

M. SALT RIVER GORGE

Field note M1. Overview

The Salt River, which drains most of the area between Caledon and the De Hoop Nature Reserve, flows southeastwardly and goes under the Bredasdorp – Potberg road, through the Salt River Gorge, into the de Hoop Vlei.

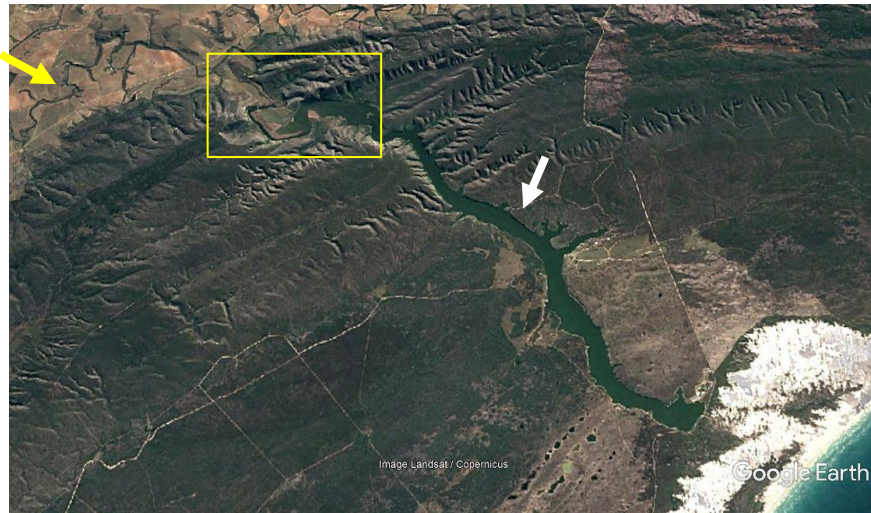


Figure 1. Satellite image showing the Salt River (yellow arrow), the Salt River Gorge (yellow box) and the De Hoop Vlei Gorge (white arrow).

The gorge is a central feature in the area. It contains a marsh and many different geological formations and morphological features, karst landforms and archaeological sites. As many features in the study area, it is nearly totally obscure.

The Salt River Gorge is the last section of the Salt River before it enters the De Hoop Vlei. Its name was given by the author, as it has no name on any map (It is not a true gorge, as it is wider than deep; nevertheless, the name will stay like that until a better name is suggested).

The marsh, contained within the gorge (named by the author the Salt River Marsh), is widely considered the north part of the De Hoop Vlei. The marsh is very shallow, and in years of poor rainfall it is dry, while the vlei still contains water (there are times, though, when the vlei is nearly totally dry) the marsh is not protected under the Ramsar Convention; see Chapter X). The Island area can be considered the east 'end' of the marsh. From that point to the southeast, the De Hoop Vlei is contained in the De Hoop Vlei Gorge.

The Salt River Gorge and the De Hoop Vlei Gorge may not be two parts of the same feature: the directions, dimensions, geology, tectonics and morphology of the gorges are quite different (see chapters F, N and W).

This chapter on the Salt River Gorge contains several Field Notes on the geology, morphology, hydrology and archaeology of the gorge. The many karst landforms (some of which are the most spectacular of their kind in the area) are described and discussed in Chapter E. Other features are discussed in the appendices (Chapters X and Y).

The Salt River gorge is located at the north end of the De Hoop Vlei Gorge (Figures 2 and 3).

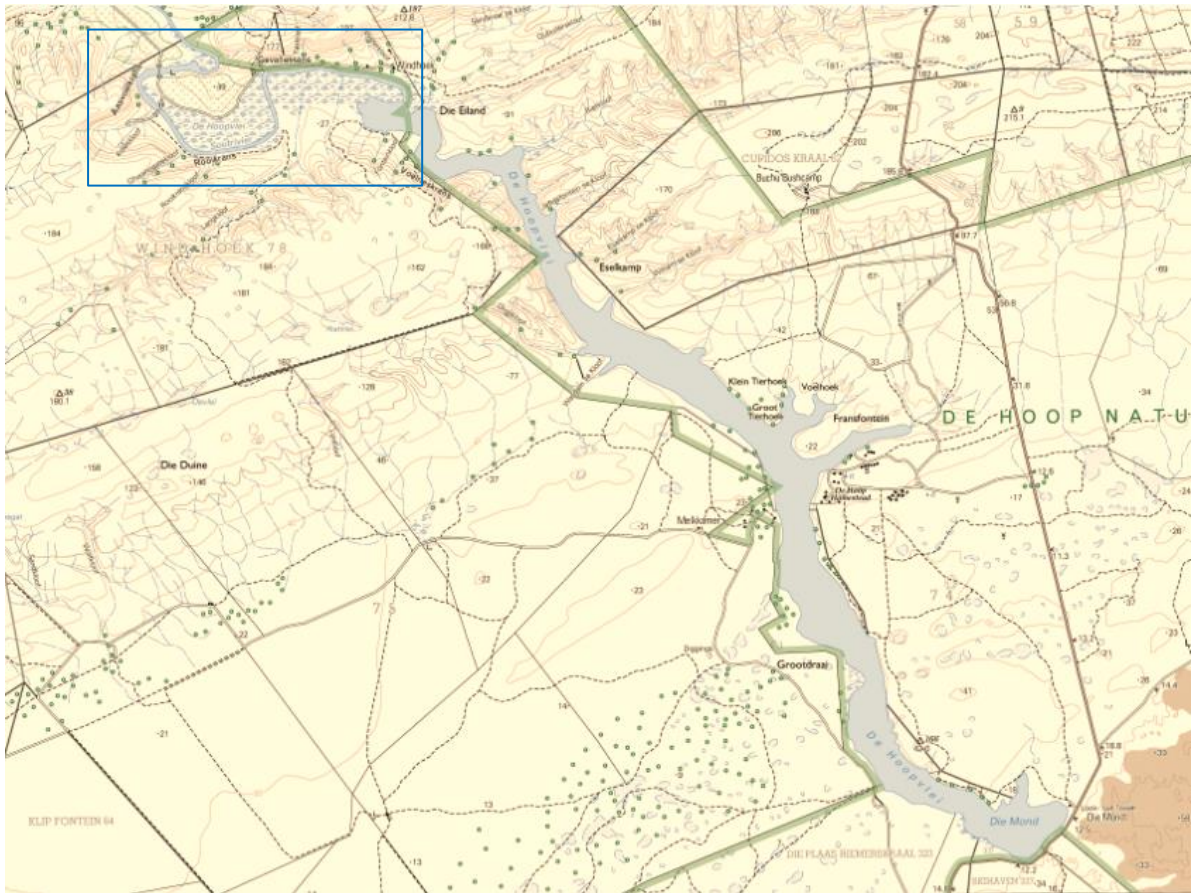


Figure 2. Topography map showing the Salt River Gorge (boxed, enlarged in Figure 3) and the De Hoop Vlei Gorge.

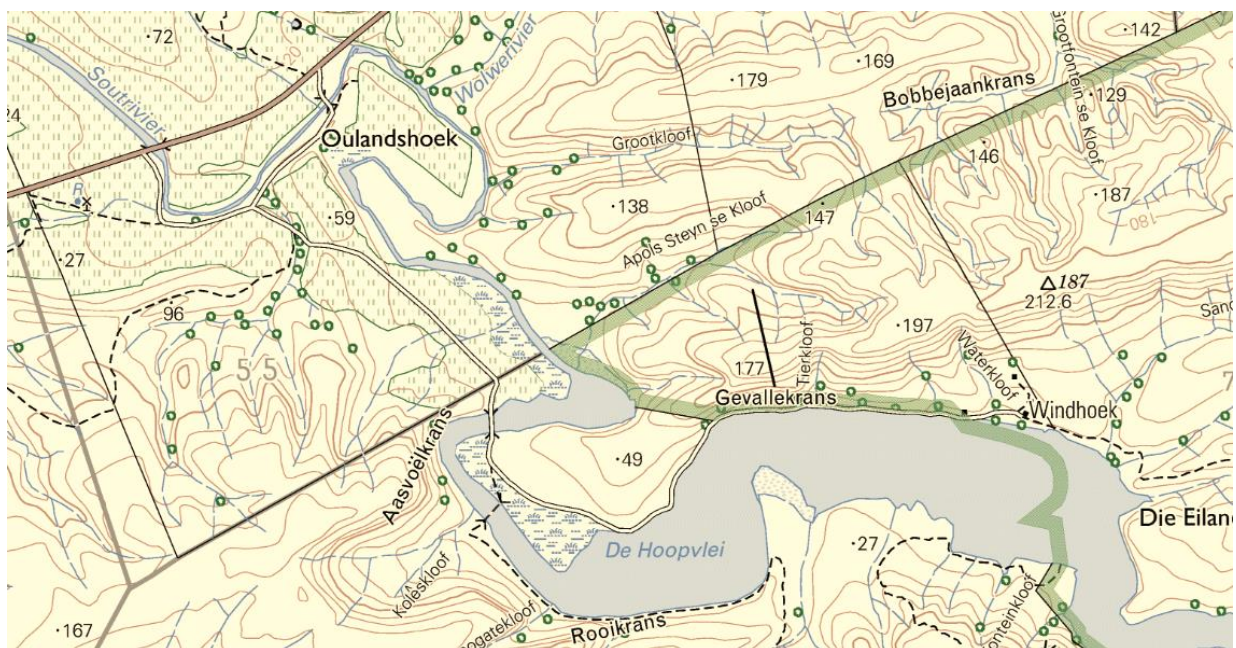


Figure 3. Topography map showing the Salt River Gorge.

The Salt River Gorge is located at the heart of the historic Windhoek Farm (Figures 5 and 6).

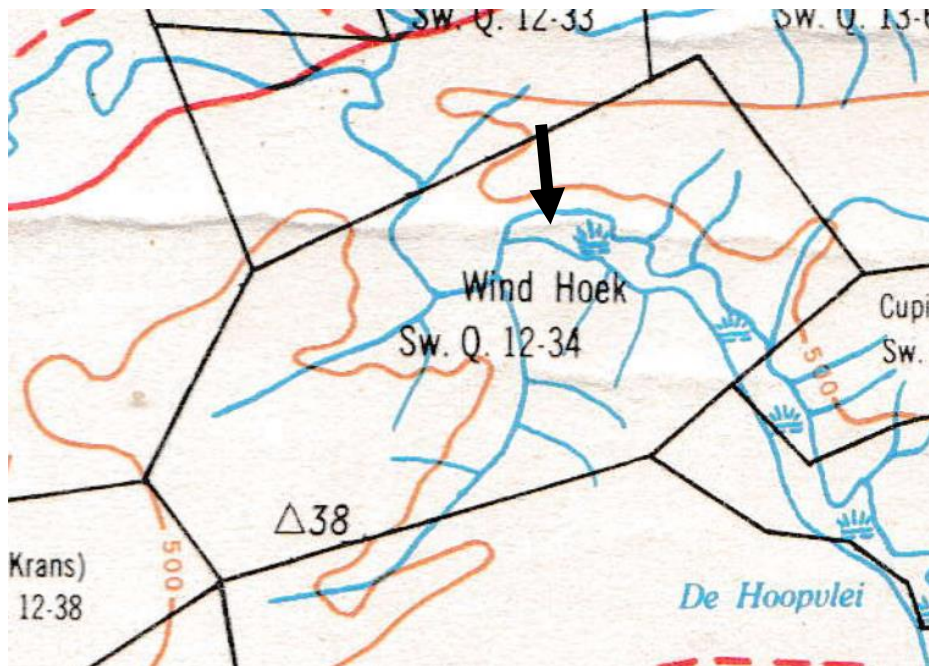


Figure 4. Topography map (3420 Riversdale Sheet at 1:250,000 from 1961) showing the Salt River Gorge (black arrow) within the boundaries of the historic Windhoek Farm.



Figure 5. Satellite image of the De Hoop area with farm boundaries. Arrow points to the remainder of the Windhoek Farm, which contains the Salt River Gorge. This farm is now privately owned; the name was changed to Vogel Revier (German spelling).

High relief topography characterises the gorge and its surrounds (Figures 6 and 7). The name Riverband Hill was given by the author.



Figure 6. Topographic map showing the relief of the Salt River Gorge.



Figure 7. The Salt River Gorge. View to the east from the top of Koleskloof.