused to leave if they were not paid 6 months' severance pay. I refused to pay them so they then produced a hand grenade, and they said that they would kill me. I barricaded myself in my living quarters, covering the windows with my mattresses for an entire weekend. Eventually I managed to get a message through to our Offices in Luanda, asking for assistance. A helicopter borne Angolan National Police SWAT Team was promised, word got out and the 3 field rangers fled.



MI 17

Angolan

Air force.

Airborne

Patrol

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Communications and Transport was a real problem in the beginning. Prior to my arrival the VHF Radio repeater was struck by lightning, (no one had bothered to unplug the antennae) so there was no internal communication, there was no land line nor cell phone. The only form of communication was a HF Radio link with Prof van Hoven in Pretoria. We would call him once a day, and he would pass on a message to our Luanda office by phone (IF it worked). Our transport was 2 second World War Military Trucks, 1 Mitsubishi twin cab (on its last legs), and a Landover Pickup (also on its last legs)

A good development in the park was the relationship we developed with GTZ. A German Fed. Aid Group.



Ranger Training School are visited by Miss Angola



Opening of the X Military Ranger Training

The Dir. GTZ. In Angola Dr. Marcus Barend brought his family to visit the Park, through this we developed a friendship having many chats around the camp fire. Marcus came up with the idea of

setting up a Project that could support Conservation in Angola, and also be of assistance to Kissama National Park.



Unimog donated by GTZ, Landcruiser donated by WILD Foundation

This idea was to establish a Ranger Training School in the park. By training x military soldiers we would also be assisting them deal with post conflict resolution and rehabilitation.

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The following equipment was provided:

- 1 new Unimog Truck , 1 Land Cruiser and 2 Quad bikes
- A new radio net was set up with two repeaters, handheld and fixed radio sets
- Patrol tents and other patrol equipment
- Uniforms, etc.



Martin Mthimbu on Quad Bike donated by GTZ

boasting a Medical Outpost.
Malaria is also a major problem,
and I have contracted it 5 times.

Anti-Poaching Patrols have been very successful with large numbers of weapons being confiscated. Anti-Poaching Patrols have been very successful with large numbers of weapons being confiscated. As a result of 30 years of war (Which was still raging when I started) everyone was armed with an AK47 and were hardened vets, this making ranger patrols very dangerous (We have had many fire-fights, and 3 Field Rangers have been killed, along with a number of poachers)

To date 140 Field Rangers have been trained with assistance from the South African Wildlife Training College (Martin Mthimbu and his team).

I have since prepared a Park Management Plan, and have compiled Biological inventories.

The Park has also hosted groups of students from the USA and Portugal arranged by the University of Pretoria.

Initially the closest medical facility was in Luanda, 3 hours by road. As a result of the war the staff residency had turned into a village with about 150 residents (approx. 50 Children) With my military medical training I provided the best service I could.

Through our contact with the Military we managed to employ a Medic, now



Some weapons confiscated by poachers

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Angola's poor infrastructure and corrupt Government Officials make it a very difficult country to live and work in. Difficulties are encountered for daily life such as food shopping. The Governor of Bengo Provence (The Park falls within the geographic area of Bengo) felt that National Park was his land for self enrichment. I received information that he had started illegal tourism development, at Sangano along the coast. On investigation I took photographs, wrote a report sending it to the Minister of Environment. This lead to his embarrassment as I managed to get the (Non-Government Controlled) press involved aswell.

As a result of this action a group of Immigration Department Officials and the Police Chief were sent to Kissama Park to deport me. They failed to do this as my papers were in order. This is just one example of the many difficulties I face living and working in Angola.



Two Rangers with two poachers and confiscated equipment



Illegal tourism development Sangano

Cagandala National Park. Many hours of my time have been spent training an Angolan to take over from me. (Sadly the first appointed candidate contracted AIDS). His replacement Miguel Savituma is now in training. Through an American group I was able to raise the funds to send him on short courses at the University of Pretoria and the Leadership training program run by US Fish and Wildlife Department at Shepherdstown, Virginia, USA.

The Current Project that is being undertaken is the fencing off of a larger area thus extending the Special Conservation Area. Once this has been done we will establish the necessary security and re-introduce more wildlife such as roan, red buffalo and introduce new genes for the current game stocks.

I have also been involved with the training of Field Rangers who are protecting the Giant Sable, at



Rangers in training at Cagandala National Park

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In the 10 years that I have served as Director of Kissama National Park conditions have been improving steadily.

I am proud of the fact that not one animal has been poached from the Special Conservation Area (Op. Noah's Ark). In close collaboration with our Luanda office (Vladimir Russo, Dario Martins) we have devised a program to ensure staff salary payments and accountability to the nearest Kwanza.

I consider this a miracle in a post conflict country. The future of the park looks prosperous as becoming a functional tourist attraction in the future.

I can be contacted by my email
rolandcedricgoetz@gmail.com

Roland Goetz

(September 2012)



Leadership Training School, Shepherdstown, Virginia



Left to Right: Augustino Blanco, Augustino Bimba Gabriel, Director Roland Goetz and Deputy Director Miqual Savituma