

MIDLANDS HIKING CLUB - HIKE REPORT - FEB 2025

LAKE ELAND GAME RESERVE, ORIBI GORGE



Hike Leader
Brian Henwood



All Fit and Ready for the Hike Adventure



Load Testing the Bridge on the Blue Route

The month of February is typically a hot and humid month with intermittent rainstorms and showers. The weather forecast for the week prior to our weekend was generally no rain but a warning of a thunderstorm on Saturday. Well, it so turned out that we had rain during the week and a sunny cool day on Saturday. Ideal conditions for our day hike.

We had planned to do a 5,7km hike around the lake on Friday afternoon. However, the high-water level in the Umzimkulwana River made the crossing of the causeway too dangerous. So, a gentle walk to the Chapel became a better alternative, albeit with a light drizzle.

Despite the drizzle we went ahead with the traditional braai. A braai drum and grid had been delivered to Donald's campsite by our hosts. He then kindly rigged up a tarpaulin and got the fire going. Thanks to the kind hospitality of Donald and Linda, we were also able to braai with them on Saturday evening.

But Saturday turned out to be a perfect day for our 15km hike, as you can see from all the smiles on the faces of the hikers. The first section was along the gravel road until we picked up the red and blue routes. These trail routes up to 40 km long are used by both hikers and cyclists.

We chose the route running along the top of the cliffs and up the valleys. It provided us with a continuum of scenic sites as we approached the upper end of the Oribi Gorge. We climbed until we reached the famous Zipline Office. Here you find people congregating in small groups to test their inherent levels of fear. Neville was suddenly showing a keen interest in the various Zipline options.

But we managed to drag him off to the Caves which are situated below the steep slopes of the Oribi Gorge. Some 283 steps later we were back on the path to the Suspension Bridge.

The Suspension Bridge and View Sites are very popular destinations. They not only test your fear of heights, but these are places to sit and relax and thoroughly absorb the beauty of our countryside.



Lined up for a Photo Rest



Taking a Breather in one of the Caves



A Distant View of Lake Eland and the Umzimkulwana River from the Cave Entrance



The 80 long Suspension Bridge gives you the most magnificent view of Oribi Gorge



If the Suspension Bridge is not Enough there is a Viewing Platform

We returned along the Blue Route through grassy plains teeming with wildebeest, blesbok, impala and zebra. What a happy ending!