

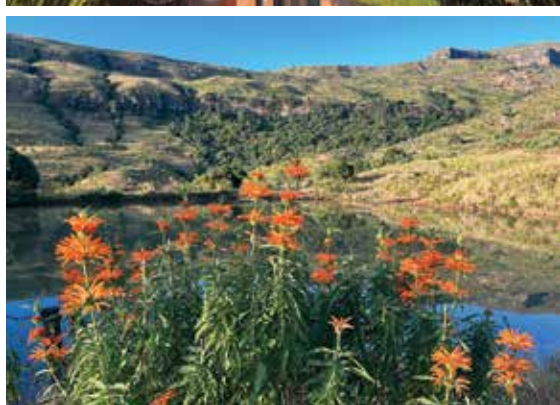


The CAVERN

EST. 1941

NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG - KZN





NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG NATURE RESERVE

In 2018, a few neighbours in the Putterill valley came up with a dream of combining their properties into a joint nature reserve. That dream evolved into an idea, from which grew a plan, and finally, as of the 18th of April 2024, a reality. Comprising 6,500 hectares, the Northern Drakensberg Nature Reserve (NDNR) is KwaZulu-Natal's newest nature reserve, of which The Cavern & Sungubala are founding members. This is one of the most significant conservation achievements across southern Africa in recent years.

The establishment of the NDNR is a truly collaborative effort, representing the sweat and toil of various actors, ranging from small private landowners all the way to the World Wildlife Fund. It also represents a giant leap ahead in the consolidation of various tracts of the Drakensberg into a single conservation corridor, linking Sterkfontein Nature Reserve in the Free State with the uKhahlamba/Maloti Drakensberg Park in KwaZulu-Natal, the latter also being a World Heritage Site.

Broadly speaking, the purposes of the NDNR are to (i) conserve animal species and habitats, (ii) enhance regional water security, (iii) preserve the area's rich cultural heritage, and (iv) further socio-economic upliftment in the local community.

On the conservation front, the NDNR is home to several species of antelope (including the majestic Eland) and other mammals, a rich diversity of bird life (including the extremely rare bearded vulture), and even a few predators, such as spotted hyena and the elusive leopard. The story of the region's Eland population is particularly symbolic. The "last Eland" in the area was supposedly shot in the late 1940s because the old bull had become a nuisance on the nearby Tugela Gorge walking path. Years later, the species was reintroduced in the Sterkfontein Nature Reserve, and since then, the population has steadily recovered. Today, free-roaming herds of over a hundred and fifty Eland can be seen in the NDNR. That is the power of conservation. It is also the reason the members of the NDNR chose this majestic creature as the reserve's logo, which is a copy of an original bushmen painting of an Eland found in Cannibal Cavern, situated within the reserve. The painting itself, like the bushmen culture that produced it, has unfortunately faded away over time. As it does so, it reminds us of the importance of preserving and conserving.

Equally worthy of protection as these animals themselves is the environment that they call home. The NDNR is comprised of sweeping mountain ranges (in fact, it is one of the largest Mountain Protected Areas in southern Africa), lush grasslands, and crystal-clear streams, and rivers. Grasslands across South Africa are under threat, with fewer than 3% of grassland biomes in the country currently being under formal conservation. These grasslands are vital for biodiversity, and also serve to absorb the high levels of rainfall which the eastern part of South Africa enjoys. Additionally, the Drakensberg is southern Africa's principal water production area, and ensuring the conservation of clean flowing water in this area is crucial to the habitability of this entire southern portion of the African continent.

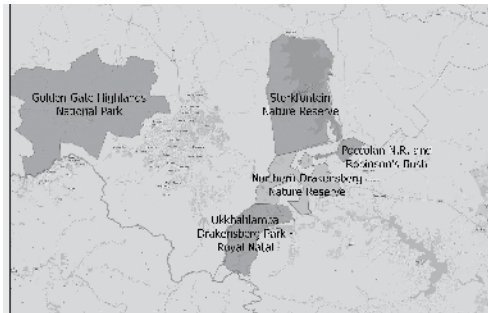
The NDNR aims to place an emphasis on water security, as most of the water which flows through the reserve eventually feeds the Tugela river, the vein of KwaZulu-Natal, carrying life to millions of people across the province.

Unique to the NDNR is its fusion of natural beauty and conservation goals with its rich historical and cultural significance. Ancient human settlement in the area is evinced by bushmen rock art to be found within the NDNR. Although some Drakensberg rock art is modern (dating only back to the 19th century), there is also rock art in the region which dates back over three thousand years. Conserving this space therefore also entails conserving one of South Africa's (and the world's) rich sources of ancient art and spirituality.

Finally, the NDNR is established for the benefit of those not only within the reserve but also beyond its borders. As a major tourist destination in the area, members of the NDNR constitute key actors in employment and socio-economic upliftment for an otherwise poor part of the country. Members of the local community can look forward not only to jobs and incomes, but also to being part of a collaborative conservation initiative, having the opportunity to provide input which will filter into the management and running of the reserve itself.

Like the dirt roads of the Northern Drakensberg, the road ahead for the NDNR also has its bumps and potholes. Poaching of game (especially of species recognised as endangered) poses a major challenge, as does arson, soil erosion, and alien vegetation control. However, as with those testy dirt tracks, with enough determination the destination can still be reached. And what is that destination? The preservation of the natural, cultural, and economic resources in this pristine part of the country in perpetuity, not only for the enjoyment and upliftment of ourselves, but for all generations to come.

Liam King



The Cavern is a significant conservation site with outstanding natural features, and the Nature Trail has been constructed to present most of these to visitors. It begins near the 70s block and follows well-used paths that link points of particular interest. Thirty information boards have been placed along the trail, illustrating each feature, and telling the story about them.

The adventure begins beneath probably the biggest acacias in the Berg. From here there is a good view of Fern Forest which owes its existence to climate changes within the last million years. Above it can be seen the sandstone and basalt layers that make up the higher Berg. These date back to the break-up of Gondwana.

Once inside the forest look for endemic – found only in South Africa – birds such as the Chorister Robin-chat, Cape White-eye and Bush Blackcap. In shady places in the undergrowth are plants now famous as house plants throughout the world – Impatiens, Begonia and Streptocarpus. Above them tower forest giants – Cape Ash, the rare Coffee Pear, and the biggest Cabbage Tree in Africa. Once there were big Yellowwoods too, nineteenth century saw-pits mark the spots where they were felled. Along the path are traces – footprints and droppings – of elusive or nocturnal animals, Porcupine, Caracal, Serval and our resident Leopard.

Once out of the forest meet a whole new world. Mountain grassland is famous for its diversity of spring flowers, most of which bloom shortly after a fire. Among them are Proteas, South Africa's signature plants. Sunbirds and sugarbirds attend their flowers. Soaring high overhead might be the endemic Cape Vulture, or even the legendary Lammergeier – famous for its habit of dropping bones onto a favourite rock. Herds of Eland pass through, or on a steep hillside a family group of Mountain Reedbuck might be seen. Rival groups of Chacma Baboons bark at each other.

Along the stream look for three special birds that are found only where there is clean flowing water, the Black Duck, Mountain Wagtail and Half-collared Kingfisher. Crunched-up crab remains reveal the presence of the Cape Clawless Otter and Water Mongoose.

Allow two hours to make the most of this trail.



THE CAVERN NATURE TRAIL

There are many rock paintings in the Drakensberg painted by the Bushmen. We are very fortunate to have these artworks as they represent an ancient culture. No-one knows exactly how old the paintings are, but the newest are about 130 years old and the oldest are probably more than 500 years old. The paintings are all on Cave Sandstone, mostly under waterproof overhangs where the paintings are protected from the worst of the sun, wind and rain.

These paintings give us a sort of picture-book of the past history and tell us a lot about how these people lived and what they considered important. Most of the paintings are of animals, and as the pictures are very good, we can tell what animals lived in the Berg at that time, even though many are now extinct. For example there are pictures of elephants which no longer occur here, but independent proof exists that they once did because 200-year-old bones have been found at Giant's Castle. Lions, Rhinos and Antbears are also in some of their pictures, and these would have migrated from the lowlands during summer and back down when winter arrived. This was in an age when there were no roads or fences to stop them. The Eland were drawn big and important and this tells us how much the Eland meant to the Bushmen. This was an important food source and there are more pictures of Eland than any other animal. The Eland was always drawn with the neck and shoulders very big and the legs thin and small, to emphasise the important features, just as cartoons do. Men were also drawn in this way, with thin little legs, arms and bodies and big fat buttocks; the more fat stored the stronger the man.

We know from their paintings that they fought a lot. Many very realistic battle scenes are painted, with arrows flying about and dead and dying people, some running away with others chasing them. They probably fought over ownership of the best caves in the area. A classic battle between two Bushmen tribes can be seen at Lone Rock.

The materials used in the paints are all local. Blood, rock or soil rich in rust (ferric oxide) provide reddish brown. Variations in the redness can be obtained by heating the pigment in a fire. Charcoal provides the black, while white is created with bird droppings or clay. Other colours are rare. They used melted fat, beeswax or egg-white to mix with the pigments to make the paint, but they must have had a secret ingredient that made the paint last so long. They painted the white parts of the picture first, and then the other colours. They probably used the hair of the Black Wildebeest mane or tail attached to a reed as a paintbrush, and a pointed bone when they needed fine definition.

Sadly the Bushmen no longer inhabit the berg foothills and their art will not last forever, so it is up to us to preserve it as long as possible.



Guide to Activities & Hikes



AMPHITHEATRE WORLD HERITAGE SITE The spectacular Drakensberg Mountains took their place on the international stage with the proclaiming of the 243 000 hectare Drakensberg Park in December 2002 as a World Heritage Site. Of all the World Heritage Sites only 22 have qualified, as the Drakensberg has done, on both cultural and natural criteria – a truly great achievement. International recognition was granted in acknowledgement of the area's unique richness of biological diversity, its endemic and endangered species, its natural beauty and its masterpieces of human creative genius in the form of Bushman rock paintings – the world's greatest collection of rock art.

The area is home to over 2153 species of plants and 298 species of birds with a large number being endemic. There are 48 species of mammal to be found.

The variety of activities and attractions at The Cavern allow for something for everyone. For those wanting to explore the great outdoors, Bushman paintings, age-old rock carvings, an interesting cannibal history and hours of hiking and mountain-biking trails are available. For parents with young toddlers and children, there's the playroom staffed with nannies, safe and exciting playgrounds and a range of games and fun activities. This is a haven for kids keen on fishing, horse riding, tennis, swimming and exploring. For adults, bowls, tennis and croquet are firm favourites and the spa, overlooking a majestic canopy of ancient ferns, offers a wide range of massages and relaxation treatments. There are dozens of board games for family time by the fireside and a quiet lounge stocked with books for gentle afternoons spent drinking tea and nibbling on The Cavern's infamous Cavern Crunchies.

GUIDED MORNING WALKS Every morning at 09h15 and 09h30 a guided walk to one of the many beauty spots near The Cavern leaves from the front lawn. The physical demand on the hiker varies from one person to another. The grades listed have been prepared by active hikers, so check your fitness against the grade before setting off. Another popular activity is the Breakfast Walk, ending off with a scrumptious breakfast, overlooking the picturesque Cavern Valley.

The notice board outside the Quiet Lounge has details of all walks and activities.

PLEASE SIGN THE LIST BELOW THE NOTICE BOARD TO ENABLE US TO CATER FOR TEAS AND THE LEGENDARY CAVERN CRUNCHIES.

- S Grade – Short(ish) Stroll** Strolls suit anybody who can walk. They last one to two hours at a very gentle pace.
- Strolls at The Cavern include:
 Leopard's Loop Porcupine Trail Cowslip Falls Trail
 Baboon Trail Top Dams Trail
- E Grade – Terrain Easy** These walks suit people who wish to enjoy the hills and mountains without much strenuous activity and at a slower pace. Expect three hours' walking with a maximum of approximately four hours.
- Easy terrain hikes at The Cavern include:
 Nature Trail (short walk) Reedbuck Trail (short walk)
 Lone Rock (intermediate walk) Silent Woman (intermediate walk)
 Jim's Cave (intermediate walk)
- D Grade – Terrain Moderate** These are reasonably energetic walks on hills rather than mountains, but nothing too strenuous, although some paths may be rough. Average walking time will be less than five hours.
- Cannibal Cavern Surprise Ridge Jackal Hill
- D+ Grade – Terrain Moderate** Expect energetic hikes among hills and relatively easy mountain walking. Walking time will rarely exceed six hours.
- Camel's Hump Echo Cave Sugar Loaf
 Tugela Gorge (all day)
- C Grade – Terrain Moderate to Hard** Hiking time will be about six hours.
- Hlolela
- C+ Grade – Terrain Hard** Trekking might be strenuous, offering excitement and challenges, with up to seven hours walking and occasional scrambling. Chain ladders may be encountered on some routes.
- The Diamond Metsi Matso Dam
 National Park Grotto Goodoo Falls
- B Grade – Terrain Hard to Severe** Hard walking and scrambling, up to an average of eight hours. Please note from trekking descriptions the altitudes that are likely to be reached. We advise that previous experience of hard mountain walking is essential. Chain ladders may be encountered, so a good head for heights is also necessary. Some routes pass through snow.
- The Cavern's Big5Hike Amphitheatre Ascent

Day hikes can be organised on request. All-day hikes include the Amphitheatre Ascent, Tugela Gorge, The Cavern's Big5Hike and other beautiful destinations.

We must stress that these walks and climbs are not intended as tests of endurance or time trials. To appreciate the real splendour of the mountains, one needs time to absorb them and that calls for frequent stops along the way.

Most 'disastrous' walks are caused by some members of the party walking too fast and thereby putting pressure on the not so young and fit. Our experience has proved that to enjoy the outing we need to slow the party down – on holiday time is not of the essence.

WARNING: Guests who wish to walk without a guide, please sign the register at Reception. Maps and the trail app are available from both Activities Desk and Reception.

REMEMBER ON ALL HIKES:

- a jacket
- suitable footwear
- water
- sunscreen and a hat

LONE ROCK **GRADE:** E **TIME:** 2½ hours.
DISTANCE: 4 km return.
TERRAIN: Undulating path with moderate slopes.
 Best done with a hotel guide, as it is easy to miss the paintings. Take the Top Gate out of The Cavern, turn right past the solar field and dams, continuing up the Sugar Loaf path. Go up another small rise. As the path flattens out look for the Eland Contour. Go to the left and this path takes you to the paintings on the north side of the orange rock. These paintings are deteriorating with age; please do not touch them, nor splash them with water.

CANNIBAL CAVERN **GRADE:** D **TIME:** 4-5 hours.
DISTANCE: 6 km return, or 7 km round trip.
TERRAIN: Undulating with a few steep sections.
 Top Gate is the starting point. Take the path right, leading past the solar field. Keep left, going uphill, past Top Dams. Go through a gate and bear left towards TV Ridge. From the aerial the contour path begins to rise. Look out for Ground Woodpeckers sunning on the rocks. After walking alongside a fence, go through a gate on the right. The path goes through some small forest patches, look out for the rare and endemic Berg Bamboo.



Many of the large boulders seen along the route are home to isolated large trees, and even miniature forests. A bare rock may seem an austere home, but has several advantages. First it is a refuge from fire, and nearly all “rock” trees are otherwise found only in the forest where fire rarely penetrates. Second, a rock acts as a heat store, soaking up sunshine by day, and slowly releasing warmth at night, keeping frost at bay. Third, all the rain that falls on it is channelled to one or a few spots – exactly where the trees are rooted. And there is plenty of soil, because most of these rocks are not outcrops, but boulders that have rolled down from higher up, and are sitting on a full soil profile. How did the trees get there? Any passing bird perches on the highest available point. In its droppings will be seeds from fruits eaten at a previous pit-stop. The seed will automatically be washed into the best germination spot by the next rain. Once it has matured and begins fruiting it becomes an added attraction for yet more birds to visit.

Cannibal Cavern was home to Bushmen in earlier times, and two very faded paintings still exist. Since then it allegedly housed real cannibals early in the nineteenth century. During King Shaka’s wars of expansion, refugees from losing tribes fled south and west, often dispossessing even weaker tribes on the way. Cannibal Cavern became the last refuge, where a few survivors could hold out. They dared not reveal their hiding place, so there were hard times with little food. When starvation set in the only choice was to eat their own dead. This led to their tribal name of amaZizi – amazimo is the Zulu word for cannibal. When the troubles finally ended, they moved down to the flat lands below to resume normal life. Many people working at The Cavern today are seventh generation descendants of the early tribes. A stone shepherd’s dwelling has been built near the cave entrance. A permanent trickle of water at the back of the cave made it a tenable home, and provides a welcome drink for walkers today.

SUGAR LOAF

GRADE: D+ TIME: 4 hours.
 DISTANCE: 7 km return.
 TERRAIN: Undulating path with a few steep slopes and fairly easy scrambles.
 Top Gate is the starting point. Take the path right, leading past the solar field. In spring, particularly after a burn, clumps of *Barleria monticola*, a lovely mauve flower, erupt out of the blackness. Keep left, going uphill, where the path forks. Do not turn left to the dams and the aerial, but keep straight on towards the cliff face. This path leads to Sugar Loaf Gap. Once on top of the plateau take note of any marker that identifies the route back; many a walker has had difficulty in finding the exact spot on the return. Now go left, path not well marked, to the Sugar Loaf summit. Water may be difficult to locate, so make sure to carry some. Return the same way.

THE SILENT WOMAN

GRADE: E TIME: 3 hours.
 DISTANCE: 7 km return.
 TERRAIN: Undulating path with moderate slopes and gradients.

STARTING POINT: Take Fern Forest path and at the cairn of rocks turn right. At the fork in the path on top of the ridge, bear left towards the Sungubala Valley. The path leads you to Sungubala. Before the camp bear right into the valley. Approximately 1 km from the turn cross a small stream. 30m further on turn off to your right at the gate. Follow this path bearing down into a grove of Yellowwood trees and the stream. Once amongst the trees there is a large rock face to your right. Go around to the back of this huge rock to see the Rock Carving of the Silent Woman which faces into the opposite cliff. Come back the same way.

This carving was done by the late William Chalmers in the early 1950s. He was a poet and wanderer who found himself in this area in search of Bushman artefacts. Having fallen ill he was taken in by the Coventry family of the farm Sungubala, who nursed him back to health.

SURPRISE RIDGE

GRADE: D TIME: 3½ hours.
 DISTANCE: 7 km return or circular route.
 TERRAIN: Undulating path with moderate slopes and gradients.

The ridge holds two surprises. The first is that on approaching the ridge one finds that the real ridge is further on. The second is the magnificent view of the main Berg, from Cathkin to Cathedral and the Amphitheatre that suddenly appears. Top Gate is the starting point. Proceed to the TV aerial as for the start of the Cannibal Cavern walk. Then follow the “contour” path, without taking the right turn to Cannibal Cavern. At the confluence of the streams take the path easing left. Subsequently it takes several zig-zags on the ascent.

An alternative route is to go left after Top Gate. Almost immediately, under the trees, look for a white ground orchid, *Disperis fanniniae*, that flowers in summer. The path then goes past Cowslip Falls – named not after a pretty flower; but after a cow that slipped to its doom on a dark and stormy night. Beyond Cowslip Dam the path forks. Go left, across the little bridge. In autumn the area to the right is a mass of orange *Leonotis* flowers, a magnet for sunbirds. There are always a few white flowers among the red; it’s the same species, but lacking the orange pigment, an example of albinism. A little further, also on the right, is a classic specimen of the Red Rock Fig hugging a big boulder. New spring growth flushes brilliant red. The tree never grows any “taller” because every winter frost trims it back. The path will join up with the other route at the confluence of the streams.

ECHO CAVE

GRADE: C+ TIME: 4 hours return.

DISTANCE: 5 km.

TERRAIN: Difficult – steep, slippery and scrambly in places.

The starting point is to follow the directions through the Fern Forest. Upon emerging from the end of the forest take the right fork leading up the hill. This path is well defined, and as it ascends it bears right past an old fence line. Stick to this path, which now ascends steeply. Ignore right turns as you approach the sandstone wall. After a few zig-zags the top of the plateau is reached. A well-earned rest will give sufficient time to enjoy the magnificent views of the Amphitheatre and surrounding mountains. Just before the cliff the path veers to the left, continues in through the trees, and after a short walk reaches the Echo Cave. Be careful crossing the mouth of the cave; the sandstone is very slippery when wet. The cave wall bears impressive black stripes. These are caused by cyanobacteria growing in seepage water.

Return on the same route. An alternative is to go back to the point where you entered the cave, but take the path descending to the right. There are way-marks on the trees. This path is very steep in places, but the trees provide good hand-holds. A strong walking stick is helpful too. After the first stream look out on your left for two very large yellowwood trees; these are hundreds of years old.

Yellowwoods have great historical significance. Because they grow straight, and have wood that is easily worked, they were heavily exploited until the twentieth century for furniture and building timber. Because Echo Cave forest is so remote and steep it was never exploited, which is why it has so many yellow-woods. On the greater time-scale yellowwoods contribute to our knowledge of Earth history. Almost identical species are found on all the southern continents, and even as fossils under Antarctic ice. This points to a common ancestry when all these regions were physically joined. This super continent was Gondwana, and although continental drift has pulled its fragments apart, each still carries some of the original inhabitants. Close to the path you will see a small, delicate



bamboo; it is rare and endemic – found only – in the Berg. Its unique feature is that the leaf veins form a perfect cross-hatch pattern, unlike the parallel veins of other bamboos. Look through a magnifying glass or reversed binoculars. Flowering is rare, only every 40 years or so. Before leaving the forest the path crosses a second stream. Here there are two triangular steel steps anchored into the rock. Use these as the rock is very slippery.

Once the path leaves the forest you will descend towards the Sandstone Quarry. Take the left fork downhill. This leads to a steep stepped descent. From here the way to the hotel is obvious.

The Royal Natal National Park has an interesting history dating back many years. In 1836 while exploring Basutoland, two French missionaries, Arbrousset and Dumas, discovered Mont-Aux-Sources, literally the mountain of sources (of the rivers). In 1908 the idea of establishing a National Park in this area was conceived, and the territory was explored by Senator Frank Churchill, General Wylie, Colonel Dick and Mr W. O. Coventry. Recommendations were put forward, but it was not until 16 September 1916 that the National Park came into being. An advisory committee was appointed to control the park. Shortly afterwards the Natal Provincial Administration purchased the farm "Goodoo", upon which a hostel had already been opened in 1913, and incorporated a small portion of the Upper Tugela Native Trust Land, thus swelling the National Park to its present 20 000 acres. The Advisory Committee was abolished in January 1942, and the park was administered by the Provincial Council until the formation of the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board on the 22 December 1947.

Mr F. O. Williams held the first hostel lease rights on the farm Goodoo that he obtained from Mr W. O. Coventry, the original owner. Mr Coventry became lessee of the whole Park in 1919, and took over the post of Park Superintendent in August 1924 at the grand salary of £5 per month. In 1926 he was succeeded by Otto and Walter Zunkel, who each added their share of buildings and improvements. Mr Alan Short was the next Superintendent, and was in charge when the Royal Family visited the park in May 1947, as a result of which its name changed to "Royal Natal National Park".

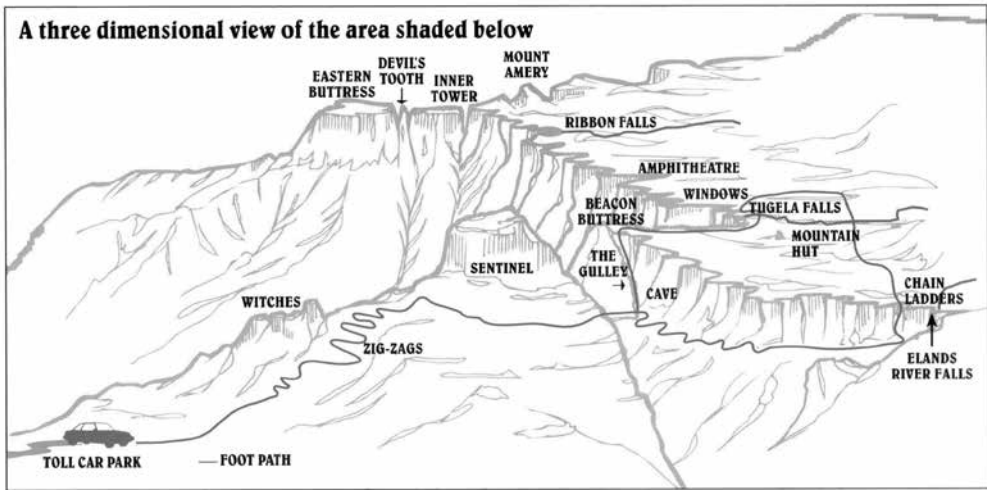
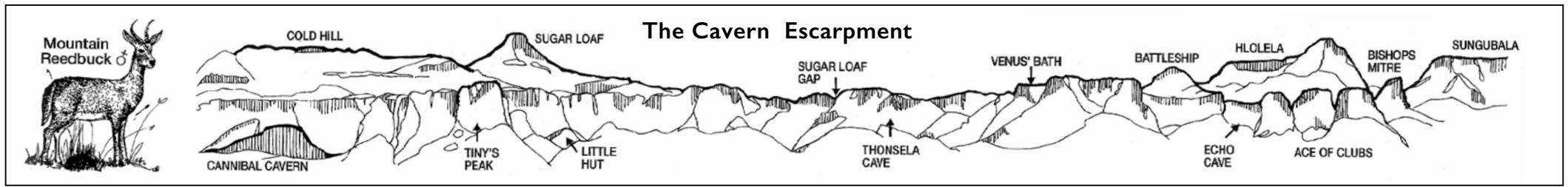
THE CASCADES GRADE: S (Or E if taking the round route).

TIME: 2 hours. (Or 3½ hours round route).

DISTANCE: 5 km return. (8 km round trip).

TERRAIN: Easy path. (Undulating with a few steep parts on the round trip).

From the park gate take the road to the Mahai campsite public car park (only campsite residents may take their car beyond this point). Walk along the road past the campsite. This joins the path to the Queen's Causeway and the Cascades. The arch over the river was built in 1947 for the visit by King George VI and his family. From there a good path leads to McKinlay's Pool where the Gudu stream meets the Mahai. To make a round trip, although the going is very steep, take the path from the boulders near McKinlay's Pool up towards Dooley. It joins the Tiger Falls-Gudu Bush path. Return via Tiger Falls or Gudu Bush.



| Main Peaks | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Amphitheatre.....2930m | Devil's Tooth.....3044m | Policeman's Helmet.....1950m |
| Babangibona.....2320m | Eastern Buttress.....3047m | Sani Pass.....2740m |
| Battleship.....1965m | Giant's Castle.....2930m | Sentinel.....3165m |
| Beacon Buttress.....3122m | Tugela Gorge.....1630m | Sentinel Car Park.....2620m |
| The Bell.....2930m | Hlolela.....2127m | Stoney Pass.....2070m |
| Broome Hill.....2212m | Injasuti Peak.....3070m | Sugar Loaf.....2085m |
| Camel's Hump.....1892m | Maluti Mountains.....3482m | Sugubala Mountain.....2133m |
| Cathedral Peak.....3004m | Montusi Mountain.....1626m | Sugubala Camp.....1550m |
| Cathkin Peak.....3149m | Montusi Lodge.....1350m | Surprise Ridge.....1830m |
| Cavern Berg Resort.....1500m | Mont-Aux-Sources Peak.....3282m | Thabana Ntlenyana.....3482m |
| Champagne Castle Peak.....3377m | Oliviershoek Pass.....1732m | Thendele Chalets.....1500m |
| Cold Hill.....2170m | Plowman's Kop.....2045m | Witsieshoek Mtn Resort.....2135m |

TUGELA GORGE

GRADE: D+

GRADE: C+ if you continue past the Chain Ladder for better views and more excitement.

TIME: 5 hours return.

DISTANCE: 14 km return.

TERRAIN: The path is easy to follow and climbs gradually. The only part that may present difficulties is the last two kilometres in the Gorge itself, which involves boulder hopping and some wading in fast knee-deep water.

The Tugela Gorge hike is one of the finest one-day hikes in South Africa. This walk is a must-do in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg. As well as proper walking boots it may be useful to take along a lighter pair of shoes or sandals to walk through the river to get to the Gorge.

In summer make sure you take a costume for a lovely swim in the rock pools. Drink plenty of liquids – the river water is safe – and take along a hat. Packed lunches can be provided.

This walk begins in the Tugela car park, and is a wonderful experience of “climbing” into the mountains. Follow the signs to “The Gorge”. After 15 minutes you will come to a bridge over the tributary from Devil’s Hoek. Cross the bridge and follow the path to the left. Not long after crossing the intersecting stream from Devil’s Hoek, look out for Policeman’s Helmet on the high ground to the right overlooking Vermaan Valley. Initially the trail is almost flat, allowing you to admire the magnificent scenery to the full. The path winds along, above and parallel to the Tugela River.

The scenery is spectacular, and in spring and summer the valley is a carpet of indigenous flora. The path meanders in and out of lush forests cascading down the hills into the river valley below. Views of the Amphitheatre wall get increasingly more magnificent as you approach the Gorge – the wall rises over 1800 m from the valley floor. The path disappears just before the Gorge proper. The last kilometre through the Gorge entails three boulder crossings of the river – simple enough unless in flood, and takes about an hour. If at all possible it is well worth continuing, but anyone nervous about their knees might do well to stop here. With a little bit of effort the most picturesque scenery in the park is to be seen at the far end.

At this point there are a number of things to look for; the Devil’s Tooth, the Tunnel ahead and the Chain Ladder. Pause for a swim in the crystal clear white sandstone rock pools before attempting the Chain Ladder. At the Tunnel (the path really ends here, but the Tunnel can be bypassed by a scramble up a small chain ladder) the river flows through an impassable rock formation. Some local information suggests that there is a way through here, but don’t attempt it. The mapped trail to the right leads into the Amphitheatre. A boulder hop further up the Tugela for about half a kilometre will reward you with a complete change of scenery at every step.

You may see or hear baboons barking on the high rocks. Three beautiful and locally endemic birds often perch on the rocks too: the Ground Woodpecker, Cape Rock-thrush and Buff-streaked Chat. Greater and Southern Double-collared Sunbirds, and Gurney’s Sugarbird can be seen on the Protea flowers.

Keep an eye out for thunderstorms that quickly brew above the Amphitheatre wall, but above all else remember to enjoy yourself in this special place. The return down trip to the car park is faster than the up trip, so savour the moments you treasure the most.

Before you go:

Check the weather forecast before setting off. Heavy rain causes very dangerous flash floods. Sunblock is especially important on this hike, the terrain seems to focus the sun’s rays on hikers. There is no mountain rescue emergency procedure here, and no recognition of distress signals. So if hiking without a guide it is essential that you advise hotel staff of your route and expected time of return. Then stick to these.

THE AMPHITHEATRE ASCENT (2926m)

GRADE: B

TIME: 6 hours hiking plus 4 hours driving.

DISTANCE: 6-8 km plus 240 km drive.

TERRAIN: Steep at times but on a reasonable path. Narrow ledges to cross with two chain ladders to climb to reach the summit. Need a head for heights.

To spend the day on the summit of the Amphitheatre, in the KZN Drakensberg, must surely be one of the highlights of a visit to South Africa. The breath-taking views and grandeur of the scenery, with the Tugela River plummeting in five massive leaps, 983m into the gorge below, creates an unforgettable experience. In the distance are the rolling Midlands of KZN, mostly grassland, with forest strips along some of the rivers.

The Amphitheatre also has a dramatic history. Once it lay at the centre of the super-continent Gondwana. Then, 140 million years ago, the greatest lava flow of all time erupted here, solidifying into basalt. This same volcanism fractured Gondwana, and continental drift carried Antarctica and Australia away, leaving Africa with brand new coastline only 100 km from the Amphitheatre. Since then, erosion has cut back to the Drakensberg, where the last of the Gondwana landscape remains. The “dragon’s teeth” appearance of the Berg from below is due to the different speeds with which the rivers cut back into the Amphitheatre face. The actual top is relatively flat.

From the Sentinel car park a broad path leads up the looming northern flank of the Sentinel (3165 m). At this altitude grasses, wild flowers and the Lammergeier flourish. The path leads to the base of the Sentinel. Peer over the edge to the left and see the Tugela Gorge far below in the Royal Natal National Park. Due east lies the Devil’s Tooth, a completely isolated pinnacle of rock, between the Eastern Buttress (3047 m) and the Inner Tower (3044 m). Enjoy this spectacular view before the path follows a contour to the right round the back of the Sentinel and Beacon Buttress (3121 m) to the famous ‘Chain Ladder’. This mildly intimidating structure, two ladders of 25 m and 15 m, allows easy access to the Amphitheatre plateau above. Those with faint hearts can ascend or descend via the steep Gully between the Sentinel and Beacon Buttress.

From the top of the Chain Ladder the edge of the Escarpment lies 2 km to the east. The best position from which to appreciate the magnificent views is some way to the south of the waterfall itself at the Window Crevice. From the top of the Chain Ladder follow the path along the stream for 500 m then turn to the southeast and follow the rising slope to the top of Crows Nest Ridge and to the edge of the Escarpment and the Window Crevice. Time does not permit you to stay too long at the Window Crevice.

Head north down the ridge to the top of the Tugela Falls for lunch. It's difficult to convey the fear of the being so close to the edge with such a huge drop below. Try not to worry, as the rocks have not moved yet, so sit back and admire the view.

After lunch and some refreshments the walk back to the car park should be started by 15h00. One has the choice of descending either by the Chain Ladder or the Gully between the Beacon Buttress and the Sentinel. The gully is steep and full of small, loose rocks and should not be attempted in wet conditions. The Gully path leads back to the contour path, and then to the car park.

Before you go:

Hiking in this area demands some preparation. Always wear sound shoes or boots. Be aware that this area is subject to rapid changes of weather in all seasons. Always take waterproof clothing and something warm even if you are roasting in the car park below. It has been known to hail and snow in summer at high altitude. At this height pay heed to the fact that exercise is more tiring – the air is much thinner – and that one dehydrates quickly.

Park fees and charges:

There is a small toll road fee and a park entrance fee per person. A guide can be hired from the Cavern for the day.



OLIVIERSHOEK PASS (1750 m)

TIME: 1½ hours

DISTANCE: 60 km return.

Go to the main Harrismith-Bergville road (R74), turn left up the pass. From the view point at the top of the pass look down onto the Kilburn Dam below, and the Woodstock Dam in the distance. These storage dams supply water to the Drakensberg Tugela/Vaal system. Initially water is pumped over the escarpment towards the Vaal using surplus coal-fired electricity. It is then stored in the Driekloof Dam, just behind you. But when the demand for electricity exceeds supply, some of the water is then released back down the escarpment into the Tugela to generate electricity for the national grid. As well as electricity this system also serves Gauteng with essential water from the Drakensberg catchment. Water from the Sterkfontein Dam gravitates down natural river courses to the Vaal Dam.

RETIEFKLIP AND VOORTREKKERPAS

TIME: 1½ hours.

DISTANCE: 80 km return.

SCENIC AND HISTORICAL DRIVE

Set off up the Oliviershoek Pass. After about 5 km from the top of the pass, take the right turn to Retief Pass. The road becomes gravel. After a short distance turn right to the Voortrekkerpas. This is where Piet Retief and his advance party trekked down the Escarpment into Natal. At the pass there is a trail following the wagon tracks along the route followed by the Voortrekkers. There is a monument of a barefooted woman walking away from Natal. This is a tribute to Susanna Smit, sister of Gert Maritz, who declared she would rather 'trek' barefoot over the Berg than live in Natal under British rule. The pass and monument are on private land. No entry permit is required, but please respect the landowner's rights.

AMPHITHEATRE

TIME: 4 hours.

DISTANCE: 240 km return. 4 x 4 REQUIRED.

VERY SCENIC DRIVE & OPTIONAL SENSATIONAL HIKE.

This is an interesting and scenic trip to an altitude of 2500 m. Set off up the Oliviershoek Pass. As you pass Sterkfontein Dam on your left, look out for the viewpoint overlooking the dam. Then continue until you reach a T-junction. Turn left onto the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba and Golden Gate. You will pass the Sterkfontein Dam wall on your left. Further on take a left turn into Phuthaditjhaba, towards Witsieshoek Mountain Resort. You will pass a toll where a small entrance fee is payable.

After 5 km you will reach a fork in the road. Left takes you to Witsieshoek Mountain Resort (2300 m) and right to the Sentinel car park. As you climb higher take time to stop at intervals on the road and look left down onto the Royal Natal National Park over 1000 m below. Once at the car park another spectacular view is only a five minute walk along the path. Ahead is the massive Sentinel (3047 m) and the Devil's Tooth (2941 m).

CLARENS TIME: 5 hours. DISTANCE: 200 km return.
SCENIC VILLAGE
 Take the route to Golden Gate R712. If you continue along the main route you will arrive at the charming Free State village of Clarens with its quaint gift shops and art galleries. There are a number of inviting restaurants and pubs.

ROYAL NATAL NATIONAL PARK & THANDANANI TIME: 2 hours.
 DISTANCE: 45 km return.
SCENIC AND CULTURAL DRIVE WITH OPTIONAL HIKING IN THE NATIONAL PARK
 Take the tar road out of the Cavern and when you reach the T-junction, turn right to the Royal Natal National Park. The tarred road takes you through the amaZizi area. Soon after you cross the narrow bridge over the Singati River, you will see the Thandanani Handcraft Centre on the right. Here one can purchase many handmade and woven goods, made by the local people.

From Thandanani continue along the tarred road until you reach KZN Wildlife checkpoint. An entry fee is payable here. To visit the Cascades drive towards the Mahai campsite.

To drive within 7 km of the Amphitheatre wall turn left at the visitors centre to Thendele. The road ends at the start of the popular Tugela Gorge Walk; only residents are allowed to proceed further to Thendele camp itself.

SPIONKOP BATTLEFIELD TIME: 3 hours.
 DISTANCE: 150 km return.
HISTORICAL DRIVE
 Take the R74 to Bergville. Just as you reach the town take the left turn to Ladysmith (R616). Continue for about 32 km and turn right to the Spionkop Battlefield. The route is well sign-posted. There is 10 km of gravel road before you reach the parking area. Self-guide booklets can be purchased from the KZN Wildlife guard.

SPIONKOP GAME RESERVE & DAM TIME: 4 hours.
 DISTANCE: 200 km return.
SCENIC DRIVE WITH GAME VIEWING
 Take the R74 to Bergville. Pass Bergville and continue for 19 km to Winterton. Before entering the town take a left turn indicating Spionkop. The reserve is open from 06h00 to 18h00 and is controlled by the KZN Wildlife. There is an entrance fee to be paid. One can see a large variety of antelopes, Rhino, Zebra, Giraffe, etc. Water sports are permitted on the dam.

DRAKENSBERG BOYS CHOIR SCHOOL TIME: 3 hours.
 DISTANCE: 200 km return.
SCENIC DRIVE WITH OPTIONAL CHOIR PERFORMANCE
 Take the R74 to Winterton. As you enter the town take the right turn on the R600 towards the Central Berg resorts. Follow this road into the Champagne Valley. This world renowned choir school is on your right about 4 km after you pass the Champagne Sports Resort on your left. The choir gives weekly performances. Booking through the school is essential.

DRAKENSBERG STORAGE SCHEME TIME: 3 hours.
 DISTANCE: 50 km return.
 This power station is a joint venture between Eskom and the Department of Water Affairs, transferring water from the Tugela for use in Gauteng. All installations are underground. The four reversible pump turbines, situated 156 m below ground, generate 1000 MW of electricity for the national grid. Discover how a power station works by joining the guided tour.

ALL OUT ADVENTURES TIME: 2-3 hours.
 DISTANCE: 14 km return.
 Sharing extraordinary experiences with everyone. Just 7km down the road visit the Centre of Adventure - paint ball, quad biking, tree-top cable tour; king swing, zip line, bungee bounce and tea garden with kiddies play area.

SNAKES Be aware of these species in our region

Puff Adder
 Identification: Variable yellowish/brown with dark chevron or zig-zag type markings. Averages 60-90 cm in length.



Basic Guidelines in the Case of a Snake Bite:

1. Immediately apply firm pressure by broad bandage or suitable substitute. Do NOT use a tourniquet.
2. Limit movement – movement increases venom circulation. Remember to keep calm & reassure the victim.
3. Bring the person down the mountain and to the doctor ASAP.

- DO NOT give the victim alcohol
- DO NOT cut the bitten area
- DO NOT suck the bite
- DO NOT panic



Rinkhals
 Identification: Normally olive to dark brown or dull black with 1 or 2 white cross bars on the throat. Averages 1 m in length. In threat pose it raises its head and spreads a neck hood.

Berg Adder
 Identification: Greyish olive to dark brown/black with geometric patterns of triangular markings. Averages 30-50 cm in length.



The Drakensberg is a fragile environment that cannot be abused in any way. The harsh extremes of climate and the rugged nature of the terrain make survival of plants and animals difficult, and the influence of humans must be kept to a minimum. This advice is aimed at environmental care. Ignoring the precautions below could lead to permanent damage to the environment.




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|--------------------------------|--|
| PATHS | A network of paths has been laid out for your enjoyment and to reduce impact on the environment to a minimum. It may be tempting to take short cuts and to stray from the established paths, but this has been the cause of more erosion in recent years than almost anything else. Vegetation that may have taken centuries to establish itself is damaged, and heavy rains do the rest. |
| FIRES | Controlled fires are a necessary part of management, but the use of this "tool" is very carefully considered and monitored. Uncontrolled fires can be devastating. A small fire that spreads or a carelessly discarded match or cigarette can cause untold damage to vegetation and small creatures, even endangering human life. No fires or firewood collecting are permitted. |
| LITTER | Litter is unsightly and causes harm to the environment. All litter must be carried out with you, and should not be buried. |
| FLOWERS | The spring flowers in the Drakensberg are magnificent, although flowers may be found throughout the year. It may be tempting to pick flowers but by doing so you will deprive someone else of the pleasure of seeing them – it is a serious offence to pick wild flowers. |
| ROCK ART | The Bushmen who left us the graphic accounts of their way of life are long gone and their art is irreplaceable. Wetting the paintings will reduce their life, while disfiguring them means they are gone forever. Carving your name or initials on any surface in the Berg is strictly forbidden. |
| ROCKS | Some people are tempted to roll rocks down hills. This is extremely dangerous and, in addition to endangering the lives of others, it can damage vegetation and even start erosion. Simply turning a rock over can start a small landslide, so it's best not to try it. |
| EQUIPMENT & SAFETY IN THE BERG | For your safety, please complete the register at Reception when walking without a guide. Walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers are recommended. The berg weather is very unpredictable. Protection from the sun is vital (sun creams and adequate head protection should be worn). Drink plenty of fluids, always ensuring you are adequately hydrated. |
| SPRAINS | The most typical injury occurring on walks is a sprain. If you are near a stream submerge the limb in cold water for about 10 minutes. Bandage the joint for support and if it is necessary use a stick to assist with walking. |
| DEHYDRATION | May occur if insufficient liquids are drunk. Typical signs of dehydration are disorientation and fainting. Cool the patient down with water and ensure that he/she consumes plenty of fluids. |

TREES OF THE NATURE RESERVE

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| <i>Acacia sieberiana</i> – Paperbark Thorn | <i>Ilex mitis</i> – Cape Holly |
| <i>Acokanthera oppositifolia</i> – Common Poison Bush | <i>Kiggelaria africana</i> – Wild Peach |
| <i>Allophylus africanus</i> – Black False Currant | <i>Leucosidea sericea</i> – Ouhout |
| <i>Andrachne ovalis</i> – False Lightning Bush | <i>Maytenus acuminata</i> – Silky Bark |
| <i>Apodytes dimidiata</i> – White Pear | <i>Maytenus peduncularis</i> – Cape Blackwood |
| <i>Bowkeria verticillata</i> – Natal Shell-flower Bush | <i>Maytenus undata</i> – Koko Tree |
| <i>Buddleja dysophylla</i> – Climbing Sage | <i>Myrica pilulifera</i> – Broad-leaved Waxberry |
| <i>Buddleja salviifolia</i> – Sagewood | <i>Myrica serrata</i> – Lance-leaved Waxberry |
| <i>Burchellia bubalina</i> – Wild Pomegranate | <i>Myrsine africana</i> – Cape Myrtle |
| <i>Calodendrum capense</i> – Cape Chestnut | <i>Ocotea bullata</i> – Black Stinkwood |
| <i>Calpurnia aurea</i> – Natal Laburnum | <i>Olea capensis</i> – False Ironwood |
| <i>Calpurnia sericea</i> – Mountain Laburnum | <i>Olinia emarginata</i> – Mountain Hard Pear |
| <i>Canthium ciliatum</i> – Hairy Turkey-berry | <i>Osyris lanceolata</i> – Transvaal Sumach |
| <i>Canthium kuntzeanum</i> – Mountain Turkey-berry | <i>Pachystigma macrocalyx</i> – Mountain Wild-medlar |
| <i>Canthium mundianum</i> – Rock Alder | <i>Passerina montana</i> – Mountain Gonna |
| <i>Carissa bispinosa</i> – Forest Num-num | <i>Pavetta cooperi</i> – Mountain Bride's Bush |
| <i>Cassinopsis ilicifolia</i> – Lemon Thorn | <i>Pittosporum viridiflorum</i> – Cheesewood |
| <i>Celtis africana</i> – White Stinkwood | <i>Pleurostylia capensis</i> – Coffee Pear |
| <i>Chionanthus foveolatus</i> – Common Pock Ironwood | <i>Podocarpus falcatus</i> – Outeniqua Yellowwood |
| <i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i> – Bush-tick Berry | <i>Podocarpus henkelii</i> – Henkel's Yellowwood |
| <i>Clausena anisata</i> – Perdepis | <i>Podocarpus latifolius</i> – Real Yellowwood |
| <i>Clerodendrum glabrum</i> – Cat's Whiskers | <i>Protea caffra</i> – Natal Sugarbush |
| <i>Cliffortia nitidula</i> – Starry Rice-bush | <i>Protea roupelliae</i> – Silver Sugarbush |
| <i>Clutia pulchella</i> – Warty-fruited Clutia | <i>Protea subvestita</i> – Lip-flower Sugarbush |
| <i>Combretum erythrophyllum</i> – River Bushwillow | <i>Pterocelastrus rostratus</i> – Red Candlewood |
| <i>Combretum kraussii</i> – Forest Bushwillow | <i>Rapanea melanophloeos</i> – Cape Beech |
| <i>Cryptocarya woodii</i> – Cape Quince | <i>Rhamnus prinoides</i> – Dogwood |
| <i>Cussonia paniculata</i> – Mountain Cabbage Tree | <i>Rhoicissus revouillii</i> – Bushveld Grape |
| <i>Cussonia spicata</i> – Common Cabbage Tree | <i>Rhoicissus tridentata</i> – Bushman's Grape |
| <i>Cyathea dregei</i> – Tree Fern | <i>Salix mucronata</i> – Natal Willow |
| <i>Dais cotinifolia</i> – Pompon Tree | <i>Searsia (Rhus) dentata</i> – Nana-berry |
| <i>Diospyros lycioides</i> – Bluebush | <i>Searsia (Rhus) discolor</i> – Grassveld Currant |
| <i>Diospyros whyteana</i> – Bladderturn | <i>Searsia (Rhus) pallens</i> – Warty Currant |
| <i>Dovyalis zeyheri</i> – Wild Apricot | <i>Searsia (Rhus) pyroides</i> – Common Wild Currant |
| <i>Ekebergia capensis</i> – Cape Ash | <i>Searsia (Rhus) tomentosa</i> – Real Wild Currant |
| <i>Euclea crispa</i> – Blue Guarri | <i>Scolopia mundii</i> – Red Pear |
| <i>Ficus burkei</i> – Common Wild Fig | <i>Scolopia zeyheri</i> – Thorn Pear |
| <i>Ficus ingens</i> – Red-leaved Rock Fig | <i>Scutia myrtina</i> – Cat Thorn |
| <i>Grewia occidentalis</i> – Crossberry | <i>Solanum giganteum</i> – Healing-leaf Tree |
| <i>Greyia sutherlandii</i> – Mountain Bottlebrush | <i>Thamnocalamus tessellatus</i> – Berg Bamboo |
| <i>Gymnosporia buxifolia</i> – Common Spikethorn | <i>Trimeria grandifolia</i> – Wild Mulberry |
| <i>Halleria lucida</i> – Tree Fuchsia | <i>Trimeria trinervis</i> – Small-leaved Wild Mulberry |
| <i>Heteromorpha arborescens</i> – Parsley Tree | <i>Vepris lanceolata</i> – White Ironwood |
| <i>Hippobromus pauciflorus</i> – False Horsewood | <i>Zanthoxylum davyi</i> – Forest Knobwood |

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Coqui Francolin | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fiery-necked Nightjar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Goliath Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> | Broad-tailed Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | Buff-streaked Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Thick-billed Weaver | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grey-winged Francolin | <input type="checkbox"/> | Freckled Nightjar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cattle Egret | <input type="checkbox"/> | Arrow-marked Babbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mountain Wheatear | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Firefinch | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Red-winged Francolin | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speckled Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black-crowned Night Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bush Blackcap | <input type="checkbox"/> | Familiar Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sweet Waxbill | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Red-necked Spurfowl | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Olive-Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Little Bittern | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape White-eye | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anteater Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common Waxbill | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Swainson's Spurfowl | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lemon Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hamerkop | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lazy Cisticola | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mocking Cliff-Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Orange-breasted Waxbill | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Common Quail | <input type="checkbox"/> | Laughing Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hadedda Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wailing Cisticola | <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-winged Starling | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Quailfinch | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Helmeted Guineafowl | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Turtle-Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Bald Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> | Levaillant's Cisticola | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Glossy Starling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bronze Mannikin | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Egyptian Goose | <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-eyed Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Sacred Ibis | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neddicky | <input type="checkbox"/> | Violet-backed Starling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dusky Indigobird | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spur-winged Goose | <input type="checkbox"/> | Namaqua Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Spoonbill | <input type="checkbox"/> | Zitting Cisticola | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pied Starling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pin-tailed Whydah | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| African Black Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> | Denham's Bustard | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Stork | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wing-snapping Cisticola | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common Myna | <input type="checkbox"/> | House Sparrow | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yellow-billed Duck | <input type="checkbox"/> | Buff-spotted Flufftail | <input type="checkbox"/> | White Stork | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drakensberg Prinia | <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-billed Oxpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Grey-headed Sparrow | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Greater Honeyguide | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common Moorhen | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fork-tailed Drongo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bar-throated Apalis | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amethyst Sunbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Wagtail | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lesser Honeyguide | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common Greenshank | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fairy Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rufous-naped Lark | <input type="checkbox"/> | Malachite Sunbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mountain Wagtail | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brown-backed Honeybird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spotted Thick-knee | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Paradise-Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Rock-Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Double-collared Sunbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Longclaw | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Red-throated Wryneck | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blacksmith Lapwing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black-backed Puffback | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sentinel Rock-Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Greater Double-collared Sunbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Rock Pipit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Golden-tailed Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Cuckoo Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black-crowned Tchagra | <input type="checkbox"/> | Groundscraper Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gurney's Sugarbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Pipit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ground Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black-shouldered Kite | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Tchagra | <input type="checkbox"/> | Olive Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spectacled Weaver | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plain-backed Pipit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cardinal Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow-billed Kite | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Boubou | <input type="checkbox"/> | Karoo Thrush | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Weaver | <input type="checkbox"/> | Long-billed Pipit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Olive Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Fish-Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bokmakierie | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Black Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Masked-Weaver | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Canary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black-collared Barbet | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lammergeier | <input type="checkbox"/> | Olive Bush-Shrike | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-billed Quelea | <input type="checkbox"/> | Forest Canary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crested Barbet | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Vulture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Batis | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spotted Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow-crowned Bishop | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow-fronted Canary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Southern Ground-Hornbill | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Harrier-Hawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Crow | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Dusky Flycatcher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Red Bishop | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow Canary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| African Hoopoe | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Goshawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pied Crow | <input type="checkbox"/> | White-starred Robin | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow Bishop | <input type="checkbox"/> | Brimstone Canary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Green Wood-Hoopoe | <input type="checkbox"/> | Little Sparrowhawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | White-necked Raven | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Robin-Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fan-tailed Widowbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Streaky-headed Seedeater | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Half-collared Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chorister Robin-Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Red-collared Widowbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cinnamon-breasted Bunting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Malachite Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Sparrowhawk | <input type="checkbox"/> | Grey Cuckooshrike | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Stonechat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Long-tailed Widowbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Golden-breasted Bunting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Grey-headed Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Steppe Buzzard | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Cuckooshrike | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Brown-hooded Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Forest Buzzard | <input type="checkbox"/> | Southern Black Tit | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Giant Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jackal Buzzard | <input type="checkbox"/> | Brown-throated Martin | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Pied Kingfisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Verreaux's Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Barn Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| White-fronted Bee-eater | <input type="checkbox"/> | Booted Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | White-throated Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Speckled Mousebird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Martial Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Greater Striped Swallow | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Jacobin Cuckoo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Long-crested Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rock Martin | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Red-chested Cuckoo | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Crowned Eagle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Common House-Martin | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Black Cuckoo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Secretarybird | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Saw-wing | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Klaas's Cuckoo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rock Kestrel | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dark-capped Bulbul | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Diderick Cuckoo | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amur Falcon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Terrestrial Bulbul | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Alpine Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lanner Falcon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Barratt's Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Common Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | Peregrine Falcon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cape Grassbird | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| African Black Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | Little Grebe | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Reed-Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Little Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | African Darter | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lesser Swamp-Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Horus Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reed Cormorant | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dark-capped Yellow Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| White-rumped Swift | <input type="checkbox"/> | White-breasted Cormorant | <input type="checkbox"/> | Long-billed Crombec | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| African Wood-Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> | Grey Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| Marsh Owl | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black-headed Heron | <input type="checkbox"/> | Willow Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |

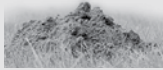
CHECKLIST Animals to look out for:

| | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | • Water Mongoose | <input type="radio"/> |  | • Dormouse | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Porcupine | <input type="radio"/> | | • Striped Field Mouse | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Bushbuck | <input type="radio"/> | | • Mountain Reedbuck | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Grey Duiker | <input type="radio"/> | | • Cape Hare | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Leguaan | <input type="radio"/> | | • Black-backed Jackal | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Eland | <input type="radio"/> | | • Leopard | <input type="radio"/> |
| | • Serval | <input type="radio"/> | | • Baboon | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | • Caracal | <input type="radio"/> | | • Grey Rhebuck | <input type="radio"/> |

Have a look & find.... Tick the box!

Molerat home

Molerats live in colonies under the ground. They eat bulbs and tubers of plants and they make tunnels to find them. They need to get rid of the soil they dig out when making the tunnels and they also need to get fresh air, so that is what makes the heaps we see.



Dragonflies

Male dragonflies live next to a stream or dam and have a little territory which they guard against other dragonflies. The females, who are duller in colour, come to visit them. Then they mate and she lays many eggs directly into the water. The larval stage lives on the bottom of the pond. Later the fully grown larva climbs out of the water, its skin splits, and a new dragonfly emerges.



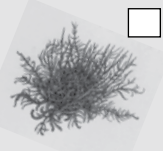
Bushbuck

These buck live on their own and only get together to breed. Only the males have horns. They eat leaves and fruits, but not grass. You will see them on the forest edge (or in our garden!).



Moss

This is a very ancient kind of plant and has been on earth for millions of years. Mosses live only in shady, damp places. They do not have flowers, and their seeds are called spores.



Yellowwood tree

This is an evergreen tree that can grow very tall indeed. It does not have flowers like most other trees, but has soft green cones and is related to Pine trees.



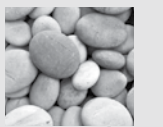
Protea

There are many different Proteas in the Cape, and they are all bushes, but here at the Cavern there are three Protea trees. They have lovely big flowers which offer nectar to the sunbirds and sugarbirds.



Round pebble

The round pebbles you find in the streams were once sharp pieces of rock high on the mountain. After they fell into the river, the rough edges were knocked off while they rolled down the stream, a little way each time the river flooded.



Bracken

This is a fern and the same plant can be found all over the world. It is slightly poisonous so the animals do not eat it. It can be a bit of a problem if it grows too strongly, because it shades out the grass, so farmers don't always like it.



