



Flock

The Annual Gathering of Members of BirdLife South Africa

to the Wilderness 2023



Excursion Information Booklet



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Photo: Mike Bridgeford

Need to know before you go:

Please take note of the following if you are planning to attend any of the excursions listed in this booklet during Flock to Wilderness 2023:

- All listed excursions can be booked via the [online booking platform](#) located on the Flock to Wilderness 2023 [website](#).
- Bookings are subject to availability as spaces are limited.
- Bookings for the excursions will only be confirmed and spaces allocated upon receipt of **full** payment via the Flock to Wilderness [online booking platform](#).
- No participants will be allowed to attend any of the excursions without confirming acceptance of the indemnity form via the online booking form.
- Please ensure that you have read, understood and accepted the Terms and Conditions before booking for Flock to Wilderness 2023 and its associated excursions. These can be found on the [website](#).
- Participants will be responsible for their own refreshments and stationary during the excursions and workshops.
- Weather on the South Coast, particularly in the Garden Route and at sea can be changeable, so participants are encouraged to dress for potentially wet, cold and/or windy conditions.
- Participants are encouraged to wear a hat and sunscreen during all activities and to bring a bottle of water in a nature-friendly container with them.
- Many of the Wilderness birding attractions are self-drive and can be birded in your own time. There will be paid for excursions to some of these destinations (detailed below) which will give you access to a guide who will lead you through the sites.

Sponsors and Partners



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Knysna Turaco (Photo: Tim Carr)

Overall Schedule of Activities and Events at Flock to Wilderness 2023

	23-May Tuesday	24-May Wednesday	25-May Thursday	26-May Friday	27-May Saturday	28-May Sunday			
Tide Times for Wilderness		Sunrise: 07:21 Sunset: 17:32 High tide: Low tide: High tide: Low tide:	Sunrise: 07:22 Sunset: 17:32 High tide: Low tide: High tide: Low tide:	Sunrise: 07:22 Sunset: 17:31 High tide: Low tide: High tide: Low tide:	Sunrise: 07:23 Sunset: 17:31 High tide: Low tide: High tide: Low tide:	Sunrise: 07:24 Sunset: 17:30 High tide: Low tide: High tide: Low tide:			
06:30-07:00									
07:00-07:30			Flock and LAB Conference Registration						
07:30-08:00				Nature's Valley Trust Beach Tour					
08:00-08:30		Pelagic	Learn About Birds (LAB) Conference Science and Layman's LABS in parallel (Palm and Yellowwood)	Learn About Birds (LAB) Conference (Science and Layman's LAB) (Palm and Yellowwood)	Ocean Odyssey Knysna Lagoon Birding				
08:30-09:00		George Forest Birding at Witfontein				Bird Ringing Demonstration (Mark Brown)	Woodville Forest & Bergplaas Forest Road		
09:00-09:30		Journey into the Klein Karoo				Ebb & Flow Tour			
09:30-10:00									
10:00-10:30									
10:30-11:00									
11:00-11:30									
11:30-12:00									
12:00-12:30									
12:30-13:00									
13:00-13:30									
13:30-14:00									
14:00-14:30		Reflections Eco-Reserve Tour	LAB Forest Birding Workshop (Yellowwood)	Science LAB Continues (Yellowwood)	BirdLife South Africa's 94th AGM	Canon SA Photography Workshop (Yellowwood)			
14:30-15:00		Raptor Rescue Plett Tour							
15:00-15:30									
15:30-16:00				Bird Club Indaba (Protea)					
16:00-16:30				Rondeveli & Malachite Bird Hides					
16:30-17:00				BLSA Board Meeting					
17:00-17:30			LAB Cape Bird Club 75th Anniversary Lecture	Reflections Eco-Reserve Tour					
17:30-18:00			Science LAB Speed Talk Session						
18:00-18:30				Sundowners (Wilderness Hotel Patio)	Sundowners (The Blind Pig Bar)				
18:30-19:00									
19:00 - onwards		Quiz Night Ice Breaker (The Girls on the Square)	Cocktail Function (Wilderness Hotel Pool Deck, cash bar)	Gala Dinner (Wilderness Hotel)	Informal evening function & live music (Pomodoro)				
						End of Flock to Wilderness 2023			

Version 12; 20 October 2022

*Please note that some of these excursions are weather dependent and may not be able to depart at the specified time if tides or weather conditions are not safe.

Local birding around Wilderness and surrounds

-  Wilderness Hotel
-  1. Ebb & Flow Tour
-  2. Malachite Bird Hide
-  2. Rondevlei Bird Hide
-  3. Reflections Eco-Reserve Tour
-  4. Woodville & Bergplaas Forest Tour
-  5. Ganzvlei Farm Tour
-  6. George (Witfontein) Forest Tour
-  7. Journey to the Klein Karoo Tour
-  8. Exploring Eastern Agulhas Plains Tour
-  9. Open Ocean Pelagic Tour
-  10. Ocean Odyssey Marine Eco Tour
-  12. Raptor Rescue Plett Tour and Lecture
-  13. #SaveOurShores Experience

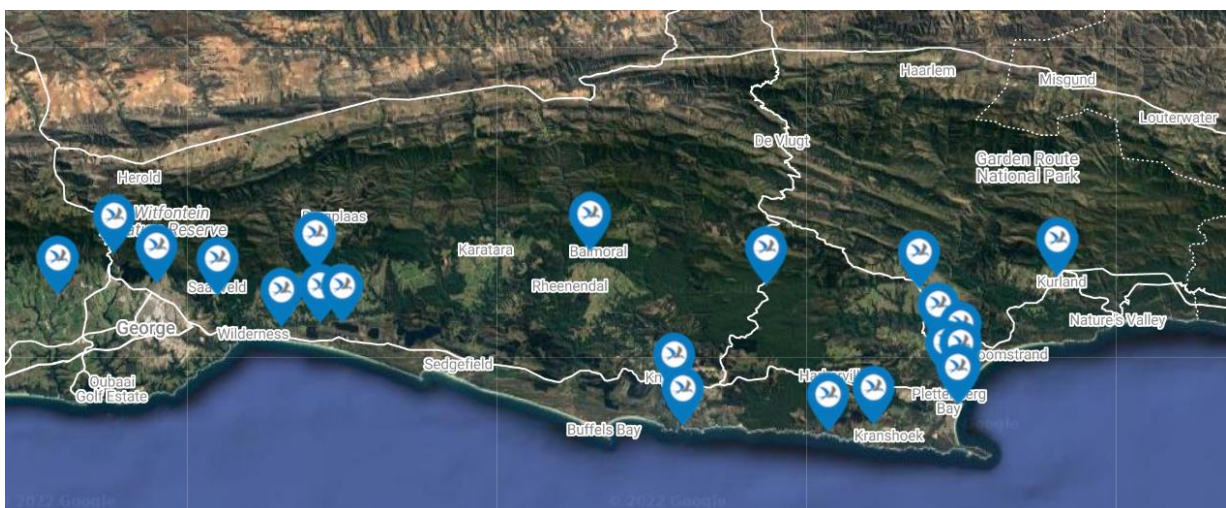


*Arrows pointing off the map indicate that the excursion will take place outside of map area.

Flock to Wilderness delegates are encouraged to take advantage of the many fantastic birdwatching destinations in and around Wilderness during their stay. Listed below are some of the free birding activities which delegates can undertake at their leisure.

At the western end of the Garden Route, the Wilderness section of the Garden Route National Park hosts a system of reed-fringed coastal lakes which are squeezed between a beach and an escarpment coated with lush coastal forest. There are several trails leading through the forest, offering easy and enjoyable access to a superb selection of forest birds, including **Knysna Turaco**.

You can also visit the [Go Birding](https://gobirding.birdlife.org.za/) platform set up by BirdLife South Africa to find out more information about birding in the Wilderness area. <https://gobirding.birdlife.org.za/>



I. Ebb & Flow - Garden Route National Park

AREA: SANParks- Ebb and Flow main rest campgrounds and the adjacent campsite along the eastern banks of the Touw River.

INFORMATION: The park's rest camp is at Ebb and Flow, situated on the Touw River. The hatted camp and campsite, particularly at Ebb and Flow North (adjacent to Ebb and Flow south), offers good birding (including nightly Wood Owls) and is a rewarding place to base your explorations into the surrounding forests. You will need a valid [WildCard](#) to access the Garden Route National Park trails and facilities.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Knysna Turaco, Giant Kingfisher, Malachite Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Half-collared Kingfisher, Grey Cuckooshrike, Black-backed Puffback, Narina Trogon, Cape Batis, Knysna Warbler, Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler, Green Wood-Hoopoe, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Olive Woodpecker, White-starred Robin, Chorister and Cape Robin-Chat.

Paid Excursion: Ebb & Flow Tour

Join leaders from the local Lakes Bird Club on a 2-3 hour tour of the Ebb & Flow area and its trails. Take advantage of the local gen and enjoy seeing some of the specials of the area's forests, rivers and lakes.

GUIDED WALK

Excursion dates and times:

- 24 May 2023; 07:00-10:00
- 27 May 2023; 07:00-10:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to self-drive to the Ebb and Flow Campgrounds (-33.9901, 22.6085)

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 7 minutes and 3.6 km along the Waterside Road

Tour pax per trip: 12 people per leader up to a maximum of 24 people per trip

Price per person per trip: R100



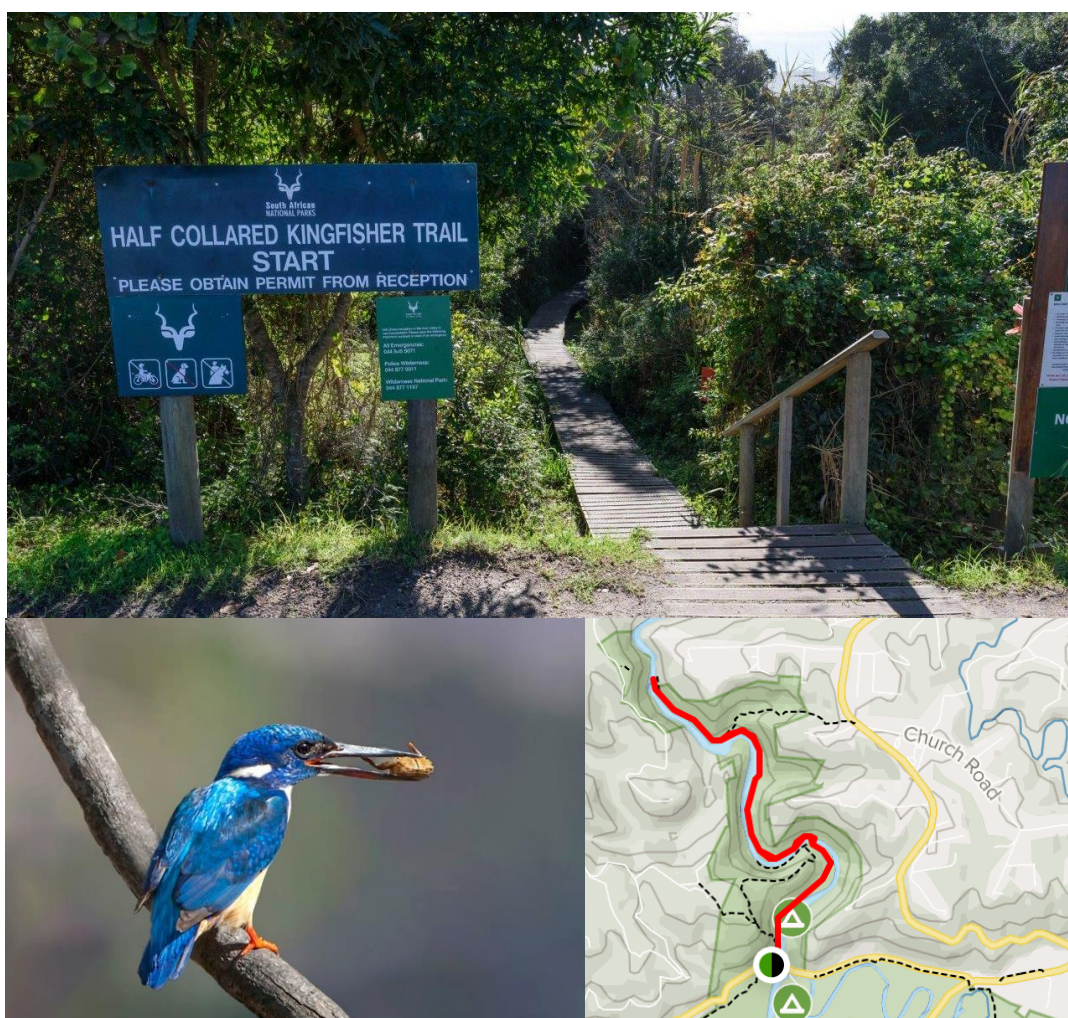
Left: The Serpentine River meanders through the Wilderness area (Photo: Mike Bridgeford).

Top Right clockwise: Blue Mantled Crested Flycatcher, Knysna Turaco, Knysna Warbler (Photos: Bruce Ward-Smith).

There are **two trails** leading from Ebb and Flow, all named after local kingfishers:

a. **Half-collared Kingfisher Trail**

This trail runs along the west side of the Touw River for 2.5 km, offering good views of the river edges, and hence better access to its elusive namesake, which is resident along its length. The most noticeable forest birds along the trail are usually **Bar-throated Apalis** and **Green-backed Camaroptera**. **Terrestrial Brownbul** and **Chorister Robin-Chat** lurk in the lower levels of the forest matrix, while common species of the mid-canopy are **Cape Batis**, **Dusky Flycatcher**, **Sombre Greenbul**, **Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler**, **Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher**, **Olive Woodpecker** and, less conspicuously, **Olive Bush Shrike**. It is especially important to familiarize yourself with the calls of otherwise cryptic canopy species such as **Black-headed Oriole**, **Narina Trogon**, **Grey Cuckooshrike**, **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, **Black-bellied Starling**, **Knysna Turaco**, and **Green Woodhoopoe**. The latter two birds often venture into the rest-camp edges. Look out for **Red-necked Spurfowl** feeding cautiously in open areas near the forest edge, especially in the early morning and in the evening. Listen for the deep hoot of **Buff-spotted Flufftail** at night. **Crowned Eagle** and **African Goshawk** may be seen overhead here, as indeed in any of the Garden Route forests. **Lemon** and **Tambourine Doves** are birds of the forest floor and are most often seen when flushed.



Top: Entrance to the Half-collared Kingfisher Trail (Photo: Mike Bridgeford) Left: Half-collared Kingfisher (Photo: Bruce Ward-Smith). Right: The route along the Half-collared Kingfisher trail from Ebb & Flow.

b. Brown-hooded Kingfisher Trail

The Brown-Hooded Kingfisher Trail (-33.9838, 22.65099) meanders along the bank of the Duiwe river and parking is available at the start of the trail, this trail is free but self-issued permits must be filled out at the start of the trail. The causeway across the road is good for both **Giant** and **Half-Collared Kingfisher** and the cliff on the right is often used by **Peregrine Falcon**. **African Goshawk** can be heard calling above the valley in the mornings. The forest is drier than the Half-Collared trail with open grassy patches that will often have **Swee Waxbill** as well as occasionally **African Firefinch**. Listen out for bird parties moving through the brush, species such as **Blue-Mantled Crested Flycatcher**, **Black-Headed Oriole**, **Olive Bushshrike** and **Chorister Robin-Chat**.



Pied Kingfishers (Photo: Bruce Ward-Smith)

2. Rondevlei and Malachite Bird Hides

AREA: SANParks - Rondevlei Bird Hide & surrounding grounds and forest edge walk and the "link channel" with parking at -33.988, 22.717. Malachite Bird Hide is situated on the Langvlei Lake and accessed via boardwalk with parking at -33.984, 22.676 off the Bo-Langvlei Road.

INFORMATION: A string of lakes stretches from Wilderness Lagoon to Island Lake, Bo-Langvlei, Rondevlei and Swartvlei. At Rondevlei where SANParks has offices and a research centre there is a well-maintained bird hide with great views across the lake with sand banks and reeded edges in front of the **Rondevlei Bird Hide**.

The **Malachite Bird Hide** is set in the Wilderness National Park along Langvlei Lake where you can see an outstanding array birds. This relaxing and comfortable viewing point is accessible from a sturdy boardwalk. Enjoy the splendid views and the quiet, tranquil environment around you, while peering through your binoculars at the nature around you. Parking is available near the boardwalk so you don't have far to walk to get to this idyllic destination.

Both hides are wheel-chair accessible.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: In the reeds: Little Rush Warbler, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Common Reed Warbler, (summer) African Rail, Black Crake, African Snipe, Greater Painted-Snipe, African Swamphen, Purple Heron, Red-chested Flufftail, African Marsh-Harrier.

On the water: Greater Flamingo, Great Crested Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Maccoa Duck, Southern Pochard and White-backed Duck. African Fish-Eagle breed in trees near the water's edge and is present. Around the property: Southern Tchagra, Red-neck Spurfowl, and Spotted Thick-knee may be seen. From the roadside, the channel between Bo-Langvlei and Rondevlei can yield some interesting birds like Black Egret, Little Bittern, Blue-billed Teal and Goliath Heron.

Local Support: Rondevlei and Malachite Bird Hides Visit

Volunteers from the local BirdLife Plettenburg Bay bird club will be stationed in the hide to assist you with identifying the many exciting birds on offer.

Dates and times:

- 26 May 2023; 14:00-16:00
- 28 May 2023; 08:00-11:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to self-drive to the Rondevlei and Malachite Bird Hides where they will find guides stations to assist.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel:

- Rondevlei: 21 minutes and 15.8 km along the Bo-Langvlei Road
- Malachite: 14 minutes and 11.2 km along Hoekwil Road

Tour pax per trip: 8 people per hide, please be patient and rotate out if there is high demand

Price per person per trip: FREE



Top-left clockwise: Malachite Kingfisher, view of Wilderness Lakes, African Darter.
(Photos: Bruce Ward-Smith, Mike Bridgeford, Trevor Barnett)

Paid Excursions

I. The Reflections Eco-reserve Tour

AREA: Reflections Eco-Reserve borders both coastal forest and the Rondevlei Lake with its extensive reedbeds and has walks along paths and roadways around the property that meander through coastal thickets, tree lined lanes and stretches of open areas with some grass and rehabilitated fynbos.

Reflections
ECO-RESERVE

INFORMATION: The property has been host to a number of rarities over the years like White-browed Scrub Robin and Great Spotted Cuckoo and is a good site to see both Lesser and Greater Honeyguide as well as Cardinal Woodpecker. There is a breeding pair of African Fish Eagle on the property that can be seen regularly and a variety of ducks, egrets and some waders can be observed on the eastern side that overlooks Rondevlei Lake. The Rondevlei is part of a series of estuarine lakes that contribute in a large way to the Garden Route's fame as South Africa's favourite holiday destination. As a designated Ramsar site no boating or fishing is permitted. This ensures a tranquil tour and great birdlife. Besides nesting resident Fish Eagles, we boast about 140 species of bird life as well as Cape Clawless Otter, Water Mongoose, Caracal, Bushpig, Grysbok and Grey Duiker.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: African Fish Eagle, Greater Double-collared Sunbird, Dusky Flycatcher, Grey and Black Cuckooshrikes, Knysna and Olive Woodpeckers, Sweet Waxbill, Brimstone Canary and many more of the 250 birds of the Garden Route. To see the full list visit:

<https://reflectionsreserve.com/birding>

GUIDED WALK

Trip Leader: Tim Carr

Dates and times:

- Wednesday 24 May 2023; 14:00-17:00
- Friday 26 May 2023; 14:30-17:30

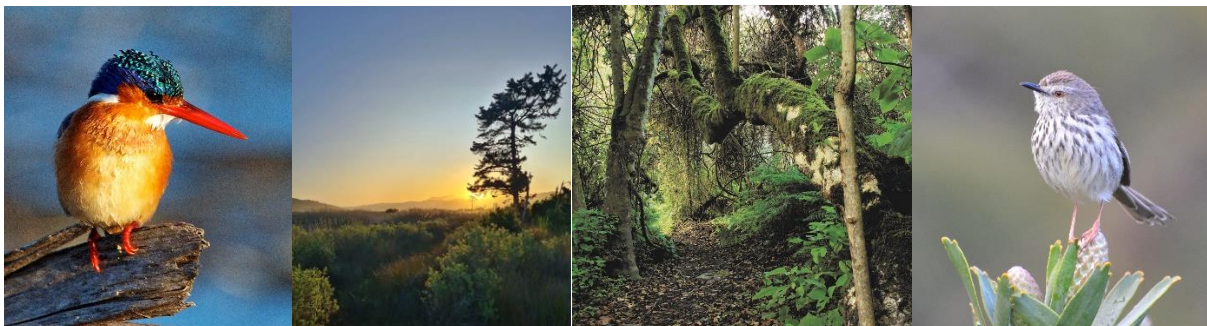
Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to self-drive to the Reflections Eco Reserve (-33.9863, 22.6956) where they will begin their tour. Please try to car-pool from the Wilderness Hotel if possible.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 20 minutes and 13.7 km along the Bo-Langvlei Road

Tour pax per trip: 16 people per trip

Price per person per trip: R100



Malachite Kingfisher, landscapes at Reflections Eco Reserve, Karoo Prinia.

(Photos: Tim Carr, Melissa Whitecross)

2. The Woodville Forest and Bergplaas Forest Road

AREA: Woodville Forest and Big Tree within the Wilderness Section of the Garden Route National Park.

INFORMATION: There is a 1.5km walking trail through some magnificent indigenous forest with some huge Yellowwoods and other trees, many of which are named. This forest is famous for its Narina Trogons, but May is not the optimal month for sighting them. After the forest we will drive along the 7 Passes Road with its many dairy farms and dams which attract species such as the Black-winged Lapwing. After a few kilometres there is a road sign posted on the left to Bergplaas. This is also a very good birding road. At a small vlei near this turn off some Stripped Flufftails were recorded. Drive back to the 7 Passes Road and shortly thereafter we will take a right turn and drive through more farmlands where Denham's Bustards and Secretary birds can be seen. Raptors are often seen on these roads. We arrive back at Langvlei, one of the Wilderness Lakes. This route can be done as a self-drive or bookings for the guided excursion on 27 May 2023 can be made.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Narina Trogon, Grey Cuckooshrike, Chorister Robin-Chat, White-starred Robin, Olive Bushshrike, Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler, Black-bellied Starlings, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Knysna Turaco, Knysna Warbler, Olive and Knysna Woodpecker, White-faced Whistling Duck, Black-winged Lapwing, Forest Buzzard, Black Sparrowhawk, Denham's Bustard, Victorin's Warbler.

Trip Leader: Tim Carr and extra guide

Dates and times:

- Saturday 27 May 2023; 06:30-11:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via a shuttle bus.

WildCard: Yes

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 20 minutes and 16.5 km along the Hoekwil Road

Tour pax per trip: up to 22 people per trip (11 per guide)

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R600



Left: White-starred Robin-Chat (Photo: Justin Ponder). Right: Knysna Woodpecker (Photo: Melissa Whitecross)

3. The Ganzvlei Farm Tour

AREA: East from Wilderness on the N2, pass Sedgefield and Groenvlei Lake on the right. Just before the turn off to Buffalo Bay on the right is Ganzvlei Farm.

INFORMATION: This is a privately owned farm, previously dairy but now just Aberdeen Angus cattle. The tour will start with a walk past the farm buildings and along a delightful, wooded avenue until the banks of the Goukamma River, where Black Saw-wings and Brown-throated Martins nest in the riverbanks. In summer 5 species of cuckoo are found here. Continuing along the tree line, where there are magnificent White Stinkwoods, until a small pond next to an old bird hide. There are extensive reed beds in this area. If the mouth of the Goukamma River is closed, there is a lot more water in the final area near to the bird hide. The tour will return along the same path back to the starting point. This is not a self-drive option.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Brown-hooded Kingfisher, African Black Duck, Terrestrial Brownbul, Southern Boubou, Green-backed Camaroptera, Black-backed Puffback, African Goshawk, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, African Rail, Tambourine Dove, Yellow Bishop, Little Rush Warbler, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Malachite Kingfisher, Black Cuckooshrike, Black-bellied Starling, African Finfoot, White-starred Robin.

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leader: Lakes Bird Club Representative

Dates and times: Friday 26 May 2023; 07:30-12:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via shuttle bus.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 30 minutes and 34.2 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 11 people per trip

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R600



Ganzvlei Farm has a beautiful diversity of habitats from riverine to forests with many special birds to be enjoyed. Left to right: Terrestrial Brownbul, Ganzvlei Farm, African Finfoot (Photos: Bruce Ward-Smith, Pat Nurse)

Half Day Birding Excursions

4. George forest birding at Witfontein

AREA: Witfontein Forest Nature Reserve lies in the Outeniqua Mountains overlooking the city of George. This reserve holds patches of pristine Southern Afro-temperate Forest, hidden within a large pine plantation with Fynbos vegetation covering the higher altitudes.

INFORMATION: There are several small patches of pristine Southern Afro-temperate Forest, in the section of the reserve near George. A network of trails can be used to get to these forest patches, starting at the Witfontein Forest Station. The tour will start walking from the office parking area, following the lower contour road through pine plantations to get to the forest patches. Be on the lookout for Forest Buzzard, Grey Cuckooshrike and Forest Canary in the plantations. Upon entering the first forest patch, we will arrive at the Witfontein Waterfall where birds such as Forest Canary and Cape White-eyes come to drink. From here the tour will access the Forest Buzzard Trail into the forest and then head further East again towards the second forest patch. Where the contour road cuts into the heart of the forest, these two forest patches are collectively home to just about all the forest specials that you can hope to see in the Garden Route. Remember to scan for birds of prey flying overhead as there are a resident pair of Black Sparrowhawks and African Cuckoo Hawks that live in the Witfontein area. Please note that this excursion will involve walking on forest trails and is not recommended for anyone who does not have a basic level of trail walking fitness. The walk will be approximately 6 km in total. Please remember to pack insect repellent.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Forest Buzzard, Black Sparrowhawk, African Cuckoo Hawk, African Olive Pigeon, Knysna Turaco, Alpine Swift, Narina Trogon, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Chorister Robin-chat, White-starred Robin, Knysna Warbler, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, Collared Sunbird, Grey Sunbird & Forest Canary.

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leader: Christiaan Viljoen

Dates and times:

- Wednesday 24 May 2023; 07:00-13:00
- Sunday 28 May 2023; 07:00-13:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via shuttle bus.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 1 hour and 55 km along the Outeniqua Pass

Tour pax per trip: 11 people per trip

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R800



Left to right: Cape Batis, Witfontein Forest Nature Reserve, Chorister Robin-Chat and Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler. (Photos: Michael Gutierrez, George Trails, Bruce Ward-Smith)

5. Journey into the Klein Karoo

AREA: Trip will travel over the Outeniqua Pass and into the Klein Karoo to explore the many endemics and unique birds to this special ecosystem in the heart of the Western Cape.

INFORMATION: The Klein Karoo is one of the few landscapes in South Africa which has survived large-scale land transformation and the local farmers of the area have successfully maintained the incredible diversity of endemic fauna and flora found in this hidden gem of South Africa's natural heritage. This trip will focus on targeting the Karoo endemics and other unique biodiversity found nowhere else on earth.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Jackal Buzzard, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Ludwig's Bustard, Karoo Korhaan, Karoo Prinia, Rufous-eared Warbler, Bokmakierie, Pirit Batis, Karoo Chat, Karoo Scrub-Robin, Grey-backed Cisticola, Cape Clapper and Karoo Larks, Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark, White-backed Mousebird, Layard's Warbler.

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leader: Rudi Minnie

Dates and times: Wednesday 24 May 2023; 06:30-13:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via shuttle bus.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 2 hours and 200 km along the Outeniqua Pass into the Klein Karoo

Tour pax per trip: 11 people per trip

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R1 000



Top left clockwise: Karoo Korhaan, Jackal Buzzard, Rufous-eared Warbler, Karoo Prinia, Denham's Bustard, Karoo Scrub-Robin (Photos: Warwick Tarboton, Chris van Rooyen, Bruce Ward-Smith)

6. Exploring the Eastern Agulhas Plains

AREA: Heading west of George into the Overberg region of the Western Cape, you will explore the remaining patches of renosterveld and strandveld in search of the Agulhas Plains specials.

INFORMATION: The Overberg Region is a landscape transformed for agriculture, thankfully, remnants of the once dominant Renosterveld and Strandveld habitats remain and are home to many of the Western Cape endemics which will be the target for this trip. Most importantly, we will seek out views of the Agulhas Long-billed Lark, a bird endemic to this region of South Africa.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Agulhas Long-billed and Large-billed Lark, Black Harrier, Southern Black Korhaan, Denham's Bustard, Secretarybird, Blue Crane, Cape Vulture.

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leader: Rudi Minnie

Dates and times: Sunday 28 May 2023; 06:30-13:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via shuttle bus.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: approximately 2.5 hours west of the hotel.

Tour pax per trip: 11 people per trip

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R1 000



Top Left clockwise: Rufous-eared Warbler, Denham's Bustards, Karoo Korhaan, Agulhas Long-billed Lark, Southern Black Korhaan and Black Harrier.

(Photos: Bruce Ward-Smith, Louis Groenewald, Maritjie Froneman and Per Holmen)

7. Pelagic (Open Ocean) Half-day Boat Trip

AREA: ~15km offshore into the open ocean to enjoy views of the pelagic seabirds and other marine fauna.

INFORMATION: If Flock@Sea or Flock to Marion gave you a taste for pelagic birding, then this is an excursion not to be missed! The boat will leave from the Knysna Lagoon Marina (or alternatively Mossel Bay), heading out through the breath-taking Knysna Heads towards the open ocean. Please dress warmly and make sure to wear water- and windproof outer layers. Make sure to take your seasickness tablets! Weather dependent!

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: Species targeted will include Black-browed, Shy and Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross; Flesh-footed, Sooty, Cory's and Great Shearwater; White-chinned and Northern Giant Petrel; Wilson's Storm Petrel and African Penguin. We will also be on the lookout for Bryde's Whales, Hump-backed Dolphins, Bottle-nosed Dolphins, sharks and much more. Who knows what else could turn up!

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leader: Tim Carr

Dates and times:

- Wednesday 24 May 2023; 07:00-13:00
- Sunday 28 May 2023; 07:00-13:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will begin their tour via shuttle bus to Knysna Marina or Mossel Bay depending on the weather.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 45 minutes and 48 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 10 people per trip

Lunch pack included: yes

Price per person per trip: R2 200

**Please note that departure of this trip is weather dependent, and delegates may be asked to be flexible on departure times once the forecasts are confirmed closer to the time.*



*Top left to right: Great Shearwater, Black-browed Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel.
Bottom left to right: Shy Albatross, Great Shearwater. (Photos: Melissa Whitecross)*

8. Knysna Lagoon and Coastal Marine Eco Tour (Ocean Odyssey)

AREA: Knysna Lagoon and surrounding coastlines through the Knysna Heads

INFORMATION: Departing from the Knysna Marina in partnership with Ocean Odyssey Tours, guests will enjoy a tour of the Knysna Lagoon and surrounding coastline on a 1.5 hour tour. The trip will take place in a 12-seater “Oystercatcher” boat, where guests will be guided by exemplary eco-marine guides and birding experts on board. The trip promises close-up encounters with the birds and marine life of the Knysna Lagoon. Please dress warmly for the boat ride out and make sure to have a water- and wind-proof outer layer.

SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: African Oystercatchers, White-breasted, Reed and Cape Cormorants, and Greater Crested and Common Tern, Pied Kingfisher.

SELF-DRIVE (SHUTTLE OPTIONAL)

Trip Leader: Ocean Odyssey Skipper and Colin Wylie

Dates and times:

- Saturday 27 May 2023; 06:30-10:30
- Sunday 28 May 2023; 06:30-10:30

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 45 minutes and 48 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 12 people per trip

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to self-drive to the departure point at TH22 Long Street, Thesen Island Harbour Town, Knysna, Garden Route, Western Cape. Boat will depart at 7:30.

Shuttle Option: Delegates can indicate interest for a shuttle from Wilderness Hotel as part of this excursion at an additional cost of R300 per person subject to a minimum of 10 bookings.

Price per person per trip: R1 200



Top row left to right: Common Dolphin, African Oystercatcher, Cape Gannet. Photos: Ocean Odyssey, Melissa Whitecross. Bottom: Experience the Knysna Lagoon up close. Photos: Mike Bridgeford.

9. Bird Ringing Demonstration at Reflections Eco Reserve

AREA: Reflections Eco-Reserve borders both coastal forest and the Rondevlei Lake with its extensive reedbeds and has walks along paths and roadways around the property that meander through coastal thickets, tree lined lanes and stretches of open areas with some grass and rehabilitated fynbos.

INFORMATION: Bird ringing is an important conservation and citizen science tool moderated by SAFRING. Join local Garden Route bird ringers in the field to see what bird ringing is practically all about. Get up close and personal with our feathered friends and learn how much more you can learn about a species when you have it in the hand. Find out how the birds are caught, carefully handled, measured and released with their bling on. Please note that this excursion is weather dependent and will not take place if conditions are too wet and/or windy.

SIGNIFICANT BIRDS:

<http://www.reflectionsreserve.com/index.php/about-reflections/abundant-birdlife>

SELF-DRIVE

Trip Leaders: Mark Brown and Lakes Bird Club Ringers

Dates and times:

- Saturday 27 May 2023; 07:00-10:30
- Sunday 28 May 2023; 07:00-10:30

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will travel by shuttle to the Raptor Rescue Plett Centre (The Heath, N2 Harkerville, Plettenberg Bay, 6600)

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 1 hour and 72.5 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 20 people per trip

Price per person per trip: R100



*Left to Right: Malachite Kingfisher, Little Sparrowhawk, Bar-throated Apalis and Cape White-Eye
(Photos: Cape Bird Club, Raptor Rehab Centre, Nature's Valley Trust)*

10. Raptor Rescue Plett Tour and Lecture

AREA: The Raptor Rescue Centre is situated at The Heath, N2 Harkerville, Plettenberg Bay, 6600.

INFORMATION: Raptor Rescue Plettenberg Bay strives to provide the best after care and on site housing for the treatment and rehabilitation of birds of prey. We maintain ethical standards by working with professional veterinarians and birding conservationists. Our mission is to release as many indigenous birds as possible back into their natural habitat in the hopes that they can breed and increase wild raptor populations. Our primary objective is to educate and create awareness surrounding the importance of conserving raptors, and how the public are able to help. Join us for a guided tour and flying demonstration where you will have the opportunity to see some of our non-releasable birds up close and in flight. The tour will run for an hour after which we will



make our way down to the Boma for a light refreshment followed by Dr Mark Brown's presentation on Raptors in the Bitou, Plettenberg Bay Area.

SIGNIFICANT BIRDS: Secretarybird, Verreaux's and Long Crested Eagles, Western Barn and Spotted Eagle Owls, Jackal Buzzard and many more birds of prey.

SHUTTLE TOUR

Trip Leaders: Mark Brown and Laura Fotherington

Dates and times:

- Wednesday 24 May 2023; 13:00-17:00

Meeting place and travel options:

Delegates will need to meet in the front parking area of the Wilderness Hotel where they will travel by shuttle to the Raptor Rescue Plett Centre (The Heath, N2 Harkerville, Plettenberg Bay, 6600)

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 1 hour 15 minutes and 75 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 19 people per trip

Price per person per trip: R600

11. The #ShareTheShores Tour

AREA: Touw's River mouth beach. Parking at Salina's Beach Restaurant.

INFORMATION: Join the Nature's Valley Trust team at Touw's River mouth for a chat about conservation issues facing beach breeding birds. Learn about the threats, and the local conservation and research efforts put in place to mitigate them. This educational outing may not see loads of species ticked but will give you a better appreciation of the wonderful birds we share our beaches with. Outing will be 1 hour long.



SIGNIFICANT BIRD SPECIES: African Oystercatcher, Greater Crested Tern, Kelp Gull.

SELF DRIVE

Trip Leader: Nature's Valley Trust

Dates and times: Friday 26 May 2023; 07:30-08:30

Meeting place and travel options:

Self-drive and meet at beach parking lot by Salinas Beach Restaurant by 07:15.

Distance from Wilderness Hotel: 3 minutes and 1.4 km along the N2

Tour pax per trip: 25 people per trip

Price per person per trip: R100

Workshops:

I. Introduction to Forest Birding Workshop

Workshop Abstract

The Forest Biome is the smallest in South Africa but is home to some of the most unique and highly sought-after birds in the sub-region. The 2023 Flock to Wilderness event is taking place in the heart of some of South Africa's best forest birding localities and this workshop is designed to assist you with expanding your forest birding knowledge and skills. Join Mike Bridgeford, a seasoned local birder to the Garden Route and extremely talented photographer in his own right, as he shares his years of experience in forest birding and photography. Through this 2-hour workshop you will learn about the basic ecology of the forest biome, what makes this habitat unique and how to find and identify the special birds that call this spectacular ecosystem home.

Speakers: Mike Bridgeford and Dr Melissa Whitecross

Date: 24 May 2023

Time: 14:00-16:30

Venue: Yellowwood Room, Wilderness Hotel

Pax per Workshop: 80 people in person

Virtual Attendance: Yes

Price per person: R250



Top left clockwise: Knysna Woodpecker, Lemon Dove, White-starred Robin-Chat, Forest Buzzard, Olive Bushshrike and African Emerald Cuckoo. (Photos: Bruce Ward-Smith, Geoff McIlleron, Ian Pletzer, Patrick Raymond, Mike Bridgeford).

II. Canon South Africa Photography Workshop

Workshop Abstract

This workshop will be sure to improve your bird photography skills. Join one of the Canon Ambassadors as they share their knowledge, passion and skills during this exciting two hour workshop.



Speakers: Will be confirmed closer to the time, please keep an eye on the website for more details.

Date: 28 May 2023

Time: 09:00-12:00

Venue: Yellowwood Room, Wilderness Hotel

Pax per Workshop: 50 people

Virtual Attendance: No

Price per person: R250



*Photos by Canon South Africa

For more info please contact:

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All photographs unless otherwise indicated were taken by Melissa Whitecross.