

Witsand Nature Reserve Information Centre: +27 (0)83 234 7573

More than 170 species of Birds

The avid birdwatcher's skills will be put to the test by the abundance of LBJ's. Witsand offers an interesting combination of arid region and bushveld birds to keep from the complete novice to the compulsive twitcher happy. We have a well positioned sunken bird-hide from where one can watch birds (particularly Sandgrouse) and game at their level coming to drink at a waterpoint just a few metres away. The hide has proven to be a great asset to the reserve.

The most significant birds are

- Pygmy Falcon (Africa's smallest raptor)
- Sociable Weavers (with their huge nests)
- Kori Bustard (biggest flying bird in Africa)
- Secretary Bird
- Crimson-Breasted Boubou or Shrike
- Lilac-Breasted Roller and
- Three species of Sandgrouse



Wildlife

Gemsbok, Red Hartebeest, Springbok, Duiker and Steenbok are abundant on the reserve. Since Witsand has enjoyed conservation status, a small herd of Kudu has established itself on the reserve. The reintroduction of additional species will be considered once the natural vegetation has recovered sufficiently. Nevertheless, some particularly rare and interesting species, such as Pangolin and Aardvark occur on the reserve, and the visitor to Witsand can never be sure of what he or she may be likely (or fortunate enough) to see! Many species show adaptations typical of species living in hot desert environments. This is particularly true of the many beetles and other insects found in the dunes.

Wildlife to spot in the daytime:

Springbok, Common Duiker, Steenbok, Gemsbok (Oryx), Red Hartebeest, Ground Squirrels and Suricate (Meerkat/stokstaart)

Wildlife to spot at night:

Ground Pangolin, Porcupine, Aardvark, Aardwolf, Bat-eared Fox, Cape Fox, Genet, Spring Hare and Owls



Important Tips

1. Typical of desert environs, Witsand can be extremely hot in summer and cold in winter. Please bear these extremes in mind when setting out on a hike.
2. Always carry a water bottle.
3. Heat exhaustion is a very real danger in summer. Avoid hiking during the hottest time of the day.
4. Please respect the forces of nature and stay out of the dunes during thunderstorms! Bear this in mind when setting out on your hike.
5. The white sand reflects a great deal of heat and one may suffer severe sunburn even whilst wearing a hat. A high SP factor sun cream is advisable.
6. Wear closed shoes when walking around at night, when scorpions emerge from their burrows to forage. Scorpion stings can be lethal, and at best, are extremely painful. A good camping habit is to knock your shoes out before slipping your feet into them in the morning. You just never know who has taken a liking to the warm, dark interior of your hiking boot!
7. In summer, paper wasps vehemently defend their paper-like nests, and may attack passers-by without provocation. Be careful when passing through dense thickets and under the canopies of trees where the nests are found. Unlike bees, wasps can sting repeatedly.
8. Don't ignore the symptoms of any sting or bite if it goes beyond localised swelling and pain. Allergic reactions must receive medical attention without delay, especially if you are experiencing difficulties in breathing or feel nauseous.
9. A good idea is to tell someone where you will be heading, and approximately how long you envisage being away before you set out on a hike, especially if you are walking alone. If you wish, report to the tourist office and then remember to report back.
10. If you plan an afternoon walk, be sure to be back by sunset. The dunes can be disorientating at night.
11. Please feel free to approach us for more information.
12. And do share your sightings with us!

Note

- Gate hours 08h00 - 18h00.
- Vehicles are restricted to designated tourist roads.
- No motorbikes or quad bikes on the reserve.
- No pets allowed.
- No loud music/noise permitted.
- There is one public telephone on the premises (this is card operated).
- MTN reception / No Vodacom or Cell C reception.
- Right of Admission Reserved.
- THERE IS NO FUEL STATION AT WITSAND

What to Bring

- Sun Protection cream.
- Hat.
- Comfortable walking shoes.
- Insect repellent.
- Own liquor (Kiosk does not sell liquor).
- Fresh produce (Kiosk stocks tinned foods etc. but no fresh fruit or vegetables).
- Books/Board Games/Playing Cards.
- Selection of Field Guides available for use at the



Recommended route from Upington

- Estimated driving time is two and a half hours (220km).
- From Upington take the N8 (R64) to Groblershoop, approximately 110km.
- Before entering the town turn left towards Griquatown.
- Travel another 59km on this road.
- Turn left at the Witsand turnoff (road well sign-posted).
- From there another 45km gravel road to Witsand (follow the signs).