

# The Diamond Route

The Diamond Route is the culmination of a partnership between De Beers, the Oppenheimer family and BirdLife South Africa. The project is aimed at maximising the potential of properties owned by De Beers and the Oppenheimer family for conservation purposes. As a result of the project, around 250,000 ha of ecologically protected land has been opened to the public.

De Beers participation ensures that its landholdings play a key role in securing a positive environmental legacy for South Africa. Only 35,749 ha (or 3.72%) of De Beers 960,792 ha licence areas are actually disturbed by mining activities. This leaves significant tracts of protected, responsibly managed and biodiversity-rich land. Through the Diamond Route, this land is used to promote conservation research, environmental awareness and sustainable development. It also offers visitors unique opportunities to explore some of the best natural environments in South Africa.

## Biodiversity research projects

A wide range of research projects have been carried out on Diamond Route properties, covering mammals, birds, invertebrates, fish and reptiles. Examples include:

- Raptor research with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
- Cape Fox habitat fragmentation research with Oxford University
- Establishment of a research centre with the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology at the University of Cape Town
- Vulture research and conservation with the Hawk Conservancy Trust

## Community development projects

Diamond Route properties support a range of community development projects aimed at promoting local skills, economic growth, education and environmental awareness. Examples include:

- Eco-tourism, including hotels, tours and guiding
- Tourism internships for Ekangala Comprehensive High School students
- Hosting of field courses for the University of KwaZulu Natal
- Support of the African Organic Farming Foundation
- Support of the Transvaal Museum skills transfer project

[www.diamondroute.co.za](http://www.diamondroute.co.za)

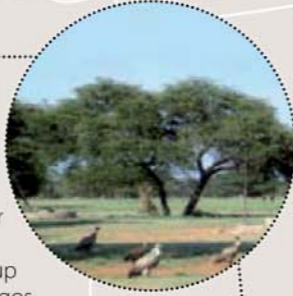
## Legend

○ Diamond Route Sites

\* Operation ceased in 2008

### Dronfield (12,500 ha)

Dronfield, which dates back to an 1887 land purchase by the De Beers Mining Company, was declared a nature reserve in 2004. It has been stocked with herds of Eland, Gemsbok, Blue Wildebeest and other animals from the De Beers-owned Rooipoort Nature Reserve. It enjoys up to 140 bird species, including Flamingos and White-Backed Vultures.



### Tswalu (100,000 ha)

The Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, which sits at the foot of the Korannaberg Mountains, is the largest privately owned reserve in South Africa. Conservation projects range from Butterflies to Mole-Rats and Black Rhino research.



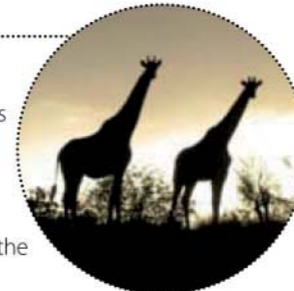
### Namaqualand (30,000 ha)

The Namaqualand reserve, which is formed from land set aside by Namaqualand Mines, is home to about 115 bird species. These include Kori, Ludwig's Bustard and the Southern Black Korhaan, as well as visitors such as the Malachite Sunbird.



### Rooipoort (40,000 ha)

The Rooipoort Nature Reserve dates back to 1893 and was declared a South African Natural Heritage Site in 1985. It enjoys up to 240 species of birds and a variety of mammals and reptiles. Several wildlife management strategies are in place, including the reintroduction of species into other conservation areas. The reserve has played a pivotal role in ensuring the survival of the Red Hartebeest and the Black Wildebeest.



### Venetia (36,000 ha)

The De Beers Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve forms part of the Mapungubwe National Park – a World Heritage Site. The reserve is home to more than 400 bird species, including the Senegal Coucal and the Tropical Boubou. It also enjoys many mammal species, including Lions, Elephants, Rhinos and Wild Dogs.



### Ezemvelo (10,000 ha)

The Ezemvelo Nature Reserve was donated by Nicky and Strilli Oppenheimer to the Maharishi Institute. Bird species include the Melodious Lark and the Marsh Owl. Animal species include Black Wildebeest, Red Hartebeest, White Rhino and Leopards.



### Brenthurst Gardens (16 ha)

The Brenthurst Estate is the historic home of the Oppenheimer family. Its gardens are rated as amongst the finest in the world – characterised by their indigenous and endemic plants.



### Benfontein (11,000 ha)

Originally bought by De Beers in 1891 for its diamond reserves, the Benfontein site is now dedicated to conservation. Species include Springbok, Ostrich and the Black Wildebeest – which De Beers has been instrumental in saving from extinction. The 260 bird species recorded here include Tawny Eagles and Greater Kestrels.



### Kimberley Big Hole

The Old Town of Northern Cape's capital includes a range of preserved or restored buildings from the city's heyday, including Barney Barnato's Boxing Academy, the diggers tavern and the De Beers railway coach used by Cecil John Rhodes.

