

Umgeni Valley - Dwarf's Dawdle

Hike leader: Katy Hart

24 January
2015



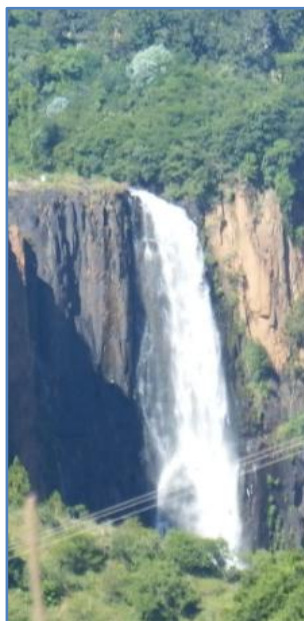
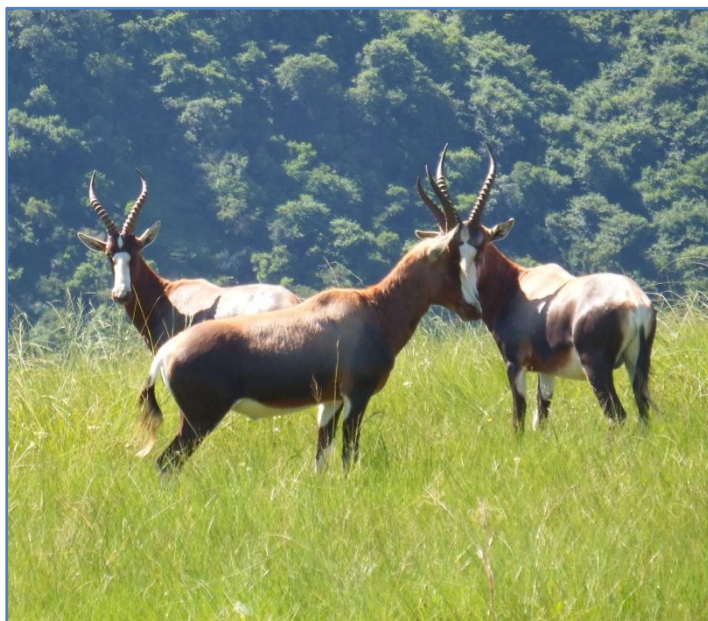
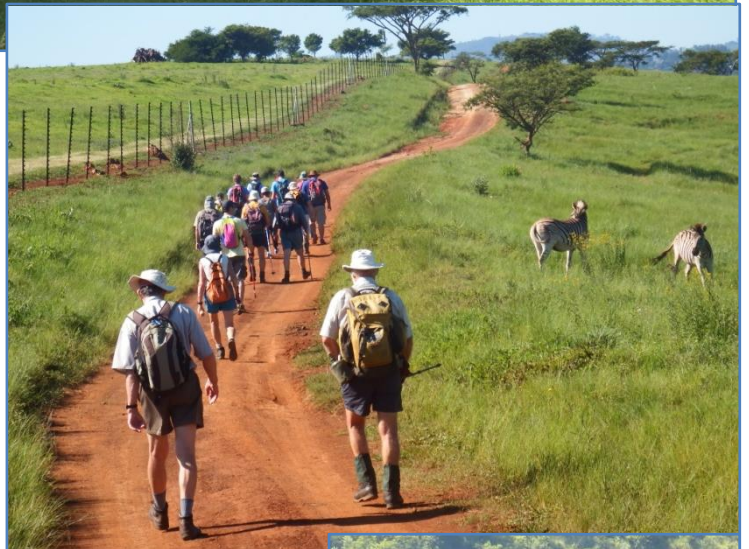
A nice big crowd - 18 of us - met at the Umgeni Valley office at 8am.

It was great to welcome some new and young faces, and to catch up with the regulars.



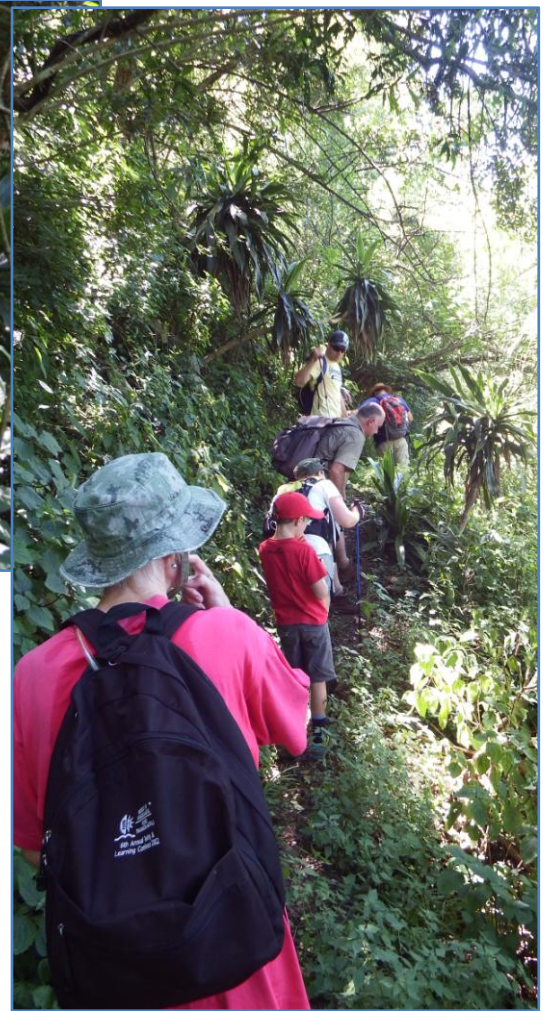
8h20 and we set off, the sun already blazing down upon us; sure to be a very hot day. It was an easy start, following the road for about 5kms passed numerous Zebra, a Wildebeest some Blesbuck, and two rather cute little Warthogs.

From the road we had a good view of the Howick Falls, flowing with gusto. We also passed some *Leonotis leonurus* (aka Wild Dagga) though no volunteers opting to try it!





At the start of the trail we stopped briefly for a sip of water before heading into the undergrowth. The path runs along the cliff bottom, the shrubbery keeping it shady but also a little stifling without the breeze. Leading the pack, I also had the unfortunate duty of clearing away the many extra scary looking spiders and their webs! A pleasant walk up and over rocks and tree roots and ducking under vine branches, stopping once or twice to take in the view of the cliffs above and the river and veld further down below until arriving at the ladder.



From the top of the ladder, a few hundred meters along a grassy path in the super hot sun (some having come more prepared for this than others), and we made it to our lunch spot... perfectly shady with a view and a breeze and table for a few.





After lunch it was a much shorter trip back to the start of the trail, this time following the grassy (and tick infested) path along the top of the cliff, though by now it was mid-day and beyond sweltering. Luckily Gill had driven down to the start of the trail as opposed to walking the first 5km, and offered a lift back to as many as could fit in her car. Charlie went with and returned in the Hyundai H100 to gather up the rest of us sissies. Hats off to Keith, Neville and Peter who stuck it out and walked the 5kms back to the cars!

Thank you all for joining me!

