

CEDERBERG COMPLEX



The Cederberg Complex

Lies some 250km north of Cape Town, stretching from the Middelberg Pass at Citrusdal to north of the Pakhuis Pass at Clanwilliam and encompassing some 79 687ha of rugged, mountainous terrain. It is renowned for its spectacular landscapes and rock formations as well as the increasingly rare Clanwilliam cedar tree, from which the area got its name. The 12800ha Matjesrivier Nature Reserve land with the assistance of the World Wide

Fund (WWF) was purchased in 1995, but it was only declared a Nature Reserve in 2000. Situated on the drier eastern boundary of the Cederberg mountains. The Cederberg Complex - Includes the Cederberg Wilderness Area, Hexberg Nature Reserve and Matjesrivier Nature Reserve. Geologically, the Cederberg is part of the Cape Fold Belt and consists mainly of Table Mountain sandstone. Weathered sandstone formations, most notably the Wolfberg Arch, the Maltese Cross and Stadsaal cave, are typical of the Cederberg.

Climate



The Cederberg Complex is located in the winter rainfall zone so winters are cold and wet while summers are warm and dry. Most rain falls occur between May and September and it often snows in the higher parts. In winter, night temperatures drop sharply and heavy frost may occur, while in summer temperatures reach the mid 40's°C. Lightning is the most common cause of periodic veld fires during the summer months.

Flora



The Cederberg Complex is located in the Cape Floral Kingdom. The vegetation in the Cederberg is predominantly mountain fynbos. The lower slopes support protea, silky cone-bush, sand olive and Clanwilliam daisies, with wild olives and mountain maytenus on the rocky outcrops. Large Waboom trees still occur in pockets on the lower slopes and valleys.

The eye-catching purple-blue ridderspoor, rooibos tea and buchu grow against the lower cliffs while higher up one finds fynbos restio veld, with red disas along streams on the plateau.

The Clanwilliam cedar grows in rocky areas at altitudes of more than 1000m above sea level. In the wet ravines, red and white alder, yellowwood, hard-pear and Cape beech occur, while wild olive, silky bark and spoonwood prefer drier kloofs. The endemic snow protea is perhaps the most attractive plant on the highest peaks - it is very scarce and only found at a few sites in the wilderness.

Matjesrivier Nature Reserve falls in a transitional zone between the fynbos and succulent Karoo vegetation types. The dry conditions and fine-grained clay soils of the western slopes of the reserve also support central mountain renosterveld, which is dominated by members of the Asteraceae family. Growing on more fertile soils than fynbos, renosterveld is believed to have once supported herds of large game and predators such as lions.

Fauna



Baboons, dassies, grey rhebok, klipspringers, duiker and grysbok are fairly common in the Cederberg. Porcupine, honeybadger, Cape clawless otter and aardvark also occur although they are seldom seen. The leopard is the Cederberg's largest predator and is fairly common although very shy. Smaller mammals include African wild cat, lynx, bat-eared fox, aardwolf and Cape fox. The small grey mongoose and striped polecat are often seen. Various interesting rodents occur, including the spectacled dormouse.

More than 100 bird species occur here, with black eagle, rock kestrel and jackal buzzard being the most common raptors. About 16 snake species are found in the Cederberg, the most common being berg adder, puff adder and Cape cobra. The armadillo lizard is one of the endemic reptiles found here.

History



The San and Khoi people have inhabited the Cederberg area since early times. European settlers began stock farming here in the early eighteenth century and from 1903 to 1973. Exploitation of natural resources was rampant and large amounts of cedarwood, rooibos tea, Buchu and rockwood bark were harvested. Fires added to the destruction and cedar trees are now on the brink of extinction. The Cederberg was proclaimed a wilderness in 1973 and received World Heritage status in 2004. Since the 1840's Matjesrivier was a livestock farm until proclaimed as a Nature Reserve in 2000. It received World Heritage status in 2015.

Activities



The solitude and wild grandeur of the Cederberg Complex offer unsurpassed opportunities for a deep and spiritual connection to nature. Recreational hiking and bouldering are allowed in designated locations within the complex, but are subject to having permits. Please ensure that you have suitable hiking maps with you.

Before departing on any journey, it's important to let someone know of your plans. Let them know where you will be, the route you'll take, and when you expect to return. Ensure this person has the local emergency numbers.



Rock art

The Cederberg features hundreds of rocky overhangs and caves with fine examples of rock art dating back between 300 and 6 000 years. Matjesrivier offers easy access to magnificent rock formations and rock art at Truitjeskraal and the Stadsaal cave with its famous elephant paintings.

The interpretive trail at Truitjeskraal will take visitors on a historical journey through the San and Khoekhoe cultures span thousands of years. Permits are required to visit the Stadsaal cave and Truitjeskraal, available from CapeNature Tourism Offices in Cederberg as well as select partners. Rock art is very sensitive to damage and is protected by the National Heritage Resources Act no.25 of 1999. Vandals who deface rock paintings face severe penalties or arrest.

Facilities



The peaceful atmosphere of the Algeria campsite has broad appeal. Here, 48 campsites are situated along the banks of the Rondegat River. Algeria also offers 8 chalets, Boshersberge have 5. Boshersberge are on Solar Power, ranging from fully equipped to comfortable basic accommodation, all close to the Rondegat River and its swimming holes.

The more basic Kliphuis campsite is located on the Pakhuis Pass on the flower route to Biedouw Valley and Wupperthal. This campsite has 14 spots under shady trees along the Kliphuis River. Accommodation is also available in three chalets. Set against the backdrop of the famous Rocklands bouldering site, it is the perfect spot for climbing enthusiasts. The wilderness is divided into utilisation zones, which helps to maintain the unspoilt atmosphere and limits the impact of visitors. Groups are limited to a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 persons per group. Visitors are urged to book well in advance to avoid disappointment.

Conservation

One of the restoration projects that CapeNature has embarked on, with several partners and volunteers, is Cedar tree propagation and planting. In recent times, climate change, runaway fires and over harvesting have been contributing to the decline in Cedar Tree survival.

The Cederberg Complex forms the core of a leopard management area established in 1988. This area includes neighbouring private land and is managed in collaboration with landowners and researchers. The aim of the initiative is to, through raising awareness of the critical role of leopards in the ecosystem, as well as promoting alternative predator management and livestock protection, ensure the persistence of healthy leopard populations in the Cederberg.

Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE
087 087 3968

RESERVATIONS
087 087 8250

EMERGENCIES
082 453 3766

Gate times

07h30 - 16h00

Overnight visitors may occupy accommodation from 14h00 on the day of arrival and need to vacate accommodation by 10h00 on the day of departure. No pets or firearms are allowed.

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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



CEDERBERG
COMPLEX

LEGEND

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|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Reserve boundaries |  | Towns |
|  | National road |  | Places |
|  | Roads |  | Geological features |
|  | Jeep track |  | Mountain peaks |
|  | Trails |  | Information |
|  | Rivers | | |

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

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