

The Kunene People's Park

Co-management of Wildlife &
Tourism in Kunene Region,
Namibia

Background

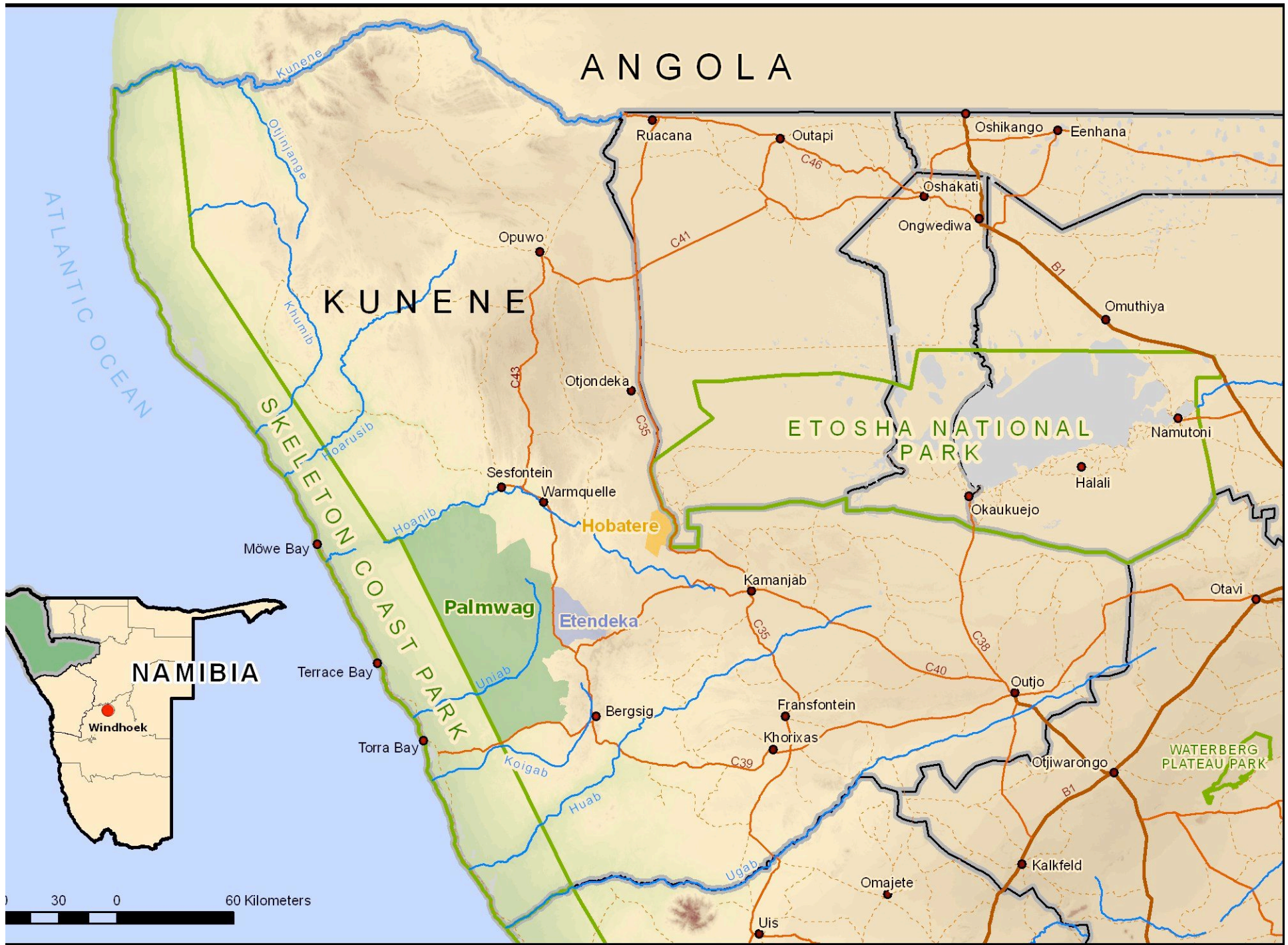
- Kunene Region: north-west Namibia, semi-arid to true desert (Namib), “desert” elephant & black rhino, spectacular scenery, communal land
- Three hunting/tourism concessions established 1980s by local ethnic government – Hobaterere (size), Etendeka (size), Palmwag (size).

Background (2)

- With Independence from SA 1990, concessions fall under new central government – Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET).
- Key point: concessions remain communal land
- Under 1996 legislation local communities form conservancies – representative management bodies with rights over wildlife & tourism, keep all income from trophy hunting & tourism.
- 5 conservancies adjacent to concessions

Background (3)

- Since 1980s, wildlife recovered from severe drought & poaching helped by community involvement & conservancies
- 2 concessions were due to end 2007, one 2010.
- Govt. agenda – link Etosha National Park & Skeleton Coast
- Cabinet decision Convert concessions into new Nat. Park linking ENP & SC.



2 Perspectives on proposed park

- 1. Government
 - Long-term SWAPO objective
 - Restore migration routes – connectivity & climate change
 - Provide core areas for wildlife spreading to conservancies
 - MET feared take-over of concessions by Ministry of Lands
 - Boost tourism & community benefits

2 Perspectives (2)

- 2. Community
 - Little benefit from concessions - bed night levies from Etendeka. Bad relationship with Palmwag concessionnaire for many years
 - The Kasupi option
 - Communities lost access to land and resources in ENP & SC
 - No benefit, only problems from existing conventional parks
 - Why should this be different? Fear of loss of more land.
 - Conservancies work – why the park?

The negotiations

- Key point: Cabinet wanted extensive consultation with local communities
 - MET set up Technical Committee: TAs, conservancies, Regional Council, MET, NGOs, concessionnaires.
 - Series of meetings: Communities set conditions, MET agrees, all agree should be contractual park – “Kunene People’s Park”
development of draft contract

Negotiation (2)

- Why was agreement reached?
 - Negotiation, not just consultation
 - Buy in from Minister to contractual park
 - MET senior officials take on the ground decisions
 - MET awarded concession rights to conservancies – statement of intent to do things differently
 - MET accepts that land status should not change

Negotiation (3)

- Conservancy approach laid foundation for cooperation – increase in wildlife, communities benefit from tourism, measure of trust developed, platform for co-management
- Communities understand potential for boosting tourism revenues through concessions
- Process enabled communities to debate & decide amongst themselves

Negotiation (4)

- Shared agendas
 - Control tourism, benefits to communities, conservation,
- Process – not product – lesson learnt from conservancies

Shaping policy

- Co-management not provided for in conservation laws
- Kunene People's Park experience informing drafting of new legislation
- Contractual Parks specifically provided for

The Future?

- Potential for:
 - Increased community benefit from existing concessions: conservancy = concessionnaire
 - Increased community benefit from additional concessions
 - Increased tourism linked to Park “Brand” – will need managing, but park should make it easier

The Future ? (2)

- Co-management of park
 - JMB (all parties to the agreement)
 - Roads, etc. as part of concession contract
 - Wildlife monitoring: conservancies, MET, NGOs
 - Anti-poaching; MET, conservancies, NGOs
 - Emergency grazing, access to cultural sites and resources
 - With conservancies across larger landscape

