This collection of field notes was compiled by:

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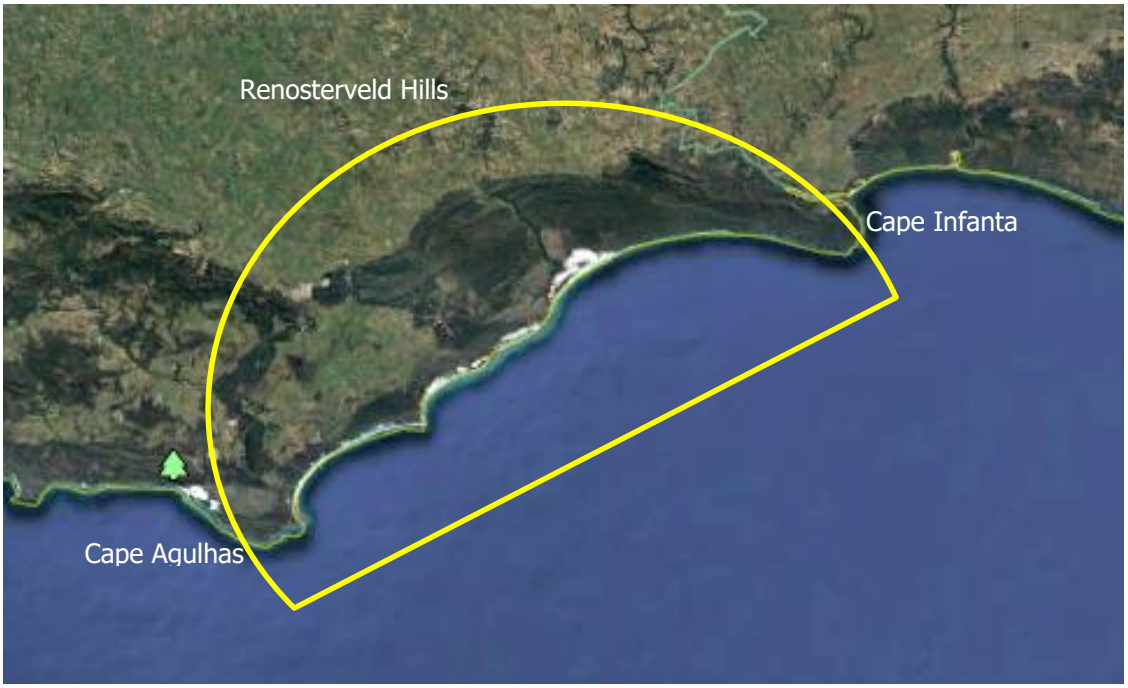
Readers who wish to comment on, or discuss, any subject, are welcome to contact Y. Eytam.

This collection of notes is the summary of detailed exploration of the area between Cape Agulhas in the west, Cape Infanta in the east, and the Renosterveld Hills (name suggested by the author) in the north, as shown in the figure below.



The study area is 'off the beaten track'; it did not receive the attention it deserves and was very little studied. It is a most interesting area, with a variety of landscapes and natural and man-made features, from tidal pools, coastal cliffs, rivers and dunes (fossil and shifting), through very old and recent rock formations, quartz intrusions, karst landforms and various types of crusts and soils, to Stone Age and Khoisan archaeological sites, as well as historical clay mines and stone-walled fish traps.

Vast sections of the area are inaccessible by car; most of the terrain is rugged and covered with thick vegetation and thus difficult to roam on foot; other sections are cultivated farmland. The Overberg Test Range occupies a large area SE of Bredasdorp and access to the coast and the southwest 'hard dunes' is denied. All the sections, except for public nature reserves, lie behind barbed wires, fences and gates, rendering the area seldom-visited and underexplored.

Previous studies

Geology: The geological mapping of the area between Stanford to Riversdale by J Malan and his colleagues in 1984 resulted in a set of maps (field sheets) in 1:50,000 scale, which form a part of the Riversdale geology map in 1:250,000. Malan later investigated the stratigraphy and the sedimentology of the Bredasdorp Group. Malan's very detailed work was published as an MSc thesis, submitted to the University of Cape Town, in 1990. Several, short papers, discussing the lithostratigraphy of each formation of the Bredasdorp Group were published in 1989 and 1991. A stratotype of the lowest formation of the Bredasdorp Group is located on WNR.

Karst landforms: The many karst features in De Hoop Nature Reserve were studied by the late Lin Russell. Her research was published as an MSc (1981) and a PhD (1990) theses, submitted to the University of Fort Hare. The late Prof Margaret Marker, of the UK, who also guided Lin Russell's research, published a paper on the karst of the De Hoop Nature Reserve in 2002.

Hydrology: The environmental factors and the hydrological regime of De Hoop Vlei were investigated by the late Shirley E Butcher. Her research was published as an MSc thesis (1993), submitted to the University of Cape Town. The investigation of the chemistry and the sediments of the vlei was published by Johan Lanz as an MSc thesis (1997), which was also submitted to the UCT.

Archaeology: Very few archaeological studies of the area have been conducted (about Stone Age caves and 20th and post-colonial fish-traps). Ann and Mike Scott, previous managers of the De Hoop Nature Reserve, published the book 'The People of De Hoop Nature Reserve' in 2002, which contains historical material about the early settlers in the area, and brings some information on the surrounding farms, the vlei and its hydrological regime.

Summary: The abovementioned works, 20 to 35 years old) served as background information to this study. Some of the abovementioned researchers are deceased and the others are not exploring the area anymore. [Several other studies, of the flora and fauna of the De Hoop greater area, were published during the last four decades, but they are out of the scope of this study]. All the above rendered the study area a nearly new territory to explore.

This study

This research is about the geography, geology, morphology, hydrology and archaeology of the area. The notes are based on many, many days of criss-crossing the area on foot, reaching points which were, until now, only the domains of herders, while collecting information and then reporting on it. The author made use of satellite images, which were not available to previous researchers. Many features have been described here for the first time. Only some observations on flora and fauna are mentioned.

This website

The objective of this website is to reveal the secrets of the area and tell about them in a way which uses more photographs than words, and which will appeal to all readers, not only scientists.

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The notes are short, mostly descriptive and do not intend to be lengthy scientific discussions. None of them presents a completed research. They pose more questions than answers and can be used as foundations for further debates and studies. Where information from other publications and websites was used, the authors were credited.

The author welcomes comments from readers and will debate any subject. It will also be possible for readers to add field notes which they have compiled, and for which they will be credited.

The site is in the process of being populated with field notes. As the author intends to revisit the features, the notes will be constantly amended and updated. The notes are arranged in twenty six chapters. Click '*Guide'* on the front page of the site*,* to see the full list of the field notes.

