

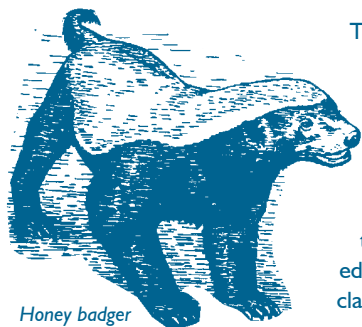
Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve lies in the Hottentots Holland mountains, some 90km south east of Cape Town. This 70 000ha reserve stretches from Elgin in the south to beyond Villiersdorp in the north, and from the Stellenbosch mountains in the west, eastwards to the Groenland mountains. About 7000ha of private and state property adjoining the reserve is co-managed as the Theewaterskloof Conservancy by CapeNature and local landowners

The entrance to the reserve is at Nuweberg, 11km from Grabouw on the R321. From Cape Town, take the N2, turn left at the Orchard Farm Stall in Grabouw and left again at the Villiersdorp junction.

History

In 1935 the Department of Forestry purchased much of the land in the Jonkershoek Valley from the municipality of Stellenbosch. Shortly afterwards the Jonkershoek Forestry Research Station (now part of the CSIR) was established and this became the initial step in a long history of research into mountain ecosystems, with emphasis on the hydrological cycle and plant ecology. The Forestry industry received added momentum as a result of the shortage of timber during the First World War and the need to create employment during the Depression.

Nuweberg, previously a railway owned plantation, was taken over by the Department of Forestry and new plantations were established on the lower slopes of the mountains at La Motte, near Franschhoek, and at Jonkershoek. There was an immediate reaction from various knowledgeable amateur naturalists and others who were concerned about the destruction of the natural fynbos to make way for forestry operations. As a result, several nature reserves were established in the afforestation zone, where the Cape flora of these parts could be protected.



Honey badger

The principles of reserve establishment and management were poorly understood at this time and many of the reserves were too small for long term viability. Finally, all these areas were consolidated and the Reserve was proclaimed in 1979. This was the

first and only nature reserve to be declared under the Forest Act in South Africa. Today, nature reserves enjoy the second highest conservation status in the country - the highest going to wilderness areas.

The protection of flora was viewed synonymously with the protection of the reserve against any influence that was perceived as a threat to the vegetation. This included complete protection against fire, which had disastrous results and led to a subsequent threat to the survival of many indigenous species including the Blushing Bride (*Serruria florida*).

Improved conservation methods and increased expertise resulted in the entire natural area achieving conservation status. Water and nature conservation were the primary land management goals, while secondary uses of the area, such as recreation and research, were permitted if they were compatible with the primary objectives.

In 1995, the former farm Rusbos was handed over to CapeNature for management as part of the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve. The land is managed as part of the Riviersonderend catchment according to the management plan of the reserve. In the future, the Reserve will form part of the larger Boland Biosphere Reserve and will play an important part in the maintenance of the ecological functioning of the greater reserve network and associated World Heritage sites. Local communities are expected to play an important part in the conservation of the area and the establishment of a viable local eco-tourism industry.

Geology

The landforms of the Hottentots Holland mountain range have been shaped by the movement and folding of a previously unrelieved landscape. To the east and the north, the mountains overlay 550 millennia old Cape granite, which is a relatively erosive rock formation. This results in a convoluted and undulating landscape, and aids the development of nutrient-rich yellowish and reddish soil. Enclosed in the granite that was originally welled up, are remnants of shales and metamorphosed sedimentary rocks that are characteristic of the 950 millennia old Malmesbury Formation.

The sedimentary layers of the Table Mountain Group formation overlay the other formations and dominate the landscape. The oldest of these is the Peninsula Formation - 1500m of hard, grey

sandstone and quartzite that form the prominent cliffs found throughout the range, from the Franschhoek peaks to the escarpments in the Banghoek area, and the Jonkershoek mountains to Somerset West. This is followed by the Pakhuis Formation - a narrow band of tillite formed from material deposited by glacial action 400 million years ago. The tillite contains large amounts of water-washed quartz stones. Soft shales of the Cederberg Formation overlay the tillite. These shales are susceptible to weathering and aid the exposure of the underlying layers in a landscape that is relatively resistant to erosion. In the Hottentots-Holland range, the most striking of the shale landforms are the dome summits of Victoria peak (1589m), Somerset-Sneeuokop (1590m), and the Triplets (1515m). These peaks, together with the contrasting angular summits of Pike (1500m) and the Rifberg (1525m), are the highest in the area.

Terrain

The Reserve's terrain is rugged and very mountainous, with altitudes ranging from 500 to 1590m. High mountain peaks and steep valleys provide a sense of remote wilderness, while the near-pristine Palmiet River, which originates high in the mountains and traverses a steep gradient down to the sea, is one of the significant attributes of this protected area.

Climate

The annual rainfall is as high as 3 300mm on the Dwaarsberg plateau and winds are frequent and strong. Summers are generally mild and dry. Weather conditions in the mountains can be unpredictable and dangerous.

Plants & animals

The Reserve plays an important role in the conservation of mountain fynbos, with approximately 1300 species occurring, some of which are rare and endemic. Approximately 110 bird species have been recorded, including several species of raptor.

Many animals have been re-introduced, including the rare Cape mountain zebra, eland, bontebok and red hartebeest. Populations of grey rhebuck, klipspringer, common duiker and grysbok occur and, while leopards frequent these mountains, they are seldom seen.

Game drives are allowed and visitors should use the Rusbos gate entrance at the foot of Franschhoek Pass. Tour operators are welcome.

Historical structures

Structures of historical importance are the old Toll building for the Franschhoek Pass and the ruins of the village used by the

workers that constructed the Franschhoek Pass. Forming part of the Pass, Jan Joubert's Gat bridge was one of the first bridges ever built in South Africa. It is still in use and has been declared a national monument. The Oxwagon spore and cannons in the Gantouws Pass above the Sir Lowry's Pass are also national monuments.

Hiking

The Hottentots Holland section of the Boland Hiking Trail passes through the Reserve. This trail has various routes covering distances of between five and 50km, over one, two or three days. The Hottentots Holland section of the Trail is the starting point for the routes, and has toilet and changeroom facilities. The Trail has two overnight sites, the first with two huts and the second with one hut. All of the huts are equipped with bunks, mattresses and water and all have four rooms that may be booked separately. Fires and braais are strictly forbidden except at demarcated sites.

Due to severe weather and flooded rivers, some hiking routes are closed from July to the end of August. Hikers should be fit, experienced and well-equipped for extreme weather at all times. See CapeNature's 'Hiking in the Mountains — a Survivor's Guide' for guidelines on mountain safety. This is obtainable from the booking office.

OVERNIGHT ROUTES:

Nuweberg to Landdrooskop Hut via the **Sphinx**: 12km, 3 to 4hrs (moderate); **Nuweberg to Boesmansklouf Hut** (also known as the **Orchard Route**): 14km, 4 to 5 hrs (moderate); **Nuweberg to Boesmansklouf Hut (Pofaddernek and Noordeklouf)**: 17.2km, ±7hrs (strenuous); **Boesmansklouf to Landdrooskop Hut** via **Pofaddernek** and **Noordeklouf**: 17.6km, 7 hrs (moderate).

DAY HIKE:

Boegoekloof 24km, 8hrs, out and back route; **Palmiet Trail** 6km, 2hrs, designed for visually impaired and disabled persons but not suitable for wheelchairs.

KLOOFING:

Riviersonderend 15km, 6hrs, circular route; **Suicide Gorge** approx. 17km, 5hrs. Closed due to flooding in winter - open from November to the end of April.

Mountain biking

The Reserve has one mountain bike trail, passing over Groenland Mountain and exiting at Lebanon or Twaalfontein Farm (22 km out and back).

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

All persons entering this conservation area and using its facilities, do so entirely at their own risk. The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board and/or its employees and/or agents and/or its successors in title shall not be liable for any damage, loss, theft, injury, accident or death suffered by any person, howsoever caused.

Right of Admission Reserved.

ENQUIRIES:

Tel: (028) 841 4826/4302
Cell: 082 413 5258

RESERVATIONS:

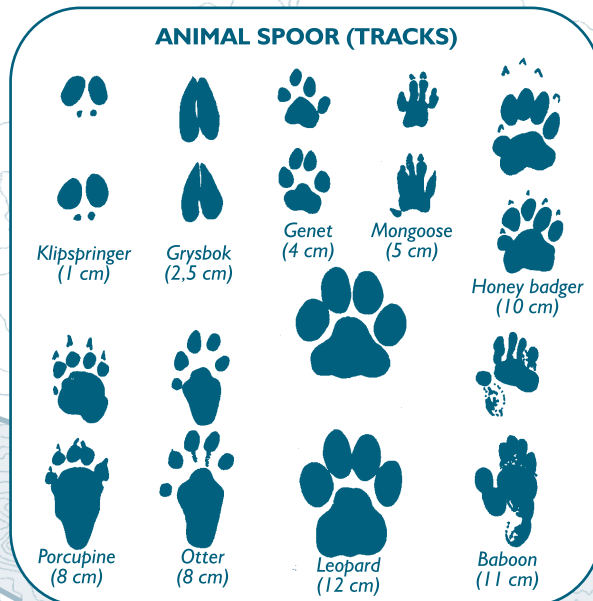
Tel: (021) 483 0190

www.capenature.co.za



CapeNature

www.capenature.co.za



LEGEND

- Jeep track
- Escape route
- Old Boland Trail (closed)
- Drinking water

OVERNIGHT ROUTES

- 1 The Sphinx (Nuweberg to Landdroskop Hut)
- 2 Orchard Route (Nuweberg to Boesmanskloof Hut)
- 3 Boesmanskloof (Nuweberg to Boesmanskloof Hut - longer route)
- 4 Boesmanskloof Hut to Landdroskop Hut (via Pofaddernek)
- 5 Landdroskop to Jonkershoek

DAY HIKES

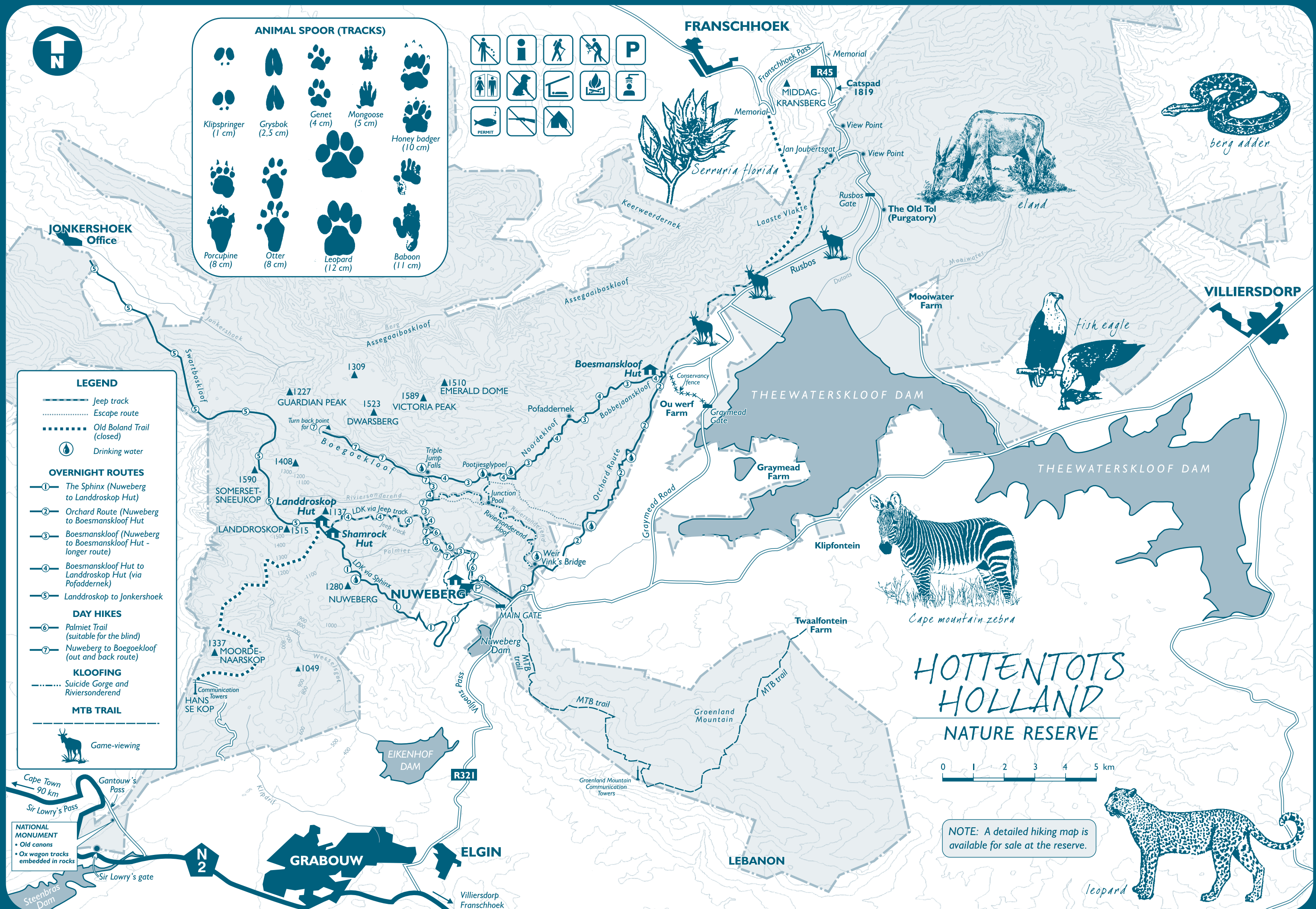
- 6 Palmiet Trail (suitable for the blind)
- 7 Nuweberg to Boegoekloof (out and back route)

KLOOFING

- Suicide Gorge and Riviersonderend

MTB TRAIL

- Game-viewing



HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND NATURE RESERVE



NOTE: A detailed hiking map is available for sale at the reserve.

