

## Hennops Hiking Trails – Gauteng Outing – April 2023



The much-anticipated Gauteng outing eventually took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, after many months of trying to get together, with a small but lively bunch of enthusiasts rearing to head off on the hike. The question was do we do 5 or do we brave the 10? As you'd expect, naturally, we elected to do the 10km.



We headed off across the water and the excitement was buzzing. So much chatter going on as we still had so much energy (and I guess, we were still very much in the forest vegetation, which meant we were still nice and cool). Stopping from time to time to take in the beauty of the area, and of course, to catch our breaths, there was never a moment that someone wasn't passing a witty comment, having us all in fits of laughter. One would find it hard to believe that for many of us, it was first time meeting each other. Family, is a word that comes to mind, right now. We all just sync and share in our passion for nature and wildlife.



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Continuing along the trail, we passed many of the iconic landmarks of the area, interesting caves, plants that attracted some who have a greater knowledge on this and even some cows, yes, they told us to look out for Zonkies along the route and all we could produce was cows. Cute ones though, hehe. Soon we realised we had lost a few of our members but then it became apparent that they had taken one of 2 escape routes along the way. A few times, I asked myself why I didn't do the same, but hey... Plod on and conquer this koppie that suddenly felt like Mt Everest before me. All in the name of good fun with awesome friends.



Checking the time, we soon figured that the trail was a lot longer than we anticipated and we opted to take the 2<sup>nd</sup> escape route. Downhill from here, yay!!! Heading back along the path, we stopped occasionally to look at birds and other interesting things. I was in awe at the knowledge of our birding members, who merely saw occasional flashes before them, and would rattle off an ID. I am sure it takes years of experience but one thing I can say: Our members know their stuff!!

Reaching the river, we had to brave the crossing, and scary is an understatement. As you can imagine, with anything like this, a few words of wisdom and a few profanities were shared. We all survived the crossing, however, some only just! Note to Robyn, take off the backpack before attempting the lift.



After what seemed like many more hours than it really was, we arrived back at base, where we found our lost members of the party casually relaxing with my parents who had very kindly remained at base



and prepared us some yummy, and much needed boerie rolls. Learning that poor Cathan had braved the hike after not quite getting over a bad case of the flu, we were grateful that there were indeed the escape routes that allowed him and couple of others to get back sooner.

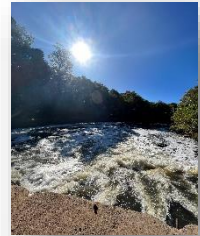
3.

We sat around and chatted about everything and anything really, but before long, the coolness of the pool was calling. Well for some anyway...



Guys braving the cold and girls paddling on the sidelines, we shared many more stories and bush experiences that once again had us in fit of laughter.

Soon the day was drawing to an end, and as the last of the members made their way home, we packed up and reflected on the day. Although not as many members as we had hoped joined, we had huge amounts of fun. We really hope that we can get to meet a lot more members at future outings, like this one. If you have a suggestion on a great outing destination for the Gauteng region, please get in touch with us as we'd love to plan these outings more frequently.



Written by Gabby Sykora