



## The Blyde Canyon in South Africa

Blyde Canyon is certainly the greenest of its kind and is considered one of the great natural wonders of Africa. The canyon is located in the nearly 300 square kilometer Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, where the Blyde (joy) and Treur (sorrow) rivers meet. Its enormous round rocks, the rondavels, are reminiscent of traditional African round huts. From numerous vantage points there are fantastic views over the lush landscape - on clear days even as far as the border to Mozambique.

The Blyde River Canyon is 26 kilometers long, up to 800 meters deep and mainly made of red sandstone. Since the route through the canyon is quite short, there are also some sights of the surrounding bush landscape to see and we work our way to the source of the Blyde River.

Have fun flying and exploring wishes Koschi.

### Flying tips:

There is a GPS course that can be obtained.

The weather is freely selectable. Live weather is preset.

Use ATC if you like.

The HUD in the interior can be switched off in the settings.

No. of Legs: 5

Total distance: 173 nm

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Project: nhm-bushtrip-c02blyde

# Table of Contents

Legs .....	3
Leg 1: FAPB - FUQR .....	3
MASD-Massingir Dam .....	3
LMAS-Lake Massingir .....	4
RELE-Rio dos Elephantes.....	4
LETA-Letaba .....	4
OLRC-Olifant Rest Camp .....	5
FUQR-Phalaborwa Airport .....	5
Leg 2: FUQR - FUQO .....	6
OLBR-Olifant's Bridge .....	6
NHLA-Nhlalarumi .....	7
FUQO-Phalaborwa Airport .....	7
Leg 3: FUQO - FAHY .....	8
PHAM-Phalaborwa Mine .....	8
RURL-Rusermi River Lodge.....	9
UKNR-Ukhozi Nature Reserve.....	9
THBR-Three Bridges.....	9
FAHY-Hippo Pools Airport.....	10
Leg 4: FAHY - FAPO .....	11
BLYD-Blyde River .....	11
SAND-Sand Sprit .....	12
GLEN-Glencoe Baobab.....	12
R527-Route 527 .....	12
GABR-Gate to Blayde River Canyon .....	13
BLRD-Blyde River Dam.....	13
MORE-moremela .....	14
FAPO-Pilgrim's Rest Airport.....	14
Leg 5: FAPO - FALL .....	15
LISR-Lisbon River .....	15
BLYD-blyde .....	15
PILG-Pilgrim's Rest .....	16
MTSH-Mount Sheba.....	16
SBLR-Source of the Blyde River .....	17
FALL-Lydenburg.....	17



## LEGS

### LEG 1: FAPB - FUQR

Departure: Massingir Airport (FAPB)  
Destination: Phalaborwa Airport (FUQR)  
Distance: 29,4 nm



### MASD-Massingir Dam



Distance:	4,0 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	4,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	25,4 nm
True Course:	354°
Magnetic Course:	12°

We start in Mozambique and fly over part of the Massingir Dam, which was created by damming the Rio dos Elefantes. The dam is an earthfill dam; 48 meters high and 4,600 meters long. The hydroelectric plant's turbines provide 40 megawatts of power.

Mozambique could be completely self-sufficient in energy. The total production of all electricity generation plants is currently 159% of the country's own needs. Nevertheless, Mozambique trades its electricity with other countries. Smaller towns and villages still do not have electricity.

Construction began in 1972 and the dam was nearly completed in 1977. However, unrest and civil war prevented final commissioning, and there were also many construction defects that almost caused the dam to break. After some rehabilitation and a lot of money from abroad, it was finally put into operation in 2006.

Sit back, let the autopilot work with the GPS course and enjoy the flight. You will have to intervene in the navigation later when you reach the canyon.

Another little tip: If you want to read in peace and also enjoy the scenery during the flight, press the pause button every now and then. This will make this mission a little more enjoyable.



**LMAS-Lake Massingir**

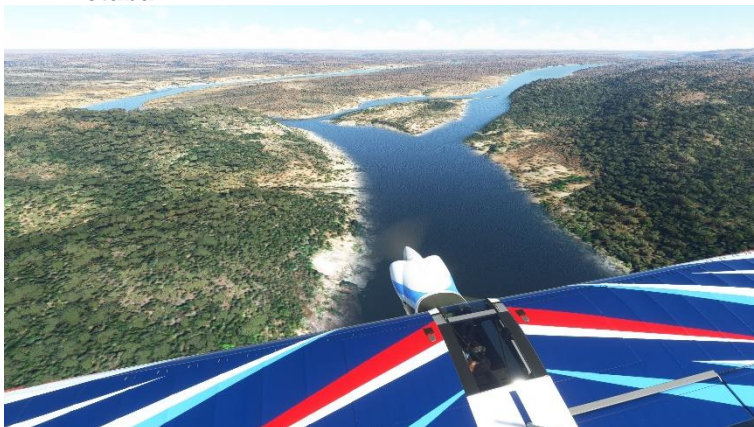
Distance:	2,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	6,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	22,7 nm
True Course:	293°
Magnetic Course:	311°

Your autopilot now sets course for Lago Massingir. The lake is located in the Limpopo National Park. The area is an important space for the reproduction of the Nile crocodile. Because of this, there were concerns from the Kruger National Park administration about the flooding of Olifants Gorge because these areas could be destroyed. The dam causes sediments to accumulate in the 8 kilometer long crocodile gorge.

**RELE-Rio dos Elefantes**

Distance:	10,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	16,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	12,5 nm
True Course:	240°
Magnetic Course:	258°

You will now fly towards the mouth of the Rio dos Elefantes, formerly called Olifants and today called Lepelle, passing through the Crocodile Gorge. This gorge is not accessible to tourists and is the world's largest breeding area for the Nile crocodile. Before you leave the lake, you can see extensive wetlands at the mouth of the river. These are areas where the sediments of the Lepelle have settled.

**LETA-Letaba**

Distance:	6,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	23,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	5,9 nm
True Course:	246°
Magnetic Course:	263°

At the next waypoint, the Letaba River flows into the Lepelle River. In the meantime you have crossed the border into South Africa and are now in the Kruger National Park.

The name Letaba means, translated from the Sepedi, "sandy river". The sandy riverbed is an excellent place to spot wildlife, especially elephants that live in the area. The river is a green oasis in the surrounding dry Mopane field.

Kruger National Park is the largest game reserve in South Africa. Its area stretches from the Crocodile River in the south to the Limpopo, the border river with Zimbabwe, in the north. The north-south extension is about 350 kilometers, in east-west direction the park is on average 54 kilometers wide and covers an area of about 20,000 square kilometers. This makes it one of the largest national parks in Africa.

The reserve was founded on March 26, 1898 under President Paul Kruger as the Sabie Game Reserve to protect the wilderness. In 1926, the area was given national park status and renamed to its current name. The park is home to 147 species of mammals including the "Big Five", as well as some 507 species of birds and 114 species of reptiles, 49 species of fish and 34 species of amphibians.

#### OLRC-Olifant Rest Camp



Distance:	4,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	27,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	1,6 nm
True Course:	258°
Magnetic Course:	275°

Now follow the left course of the river or the GPS course until you reach Olifant Rest Camp, which you can discover on a hill. Guests enjoy a fantastic view over the wide riverbed, which is regularly visited by elephants, lions, hippos, crocodiles and eagles. Here you can rent simple bungalows as well as luxurious guest houses.

#### FUQR-Phalaborwa Airport



Distance:	1,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	29,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	324°
Magnetic Course:	342°

The term "airport" is probably a bit exaggerated. It's an airstrip with some fortification, which you should have already seen on the approach to the camp. I could not find any airline serving this "airport". Have a happy landing here.



**LEG 2: FUQR - FUQO**

Departure:      Phalaborwa Airport (FUQR)

Destination:    Phalaborwa Airport (FUQO)

Distance:        33,6 nm

**OLBR-Olifant's Bridge**

Distance:	5,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	5,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	28,1 nm
True Course:	208°
Magnetic Course:	225°

After starting, orient yourself by the river or follow the GPS course.

Only a few bridges cross the river to connect the two provinces of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, whose border river is the Lepelle. All other crossings are fords that can only be traversed by special off-road vehicles or trucks. Here, National Road 7 crosses the river, a lifeline connecting the countries of South Africa and Namibia. There was already an existing bridge here that could no longer cope with the volume of traffic and was in danger of collapsing. The new bridge was handed over in 2018.

**NHLA-Nhlalarumi**

Distance:	10,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	15,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	17,7 nm
True Course:	277°
Magnetic Course:	294°

At the next waypoint you come to the mouth of an important tributary of the Lepelle, the Nhlalarumi. The river was dammed in several places to irrigate agricultural land and to regulate water during heavy rains. Floods repeatedly caused destruction in nearby villages and also resulted in fatalities.

**FUQO-Phalaborwa Airport**

Distance:	17,7 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	33,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	251°
Magnetic Course:	268°

Here, too, the term "airport" is probably more of an exaggeration, as you should already notice during the landing approach, although it bears the name Hendrik Van Eck. After all, flights to Johannesburg still took place here regularly until 2020 and there are also still some airport buildings to see. There is also an entrance to Kruger National Park nearby, which you will now leave.

There is one more peculiarity to mention in this city: Everywhere there are warning signs about hippos, which occasionally raid gardens and garbage cans. Supposedly, these animals can kill a human faster than a lion. Anyway, I'll avoid testing that.

Have a safe landing here.

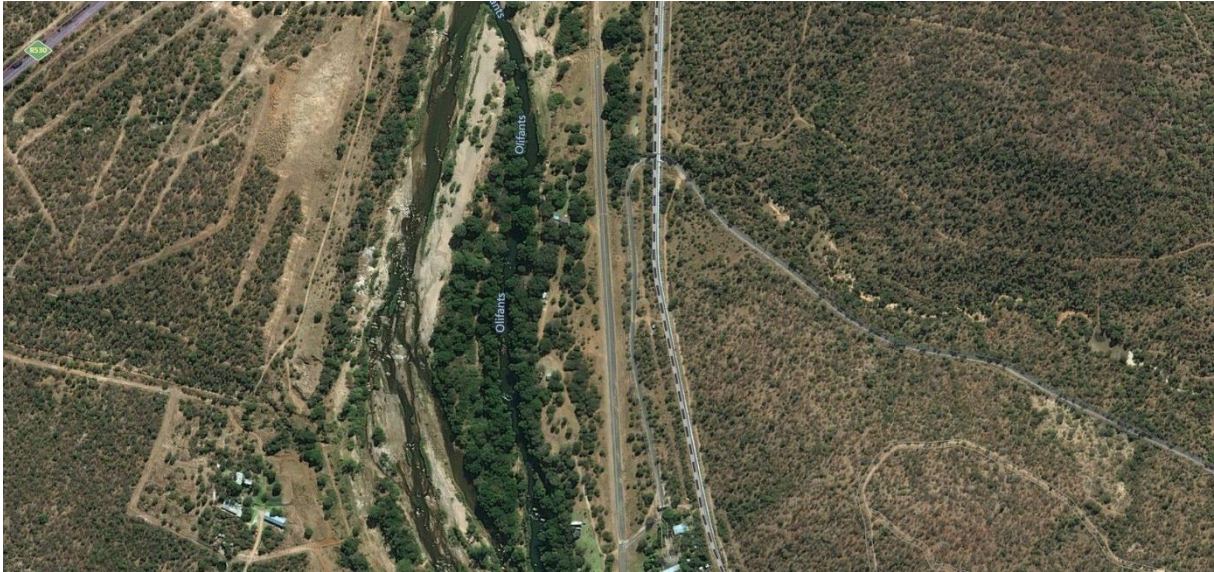


**LEG 3: FUQO - FAHY**

Departure:      Phalaborwa Airport (FUQO)

Destination:    Hippo Pools Airport (FAHY)

Distance:        33,2 nm

**PHAM-Phalaborwa Mine**

Distance:	9,6 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	9,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	23,6 nm
True Course:	337°
Magnetic Course:	355°

You make a small detour from this airfield in a northerly direction. There is a copper mine there. The unusual thing about it is a large crater-shaped depression, because copper-bearing ore is mined here in an open pit. This block cave mine produces about 50,000 tons of copper annually. It is currently 700 meters deep, making it the largest mine in the world, of its kind. The hills you can see on the approach are spoil heaps and the lakes are catch basins for polluted groundwater and brine, the water from which gradually evaporates in the basins and fortunately is not discharged into the rivers, as so often happens in African countries. The phosphates produced are processed into fertilizers in nearby industrial plants.



**RURL-Rusermi River Lodge**

Distance:	6,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	16,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	16,8 nm
True Course:	210°
Magnetic Course:	227°

Rusermi River Lodge is located in the Balule Nature Reserve, which you are now flying into. Balule Nature Reserve is a member of the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR). As part of this wildlife conservation initiative, all fences between APNR reserves, private landowners and Kruger National Park have been removed. The ecological benefits of this initiative have made the region a popular destination for ecotourism. Conservation efforts have ensured that the wildlife population has increased. Today, the Balule Reserve covers an area of about 40,000 hectares. The area is regularly expanded as more landowners join the initiative and are incorporated.

**UKNR-Ukhozi Nature Reserve**

Distance:	6,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	22,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	10,5 nm
True Course:	221°
Magnetic Course:	238°

The Ukhozi Nature Reserve, which you are about to enter, is a private game reserve and not open to the public. With no fences but well guarded, Ukhozi is home to all the wildlife species found in the South African Lowveld. Whether it is the endangered black rhino or the mysterious leopard, Ukhozi presents an environmental mosaic for all types of wildlife.

**THBR-Three Bridges**

Distance:	9,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	32,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	1,1 nm
True Course:	265°
Magnetic Course:	282°

While you haven't seen a single bridge the entire way from Olifants Bridge to here, three of them appear here at once - two road bridges (Routes 40 and 530) and a railroad bridge. In addition, the Makhutswi River joins the Lepelle here.

The bridges connect parts of the communities of Maruleng, a municipality that covers several square kilometers here. The community name is derived from the Sepedi word for the Marula tree that grows there. Amarula liqueur is made from its fruit.

#### **FAHY-Hippo Pools Airport**



Distance:	1,1 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	33,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	201°
Magnetic Course:	218°

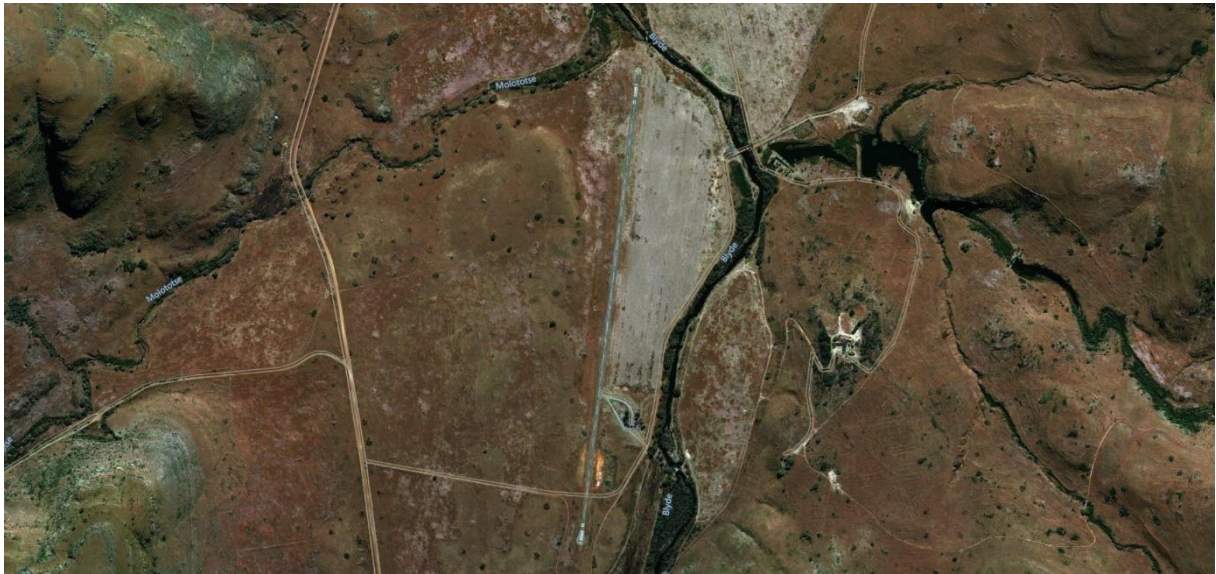
You should have already discovered the airport when approaching the three bridges. Also to this "airport" no official flight connections can be found. The only thing I could find out is that this airport is occupied by a charter company that operates safari flights. But I did not find a bathing pool for hippos (as the name says) ;-)

Have a safe and soft landing here too.



**LEG 4: FAHY - FAPO**

Departure: Hippo Pools Airport (FAHY)  
Destination: Pilgrim's Rest Airport (FAPO)  
Distance: 38,5 nm

**BLYD-Blyde River**

Distance:	3,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	3,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	35,0 nm
True Course:	163°
Magnetic Course:	181°

You are getting closer to your destination. Shortly after takeoff, as you follow the river in a southerly direction, you can see the confluence of the Lepelle and Blyde rivers. It was the Blyde River that formed the sandstone landscape you are about to fly towards several million years ago. The Blyde flows from the south into the Lepelle.

**SAND-Sand Sprit**

Distance:	3,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	7,3 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	31,2 nm
True Course:	159°
Magnetic Course:	176°

At the next waypoint, the Blyde River gets a tributary from the Sandsproit River.

**GLEN-Glencoe Baobab**

Distance:	3,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	10,8 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	27,7 nm
True Course:	179°
Magnetic Course:	197°

Keep west and then south over the Blyde River to get to the Glencoe Baobab. The GPS course will take you over the Sandsproit River. But you decide for yourself how you prefer to fly.

Unfortunately, the Glencoe Baobab is not visible in the simulator. It is the strongest and second largest baobab tree in South Africa and possibly the strongest tree in the world. The tree is located at Glencoe Farm and has a trunk diameter of 15.9 meters. The diameter of the crown is 37 meters. The age of the tree is estimated to be over 1,800 years.

**R527-Route 527**

Distance:	3,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	14,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	24,0 nm
True Course:	238°
Magnetic Course:	256°

Now continue to follow the river. The next prominent point is the road bridge of Route 527.



Very close to the road, in the direction of the community of Maruleng, stands the largest baobab tree in the world. It is not as strong in trunk diameter as the previous specimen, but it is somewhat taller.

#### **GABR-Gate to Blayde River Canyon**



Distance:	5,4 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	19,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	18,5 nm
True Course:	159°
Magnetic Course:	177°

Follow the river for a few more miles and you will find yourself at the gate to the Blyde River Canyon. At the latest here you should switch to hand steering to be able to follow the river, which now meanders through the canyon. If you follow the GPS course, you have to fly very high and see mostly only flat bush land. Fly as low as you can to get the best view of the canyon.

#### **BLRD-Blyde River Dam**



Distance:	3,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	23,4 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	15,1 nm
True Course:	216°
Magnetic Course:	233°

Fly east around the Cone Mountain to reach the Blyde River Dam.

The dam was completed in 1974 and has a dam wall 71 meters high and 22 meters deep. Its main purpose is to provide a stable water supply for the irrigation schemes of the Blyde River Irrigation District and to provide additional water for mining and industry in Phalaborwa.

**MORE-moremela**

Distance:	8,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	31,7 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	6,8 nm
True Course:	174°
Magnetic Course:	192°

Continue flying south over the reservoir until you see the Blyde flowing into the lake, then continue following it to Moremela. Enjoy the next 9 miles through the canyon.

At Moremela, the Blyde and Treur Rivers converge. This is also the location of the scours and washouts known as Bourke's Luck Potholes. The gold prospector Bernard Thomas Bourke actually found gold here and became rich. Whether he became happy with it, I could not find out unfortunately.

**FAPO-Pilgrim's Rest Airport**

Distance:	6,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	38,5 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	189°
Magnetic Course:	207°

Take the right turn of the river and land at Pilgrims Rest Airport. As the name suggests, you can take a short break here to process the strong impressions left by this landscape.



**LEG 5: FAPO - FALL**

Departure: Pilgrim's Rest Airport (FAPO)

Destination: Lydenburg (FALL)

Distance: 38,0 nm

**LISR-Lisbon River**

Distance: 2,4 nm  
Dist. from Dept.: 2,4 nm  
Dist. to Dest.: 35,6 nm  
True Course: 199°  
Magnetic Course: 218°

Start and follow the Blyde south to the next confluence with the Lisbon River.

**BLYD-blyde**

Distance: 3,8 nm  
Dist. from Dept.: 6,1 nm  
Dist. to Dest.: 31,9 nm  
True Course: 110°  
Magnetic Course: 128°

Follow the Lisbon River until you see a village on a mountain. It is Blyde, the place after which the river and the canyon are named. North of it and in close proximity is another sight, the Berlin Waterfall

which is classified as Candle Waterfall. The waterfall plunges from the center of a steep cliff that is about 80 meters high. A narrow, natural channel at the top of the waterfall forms the wick of the candle, and as the water falls from this point, it fans out to form the rest of the candle before falling into the scour below.

Various places in this region got their names from miners during the gold rush, who named these places after cities and towns in their homelands. Accordingly, the Berlin Waterfall was named after the capital of Germany. Now you know why the river was named after Lisbon.

#### **PILG-Pilgrim's Rest**



Distance:	5,5 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	11,6 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	26,4 nm
True Course:	241°
Magnetic Course:	259°

Turn southwest here, climb and follow the GPS course, over the mountains to the community of Pilgrims Rest, after which the airfield you landed at earlier is named.

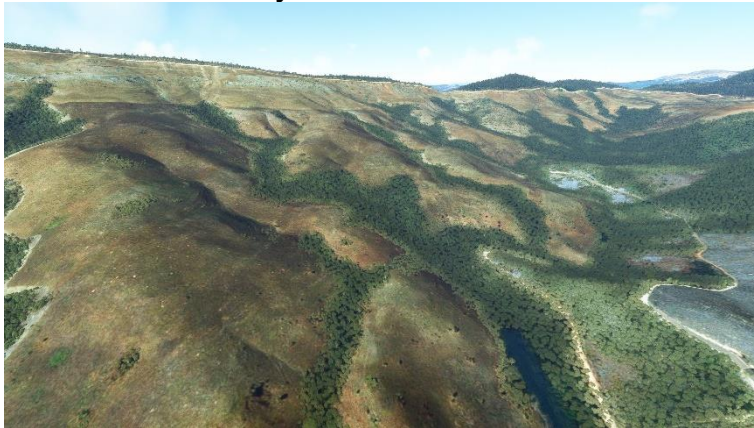
#### **MTSH-Mount Sheba**



Distance:	7,2 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	18,9 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	19,2 nm
True Course:	196°
Magnetic Course:	214°

Once you have reached Pilgrims Rest, follow the Blyde River again, which is fed by 3 streams at the next waypoint, all called Blyde. On your right wing now rises the mountain range of Mount Sheba.



**SBLR-Source of the Blyde River**

Distance:	2,3 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	21,2 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	16,8 nm
True Course:	182°
Magnetic Course:	201°

Once you have reached the 3 headwaters, follow the middle one in a southerly direction. Soon you will be able to see the official source of the Blyde, which rises on a slope.

**FALL-Lydenburg**

Distance:	16,8 nm
Dist. from Dept.:	38,0 nm
Dist. to Dest.:	0,0 nm
True Course:	257°
Magnetic Course:	276°

Now you're off to the last landing site of this mission, Lydenburg Airfield. This airfield is a private airfield where you are welcome. You can help the owner during your stay, for example by changing the windsocks, repairing the fence and mowing the grass to save landing fees. After that you can comfortably start your journey home.

#####

You have landed safely and successfully completed this mission. Congratulations. Good luck in your future endeavors and always safe landings. Koschi.