

Project Update: March 2017

Namibian fieldwork update

Our journey began in Scotland, initially flying down to Cape Town to collect equipment before our road trip to Windhoek (the capital of Namibia) meeting up with others and then onto Etosha National Park to meet with Rachael's long-term project collaborator Mr Martin Kasaona Senior Conservation Scientist for the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism. With two fully-equipped 4x4 vehicles we headed to the breath-taking north-west Namibia, an arid area with many unexplored caves and sink holes looking for new roosts for our two focal species Dent's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus denti*) and the largest insectivorous bat in southern Africa – the striped leaf-nosed bat (*Hipposideros vittatus*).

Luckily for us an international cave exploration team, working with local conservancies in north-west Namibia, had explored caves and sink holes across the area, and sent us the mapped out sites along with which sites had bats in them. During our field trip we revisited some sites we had been to previously and also six new sites, during this time we caught 14 *R. denti* but only 1 *H. vittatus* individuals as well as other species, including our first fruit bat – Angolan epauletted fruit bat (*Epomophorus angolensis*), this species is only found in NW Namibia and SW Angola. For our focal species, we recorded morphometric data, took a wing biopsy for molecular analysis and recorded echolocation calls. For other species we collected morphometric data and took a biopsy to aid identification from a few individuals per species at each site.

