

Waterberg Plateau Park



Towering sandstone cliffs, dinosaur footprints, mysterious rock engravings and some of Namibia's most rare and valuable game species are synonymous with the Waterberg Plateau Park.

In 1904, Waterberg was the scene of a battle between Herero warriors and German colonial forces. The Herero fighters suffered a bitter defeat against their oppressors and thousands of lives were lost in the ensuing retreat across the Omaheke Region into Botswana.

Proclaimed as a sanctuary for rare and endangered game species, Waterberg has played a vital role in breeding species for the restocking of other parks and conservation areas. The area is also home to the last remaining population of Cape vultures in Namibia.

The park has been zoned into management areas for wilderness, trophy hunting and tourism. The Bernabé de la Bat Rest Camp is one of Namibia's most visited resorts, while thousands of surrounding community members receive training at the Okatjikona Environmental Education Centre annually.

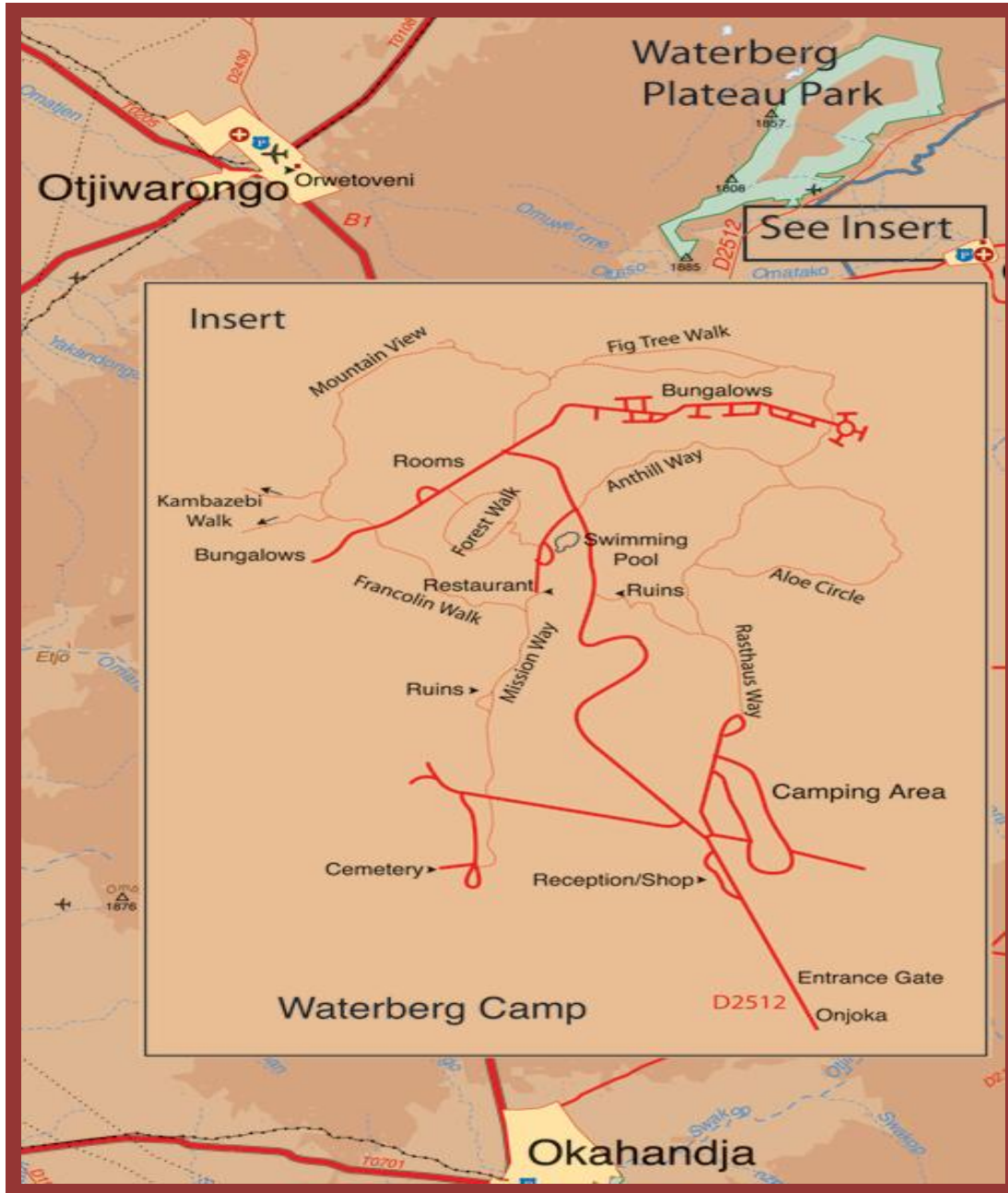
FACT FILE

Park size:	405 km ²
Date proclaimed:	1972
Natural features:	A 50-km-long porous sandstone mountain with abundant game, unique vegetation and a series of permanent springs at the foot of the plateau.
Vegetation:	Tree and Shrub Savannah Biome. Vegetation type: Northern Kalahari, Thornbush Shrubland. Leadwood tree (<i>Combretum imberbe</i>), silver terminalia (<i>Terminalia sericea</i>), kudu bush (<i>Combretum apiculatum</i>), a variety of acacias (<i>Acacia eriloba</i> , <i>A. erubescens</i> and <i>A. tortilis</i>), laurel fig (<i>Ficus ilicina</i>) and about 140 lichen species.
Wildlife:	Black and white rhino, buffalo, roan and sable antelope, eland, tsessebe, leopard, side-striped jackal. More than 200 bird species, including Hartlaub's francolin, Rüppell's parrot, Bradfield's swift, Monteiro's hornbill, Bradfield's hornbill, Carp's black tit, rockrunner, Cape vulture.

Tourism:

Rest camp with bungalows and camping. Restaurant, kiosk, shop and swimming pool. Guided drives on the plateau. A 48 km unguided hiking trail. Guided wilderness trails. Booking required for guided and unguided hiking trails on the plateau. Short walking trails within the resort.

Map



The Waterberg Plateau Park is located 60 kilometres east of Otjiwarongo and 300 kilometres north east of Windhoek.

Conservation successes

The park was initially proposed to protect eland, Africa's largest antelope, but, recognising the plateau's physical defences against human and livestock encroachment, conservationists soon introduced other endangered animals to establish securely protected breeding populations.

These include black and white rhinoceros, disease-free buffalo, and sable and roan antelope. All these species are on the increase and surplus populations are released regularly in other protected environments.

Over 200 species have been recorded in the park, ranging from love birds and parrots to secretary birds. In addition to hosting 33 species of birds of prey, including black eagles, the Waterberg has the highest density of peregrine falcons in Africa. It is also home to the last remaining breeding population of Cape vultures in Namibia. These are the rarest birds in Namibia with perhaps only ten remaining.

Of the eleven endemic bird species in the country, seven occur here. Look out for the rockrunner (*Achaetops pycnopygius*), Hartlaub's francolin (*Francolinus hartlaubi*), Rüppell's parrot (*Roicephalus rueppelli*), Bradfields's swift (*Apus bradfield*), Monteiro's hornbill (*Tockus monteiri*), Short-toed rock thrush (*Monticola brevipes*), and Carp's black tit (*Parus carpi*).

Key management issues

Staff are chiefly occupied with the maintenance of water points for game, fences and tourism control. A hunting concession exists within the park, and requires monitoring. Rare species, particularly white and black rhino, roan and sable antelope and disease-free buffalo require careful monitoring and management. Conservation of the last known breeding colony of Cape vultures in Namibia.

Future plans

The display at the vulture hide will be upgraded, and regular feeding will recommence. New staff accommodation is being constructed and the Okatjikona Environmental Education Centre is being renovated. The latter is due to reopen early in 2010.