

# NEWSLETTER AUGUST

## In this newsletter:

- 🐾 [Fire](#)
- 🐾 [DRC game translocation](#)

Dear clients,

In this newsletter we unfortunately start off with some bad news regarding Ulf's accident. Next, we tell, and especially try to show you our latest DRC game translocation. An interesting trip for us, and we hope you enjoy reading about our adventures! Don't forget to watch the video 😊 If you have any questions, or if we can assist you in any way, feel free to contact us anytime! Have a wonderful day!

Kind regards, the Wildlife Vets Namibia team

## FIRE

Normally we start the newsletter with a light topic of an interesting feature or adaptation of an animal. But unfortunately I start this time with some bad news.

On Sunday a veldfire broke out in Brakwater (a residential area just north of Windhoek), and the fire quickly spread to other parts of Brakwater, Ongos-East (the farm of Ulf Tubbesing) and some other farms. While fighting the fire, Ulf got unconscious and fell into the fire. Fortunately, he got conscious again and was able to crawl out and brought himself into safety. While he was helped by his neighbour he was still full of jokes but the situation was serious and he was brought to the hospital.

Ulf sustained serious burn wounds on his legs, arms and face, a total of about 25% to 30% of his body. On Monday the first surgery was conducted whereby the doctors started to remove the dead skin. This coming week they hopefully start with skin grafts. This means that healthy skin is taken from an area of the body, and is used to cover the areas of the lost/damaged skin.

Unfortunately, the bad news does not stop there, as the fire that was still burning on a farm close to Ongos flared up again on Monday, and due to the winds, it spread to Ulf's property very quickly again. It threatened the house, but with the help of some amazing people the fire was stopped at the fence of the house. A big part of Ongos-East has burned down. We cannot thank the people who have been bravely fighting this fire for 2 days, with hardly any sleep, enough. Thanks to them the house was saved, and part of Ongos-East as well.



Ulf is okay at the moment, but it's a painful healing process and it will take time to recover. He was discharged from the hospital on Wednesday and is now at home with his family. It is, and has been amazing to see and hear how many people reached out to him and wishing him well. Ulf cannot answer you all, but know that he really appreciates it and the fact that so many people think of him does him a lot of good. I am sure your thoughts, prayers and kind words will help to speed up his recovery!

We are all relieved and happy that Ulf survived, but the road to recovery will be long and painful, and costly. I think most of you know that Ulf won't ask for help, and that is why I do it – weather he agrees to it or not... Unfortunately for him (or not?) he hired a Dutchie that is even more stubborn than himself 😊 Ulf is always there to help others, but now the roles have turned and him and his family needs help.

At the moment I am assessing what the estimated costs will be, and how best we can help them. Once the first skin grafts have taken place and we have a better idea of the road to recovery, I hope that I can reach out to you.

Again, I would like to thank each and every one that helped with the fire, and all those that have sent all these nice messages to Ulf, his wife Michaela and me. We highly appreciate it and for sure it will help Ulf in his recovery process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time reading this, and we all hope that Ulf will be back in the field soon.

Kind regards,

Mariska





## DRC GAME TRANSLOCATION

A long journey, lots of potholes, people wanting money and thus frustrations... But when we offloaded, we saw relaxed and healthy animals and that is what makes it all worth it! This basically summarizes our recent game translocation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)! It was a long trip of 3000 km – our longest road trip so far, but the animals did great! Read more about our journey in this article. We made a video, to watch it, click on [this link](#).

### Namibia

We took 5 sables, 5 roans, 5 wildebeest, 6 eland and 8 nyalas from Namibian game farms to restock a reserve in the DRC. Most of the animals were captured via dart immobilization, which has the advantage than we can really pick and choose. Preferably we take young animals, as they travel a lot better than older animals, and they have less problems adapting in new environments. Especially on such a long and daunting trip it made a huge difference to have youngsters, coming from a farm where they are used to people. Another advantage of darting them is that we can give the animals a vitamin/mineral booster, deworm and vaccinate them. To minimize stress, to relax the animals and to ensure that they eat during the translocation, all animals received a long-acting tranquilizer before we hit the road.

Once all the animals were caught and loaded in our trucks, we started driving to the Katima Mulilo border. We had a special permit to drive at night, and our drive through the Caprivi strip was quite exciting! We saw sables, roans and a bachelor herd of buffalo along the road! On a quiet place we stopped for a quick snooze, and reached the Katima border early in the morning.



*Darting sables*



*From left to right:  
roan, nyalas,  
sable bull,  
wildebeest and  
eland in the  
trucks.*





*Driving over the floodplains in northern Zambia. On the back of our one trucks we have 4000 liters of water in our tanks, so we always have enough water for the animals.*



## Zambia

*Nyalas enjoying their camel thorn pods →*

Border processes are always frustratingly long... While we were waiting on the Zambian side, we gave food (teff hay, lucerne and camel thorn pods) and water to the animals. We always take plenty of food and water on long translocations, and feed and water the animals at least once a day. Mid-afternoon we were finally cleared, and we drove through Zambia – our first time!



As the Katima - Livingstone road is so bad, we took a bit of a detour going past the Angolan border, and the first part was along the mighty Zambezi river. Part of these roads were good, other parts were... well not so good 😊 In some areas it was better to drive next to the road! As a result, our average speed for the first 2 days in Zambia was a mere 35 km/hour. Another delay are the many toll gates and road blocks. Fortunately, we had a Zambian wildlife officer with us who saw to it that we were not held up at the road blocks.



The advantage of the detour was that despite some bad sections we could at least keep on driving without too much trouble, and as a bonus, we drove through Kafue National Park. Here we saw pukus, lechwes, impalas and some interesting birdlife, such as ground horn bills, saddle-billed storks, marabous, grey-crowned cranes and wattled cranes. This was great to see, especially since in the rest of Zambia we hardly saw any animals or birds.

We drove all the way past Lusaka, and then stopped to get some rest, and to give the animals a break and to feed/water them. After we took care of the animals, we ate and had a quick nap. The animals used this time of quiet to eat and drink at their own time. We were lucky with this bunch of animals, as all ate and drank well.



The next day it was a nice change of scenery, with lots of water and floodplains to make us Namibians jealous! We have been very blessed with the temperatures; it has been nice and cool most of the time. We drove almost until the border, but as we were to late to cross, we stopped to feed and water the animals again, and to get some sleep. The last stretch was finally there!



*← Toll roads in Zambia... if you want to drive through Zambia make sure you bring enough cash 😊*

*There are many small villages along the Zambian roads →*





*Crossing the river with the ferry, one truck at the time.*



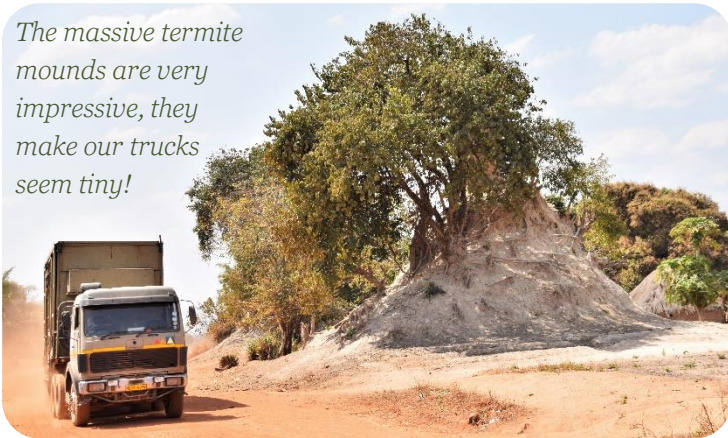
## The DRC

Bright and early we made sure to be the first ones to cross the border from Zambia into the DRC. We had to cross a river, and when we saw the ferry, we got slightly nervous... The captain with his eagle eyes and measuring stick quickly assured us that there would no problems. But our giraffe trailer, with the nyalas, sables and wildebeest, only just fitted!

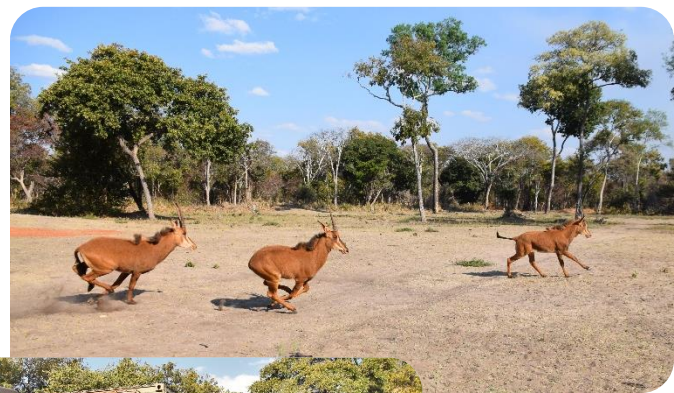
A quick trip across the river, and now we were really down to the last stretch. We, and probably the animals even more, could not wait to start offloading! We also were looking very much forward to a bed and shower by now 😊

The last stretch was luckily not so long, but some parts of the roads were quite daunting. It was sad to see the extensive deforestation going on in both Zambia and the DRC. Entire forests are being chopped down to make charcoal, even trees with potential for timber. With the exception of dedicated game reserves, we saw very little wildlife and, in most areas, only a few birds in Zambia and the DRC. This once again showed us the importance of conserving nature and the creation of national parks, reserves and private game farms. Education in this regard is essential. The more accessible the enjoyment of nature is made, the better the chances that human destruction of natural habitats may eventually be brought under control!

*The massive termite mounds are very impressive, they make our trucks seem tiny!*



And then finally... more than 3000 km from Windhoek, we reached the reserve, and we could start offloading the animals. This was the moment everybody has been longing to! It was a great offloading; all the animals were alive and well, and it was wonderful to see how relaxed the animals were. Most got out very casually, looked around and trotted off at a slow pace. Two of the wildebeest started eating and playing right in front of the trucks – happy to be out!



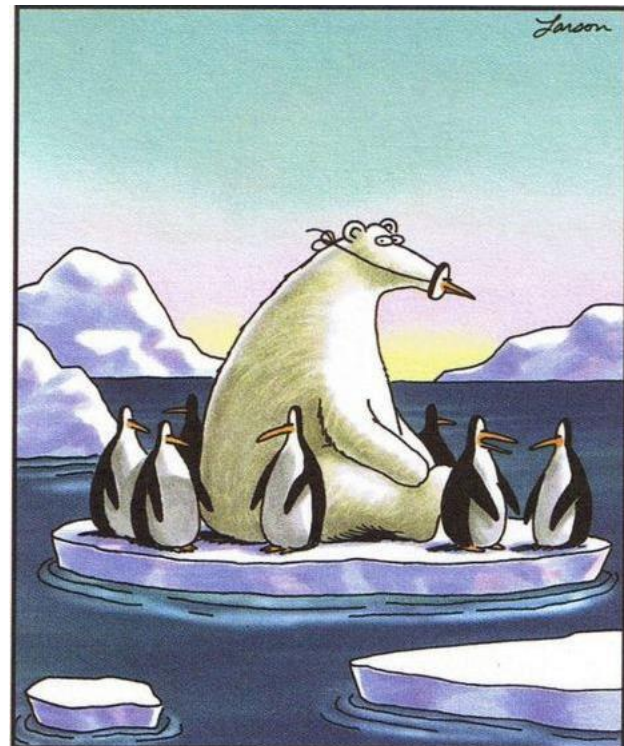




The next days we drove around the reserve, looking for the animals. The eland, who trotted off in different directions, luckily quickly joined up, and the wildebeest joined up with the resident herd. The sable bull and nyalas already started eating game pellets right inside a feeding kraal, no worries at all 😊 We saw most of the animals, and we are sure they will have a great life in their new home. This is a beautiful and very well managed sanctuary, with forests, more open areas and floodplains. The animals have plenty of food and are well monitored. Soon the reserve is extended and will include an area with a river as well.

We would like to thank all those involved in this translocation! We especially would like to thank the owners and management of the reserve – it is great to see this ‘game sanctuary’ for wildlife in an area that is heavily threatened by charcoal making. Of course, we also would like to thank our drivers, and all others involved – from the involved Namibian, Zambian and Congolese ministries and veterinary services, those arranging permits, clearing agents and of course to the game farmers supplying these amazing animals. This translocation has been a big team effort, and we are truly grateful for every bodies help!

*Thank you  
Baie Dankie  
Merci!*



And now Edgar's gone. ...  
Something's going on around here.

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