**G2 - Interview Directory of wildlife, Windhoed - 25-1-2023**

Could you give a bigger introduction of the directory that you’re working at?

The directorate here, we call it the directorate of Wildlife and national parks. We are responsible for wildlife management. And within that component we kind of move towards what you are more interested in. It has a component of CBNRM, which is community based natural resource management. Within that aspect, then comes the issue of communal conservancies. And within the communal conservancies, of course, it's not just about wildlife. Then you look at community forest and of course, in some areas where you have community forests, you have community that are interested in beekeeping projects, you have community that are doing crafts from those trees there sustainably. And then you also have some conservancies where there is an issue with bush encroachment. So then those one, they request with assistance from the government to say this has become so thicket that our livestock cannot even walk through. One of the good case was even just recently, last year, where one of the conservancy, we call it Nahi Conservancy now, it was like nahi conservancy and community forest was launched by the ministers. They got equipment to the tune of 2.5 million Namibian dollar. And that was for them now to start converting these bushes into fodder for the livestocks. So on that aspect, that's one of the elements. And the other issue also, they also requested that they will be allowed to also use some of these bushes, reels to do charcoal.They also want to sell firewood, they want to do charcoal bendings and everything. Now, at the moment, there was a decision made that maybe because it's complexity of controlling when it's in a communal area, only the commercial farmers were allowed to do the charcoal and firewood or whatever selling and transportation. because it's very difficult to control because the sustainability of it. How much are you taking and what is the landscape, what is the rainfalls and what species and all kinds of stuff. Now, the bush encroachment, as much as when we are talking about people, when you are saying community forest, they will tell you Namibia is a desert, waste your forest. But as much as we are not forests like the real forest that you find in other countries, is a serious problem. You get animals like cheetahs, they can't hunt proper, some of them. You find them, they have one eye because they are trying to chase, then get scratches. So you need to open up, cattles cannot move. They have that condition on their body because they stick on the sides, all kind of stuff. So they need to control that. So what they do is the pellets that you just mix and there is a system whereby you just cut the branches and you put it through the system. Then it kind of turn out almost like a powder that you have to mix it with other ingredients and then of course, provide it. So we think that way, if you do that, you are controlling, reducing the bush encroachment and you are also making use of your kind of turning bush into something which is beneficial to the community. Rather than having this thick tree standing there, you open it up. It's good for the ecosystem, of course, and also for the community that they are getting something in return. Now, the worry shouldn't be very much with communal conservancy. I know we did a project that was called Land Accreditation Neutrality where we did sampling. You look at the rainfall, you look at the depth, you try to look at the area coverage in terms of vegetation and then you said in an area like this, how sustainable will it be for people to be doing bush harvesting or charcoal production? Unfortunately, on commercial farmers there is not much you can do. You can't say payer from this region. You take one region like and you say from this region I think we only want two tons or whatever coming through because each person is a commercial private farm and it's on his farm and you want to harvest it. There is other organizations that control that. But the challenge is how do you give of course there's a new things of branding with your charcoal that you brand them. Maybe if it is written green or cheetah friendly or whatever, or this locker that they put on top, it almost like at an advantage that it was done proper, harvested, sustainably. But how do we measure that if you are not there? I buy that and I put it in my bags and I said this was done according to all the requirements and everything. But I can almost say that's what we are sitting with and we are making good use of it. But I think it's something that can be always be revamped. Almost You tickle it and try to adjust it as you are going on. It's a long process. It has been there, it's just that we are kind of now getting the communal conservatives into the system. Commercial farmers has been doing it for ages. Local communities, some of them have been selling it to the commercial farmers, to the passerby. But now you just have to regulate it. That's basically what I can say.

**Yeah. So when did you put a stop on those exhibits in the communal area?**

I think it was last year. Last year or two years ago?I think it's two years ago. Okay. I think it was 2020, if not 2020 between 2020, 2021. And it was just a temporary it's like a temporary hold for people to start. It's the issue that is being discussed now. So it's not a permanent ban per se. It just was just like let's get our houses in order and see how we can do it proper. I mean, now it's a charcoal side of it, but bush to falter, they are going ahead. They do that in any way. So even through the Environmental Investment Fund, the ministry launched this bush to fodder machinery that was bought through that project and was given to the community around Okakara area to start think it's free. They have five four sites where they do that and each site has a machinery

**and that fodder is then for own consumption or do they sell that?**

No, it's for their own consumption but they are also allowed if they make more, they can sell it. The conservancy, they sell it but the people that work there it's really low cost. Then they get paid by the conservancy. Of course, instead of going to crowd is one of the supplier of fodder for animals you paid at a very subsidizedc ost just to make sure that the guys that are chopping these trees and doing the whole processing, At least they get paid rather than just spending days and nights out there in the field chopping trees and washing it. So basically that's what they do. Yeah.

**And so before 2020, did you have negative experiences then in the communal areas that you put a hole?**

Yes. it's a bit tricky? In some areas, yes. We also had an experience where in some of the resettled farms now we have a policy where the government buys farms and then they resettle community. Now, some of these farms, they get resettled on under condition that, okay, you resettled here. But we also want to build for you a lodge here so that you have access into the park or to the adjacent area where you can be employed. Some of your guests will be employed, some of you will be guided, some of you will do whatever way. So then you realize, the other guy, they realize there's a lot of nice dead mopani trees here. It's good for firewood if you chop them nicely. You send them to Windhoek, you send them to South Africa, and then they started so then it was like, of course you want these big red trees to stand there because of the ##[10:29], because of nice sceneries.Y ou want the tourists, when they are driving there to see all this, they don't want to see a desert. And then the whole thing started,okay, no, let's stop this. So that means from resettle farms to the communal conservancies or communal areas. And then I think we had a discussion last year when under what condition to lift that memorandum. Okay, memorandum. Because one thing that triggered this is bigger than the normal communal conservancy site. Because if you move towards the east, north east of the country in Zambia area, you hav ethe timber issue, the redwood or whatever they call it, that get smuggled through the airport to go and do these expensive furnitures. Okay, those trees can be 80 years, 70 years,80 years, 100 years and get chopped and then loaded, big stumps loaded, and then into our FishBay harbor and then get shifted.Those are in communal areas.They are not really making a lot of money. You get all these big guys a lot of money. They know their businesses, they use local guys to chop these trees and then shift them. So that also trigger rather than just your bush encroachment or Mellifera or whatever trees that you have, sickle bushes that you have there that you want to prune it so it's bigger than that. But you can't say stop this site, and you let those bigger trees get taken. So that's where the whole things comes in. And those are very protected trees, protected areas, and then they get smuggle out.

**And so you said you had discussions about when and under what conditions that could be.So what are the conditions?**

I think some of the conditions they were like they needed to apply for quota setting and then they have to apply through the organization, whether it's a conservancies set up or whether it's a traditional authority. And some of them, they can form like a small community. If they don't have a conservancy in the area, they canc ome together and transform a small kind of like a committee or a project kind of thing in the area there they want to operate and then maybe get issued. It's almost the same principle. People collect such grasses to fetch their houses, grasses to put on verandas or whatever. They just get issued with payment for ##[13:27] and maybe sometimes to collect firewood during the wedding.You get a payment in some areas and then you go and harvest the ##[13:35] just to get that regulation. And I think not sure now, but I think because there I was fortunate enough now the right person whether how long that going to be, will be the director for forestry. Okay. And I think if you don't get a hold of the guy that I'm asking you now, I would want you to make an appointment, the director of forestry, I can give you details, but I can also talk to him later.

**Oh, thank you.**

Because then that would be a big. I think he can give you really a bigger picture. Okay. And I would also ask him sometimes it's better if there are two or three because then the other the one who are on the ground.

**Okay, thank you. Because your department doesn't issue these permits?**

No, it's forestry. Whether it's timber, firewood, charcoal or this is under the directorate of forestry, the only comes in, but the mandate is to be them. But only because the conservancy is a CBNRM thing. It's like a ministry, but when it's come to the specific fires in communal area, it's directrate of forestry, sustainable harvesting of those beekeeping project and everything falls under the directorate of forestry.

**Okay.So you're also not involved in the community forests?**

the community forest, depending on what is in there. We have the CBNRM chief wardens. But to be honest people sometimes, I always say let's conservatives be honest. Some are desperate. You can see there's not much forest in it, but they still want to have forest because they think there is maybe funding that is coming through. So there's a few selected project areas where you have a conservancy which also have a forest, which is gazetted as a community forest, where they can do beekeeping, where they can do, build a lodge in there, or they can make it like a walking trail. But then you get communities that are around from here.I'm not sure.How far did you travel outside?

Not yet, We will.

I would have said go to ##[16:16], but it's raining, so if you go there, you might blame me for not seeing anything.

We hope you see.

Let's hope it doesn't rain. Because if it has been raining, you are likely not to see much.So if you are driving, you can see one ither side some areas it's just small, short bushes.Some of them, those farmers, they have money, they cut them.You might see some heaps because then they dry them, then they throw them in the pot. Or sometimes when you are driving, you just see smoke here and there because that's what they are doing. So those ones, when it's in the conservancy, that's what we try to kind of regulate. But still when it comes to the issuance of this thing, it will be directly to forestry.They are also the one that kind of advocate for planting, teaching as trees. They sometimes during environmental days, they go with X number of teaching trees and fruit trees and give to the community to plant them. And maybe in the future they can get some fruits. And so that's what they do. Okay, but the bush controls are so good for the wildlife, isn't it? Bush control? It goes both ways. It's good.They make profit out of it. It's good for wildlife because it's open up. Especially our in endangered animal like cheetahs. It's also livestock like cattle that can walk into that sick things. It goes around and you see your animals felt the skin condition. They just become attractive. If you take it out for auction, they see this thing, or having the skin is kind of pale or have some stripes on it. So it goes both ways. That we understand. But you can almost say in not countrywide, I think I can almost say probably from here towards Otjiworongo, which is another station, moving from there to go towards a ##[18:30] northwest Feather, that become what we call semi-desert. So really you don't have that problem anymore. It's not a bush encroachment kind of thing. But then you will have a problem around a ##[18:45] about charcoal. When you have a problem about charcoal, then you have a problem with fire. They make the charcoal for whatever reason. It gets its way out of control. It enter the park and it start burning the park. Or it goes to adjacent farms that are having lodges, that are also having private their own game on the farms, start buring the grazing that's height. So it's also or sometimes it starts inside Natosia, the fire, then it goes out. Okay? But most of the fire that comes in Natosia comes from the neighboring farms and specifically those resettled farms where they are doing charcoal protection. Okay. Then it ends up.

**so on the resettles farms, they do charcoal?**

They do charcoal, but at the moment stopped. Yeah. Okay. We have issues where people wanted to sue the ministry ,but you can't sue because today it start in Natasha, tomorrow it starts on your farm, whether it's a secret part, whether it's lightning or whether it's whatever. So they kind of back off.

**Yeah, with this dry climate.**

But we have that challenge. And I know I was handling it because I was there. I said it's okay. Before our case is finalized, the fire will start on your farm and comes in then. Now you will pay. So kind of just help us. So now, if it goes this in Natosia, it goes out, we help them. Or if they have it on your farm, we help them to try and extinguish it there.

**You don't do preventative burning?**

We do inside the park. But then sometime we allow it to burn inside the park.So we said, okay, this area haven't been for 5-10 years, let it burn off. But then the priority, we give it to the farmer. Farmers, they don't like to burn.They don't care.They just said, I don't want fire in Natosia. Yes, we do.

**Have you seen a sharp decrease in wildlife because of all encroachment?**

It's really very difficult. Like in Natosia. I tend to get scientists coming in there.Then they said, Somebody will tell you what is the current capacity for elephants? Okay. Natosia is having how many elephants? Around 2500 to 3000 around there.That's the carrying capacity. I said, what are you looking at? What is the carrying capacity of other animals? You have giraffe, you have ##[21:40], you have zebras. So you have kutus. You look at all these sometimes most of these species that are browsers, then you said that fits at the different levels. And you said, what are you looking at when you are saying the carrying capacity for giraffe is X and Y? And I think because you are looking at close to 23,000 square kilometer areas, it's big enough and we haven't really seen any decline. And the good thing we always say elephants in Natosia we wouldn't be surprised if they reach 5000 because every 15-20 of them get knocked down by anthrax, which we like anyway, because, yes, if we if we don't have anthrax and the population kind of shoot up, it will be a public outcry. If I take my rifle and start shooting them to say, okay, now there are too many. But if they are dying from a disease, it's a natural system which is recollecting them.So a few 10-15 elephants every year dying from anthrax, maybe 50 zebras or whatever zebras are close to 20,000 .So if you are losing 50. Springboks, sometimes we don't even notice because by the time they start showing signs, the chuckers take them out because they are very weak. At least the chuckers can say something wrong with the springbok, they take them out. So it's very difficult, unless it's in an area which is intensively managed, like maybe a small farm, then maybe you can say, yes, the grazing is not enough. My animals are not breeding very well because of maybe then maybe easy to detect that the quality of the vegetation is not good. So I can see maybe let me chop open these areas and see whether animals can run into that area.But in the bigger parks, like Atrocious,

**And do you have any governance over the wildlife on commercial farms or they own the animals?**

If it's on their farm, they have the rights over that. The only thing that we have rights over, it black rhinos.Okay, black rhinos belong to the government, some of them, they have white rhinosis theirs, but we regulate it. Endangered species doesn't matter whether it's yours when you are selling it, when it's sick, you are trying to take to the vets, you're moving it from one place to another. You have to get permission from the ministry. So because even when you are selling it through site is permit, we have to issue because the government get told you are selling 20 tons. Now, as a country.Then the government decided, okay, let's give five tons to the commercial farmers because we have our citizens that are also having private rhinos on their farm, probably sitting with a pile of rhino horns so that they can also kind of sell them.Then they said, okay, and the government can say we take the 15 tons and then we give them the five tons they share among them. Something like that. And are you the ones that issue the hunting licenses or the quotas.Y eah, my colleague up here, we used to call him a busher. He's the one who issue but the normal request for handing for owners or whatever, it comes through for central region, it's come through my office. We said, It's a commercial fund, it's requesting to hand this anymore. We check on the statistic. Our people goes and check them and say you want maybe 20 zebras and 30 giraffes? No, we give only twelve and only 13. The rest you can apply next year or something like that. We said, no, we are not giving you this year. You didn't meet the requirements or something. But the fence has to be in the certain requirements, otherwise you can't commercialize it. Okay? Yeah.

**And how do you monitor or control how many they've shot ?**

every time the permit get issued, There's a permit office here.They always pull it. And every year you have to do a farm inspection.The staff has to do it. And then they come with the latest figure. But also each commercial farm ,there's a file down there. Every time they request, they go through the book and then they check there are certain animals like leopard. That one is a one a year. Then you decide you want to hand three a year. And they tell you no, you handed or you are saying you have three leopard onyour farm and you handed five months. Now it's only left, but they are all finished, so you're not allowed. So it's one of those, because sometimes they ask, can I come in 100? Maybe I have clients. Can I move to your farms and all kinds of things.

**So basically that's what they would you say the hunting industry is one of the biggest incomes fo r these lodges and tourists?**

for lodges is really yes, during COVID they were knocked down. You can almost say yes. Even within the conservancy is also partly part of it is a very controversial one where some people don't like it. And I'm from Northwest, by the way. To Tosha. If you go further towards kunani, there's nothing fancy about it. They call it desert elephant. Desert lounge. It's just a tourism marketing name. Genetically they are the same as any elephant, which is in Natosia anyway. Okay.They tried to say they are thinner, blah, blah.There was a long distance.They work for water, which is true, but genetically there is no difference with the one in the Tosha. But I can say yes It's a big industry. But also some conservancies, they have trophy hunting contract with the hunters and they also generate money through that. But it's something that needs to be regulated because you have two part of the goal. Just to give you a very brief example, you will never come in a conservancy. The bad guys, if I have to put it that guy, because that's everybody would say they hand us. They are always dumped either in a river bed it's like go hide there and build your small camp there where you won't be staying.This area is zoned for tourists. Let the tourists go there and enjoy the animals. You stay in that hide out and hand in that area. There was an issue in Palama some years back, ten years ago, where the two tourists met the water point Paloma. In the morning, they greeted each other. How are you? Fine.What are you doing here? This guy with his family. Oh, I had Namibia. Very nice. Beautiful, majestic animal called desert elephants. And we can't wait to see them today because we were told they are just not far, maybe five kilo, ten kilo from here. And you, what are you doing here? Got a permit to come and hand. Really? I like to hand elephant. It will be very, very good experience for me. And they never spoke anymore. We just found it in the newspaper. How well, my children were traumatized hearing these and these. Then from there we said, Anders, it seems like you are not the right people.You must always be somewhere in the hideout. That's basically quite often you see them out of sight. They go then get drunk and whatever with your guns on the other side, nobody must see you. So that's basically.

**maybe we can show you the concept that we are working on. It's called the biohub. And the idea is that here in this area there are different communities of farmers that produce biomass. So in this case it would be the encroacher bush and then transport it to a biorefinery. And we are now investigating a technology where you can produce four different products out of it.The main one is bio-oil that can be converted into a biofuel. And we are investigating biofuels for the shipping sector, but it can also have other uses. Also another stream that's produced is biochar and biochar can be used again in multiple ways like a fertilizer or water treatment.**

Have you spoken to someone at ##[31:17]?

**Not yet, no. But we are going to.**

okay, whom are you going to talk?

**I'm not sure now, but I think at least someone from the project, like the Bush Control.**

Okay, bush control.There is a guy called what is his name? I forget his name. Okay, I'm sure if it is ##[31:42] that they will give you because I know they are also rolling the Biochar kind of bush to fodder and CCF Cheetah Conservation Fund. Okay, they are doing that also.They have these blocks o rwhatever that they are selling. But yeah, you saw that and it's indirectly also to open up. But I think they are kind of also they stretch themselves. I don't mind you guys talking to them, but they always sometimes try to oversell themselves. Okay, tell you please, it's an NGO. I always tell people that they will never say cheetahs are not endangered because that's the end of their organization.They always say oh, we are the only one, we are the only one who are trying and all kind of stuff. But they also are good people.They are just outside what you are.If you have time, maybe you can make it next. Okay?So please, if you go there, just listen, but don't be too over-sympathetic, okay?Just listen as a scientist and just objectively start asking yourself what is it that they are not telling us? The good thing about the cheetahs is it's good. But I always tell people if you are protecting cheetahs if I have a cheetah that I need to translocate, don't give me a condition that only if it is coming on your farm. Because I'm like I'm sitting with 5 million hectares of ##[33:14] just give us a cage and then we go to only when you are bringing it to our farm then we can give you that's not conservation but when it comes to the charcoal things and they are doing a lot of things in the farmers there. You get to know Natalia dogs that they are using to head livestocks there. So good stories and when it comes to cheetahs, they will tell you the only one, the government is not doing anything and blah, blah, blah you can just listen and okay, and then when you come to the forecast, we can overrule that they are not doing anything. But sometimes they.

but don't you give the transport permit?

Sometimes if they're an animals, we know that we can release it again. So they have it. But we also know that some animals can easily be released out in the world they don't like to release them so it goes away. But if they are moving, we give them permit. It's a non-profitable organization, but all these international students but of course you need money to run the infrastructure, whatever.But it has become kind of like commercialized kind of things.You guys comes in, you feel pity for the cheetah. Another one comes in, feel pity for the cheetah. And now they move into bush to Fodder and they kind of expanded on that. It's a very good thing they are opening up the system. It's good for the cheetah and Namibia is in the mail because 92% of cheetahs are free roaming cheetahs and they are trying to protect these cheetahs from being killed by farmers and all kinds of things. it's a very good they initiated genetics and everything but all what I'm saying is let them not draw in.You are scientists, let them not draw in and kind of oh gosh it's not about specific, it's not about an individual animal it's about species conservation. So if one animal is having a broken leg and I'm spending broken leg and arm and one and we had an issue with Baboons in crowdfunding was abandoned by the troops and my stuff, they called me we have this baboon’s small baby. Somebody brought it to our office crying. I said, Take it to the other Baboon troops. They can either adopt or if they reject stuff taken there. It was a big thing in the media because they want pictures. But they went and drop it. They just took it. The other Baboons just released it. It was a big thing. Poor baboons. Maybe they just probably must have maybe just hit it with a hammer in the office. Now there is Nakusa somewhere here, outside windhoek. You want it to go get it. Baboons technically stick it as a problem anymore. So anybody can shoot it. But you don't just shoot because you feel like shooting it. It's a small baby, just drop it there. And they say Baboon seems to be stupid, because when we release it, it run. And the others, they got her. Maybe they adopted. They started running, said, okay, maybe do we survive? It dies. It dies. You understand what I'm saying? We are not going to be investing money, buy milk, buying, the bigger picture. But sometimes NGOs, they have one which is crippled. This is a very good example for the intents that are coming in to come what was this? No, it was poison. Or the mother was killed with pangas by the conservancy. And then we rescue it while it's so small. That's why it's like this one will never go away. Because it's a story that you see, stories that you will get. I think they have wild dogs there. I've seen cheetahs there in few animals there.

**Yeah, but they're also quite involved in the bush.**

Yeah, the bush aspect is actually very important. They have like a big like a warehouse, massive one. It's it's a very, very nice I was there. I don't have an issue with him. I took the Executive Secretary ofthe United Nations for biodiversity there. So just to look at more, we're going to tosha then I say let's pass here because of the cheetah aspect. So I stay kind of at the back. I just said they knows me. So for them to concede nicely about the ministry, I'll put you guys through and I will go out and walk around that side, let them talk freely to your people and kind of sell themselves. Basically.That's what happened. But I think it's a good thing, I think try to talk to the right people. Let me organize you to talk to the Directorate of Forestry, the Director. When are you going to this guy must be in the meeting. When are you going to this whole week are you around or when are you leaving Windhoek?

**no, it's actually tomorrow and Friday we are out of town and next whole week we are in Otjiworongo. Okay, so the week after that we are available from the 6th to the 9th, 6th to the 9 February.**

That's when you will be here.

**Yes. And also 13 or 14 could be possible.**

I don't think that might be meeting the task also.