

Cape to Congo River: 6 July to 22 August 2010: Part II Author: Deon Kotze,

Day 28-29: Monday 2-Tuesday 3 Aug 2010: Lobito to Caba Ledo: 455km

Travelling towards Cabo Ledo was quite a scenic trip.

Rio Balombo





It does not matter where you live as long as you have a new car or motorcycle..



Monday is wash day...



The next stop was Sumbe where we had a drink at a restaurant opposite the Hotel Ritz

For the sailors...



Our next stop was the waterfall Cashierra on the river Queve



Then to Caba Ledo where we booked into chalets at the Pescaria Queros lodge for 2 nights. Accommodation was expensive at R600 per night for an old run-down hut but the clean beach and beautiful scenery made up for it....





The Tuesday was spent relaxing, and even some swimming.

Day 30-31: Wed 4 Aug - Thursday 5 August 2010 - Cabo Ledo to Kwanza River Lodge: 51km

We had a short drive to Kwanza river Lodge where we would stay again for 2 days. Koos and the owner organised the different chalets/houses for the group and I believe some people were not so happy but our chalet was tops. Accommodation was R320 a night which was very reasonable, we had a very good dinner that evening at the lodge and on the Thursday we went on a boat trip on the Quanza river, cost R640 per person.

Kwanza river lodge



Bridge over the Quanza river



Palm nut vulture



African Fish-eagle



Woodlands Kingfisher



Day 32-Friday 6 August 2010-Kwanza lodge to Muserra-292km.

We left early the morning and a terrible road was awaiting us. Stopped along the road at a market...
Lunch anyone?



Bread rolls (pão) was a big favourite and bought by us about every second day....
We bypassed Luanda, refuelled at Barra do Dande and proceeded towards our bushcamp outside
Musserra. Terrible roads was to be encountered...gravel roads with tar potholes...you have to drive like
a drunk, zig-zagging all the way...



And

the problem was that we had to come back on this road after we turn around at the Congo river 🤔

The Baobab forest went on many kilometres..



Just wished I could stop and take some better photos....that was my one gripe of this convoy driving, we were always rushing to get to the next destination and I have lost out on many good pictures... Luckily I had a handycam that Philna managed and I have about 11hours of unedited video to watch. That night we bush camped in a demined area next to the road. The grass was burned some time ago and everything you touched was black...and we were so near the road the traffic at night felt as if they were driving through your tent... we were very happy to leave the next morning.

Day 33-Saturday 7 August 2010-Muserra via Nzeto to Macula-125km

Again tar road and bad gravel!

We stopped at the beach at Nzeto for lunch and what a surprise....there was a group of children busy cleaning the beach! This was the only time we saw somebody cleaning Angola!



When will Angola ever rebuild the country? The buildings were left just like they were shot up during the war...

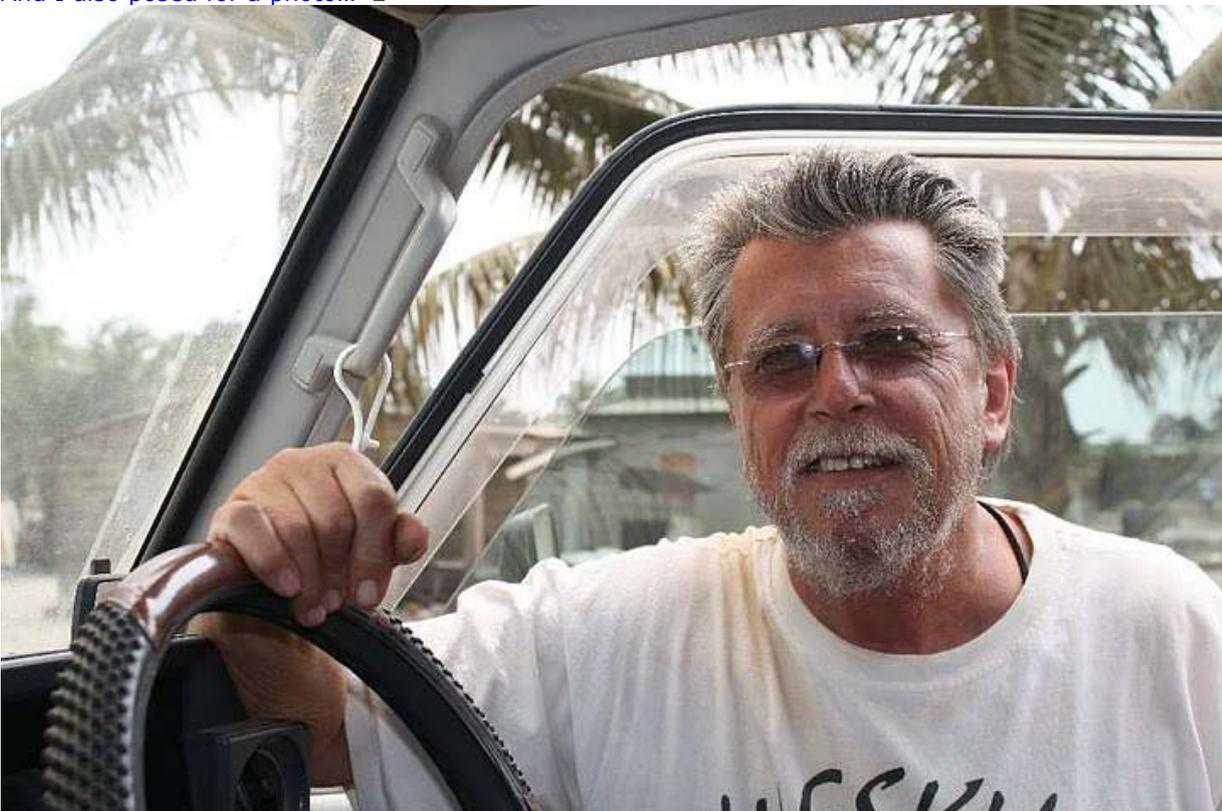


Then on to Musserra where we had to wait again in order for Koos to chat to the chief and arrange somewhere for us to stay. The village children received some pens and were just enjoying these funny strangers in their town..





And I also posed for a photo... 😊



Then we were off to our beach camp for the night



Lawrence caught a very nice fish...



Day 34-35: Sunday 8- Monday 9 August 2010: Macula to Congo river and back to Quifuma-161km

Today we were going to see the mighty Congo river! We followed the coastal road but you could not actually see the sea.....you knew it was near by the amount of dried fish for sale next to the road. We also saw many small animals hanging from branches for sale, some dead and some still alive....really not nice to see.

Nearer to Soyo the road became very dusty. We passed the oil fields and then we were in Soyo.....or dirty Soyo I should say.

And then we were there...at the turning point....the Congo river!
6610 km travelled...



Seeing the mighty Congo river....don't know what I thought it would be like but it was rather a let down...just a sea of water stretching for miles...what did I expect? Don't know...maybe if the river had high banks and you could look down on this mass of water....
It was a Sunday so there was no chance of getting fuel.....there were hordes of people at the garages, cars, bikes, and a few hundred yellow drums...
We turned back from the river and made our way through the terrible traffic to the Soyo market. I was looking for an Angola t-shirt and decided to venture deep into the market....did not find the t-shirt but felt very dirty when I came back to the vehicle again.....this market was most probably the dirtiest place I have and will ever see.....I hope...
I could not take photos inside the market, when you lift up your camera everybody started shouting and waving with their arms and the reason probably because many of them were there illegally...but otherwise they were very friendly and I never felt that I was in any danger.



I hope they were not spreading it...



When we left Soyo we turned off to someone's house and refilled our water tanks. We only used the water for washing.
Now we backtracked to a little place Quifuma where Koos organised for us with the owner to spend 2 nights free of charge.

That evening the certificates for reaching the Congo river were handed out.



We camped on the beach again for 2 nights.



We had "flush" toilets, you just had to fetch water in a bucket and flush the toilet, but the biggest problem for the ladies were that the two toilets next to each other did not have doors....
What was very disturbing for everybody was the suni antelope the owner had in a cage.



At night you could see the fires of the oil rigs out at sea, and I tried my hand at a handheld time shot and this is what came out....can you see the outline of Africa?



On the last night the owner's wife rocked up and was very annoyed at the people camping here at her husband's place, and the next morning when we left we all had to pay 80 kwanza (about R68) per vehicle per night....which was still cheap.

Day 36-Tuesday 10 August 2010- Quifuma to Musserra- 216km

We were still backtracking on the road we came up, but now we would pass Macula and bushcamp outside Musserra, but this time not on that black burnt grass site. Some onlookers



Refuel outside Macula from a container



Day 37-Wednesday 11 August 2010- Via Caxito and then east to Uige-436km

This was a long drive, again also on that terrible gravel road with tar potholes.....it was bad and slow driving....our friend in the Condor had his 3rd flat tyre..or was it 4th?

When we went up north, this school bus was standing next to the road, coming back it looks like someone had crashed into it and ran it off the road..



There are many of these still in Angola..



At the police control points we were just waved through, I can remember only once where the group were stopped but when Koos showed the letter from the Angolan embassy we were on our way again. Beautiful tropical scenery going up to Uige but nowhere to turn off or stop....



Dilapidated houses, rubbish everywhere.....but solar powered streetlights!!



We were to camp at a spot near the Radio station in Uige where the Voetspore team camped but now that camp spot did not exist anymore....

View from the radio station



So now Koos had to find us somewhere else to stay.....and the convoy moved into town...we stopped at a church...then moved off again. It was now getting dark and with all the traffic in town the inevitable happened....someone shouting on the Vhf to go left and someone else on the 29mhz shouting for directions....we were separated from the rest of the convoy..... I decided immediately to stop the vehicle, got hold of Koos eventually on the radio and directed him to where the 5 of us were waiting for him. It was dark when he eventually brought us to our overnight spot.....some market place that looked more like a rubbish dump.....one that I would rather erase from my memory! I don't think we made food that night.....the air was just too dirty.. Luckily we had police guard the whole night....



Day 38-Thursday 12 August 2010-Uige via Negage to Calandula Falls-245km.

We were all very glad to leave this place behind us...and looking forward to a good clean wash... Still beautiful country and we remarked between us that this central part of Angola is a lot cleaner than the coastal area.



Church in Camabatela



The second largest waterfall in Africa





We camped near the falls and some of us had a very nice wash in the pools...



The toilets were in a terrible state...
We had police guards the whole night....

Day 39-Friday 13 August 2010-Cacusso-Pedras Negras to Dondo and Cuanza river beach-308km

The road again changed from tar to gravel to very bad tar to terrible gravel and tar patches. Everywhere the Chinese were busy building roads but with no specific plan to connect them....
Pedras Negras



Angola must have the largest Baobab forest in Africa?



Then onto Dondo where we refuelled and bought a few things at the shop at the garage, then to beach camp on the Cuanza river beach.



We had quite a nice bath in the river, a few of the locals made a nuisance of themselves. Had quite a laugh when one of the guys parked himself next to Philna and then took her soap and started washing himself..

The locals soon dispersed and we had the place to ourselves....

Friday the 13th went without incident.

Next morning very early Philna and I had a skinny dip/bath in the river, quite refreshing....

Day 40-Saturday 14 August 2010-Quibala-Bridge14 to Waco Cungo-225km

We stopped at a roadside market again for some fruit...



This t-shirt I have seen quite a few times in Angola: "Today must become Good D"



Church at Quibala



This did not happen yesterday.....



Then we were off to Bridge 14 where Koos gave us the history of what happened here during the war. While we were there the owner of the farm arrived in his vehicle and we were taken to the river on his farm where the original bridge ended up eventually...



Then it was shopping in Waco Cungo whilst Koos went to the church to organise our overnight camping spot. While we waited for the diesel guys to refill some of us had a beer or two at a very nice restaurant and bar at S11.39741 E15.13605. The group also bought cases of Cuca beer at an off-sales that is run from a container... S11.36723 E15.12893.

Then off to our camping spot next to the church.



Day 41-Sunday 15 August 2010-Huambo-Katchiungo to Menongue-538km

The day trips were getting long....

In Huambo Koos, leading in front, had the misfortune of turning left at a robot...and suddenly we were all stopped by the traffic police! It turned out that there was a new road sign erected that forbid left turn at that spot but Koos did not know about it. All our drivers licences were collected and while standing on the pavement we were suddenly told in no friendly manner to get into the vehicles. That was a bit sinister to me at first but I think I know the reason for it now....

Eventually our drivers licences were returned and we were allowed to go....and that is all I can say about that incident.....

We passed the origin of the Cubango river, which eventually becomes the Okavango river.



Our friend Anthony in the Condor had another puncture.....

We bush camped that night at a fenced-off demined area next to road.



Day 42-Monday 16 August 2010-Menongue to bushcamp next to Okavango river near Caiundo-208km

We refueled at Menongue and visited the local markets.



We visited a camp of some of the guys that are still busy removing landmines in Angola and also passed a graveyard of war machines.



Beware...don't set foot here...



Russian truck being repaired in the road..



Potholes do not get repaired...they just get bigger



Near Caiundo we had to wait again for Koos to do his thing with the chief.....and off we went to our camp at the Okavango river. Problem with these camps are that when you read the itinerary you think you will be at the riverbed so you can just walk to the water and wash clothes etc. Most of the cases this is not so and it is quite a mission to get the water to your camp.



Day 43-Tuesday 17 August 2010-Follow Okavango to Savate-153km

Some more bad gravel/sand road and eventually, after Koos had his ritual with the chief we were at our bushcamp near the river. This time we had some children fetching water for us.



Even the locals had to go to the river to fetch their water....after they undress completely in full view to wash themselves...no pictures unfortunately... 😊



Sunset the last night in Angola...



Day 44-Wednesday 18 August 2010-Savate to Katitwe, cross the border and to Sarasungu Lodge in Rundu-251km

Now we did not moan about the roads anymore.....we would be in Namibia soon!

The border crossing again took some time and in true Angola fashion some vehicles were searched...but no problems and soon after that we were in Namibia..... land of Tafel Lager!

Hendrie as well as Piet and Adrie from Piketberg had left us two days before as Adrie had to get to Piketberg in time for her daughter's matric farewell, and Brand and Annatjie Leach from Langebaan now said their farewells as they were on their way home.

The rest of us travelled in convoy to the Sarasungu Lodge where we were booked into chalets, R570 bed and breakfast for the two of us. A bed and shower again!!



Paul and Lin Fisher was going on the same trip a month later with Koos and we spoke to them on the phone from here giving a few tips of what to expect on this expedition.....
That night we had a very nice dinner and few beers and said our goodbyes..

Day 45- Thursday 19 August 2010-Rundu to Murunani camp-140km

The next morning each went his own way.....

I had previously heard about this place from Wouter of the T4A forum and booked at Murunani Camp just south of the Mangetti National Park on the B8. When coming from the north you will first go through the veterinary gate so do not have meat in your fridge.

Murunani camp with very good ablutions





Our cost for camping was R100 and we had Kudu steak that evening at R60 per person! What a bargain! I can recommend this place to anyone, the owners is Joseph and Rensie Lewis, tel no 0813202362 and email murucamp @ mweb.com.na. They also have a shop and butchery on site S18.79449 E 18.92778

The Mangetti National Park which was proclaimed in 2008 with a size of 41 000 hectares, is closeby and we went for a tour through the park with Joseph. Unfortunately we did not see many animals but next time when we have more time we would visit again. And of course the birds at the campsite...

Groundscraper thrush



Acacia Pied barbet and Blue waxbill



Golden breasted bunting



Day 46- Friday 20 August 2010-Murunani camp to Arebusch Lodge, Windhoek-593km

We booked into the camp and had a nice shower in their newly renovated ablutions. Camping for the night cost R240 and we went for dinner at their restaurant, I will not visit Joe's Beer house again, after twice had to chew through the toughest steak in my life....

Some more birds...

Must be the ugliest bird I have seen..

Southern masked-weaver



White browed-sparrow weaver



Day 47-Saturday 21 August 2010-Windhoek to Grunau Country House-697km

As we had now seen the "Vingerklip" that was still standing, we decided to turn east just south of Asab to go and have a look at the site of the fallen "Vingerklip" that was destroyed on 8 Dec 1988.

This is all that is left



We bought some Gemsbok biltong at a stall near Grunau, and booked into the Grunau Country House for the night at R425 for the room.

Day 48- Sunday 22 August 2010- Grunau to Cape Town-807km

The weather was cold and raining(every time I come home it rains), we had an easy border crossing, and at 17h00 we were home from the longest trip I have been on up to now. Glad to be home after 48 days...

Some statistics for the trip:

Accommodation costs for 2 people : R6 732
Guide fees(R18000), visas(R1900), park fees, road tax etc R23 218
Food and drink R8 584
Eating out R4 147
Km travelled : 11 464
Liters petrol used: 2 131
Fuel Cost: R13 049
Fuel consumption: 5.38 km/lt
Petrol price in Angola: R3.37/lt
1400 pictures taken and 11hours of video clips still need to be edited.....
Did I mention anywhere about the terrible roads in Angola.....