

Kogelberg Nature Reserve is often considered the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom because of the exceptional quality of its fynbos. The reserve lies within the southern stretch of the rugged Hottentots Holland mountain range and has remained isolated and remarkably unspoilt. Its high mountain peaks, steep kloofs, valleys and several tributaries of the pristine Palmiet River create a sense of remote wilderness.



Kogelberg is situated about 90km south-east of Cape Town and comprises a core area of 18 000ha and several smaller fragments. The Reserve is sign-posted from the coastal road (R44) where a gravel road leads for 3km through private property to the office. The coastal town of Kleinmond is about 8km south-east of the reserve.

History

The Kogelberg area shows evidence of early Stone Age hunters who probably lived off game, shellfish and edible plants. Khoi people inhabited the area from about 100 000 years ago until modern times and their middens and burial sites can be found along the coast. Eighteenth century European explorers described the beauty of the area and the plentiful game but early farmers found the area too rugged for agriculture. Hence, the Kogelberg was left practically untouched over the years, unlike many other areas of the Cape.

In 1810 the government of the Cape demarcated certain Crown Lands, including the Kogelberg area. Access was extremely difficult until a road was built in 1935. In 1937 the Department of Forestry became responsible for the area and declared it a State Forest. During World War II, a military road was built around the coast and the peripheral

coastal area slowly became more developed. Kogelberg was transferred to CapeNature in 1987 and managed as a nature reserve.

Conservation

Kogelberg Nature Reserve is managed according to the internationally accepted principles of a biosphere reserve. This implies that the sensitive core area of 18 000ha remains pristine and essentially wild, with a high level of biological diversity, and is buffered by a more resilient area. Beyond the Reserve's borders, agriculture and commercial pine plantations form a transitional zone. The biosphere concept accommodates conservation and development, ensuring that sensitive areas and biological diversity are adequately protected.

Climate

The climate of the Kogelberg is fairly typical of the Western Cape. Winters are cold and very wet, and snow may fall on the higher peaks. The summer months are hot, dry and often very windy. Hikers should note that the weather conditions are variable and unpredictable.

Vegetation

The historical isolation of the Kogelberg area has helped to protect its floral wealth, keeping it relatively clear of alien vegetation, and today the Reserve presents perhaps the finest example of mountain fynbos in the Western Cape. It has approximately 1800 plant species of which about 150 are endemic and noteworthy. Many spectacular members of the protea family occur in the reserve. These include



the endangered marsh rose, *Orothamnus zeyheri* - once on the brink of extinction and now known to occur on a few inaccessible peaks. The Reserve also has the highest concentration of Mimetes species in the Cape, most notably the endangered *M. hottentoticus* and *M. capitulatus*.

Kogelberg has three patches of relic indigenous forest: Louwsbos, Platbos and Oudebos. These patches are similar to the Knysna forests and include yellowwood, stinkwood and boekenhout trees. The Palmiet River and its associated riparian vegetation is of the most pristine in the south-western Cape. Wild almond, rooi-els, Breede River yellowwood and Cape beech are among the trees occurring in the riverine scrub along its water courses.

Much of the area's early botanical documentation was done by TP Stokoe, a Yorkshireman who emigrated to South Africa in 1911. Stokoe collected numerous specimens in the Kogelberg, many of which were named after him. His ashes were scattered near Stokoe's Bridge in the Reserve.

Animals

The Kogelberg does not have many large animals although leopards have been sighted and the Cape clawless otter may be seen in or near the Palmiet River. Smaller antelope include grey rhebuck, klipspringer and grysbok, while baboons, porcupine, mongoose, dassies and hares are fairly common.

Peregrine falcons, black eagles and fish eagles hunt and nest in and around the Reserve. An endemic freshwater crab and the endangered micro-frog are also found in the area. A herd of wild horses that were abandoned after the Anglo-Boer War, roam the flats of the Bot River estuary at Rooisand Nature Reserve.

Activities

Visitor numbers are limited and low-impact recreation that is compatible with the wilderness atmosphere is encouraged. Hikers have several options

(refer to map) and should be prepared for fairly rough terrain and unpredictable weather. White water kayaking is permitted during the winter season on the Palmiet River but only for competent kayakers, as the river can be dangerous.

In the nature reserve's less sensitive areas, activities include hiking, mountain biking, swimming and kayaking. Accommodation is available at Oudebosch in five self-catering eco-cabins including a multi-functional facility for small groups. Camping and picnic facilities are not provided.

Take note

- Permits must be carried at all times
- Trail times make allowances for swimming and resting
- Keep to designated paths/routes to prevent soil erosion and trampling of plants
- The making of fires is prohibited
- Swim and rest only at designated sites on the trails
- Do not pick flowers, disturb animals or deface rocks
- An inland fishing license is required for fishing at Bot River estuary and can be obtained at the Kogelberg office
- The Reserve gates are open between 07h30 and 19h00
- **Strictly no permits issued after 16h00**

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

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RESERVATIONS

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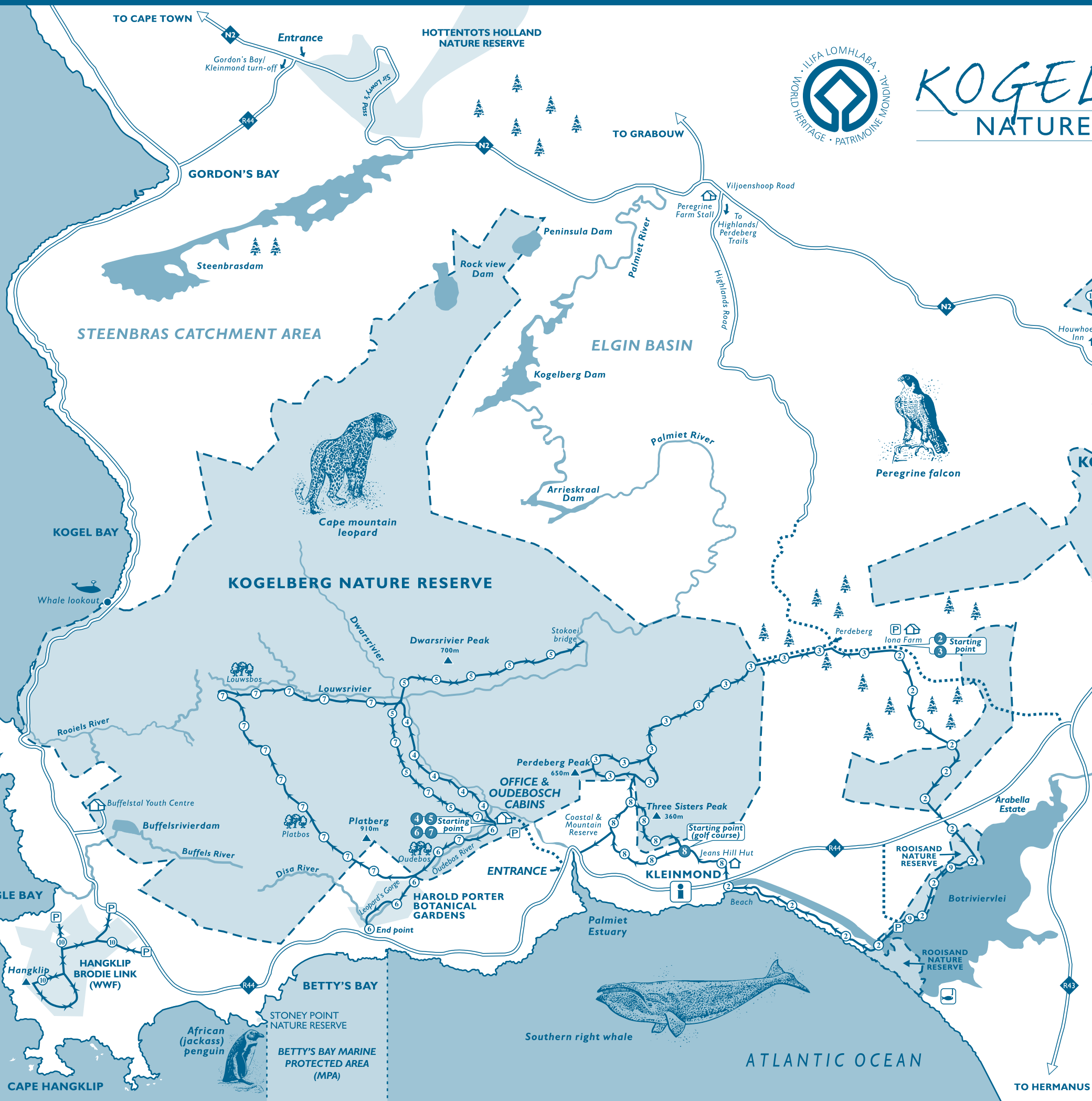
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KOGELBERG NATURE RESERVE



SCALE 1:50 000



KOGELBERG

NATURE RESERVE



LEGEND

- Reserve boundary
- Roads
- Gravel roads
- Trails
- Pine plantations
- Parking

TRAILS

| Route (number) | Distance (km) | Time (h) | Difficulty level |
|---|---------------|----------|------------------|
| Day hikes | | | |
| Perdeberg Trail (3) | 22km | 7-8hrs | moderate, long |
| Palmiet River Walk (4) | 10km | 3 hrs | easy |
| Oudebosch-Leopard's Gorge (6) | 6km | 3-4hrs | moderate |
| Kogelberg Trail (7) | 24km | 8hrs | moderate, long |
| Three Sisters (8) | 8km | 4hrs | moderate |
| Overnight trail (arrange your own accommodation) | | | |
| Highlands Trail | | | |
| Day 1 (2) | 16km | 6-7hrs | moderate |
| Day 2 (8 & 3) | 21km | 8hrs | moderate |
| Other trails | | | |
| Houwhoek Trail (1) | 8km | 3hrs | moderate |
| Rooisand Ramble (9) | 5km | 2hrs | easy |
| Hangklip/Brodie Link (10) | 3km | 1-2hrs | easy |

KAYAKING

| | | | |
|---|-----|------|------------------------------------|
| Palmiet white water rafting (June - Sept) | 5km | 2hrs | Grade III, only competent kayakers |
|---|-----|------|------------------------------------|

MTB

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|----------|
| Palmiet River Valley MTB Route (5) | 22km | 2-4hrs | moderate |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|----------|

Trail information is available at the Kleinmond Information Bureau