

N. DE HOOP VLEI GORGE

Field note N8g. Hydrology - Disappearing vlei



A view of the dry De Hoop Vlei.

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The De Hoop Vlei water level changes constantly as a function of the rainfall in the catchment area of the Salt River. The vlei was flooded in 2013-14 (Figure 1). Since then, and until May 2021, the water level was receding and bottom features protruded the water (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Satellite image of the flooded vlei.



Figure 2. When the water level in the vlei recedes, an 'island' emerges in the middle of the vlei, between the resort and Melkkamer.

When the vlei and the Salt River Marsh are full, kayaking is the only way to get to the other side of the Salt River Gorge and the banks of the De Hoop Vlei Gorge (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Top – leaving the eastern shore. Bottom – arriving at the west bank.



Figure 4. View to the west along the Salt River Gorge when there was no water in the vlei. An unknown canoe downstream from The Island.



Figure 5. View to the north along the De Hoop Vlei Gorge.



Figure 6. View across the De Hoop Vlei Gorge.



Figure 7. Mud cracks.



Figure 8. Mud cracks. The mud chunks on the right were unnaturally overturned.



Figure 9. Top, middle and bottom - mud cracks.