

Marloth Nature Reserve

lies within the southern Langeberg mountain range near Swellendam. The reserve is 14 123 ha in extent and is managed together with another 16 532 ha of privately owned proclaimed mountain catchment land. Most of the reserve activities occur between the gently sloping foothills, up to the 'Plaat' at about 600m. The formidable higher slopes, up to the famous 'Clock Peaks', lie between 1 100m and 1 450m above sea level.

Swellendam is the third oldest town in South Africa and has many interesting cultural-historic features. Marloth Nature Reserve is named after the pioneer

botanist Dr Rudolph Marloth who, in 1928, successfully led a deputation of Swellendam residents to petition the Minister of Lands and Forestry to set aside a part of the mountain (190ha) as a nature reserve. This included the forest patches of Koloniesbos and Duiwelsbos and thus protected some of the land. During 1981 the reserve was enlarged to include the rest of the Forest Reserve state land and the Swellendam Hiking Trail was opened. The reserve was designated a World Heritage Site in 2015, as part of the extension to the Cape Floral Kingdom Protected Areas World Heritage Site.



Climate



The climate in the Swellendam area is typical of the southern Cape, with hot summers and cold winters. The rainfall is fairly evenly spread throughout the year with June and July being the driest months and March, October and November the wettest. The mountainous topography also influences local weather conditions, resulting in a higher rainfall and even snow in winter at the higher altitudes.

Flora



The vegetation in the nature reserve is predominantly mountain fynbos with patches of Afromontane forest. Spring is the best time to witness the colourful display of mountain fynbos, that includes several protea species and more than 25 erica species. Many of these erica and protea species occur nowhere else in the world. The original forest covered a much larger area but due to exploitation for timber for the local furniture and wagon industries over the past 300 years, as well as wild fires (fynbos encroachment), it has been reduced to isolated patches in the damper kloofs (riverines). Typical forest species include yellowwood, stinkwood, Cape beech, wild olive, assegaai-bos, cherrywood and hard pear.

Fauna



Marloth supports numerous animal species, although most are relatively small and not easily observed. Mammals include grey rhebok, grysbok, bushbuck, bushpig, porcupine, klipspringer, common duiker, baboon, leopard, caracal lynx, mongoose, porcupine, hyrax and hare. The area is rich in birdlife. Of the 114 species that have been recorded, the Cape Sugarbird is the most conspicuous while African Fish Eagle, Black Eagle, Wood Owl, Red Winged Francolin, Tambourine Dove, four different species of Wood-pecker, Cape Vulture and Narina Trogon can also be seen. Visitors should be on the alert for Puff adder, Cape cobra and mountain adder snakes when hiking.

Activities



All trails and activities begin at the Marloth Nature Reserve office, where vehicles may be parked. Visitors can hike, picnic or mountain biking. Multi-day hikes and accommodation must be reserved in advance.

MULTI-DAY HIKING

The Swellendam Hiking Trail is one of South Africa's top ten hikes and undiscovered by many younger generation hikers, due to the closure of the trail for many years. During 2010 and 2012, devastating wild – fires caused extensive destruction or damage to the trail huts. The route is 4 nights and five days to complete and is physically demanding and should only be attempted by fit hikers. Hiking trips should be planned and booked in advance, due to limited hikers per trail section per day. The first section of the trail starts at the Marloth office and traverses the southern slopes to the Boskloof site below Hermitage Peak and then to Goedgelooft, Protea Valley and Wolfkloof. Goedgelooft, Proteavallei and Wolfkloof overnight sites have huts, double bunk beds with mattresses, water taps and Enviro Loo. Goedgelooft and Wolfkloof huts have cold water showers and refuse bins. Hikers should bring their own eating and cooking utensils, food, bedding, warm clothes, hat, sleeping bag, head lamps, etc. The two rustic Boskloof shelters have twelve camping type mattresses and Enviro Loo, but no water taps. Hikers must ensure that their sleeping bags are suitable for at least minus 5 – 10 degrees Celsius during the colder winter months when overnighing in the primitive Boskloof shelters. Fires are only permitted at the demarcated site at Wolfkloof due to the high risk of veld fires and the scarcity of fire wood. Fire wood is for sale from adjacent landowner.

All shelters are self-maintained and must be left as found with "leave no trace" principles needing to be always adhered to. Hikers are encouraged to carry out everything carried in, and no dumping of any items is allowed at the various sites or along hiking trails.

DAY TRAILS

Marloth offers various day trails, ranging from easy, short walks to more strenuous, longer hikes.

INDIGENOUS FOREST WALKS

The Duiwelsbos and Koloniesbos trails lead into the cool green depths of the indigenous forest remnants where rock pools, waterfalls and ancient trees wait to be explored. The walks are generally short (between 2km and 5km) and reasonably easy. The flow of water from this waterfall depends on the amount of rainfall in the mountain catchment area. Look out for bushbuck and baboon.

THE PLAAT

The Plaat walks are slightly longer and range between 3km and 16km. They include a short, steep zig-zag section to reach the mid-band of the mountain at about 600m. Here hikers are rewarded with inspiring views and a variety of wildflowers and birdlife. The many streams en route provide ample cool mountain water to quench the thirsty, advised to carry sufficient water

THE PEAKS

The mountain peaks of Tienuurkop (1 195m) and Twaalfuurkop (1 450m) are an ideal challenge for fit hikers. Breathtaking views of the entire Langeberg mountain range, the Rûensveld and even the Indian Ocean are guaranteed. Hikers are advised to carry sufficient water and be prepared for rapid climatic changes and extreme weather conditions.

PICNICS AND BRAAIS

There are three picnic sites: the office/information center area, Glenstroom and Duiwelsbos. Only the entrance area of the office/information center and Glenstroom have designated braai (barbeque) areas and picnic tables. Reservations or a conservation entrance permit are required for the last mentioned sites. During the hot summer months, the Glenstroom braai area may be closed at short notice due to extreme fire risks.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

There is no formal mountain biking route on the reserve, but the reserve and plantation's road network offer good opportunities for exploring from the saddle. There is also the Swellendam MTB trail on the adjacent municipal property. Details are available at the reserve office.

Accommodation

Bushbuck and Suikerbekkie Cottage are fully equipped self-catering cottage and can accommodate 6 and 2 persons respectively. Both cottages have both indoor fire places and outside braai areas. They are situated near the start of the one and multi-day trails and is an ideal base from which to hike and explore the reserve.

(Please refer to information about the overnight hiking trail under Activities - Multi-Day Hiking). Alternatively, hikers may stay in several other accommodation facilities in Swellendam while hiking the Swellendam Hiking Trails.

MARLOTH NATURE RESERVE

Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE
087 087 3039/3883

RESERVATIONS
087 087 8250

EMERGENCIES
082 4962 450

Wilderness Search and Rescue
10177

Police
028 514 8102/ 10111

Gate times
07:30 to 16:00

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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 you know what the weather conditions are before you depart
- Take a warm jacket/raincoat in winter
- Make sure you have a map of the area
- 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





Marloth

NATURE RESERVE

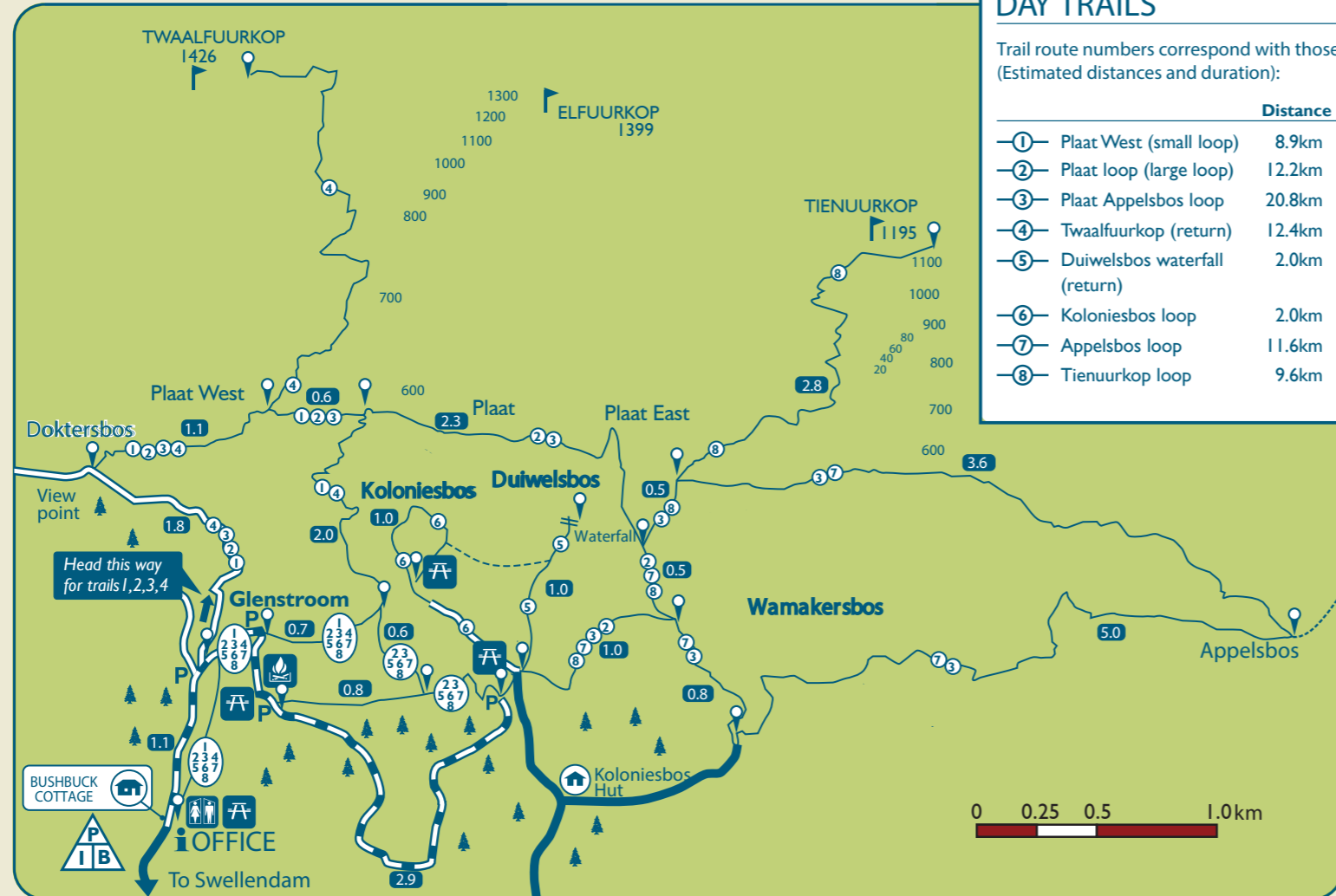
Scan QR Code for Map



DAY TRAILS

Trail route numbers correspond with those on the map. (Estimated distances and duration):

	Distance	Time	Difficulty
①— Plaat West (small loop)	8.9km	2hrs	Moderate
②— Plaat loop (large loop)	12.2km	3hrs	Moderate
③— Plaat Appelsbos loop	20.8km	5hrs	Moderate
④— Twaalfuurkop (return)	12.4km	6hrs	Strenuous
⑤— Duiwelsbos waterfall (return)	2.0km	1hr	Moderate
⑥— Koloniesbos loop	2.0km	1hr	Easy
⑦— Appelsbos loop	11.6km	3hrs	Moderate
⑧— Tienuurkop loop	9.6km	5hrs	Strenuous



LEGEND

Reserve Boundary	Information	
Swellendam Trail	Parking	
Day Trails	Starting point	
Trail under construction	Distance marker	
Jeep track	Peak height (metres)	
Private jeep track	Parking	
Forest drive	Picnic site	
Indigenous forest	Braai area	
Pine plantation	Swimming	
Overnight hut	Toilets	