

I. HEUNINGNES AND KARS RIVERS

Field Note 15a. Kars River Gorge - Morphology

The Kars River runs eastwards from an area ~20 km west of Napier. Northeast of Bredasdorp it turns to the south and goes through a gorge in the Hard Dunes (Figure 1). The morphology of the gorge is the subject of this Field Note.



Figure 1. Satellite image of the middle part of the Kars River near Bredasdorp. The box, enlarged in Figure 2, contains the gorge.

The Kars River Gorge is ~4 km long and ~1.2 km wide (Figures 2 and 3). It is not a true gorge, as its width is larger than the height of its 'walls' which also do not mirror each other.



Figure 2. Satellite image of the Kars River Gorge.



Figure 3. Topography map of the Kars River Gorge. Arrows point to an ancient floodplain (see Figure 10).

The 'walls' of the Kars River Gorge (Figures 4 to 7) are different from each other, and the east 'wall' is lower than the west 'wall', which raise the question whether the gorge was formed as a true river incision, or whether tectonic forces were at play. [A similar question is asked about the formation of the Salt River Gorge, some 25 km to the east (Chapter M). The formation of these gorges is discussed in Chapter W].



Figure 4. View to the north entrance of the Kars River Gorge.



Figure 5. View to the southwest on the west 'wall' of the Kars River Gorge.



Figure 6. View to the west to the northern section of the west 'wall' of the Kars Rive Gorge.



Figure 7. Views to the west 'wall' of the Kars River Gorge. Top – to the southwest, from the north end; bottom – to the northwest, from the south end.

The karst landforms around the Kars River Gorge have only been identified on the west 'wall' (Figures 8 and 9). They are not as developed and spectacular as those within and around the Salt River Gorge (see Chapter M), and they are not present on the east 'wall' of the gorge.



Figure 8. Views on the north section of the west 'wall'.



Figure 9. View into a ravine with karst landforms, at the north section of the west 'wall'. Top – to the west, from the east side of the gorge; bottom – to the southeast, from a closer point, on the west side of the gorge.

An ancient flood plain, filled with sediments and perfectly flat, constitutes the floor of the northern section of the gorge (Figure 10).



Figure 10. View on the flood plain in the northern section of the Kars River Gorge.

The ancient milkwood tree, at the north entrance of the gorge (next to the Rhenosterfontein farmhouse) has a National Monument status (Figure 11).

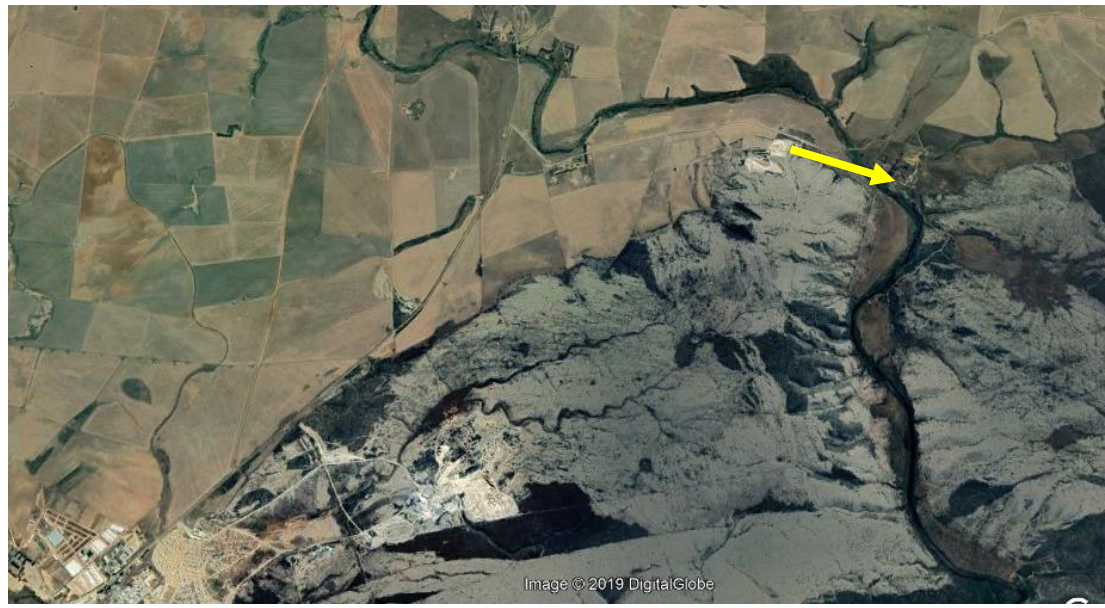


Figure 11. The old milkwood tree (arrow) on the Rhenosterfontein Farm, north of Bredasdorp. Top – satellite image of the area (Bredasdorp is at the bottom-left corner); middle: left - the sign on the R319, at the turn-off to the farmhouse and the gorge; right - the plaque in front of the tree; bottom - the tree and the plaque. (See also Chapter B and Appendix X).