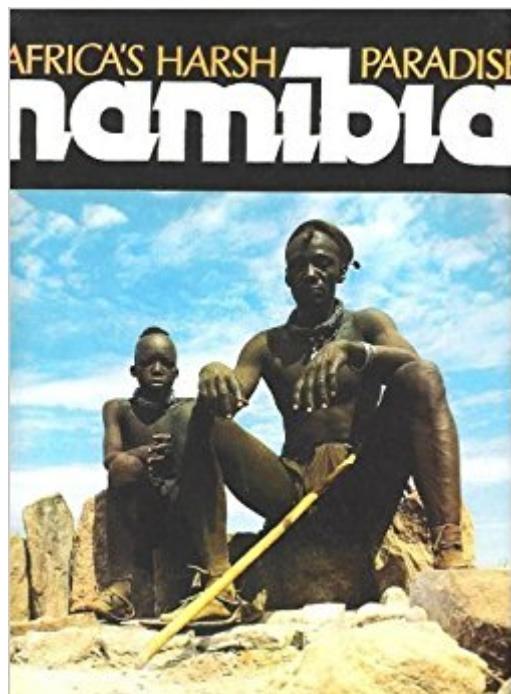


The book was found

Namibia: Africa's Harsh Paradise



Synopsis

This book attempts to reveal the world of Namibia: its varied landscapes, its vast diversity of wildlife, and its myriad tribal peoples. With a collection of photographs and text, it unfolds the story of this most individual of southern African lands. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Struik Publishers; 1st Edition edition (February 18, 1988)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 086977106X

ISBN-13: 978-0869771068

Package Dimensions: 12.7 x 9.9 x 1.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,906,236 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in Books > Travel > Africa > Namibia #10189 in Books > Travel > Reference > General #10671 in Books > Travel > Pictorial

Customer Reviews

I have recently rekindled my interest in Wildlife. Most of my books are on East Africa, and Southern Africa. I don't have much on Namibia, so I was pleased when I found this book. It was published in the 1980's. It covers the country { Namib Desert, The Skeleton Coast for instance. } The book has a good coverage of the different people that make Namibia. And of course there is an excellent section on the wildlife and the plants and flowers. The photography is very good for the time. The text is full. For me it filled a clear gap in my knowledge about this very interesting country, its various ecosystems, the various animals, reptiles and insects that live in them. One has to also remember the birds as well. One marvels that some large mammals can live in the Namib Desert, which I gather is the world's oldest desert. So far in my search I haven't found much on Namibia especially its wildlife.

Namibia is an African country which is 50% larger than France, yet at the time this book was published, in the late '70's, it had only a million people, and 90% of those lived within 50 km. of the Angola border (today the country's population has doubled to two million). Yes, there is a lot of glorious space, the result of the absence of water. Parts of the desert coastline rival Chile's deserts,

going years without a drop of rain. It contains some of the highest sand dunes in the world. Only the Bushman, now roughly 20,000 people, can claim to be "natives," everyone else, African tribes such as the Herero and Mbanderu, and the white man, German, British and Portuguese, arrived over the last 400 years. For roughly 40 years it was a German colony, known rather prosaically as German South West Africa. World War I ended its status as a German colony, and for another roughly 60 years it was a "trusteeship" of South Africa. Today it is an independent country. Johnson and Bannister have produced an excellent book, mainly of photographs, that capture the beauty and diversity of the country, certainly highlighting the landscape and wildlife, but also they include strong sections on the inhabitants. Each section has a succinct accompanying narrative. They were able to take aerial photographs, including one at the beginning, of the fog rolling in from the ocean over the sand dunes that are quite impressive. In terms of the fauna who survive with limited access to water, they have quality pictures of beetles, and other insects that harvest water from the sea fog, and of the larger animals, there are many normally associated with Africa, like elephants, lions, ostriches, oryx and zebra, which inhabit oases like the Etosha pan. There is an expansive section on the Bushman, and their daily life, shot with dignity for these ultimate survivors. There is another entire in-depth section on the Herero-speaking people who inhabit the far north, along the Kunene River, which marks the border with Angola. The cover picture recalls the work of Leni Riefenstahl (speaking of survivors!) among the Nuba in Sudan. There is a section on the Benguella coast, swept by a cold current, and thus is home for a period of the year to penguins and seals arriving from Antarctica. Along this coast is the town of Luderitz, which was a "diamond capital" during its brief heyday. There are some charming / haunting Victorian mansions, now abandoned, with the sand dunes reclaiming them as their own. The book concludes with a few pictures in the capital, Windhoek. I was able to visit Namibia for 10 days, in 1980, when I was able to purchase this book. I traveled in what the South Africans call a "combie," a VW camper, and was able to freely camp throughout the country, avoiding the area of fighting along the Angolan border. Truly that is the way this magnificent country should be seen. This is an excellent guide book, and a solid introduction, for anyone contemplating seeing a part of Africa "off the beaten path," a country with some "elbow room."

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