

N. DE HOOP VLEI GORGE

Desk Note N8b. Hydrology – De Hoop Vlei course and outlet - 19th century



Map of the area from 1852.

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The question which is often asked, is whether the Salt River (Sout Rivier) had an outlet into the sea in historical times. On some maps from the 19th century the De Hoop Vlei is connected to the sea, and on other maps it is not (Figures 1 to 7). The accuracy of these maps is very poor, as one can judge by the locations of some places, the courses of rivers and the shape of the coastline and other features.

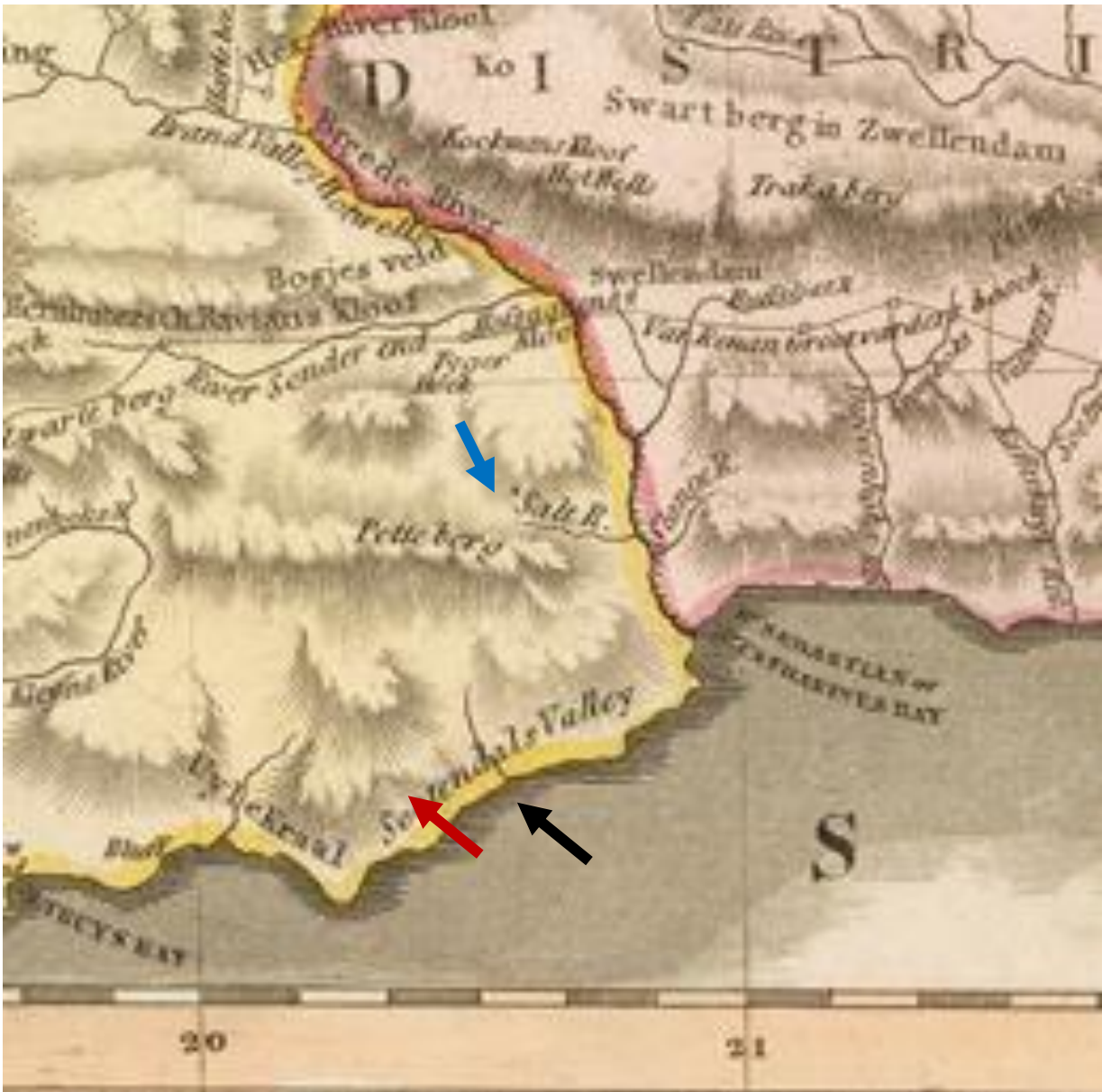


Figure 1. John Thomson, 1802: North Africa [with] South Africa. A river without a name (black arrow), probably today’s Salt River, runs into the sea. (The name Salt River – blue arrow - was given to a tributary of the Breede River). The entire coast is named here Soetendals Valley. Red arrow points to the location of the Soetendals Lake.



Figure 2. J. Arrowsmith, 1834: Cape of Good Hope. The De Hoop Vlei (arrow), named here Zoetendals R Valley), is a lake with no outlet to the sea.



Figure 3. Colonial Office, 1849: South Africa. The De Hoop Vlei (arrow) runs into the sea.



Figure 4. John Thalis, 1851: Cape Colony. The De Hoop Vlei (named here Zoetendal Val, arrow) is a lake with no outlet to the sea.



Figure 5. Archibald Fullarton & Co, ca 1870: From Official & Other Authentic Sources. The Salt River (Zout R, arrow) runs to the sea.



Figure 6. Adamantia. The Diamond Gold Fields of South Africa by James Wyld Geographer to the Queen, 1874. The De Hoop Vlei (arrow) is a lake with no outlet to the sea.



Figure 7. Part of British Admiralty nautical chart, Cape Agulhas to Mossel Bay, 1920. The De Hoop Vlei is depicted very much like it is nowadays.

The maps shown above, and probably other historical maps, do not provide conclusive answer to the question about the Salt River outlet to the sea during the 19th century. The shape of the vlei is different on the various maps – as a result of inaccurate mapping and / or the oscillations of the vlei water level. Nevertheless, during some floods the river flowed into the sea, as described in Field Note N8b.