



# Khaudum National Park

## Wildlife wonders

- **Large wildlife:** Huge numbers of elephants occupy the park during the dry season. Over 3 500 animals have been counted during annual full-moon game counts and aerial surveys. Other species include roan antelope, giraffe, eland, tsessebe, kudu, gemsbok, reedbuck, ostrich, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, warthog, lion, wild dog, leopard, spotted hyaena and side-striped jackal.

- **Over 320 different bird species** make use of the park, including the rare and endangered ground hornbill, African hobby falcon, racket-tailed roller, sharp-tailed starling, bateleur, tawny eagle, white-backed and lappet-faced vulture, Bradfield's hornbill, coppery-tailed and Senegal coucal, rufous-bellied tit and black-faced babbler. During the rainy season, visitors to the park include Abdim's storks, yellow-billed kites, steppe and lesser spotted eagles, blue-cheeked and carmine bee-eaters and the African golden orioles.

### Landscape and vegetation

- The Khaudum National Park is laced with a network of *omiramba* (plural of *omuramba*, a Herero word for an ephemeral river). These dry riverbeds act as ideal routes for wildlife through a landscape that is often heavily forested. The Khaudum National Park subdivides into two major vegetation zones. In the northern half, thick sand with tall standing woodland forests reign, while in the southern part of the park, calcrete and clay dictate shorter growths of shrub and bush. In the north, the following species are dominant: false mopane, wild seringa, Zambezi teak, Kalahari apple-leaf, silver cluster-leaf, coffee buhinia, kiaat, manketti, leadwood, African wattle, sickle-bush, sandveld acacia, black-thorn acacia, candle-pod thorn, camel-thorn, buffalo thorn and russet com-bretum. In the south, the following species are dominant: purple-pod cluster leaf, kudu bush, lavender croton, rus-set bushwillow, blade thorn and a number of the trees as



listed under the northern section. There are baobabs in the western section of the park.

- The Khaudum National Park consists of an undulating sand plain, the sandveld, in the north. Rare, small, flat ridges of finer-grained red sand, which are interpreted as relic dunes, rest on this plain. The south-eastern part of the park is characterised by large fossil dunes. The south-western part is known as the hardveld: bedrock areas of quartzite and subordinate phyllite alternate with shallow, sandy to loamy soils. Mostly inconspicuous calcrete terraces occur in the vicinity of dry rivers.

### Safety in the park

While offering adventure and an unforgettable wilderness experience, Khaudum is potentially a dangerous park. Lion, leopard, hyaena and elephant attacks, while uncommon, do cause injury and have claimed human lives. Elephants, particularly if they have been harassed or injured in neighbouring countries, can be vengeful and aggressive and sometimes charge vehicles, even if unprovoked. The Khaudum National Park is also home to venomous snakes, including the black mamba, which, unlike most snakes, exhibits little fear of humans and has a reputation for irritability. Keep your tents zipped.

Park rules stipulate you must take a minimum of two vehicles as a precaution against mechanical mishaps or becoming bogged down in the thick sand or, after rains, mud. Should your vehicles become incapacitated, stay with them and wait. Do not walk off in search of help.

Help will come, sooner or later. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism recommends that you bring sufficient water (100 litres a day) and food for at least three days in case help comes later. Keep in mind that only 2 000–2 500 people visit each year, so expect to be alone for much of your stay.

When leaving your vehicles, be aware that large predators use the shade beneath bushes both as resting places and as ambush positions. In bright sun when the contrast between light and shadow is strong it is often difficult to see them. A recent incident involving a leopard attack on a visitor hiding in a bush to relieve himself underlines the message that if nature calls, modesty is not the best policy. If travelling with children, make sure they are supervised. Walking at night is inadvisable.

The Khaudum National Park is a malaria area. Consult your medical professional for precautionary measures.

This safety advisory is not intended to deter or frighten you away from the Khaudum National Park. Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism simply recommends a higher degree of caution than is necessary in some of the other parks in the country.

[www.met.gov.na](http://www.met.gov.na)



### Environmental Care Code

Please adhere to the following:

- Be cautious of elephants and keep well away from breeding herds.
- For your own safety, travel in the park with a minimum of two 4x4 vehicles.
- Remove all your rubbish from the park.
- Light fires only in designated camping areas.
- Stay on established roads and tracks.
- Keep to the rules and regulations listed on your permit.

Enjoy the adventure!

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