

BRinK - Biological Research in Kuzikus
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Study Site and Research Facility – An Overview

BRinK is situated on Kuzikus, a wildlife reserve in the Namibian Central Kalahari Desert (S23 14 202 E18 23 402), 180km southeast of Windhoek at 1380m above sea level. The reserve is a 10 000ha fenced area, with the fence being about 2,4 meters high. The reserve is surrounded by sheep and cattle farms, accessible for BRinK research purposes also. Annual rainfall varies between 150 and 200 mm. Temperatures can reach up to 40 °C in February and can go down to -20°C in June/July. The reserve is home to the critically endangered black rhinoceros and actively involved in its conservation and breeding program. Local park wardens are required to accompany researchers and tourists for their safety and protection of the species.

The area mainly consists of the African savannah, represented by *Acacia* (*A. erioloba*, *A. melifera*, *A. hebeclada*, *A. karoo*) and non-*Acacia* trees (*Boscia albitrunca*, invasive *Prosopis glandulosa*) and shrubs (*Lycium* spp, *Grevia flava*, *Ziziphus mucronata*). Grasses that dominate the landscape are perennial *Stipagrostis* and *Eragrostis* species. In degraded soil (such as around boreholes) landscape is dominated by *Aristida* species and annual *Schmidtia kalahariensis*. Only most common species are listed. **Plant species list** available. On the reserve, ungulate populations are managed through hunting, game catching and translocations, and freely traverse BRinKcamp. Kuzikus is home to larger herbivores such as Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*; abundance: 40), Common Eland (*Tragelaphus oryx*; abundance: 25), Greater Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*; abundance estimate (ae) 20), Blesbok (*Damaliscus pyrgagus phillipsi*; ae: 300), Springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*; ae: 800), Impala (*Aepycerus melampus*; ae: 20), Blue Wildebeest (*Gonnochaetes taurinus*; ae: 370), Black Wildebeest (*Gonnochaetes gnou*; ae: 120), Red Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*; ae: 45), Gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*; ae: 620), Burchells Zebra (*Equus burchelli*; ae: 75), Steenbok (*Raphicerus campestris*), Common Duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*) and the Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*; ae: 10). No dangerous predators roam on Kuzikus, making research easier. Smaller predators include Black-backed Jackal (*Canis mesomelas*), Caracal (*Caracal caracal*), African Wildcat (*Felis sylvestris*) and the Larger spotted Genet (*Genetta tigrina*). **Mammal species list** (including small mammals) available.

Over 130 species of bird are recorded in Kuzikus so far with BRinK, including migratory species. **Bird species list** available.

BRinK holds a private collection of insects with over 300 specimen including most common insect families present in Kuzikus and a **reference collection of Tenebrionidae** (Coleoptera). Lists of other arthropods, reptiles and amphibians are not complete, but literature is available on site.

BRinK research station is located in a flat area, shaded by high trees. Five large safari tents with shower and sink are used for accommodation, 5x5m kitchen tent fully equipped, holding a maximum of 10 people at a time. The 10x5m field lab is equipped with essential tools for field work. GPS, notebooks *etc.* can be let. Qualified ecologists based locally may be hired for field work assistance and are responsible to well-being of visiting researchers.