

# 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 15 — Kunene



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**KUNENE**, formerly known also as Nourse, a river of South-West Africa, with a length of over 700 m., mainly within Portuguese territory, but in its lower course forming the boundary between Angola and German South-West Africa. The upper basin of the river lies on the inner versant of the high plateau region which runs southwards from Bihe parallel to the coast, forming in places ranges of mountains which give rise to many streams running south to swell the Kunene. The main stream rises in  $12^{\circ} 30'$  S. and about 160 m. in a direct line from the sea at Benguella, runs generally from north to south through four degrees of latitude, but finally flows west to the sea through a break in the outer highlands. A little south of  $16^{\circ}$  S. it receives the Kulonga from the east, and in about  $16^{\circ} 50'$  the Kakulovar from the west. The Kakulovar has its sources in the Serra da Chella and other ranges of the Humpata district behind Mossamedes, but, though the longest tributary of the Kunene, is but a small river in its lower course, which traverses the arid region comprised within the lower basin of the Kunene. Between the mouths of the Kulonga and Kakulovar the Kunene traverses a swampy plain, inundated during high water, and containing several small lakes at other parts of the year. From this swampy region divergent branches run S.E. They are mainly intermittent, but the Kwamatu, which leaves the main stream in about  $15^{\circ} 8'$  E.,  $17^{\circ} 15'$  S., flows into a large marsh or lake called Etosha, which occupies a depression in the inner table-land about 3400 ft. above sea-level. From the S.E. end of the

Etosha lake streams issue in the direction of the Okavango, to which in times of great flood they contribute some water. From the existence of this divergent system it is conjectured that at one time the Kunene formed part of the Okavango, and thus of the Zambezi basin. (See [NGAMI.](#))

On leaving the swampy region the Kunene turns decidedly to the west, and descends to the coast plain by a number of cataracts, of which the chief (in 17° 25' S., 14° 20' E.) has a fall of 330 ft. The river becomes smaller in volume as it passes through an almost desert region with little or no vegetation. The stream is sometimes shallow and fordable, at others confined to a narrow rocky channel. Near the sea the Kunene traverses a region of sand-hills, its mouth being completely blocked at low water. The river enters the Atlantic in 17° 18' S., 11° 40' E. There are indications that a former branch of the river once entered a bay to the south.



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