

## Bontebok National Park Access for Mobility Impaired Guests



Bontebok



SA's National Bird – the Blue Crane



Breede River

**Bontebok** National Park is the country's smallest national park, but it played a huge role in conservation - saving the antelope of the same name from extinction. The park is scenically beautiful – with the Langeberg Mountain Range to the north and the Breede River flanking the park to the west, the park also plays an important role in conserving endangered fynbos and Coastal Renosterveld, both part of the Cape Floral Kingdom which has World Heritage Status. The park is located on the N2 just outside the town of Swellendam. It is an excellent destination for a weekend getaway but also a great transit destination to break the journey for people driving between Cape Town and the Garden Route. Apart from the Bontebok (which once numbered 17 individuals and now the park is home to around 300 of these beautiful antelope, the park hosts around 200 bird species including striking species such as Blue Crane (South Africa's National Bird), Denham's Bustard, Secretarybird and Cape Sugarbird.



Bontebok calf



Aloe proliferation



Red Hartebeest

The entrance into the park is achieved by driving through an open gate which is often unattended. One does not have to disembark until one gets to the park's reception building. Parking is open and space is not a problem. There is however heavy gravel to traverse and the entrance into the reception building is up a considerable step. This step is not really visible in the photo left.



**Accessible Accommodation:** The park's accommodation is at **Lang Elsie's Kraal Rest Camp** which is very picturesque on the banks of the Breede River. The units are made of wood and stone and fit the environment well. The camp has two 2-bed accommodation units (with an additional sleeper couch ideal for children) that have accessible facilities and these units are very comfortable from an access perspective. The accessible units are numbers 1 and 10.





The accessible units have ample open parking on relatively flat and firm ground. The view from the units of the river is beautiful.



The access ramp (unit 10 is shown here) is long but the surface is firm, the width wide and the gradient moderate. There is no kick plate or rail to stop a person rolling off the side, so care must be taken when ascending or descending the ramp not to fall off the side.



The main entrance door is narrower than ideal and the small ridge of the door frame may bother some wheelchair users. If a wheelchair is too wide for this entrance, a wider entrance is available on the veranda.



The units' decks are wide enough to allow for ease of movement in a wheelchair. The outside table is not the most accessible, but the side portions can be used. The braai facility folds down nicely to allow a wheelchair user to be able to light a fire and cook their meat easily.



The bedroom has beds of good height with sufficient space between them for the passage of a wheelchair. The sleeper couch (right) is more suitable for children.



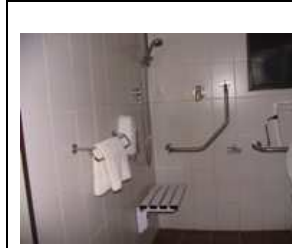
The units' kitchens have fold down tables that offer good clearance when assembled. The sink and hotplates (below right) do not have any clearance provided beneath them though and are not as comfortable to use.



The units' wardrobes (left) are pretty easy to open for someone in a wheelchair, but the rail is a little too high to reach easily



The door to the units' ablutions is wider than the standard door and ideal for wheelchair passage. It has also been fitted with a grab handle to enable a person to close the door behind them. However this is not needed currently as the door is spring loaded



The roll-in shower has a well placed adjacent dog leg rail, but there is no vertical rail on the outer side of the shower, the seat that has been used is too narrow for a person to sit on safely and comfortably and the shower pipe and head are on the wall behind a seated person instead of on the adjacent wall above the dog leg rail.



The toilets have grab rails in the correct position. The basin although fitted with lever taps is just on the far side of being within reach from the toilet.

**Activities and Facilities:** The park's web pages list the following **activities** on offer in the park: Birding; Game viewing from own vehicle; three nature-hiking trails, starting and ending in the rest camp area for overnights and old pump house for day visitors; bathing in the Breede River – in the Rest Camp Area and at Die Stroom; angling in the Breede River - anglers must be in possession of a valid angling permit, available for purchase at Park reception; canoeing/ kayaking in the Breede River, with own equipment; biking opportunities available, regular and mountain biking, to increase with Park's project. Only birding, game viewing and angling can be considered potentially accessible activities. Of the **facilities** listed ... Picnic and braai/barbecue sites with ablution facilities are available for day and overnight visitors; shop at the park entrance supplies basic commodities like beer, snacks and soft drinks and curios can be purchased (Fresh produce and other groceries are available in Swellendam); the nearest fuel supply is in the town of Swellendam; a conference facility is now available, ... assistance is needed to get into the shop, but most of the others will be fine for people with mobility challenges.