

Reach Africa Birding and Getaways



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PORT ELIZABETH

5 DAY TRIP: 16 to 20 May 2012

This trip offers exciting and varying birding opportunities within easy reach of Port Elizabeth, "the friendly city"

We have scheduled the trip for this time of the year to give us the opportunity of seeing, in addition to resident species, three tern species which are absent during the summer ie Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern and Antarctic Tern.

BIRDING ATTRACTIONS

Cape Recife

This 370ha nature reserve is situated on a headland at the south-western tip of Algoa Bay. It is the best place near Port Elizabeth to see marine and freshwater birds and is one of the "must see" birding venues in Port Elizabeth. The tern roost at Cape Recife point in winter is the best place in South Africa to see Roseate Tern, in breeding plumage. Antarctic Tern is also a common winter visitor. A Bridled Tern, a vagrant to South Africa, returned to the tern roost for five years up to 2007, was absent in 2008, but returned again in 2009. Hopefully it will put in an appearance again in 2010.

The bird hide overlooking one of the sewage reclamation ponds offers reedbed species such as African Rail, Black Crake, African Purple Swamphen, Purple Heron and the elusive Little Bittern.

Coastal dune scrub holds Cape Bulbul, Southern Tchagra, Karoo Prinia and Yellow Canary.

Island Forest Reserve and Maitland Reserve

These two small forest reserves near Seaview provide accessible indigenous coastal forest close to Port Elizabeth and are the best places in the area to see many of the forest specials.

These include Forest Buzzard, Lemon Dove, Knysna Turaco, Terrestrial Brownbul, Chorister Robin-Chat, White-starred Robin, Brown Scrub-Robin, Blue-mantled Crested-Flycatcher, Olive Bush-Shrike, Black-bellied Starling, Grey Sunbird, Dark-backed Weaver, Sweet Waxbill and Forest Canary.





Gamtoos River area

The freshwater reedbeds and marshes at the Gamtoos River mouth are a fairly reliable site for Baillon's Crake and African Rail which are best seen early in the morning. Southern Tchagra is fairly common in the coastal bush which lines the river.

Mondplaas Ponds is the name given to a series of pans on the Gamtoos River floodplain. This is one of the best birding spots near Port Elizabeth for water birds and the number and variety of birds seen depends on the amount of water present. African Rail, African Jacana, Black Crake, Hottentot Teal, Black-crowned Night-Heron

and Little Bittern are permanent residents
Ducks are well represented.

Farmlands and grasslands

Farmlands and grasslands around Humansdorp and Aston Bay hold Blue Crane, Denham's Bustard and Black-winged Lapwing. There is an isolated population of Barrow's Korhaan on a game farm near Aston Bay.

A private residential estate near St Francis Bay usually yields good sightings of the elusive Knysna Warbler and Knysna Woodpecker.

Van Staden's Wild Flower Reserve

This 450 hectare reserve lies 40 km from Port Elizabeth on the N2 to Cape Town. It is the best place near Port Elizabeth to see lowland fynbos with flowering Proteas and associated fynbos endemics.

The reserve hosts a number of fynbos endemics including Cape Sugarbird, Cape Bulbul and Orange-breasted Sunbird. Victorin's Warbler and Cape Siskin are visitors, especially in winter when they descend from the mountains.