

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 2500ha, while the Marine Protected Area extends along approximately 18km of coastline from Buffalo Bay towards Sedgfield, and one nautical mile (1,85 km) out to sea. 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 underground link to the sea.

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.

Vegetation

Coastal fynbos and coastal forest are the two main types of vegetation found here. 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.

Animals

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

Goukamma has various accommodation options. The Mvubu Bush Lodge offers expansive views of the lake while the rustic Groenvlei Bush Camp is nestled among milkwood trees on the lakeshore. On the Buffalo Bay side of the reserve, three recently

renovated thatched double rondavels overlook the scenic Goukamma river and estuary. All options are self-catering.

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 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 6,5 km 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 via the 4,2 km **Buffalo Bay Trail**, a circular route through forest and coastal vegetation with sea views along the way.

Visitors can picnic, swim, sail and canoe on the river. Canoes can be hired and licenses for freshwater angling and boating on Groenvlei are available at the reserve office or *Bait & Tackle* in Sedgfield.

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.

Times

Gate times are from 8h00–18h00 daily. 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.



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. In if 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, seek shelter.
- Stay on or close to the path to be visible to a rescue party. Do not stray from a given route.
- In case of emergency notify the reserve office or phone 10177.
- If possible, send two experienced group members to report the accident. Don't abandon the casualty.
- Give the rescue team full name, age of the casualty; the type of injury; the location of the accident.

Being Lost

- Never descend via unknown terrain. Loose stones and hidden cliffs can be deadly.
- Sunlight and weather permitting, retrace your steps until reaching a known route. Otherwise, stay where you are until rescued.
- Use bright items to reveal your position to search teams. Blow a whistle to attract attention.

Hypothermia

(abnormally low body temperature)
Wet, wind and cold can cause hypothermia. Symptoms include stumbling, uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, loss of memory and drowsiness. Stay dry and warm and seek shelter while you still have energy, but try to stay near the path.

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.

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



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.

ENQUIRIES

Tel: (044) 383 0042

goukamma@mweb.co.za

RESERVATIONS

Tel: 0861 CAPENATURE

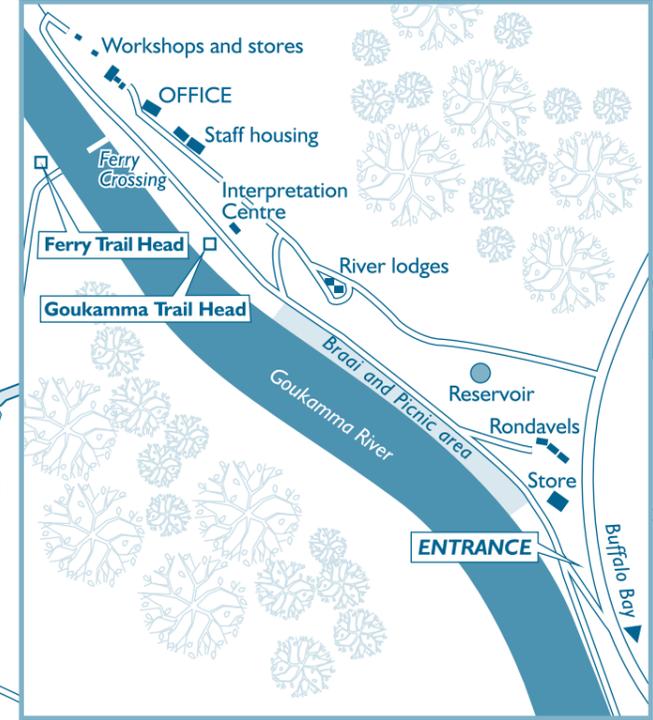
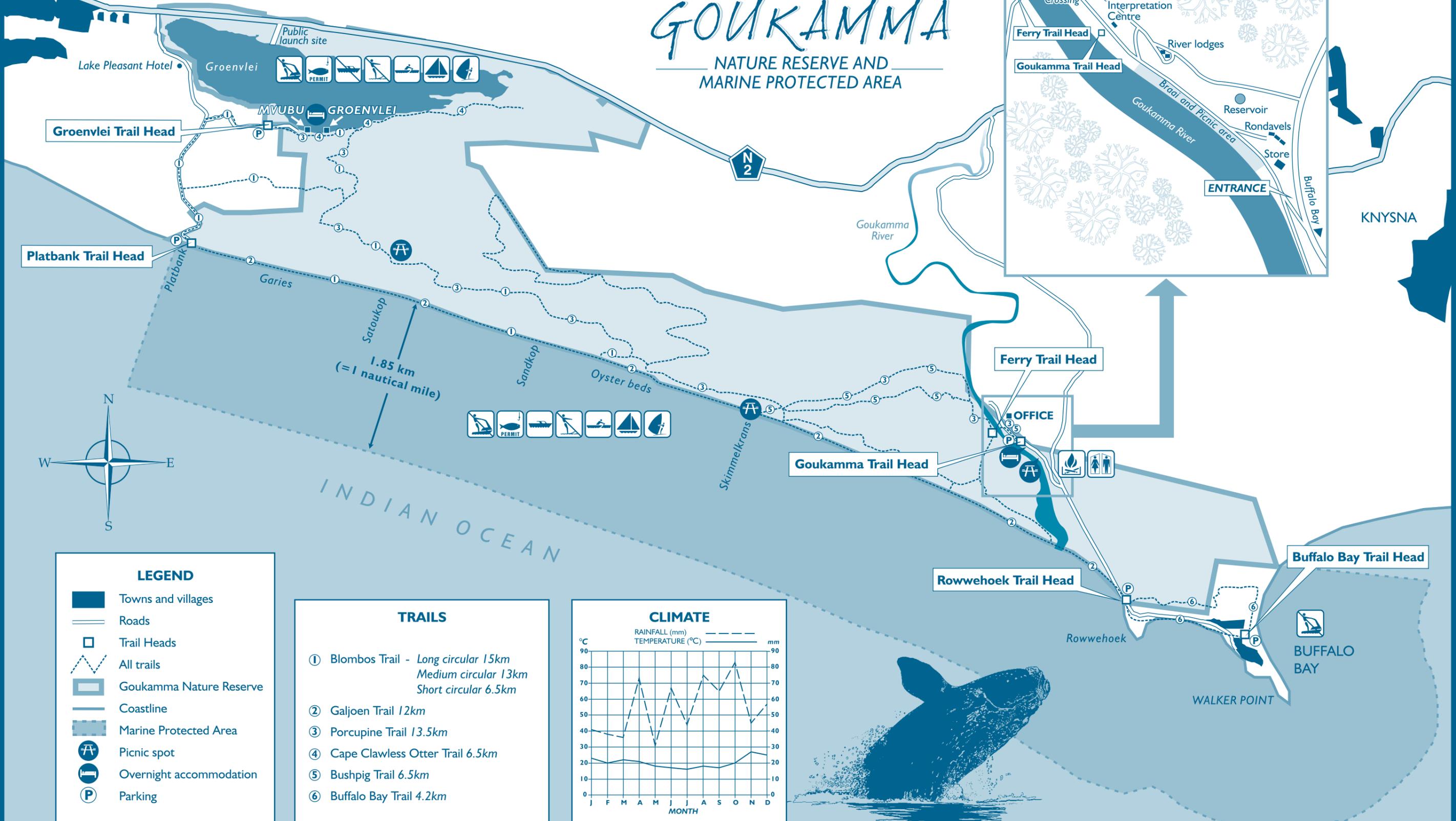
(227 362 8873)

www.capenature.co.za



GOUKAMMA

NATURE RESERVE AND
MARINE PROTECTED AREA



LEGEND

- Towns and villages
- 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

CLIMATE

