

Hardap Recreation Resort



Hardap is well known as an angler's paradise, with annual competitions held for enthusiasts. But few know that the small Hardap Game Reserve is a haven for black rhino and that the dam and surroundings accommodate one of Namibia's most strategic great-white-pelican breeding colonies and a thriving freshwater fish institute that is supporting the country's growing aquaculture industry.

Situated about 24 km from the town of Mariental, the Hardap Recreation Resort encompasses Namibia's largest dam, Hardap, which is on the Fish River. Although first

investigations were carried as early as 1897, construction commenced in 1960 and the dam was completed in 1963. It has a capacity of 320 million m³ and a surface area of 25 km².

There is a game park on the southern side of the dam. In 1990 black rhino were translocated from the Kunene Region into this reserve. A wide variety of birds occur in the Hardap region, with 284 species recorded to date. The Hardap Freshwater Fish Institute provides fish farms, other state-controlled dams and aquaculture projects with fingerlings for breeding and conducts research.

FACT FILE

Park size:	252 km ²
Proclaimed:	1968
Natural features:	Dominated by the Hardap Dam, the Fish and the Groot Komatsas rivers. Open savannah with mountainous areas such as the Gemsbok Plateau.
Vegetation:	Nama Karoo Biome. Vegetation type: Dwarf Shrubland. Shepherd's tree (<i>Boscia albitrunca</i>), camel-thorn (<i>Acacia erioloba</i>), green-hair tree (<i>Parkinsonia africana</i>) and buffalo-thorn (<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>).
Wildlife:	Black rhino, kudu, gemsbok, Hartmann's mountain zebra, springbok, red hartebeest. The 284 bird species recorded here include the great white pelican, yellow-billed stork, osprey, Bradfield's swift and Stark's lark.
Tourism:	Fresh-water angling. Water sports and boating, 9-km and 15-km hiking trails. Game drives. Bird-watching. Rest camp with bungalows and caravan park. Restaurant and shop. Aquarium. Angling permits obtained at camp office.

Map



Hardap Recreation Resort is located 24 kilometres from Mariental in southern Namibia.

Conservation successes

In 1990 four black rhino were translocated from the Kunene Region into the reserve. This small population represents the southernmost distribution of black rhino in Namibia.

Key management issues

People from settlements alongside the eastern boundary of the park associated with crop production leave snares in the park for small antelope.

Aging infrastructure such as roads and equipment such as vehicles hamper tourism and park maintenance. The park has a small budget and is not well marketed.

Future plans

There are plans to upgrade the entrance gate and to change the entrance to the game park. The hiking trails will be upgraded. A fact sheet will soon be produced for visitors to the game park.