

De Mond Nature Reserve

De Mond Nature Reserve, situated 26km southeast of Bredasdorp on the captivating southwestern Cape coast, spans 954 hectares at the mouth of the Heuningnes River. Established in 1986, it remains a cherished destination for nature enthusiasts and avid hikers alike, offering serene picnics and invigorating hikes along scenic trails like the renowned 7km Sterna Trail. This trail winds through riverine vegetation, dune forests, and stabilised dunes, eventually revealing the splendor of the river mouth and saltmarshes. Angling aficionados can delight in

De Mond's prime freshwater and marine fishing spots. Furthermore, the coastal Damara Trail offers a captivating 16.5km 2-day overnight hiking experience from De Mond to Waenhuiskrans/Arniston, showcasing stunning coastal vistas and historic sites like the Waenhuiskrans cave, ancient fish traps, and remnants of an old shipping beacon. Secure parking is available at the De Mond NR Office for visitors' convenience. Cars are not allowed past the parking area. Please do not disturb nesting birds, and keep to specified paths to avoid trampling vegetation.

Climate

The Heuningnes River and its catchment area are situated within a Mediterranean climatic region, where the majority of rainfall occurs during the winter months, typically from May to September. Summers are warm to hot and dry. The mean annual rainfall within the catchment ranges between 400 and 600 mm, with an average annual precipitation of 447 mm for the Heuningnes drainage system.

Flora

Before being designated as a nature reserve, De Mond's naturally shifting sand dunes were stabilized with indigenous vegetation by the Department of Forestry, adding to the already varied flora of the area. The vegetation here is mainly coastal, ranging from dune milkwood forests to teeming saltmarshes that sustain the estuarine environment. Further inland, dune fynbos borders limestone fynbos heathlands, creating a fascinating composition.

- **proteas** - tall shrubs with large leaves
- **ericas** - heath-like shrubs
- **restios** - wiry, reed-like plants which are always present in fynbos
- **geophytes** - bulbs that store moisture in fleshy underground organs

Fauna

De Mond Cape Nature Reserve sustains various species of small mammals, including grysbok, steenbok, and grey duiker. While the caracal, the primary notable predator in the area, is seldom spotted, its presence adds to the reserve's ecological diversity. Additionally, reptiles and amphibians thrive in abundance, with visitors advised to remain vigilant for puff adders, particularly during the spring season.

During spring, De Mond offers whale-watching opportunities, with the chance to spot Southern Right Whales, Humpback Whales, Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins, Common Dolphins, and Dusky Dolphins. These marine mammals occasionally grace the waters off the reserve's coast, displaying their majestic presence and playful behavior when sightings occur.

Moreover, the reserve boasts a rich and diverse birdlife, making it a haven for bird enthusiasts. De Mond plays a crucial role in the conservation of threatened species, such as the Damara and Caspian terns, by protecting their breeding colonies. Additionally, the rare African black oystercatcher finds refuge in the reserve's tranquil environment, while occasional sightings of breeding blue cranes further highlight the area's importance for endangered species conservation.

Activities

De Mond offers a variety of activities that can be tailored to suit visitors' preferences, whether they have a whole day to spend or just a few hours. Popular activities on the reserve include hiking, angling, picnicking, birdwatching, and swimming.



Hiking

De Mond boasts two captivating hiking trails, providing visitors with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the untouched natural beauty of the reserve.

The Sterna Trail, spanning 7km and taking around 2 hours, starts near the reserve office. Named after the damara tern, this circular trail features a swaying suspension bridge over the Heuningnes River, offering diverse scenery before returning to the estuary mouth.

The Damara Trail stretches over 16.5km, split into two days. The first leg covers 5km in approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, while the second leg spans 11.5km and takes about 3 hours and 45 minutes. This linear coastal route from De Mond to Waenhuiskrans (Arniston) passes by notable landmarks such as the Waenhuiskrans cave and historical fish traps, with remnants of an old shipping beacon adding to its allure.



Birding

De Mond is a haven for sea birds, including the African black oystercatcher, the damara and Caspian tern and the blue crane.



Whale Watching

In spring, De Mond offers whale-watching opportunities, though sightings are not guaranteed.



Swim

Visitors can cool off in the sea's crashing waves or in the Heuningnes estuary.



Picnicking

Enjoy a picnic under the cool shade of the trees on the banks of the Heuningnes River. Please note, visitors can use gas braais and Webers, but open fires are not permitted.



Angling

De Mond and Waenhuiskrans are popular fishing spots for both shoreline and estuarine anglers. Anglers must be in possession of a valid recreational fishing permit, obtainable at any South African Post Office. **Please note** that NO bait collection or use of a cast net is allowed in the estuary. No angling is allowed from 17h00 to 07h30 the following day.

DE MOND NATURE RESERVE (Near Arniston)

Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE
087 087 3931

RESERVATIONS
087 087 8250

EMERGENCIES
082 499 9925

Gate times
07h30 – 16h00

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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.

Stay safe when venturing outdoors

- Wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen and a hat
- Don't hike alone
- Carry enough food and water for the trip
- Make sure to check the weather and tidal times before departing
- Take a warm jacket/raincoat in winter
- Take a field medical kit along for emergencies
- Obey all signage
- Stay in a group and keep to marked trails

PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR PROTECTED AREAS PRISTINE



De Mond

NATURE RESERVE



To Arniston/
Bredasdorp

To Waenhuiskrans
Nature Reserve

Heuningnesrivier

DE MOND
NATURE RESERVE
ENTRANCE GATE

OVERNIGHT
BEACH
SHELTER



DE MOND
OFFICE

HEUNINGNES ESTUARY

De Mond
Nature
Reserve

DIE MAGGIE
SHIPWRECK

INDIAN OCEAN

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SCALE

