



**FoDS MEMBERS HIKE
at RIETVLEI NATURE RESERVE**

Sunday
15th April 2018 08:00-12:00



PRESENT:

FoDS Members:- Martin & Margie Rutsch, Ralph & Chris Driver, Sue Inglesby, Terry Russel, Lora Foot & Courtney Russel, Teresa Agenbag + Sheldon & Lauren, Ingrid & Ed Grobbelaar + Wilmar, Corne & Donne Cilliers, Jan & Marie de la Rey. (18)

Nature Guide:- Madeleen van Schalkwyk & Student, Jana de Beer.

We met at The Rietvlei Coffee Shop at 07:30 where Madeleen was waiting for us. After signing the indemnity form, we started on our hike.



We walked in the direction of Otter Bridge through the veld past the holding camps where injured animals are treated, or received for whatever reason.

Before leaving the Coffee Shop Madeleen had demonstrated the hand signals she would be giving, warning us to keep her always in sight. On approaching Otter Bridge we were suddenly warned to keep low and very, very quiet.

We soon saw why. A small group of buffalo were grazing within spitting distance from our pathway!

We didn't even breathe. I kept a nearby tree in my sight, just in case....



Otter Bridge



5 Yellow Billed ducks not quite awake yet.

After Otter Bridge we walked along the sand road towards the Finfoot Hide. Here we saw a few water birds flying past:- Reed Cormorant, African Darter, and a White Egret. A Black Shouldered Kite was hovering over his prey!



Approaching Finfoot Hide.....



At Finfoot Hide we turned into the bush and this is what we saw:-



Spider webs – careful not to step on them!AND we thought we were looking at the Eland ...Seems they saw us first!

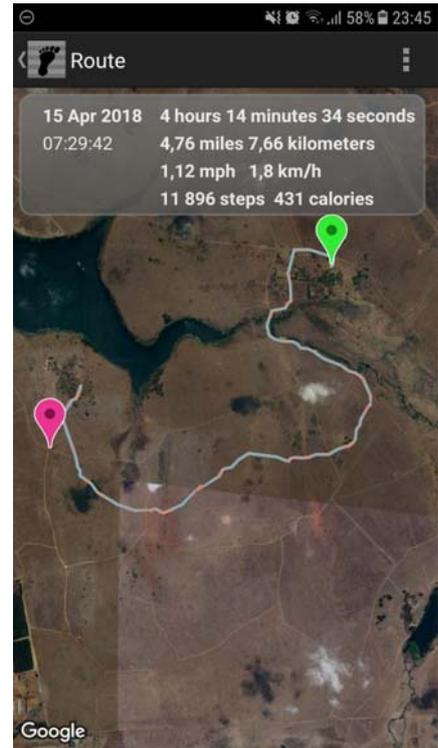




Beautiful Rietvlei Nature Reserveand a well deserved nibble break half way.



(Above) This plant which we could not identify, is *Aloysia Gratissima* var. *gratissima* (Verbenaceae) according to Braam van Wyk. It is invasive and was brought in by the Agricultural Research Council at Roodeplaat Dam to supply struggling honey bees with nectar. It seems to have escaped from that project somehow!



After quite a long walk, the Truck was called to take us back to the Coffee Shop.
See the ROUTE we walked, above right.

This was a most enjoyable hike. FoDS would like to thank Madeleen and Jana for being our guides, and Natalie Mike and Claudia for making it possible. It is much appreciated.

Regards,
Marie de la Rey
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