



Linear Dunes, Caprivi Strip Namibia

In far northeastern Namibia, there is a skinny stretch of land sandwiched between Angola, Botswana, and Zambia. The Caprivi Strip receives about 600 millimeters (24 inches) of rainfall each year. That's not a lot of rain—it tends to come in bursts that cause periodic floods—and it is a stark contrast to the much drier parts of the country.

Here the land is striped, as if a giant had dragged a rake over the landscape. Those stripes are linear dunes, and some of them are more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) long. Dunes generally form from wind-blown sand over many years, and one characteristic of linear dunes is that they tend to remain intact long after the dry conditions cease. And because they don't migrate like marching dunes, linear dunes preserve dirt and rocks that geologists can later use to understand past conditions.