

# PALMWAG SOUTH WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY

The southern parts of the 450 000-hectare (1 111 935-acre) Palmwag Concession are made up of rolling, rocky hills, flat-topped mountains and stark plains. The Palmwag Concession is a conservancy in Damaraland in the Kaokoveld (Kunene) region of north-west Namibia. Considering the proximity of the concession to the Skeleton Coast National Park and true Namib Desert, this area is home to a rich diversity of wildlife..

## CAMPS

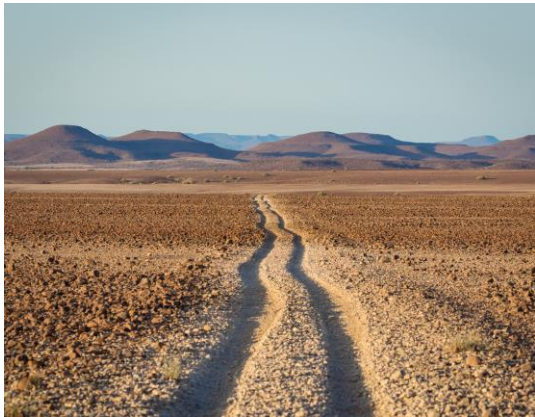
- Desert Rhino Camp



Early morning fog, which is generated by the icy Benguela Current in the Atlantic Ocean meeting the warm desert air of the Skeleton Coast, drifts inland over the Namib Desert, and is a reliable source of water for the flora and fauna in this incredibly harsh environment. Adaptation to the desert environment is the miracle of all that survives here in the Palmwag Concession.

The Etendeka Mountains dominate the scenery: impressive flat-topped outcrops coloured ochre-brown. Dry river-courses like the Uniab River cut through the landscape and occasionally fill with water. The terrain is rocky but often covered with fine golden grasses and interspersed with large Euphorbia damarana bushes, which are endemic to the area. Other fascinating plants in the Palmwag Concession include the odd-shaped bottle tree, shepherd's tree, ancient leadwoods, salvadora bushes and the unique welwitschia, a bizarre plant with two large leaves that grow along the ground over hundreds of years.

Palmwag Concession's freshwater springs support healthy populations of arid-adapted wildlife. Good numbers of Hartmann's mountain zebra, southern giraffe, gemsbok (oryx), springbok, kudu, dwarf antelope (such as steenbok and klipspringer), scrub hare, comical meerkats (suricates), inquisitive ground squirrels, black-backed jackal and small spotted genet can be seen. This concession is also rich in reptiles including Kaokoveld sand lizard, Ovambo tree skink and Anchieta's agama.



A major drawcard for the region is the presence of the largest free-roaming population of desert-adapted black rhino in Africa, as well as a healthy number of desert-adapted elephant. The Palmwag Concession also holds the core of the rarely-seen desert-adapted lion population of north-west Namibia. Cheetah and leopard are sometimes sighted roaming through this vast, unspoilt area.

Birding enthusiasts are sure to enjoy the diverse avifauna found in the Palmwag Concession. Raptors include greater kestrel, lanner falcon and booted eagles, spotted in the sky or perching on a lonely shepherd's tree. Out on drives, it is possible to see Namaqua sandgrouse, Burchell's courser, the colourful bokmakierie, grey-backed sparrowlark, Monteiro's hornbill and white-backed mousebird.

Other regular endemics include Rüppell's korhaan, Benguela long-billed lark and possibly Herero chat with some focused searching. Verreauxs' eagle is often sighted around rocky hillsides.