

GOUKAMMA

NATURE RESERVE AND MARINE PROTECTED AREA

Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE
087 087 3946

RESERVATIONS
087 087 8250

EMERGENCIES
082 494 1880

Gate times

08h00 – 18h00

Overnight visitors may occupy accommodation from 14h00 on the day of arrival and need to vacate accommodation by 10h00 on the day of departure.
No pets or firearms are allowed on the reserve.

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Conserve. Explore. Experience.

Goukamma Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area

is situated on the Cape south coast's scenic Garden Route, lying approximately 40km east of George and 25km west of Knysna.

The reserve covers an area of about 2679ha terrestrial while the Marine Protected Area covers 3201ha extends along approximately 16.5 km of

Climate

Goukamma lies between South Africa's winter and summer rainfall areas and so has no clear wet or dry season. It does experience higher rainfall in spring and autumn, and lower rainfall in summer. The weather is unpredictable, with some warm days in June and July, and the odd cold day in summer. Prevailing summer winds are south-easterly and winter winds are westerly.

Flora

There are different vegetation types in the Goukamma Nature Reserve Complex [Mucina and Rutter-Ford 2006]. Southern Cape Dunes, Fynbos, Freshwater lakes, and Southern Coastal Forest dominate the western section of the reserve. The eastern section adjacent to the river mouth contains the Coastal Lagoons and Cape Sea-shore vegetation. The coastal dune forest, occurring mostly on the dunes, consists of dense thickets of milkwoods, yellowwoods and candlewoods. Further inland, the fynbos is characterised by erica and restio species which flower in September and October.

Fauna

Goukamma's diverse habitats support many animal species. Grysbok, bushbuck, bushpig, porcupine and vervet monkeys are common, as are caracal, water and grey mongoose, honey badger and otters. More than 220 species of birds have been recorded including African spoonbill, African fish eagle, African marsh harrier, Knysna turaco, three species of kingfisher, the rare African black oystercatcher and occasionally the endangered African penguin.

Groenvlei lake has six fish species (two indigenous and four alien), while off-shore, bottle-nosed and humpback dolphins are regularly seen frolicking in the surf. Southern right whales are found close to the shore in these waters from July to December.

Accommodation

Mvubu Bush Lodge, nestled in milkwood forest, is a fully equipped wood and thatch self-catering cottage which sleeps four. It is cool and ideal for summer and offers expansive views of the Groenvlei Lake.

There are also five fully equipped self-catering chalets that overlook the Goukamma River and Indian Ocean. Four of these have two bedrooms that can accommodate four people while one chalet is a two sleeper flat.

Hiking – a survivor's guide

CapeNature manages large areas in the Western Cape, and encourages hikers to enjoy their wild beauty. Hiking is a wonderful opportunity to explore natural areas, but could end in tragedy if these guidelines are not followed.

Planning

Plan your hike thoroughly. Pay attention to:

- Permit requirements and gate times.
- Availability of water.
- Size of group (preferably three or more), never hike alone.
- Fitness and medical condition of group members, the slowest person determines the pace of hiking.
- Inform someone of your plans and expected time of return.
- Time of start and expected finish.
- Time of sunset and tides.

Weather

Weather conditions can change very quickly. Do not attempt to hike if a trail is closed - it can endanger lives.

- If the weather takes a turn for the worse, make your way back to the start as quickly as possible. Do not attempt to complete the trail.

- Weather forecasts are available at tel: 082 162. If in doubt, phone the reserve before leaving home.

Emergency Equipment

Always carry the following items:

- Headlamp /Torch (with new batteries)
- Compass / GPS
- At least a 1,5 l water bottle
- Cell phone with spare battery
- First aid kit
- Whistle
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Warm jacket

Clothing and Footwear

- Boots or shoes should be sturdy with strong non-slip soles and must be well worn in. Tennis shoes and sandals are not suitable.
- Sun hats are essential, even on cool days. In cold weather, wear a warm cap to prevent heat loss.
- Alcohol is not permitted because it may impair judgement and cause dehydration.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency or accident while hiking:

- Keep the group together.
- Keep moving if possible.
- If unable to continue due to injury or collapse, or if weather conditions become too severe,

Marine Protected Area of Coastline from Buffalo Bay. Goukamma highlights include an extensive dune field with some of the highest vegetated dunes in South Africa and the unique Groenvlei lake which has no in-flowing rivers and only an under-ground link to the sea. The reserve forms part of the Cape Floral Kingdom Protected Areas World Heritage Site.

Buffalo Valley is a conservation area bordering the river and nature reserve, 3km from the sea. Accommodation is available in three fully equipped self-catering timber lodges that sleep between four and six people.

Please visit our website for details and photos of each chalet and to book online.

Activities



Hikers have a choice of six day trails and, although booking is not necessary, a hiking permit must be obtained on arrival.

- The **Galjoen Trail** is a 12km beach walk and takes about four hours. Hikers can arrange return transport from Platbank, or walk back. The walk is inaccessible during spring high tide.
- The **Bush Pig Trail** is a 6,5km circular route that takes two to three hours. Hikers walk along a fynbos ridge with views of the coast, river and estuary, returning via a milkwood forest.
- The **Porcupine Trail** is 13,5km and takes four to five hours. This route stretches over vegetated dunes. Hikers should arrange return transport from Groenvlei.
- The **Cape Clawless Otter Trail** is a 6,5km flat out-and-back route along Groenvlei's southern shoreline, through indigenous forest and vegetation on the fringe of the lake.
- The **Blombos Trail** on the Groenvlei side is popular for bird viewing and offers 3 options. There is a long route (15km), a medium route (13km) and a short route (6,5km).
- Explore the holiday town of Buffalo Bay on the 4,2km **Buffalo Bay Trail**, a circular route through forest and coastal vegetation with sea views along the way.

Activities visitors can enjoy at the reserve include picnics, bird watching and whale watching, swimming, paddle boating, sailing and canoeing on the river. Canoes can be hired. Licences for freshwater angling and boating on Groenvlei are available, with fishing licences starting from R45 and boat stickers from R100. A hunting licence valid for one year is also available for the price of R200.

In the Marine Protected Area, angling with a rod and line from the shore is permitted, with the necessary licenses obtainable from post offices.

- No bait organisms or shellfish may be removed or disturbed anywhere within the Marine Protected Area.
- No ski-boat fishing or spearfishing is allowed.

Please note both cash and card payments are accepted. **NO FIREWOOD** allowed, due to the current risk of infestation of our trees by the Shothole Borer Beetle. Eco-logs (R60/bag) and charcoal (R65/bag) are sold on-site, or visitors may bring their own.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

All persons entering this conservation area and using its facilities, do so entirely at their own risk. The Western Cape Nature Conservation Board and/or its employees and/or agents and/or its successors in title shall not be liable for any damage, loss, theft, injury, accident or death suffered by any person, howsoever caused. Right of Admission Reserved.

Stay safe when venturing outdoors

- Wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen and a hat
- Don't hike alone
- Carry enough food and water for the trip
- Make sure you know what the weather conditions are before you depart
- Take a warm jacket/raincoat in winter
- Make sure you have a map of the area
- Take a field medical kit along for emergencies
- Obey all signage
- Stay in a group and keep to marked trails

PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR PROTECTED AREAS PRISTINE



Continued on back



GOUKAMMA

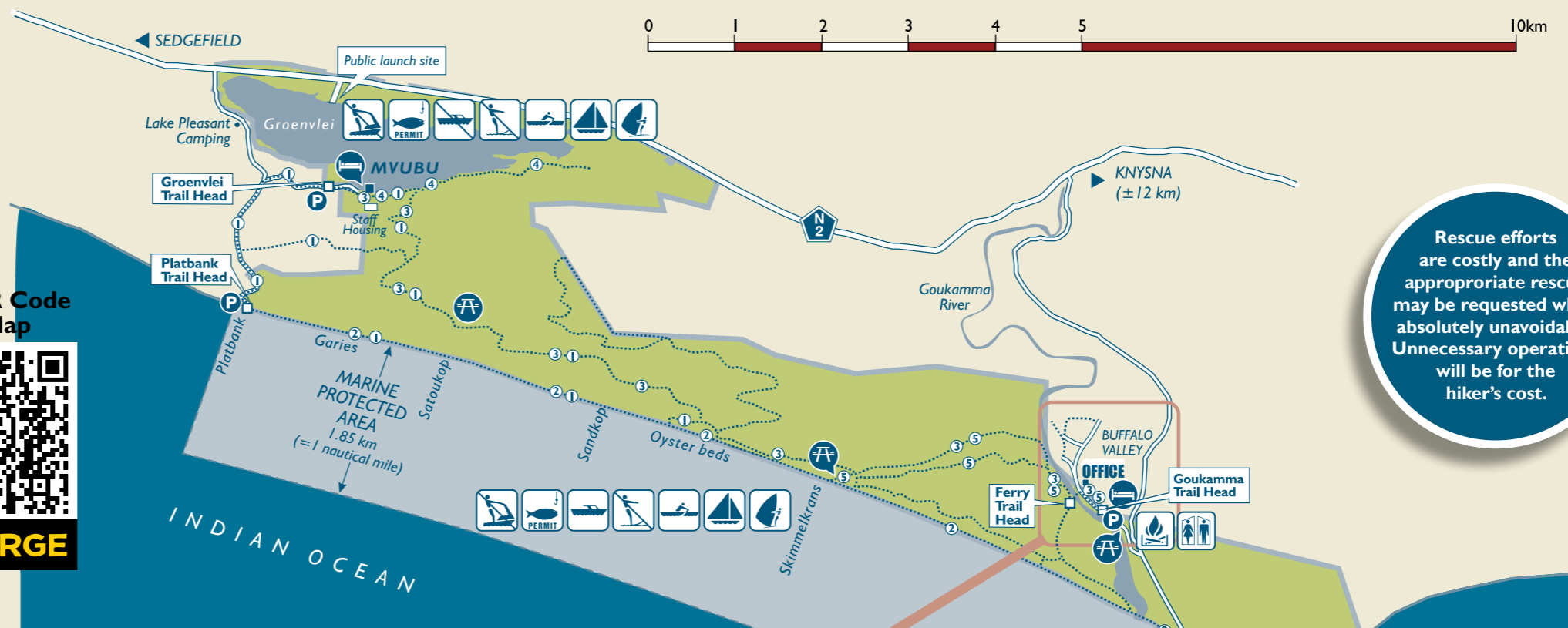
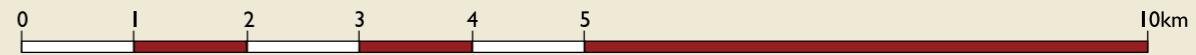
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FORGE



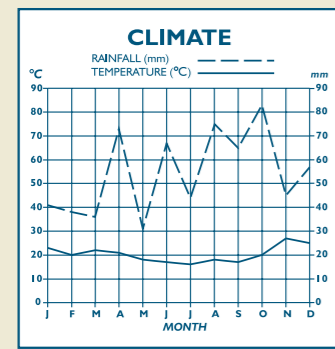
Rescue efforts are costly and the appropriate rescue may be requested when absolutely unavoidable. Unnecessary operations will be for the hiker's cost.

LEGEND

- Roads
- Trail Heads
- All trails
- Goukamma Nature Reserve
- Coastline
- Marine Protected Area
- Picnic spot
- Overnight accommodation
- Parking

TRAILS

- 1 Blombos Trail - Long circular 15km
Medium circular 13km
Short circular 6.5km
- 2 Galjoen Trail 12km
- 3 Porcupine Trail 13.5km
- 4 Cape Clawless Otter Trail 6.5km
- 5 Bushpig Trail 6.5km
- 6 Buffalo Bay Trail 4.2km



ANIMAL TRACKS

- CLAWLESS OTTER
- WATER MONGOOSE
- PORCUPINE
- GRYSBOK
- CARACAL
- BUSHBUCK

LEGEND

- River and vlei
- Grassy areas
- Tarred road
- Gravel roads
- Walking trails

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Hiking – a survivor's guide

Hyperthermia (heat exhaustion)
Hot weather, insufficient liquid and exhaustion can cause hyperthermia or heat exhaustion. Symptoms can include exhaustion, stumbling, dizziness, headaches and impaired vision.

The following points can help to avoid hyperthermia:

- Hike in the cool of morning and later afternoon.
- Rest in the shade during midday.
- Drink enough water.

Fires
Fires can be deadly.

- Stay calm and think in practical terms. Keep your group together, keep water bottles filled and, if possible, wet your equipment and clothes. Synthetic materials can melt.
- Never try to out-run a fire, especially uphill. Take note of changes in wind direction.
- Find water, rock slabs or cleared areas and stay there. Avoid thick bush, kloofs and rocky areas where you could be trapped.
- Try to keep to jeep tracks, paths or open slopes.
- Wave bright items to attract attention.
- Inform the trail authorities when you reach the end of your hike.

Conservation

- Do not interfere with plants or animals, or deface rocks or trees.
- Take all litter home with you.
- Use a small spade to bury toilet matter.
- Fires are strictly prohibited.
- Never discard cigarette butts - they cause veld fires and are unsightly.
- Stick to paths and walk in single file to avoid soil erosion.