

FAUNA AND FLORA

FAUNA

Rooipens

The angulated tortoise (Rooipens skilpad), common in the Southern Cape. The carapace is markedly convex. Males have a long, projecting nuchal scute below the neck. The geometric tortoise, an endangered species, is found only in renosterveld.



Mongoose



The yellow and Cape grey mongoose are commonly seen crossing the road. Their major diet consists of eggs, insects, scorpions and reptiles. The yellow mongoose shows a great variety of colours depending on seasons and geographical areas. The Cape grey mongoose is usually solitary or in pairs. It favours rocky areas in savanna-type country.

Buck

The steenbok and grysbok are both solitary animals. The steenbok favours flat, open plains, and wanders around during the day. The grysbok inhabits scrubby country often near the foot of hills. When threatened, it prefers to lie flat rather than run.



Cape Hare

Predominantly nocturnal, they may be seen at dawn and dusk foraging for food. They spend their daylight hours lying in shallow depressions at the base of shrubs, which provide camouflage against predators. They feed mostly on new growth of various grass species..

Bat Eared Fox

More often seen dead on the road, this shy nocturnal fox lives in pairs and small groups. It may sometimes be seen on overcast days foraging for food. Foxes are monogamous. Their main diet consists of insects, mice, small reptiles and scorpions.



FLORA

Bitter aloe (*Aloe ferox*)

The bitter aloe thrives on the slopes of hills, it flowers in June/July when the hillsides appear to be on fire. Shrike and sunbirds are often seen feeding on the bright orange flowers. This protected species is cultivated for its juice which is used medicinally.



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Milk wood (*Sideroxylon inerme*)



The milk wood grows predominantly along the coast eastwards from Cape Town. It is a low, gnarled evergreen with glossy green leaves. After flowering a bitter fruit is produced which is favoured by a variety of birds. It is common along the banks of the Breede River. The milk wood is a protected species and a permit is required from Cape Nature Conservation for cutting, pruning or removal.

Lowland Fynbos

The Cape Floral Kingdom is the smallest of the world's six plant kingdoms, covering only 0,4% of the earth's surface. It has the greatest diversity of species, according to size, boasting 8,600 species, of which 68% are endemic. Fynbos thrives in poor soil and supports much of the endemic amphibian, bird and mammal species. Protea's, Erica's, Restio's everlastings, Renosterbo's and Buchus are common in Fynbos vegetation. Many Fynbos species are localised in their distribution. As many as 1 700 plant species found in fynbos are listed in the Red Data book as been close to extinction. Alien vegetation and uncontrolled fires are the biggest threat to this unique vegetation.



Renosterveld



Renosterveld is a unique biome which is characterised by the high proportion of grasses and members of the daisy family. It is also rich in bulbous plants, chiefly of the iris, lily and orchid family. There are few endemics to find in renosterveld. It is confined to fine grained fertile soil, as a result most areas are ploughed or used for grazing. However, grazing and fire are crucial elements for the survival of this biome. The Renosterveld in this area is 70% of that found in the Western Cape. The geometric tortoise is found only in this vegetation type.

Alien Vegetation



Invasion by alien vegetation is a major threat to Fynbos and Renosterveld. In the Lower Breede River common alien invasive species are sesbania, black wattle, water hyacinth and rooikrans. Biological controls have been instituted for black wattle and rooikrans. It is everyone's responsibility to remove these pests. Don't rely on others to do it, do it yourself.