Ts'ehlanyane National Park is a National Park in Lesotho. It is located in the Maloti Mountains in Leribe District, and is part of the larger Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation Area. This Lesotho northern park protects a high-altitude, 2,600-metre (8,500 ft) patch of rugged wilderness, including one of Lesotho’s only stands of indigenous forest with a number of rare undergrowth plants that are unique to this woodland habitat.  
The name "Ts'ehlanyane" is the local common name for the berg bamboo (Thamnocalamus tessellatus), from which the river and park take their name. It is fitting that the park should bear the name of this Drakensberg endemic plant, as it may be the most important refuge for this plant in the entire Maloti-Drakensberg mountain range.  
Contents  
1 History  
2 Terrain  
3 Biota  
4 Bird species  
5 Wild flower and shrub species  
6 Indigenous tree species in the Park  
7 Other tree species  
8 Fern species  
9 Location  
10 Activities  
11 How to get there  
12 Notes  
13 References  
History[edit]  
This proclaimed protected pristine area lies at the junction of the Ts'ehlanyane and the Holomo rivers. It owes its origin to the access road to the "Mamohale tunnel" (May 1991), which was the first adit drive for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. This adit covers 22 km (14 mi) from the source at Katse Dam to the As River outfall near Clarens, Free State.  
Terrain[edit]  
This Lesotho northern park protects a high-altitude, 2,600-metre (8,500 ft) patch of rugged wilderness, including one of Lesotho's few stands of indigenous forest with a number of rare undergrowth plants that are unique to this woodland habitat. Here indigenous "ouhout" (Leucosidea) trees of significant size are preserved.  
The park has an altitude ranging from 1,940 to 3,112 metres (6,365 to 10,210 ft) and is considered mostly sub-alpine. The diversity of habitat types is exceptionally wide and derived from the large altitudinal range that the park has.  
Biota[edit]  
Avifauna: Species of interest include the  
bearded vulturealpine swiftlanner falconground woodpeckergrey-winged francolinmalachite sunbirdwhite-necked ravenrock kestrel and black stork  
There are also the alpine endemics, such as the  
Drakensberg siskinmountain pipitsentinel rock-thrush and Drakensberg rockjumper  
Fauna: Indigenous mammals include  
Sloggett's vlei ratCape clawless otterblack-backed jackalrock dassieSmith's red rock hareporcupinecaracalrhebokmountain reedbuckcommon eland (released November 2009)baboons and serval cat  
Snakes include the berg adder.  
Flora: On the banks of the rivers and streams are stands of berg bamboo which are of significant cultural significance to the Basotho people. Berg bamboo is the host plant for an endangered butterfly species, the bamboo sylph Metisella syrinx. The reserve also encompasses a reasonable proportion of very rare mountain "fynbos" that do not occur anywhere else in the world. Also recorded are in excess of 220 flowing plant species.  
Lesotho's national plant is the spiral aloe, among other varied and abundant alpine flora, including over 180 flowering species.  
Bird species[edit]  
Bird species found in the park include:[1]  
Black-headed heron  
Cattle egret  
Hamerkop  
Yellow-billed duck  
African black duck  
Bearded vulture  
Black-winged kite  
Steppe buzzard  
Jackal buzzard  
Lanner falcon  
Rock kestrel  
Grey-winged francolin  
Helmeted guineafowl  
Rock pigeon  
Cape turtle dove  
Laughing dove  
Red-chested cuckoo  
Diederik cuckoo  
Spotted eagle owl  
Black swift  
Speckled mousebird  
Pied barbet  
Ground woodpecker  
Long-billed lark  
Red-capped lark  
European swallow  
Orange-breasted rockjumper  
Spotted flycatcher  
Fairy flycatcher  
Cape wagtail  
Rock martin  
Banded martin  
Black crow  
Pied crow  
White-necked raven  
Red-eyed bulbul  
Cape rock thrush  
Sentinel rock thrush  
Mountain chat  
Familiar chat  
Stonechat (subsp. oreobates)  
Orange-throated longclaw  
Fiscal shrike  
Pied starling  
Red-winged starling  
Malachite sunbird  
Cape white-eye  
House sparrow  
Cape sparrow  
Cape weaver  
Masked weaver  
Pin-tailed whydah  
Black-throated canary  
Cape canary  
Yellow canary  
Cape bunting  
Rock bunting  
Wild flower and shrub species[edit]  
Wild flowers and shrubs recorded at Ts'ehlanyane National Park on the Matsa-Mararo route via Lets'a-le-ts'o and the lower bridle path (4 × 4 track) that leads to Holomo Pass  
(\* = exotic)  
\* Cannabis sativa  
\* Persicaria lapathifolia:[a] exotic, robust annual herb in damp areas  
\* Solanum sp. (wild potato)  
Ajuga ophrydis (bugle-plant)  
Alepidea amatymbica[a] (Lesoko): large serrated (basal) leaves, tall herb. Tea made from leaves applied as cough and cold remedy  
Alepidia cf. woodii: small herb with white, star-like flowers  
Anisodontea julii subsp. pannosa (lefeta; mountain hibiscus; wildestokroos): shrub, 1–4 m (3 ft 3 in–13 ft 1 in), flowers shiny pink. On the Holomo Pass bridle path, often near streams in scrub forest.  
Argyrolobium tuberosum  
Argyrolobium sp.: yellow pea-flowers  
Asclepias fruticosa  
Berkheya cirsiifolia: thorny sub-shrub with white daisy-like flowers, damp Basalt slopes at approx. 2,200 m (7,200 ft)  
Cephalaria natalensis  
Clematis brachiata: common climber esp. on dead cheche trees next to the 4 × 4 track leading to the Holomo Pass bridle path  
Coccinia sp. or Zehneria sp.:[a] climber in cheche forest, deeply lobed leaves, hairy. Small cucumber-like fruit of approx. 30 mm (1.2 in) in length (slightly bitter, probably poisonous)  
Conium sp.: tall herb >1 m (39 in), slightly aromatic  
Cotyledon orbiculata: on eroded basalt cliffs (south-east facing) next to the Ts'ehlanyane river  
Crassula cf. natalensis: small succulent (200 mm (7.9 in)) on damp rocks next to the Lets'a-le-ts'o trail  
Crassula sarcocaulis: on eroded basalt cliffs (south-east facing) next to the Ts'ehlanyane river  
Diascia cf. barberae  
Dierama cf. cooperi: white, with mauve and yellow flecks on inside of perianth. Next to 4 × 4 track directly above the conference centre  
Dichilus reflexus  
Disa cooperi:[a] light pink with long spur, fragrant, evident in the vicinity of the quarry  
Erica caffrorum: large shrub or small tree  
Erica oatessi:[a] shrub with pink, bottle-shaped flowers  
Eucomis autumnalis subsp. clavata  
Euphorbia cf. natalensis: herb  
Euryops evansii  
Euryops sp.: large shrub up to 2 m (6 ft 7 in), small fynbos-like leathery leaves, small yellow flowers  
Geranium cf. wakkerstroomianum  
Geranium pulchrum  
other Geranium spp.  
Gladiolius crassifolius  
Gladiolius dalenii  
Gunnera perpensa[a] (qobo; wild rhubarb; rivierpampoen): usually in large stands, marshy places, or sub-shade  
Habenaria epipactidea: greenish flowers with long white spur, one example seen on the 4×4 track leading to the Holomo Pass bridal path  
Helichrysum cooperi  
Helichrysum herbaceum:[a] golden yellow everlasting with small overlapping leaves  
Helichrysum mundtii  
Helichrysum splendidum  
Jamesbritennia sp.: ill-aromatic herb, or sub-shrub, on path, disturbed soil  
Lobelia spp.  
Lotononis sp.:[a] : greyish sub-shrub, blue pea-flowers  
Myssotis semiamplexicaulis[a] (Forget-me-not): common on disturbed areas i.e. the path, pink – deep blue  
Orchidaceae:[a] small leaves similar to Agapanthus, Disa thodei?  
Orchidaceae:[a] yellow-green flowers with two wings, long spur, probably Habenaria epipactidea  
Oxalis smithiana:[a] leaves are deeply divided, lobes narrow. Pink flowers. Common on the lower Lets'a-le-ts'o trail  
Passerina drakensbergensis (berg gonna): large shrub in scrub  
Pelargonium cf. ranuncullophyllum:[a] herb with small white flowers, tiny pink flecks on the inside of petals. Leaves with purplish brown mark. Common on the lower Lets’a-le-ts’o trail  
Pentzia cooperi  
Phygelius capensis: grassy slopes within cheche forest, damp and rocky moist slopes and on streambanks. Flowers curved.  
Printzia cf. pyrifolia : grassy slopes within cheche forest  
Plectranthus grallatus:[a] common in shade of cheche forest  
Polygala cf. rhinostigma: small perennial herb, pink flowers  
Polygala cf. uncinata: perennial herb, purple flowers  
Polygala virgata: common shrub next to 4×4 track leading to the Holomo Pass bridal path  
Rumex cf. saggitatus: climber on dead/burnt cheche en route to the Matsa-mararo falls from Lets'a-le-ts'o. Heart-shaped leaves, conspicuous fruit: papery 3-winged, pink-red en masse  
Satyrium parviflorum: small yellowish green flowers on long spike, petals drying brown soon after flowering. Basal leaves, heart-shaped, fairly large  
Scabiosa cf. columbaria  
Schizoglossum artropurpureum subsp. artropurpureum  
Scilla natalensis : on basalt cliffs south of the Ts’ehlanyane river  
Selago cf. melliodora: white inflorescence, honey scented, next to path near Matsa-mararo falls  
Selago galpinii  
Senecio macrocephalus  
Senecio sp.: common, herbaceous shrub with masses of yellow flowers. Large stands in damp areas or rocky places  
Silene cf. burchelli:[a] pink, near campsite at river deck  
Stachys cf. aethiopica  
Thalictrum cf. rhyncocarpum:[a] herb, forest floor near and on the lower Lets'a-le-ts'o path, leaves resemble maidenhair fern (Adianthium cappilus-veneris)  
Thamnocalamus tessellatus (liqaloe; berg bamboo; bergbamboes) damp slopes and near rivers/streams 3–4 m (9.8–13.1 ft) tall. Endangered species in South Africa  
Unknown species:[a] common on disturbed soil, small herb (150 mm), leaves are serrated and spatulate, of particular interest are the discoloured characteristic of the leaves: above green and below purple-pink  
Vernonia hirsuta  
Wahlenbergia krebsii  
Xerophyta viscosa: on eroded basalt cliffs (south-east-facing) next to the Ts'ehlanyane river  
Zaluzianskya cf. microsiphon  
Zaluzianskya smitziae: night-flowering species, common on the trail between Lets'a-le-ts'o and Matsa-mararo falls  
Indigenous tree species in the Park[edit]  
Indigenous trees as seen at the campsite, on the lower Lets'a-le-ts'o path en route to Matsa-Mararo falls and the lower bridle path (4x4 track) that leads to Holomo Pass  
\*Rosa eglanteria (rosehip): thorny tree, pink flowers followed by orange–red fruit, in scrub forest near river and cheche forest  
Buddleja loricata (lelora; mountain sage; bergsaliehout) very similar to B. salviifolia but leaves are leathery, lanceolate, whilst B. salviifolia leaves are softer and oval/heart-shaped at base. B. loricata usually at higher altitudes than B. salviifolia, but their habitats do overlap(1,800–2,450 m (5,910–8,040 ft)). Inflorescences of B. loricata, smaller, only white, sweetly scented. B. loricata common in the vicinity of Lets'a-le-ts'o.  
Buddleja salviifolia (lelothoane; quilted sage; saliehout) Very similar to B. loricata but leaves and inflorescence differ: see B. loricata (supra). Flowers: fragrant, white to mauve in spring.  
Diospyros austroafricana subsp. africana (liperekisi-tsa-makhoaba, senokonoko; firesticks star-apple; kritikom; vuurmaakbossie; jakkalsbessie) usually a shrub, sometimes small tree, grey appearance. Flowers: pink to red, highly fragrant during springtime. Fruit conspicuous: grey-green, red to black when ripe up to 20 mm (0.79 in) in diameter.  
Heteromorpha trifoliata (monkhoane; parsley tree; pietersieliebos) small tree with conspicuous bark peeling off in papery flakes, on steep slopes and cliffs where protection from veld fires esp. vicinity of the Matsa-mararo falls. Flowers and seeds resemble parsley.  
Leucosidea sericea (cheche; oldwood: ouhout), according to an entomological study made on the cheche of the Golden Gate area (EFS), these trees are the habitat of 117 species of beetles  
Myrsine africana (semapo; Cape myrtle; mirting) evergreen shrub with very small leaves, toothed in upper half, rarely a tree  
Rhamnus prinoides (mofifi; dogwood; blinkblaar) small tree, often in shade of cheche forest. Glossy-green leaves, small red–black berries  
Rhus divaricata (kolitsane; rusty-leaved current; roesblaartaaibos) shrub or small tree with trifoliate leaves, slightly leathery, dark olive green above, grey-green–rusty-brown hairs beneath, large numbers of small yellow to brown berries 3 mm (0.12 in) in diameter.  
Other tree species[edit]  
Other trees expected to occur in the area include:  
Bowkeria verticillata (isiduli; umbaba; southern shell-flower)  
Euclea crispa (mohlakola; blue guarri)  
Halleria lucida (lebetsa; tree fuschia; notsung)  
Passerina montana (lekhapu; mountain gonna)  
Rhus dentata (lebelebele; nana-berry)  
Rhus pyroides (kolitsane; common taaibos)  
Fern species[edit]  
Ferns and fern allies  
Underneath shade of cheche forest, an abundance of ferns occur: Polystichum spp. and Cheilanthes quadripinnata. Pteris cretica in damp places often near boulders. In exposed areas on rocky mountain slopes, typical poikylohydrous species evident like the resurrection fern and Cheilanthes eckloniana. Selaginella spp. expected on exposed rock surfaces.  
Location[edit]  
The park is located deep in the northern range of the Maloti Mountains at the foot of the Holomo Pass and only about 45 minutes on tarred road from the South African border post of Caledonspoort, 15 minutes drive from the popular Free State town of Clarens and about 4 hours from O. R. Tambo International Airport).  
Activities[edit]  
Maliba Lodge accommodation is located within the park  
Numerous hiking and bridle paths have already been established with the park, one of which is a spectacular 39 km trail linking the Ts'ehlanyane National Park with the Bokong Nature Reserve.  
Photographic opportunities. Not only is the scenery spectacular, but the fauna and flora offer a boundless variety of photographic subjects.  
Basuto pony rides offer an ideal way to explore nature from a higher vantage point.  
Swimming in the pristine streams and rock pools  
Small to medium-sized game viewing with about 24 species present  
Massage treatments at Maliba Lodge Spa  
Restaurant meals and viewing/photography deck at Maliba Lodge  
How to get there[edit]  
A 32-kilometre (20 mi) tarred access road leaves the main A1 route 8 km (5.0 mi) south of Butha-Buthe. The route passes through the village of Khabo and parallels the Hlotse river along the Holomo valley until it reaches the park entrance gate.  
Notes[edit]