

Mid-conference fieldtrip to Gobabeb-Namib Research Institute (Wednesday 15th July)

Introduction

Prior to the mid-conference fieldtrip Professor Ian Livingstone will give an introductory talk about the desert environment around Gobabeb and the aeolian research that has been undertaken there for more than 60 years. This talk is timetabled to take place in the **Conference Centre on Tuesday 14th July at 10:05** and we encourage all delegates to attend. If you are interested in learning more about the geomorphology of the landscape surrounding Gobabeb more broadly you can find a list of suggested references here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Gobabeb-Excursion>

We also encourage you to visit Gobabeb's website for more details about the Institute and a virtual tour of the local landscape. <https://www.gobabeb.org/visitors/>



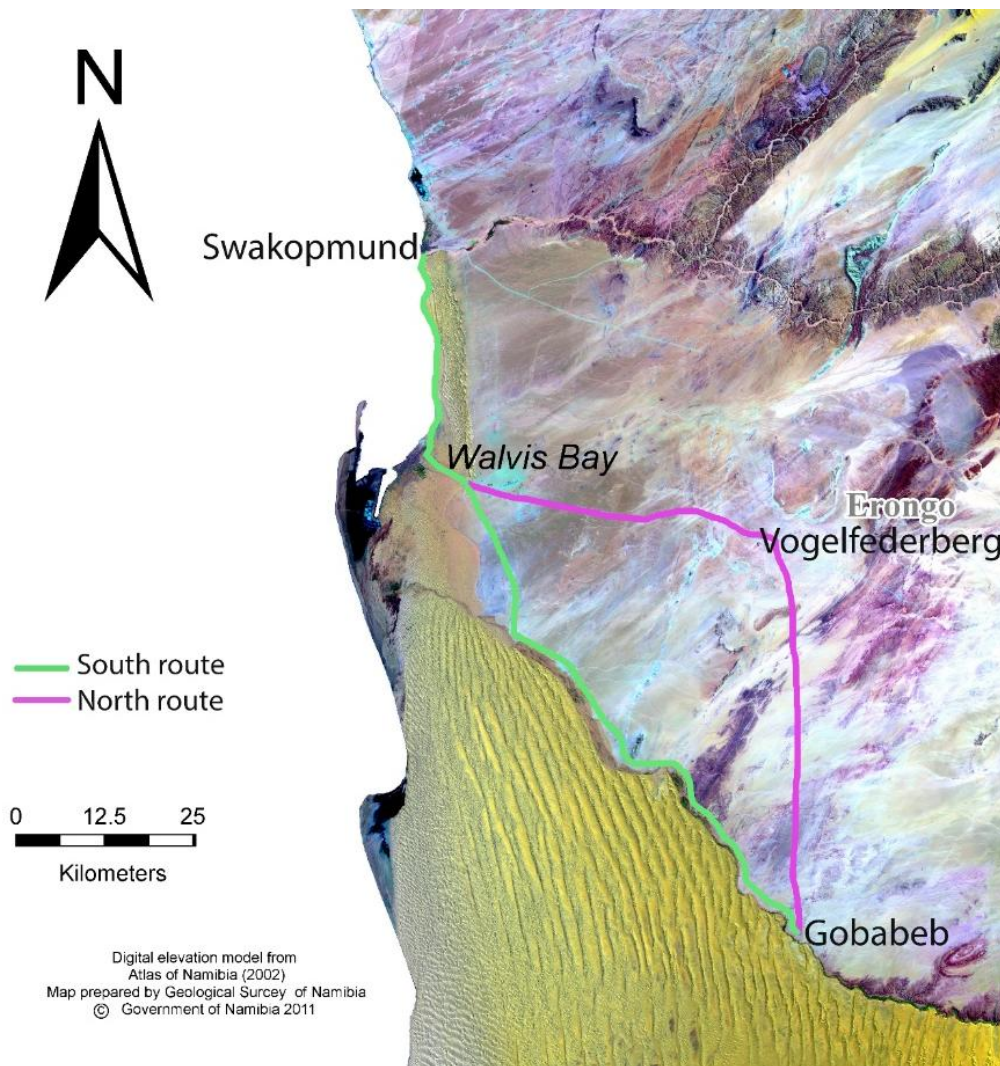
Main Institute building in the Gobabeb Campus

Travel

Please gather outside the **Strand Hotel at 07:30** in the morning from where a fleet of minibuses will **depart promptly at 08:00**. Before boarding a bus please register your attendance with a conference organiser who will be wearing a red lanyard. In true ICAR fashion we will be following the "Same Seat, Same Bus" code. Please make sure you stay on the same bus throughout the day. Each bus will have a leader to provide you with information. The buses are air-conditioned for comfort, but we will be travelling along gravel roads so it is likely to be bumpy and noisy at times.

Buses will drive south towards Walvis Bay and then inland (south-east) broadly parallel to the Kuiseb river valley towards Gobabeb. The exact route will depend on road conditions but the map below identifies likely routes. We expect to arrive at Gobabeb between 10:30 and 11:00. Tea and coffee will be available on arrival.

For return travel we will gather at Amabilis Hall at 15:00 in preparation for a **prompt departure at 15:15**. Buses will drive north for c. 1 hour to Vogelfederberg, a well-known Namibian rock formation, where we will pause (30 mins) for refreshments (provided) before continuing west towards Walvis Bay and then Swakopmund. We expect to arrive back in Swakopmund at around 19:00.



Likely travel routes to (green) and from (purple) Gobabeb

What to bring

- Please make sure you wear your conference lanyard and name tag.
- Refillable water bottle/s (you will be able to re-fill your bottle at Gobabeb and Vogelfederberg). We will avoid using single-use plastic bottles wherever possible, so please come prepared.
- Sun hat, sunglasses and sun cream
- Appropriate clothing/footwear (trainers/boots with enclosed toes and good grip, not sandals, you will likely be walking over both rocky and sandy terrain)
- Jacket or light jumper in case of 'winter' weather at Gobabeb (weather in July is unpredictable).
- Personal medication
- Hand gel
- Backpack (especially if you plan to walk to the dunes)

Lunch

A packed lunch will be provided during the visit. This can be collected from Amabilis Hall between 12:00 and 14:00. You are welcome to eat your lunch in the seated area around Amabilis Hall, or at one of the two picnic areas in the Kuiseb River Channel. At these locations there will be bins provided for your litter. If you decide to eat elsewhere, please bring your litter back to a bin.

You will need to bring a water bottle as these will not be provided, but you will be able to refill your water bottle at Amabilis Hall. There is also a refreshment shop located in the Hall where cool drinks and snacks will be available for purchase.

Activities at Gobabeb

Whilst at Gobabeb you are free to wander and explore as you wish and there are several organised and self-guided tours which you might like to join (see below). Souvenirs of the Gobabeb Namib Research Institute, including t-shirts, hats, books and more will be available for purchase on site. Please refer to the Gobabeb map for information on toilet availability. Note the toilets marked on the map outside of the campus are 'desert toilets' without plumbed water.

1. Self-guided Institute Tour (see map below)

The Institute Building loop will take you to the main research area of the campus. Within this self-guided walk, there are a number of stopping points where Gobabeb staff will be on hand to answer your questions and give you more details about the current research and workings of the Institute.

2. Self-guided Station Dune loop (see map below)

The Station Dune loop takes approximately one hour and enables you to cross the Kuiseb River, walking over some of the gravel interdune and climbing the closest dune to Gobabeb, 'Station Dune'. Signage and Gobabeb staff will be at various locations on this self-guided tour to direct you and answer questions. If you require assistance with access please listen for announcements on the day about a vehicle shuttle that can drive you to the base of Station Dune.

3. Led walking tour to Helga's Dune

Professor Ian Livingstone will lead a walk to Helga's Dune, leaving from the buses at 12.15. take place shortly after arriving (pick up your lunch before departing). Helga's Dune is to the west of Station Dune, and people joining this tour will be able to continue to Station Dune after the main hike ends.

Hazards to be aware of..

Gobabeb is located approximately 2 hours from the nearest town in an isolated desert environment, so please come prepared and follow health and safety guidance to enjoy your visit.

- **Weather:** while it may be foggy and cool in Swakopmund, it is likely to be sunny and potentially up to 35°C at Gobabeb. Sometimes in July it can also be sunny but cool at Gobabeb, please be prepared for both hot and cool weather.
- **East wind:** occasionally in July there are very strong and hot east winds that reduce visibility due to blowing dust. If an east wind occurs on the day of the trip we will provide alternative group activities in Gobabeb. As necessary the trip may be curtailed or cancelled on safety grounds.

- **Animals:** Please watch out for and keep away from wildlife, and ensure you wear shoes or boots (not sandals). Animals you may encounter include scorpions, snakes, spiders, jackals, hyenas, foxes, springbok, oryx, cattle and goats.
- **Slipping on rocks:** At both Gobabeb and Vogelfederberg there is rocky terrain. Please take care and wear appropriate footwear (not sandals).
- **Sun:** Gobabeb is situated around the Tropic of Capricorn and the sun is intense year-round. Please use sunscreen, sun hat, sunglasses and appropriate sun protective clothing covering skin.
- **Dehydration:** always carry water (advised to take 2 litres if hiking around dunes), you may find it helpful to bring a back pack to carry your water, and lunch if you plan to eat in the picnic spots.
- **Getting lost in the dunes:** Follow self-guided routes on the Gobabeb map and local signage. Always travel in a group of minimum of two. Be aware of your surroundings and, if unsure, climb a dune and look for the Gobabeb water tower, head north (away from the dune field) and you will come to the Kuiseb valley where there is shade and a road. If possible call Gobabeb on: + 264 81 8125745 (via WhatsApp). There is 2G signal in most of the immediate surrounds of the Gobabeb campus. Wifi is available in some parts of the campus through 'Gobabeb Guest', password *Welcom3!*
- **Hand gel:** temporary toilets will be provided at picnic spots and close to Station Dune, but you might find personal cleaning gel useful.

Environmental Code of Conduct

Gobabeb is situated within a UNESCO World Heritage Site in a very sensitive landscape. Please help to protect this unique environment and minimise any impact of your visit.

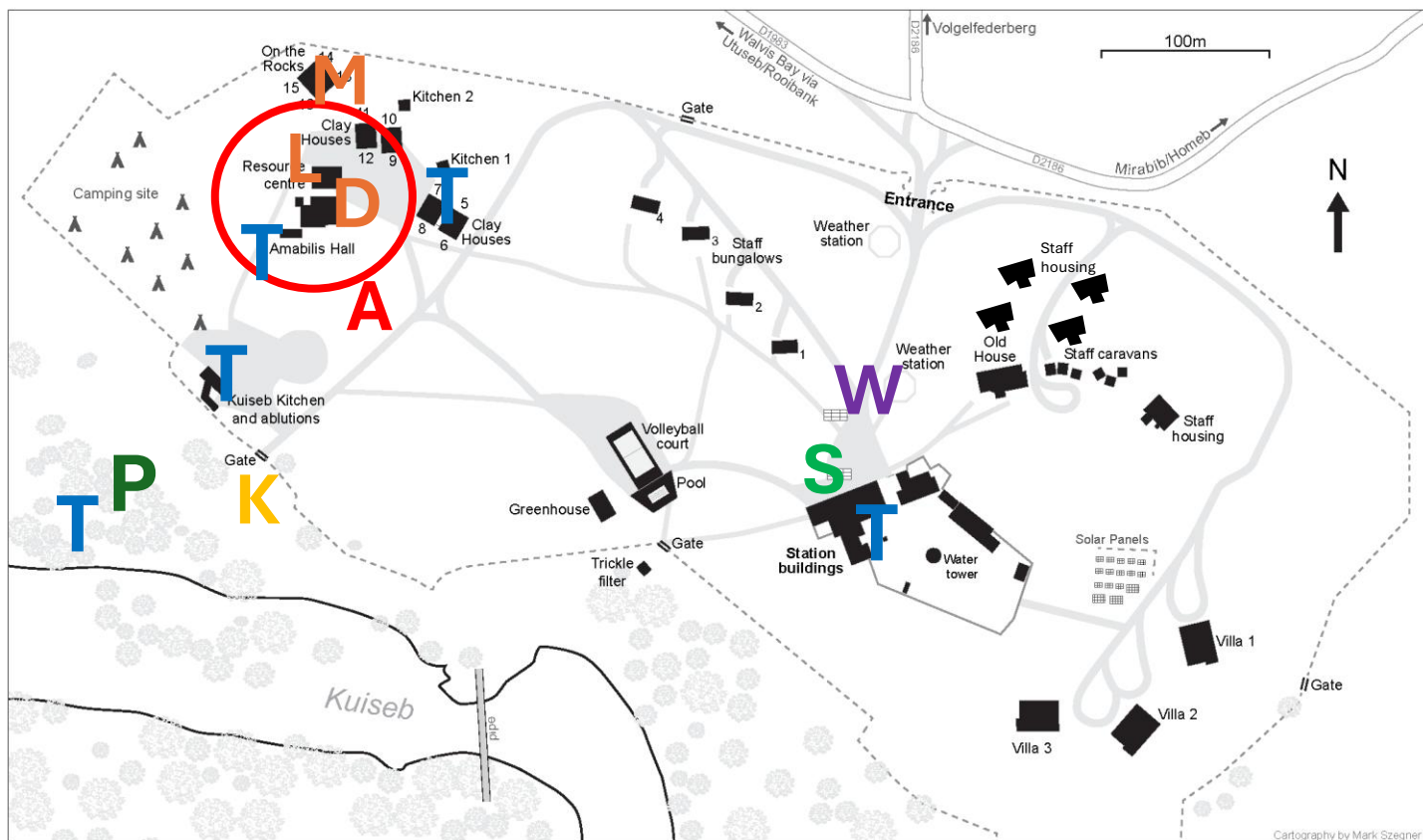
Sensitive surfaces:

- Gravel pavements and interdune surfaces are very fragile.
- When walking around areas within the campus enclosure always walk on paths that are marked with white stones (or on the clearly marked roads).
- When walking to Station Dune, make sure you close all gates along the path to stop movement of cattle.
- When walking outside of the campus enclosure over interdune or gravel surfaces, where possible walk on designated footpaths or car tracks.
- Avoid disturbing any pitfall traps and other scientific installations.

Litter:

- Remove any items that you take into the desert. This includes food scraps. There will be bins at picnic spots for you to leave your litter, and there are bins available throughout the campus area.
- Please use toilets provided and marked on the maps.
- Plastic bags are banned from all National Parks in Namibia, please do not bring any plastic bags to Gobabeb. If you accidentally bring in a plastic bag, ensure you take it with you when you leave.

GOBABEB VISITORS MAP - CAMPUS AREA



Make sure you only walk on marked paths (within the white stones) within the campus area and follow marked trails to and from the dunes.

A This is the main muster area at the Amabilis Hall. Coaches will arrive and depart here. Coffee/Tea and lunch can be collected here (**L**) between 12 and 2pm. There is an opportunity to purchase Gobabeb merchandise (**M**) and additional soft drinks (**D**). You can also refill your water bottle here.

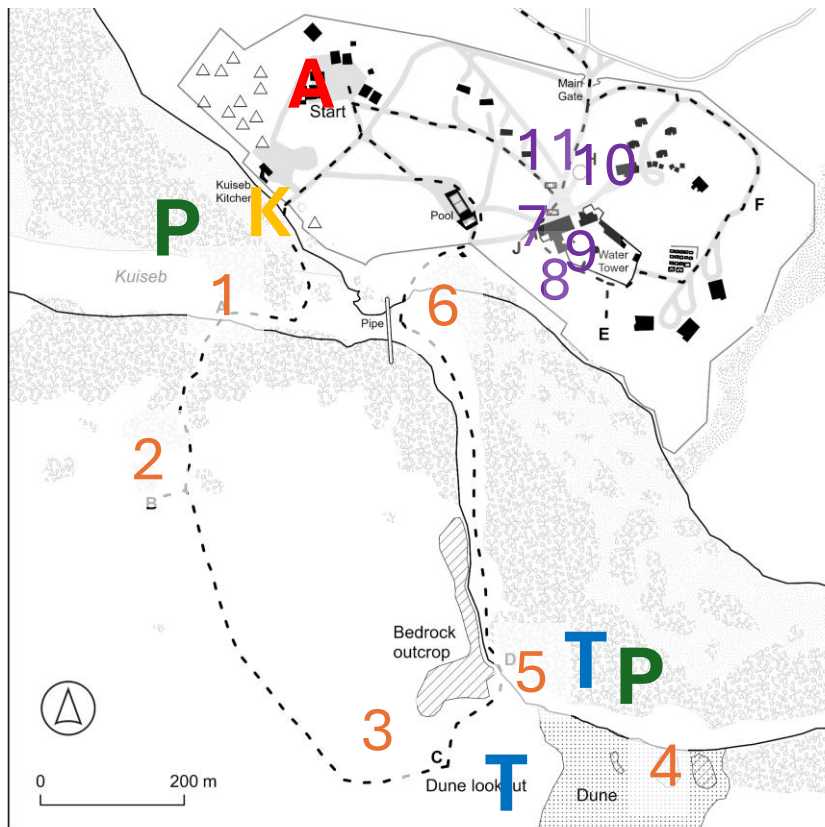
K Enter through this gate to walk on the Station Dune loop and (**P**) picnic area with chairs and tables under shady trees. Please make sure you close the gate after passing through to stop cows from entering the Campus. Gobabeb staff at the Kuiseb Gate will be happy to share their knowledge of Namib ecology.

S This is the main institute building, where you will find a viewing tower, water tower, library, laboratory and research offices. Gobabeb students will be available to discuss facilities and research undertaken at the institute here.

T Toilets.

W This is the original weather station enclosure – stop here to chat to a Gobabeb student about the current meteorological work undertaken at the Institute.

Station Dune and Institute Building Loops



Station Dune Loop (approximately 1 hour)

1. Walk through the Kuiseb River Channel, watch out for various research experiments – please don't enter any enclosures.
2. Follow the track out of the river channel and onto the interdune area – look out for the !nara plants.
3. Follow the track east to a grey bedrock outcrop with excellent views of Station Dune (please avoid making additional footprints in the interdune areas).
4. Ascend up Station Dune for views of Gobabeb and the Namib Sand Sea.
5. Descend down the saddle between Station Dune and the bedrock outcrop to the Kuiseb River Channel.
6. Follow the channel to an overhead pipeline, where you will see markers leading you back to the campus enclosure and a small gate – please close the gate behind you. Return to the Amabilis Hall or continue with the Institute Building Loop.

Institute Building Loop

7. Follow the track up the hill (marked with white stones) to the main Institute Building. At the south-west corner you can climb up the viewing tower and see the campus enclosure and surrounds.
8. Walk around the outside of the main Institute building to visit Helga Besler's lookout with views of Station Dune and Helga's Dune.
9. Go back through the main Institute building to talk to Gobabeb students about various aspects of the institute in
 - 9a) Molecular laboratory
 - 9b) Water tower
 - 9c) Library
 - 9d) Meeting room
10. Stop at the Original Weather Instrumentation Enclosure.
11. Visit the fog collectors before walking back down the hill to Amabilis Hall.