

# VROLIJKHEID NATURE RESERVE

## Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE  
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RESERVATIONS  
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Gate times  
07h30 - 16h00

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## “Vrolijkheid”

means merriment, or mirth, and it's easy to see how the place got its name. Every spring, the reserve bursts into a joyfully exuberant splash of colour, as bright orange botterblom daisies light up the stark, rocky landscape.

Vrolijkheid is a happy place for hikers and birdwatchers, as well as for those who want to do nothing more than immerse themselves in the particular charms of the little Karoo. Just 15km south of Robertson on the road to

McGregor, and with fully equipped cottages, the reserve is an ideal base from which to explore the surrounding towns, although many visitors find that the delights of Vrolijkheid more than fulfil their holiday happiness requirements.

From picnicking, day hikes and mountain biking, to putt-putt and tennis for guests staying overnight in the cottages, the reserve offers enough to keep even the most demanding visitor happy.

## Climate



Vrolijkheid Nature Reserve lies in a winter rainfall area with cold, wet winters and dry, hot summers. Summer temperatures are high and in January vary from 30–40°C. Occasional north-western berg winds may intensify the heat. The wettest months are from April to August. Mist is common during the winter in the low-lying areas. There may be light frost on winter nights.

## Flora



The vegetation in this rocky part of the Little Karoo is known as arid Robertson Karoo. Succulents dominate, including numerous dwarf trees and shrubs such as guarri, karee and melkbos, while grasses are scarce. Patches of mountain renosterveld are found on the higher ridges and hills, and sweet-thorn trees along the seasonal watercourses. Sheets of botterblom daisies create a splash of orange in spring.

## Fauna



Klipspringer, grysbok, and grey rhebuck are common at Vrolijkheid. Caracal (rooiikat) also occur but are rarely seen. The only mammal species of conservation concern that has been recorded on the reserve is the honey badger which has been listed as near threatened. The Robertson Karoo represents the north-eastern distribution limit of Cape gerbil, Cape mole-rat and Greater red musk shrew.



Birds are well represented, with a total of 189 species having been recorded for the reserve, including the jackal buzzard, African and pale chanting goshawk and the spectacular African fish eagles. The dams on the reserve also attract a variety of waterbirds.



Amphibians and reptiles are abundant, with a particular highlight being the rare Robertson dwarf chameleon. Species lists are available at the reserve entrance and office.

## Activities

There is plenty to see and do at Vrolijkheid, including various hiking trails (including a Braille Trail for visually impaired visitors), mountain bike routes, a picnicking area, and bird hides which can be accessed via wheelchair-friendly boardwalks. Overnight guests have access to a putt-putt course, tennis court, outdoor gym equipment, kids play jungle gym and swimming pool which provide fun for the whole family.



There are four day trails on the reserve each offering hikers something different in terms of scenery, habitats and birdlife. In summer, hikers should set out early in the morning to avoid walking during the heat of the day. Trails may be closed at certain times of the year depending on the weather conditions (see day trails map overleaf).



Vrolijkheid has a scenic 8km mountain bike trail that meanders through the reserve. The trail takes about an hour to complete. We suggest you start early, as the region may get extremely hot around midday. Please stay on the marked route.



Vrolijkheid has a picnic area near the entrance, where visitors can enjoy the reserve's tranquil beauty.



Vrolijkheid has a wheelchair-friendly boardwalk and bird hides allow visitors to enjoy the reserve's many bird species, including the pale chanting goshawk and the African fish eagle.

## Facilities



Vrolijkheid has five self-catering options. All units are fully equipped, sleep up to 8 people and have a braai area and wood-fired hot tub outside. One unit has its own swimming pool, while the others do not.



The Goshawk Eco-Venue can be booked for events and environmental programmes for spiritual, youth, cultural and school groups. Thirty overnight guests can be accommodated in 7 rondawels, with a hall, lapa and kitchen.

Please note: no firewood allowed, due to the current risk of infestation of our trees by the Shothole Borer Beetle. Eco-logs are sold on the reserve for fire usage.



A wedding and conference venue called Barn Owl (Isikhovha).

## 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.

## 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



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NATURE RESERVE

