South African
NATIONAL PARKS

Garden Route National Park

WILDERNESS
KNYSNA
TSITSIKAMMA

A SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM
CONNECTING SOCIETY

GARDEN ROUTE NATIONAL PARK

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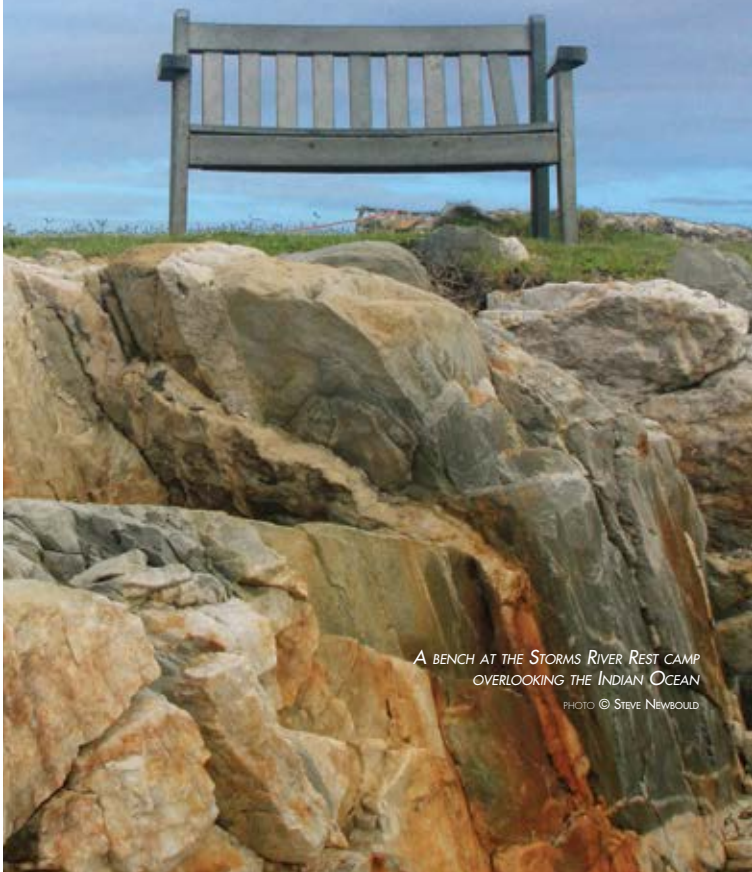
INTRODUCTION

We invite you to the South African National Parks Route of Splendour. Along the south coast of South Africa, between George and Port Elizabeth lies one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline in the world, home to the Garden Route National Park.

It encompasses the world renowned Tsitsikamma, Wilderness and Knysna areas, a variety of mountain catchments, indigenous forests and fynbos areas, all valued for their diverse natural and cultural heritage. Managed by South African National Parks, it hosts a variety of accommodation options, unique fauna and flora, places of interest and unforgettable views.

This is the place to relax, unwind and reconnect.



A bench at the Storms River Rest camp overlooking the Indian Ocean
PHOTO © Steve Newbould

The wide golden beach of Wilderness
Left *A stop along route 62*

Right *Sea view from Dolphin Point*
All photos © Steve Newbould

Moving around the GARDEN ROUTE

Planning your WILDERNESS TO TSITSIKAMMA Route

The Garden Route is easily accessible by road or air (see box on opposite page for air access).
The biggest commercial centres in the region are **George** in the west, **Knysna** which is centrally situated and **Plettenberg Bay** in the east. Extensive shopping centres (with the biggest one just outside George on the N2) and fuel stations are in abundance in all 3 towns.
Visitors to the Garden Route are spoilt for choice when it comes to restaurants and attractions. There is no better way to enjoy and feel part of the Garden Route than staying over at the Park's Rest Camps.

The Map of Africa at Wilderness Heights photo © Steve Newbould

COMING FROM THE WEST (CAPE TOWN) OR NORTH (GAUTENG)

The natural entrance to the Garden Route from the direction of Cape Town is along the N2 to George. If coming from the north you will enter from the N12 via Beaufort West and Oudtshoorn through George. If you need to stock up with provisions the Garden Route Mall is to be found at the confluence of the N2 highway and Knysna Road, and within close proximity to George Airport. The first Garden Route National Park Rest Camp coming in from the west is Ebb & Flow which is 3km from Wilderness village, 15km from George, 410km from Port Elizabeth and 450km from Cape Town.

AIR ACCESS TO THE GARDEN ROUTE

George Airport is situated approximately 7km from George city centre, has scheduled flights to Cape Town International Airport, King Shaka International Airport (Durban) and OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg) serving over half a million passengers per annum.

It is less than 30km from George Airport to the Wilderness' Ebb & Flow Rest Camp.

The John Benn Ferry at the Knysna Heads

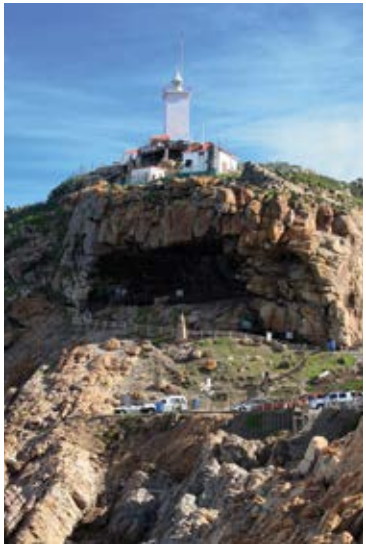
Left The Garden Route forest walks are renowned ...

Right ...As are the beaches and watersports

All photos © Steve Newbould

When leaving Wilderness' Ebb & Flow Rest Camp, head east along the N2 crossing the Swartvlei Estuary and on to the village of Sedgefield. Drive through Sedgefield and pass the only freshwater lake in the system, Groenvlei. Continue on and enjoy the sweeping views as the N2 winds its way into the popular town of Knysna along the Knysna Estuary. The SANParks regional office building can be found on Thesen Island – from here you can obtain permits, complete bookings and collect information for the rest of your trip.

Alternatively, when leaving Wilderness take the Hoekwil forest road to the Woodville Big Tree and picnic site. From here either work your way back to the N2 entering just west of Sedgefield or continue on the forest roads to the mystical Goudveld and Millwood forests to the north of Knysna.



Mossel Bay photo © Steve Newbould

Back on the N2 just exiting Knysna, take a left onto the R339 and travel inland to the Diepwalle forest where wooden camping decks are situated high in the treetops. See page 28 for more information on this forest's accommodation and attractions. The shortest route from the Wilderness to Knysna is only 45km on the N2.

From the Knysna area it is approximately 65km on the N2 via Plettenberg Bay to the Tstisikamma's rustic De Vasselot Camp in Natures's Valley. From here, head back onto the N2 and travel east to The Tsitsikamma's Storms River Mouth Rest Camp. The turn-off to the right is just under 40km from Nature's Valley (just before the quaint village of Storms River) and then its a further 6km to the Storms River Mouth Rest Camp with its many activities and attractions.

COMING FROM THE EAST (PORT ELIZABETH, EAST LONDON) AND KWA-ZULU NATAL

The entry point here is also via the N2, only from the eastern side. From Port Elizabeth travel westwards via Jeffrey's Bay and take the Storms River turn-off to the right after about 180km. The directions from thereon will be the reverse of the George side entry.

Plettenberg Bay photo © Steve Newbould

a mystical forest and water wonderland

Garden Route National Park
WILDERNESS

Looking for tranquility, an action packed holiday, or a bit of both? Wilderness is your playground. Experience whales and dolphins at Dolphins Point, go boating or fishing at Island Lake or hike to the waterfall above the Ebb & Flow Rest Camp. You don't need to be super fit to enjoy the natural beauty of the area. Take a stroll along a forest path or visit one of the five bird hides situated along the still banks of the rivers and lakes. Paddle down the dark rivers in a canoe (which can be hired at Ebb & Flow) and watch the world float by. Camp under the stars alongside the river or stay in log cabins on stilts.

Above
The idyllic Ebb & Flow Camp

Cormorants are just one of the many species found in the area

photos © Steve Newbould

GETTING TO WILDERNESS

The Garden Route National Park, Wilderness, is situated close to the N2 highway, 16km from George and 3km from the town of Wilderness. It is 410km from Port Elizabeth, 47km from Knysna and 450km from Cape Town. Make sure to absorb the pristine beauty of the protected Lakes on both sides of the N2. The closest airport is in George, where car hire facilities are available. Guests visiting Wilderness' Ebb & Flow Rest Camp, please note the road sign on the National Highway (N2) to the Park reads 'Garden Route National Park Wilderness'. Entrance to the Ebb and Flow Rest Camp will only be via the main gate in South Camp.
GPS coordinates: -33.994 698° South (Latitude) and 22.606 635° East (Longitude).

WILDERNESS

Ebb & Flow – south

REST CAMP
WILDERNESS

Spoilt for choice accommodation

FAMILY COTTAGES 5 x 2 bedrooms, max 4 people
(1 x Unit accessible to the mobility challenged)

LOG COTTAGES 9 x 2 bedrooms, max 4 people

Easier on your pocket accommodation

FOREST CABINS 10 x 4 beds and 10 x 2 beds. Partially equipped kitchen with communal cooking facilities

CAMPSITES 68 sites all equipped with power points (max 6 persons per site)

SUPPLIES & PETROL Wilderness Village is only 3km away and has a grocery store and petrol station

OTHER FACILITIES Laundromat and conference venue

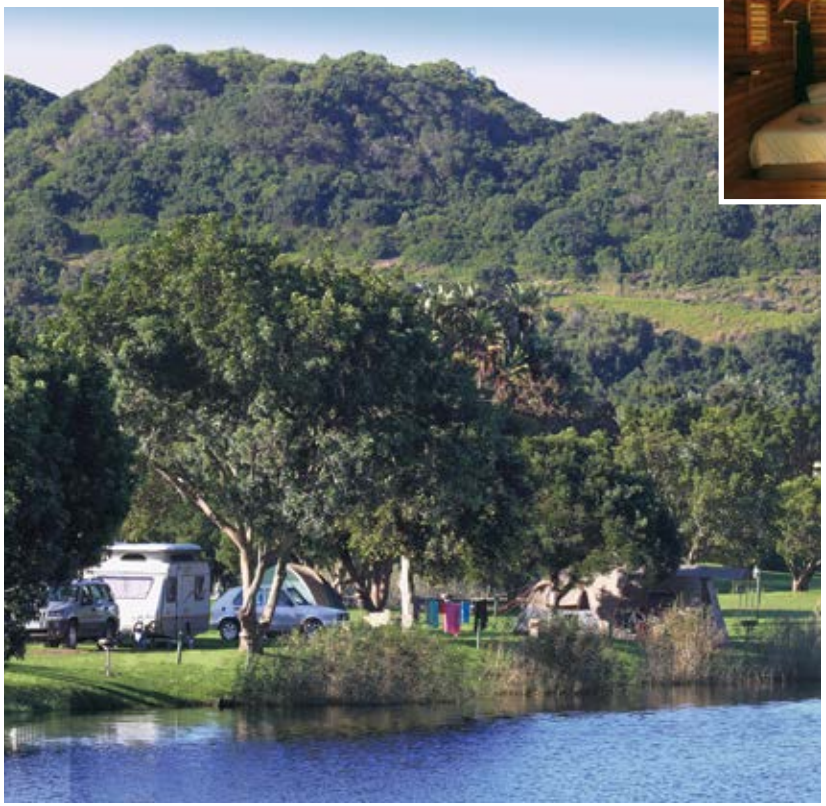
ACTIVITIES Swimming, canoeing, fishing, bird watching and hiking trails

BOOK ONLINE
www.sanparks.org

The 20 forest cabins are very popular and offer different levels of 'easy on the pocket' accommodation
All photos © Steve Newbould

The Reception and lounge area

All accommodation is serviced daily and comes with bedding, towels and soap. Family Cottages have two bedrooms and two bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen and both indoor and outdoor fireplaces. Forest Cabins have either two beds or four beds with one bathroom and a partially equipped kitchen. A communal kitchen is available for cooking.



Many campsites have river side views

WILDERNESS

Ebb & Flow – north

REST CAMP
WILDERNESS

Easier on your pocket accommodation

BOOK ONLINE
www.sanparks.org

RONDAVELS 10 x two-bed with bathroom, 2 x two-bed with communal ablutions and 3 x four-bed with communal ablutions

CAMPSITES 36 with power points and 29 without (max 6 persons per site)

SUPPLIES & PETROL Wilderness Village is only 3km away and has a grocery store and petrol station

ACTIVITIES Swimming, canoeing, fishing, bird watching and hiking trails

ABOVE *THE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE AND RECEPTION IN THE SOUTH CAMP SERVES THE NORTH CAMP TOO*

In order to cater for a wide range of pockets the accommodation in North Camp is more affordable. The rondavels are basic and classified as budget accommodation but are equipped with basic kitchen equipment.

Accommodation is also serviced daily and provided with bedding, towels and soap.

ABOVE *THE MAJORITY OF THE ACCOMMODATION IN THE NORTH CAMP IS FOR CAMPERS*

LEFT *THE RONDAVELS ARE BASIC YET FULLY EQUIPPED FOR SELF-CATERING*

ALL PHOTOS © STEVE NEWBOULD

CARAVAN AND CAMPING

Both South and North Camps have caravan sites and campsites on the banks of the Touw River with communal ablutions and scullery facilities. Some sites at Ebb & Flow Rest Camp are equipped with 220v power points. These power points are for caravan plugs only; to be able to use a normal three point plug you need the applicable adapter.

Pre-approval must be obtained from management if additional tents are required on the campsite.

Island Lake, Wilderness
PHOTO © Steve Newbould

A WORLD OF LAKES

The Wilderness area of the Garden Route National Park stretches from the Touw River mouth in the west to the Swartvlei estuary in the east and beyond, where it links with the Goukamma Nature Reserve, giving welcome protection to five lakes and the Serpentine River, which is the winding strip joining Island Lake to the Touw River at the Ebb & Flow Rest Camp.

Island Lake is the first in this chain of lakes and owes its name to Drommedaris Island located at its center. Langvlei (long lake) was formed when the sea level was much higher and owes its name to its shape, which seems particularly elongated when compared to the other four. Rondevlei (Round Lake) is 143ha and an old wind deflated basin inundated with seawater. This Ramsar site is a very important habitat for several rare bird species. Swartvlei (Black lake) covers some 1100ha and is the largest and deepest of the lakes. It is a veritable birding enthusiast and salt water fisherman's paradise.

EBB & FLOW GATE TIMES

South Camp: 07:00 to 18:00
24 hour security. Guests arriving after 18:00 should report to the main gate at South Camp where a security officer will assist with check-in.
North Camp: 07:00 to 18:00
In house guests will recieve electronic tags at check-in for self-access to the gate after 18:00. All overnight guests must report to reception for check-in.

Canoeing the Touw River. Canoes can be hired at the Ebb & Flow rest camp

PHOTO © Steve Newbould

Wilderness ACTIVITIES & ADVENTURES

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Canoeing

Start at the Ebb & Flow Rest Camp and canoe the Touw River, which leads to Wilderness beach or meander gently alongside the Half-collared Kingfisher Trail as it stretches out toward the waterfall at the end. Explore the Touw and Serpentine rivers and Island Lake. Rent a canoe from SANParks' canoe operation at the Tarentaal day visitor area in South Camp.
To book call: +27 (0) 44 877 1197

Segway Tours

The Wilderness Segway Tours operates within the Ebb & Flow Rest Camp at the Tarentaal day visitor area. Included in the 1 hour Segway tour is a 15-20 minute training session as part of the 1 hour Segway experience. Journey through the Kingfisher Trail and marvel at the surrounding fynbos and Wetlands.
To book call: +27 (0) 81 796 9946

Fishing

Fishing is permitted in Wilderness at the following locations: Leentjieklip, Kleinkrans, Sandhoogte, Swartvlei, Eilandvlei, and Gericke's Point. Any person 12 years of age and above must have a valid fishing permit (Permits available from local Post Offices in Wilderness Village or Sedgefield).

Homtini Mountain Bike Route

An 18.5km route through Indigenous Forest with spectacular views of the Knysna Heads and a challenging 4km hill.

PICNIC SPOTS

Island Lake

The 150ha Island Lake is the first of a chain of lakes and owes its name to Drommedaris Island located at its center. Visitors can pack a picnic basket and enjoy lunch at one of the picnic spots. Water-skiing is restricted to Island Lake only.

Wilderness Lagoon Picnic Site

Enjoy a braai or picnic on the banks of the Wilderness Lagoon and take a leisurely stroll under the bridge and to the beach beyond.

Jubilee Creek and picnic site in the deep Goudveld forests Photo © Steve Newbould

Bird Watching

Due to the variety of ecosystems within the Park, from lush indigenous forest to sparkling rocky shores, and pristine sandy beaches, the Wilderness area of the Garden Route National Park has become a BIRDER'S PARADISE.

Gallinule Bird Hide

From the Park follow Waterside Road to the west and turn left into Dumbleton Road toward Fairy Knowe. Collect the key to this magical Bird Hide at the Fairy Knowe Hotel.

Malachite Bird Hide

From the Park follow the gravel road east for 7.5km past Island Lake to Langvlei where the entrance to the hide is signposted.

Rondevlei Bird Hide

Follow the signs from SANParks offices at Rondevlei to the hide which is situated on Rondevlei (Ramsar Site).

DAY TRAILS

Half-collared Kingfisher Trail
| 7.2km | ± 3 hours

This popular trail starts on the western bank of the Touw River at the Railway Bridge. It winds deep into the forest along the Touw River until the river becomes a narrow stream where a pontoon awaits for safe passage to the eastern bank of the river. From here the trail extends along a 2km boardwalk, which ends at a beautiful waterfall.

Bosduif Loop
|1km | ± 1 hour

This trail loops off of the Half-collared to climb the steep ridge on the western bank of the river. It's quite a climb but absolutely worth it for the view at the top. Caution: Steep climb.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher Trail
|5km |± 2-3 hours

This magical trail is tucked away in a corner opposite the eastern bank of Island Lake. Visitors can walk along the Duiwe River to explore the mesmerizing waterfall and even go for a dip in the natural water pool before turning back. Caution: Slippery rocks.

Pied Kingfisher Trail | 10km | ± 3-4 hours

This easy-going, circular route is perfect for birdwatchers. It starts at Ebb & Flow Rest Camp, then heads south out of the rest camp on the paved road, crosses the N2 and follows the northern bank of the river, returning eventually to Ebb & Flow.

Cape Dune Mole-Rat Trail
| Route A - 6km | Route B - 3km

Permits available at Rondevlei Office, close to the bird hide parking area where the trail starts. Enjoy beautiful smelling Fynbos on a crisp morning and breathtaking views of the Swartvlei Estuary on the opposite bank.

Woodville Big Tree Walk
| 2.1km | 45min

The Woodville Big Tree is a short drive from Ebb & Flow Rest Camp and an easy walk from the parking area to the 810 year old Yellowwood tree. The tree is 34m high and 8.8m in circumference.

Goudveld and Millwood forests

These mystical indigenous forests are equally easy to get to from Wilderness or Knysna.

Dalene Matthee Big Tree and Memorial

An 800 year old Outeniqua Yellowwood, made famous by writer Dalene Matthee, whose memorial can be found next to the tree, is situated at the Krisjan-se-Nek Picnic Site. This is also the start of the famous Circles in the Forest Trail (*see below*).

Permits are available from the Goudveld Kiosk.

Getting to Goudveld

From Wilderness take the N2 towards Knysna, travel for 37km and take the Rheenendal turnoff just outside of Knysna. Travel along this road for 12.6km until Bieby's Hoek turnoff on the right. Follow this road for 2.3km to a fourway intersection at the SANParks boom. Alternatively, when leaving Wilderness take the Hoekwil forest road, via the Woodville Big Tree and continue westwards on the forest roads towards Rheenendal.

FOREST TRAILS

Circles in the Forest

|9km or 3km | Circular Routes | Easy

Start at Krisjan-se-Nek Picnic Site and follow the trail along an old mining path along the bank of a forest creek. Choose from a 9km or 3km circular route.

Drupkelders Trail 3.6km

A challenging path winds its way down into a hidden kloof. Spend the day listening to the amber waters of the river rushing over rapids and reverberating against the concave rock walls. Jumping or diving from rocks is not encouraged.

Permits are available at the Goudveld Kiosk.

Outinqua Overnight Trail

The trail starts at Beervlei and ends at the Harkerville Forest near Knysna after winding its way through indigenous forests and fynbos with majestic mountain scenery and spectacular coastal views. The trail offers a variety of bird and animal life as well as relics of the gold rush near Millwood. Hikers have a choice of 2 to 8 stop overs at huts with bunkbeds and ablution blocks.

Jubilee Creek Picnic Site & Day Trails

A lovely picnic spot on the banks of the Jubilee Creek in the deep forest. Explore the old mine shafts, tunnels and other hidden wonders on a day walk through the old mining trails or bask in the sun while the kids splash in the nearby creek. Adventurous souls can take a swim in the natural pools.

Millwood Mines

The guided mine tour gives visitors the opportunity to learn about the 19th century gold rush. Enjoy a day walk to the historic mines near the coffee shop which is housed in the last remaining building of a once thriving village.

Goudveld Museum and Tea Garden

Depicts the heydays of gold prospecting and the old village. Serves light meals.

The Dalene Matthee Big Tree & Memorial PHOTO © Steve Newbould

Garden Route National Park

KNYSNA

mystical forests, lakes & rugged coastline

The Knysna Forest is world famous for its magical beauty, dark and mystical retreats and giant Outeniqua Yellowwoods, some of which are more than 1000 years old.. Other prominent tree species include Stinkwood and the pink-flowered Cape chestnut.

It has achieved a mythical and permanent place in South African literature through the works of writer Dalene Matthee who found inspiration for numerous novels in the heart of the forest.

The name Knysna, a Khoi word, is most popularly thought to mean 'place of ferns', in reference to the dense forests. During the early parts of the 19th century, the Knysna forest was home to hundreds of elephants. This period however, was witness to a growing market for ivory and habitat transformation so that by 1890, the once large elephant population was virtually wiped out, leaving only four remnant populations. Today it is believed that only a few isolated individuals roam these dense forests.

Today these forests offer endless walks and hiking trails including a wide selection of cycling routes.

Discover rivers, waterfalls and a mass of flora amid giant indigenous trees. Bird watchers should keep a lookout for the famous Knysna Lourie (*Knysna turaco*) with its distinctive white-tipped crest.

Top *The Garden of Eden can be easily accessed just off the N2 highway*

Above *Kranshoek is part of the Harkerville forest, east of Knysna*

photos © Steve Newbould

KNYSNA

GETTING AROUND THE KNYSNA AREA

The town of Knysna is 45km from Wilderness, 488km from Cape Town and 261km from Port Elizabeth.

Directions to the SANParks offices, Thesen Island, Knysna
Entering Knysna from the west on the N2 (becomes Knysna Main Road), turn right onto Waterfront Drive. Take a right at the second set of traffic lights onto Thesen Island. Heading onto Thesen Island, drive over the bridge and take a right at the traffic circle at the end of the road. SANParks offices should be on your left.

Directions to the Knysna indigenous forest complex
Includes the Diepwalle Forest area, camping decks, Tea Room and Forest Legends Museum. Follow the N2 for 6km east of Knysna. Take the Uniondale (R339 gravel road) turnoff to the left and drive 16km to Diepwalle.

Directions to the Treetop Chalet
The Treetop Chalet is approximately 16km past Knysna, in the direction of Plettenberg Bay. There is a small sign on the N2 which directs you to the Garden of Eden on the left, where you can check-in to the Treetop Chalet.

Directions to the Garden of Eden
The Garden of Eden is approximately 16km past Knysna, in the direction of Plettenberg Bay. A small sign on the N2 directs you to the Garden of Eden on the left.

Directions to Kranshoek view point
From Knysna, take the N2 east for 20km to Harkerville. Take a right at the petrol station and continue on this road (which becomes gravel) for 1.5km. At the Y-junction keep left and continue for about 500m. Take a right turn towards Kranshoek and obtain your permits from the SANParks boom.

Harkerville Treetop Chalet

HARKERVILLE FOREST

A 4 star chalet which has two double rooms, each with its own bathroom and sleeps four in comfort. Fully appointed with indoor and outdoor fireplace, dishwasher, washing machine, tumble dryer, DSTV, telephone and alarm system.

SUPPLIES & PETROL The nearest petrol station and convenience store is in Harkerville just 4km away. Visit the towns of Plettenberg Bay (14km) or Knysna (20km) for shopping and supplies.

BOOK ONLINE
www.sanparks.org

NOTE Due to the geographical location of the chalet, clients will have to check-in with a valid proof of payment or confirmation letter at the Garden of Eden by no later than 17:00 to collect their keys

This magical hideaway is tucked away at the head of a wide valley situated in the Harkerville forest. From this vantage point you can bird-watch, botanise, explore the walking trails close by or hop on your bike for an exhilarating cycle through the forest.

Above & Left The chalet takes you right inside the treetop canopy

Below The sumptuous surroundings inside complement the forest views outside

Diepwalle Tented Decks

DIEPWALLE FOREST

Easier on your pocket accommodation

CAMPING DECK These decks accommodate a three-man tent, come with braai and dining areas, and have electric points. Tents and mattresses are available to rent from the Diepwalle Forest Office. Communal ablutions have hot showers. Visitors have access to communal fridge, washing machine and tumble dryer. Firewood is available for purchase at the Forest Office.

BOOK ONLINE
www.sanparks.org

TENTED DECKS Comes with a fixed tent which houses two beds, each with basic mattress (no bedding) and a bar fridge. Communal ablutions have hot showers. Visitors have access to a washing machine and tumble dryer. Firewood is available for purchase at the Forest Office.

POWER SOURCE Electric Points 240v

ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS Hiking Trails and day walks, Forest Legends Museum, Rooted in Time drive, King Edward Big Tree, mountain bike routes, scenic view points, picnic sites, & bird watching.

NOTE Check-in at the Diepwalle Forest Office before 16:00 daily. Late arrivals should pre-arrange late check-in with the office at least 24 hours prior to arrival.

KNYSNA

OVERNIGHT TRAILS

Outeniqua Hiking Trail 108km
The Outeniqua Hiking Trail is a 7 day trail with 8 overnight huts. Hikers don't need to hike the full 7 day trail. The last 4 days of hiking on the Outeniqua Trail traverse the Knysna area with sleep overs at Rondebossie, Diepwalle, Fisantehoek and Harkerville. The trail may only be done in one direction - from west to east. The terrain rating is easy to difficult. For more information on starting points and parking of vehicles. Contact SANParks Regional Office on: +27 (0) 44 302 5600

Harkerville Coastal Hiking Trail 26km
This two day, hiking trail, starts and ends at the Harkerville Forest Office. It passes through some prime examples of high forest, crosses sections of coastal fynbos and takes the hiker along some breath taking natural scenery along a cliff coast with low water pools, eerie coastal caves and pebble beaches. Sleep over at two huts along the way, the Harkerville hut and Sinclair hut. Each have basic facilities including ablutions, single bunks with mattresses, water and firewood.

KAYAKING

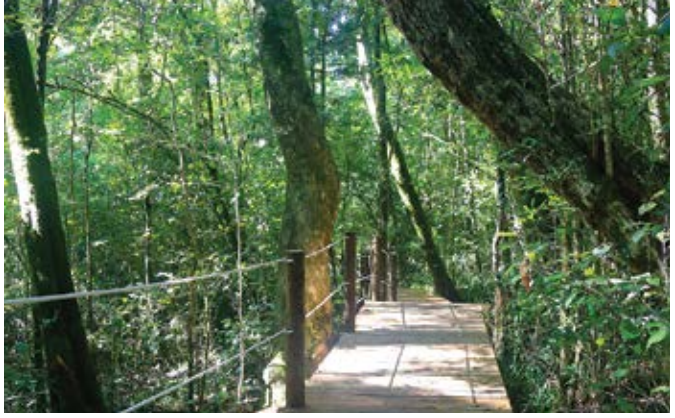
Knysna estuary offers a combination of surf and quieter open lagoon canoeing. Stay away from the heads on the outgoing tide as this can become dangerous.
Kayaks can be hired from the SANParks office, Thensen Island. To book call: +27 (0) 44 302 5600.

Harkerville Mountain Bike Routes

The Harkerville Forest is the ideal location for mountain biking. Five distinct routes have been laid out through the indigenous forest, surrounding plantations and coastal fynbos. They are colour coded as such; Blue Route: 12km | Yellow Route: 14km | Green Route: 15km | Red Route: 24km | Graspad Route: 8km. All routes are circular and permits are available at the Garden of Eden and Kranshoek entrances.

Petrus-se-Brand Mountain Bike Route

The Petrus-se-Brand Biking Route is a 24km, linear, mountain bike route starting at the Diepwalle Forest office and ending at the Garden of Eden along the N2 between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay. It offers great forest scenery and exhilarating downhills with ample streams to refill your water bottle.



The boardwalk makes the Garden of Eden easily accessible to everyone photo © Steve Newbould

Harkerville Forest

DAY TRAILS

Perdekop Trail
| 9.5km | Circular | Easy – moderate | 3-4 hours
This Trail is relatively easy and can be completed at a leisurely pace in 3-4 hours. A wonderful natural swimming pool below a waterfall and surrounded by a lush growth of ferns is situated along the route.

Kranshoek Coastal Day Trail
|9km | Moderate – difficult | 4-5 hours
The trail starts at the Kranshoek picnic site at the top of a tall waterfall and winds its way through the lush forest down into the gorge. It follows this stream towards the coast, then heads up the slopes toward the Kranshoek View Point. The full walk is fairly tough and demands a descent and ascent of 200 metres. Good walking shoes are essential.

Kranshoek Fynbos Trail
| 1km | One-way | Easy | 20 - 30 min
A breath taking fynbos trail which runs along the very edge of the deep valley.

Kranshoek Flora Trail
| 1km | Circular | Easy | 20 - 30 min
Starts and ends at the Kranshoek Picnic Site. A perfect introduction to the wonderful forest environment.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Kranshoek View Point, Picnic Area and Short Walks
One of the most beautiful spots on the southern Cape

coast, Kranshoek offers the visitor cliff-top views of the rugged coastline and a warm, sheltered picnic site, complete with stream and braai area. Obtaining a permit at the entrance provides the visitor with access to the Kranshoek View Point and picnic area, Flora Trail, Fynbos Trail and Kranshoek Coastal Day Trail.

Garden of Eden | 1km| 30min
The Garden of Eden is situated right on the N2 between Knysna and Plett and serves as a great place to stretch your legs and freshen up in the cool, green forest. A short walk follows over 1km of wooden boardwalks and bridges and is entirely wheelchair friendly. There are a number of wooden benches and tables along the trail, great for a picnic.

Witels Forest Picnic Site
Next to the N2 between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay, an ideal stop to relax and rest. Braai facilities, ablutions and fresh water available. Free entry.

ABOVE *THE KING EDWARD VII BIG TREE*
OPPOSITE PAGE TOP *THE STARTING POINT AT DIEPWALLE OF ONE OF THE ELEPHANT TRAILS*
OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM *THE FOREST LEGENDS MUSEUM, WOODCUTTERS ROOM,*
PHOTOS © STEVE NEWBOULD

Diepwalle Forest

DAY TRAILS

Elephant Trails
- Black Route: 9km | Circular | Easy | 3-4 hours
- White Route: 8km | Circular | Moderate | 3-4 hours
- Red Route: 7km | Circular | Moderate - difficult | 3-4 hours

These epic trails follow old woodcutter paths in some parts, taking the hiker past some stately Outeniqua yellowwood trees. The White Elephant Trail has the most enticing rock pool, the Black Elephant Trail passes through the King Edward VII picnic site and the Red Elephant Trail crosses a little stream exactly halfway ideal for a lunch stop.

Terblans Trail
| 6.5km | Circular | Moderate | 3-4 hours
This trail, situated in the Gouna Forest is starts and ends at the Grootdraai picnic site, ideal for a picnic before or after the hike. Excellent route for bird watching and has a beautiful rock pool to swim in.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Forest Legends Museum
The Forest Legends Museum at Diepwalle reveals some of the forest's best kept secrets. A Timeline Room helps visitors review the tug of war between exploitation and conservation in these ancient forests while the Woodcutter's Room explores the lives and times of the fabled Woodcutters of the Knysna forest. The Elephant room depicts the story of the Knysna elephant and houses the famous elephant skeleton.

Rooted in Time Cultural Heritage Route
The Diepwalle Forest holds many cultural stories, sites and artefacts. The "Self-Drive Route" consists of 10 places of cultural interest, between the Diepwalle Forest and Gouna Forest. Each stop makes a particular contribution to the overall cultural significance of the route.

KNYSNA

Garden Route National Park

TSITSIKAMMA

the place of much water

Where the booming breakers of the Indian Ocean relentlessly pound rocky shores, where temperate high forest and fynbos roll down to the sea, where ancient rivers carve their paths to the ocean down steep rocky ravines.

This, "the place of much water", is the Garden Route National Park's Tsitsikamma. The heartland of the Park stretches some 5km to sea, protecting a wonderland of intertidal, reef and deep sea life. Dolphins frolic in the breakers, surfing and playing for the sheer joy of life, and the gentle giant of the ocean, the Southern Right Whale visits here, coming inshore to breed.

The African Black Oystercatcher (a red data species) is one of South Africa's most threatened bird species and several pairs nest along the Park's rocky coastline.

The beautiful Knysna Louries with their gruff call are common sightings in the forest.

Top *The Rugged and evocative Tsitikamma coastline* photo © Steve Newbould

Above *A river spills into the Indian ocean* photo © SANParks

The Cape Clawless Otter (for which the famous Otter Trail is named), is a shy and elusive species that hunts crabs along the Park's coastline.

Blue Duiker and Bushbuck are seldom seen but can sometimes be glimpsed browsing around campsites.

Tsitsikamma has two rest camps, each with their own magic and charm; Storms River Mouth Rest Camp and De Vasselot Rest Camp in Natures Valley.

GETTING AROUND THE TSITSIKAMMA AREA

The **STORMS RIVER MOUTH REST CAMP**, is situated some 615km from Cape Town, 195km from Port Elizabeth and 68km from Plettenberg Bay.

The **DE VASSELOT REST CAMP** in Nature's Valley is 40km from the Storms River Rest Camp and 40km from Plettenberg Bay.

The access route from the N2 highway is tarred. Car hire is available at Plettenberg Bay, which is also the nearest airport (limited scheduled flights). Airports are also found in George and Port Elizabeth.

Big Tree, Tsitsikamma

This tree is a Yellowwood giant, estimated to be approximately 800 years old; it is 36.6m high and nine metres in circumference. It will take you around 10 minutes (500m boardwalk) to walk to the Big Tree from the entrance.

photo © Steve Newbould

Tsitsikamma & surrounds Map

Chalets, family cottages, guest cottages, Forest cabins and huts as well as stunning campsites - something to suit everybody.

photos © Steve Newbould & Debbie Bancroft

Storms River Mouth

REST CAMP

Spoilt for choice accommodation

CHALETS 20 units sleep 2, 3 and 4 sleepers available
FAMILY COTTAGES 15 units, sleeps 4
GUEST COTTAGES 2 units, sleeps 8
HONEYMOON COTTAGES 1 unit, sleeps 2

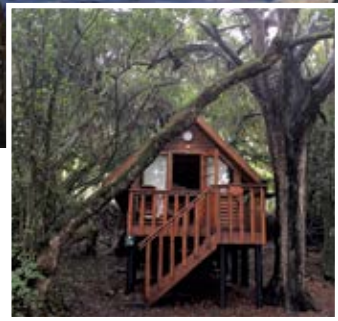
Easier on your pocket accommodation

BOOK ONLINE www.sanparks.org

OCEANETTES 15 units, sleeps 2
FOREST CABINS 6 units, sleeps 2
FOREST HUTS 20 units, sleeps 2
CAMPSITES 100 sites with power, Max 6 person per site
POWER SOURCE Electricity 240V
SUPPLIES The shop in the Rest Camp has various supplies
OTHER FACILITIES Swimming pool, shop, restaurant, hiking trails and conference facilities

Petrol /Diesel available at Storms River Bridge ± 25km away

Enjoy beautiful seascapes that contrast with the dense indigenous forests, well laid out walks, hikes, suspension bridges, boat trips and all from within the Storms River Mouth Rest Camp.
Well placed Oceanettes offer open plan living rooms and fully equipped, self-catering kitchens. Choose from open plan chalets, family cottages, forest huts or a stand alone honeymoon cottage - *something to meet everybody's requirements and pockets*.
Choose from 100 camp sites, all situated a few steps from the ocean and all with electricity, communal ablutions and laundry facilities.



TSITSIKAMMA

Storms River Gorge Suspension Bridges

This icon is situated along the Mouth Trail that starts on the small beach in front of the restaurant. The original bridge was built in 1969.
Today it includes two additional bridges that provide visitors with the option of a thrilling circular route along the rocky coastal cliff. The three suspension bridges span a total of 77 metres.

Boat Rides

The Spirit of Tsitsikamma operates on a daily basis depending on sea and weather conditions. Trips to the waterfall and up the Storms River Gorge are available and can be booked on the day at the Cattle Baron Restaurant.

Cattle Baron Restaurant

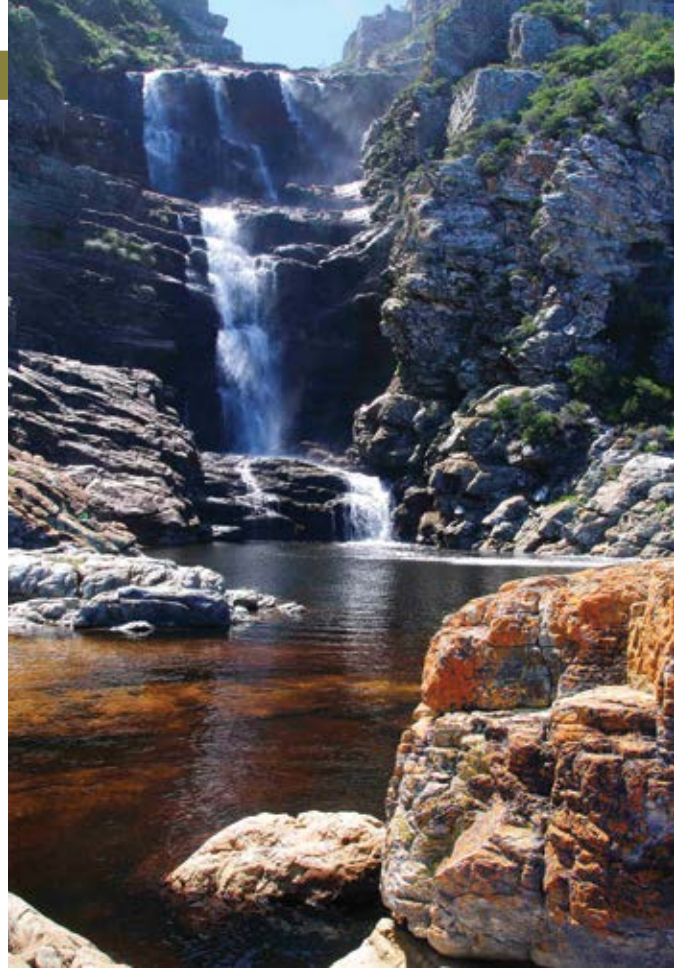
Well-known for its scenic location, visitors are sure to find a variety of scrumptious dishes to choose from. Reservations are advisable. Restaurant tel: +27 42 281 1190

Souvenir Shop

The shop sells souvenirs and basic commodities and is located next to the Cattle Baron Restaurant.

Untouched Adventures

Untouched Adventures is situated at the boat house near the restaurant at Storms River Mouth. They offer guided kayaking and lilo trips as well as snorkelling and scuba. Full gear available for hire.
Tel: +27 73 130 0689



The 6km Waterfall Trail starts at the Storms River Camp PHOTO © SANParks

Storms River Mountain Bike Routes

A 26km route runs from Storms River Village and follows the old Storms River Pass through the Plaatbos Forest to the viewpoint overlooking Storms River Mouth.

STORMS RIVER GATE TIMES

Telephone: +27 (0) 42 281 1607
Gate Times: 06:00 - 18:00
Security: 18:00 - 07:00
Late arrivals: Keys will be left at gates for overnight visitors arriving after 18h00 (prior arrangements should be made for late arrivals).

TSITSIKAMMA TRAILS

OVERNIGHT TRAILS

Otter Trail

It is undoubtedly one of the best known and most popular of the South African hiking trails and amongst the best trails in the world. This pristine indigenous 5 day trail offers some of the most spectacular vistas and landscapes along 42.5km of Tsitsikamma coastline, from the Storms River Mouth in the east to Nature's Valley in the west. It traverses breathtakingly desolate coastline, wild river gorges and broken cliff faces with majestic waterfalls.

Dolphin Trail

This unique trail has been made possible by the formation of a partnership between South African National Parks, The Fernery and Misty Mountain Reserve. The result is a hiking experience that will both challenge and pamper you. The trail covers a distance of 17km starting in Tsitsikamma at Storms River Mouth, and winding its way eastwards through natural fynbos and pristine indigenous forest. It ends on the banks of the Sandrift River at The Fernery. Hike the magnificent Tsitsikamma Coast without the heavy backpack, and spend three nights in comfort at different accommodation venues.

DAY TRAILS

Storms River Mouth Rest Camp

Storms River Mouth Trail |1km | 1 hour
This walk will lead the visitor up to the world renowned suspension bridges of the Storms River Mouth. Starts at Sandy Bay (next to the restaurant) meanders along a winding board walk through indigenous forest to the mouth of the Storm River, the famous suspension bridge, the Stormsriver Mouth Cave (Khoisan Heritage Site) and to the Spirit of Tsitsikamma boat jetty. For the more energetic, the trail continues after the bridge and leads to the lookout point on the plateau. The journey to the bridge and back is approximately 40 minutes.

Lourie Trail |1km | 1 hour
After a brief uphill climb, the trail emerges at the Agulhas lookout point, then passes through a short section of fynbos, before continuing through the spectacular coastal forest. This walk is relatively easy, and is a must for those who have yet to experience the splendour of the indigenous forest.

Blue Duiker Trail | 3.7km | 2 hours
This trail is a slightly longer version of the Lourie Trail and journeys to the heart of the forest where true forest giants, Outeniqua Yellowwoods, stand majestically in the thick coastal forest. The trail ends at the beginning of the famous Otter Trail.

Waterfall Trail | 6km | 3-4 hours
This trail comprises the first 3km of the world-renowned Otter Trail. It follows along rugged coastline and to a spectacular waterfall which plunges into a deep pool before flowing into the sea. This trail is fairly strenuous and caution must be taken at high tides.

Tsitsikamma East - Big Tree

Big Tree Ratel Nature Walks
Green Route: 1km | Yellow Route: 2.6km | Red Route: 4.2km Three routes have been laid out and colour-coded. All start and end at the Tsitsikamma Big Tree.

Tsitsikamma West - Bloukrans

Rugbos Nature Walk Green Route: 1.3km | Yellow Route: 1.4km | Blue Route: 3.1km The green and blue routes start at the Tsitsikamma Khoisan Village at the Bloukrans River. The yellow route starts and ends at the Rugbos picnic site on the Bloukrans Pass.

Stinkhoutkloof Nature Walk | 8km | 2 hours
Starts and ends at the Bloukrans Forest Office.

Tsitsikamma – Storms River Village

Goesa Nature Walk | 2km | 1 hour
Starts and ends at the SANParks Office in Storms River Village. This trail winds through indigenous forests and down to a stream before heading back. It's relatively easy with a boardwalk, bridges and steps in places.

Plaatbos Forest Trails Green Route: 6km | Red Route: 7.8km | Yellow Route: 9km
Have a picnic and swim in the Storms River at the Old Bridge picnic site on the yellow route.

Note: Trail durations are approximated. Please ask for more information on trail difficulty at reception or information before embarking on day trails.

Nature's Valley

DE VASSELOT REST CAMP

CHALETS 2 units, sleeps 3

FOREST HUTS 10 units, sleeps 2

CAMPSITES 44 (no power), (max 6 people per site)

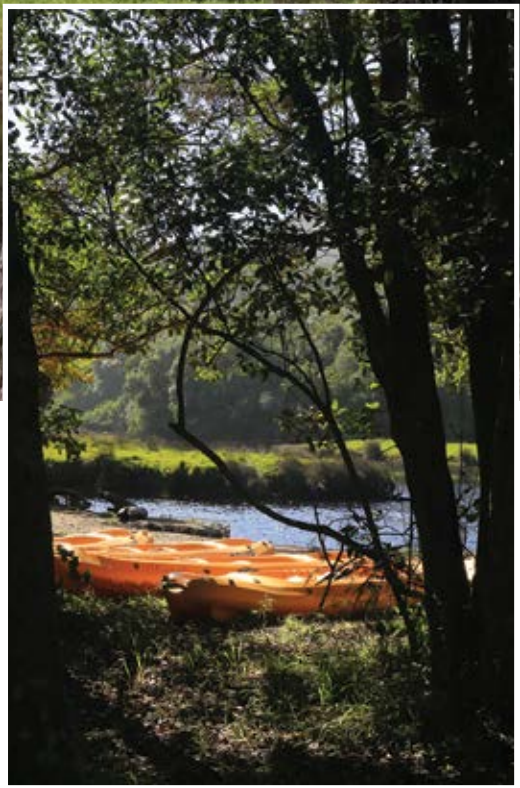
POWER SOURCE Electricity, 240V

SUPPLIES There is a shop and restaurant in Nature's Valley just a few minutes drive from the rest camp.

OTHER FACILITIES Ablution and laundry facilities, canoes available for hire, hiking trails galore!

Petrol /Diesel available at The Crags or Plettenberg Bay.

BOOK ONLINE
www.sanparks.org



Gate Times

Telephone: +27 (0) 42 531 6700
Gate Times: 06:00 - 18:00
Security: 18:00 - 07:00
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TSITSIKAMMA

De Vasselot Rest Camp is situated in the Nature's Valley area of Tsitsikamma on the banks of the Groot River.
The rest camp is about 30km from Plettenberg Bay and 40km from Storms River Mouth Rest Camp. This birdwatcher's paradise offers numerous day trails and guests may also enjoy canoeing, swimming or sailing.

Hikers ending a trail in Nature's Valley
PHOTO © SANParks

Nature's Valley Beach

Natures Valley Beach is the final pit stop to the famous 5 day Otter Trail. This magnificent beach is a welcome relief for tired bodies and feet. But if you're not one of those doing the trail this is a great spot for surfing, swimming and sun tanning.

Canoeing

Rent canoes from Reception and explore the lagoon towards
the river mouth.
For enquiries and to book call: +27 44 531 6700

Salt River Mouth

In the year 2000, researchers from the Albany Museum in Grahamstown discovered a number of aquatic insects, new to science, in the Salt River. It is the only river in Tsitsikamma where no fish are to be found.

Day Trails

Kalanderkloof Trail 4.8km | 2.5 hours
The trail starts opposite the entrance of the De Vasselot camping site and progresses up the Kalanderkloof to the lookout point and winds all the way back to the campsite.

Groot River Trail 6.0km | 2.5 hours
Starts at the entrance to the De Vasselot camp site and follows the last section of the Otter trail.

Salt River via the Keurpad Trail 15.1km | 6 hours
Follows the Kalanderkloof trail, then continues over the tarred road and crosses the Salt River before turning back along the coast to Nature's Valley.

Salt River mouth Trail 9.0km | 2.5 hours
Starts at De Vasselot camp shop and follows the beach into the scrub forest and returns to the campsite.

Varinghoek via the Keurpad and back 16km | 6 hours
Starts at the top of the Groot River pass and eventually joins up with the jeep track.

Segway Tours operate both in Wilderness' Ebb & Flow Rest Camp and from Storms River Village
PHOTO © Steve Newbould

There are many attractions and activities run by private companies both within the Park, and out.

Here is a list of some of the more popular attractions:

Storms River Village

Black Water Tubing: A river adventure of paddling, swimming and optional rock and tube jumps.

Storms River Pass Tour: (Tsitsikamma Woodcutters Journey): A tour which explores the old Storms River Pass.

Storms River Segway Tours: Explore the forests around Storms River Village on unique single axle vehicles.

Storms River Horse Trails: Guided horse trails into the National Park.

Treetop Canopy Tours: Zip line experiences over the forest.

Along the N2

Bungy Jump: Bloukrans Bungy is the world's highest bungy bridge at 216m.

Forest Ferns Nursery: Learn about the intrigues of plant life that preceded the dinosaurs of the prehistoric world.

For more information on above activities, visit the Storms River Information Centre or Tel 0422 811 098

Contacts & Info

ADDRESSES & NUMBERS

SANParks Central Reservations

PO Box 787, Pretoria 0001
Tel +27 (0)12 428 9111 Fax +27 (0)12 343 0905
email: reservations@sanparks.org web: **www.sanparks.org**

For easy discount bookings, book online

Garden Route Parks Contacts

Wilderness	Reception Desk	(044) 877 1197
	Farleigh Forest	(044) 356 9021
Knysna	Regional Office	(044) 302 5600
	Knysna Lakes Office	(044) 382 2095
	Harkerville Forest	(044) 532 7770
	Diepwalle Forest	(044) 382 9762/3
Tsitsikamma	Storms River Mouth	(042) 281 1607
	Tsitsikamma Forest	(042) 281 1557
	Nature's Valley	(044) 531 6700

Wild Card

Purchase a Wild Card and avoid paying daily conservation fees, in a variety of Parks. Valid for one year.

Card enquiries: 086 146 9453 and register online
www.wildcard.co.za

Most of the Garden Route National Park trails have **Green Flag Trails status**. This system recognises hikes in South Africa that meet minimum standards in terms of trail outlay, accommodation, facilities and service, as well as the conservation of natural resources and safety. For more details go to **www.greenflagtrails.co.za**