

# Zenya's Trip

## TO CAPE CROSS



*A story based on Cape Cross fur seal colony  
in Namibia*

Danielle Bruckert and Zehnya Bruckert

# Zenya's Trip

Dedicated to all those involved in marine research and nature conservation.

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This is Frost.  
Frost is a fur seal.



Frost lives in a seal colony,  
in Cape Cross, Namibia.



Cape Cross is one of the **biggest** seal **colonies** in the world.



Cape Cross is on Namibia's West Coast, in an area called the Skeleton Coast.



We drove by car from **Windhoek**  
**Namibia's capital city.**



It was four  
hours drive,  
over the  
**escarpment**  
and through  
the **desert.**



It is **about** one hour drive from **Swakopmund**, where we **stayed** in a **holiday apartment**, by the beach.





In Cape Cross there are **many** seal **families**. Seal pups are born once a year at **about** the same time.

That means all the seal pups will have their **birthdays almost** at the same time!

I wish I could be **invited** to the **party**.



Frost was born in **December**, with all the new seal pups.  
She was **only** two months old when we first saw her in **early February**.



When the pups are born, the **mother** seals stay on shore to look **after** them. But **after** some time, the **mothers** have to leave them to **gather** food. **Many** young pups stay all **alone**.



The **Nature Conservation** department of **Namibia** has an **office** at the seal **colony** to help look **after** Frost and her friends.



Through the **Nature Conservation** department, many people come to visit Frost and her friends and learn more **about** seals.





When Frost is **older** she will swim in the **Atlantic Ocean**, **frolicking** with her friends in the waves.



Near by there is a lovely resort, Cape Cross Lodge, where you can have lunch or stay for the night.



At the restaurant we ate fresh Atlantic oysters, fried calamari, and the line fish of the day, Kabeljou.





Our non-fish eating friends enjoyed the Namibian specialty, garlic snails, and a big juicy steak.



Of course we all had ice cream for dessert.



On the beach **outside** we saw lots of shells: Like these **muscle** shells; clam shells; and crab shells.





On the way back to **Swakopmund** we saw a **shipwreck**.



**Namibia's** West Coast has lots of **shipwrecks**, **because** of the poor **weather** and rough seas.

After our trip we wrote to **Uncle Matt** in New **Zealand**, to ask if he knew any seals.

(Since there are lots of seals in New **Zealand** :-).



**Uncle Matt** said he saw **Homer the Seal**\*

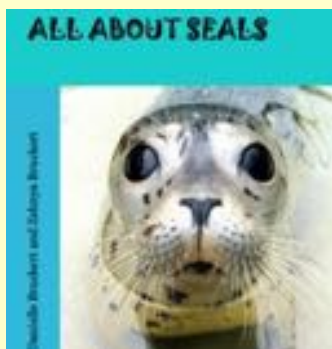
\*Homer the Seal is an elephant seal from Gisborne, New Zealand, who liked crushing cars.

They had lunch **together**, but he left him with a large bill for **sushi**. (I guess a 4500kg Seal eats quite a lot of fish.....)

Then we looked up lots of interesting facts about fur seals on Wikipedia.

### •Did you know?

- There are currently 9 species of Fur Seal identified, one from the northern hemisphere, and 8 from the southern hemisphere.
  - Northern fur seals are slightly larger than their southern counterparts.
- Fur seals' distinctive traits are their fur, and their ears. Only fur seals and sea lions have ears, amongst pinapeds.
- Fur seals gather at specific locations during summer breeding season. Many of these locations are permanent colonies, where seals return to when on land.
- Female fur seals, (cows), give birth during the breeding season, then mate again just a few days later. The following year they return to give birth to a single pup after a nearly yearlong pregnancy, and mate once again to continue the cycle.
  - Fur seals were hunted to almost extinction during the 19th century, some populations have not rebounded, others are now thriving.
- Seal culling in Namibia and many other countries attracts great controversy from animal rights groups. The Namibian government maintains it is necessary for balance in the ecosystem, and invites animal rights groups to propose more humane methods of culling if they feel it is necessary.



Find out more about seals  
in **All About Seals**,  
A non-fiction free book by  
the creators.

# Seal Classifications (Wikipedia)



Cladogram showing relationships among the pinnipeds, combining several phylogenetic analyses.

## Seal Glossary

Carnivora/ Carnivoran	A family of mammals primarily meat eating. Although sometimes commonly called carnivores, this is misleading.
carnivore	Meat eating organism, organism that primarily exists on meat.
extant	Living species (opposite to extinct).
extinct	A species that no longer has living members.
odobenidae	Walrus.
otariids	Fur seals and sea lions.
phocids	Earless or true seals.
ton	1000 kilograms
vibrissae	Whiskers found on most mammals, characterised by their large size, and specialised for tactile sensing

## Seal Facts at a Glance

Size	Largest recorded seal: 7m, 5 ton, male southern elephant seal, average size around 5m, 3 ton; Smallest adult seal: approx 1m, 45kg, Baikal seal
Order, Class	Mammalia, Carnivora
Diet	Mainly fish, marine invertebrates, and molluscs, some are known to eat small vertebrates such as penguins and other seals.
Predators	Killer whales, sharks, man
Habitat	Mostly in water, coming on land only to breed, rest, and escape from predators. Seals can sleep in water, but not fully, one part of their brain remains awake for survival.

A special thanks to Elemenno Seal for the inspiration for this book.

Zehnya also thanks Frost, Squishy, Snowflake, Angry Seal, Speedy Seal, Disco Seal, Oscar, and Buttercup.



Thanks to BytheBeach, for the holiday  
apartment Swanlamer 12

<http://www.swakopseaviewapartment.com>

## About the making of this book

This book was a project between myself, Danielle, and my daughter, Zehnya, age 6.

**Danielle:** seals are Zehnya's favourite animal. When we were in Namibia we visited Cape Cross. I suggested we make a book about the trip for her homework project, and she agreed.

**Zehnya:** I put the pictures in the book using the mouse, "Insert, Picture, From File, and then clicked on the pictures I wanted for each page.

**Danielle/Zehnya:** We worked on the text together to see what we could say. We read the book together to decide what was good and what needed to be changed.

**Danielle:** I completed a final edit of the book, to make the text and images read well, and added the information at the beginning and end.

**Danielle/Zehnya:** Finally we read through the book again to check the content.

**Danielle:** I did another final editorial check, then I created a pdf file from the book we'd made, and uploaded it to <http://www.freekidsbooks.org>.

**Danielle:** As a project for my own research, I converted the book into the Open Dyslexic font, and changed some of the text colours on the multi-syllable words, I am trying to find out if this makes it easier for those learning to read. If you have any comments about this, please contact me, or help my by completing this survey.

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# About the Publisher

## Danielle Bruckert

Danielle is a New Zealander living abroad, who now calls Africa home. Her chosen career is as a professional pilot, she has worked in a variety of aviation capacities from instruction to airline flying, and is the author of several aviation text books.

Danielle started writing children's books as a creative outlet from the stress of her 'day job'. She loves writing picture books, as she finds it is the most imaginative and inspiring reading age, and finds it fun and rewarding to write creative stories to match her children's learning curve.

Because of her passion for children's literature, and the role it plays in literacy standards, all of Danielle's books are available free in ebook versions. This also led Danielle to create the website 'Free Kids Books' to share good quality free children's books with others, contributing to improved literacy standards world wide.

Zehnya is 7 years old and is in Grade 3 at an international school in the UAE. She has a big toy seal called Elemen.

To contact the author write to [danielle@redskyventures.org](mailto:danielle@redskyventures.org)

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