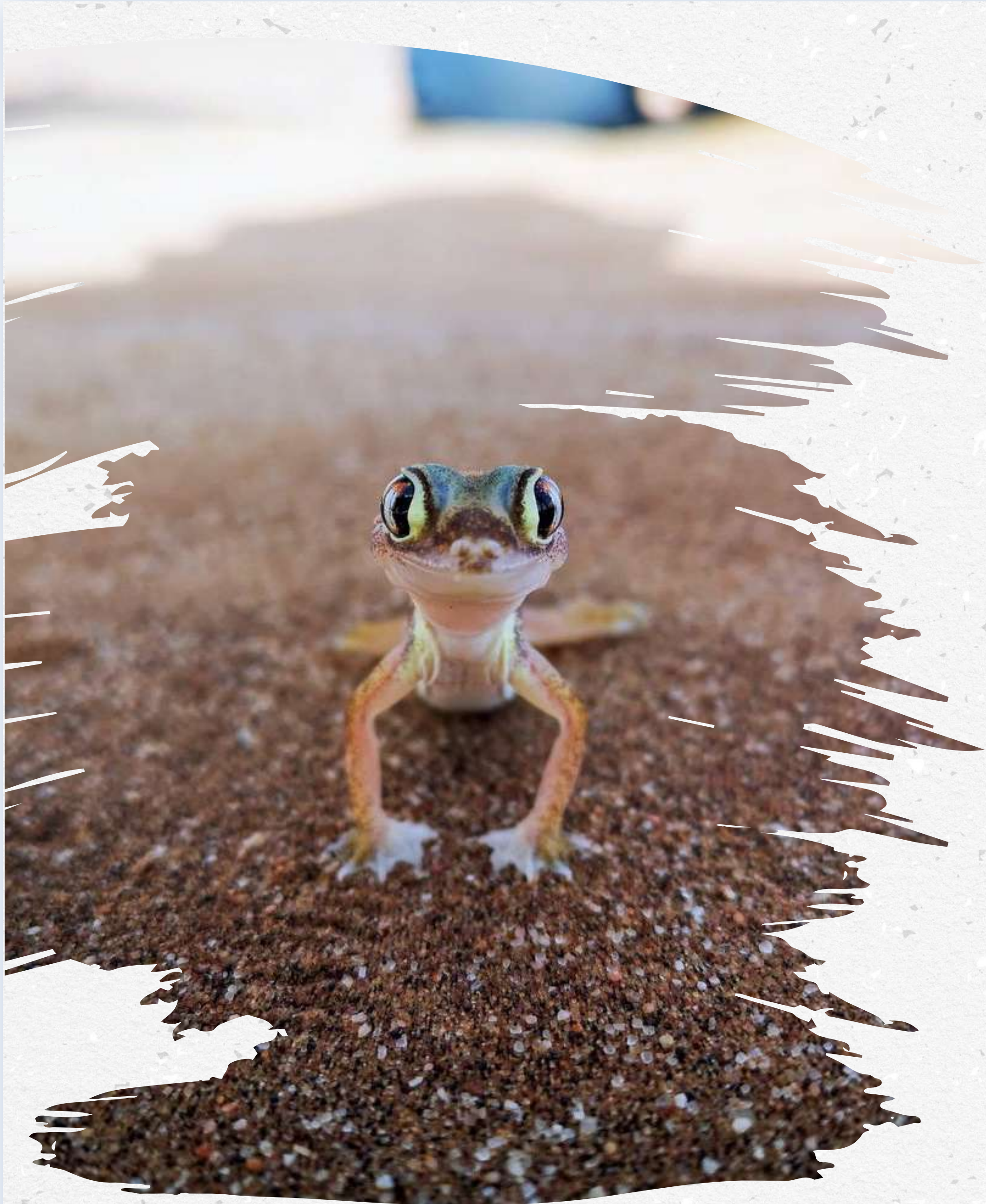




Namibia

*responsible
destination*





HERE'S HOW NAMIBIA IS TACKLING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.

Namibia was the first country in the world to specifically address habitat conservation and the protection of natural resources in its constitution. ... Community-based conservation tourism also promotes the sustainable management of natural resources and stimulates cultural preservation

From protecting delicate desert ecosystems and endangered wildlife to preserving important cultural traditions, Namibia is a world leader in responsible tourism and conservation. With a growing annual number of 1.5 million travellers to Namibia, its commitment to responsible tourism is vital for a positive impact on the environment, economy, culture and resources.

Here's how Namibia is committed to sustainable tourism:

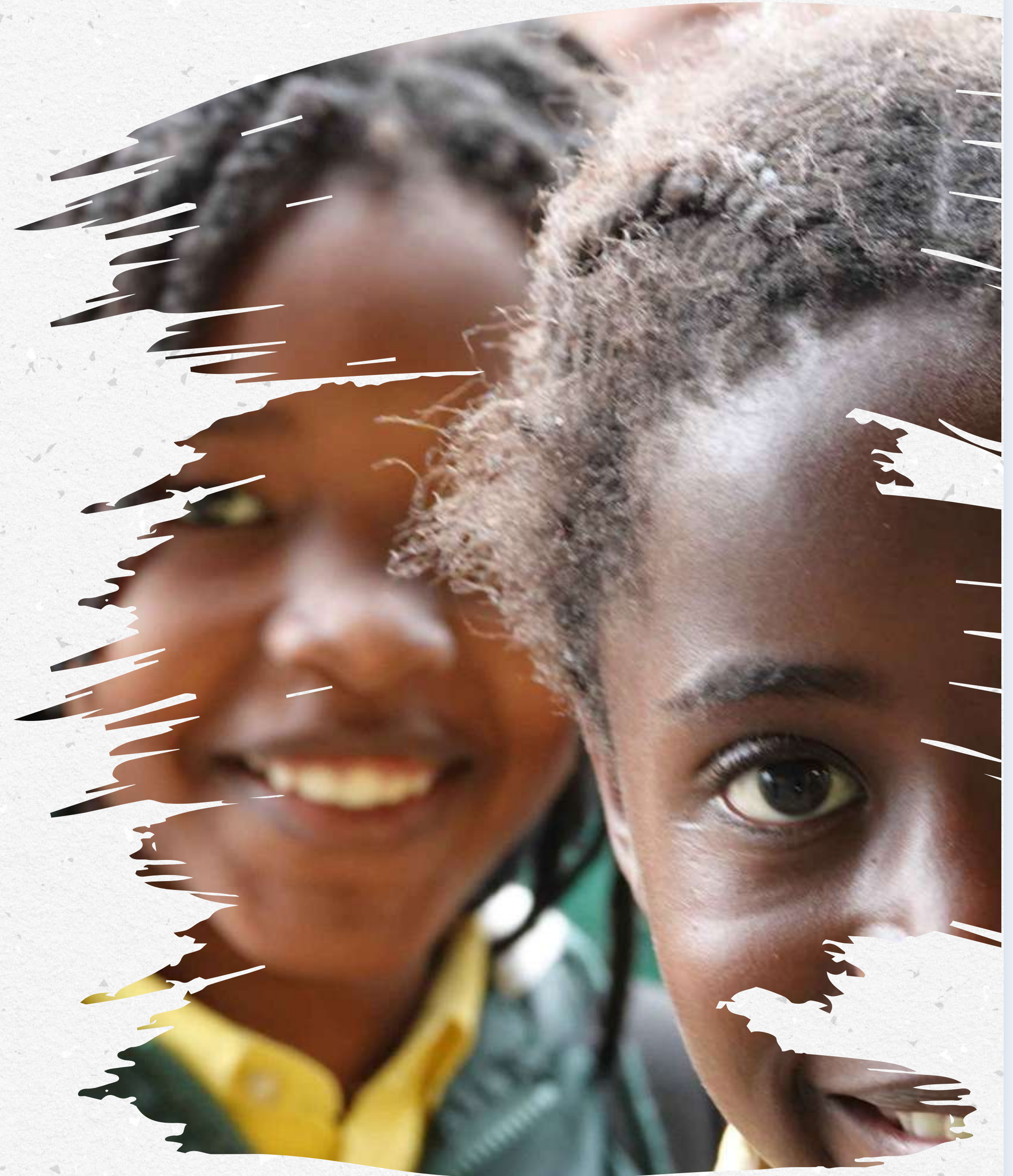
- . by including respect for the environment in its Constitution
- . Namibia hosted the **Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism** [GPST] Conference in 2015. It is internationally recognised as one of the leading countries in the development of responsible tourism and conservation.
- . a respectful and non-exploitative idea of cultural tourism
- . the **NAMIBIA ECO AWARDS**, designed to recognise establishments (lodges, guesthouses, hotels, campsite tour operators,...) with a genuine ecological conscience.

NAMIBIA WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN COUNTRY TO INCORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INTO ITS CONSTITUTION.

As well as involving the local community in sustainable activities, many are also employed as Conservation Guards to protect wildlife from poachers. For this reason, REI presented the ***Namibian Conservation Guards with the 2013 Sustainable Tourism Award***, which gave 500 guards backpacks containing equipment and supplies to support and encourage their conservation work in Namibia.

Almost an eighth of Namibians are involved, with registered conservancies covering more than 18% of the country, with a further 19% of land protected in national parks and sanctuaries. Namibia was also the first African country to incorporate environmental protection into its constitution.

The result? ***The country is now home to a quarter of the world's cheetah population. And in a region of the country where black rhinos were virtually extinct thirty years ago, there are now the largest number of free-ranging black rhinos in the world.***





THERE ARE PLENTY OF SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE DURING YOUR TRIP.

Properly managed tours offer visitors education, participation and cultural awareness, which translates into respect and income for local communities.

With **local guides**, visitors can discover the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain, and its 2,000-year-old rock paintings; the 280-million-year-old trunks of the Petrified Forest; or the rock engravings of Twyfelfontein. Whatever your choice, if you opt for a community tour, you will be contributing to this positive cycle, which involves both tourists and local people.

Another activity is **sand-boarding** with Alter Action - the first Namibian company to use snowboards to train people to safely descend Swakopmund's enormous dunes. Descending a 100-metre-high dune at a speed of 72 km/h? There's nothing like it. And as long as you don't leave any tracks behind, it's a totally ecological and non-motorised activity. There are no ski lifts at the top, which means that surfers have to carry their equipment to the top of the dunes as many times as they want to descend.

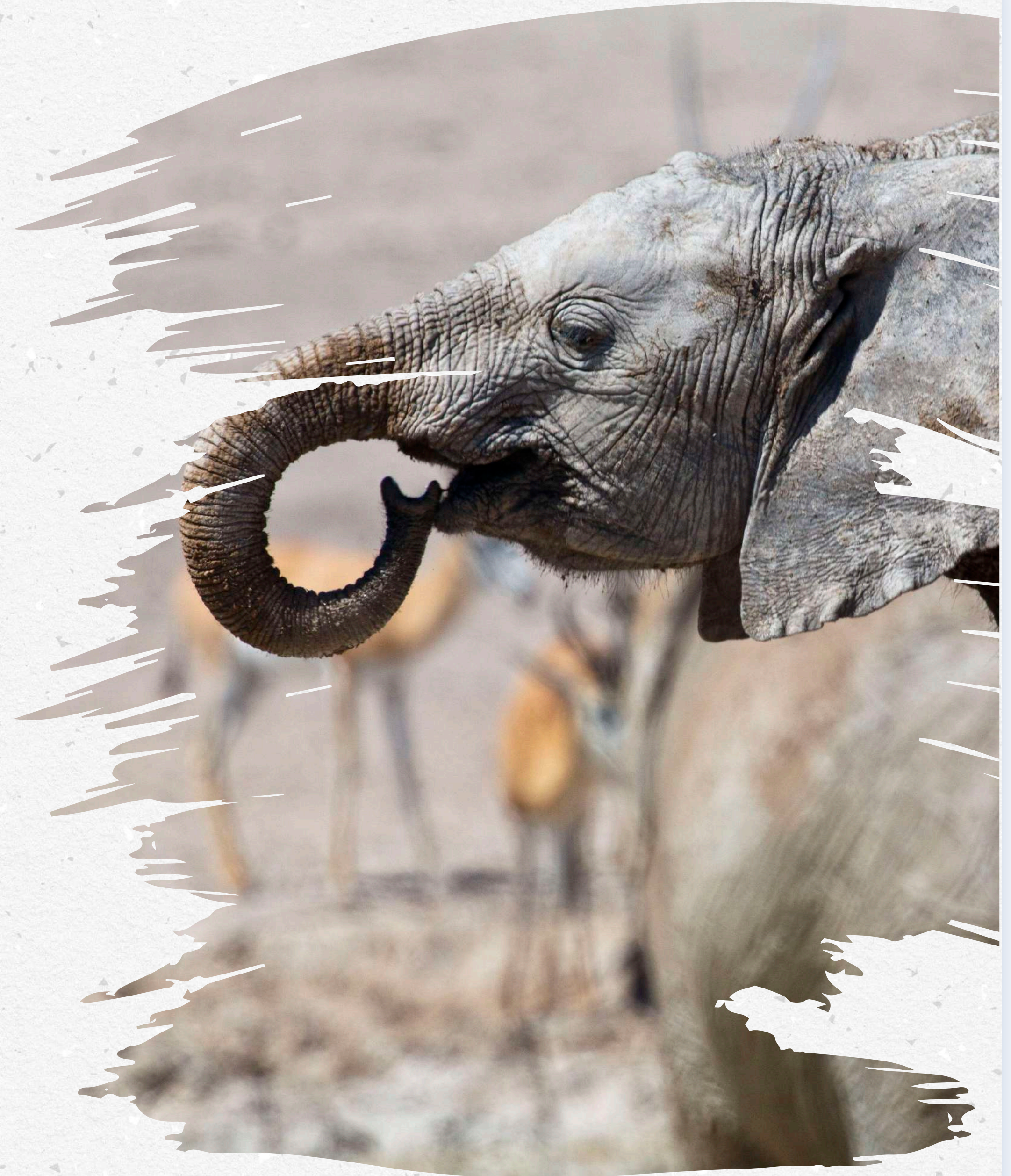
There's also the **Swakopmund Fat Bike Tour**, which is the most eco-friendly way to explore the Namib Desert. With balloon-like tyres and a wider contact patch to distribute the weight more evenly, the tracks on the non-motorised Fat Bike are actually more superficial than footprints.

Finally, embark in the original **Pelican Point kayaking experience** with Cape Fur Seals on the peaceful lagoon and in the surrounding calm waters of Walvis Bay. Seals are some of the most social and inquisitive animals in our ocean, allowing you a magical experience right up close and personal in their natural environment without any interference.

NAMIBIA IS INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED AS A LEADER IN RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL.

Namibia hosted the fifth conference of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism [GPST] in 2015, which promotes a healthy balance between sustainability and tourism. ***The GPST credited Namibia with becoming one of the world's leading destinations striving to achieve a more successful mix between conservation, tourism and the development of Namibian communities.***

One of the many reasons for the growth of tourism in Namibia is the recognition and enduring reputation that the country has gained in the years leading up to this award. According to the Namibian Sun, for every 12 tourists who arrive in Namibia, one job is created, and around 27% of all jobs are linked to the travel and tourism industry. This means that Namibians can benefit from more accessible training and education to contribute to this significant and positive growth in tourism.





OUR IDEA OF CULTURAL TOURISM IS RESPONSIBLE, RESPECTFUL AND NON- EXPLOITATIVE.

Cultural tourism is a way for travellers to immerse themselves in local rituals and unique customs. It encourages local communities to embrace and celebrate their own cultures and practices. The end result is economic growth combined with authentic and appropriate interactions between the local population and visitors.

Namibia, for example, is home to the Herero tribe, characterised by their heavy, hand-sewn Victorian-style dresses and horn-shaped headdress. Proud of their colourful outfits, Herero women often sell dolls in traditional Herero dress at roadside markets. By stopping to buy one of these dolls or other handicrafts, the Herero tribe receives economic support and their culture and heritage is recognised by visitors.

Then there are the semi-nomadic Himbas, recognisable by their bare chests, calfskin clothing and skin covered in Otjize paste - a mixture of butter fat and red ochre. One way to experience the true Himba culture is to take part in a village tour, which allows you to meet the villagers as they go about their daily business. As responsible tour operators collaborate with the Himbas on these experiences, this is an authentic opportunity to be painted in ochre and smell their deodorising perfume in a traditional Himba hut, as well as learning about their traditions and rituals. Responsible tour operators also pay the Himbas with products such as sugar and bread, and visitors have the opportunity to buy jewellery and other handicrafts at the end of the trip.

AND THEN THERE ARE THE NAMIBIA ECO AWARDS!

Need help finding a sustainable gîte or hotel? Have fun sorting through the 60 eco-establishments listed on the Eco Awards website.

Eco Awards Namibia is one of the best ways to find out whether an establishment or tour operator has developed a sustainable approach to its business. If an establishment or tour operator receives a Desert Flower Eco Awards certificate, then visitors know that ecological and responsible values are being applied and respected. This programme encourages waste reduction and the habit of recycling and reusing, as well as responsible management of its staff and travellers. Explore Namibia knowing you won't be leaving a giant, unpleasant footprint!

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Damarana Safaris was certified with a 5-Flower ECO-AWARD in 2022. This is the highest certification in Namibia a tour operator can get.





DAMARANA
feel nature.

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Let's respect together,
this country we love so
much!

- www.damarana.com