

## General Information about the work in Goegap

**Goegap Nature Reserve:** Goegap is close to Springbok, the capital of Namaqualand with approx. 15 000 inhabitants. Goegap is a semi desert. Main attractions are the wildflowers in spring (July-October; depending on rainfall in winter). During the tourist season in spring up to 500 tourists might visit the reserve each day. During other times very few tourists visit.

**Springbok:** Springbok is a small town with about 15 000 inhabitants, 20km away from the Research Station. As Springbok is the capital of Namaqualand, it has two well stocked supermarkets, a good pharmacy and many other shops with everything you might need. Once a week we make a shopping trip to Springbok.

### Costs

As no funding is available for field assistants, unfortunately they have to cover all costs by themselves. Students have to arrange their own transport to the field site (for details how to do this see below). A monthly fee must be paid to the research station for accommodation and the weekly trip to town. This fee depends on whether you do your own project or whether you help as a field assistant without your own project; see Table below. Students must buy their food etc for themselves. For food about R 2000 (200 Euro) should be calculated per month. **Including accommodation costs of 300 Euro (CHF 450) should be expected per month. Additionally you will have extra costs, such as going to the restaurant / take away on town days, beer or wine, shopping for clothes etc., postage and telephone calls home. These can easily be another 100 Euro / month.**

### Rental fee for people directly associated to the striped mouse project.

Type of accommodation	Researcher and students with grant	MSc student without grant	Undergraduate students with own project	Field assistant without own project
Daily fee	R 100	R 50	R 40	R 35
Monthly fee	R 2500	R 1500	R 1250	R 1000

### **Rental fees for guests of students / researchers:**

If there is space, guests can stay the first three days for free. Afterwards they have to pay R100/day or R 2500/month.

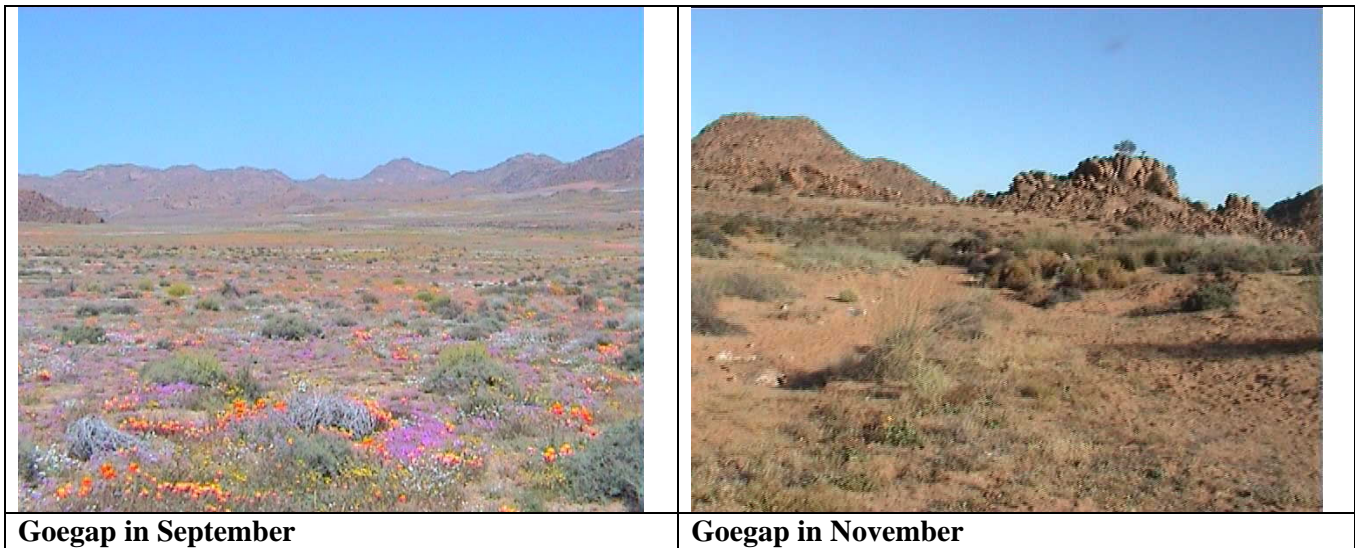
**Use of rental fee:** The rental fee is used for all running costs of the research station including repairs and new infrastructure. Please give the rental fee at the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month to the research station manager.

German students can apply for a grant from the Deutsche Akademischer Auslandsdienst (DAAD, [www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)). Here, commonly travel grants of 300 Euro are given to students. Other foundations in Germany can be found at [www.uni-kassel.de/wiss\\_tr](http://www.uni-kassel.de/wiss_tr). Information about foundations in Switzerland supporting students going abroad can be found under [www.crus.ch/deutsch/aus](http://www.crus.ch/deutsch/aus), [www.edi.admin.ch/esv/](http://www.edi.admin.ch/esv/). Best chances for Swiss students would be the SSAJRP: <http://internationalaffairs.unibas.ch/priority-countries/south-africa>

**Postal address:** To receive mail, use following address

Goegap Nature Reserve  
YOUR NAME/ c.o. Dr. Schradin  
Private Bag X1  
Springbok, 8240

## South Africa



**Telephone:** There is no Telephone line and no reception for cellular phones at the research station. You can use the public phone at the office of the reserve (5kms by mountain bike or by foot from the research station) if you have a Telkom phone card (available in Springbok at Spar or the post office). For emergencies only, people can leave a message at the office of Goegap: 0027 – (0)27 – 7189906. Please do not use this number in any other case than an emergency.

**Email:** You can send/receive emails during your stay in Goegap using the email address: [stripedmouse@bluewin.ch](mailto:stripedmouse@bluewin.ch). Please be aware that **there is no internet connection in Goegap, but email will be downloaded only ones a week in Springbok**. Thus, there will be a delay of 1-2 weeks in receiving/replying to emails. You can check your private email in Springbok during the weekly shopping trip.

**Climate:** Cold in winter/spring (Mai-September), with temperatures often below 0 at night, between 10 and 22 during the day. As houses in South Africa, including the research station, are not very well insulated, it gets very cold inside. In summer (November-March) temperatures can be up to 40 degrees. Cold periods can also occur in summer. Rain falls mainly in winter and spring, with some thundershowers in summer. The table below gives only an estimate and it can differ from year to year (brackets).

Month	Minimum temperature	Maximum temperature	Days with rain	Rain in mm
January	14 (7-13)	35 (20-45)	0 (0-5)	0 (0-60)
February	14 (9-18)	35 (20-42)	2 (0-9)	5 (0-55)
March	12 (7-11)	30 (18-40)	3 (0-5)	10 (0-61)
April	8 (4-9)	25 (18-39)	4 (3-6)	10 (9-20)
May	1 (1-3)	22 (12-33)	4 (3-8)	20 (6-20)
June	0 (-2 -5)	18 (8-28)	5 (7-9)	35 (30-50)
July	0 (-1-6)	18 (9-29)	3 (0-5)	20 (0-40)
August	1 (-1-5)	20 (9-26)	4 (3-9)	20 (1-54)
September	4 (0-7)	24 (10-36)	4 (2-8)	10 (1-15)
October	6 (0-10)	25 (18-40)	2 (2-4)	5 (2-40)
November	12 (7-12)	28 (18-44)	1 (1-7)	5 (1-7)
December	12 (7-14)	32 (20-44)	1 (0-6)	5 (0-30)

**Flora:** The Succulent Karoo is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots due to its large number of endemic plant species, with altogether more than 4000 plant species. It is especially famous for numerous species of succulents. In spring, large fields of wildflowers can occur after good winter rain. However, this is not predictable and can be any time between July and September, and in some years there are very few wildflowers at all. Less spectacular but very nice are the autumn flowers in March / April.

**Fauna:** Scorpions: Big harmless ones and small very poisonous ones (wear shoes when you got to the toilet at night!). Sunspiders, stick insects and mantis in summer. Many reptile species including poisonous snakes (black spitting cobra, cape cobra, puffadder), which also visit the house (especially October – January). However, they pose no threats and we cannot guarantee that you will see one. The smallest tortoise of the world. Many bird species including Cape and spotted eagle owl and several species of raptors (black eagle, jackal buzzard, pale chanting goshawk and booted eagle). Mammals include springbok, gemsbok, mountain zebra, baboons, aardvark, aardwolf, jackal, wildcat, mongooses etc and maybe even a leopard. Diurnal small mammals include the striped mouse, bush Karoo rat, whistling rats, dassie rat and elephant shrews.

**Other activities in the reserve:** Hiking and mountain biking. Night drives to see the aardwolf and aardvark. Namaqualand is a heaven for star gazing. A mountain bike can be rented from the research station for R5/day.

**Car:** A Mahindra bakkie (=2x4) is used for the weekly shopping trip. **There is no car for private use of students.** For excursions, you can book online a rental car at <http://www.europecar.co.za> for approximately R300/day plus a delivery fee to the research station of R250.

### Accommodation

The research station is directly at the field site. The research station is an old farmhouse with two dormitories, one student's office and one big kitchen. In winter it can get very cold, especially during nights, as the insulation is bad. Additionally, we have three small wooden houses: 2 houses of 3x6m for student accommodation (sleeps two each), one extra bathroom and the mouse colony. The research station lies lovely and lonely in the nature reserve.

**Sleeping-rooms:** There are two sleeping rooms for students, one sleeping two, the other one three. Additionally, we have two Wendy Houses (wooden houses), sleeping two each. Each student has its own bed, pillow and cupboard. You have to bring your own sleeping bag/blankets.

**Kitchen:** There is one communal kitchen and two fridges run by solar power. Space in the fridge is limited! A big braai (BBQ) area exists.

**Power** for light and computers is provided by a solar system and a wind turbine. Each room has one power plug. However, power is restricted and **you are not allowed to use any devices that use a lot of power like a hair dryer.** However, you can charge your camcorder, camera, toothbrush or cell phone.



Solar system and wind turbine at the research station.



### The Research Station

**Water** is provided by a water pump and water tanks. Thus, we have to use water sparingly, and showers should not take longer than 5 minutes. Hot water is available. There is one big communal bathroom with two showers and two toilets and one small bathroom. To get to the bathroom you have to go outside and walk around the house.

**Laundry** has to be done by hand at the research station. There is a clothesline for drying. Since 2010 we also have a washing machine, but use is restricted to periods of excess solar power. Especially in winter you might not be able to use the washing machine for weeks.

**There is NO telephone or email at the research station.** For phone calls, students have to take the mountain bike to the office of the research station (5km sand road) and use the public phone. There is no reception for cellular phones. Students can go once a week to the internet café, during a visit to Springbok.

### How to get there ?

Fly to Cape Town and stay there for one night or longer, if you would like to see a bit of the city. In Cape Town, book a minibus. Minibuses go daily (except public holidays) from Cape Town to Springbok. They pick up their passengers at the hotel/ backpacker and will drop you off at the research station. Pickup is between 2.00 and 5.00 o'clock AM (morning !). These minibuses are called taxis in South Africa and can be booked by phone only. When you take the taxi, you will arrive in Springbok during the middle of the day between 1 and 3 PM such that when you do have problems getting to Goegap you can somehow make

arrangements to get there (taxi from Springbok) or look for accommodation. (In 10 years only 1 of > 50 students had this problem!)

**Important: Make sure that both the Cape Town office operator on the phone and the driver knows that they will have to bring you to Goegap (not only to Springbok) before booking and boarding the taxi.**

The taxis cost around R300. These are their telephone numbers (027 is the area code for Springbok, 021 for Cape Town):

Titus: 021-9092533; 027-7121381 (transfer from Springbok to Goegap costs R30 extra).

Bezuidenhout: 021-9324950; 027-7121884 (transfer from Springbok to Goegap costs R150 extra).

(Carstens: 027-7121847; this company will bring you only to Springbok, but not to Goegap).

Minibuses also run in the city of Cape Town. Here these taxis are not very reliable and can be even dangerous! However, these are different operators than the minibuses going to Springbok. So if the people at your hotel warn you not to take the minibus to Springbok, they talk about different companies. Nevertheless, the minibuses might drive quite fast, and when they are full, they are not very comfortable. It is not European standard. Still, it is the best way to get to Springbok.

Instead of the minibus, you can also take the Intercap bus: <http://www.intercape.co.za> (around 350 Rand one way). The bus leaves Cape Town at 18:00 and arrives at 2:35 in Springbok. **So you will arrive there in the middle of the night!** This means you would have to stay over one night in Springbok. One good option seems to be the Boesmanland Guesthouse (Tel: 027-7121757, 150 Rand per night), who might be willing to pick you up at the bus, such that you do not have to walk through Springbok at night. Another possibility is the Springbok Hotel.

<http://www.sa-venues.com/visit/springbokhotel>.

It is about 10-15min walk from where the bus stops, up the road through Springbok, opposite Springbok Lodge. Other guesthouses in Springbok can be found in the internet, e.g. at

<http://www.namakhoi.org.za/accommodation.htm>.

**If you get stranded in Springbok**, you have four options:

1. You can ask at the taxi stands for transport to Goegap by car. This will cost you around R200. Make sure they drop you at the research station, not only the office. Ask for Bezuidenhout transport (Tel: 027-7121884)
2. You can go to the garage "Auto Mac" behind Standard bank and ask for help. They know us well! Standard Bank is in the main road (direction Cape Town) and Auto Mac just behind it.
3. You can ask at the police for help. They are surprisingly friendly and helpful!
4. You can phone Goegap and leave a message for us: 027 – 7189906. However, if there is no car at the office, we might get the message only the next day.

**Visa:**

1. If you plan to stay for less than three months, you don't need a visa. When entering South Africa, simply tick "holiday" as the reason for entering the country, and you will get a stamp into your passport allowing you to stay 3 months in South Africa. It is best to enter South Africa as a tourist. Do not state on the immigration form that you come to study or to work. You do not work here nor visit a university. If you do not state that you enter as a tourist, entrance might be declined and you would have to fly back.

2. If you plan to stay for more than three months, you can apply for a visa from the South African Embassy in your home country. These visitors visa can be for up to 6 months. When applying, you will have to hand in:
- The form BI-84 (available from the homepage of the embassy)
  - Your passport (valid for at least 30 days after you left RSA)
  - My invitation letter
  - Certificate of good conduct (polizeiliches Führungszeugnis)
  - Medical certificate
  - X-rays of your chest (South Africa is an emigration country, and the problem exists that people with tuberculosis from other African countries cross the border)
  - You have to show that you have enough money (bank account statement)
  - Medical aid that is valid for RSA
  - Return ticket
  - Fee of 52 Euro

It takes about 4 weeks to get the visa after you submitted everything. In South Africa, extensions of your visa are only possible in Cape Town and in Pretoria at the Department of Home Affairs.

**Crime:** Namaqualand is as safe as Europe. But you have to be careful in Cape Town and any other South African city. Don't walk in unknown areas, especially after dusk. Ask for advice at your backpacker.

**Health:** You should have vaccinations against **polio and tetanus**. If you come in winter/ spring, you should also get a vaccination against the **flue**. Organize this in advance, as in Europe it is often difficult to obtain flue vaccination in spring/summer, which is autumn/ winter in South Africa. You can get the vaccination also here in South Africa.

Goegap is in a desert, one of the healthiest environments of the world. We are far away from the tropics, so there are no tropical diseases. There is no malaria, bilharzias, yellow fever, or risk of hepatitis. There is a mild risk of meningitis transferred by ticks.

To our knowledge the mice do not transfer rabies. But if you are a very anxious person, you might consider vaccination against rabies. I myself and my family do not have vaccination against rabies, and most students do not have it.

The health system in South Africa is well developed and comparable to Europe. Contact your health insurance if you need special cover for going overseas.

**For your own safety and well being:**

- It is a pre-requisite that you have a valid health/travel insurance. Send / email / fax a copy of this **before your arrival** to Dr. C. Schradin. Upon arrival, hand a copy to the research station manager.
  - Make sure the project has current contact details of your next of kin.
- We never had any accident or case of emergency in Goegap and hope it will stay like this. But accidents happened at other projects. **Most dangerous are cars and roads**. This is why we do not allow students to use our cars.

**Indemnity Form:** All field assistants have to complete an indemnity form at arrival in Goegap. This means you will be personally responsible for your stay in Goegap and any accidents, injury or death that might occur in Goegap.

**Equipment:** Springbok has several banks and ATM cards from all major banks in Europe and the USA can be used to withdraw money. To exchange traveler checks takes very long and costs bank fees. Most shops and restaurants accept credit cards, e.g. the Spar supermarket where we do our weekly shopping.

## **Equipment**

You should bring the following:

- Books to read. There is no TV here!
- DVDs to watch on the computer at night (when you are not too tired of walking all day through the field)
- A good torch and a spare torch. Spare bulbs for both of them
- A watch
- Sun cream
- Hat for protection against the sun
- Warm sleeping bag (especially May to October can be very cold!)
- Warm clothing if you come in winter/ spring, i.e. several sweaters. If you come in summer, bring at least one sweater for cold evenings.
- Warm jacket in winter/ spring.
- Long trousers for field work (snakes, thorn bushes!). Students are not allowed to conduct field work in shorts!
- Light rainwear for spring/ winter.
- Binoculars, if you have some. Otherwise you can get a pair from the research station.
- Good shoes for work in the field.
- Otherwise bring light cloths. Long trousers will protect you against snakes, long shirts against the sun
- You can bring your own laptop, which would make you independent of the two computers we have at the research station.

**Work schedule:** Working times have to be flexible and adapted to the situation in the field and the different scientific projects. Normally we work from sunrise (between 5.30 and 7.30, depending on season) until 1-2 hours after sundown (19.00-22.00). Normally we work 5 days a week in the field. One day is used to go shopping in Springbok, to clean the research station and to clean the mouse cages (not counted as working day). One day a week (normally Sunday) is free. If it rains during the week such that work is impossible, we might instead work on Sunday. Also, sometimes it is necessary to work 7 days a week.

**Research Station Duty:** Apart from the scientific work there are duties of field assistants to help with the maintenance of the research station. Each field assistant will be instructed on arrival either by the research station manager or by the field assistant who did the task before. Most tasks are not pleasant, but it is important that they are done in a reliable and accurate way. They are teaching field assistants how a research station away from any town and its comforts is run. If you are interested in the function / importance of any of the tasks that is not yours, ask the field assistant in charge (e.g. if you want to know how the solar system works, how the water system works, etc.). Research station duties include:

- Daily check solar panels and batteries
- Reminder to defreeze in the fridge the night before the braai.
- Weekly check and fill up water tank
- Weekly cleaning cages
- Weekly cleaning research station
- Weekly cleaning car
- Check and replace gas bottles
- Monthly cleaning of traps

**Essays by field assistants:** The research station in Goegap publishes an email newsletter four times a year. It is expected that all field assistants contribute to this newsletter. For a period of 2-3 months, two essays are expected. One essay should be about your personal experiences in Goegap, the other one should either be a possible title story of the newsletter or a portrait.

**Reading list:** The reading list for volunteers can be found at [http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_3\\_5.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_3_5.htm). To prepare yourself for your stay in Goegap, we suggest you explore our website [www.strippedmouse.com](http://www.strippedmouse.com) (also available in German; use the button on the to right of each page). We especially suggest the page about the striped mouse ([http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_1.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_1.htm)) and the research station ([http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_2\\_2.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_2_2.htm)) as well as previous issue of our email-newsletter ([http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_6.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_6.htm)).

You can find more scientific literature at [http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_2\\_1.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_2_1.htm) and several popular science articles in German at [http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_2\\_3\\_de.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_2_3_de.htm).

Last but not least, you can watch 45min video about the striped mouse in Goegap on youtube:

In the Land of Mice at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP\\_043qy9Qk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP_043qy9Qk) (English).

Im Land der Mäuse at <http://www.youtube.com/user/schradin#p/u/10/RcgumzXFK-8>

**More information under: [www.strippedmouse.com](http://www.strippedmouse.com)**

**And our email newsletter, available at:**

**[http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1\\_6.htm](http://www.strippedmouse.com/site1_6.htm)**

**For further questions contact me via email:**

**[carsten.schradin@ieu.uzh.ch](mailto:carsten.schradin@ieu.uzh.ch)**