



cape whale coast

Hangklip-Kleinmond | Hermanus | Stanford | Gansbaai

WESTERN CAPE - SOUTH AFRICA



OVERSTRAND BIRDING MAP



There's a place just over one hour's drive from Cape Town, where you can almost touch whales from a cliff top; see more plants than anywhere else on earth; watch penguins raise their young, have conversations with sharks, sleep peacefully.

A place where nature talks,
- come, listen and experience

cape whale coast

Hangklip-Kleinmond | Hermanus | Stanford | Gansbaai

tourism@overstrand.gov.za
www.whalecoast.info



Birding along the Cape Whale Coast

The Cape Whale Coast is internationally renowned as a tourist destination - the Cape Floral Kingdom, spectacular land- and seascapes, acclaimed wines, whale-watching, diverse people and the list goes on. One of the region's greatest assets relates to the diversity of bird species found in the region: it hosts a range of often sought after endemic bird species, such as the Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Victorin's Warbler, Protea Seedeater, Cape Siskin, African Black Oystercatcher and more. Several under-utilised and ecologically varied birding destinations such as the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden, Fernkloof Nature Reserve, Vermont Salt Pan, the estuaries at Botrivier, Onrus, Kleinrivier and Uilenkraalsmond need to be properly exposed to a rapidly growing bird-watching fraternity. Many exciting birding products already exist: The "Cape Rock-jumper site" at Rooiels is world renowned, the African Penguin colony at Stony Point needs no introduction and the migratory waders visiting the Danger Point Peninsula and the Botrivier estuary are legendary.

www.westerncapebirding.co.za

and go to 'NEWS'
and then 'TRIP REPORTS'



Our endemic bird species

Many visitors to the Cape Whale Coast are attracted to the birds associated with the Cape Floral Kingdom. This "kingdom" with 9 000 plant species (almost 70% of which are endemic), ranks among the wonders of the natural world. Several exciting and endemic bird species are attracted to this habitat type and can be found relatively easily in several different localities spread around the Cape Whale Coast. Most of these birding destinations are readily accessible and feature dramatic mountain landscapes. Top destinations include the Rooiels site, the Harold Porter Botanical Garden at Betty's Bay (partially wheelchair friendly), the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve at Kleinmond, the Fernkloof Nature Reserve and Rotary Drive in Hermanus and sites at Stanford, Pearly Beach and Baardskeedersbos. Entrance to these destinations is free or at a minimal cost. A large variety of interesting species occur in most of these destinations. Western Cape species such as Cape Bulbul, Karoo Prinia, Protea Seedeater, Cape Siskin, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Southern Tanager, Victorin's Warbler and Ground Woodpecker are often encountered. More common species include Bar-throated Apalis, Cape Batis, Cape Grassbird, and Sweet Waxbill. Also found is a good selection of birds of prey, Verreaux's Eagle, Lanner and Peregrine Falcons, Rock Kestrel and a variety of accipiters such as African Goshawk, African Harrier-Hawk and Black and Little Sparrowhawks need to be mentioned.

Water + shorebirds

A mixture of sandstone and limestone formations with white sandy beaches form the Cape Whale Coast coastline. Birding along the shoreline is often very interesting and here mention should be made of places such as Stony Point, Onrus and Harderbaai, the Cliff path walk in Hermanus, the Walker Bay Nature Reserve, the Danger Point peninsula near Gansbaai and Pearly Beach. The Cape Whale Coast has an international reputation as one of the best land-based whale-watching destinations between May and November. Very few people realise that this coast hosts several endemic coastal species that are associated with the Benguela current. These include Bank, Cape and Crowned Cormorants, Cape Gannet, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls and African Black Oystercatcher. Occasionally pelagic species also pass by, particularly during stormy weather. Pelagic species are sometimes seen off shore and many migratory waders are found in summer. Stony Point at Betty's Bay is the Cape Whale Coast's flagship destination for coastal birds. It has one of only two mainland breeding colonies of African Penguins and all of the species mentioned above can be found here. A wooden boardwalk takes visitors right to the nesting burrows and a small entrance fee is charged. The Uilenkraalsmond, Klein, Onrus, Bot and Palmiet Rivers offer estuaries where bird-watching opportunities are often superb. It becomes evident that the Cape Whale Coast is a great destination for studying water and coastal birds. All three grebes are often encountered and flamingos and pelicans move throughout the region. Substantial numbers of herons, egret and rails plus a diversity of ducks and teals are usually found. Vagrant species identified along the Cape Whale Coast in the past include Franklin's and Sabine's Gulls, Little Blue Heron, Red-tailed Tropicbird, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Greater Frigatebird and Gull-billed Tern!

BirdLife Overberg

Members of BirdLife Overberg, as well as the local birding clubs have provided the text and images for this Cape Whale Coast birding map. BirdLife Overberg was formed with the following aims in mind:

- To market the Overberg as a top birding destination, thus contributing to the region's already impressive tourism infrastructure.
- To allow people in the Overberg with an interest in birds to become involved in bird-watching by participating in the typical activities associated with BirdLife South Africa and its international partners;
- To place strong emphasis on educational programs in order to get participants involved in the meaningful conservation of birds and their habitats;

Further information on birding along the Cape Whale Coast and the activities of BirdLife Overberg can be obtained from:
www.westerncapebirding.co.za

www.birdlife.org.za



Harold Porter Botanical Gardens



Kogelberg



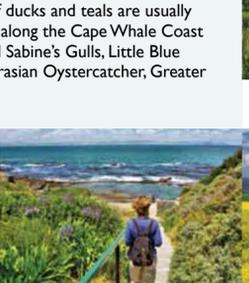
Duiwelsgat hiking trail at De Kelders



Kleinmond Estuary



Klein River in Stanford



Hermanus Cliff Path



Canola Fields of the Overberg



Walker Bay Nature Reserve



N2	national road
R44	route number
	main road
	untarred road
	distance in km
	Overstrand

www.whalecoast.info
tourism@overstrand.gov.za

cape whale coast

HANGKLIP - KLEINMOND

escape to nature

- The Hangklip-Kleinmond area, which encompasses the towns and villages of Rooiels, Pringle Bay, Betty's Bay and Kleinmond, is nestled near the heart of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve. More than 1600 species of unspoilt indigenous fynbos per 10 000 square kilometres can be found here.
- Visit the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden.
- View the African Penguin colony at Stony Point, Betty's Bay.
- Wine and dine, or explore the vast array of galleries and shops.
- Play golf, do sandboarding down the slopes of the Blesberg Dune or river raft on the Palmiet river.

Tel: 028 271 5657
info@kleinmondtourism.co.za
www.kleinmondtourism.co.za

HERMANUS

whale capital of the world

- Hermanus offers some of the best land-based whale-watching in the world. A 12km cliff path offers excellent whale watching.
- Explore the Hermanus Wine Route and Hemel-en-Aarde.
- Fernkloof Nature Reserve, offers a number of hiking trails.
- Visit one of the three museums - the Whale Museum, Old Harbour Museum and the Photography Museum.
- Find delicious food and home-made products at the Hermanus Country Market and Hermanuspietersfontein Food and Wine Market.
- Enjoy golfing, sea kayaking, wind-surfing, horse riding, mountain biking and more.

Tel: 028 312 2629 • www.hermanustourism.info
hermanustourism2@hermanus.co.za

STANFORD

a taste of village life

- Stanford is embraced by the Klein River: take a guided boat cruise or rent a canoe or kayak for a leisurely paddle.
- 'Historical Stanford on Foot' walking trail: Stanford is regarded as one of South Africa's best-preserved villages and the original village area has heritage status.
- Explore the art studios and antique shops in the village.
- Enjoy the wines of Stanford Wine Route.
- Visit the unique Klein River Cheese factory, Birkenhead Brewery, Panthera Africa and world-class restaurants.
- Enjoy Stanford's rural-style country markets with local wines, fresh vegetables and home-baked delectable treats.

Tel: 028 341 0340
ask@stanfordinfo.co.za • www.stanfordtourism.co.za

GANSBAAI

the natural adventure destination

- Known as the Great White Shark Capital of the world.
- Boat based whale watching gives an up close and personal experience.
- Hiking trails are a firm favourite - coastal, fynbos, milkwood forest and the southernmost forest.
- Explore the caves, stroll along the long stretches of beach.
- Visit the Danger Point Lighthouse, Strandveld Museum and Herbarium (Pearly Beach).
- Meet and watch well known artists at work during the Baardskeedersbos Art Route weekends.
- Gansbaai Harbour with its fishing trawlers and freshwater fountain gives an insight into the origins of the town.

Tel: 028 384 1439
www.gansbaaiinfo.com • gansbaaiinfo@telkomsa.net



Ruddy Turnstones
© ANTON ODENDAL



Swift Terns
© CARIN MALAN



Cape Weaver



Black Harrier
© RICHARD MASON



Cape Rock Thrush
© ANTON ODENDAL



Cape Grassbird
© ANTON ODENDAL



Cape Clapper Lark
© RICHARD MASON



Southern double-collared Sunbird
© DON MCIVER



Southern Black Korhaan
© ANTON ODENDAL



Cape Spurfowl
© ANTON ODENDAL



Cape Siskin
© ANTON ODENDAL



Large-billed Lark
© ANTON ODENDAL

Hangklip-Kleinmond



ROOIELS
The **ROOIELS ‘Cape Rock-jumper site’** (34°18'28.23" S 18°49'03.86" E) is probably the best place on earth to find this mega endemic bird. The site forms part of the Eastern False Bay Mountains Important Bird Area (SA 107). For more information on why this site is designated as an Important Bird Area visit: <http://www.birdlife.org.za>

Take the R44 from Gordon’s Bay to Kleinmond and at Rooiels take the second turn-off to the right (Porter Road). Park at the gate (roughly 1 km) and go further on foot. The Rock-Jumpers are normally found to the left in the rocky habitats about 500 yards beyond the gate. Other species to be found here include Verreaux’s Eagle, Cape and Sentinel Rock-Thrushes, Cape Siskin, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Ground Woodpecker and Victorin’s Warbler. More Common species include Familiar Chat, Grey-backed Cisticola, Cape Grassbird, Rock Kestrel and White-necked Raven. First time overseas visitors can expect to get up to 10 “lifter” at this spot.

BETTY’S BAY STONY POINT (34°22'26.58" S 18°53'46.72" E) can be reached by following the sign boards from the R44 when traveling through Betty’s Bay. It is one of only two mainland breeding colonies of **African Penguin** and the wooden boardwalks allow visitors to get really close to a variety of coastal birds. **All five South African cormorant species can be found here including the threatened Bank, Cape and Crowned Cormorants, African Black Oystercatcher, Kittlitz’s and White-fronted Plovers**, as well as a variety of terns and sometimes even pelagic species out to sea are often on view. Stony Point remains one of the Western Cape’s most important birding assets: it is very well maintained and managed by CapeNature and visitors regularly comment on the good number of foreign birders that are engaged with on the boardwalks. (A small entrance fee is payable).

HAROLD PORTER NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

(34°21'08.89" S 18°55'37.74" E) is situated right on the R44 and allows birders easy access to fynbos, forest and mountain associated species. This is casual birding at its best as a section of the garden is wheelchair-friendly and there is a great restaurant. Specials here include **Blue-mantled Crested-Flycatcher, African Dusky Flycatcher, Cape Grass-bird, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Cape Sugarbird, Victorin’s Warbler** and most of the endemic species to be found in the Western Cape Province. Also be on the lookout for **Cape Batis, Southern Boubou, Cape Siskin and Swee Waxbill**, as well as **Black Sawwing** in summer. The Garden is best known for its many botanical delights and a walk up Disa Kloof in search of the Red Disas that are in bloom up at the waterfall during January is highly recommended. An experience to behold. (A small entrance fee is payable). The Dawidskraal beach is also recommended - one can park at the gardens, cross over the R44 at the bridge and walk down a path to the sea. Betty’s Bay also features several water bodies where birding can be very good. Groot-witvlei stands out as the best example of these. These three magnificent birding destinations are in close proximity to each other and this at the beginning of the Cape Whale Coast region. In essence it gives a “summary” of the specials of the Western Cape on a day outing from Cape Town.

The KLEINMOND SEWAGE WORKS

(34°21'81" S 18°59'05.90" E) recently produced a vagrant **Citrine Wagtail** and is often well worth a worth a visit. Shortly hereafter (and to the left) (34°19'56.62" S 18°59'17.00" E) there is the entrance to the **OUDEBOS** core conservation base of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve managed by CapeNature. Very comfortable chalets are now available here. Reservations can be made at +27 021 483 0190. Visit www.capenature.co.za There is a parking area (34°24'57.61" S 19°38'00.22" E) to the left just as the bridge over the Palmiet River has been passed. A hiking trail leads from this spot through the Kogelberg Nature Reserve back to Betty’s Bay. This trail is not too strenuous and offers great birding. The first ridge after the trail starts (some three hundred meters) is regarded by many as the most reliable spot for **Victorin’s Warbler**, one of the most sought after Western Cape endemics. **Cape Rock-jumper** and **Ground Woodpecker** can also be seen here. Beyond Kleinmond and the Pristine Lamloch Swamps are on private land, but birding the fringes can be rewarding. Craft hire from Kleinmond mouth can help access (34°20'24.52" S 19°02'08.85" E) - a good area for **Little Bittern, African Marsh-Harrier, African Rail and African Purple Swamphen**. These sites all form part of the Botrivier and Kleinmond Estuary Important Bird Area (SA 118).

For more information on the conservation of this important area visit: <http://www.birdlife.org.za>

There are several interesting hiking trails available around Kleinmond: A publication entitled “*Kleinmond Walking Maps*” is available from the Tourism Bureau in Main Road. The area’s main attraction remains the KOGELBERG BIOSPHERE RESERVE, the first such UNESCO designated reserve in South Africa. This 70 000 hectare reserve has 1,850 plant species of which an astonishing 150 are endemic! An article on the birds found here has been published on www.westerncapebirding.co.za under the Overberg Birding Route section.

Access to the **BOTRIVIERVLEI AND KLEINMOND ESTUARY** is unfortunately fairly limited due to private land ownership along its shores. This is unfortunate as the estuary is an Important Bird Area. (SA 118). A bird hide has been developed recently at ROOISAND (34°19'46.45" S 19°05'17.19" E) - it is clearly signposted on the R44 between Kleinmond and the Arabella estate. Keep a keen lookout for **Southern Tchagra** along the access road and in summer watch out for waders along the boardwalk leading to the hide. Besides the waders, all of the region’s terns, thick-knees, kingfishers, ducks, sparrowhawks and a variety of other birds of prey can often be seen here. Specials such as **African Openbill, Eurasian Oystercatcher, African Grass-Owl, Osprey and Hottentot Buttonquail** have also been reported from this area. As far as endemic or near-endemic terrestrial species are concerned, look out for **Cape Batis, Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou, Cape Bulbul, Grey-backed Cisticola, Blue Crane, Fiscal Flycatcher, Karoo Prinia, Southern Double-collared Sunbird and Cape Weaver**. The wild horses found along this estuary are also a great tourist attraction. For outings contact Kleinmond Birding Club, Pauline Bramhall at 028 271 5170.

Hermanus



The **KARWYDESKRAAL** and **SWARTRIVIER** loop roads represent high quality wheatfield birding in close proximity to Hermanus and Cape Town. The Karwyderskraal road can be reached from two points (S34°15'47.14" E19°10'54.65" and (S34°21'35.10" E19°08'35.87") along the R43 and can give comfortable access to larger birds such as **Denham’s Bustard, Blue Crane, White Pelican** and even **Secretarybird**. Most of the area’s LBJ’s could be studied along this road and the three buzzards, **African Marsh-Harrier and Black Harrier**, the two kites and a variety of accipiters, together with **African Fish-Eagle** and **Osprey** have been observed here. The Swarttrivier road (S34°17'02.64" E19° 11'09.72") is a dirt road that stretches between the farmstead on the Karwyderskraal road and the N2 at the Gabriëlskloof wine estate close to Botrivier town. This is a fairly quiet road and one can really bird at leisure. This affords birders the opportunity to compare the difficult LBJ’s of the region as all five cisticolas, five species of larks and three species of pipits can be found along this road. The area around the low water bridge should also not be underestimated as it often produces many **Barn, Greater Striped and White-throated Swallows, Sand Martins and Alpine Swifts** in summer. Several warbler species can be heard here and a variety of water birds is to be observed. Other interesting birds in this general area include **South African Shelduck, Orange-breasted Sunbird and Spotted Thick-knee**.

FISHERHAVEN

New hiking trails have recently been developed for birders by the Fisherhaven Rate Payer’s Association. The trails are marked by poles with white tops: There is a “Birdwatching” sign on Riverside Drive where a path leads to a viewpoint near the Adfakrivier. A “Hiking trail” sign at the slipway parking area (34°21'20.17" S 19°07'27.35" E) shows the start of the other trail going around Seaway Corner and there is a bench at the viewpoint behind the Yacht Club. Birding here can be excellent, particularly in the early morning and many water birds, waders and terrestrial species are on view. Water birds often include **Greater Flamingos, Great Crested Grebes, Great White Pelicans and South African Shelducks**, together with a selection of terns that can be particularly numerous during summer. Palaearctic migrants can include **Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Greenshank, Common Ringed Plover, Common Curlew and Marsh Sandpipers and Common Whimbrel**. The vegetation should be scanned for **Bokmakierie, Southern Boubou, Cape Bulbul, Karoo Prinia, Cape Sugarbird and Southern Tchagra**. Always keep a lookout for **Osprey**.

HAWSTON

The Hawston sewage works (34°22'34.86" S 19°67'41.23" E) is another hugely underrated birding destination and staff

members are usually very helpful. Large numbers of ducks are often on display and the reed beds give cover to secretive species such as **Black Crane, African Purple Swamphen, Little Rush-Warbler and Lesser Swamp-Warbler**. The wetland and swamp across the road from the sewage works should also not be underestimated as it is a good area for water birds.

VERMONT

The Vermont Salt Pan (34°24'36.59" S 19°09'43.52" E). A great diversity of water associated birds are available here and in early summer it is often possible to see up to 40 species during an hour’s visit. The pan usually dries out towards the end of summer. Specials here can include **Pied Avocet, Greater Flamingo, Cape Shoveler, Black-winged Stilt and Cape and Red-billed Teals**. Large numbers of **White-breasted Cormorants and Grey Herons** breed here in summer. The reed beds can produce good numbers of warblers, **Cape Bulbuls, Levallant’s Cisticolas and Common Waxbills** when conditions are optimal. The eucalyptus trees to the north and west of the pan should also be investigated as there are breeding records of **African Goshawk, African Harrier-Hawk and Little and Black Sparrowhawks** here.

There are extensive green belts in the suburb of **VERMONT** itself and birding here can be exceptional. Large stands of Milkwood trees attract species such as **Bar-throated Apalis, Cape Batis, Southern Boubou, African Dusky and Fiscal Flycatchers, Sombre Greenbul, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Cape Robin-Chat, Southern Tchagra and Olive Thrush**.

ONRUS RIVER AND HARDERBAAI

(34°59.32" S 19°10'22.70" E). The caravan camp at Onrus is highly recommended as many interesting species are associated with the Milkwood trees. (See comments under Vermont above). A gentle stroll along Harderbaai during winter could show species such as **Little Egret, Purple Heron and Black-crowned Night-Heron** feeding out in open and in summer the area is known for its tern day roost. This is an ideal spot to hone one’s tern identification skills. Specials here include **Cape Cormorant, Giant and Pied Kingfisher, African Black Oystercatcher and White-fronted Plover**. 152 bird species had been positively identified over and on the ONRUS LAGOON. Species that are fairly difficult to find in many parts of the Overberg and that “twitichers” come to find here include **Little Bittern, Purple Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, African Purple Swamphen and Southern Tchagra**. Also significant that large numbers of **Barn Swallows** roost in the reed beds in summer. The birds here include 17 species that are endemic to Southern Africa, 7 that are near-endemic to Southern Africa and 27 migratory species. Species that could genuinely be described as vagrant and that were seen once or twice in this area are **White-fronted Bee-eater, African Openbill, Little Blue Heron and Red-tailed Tropicbird**.

CLIFF PATH TRAIL

Consider leisurely strolls along the cliff path that can be accessed at several places in Hermanus. It allows whale and dolphin watching at its best combined with really good opportunities to watch coastal, fynbos, forest and garden birds. **Karoo Prinia, Southern Tchagra** and a variety of fynbos specials are often encountered - watch out for interesting gulls and terns and always check for pelagic species during stormy weather.

FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE

(34°23'56.22" S 19°15'57.85" E). This is another one of the Cape Whale Coast’s special bird-watching destinations. There are several casual and more strenuous hiking trails that allow sightings of fynbos, mountain and forest species. Be on the lookout for **Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock-Thrush, Cape Siskin, Cape Sugarbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Victorin’s Warbler and Ground Woodpeckers**, as well **Blue-mantled Crested-Flycatcher** in the trees close to the waterfall. **Jackal Buzzard, Verreaux’s Eagle and African Goshawk** often patrol the skies. The bottom area of the reserve near the entrance gate and at the educational centre is particularly good for most of the common garden birds of the region. Be on the lookout for **Tambourine Dove, Streaky-headed Seedeater, Sombre Greenbul and Cardinal, Knysna and Olive Woodpeckers**. Vagrant sightings during recent summers include both **Black and Jacobin Cuckoos**.

HEMEL EN AARDE

(Turn off at 34°24'24.51" S 19°12'03.96" E). HEMEL EN AARDE takes one via Shaw’s Pass (34°18'40.85" S 19°24'52.57" E) to Caledon and is also worth investigated. Great birding can be undertaken in a variety of habitat types while sampling fine wines.

BIRD WATCHING OPERATORS

Hermanus Bird Club:
Tours to Fernkloof Nature Reserve, Salt pan in Vermont and Stanford. Cherry Mills, 028 316 4333, cherrypie@telkomsa.net hermanusbirdclub.wordpress.com
Dave De Beer:
Tours of land and seabirds. Hermanus Cliff Path, Fernkloof Nature Reserve and Stanford. 082 897 7175, davedebeer@maxitex.co.za | www.hermanuswhales.co.za

stanford



In birding circles, **STANFORD** (34°26'28.25" S 19°27'31.42" E) is best known for the annual Bird Fair, now named the Walker Bay Bird Fair. Details of the event can be found on www.stanfordbirdclub.co.za and www.hermanusbirdclub.wordpress.com

Stanford has a wide variety of habitats right on its doorstep, offering a diverse and rewarding birding experience. Prime areas within the village confines are the Willem Appel Dam and the Wandelpald meandering along Stanford’s water courses. Outlying areas include the Wortelgat Road, the Klein River Bird Sanctuary and the Akkedisberg Pass. The Willem Appel Dam Hide is best visited just after sunrise. Sighting specialties include **Little Bittern, African Purple Swamphen, Black Crane, Malachite Kingfisher, Levallant’s Cisticola and White-backed, African Black and White-faced Ducks**. The reed beds are a good place to look for **Little Rush** and **Lesser Swamp Warblers**, whilst **Reed Cormorant** roost in the dead trees. The picnic site under the Milkwoods on the opposite bank of the dam is a good spot to find forest species such as the elusive **Knysna Woodpecker, Cape Batis, Southern Boubou, Fiscal Flycatcher, African Paradise-Flycatcher and Bar-throated Apalis**. The area along the Mill Stream and Vlei Rd can reward the patient birder with **Buff-spotted Flufftail**, its distinctive call drawing attention to its presence. The Willem Appel Dam has a floating island loved by birds. There are many opportunities for taking excellent photographs from the cover of the Bird Hide (keys available from the Stanford Tourism Office). The Klein River Mountains and Akkedisberg Pass (on the R326) which follow the route of the river are home to many birds, and the farms along the Papiessvlei Road embrace outdoor life and nature. A further stroll along the Wandelpald provides excellent birding through a small Milkwood forest to the Klein River and along the river path. A variety of **weavers** can be found in the reed beds. **Sombre Greenbul** is heard in the Milkwoods, along with **Olive Woodpecker, Grey and Black-headed Herons** roost in the blue gums and in summer the **African Paradise-Flycatcher** nest in the poplars. Overhead, a wonderful variety of **swallows, swifts** and **martins** hawk for food and raptors are numerous. These include **African Harrier-Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Jackal and Common Buzzard, Yellow-billed Kite** and the ubiquitous **African Fish-Eagle** — all can be found along the open stretch on the Wandelpald. A boat trip down the Klein River is a must for spotting a host of riverine species and the occasional special such as **European Honey-Buzzard, Cape Siskin**, a shy and elusive fynbos endemic, can usually be found in the Casuarina (Beefwood) avenue along the old Akkedisberg Road which runs past Madre’s Kitchen and up to Stanford Hills. If one continues along this road (in a high clearance vehicle) there are a number of fynbos species to be found; **Orange-breasted Sunbird, Protea Seedeater, Cape Sugarbird, Karoo Prinia and Cape Bunting** are but a few. **African Wood-Owl** have been known to breed in the poplar thickets near the Klein River Cheese Factory. The surrounding farmlands are well stocked with **Blue Crane** and **Denham’s Bustard** and the endangered **Black Harrier** can usually be found quartering low-lying fynbos. For guided tours, access to the Willem Appel Hide and Klein River boat trips, contact the Stanford Tourism Office tel: 028 341 0340, email: ask@stanfordinfo.co.za, website: www.stanfordtourism.co.za.

There is a wide variety of hikes available just outside the village from Phillipskop Mountain Reserve, Stanford Hills Estate and also from Vaalvlei Farm Estate which make for excellent bird watching. The Klein River Mountains and Akkedisberg Pass (on the R326) which follow the route of the river are home to many birds, and the farms along the Papiessvlei Road embrace outdoor life and nature. Local guesthouses and self-catering cottages encourage visitors to linger and enjoy the quiet surroundings and to catch sight of the many beautiful birds. When the pristine fynbos is in flower, the birdlife and insects, along with other animals is a sight to behold.

Gansbaai



The **WALKER BAY NATURE RESERVE** can be reached on foot from an entrance gate from De Kelders and a heritage section at Klipgat Caves is always worth a visit. The entire area offers outstanding strandveld and coastal birding.

FYNBOS RETREAT is situated between Stanford and Gansbaai and offers birders access to the birding delights of the Grootbos Nature Reserve and Flower Valley Conservation Area. The access road of approximately 8 km past Stanford and should be tackled by vehicles with a higher clearance. The magnificent display of fynbos along this route is simply mind-blowing. To date over a 100 bird species have been recorded here. The main house offers ample and comfortable accommodation for 11 people with a view over a lovely natural pond hosting several water birds such as **Burchell’s Coucal** and **White-backed Duck**. Several hiking trails are available and various **sunbirds, Cape Sugarbird, Klaas’s Cuckoo, Cape Grassbird, Southern Bouhou and Sombre Greenbul** are abundant.

GROOTBOS PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE (34°32'18.19" S 19°24'47.63" E) offers a diversity of habitats including fynbos, Milkwood and Afromontane forests, riverine scrub and mountain slopes. Well trained guides are also available at this five star reserve to enhance the visitor’s experience of the more than 120 bird species associated with the various habitat types. Grootbos also offer their clients exciting nature cruises to Dyer Island. Whales can be studied in season and birders can expect to see several endemic bird species while circling the land. These include **African Penguin, African Black Oystercatcher, Bank, Crowned and Cape Cormorants, Cape Gannets**, as well as **Swift Tern**. Pelagic species such as **Shy Albatross, Giant Petrels, Sooty Shearwater and Leach’s Storm-Petrel** are also encountered occasionally.

The DANGER POINT PENINSULA

(34°37'23.57" S 19°19'47.89" E) is rapidly developing a reputation as one of the prime birding destinations of the Cape Whale Coast. The coastal road between Franskraal and the Danger Point lighthouse gives access to resident coastal birds such as **Swift Terns, African Black Oystercatchers and White-fronted Plovers**. In summer expect to find migratory waders such as **Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Common Whimbrel** and several sandpipers. This road is also regarded as the best spot to find the **Antarctic Tern**, a winter migrant that visits these shores between April and September. The Antarctic Terns in their dark grey breeding plumage (towards September) with black caps, prominent white cheek-stripe and their robust coral red bills and legs are stunning birds. Remember to search the bushes along this coastal road for many great terrestrial species that could include **Southern Tchagra**.

DYER ISLAND (34°36'55.43" S 19°21'16.17" E) is classified as an Important Bird Area (SA 120) and is managed by CapeNature. It is normally not possible to visit Dyer Island, but the birds can be seen from the boats of the whale watching and shark diving operators working in the area. Look out for endangered **Bank Cormorant** and **Roseate Tern**. Other breeding species include the **Cape, White-Breasted and Crowned Cormorants, Leach’s Storm-Petrel, African Black Oystercatchers and Kelp and Hartlaub’s Gulls**.

The area to the east of Kleinbaai is unfortunately still relatively ‘unchartered’ in birding terms. The coastal road along Kleinbaai and Franskraal can however produce similar species than those described under the Danger Point peninsula. A visit to the Strandveld Museum at Franskraal (34°36'34.91" S 19°23'33.49" E) is highly recommended. The R43 from Gansbaai to Die Dam also needs particular mention. There are several water bodies between Gansbaai and the Uilenkraals estuary that can produce excellent aquatic birds after good rains. The sewerage works just before the estuary (34°36'01.12" S 19°24'38.35" E) often produces good birding - watch out for a variety for herons and ducks, as well as **Black Crane, Giant and Pied Kingfishers and African Purple Swamphen**.

THE UILENKRAALS ESTUARY

(34°36'11.64" S 19°24'54.36" E). Many birders recommend that the estuary be explored from the bridge - a word of caution need to be expressed here however. There is very little safe parking close to the bridge and vehicles often go past here at high speeds. It is probably best to enter the Uilenkraals Caravan Park and explore the estuary from there. The estuary often produces vast numbers of cormorants and gulls, as well

as terns and waders in summer. Interesting resident species that are found regularly include **Little Egret, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, Caspian Tern and White-fronted Plovers**. Vagrant species recorded here in recent years include **Black-tailed Godwit, Pacific Golden Plover, Greater Sand Plover, Terek Sandpiper and African Pied Wagtail**.

Further east **PEARLY BEACH** (34°39'36.31" S 19°31'45.46" E), **BUFFELJAGSBAAI** (34°45'07.51" S 19°36'33.97" E), **QUOIN POINT** (34°45'44.63" S 19°38'16.29" E) and **DIE DAM** (34°45'46.39" S 19°41'09.12" E) all have fantastic birding potential. Most of the region’s coastal birds are readily available and whale-watching is outstanding in season. Large patches of remaining Milkwood forest patches produce most of the forest species to be expected along this coast. Also keep in mind that these destinations offer extensive fynbos habitats allowing exposure to the majority of ‘fynbos specials’. These villages therefore allow birders access to coastal, forest and fynbos species and certainly deserve to be investigated. The trail through the Milkwood forest at Die Dam and the Fynbos Garden at Pearly Beach where the Conservation Society is doing excellent work, are of particular interest.

The Conservation Society has recorded over 40 different species of birds in the Fynbos garden in the space of 2 years. Blue Water Bay and the Blind River on Afsaal Beach are particularly good places to see a variety of terns, plovers and cormorants. The interior region to the east of Stanford and Gansbaai, the north of Pearly Beach and Die Dam and South of Akkedisberg Pass is highly underrated in birding terms. Now one of the Cape Whale Coast’s most spectacular birding drives is recommend: The gravel road that goes past Grootbos to the Uilenkraal village should be investigated by serious birders. (Turn east off the R43 at the Grootbos signpost). Several habitats types are on offer and two places to see along here stand out as truly outstanding birding destinations.

The poplar plantation at **WITKRANS** as one enters the **FLOWER VALLEY** area (turn off to Flower Valley at (34°33'42.67" S 19°27'17.67" E) allows great birding. It is known for its woodpeckers and **Cardinal, Knysna and Olive Woodpeckers** are all found here regularly. Also look out for **Cape Batis, Southern Boubou, Klaas’s Cuckoo, African Dusky and Fiscal Flycatchers, African Goshawk, Sombre Greenbul and Cape Spurfowl**. Two important target species, **Tambourine Dove** and **Blue-mantled Crested-Flycatcher**, are available here even though they are secretive and often difficult to find. Expect to find migrants such as **Spotted Flycatcher, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Black Saw-wing and Barn and Greater Striped Swallows** in summer. The area immediately around Witkrans is also very good for birding as there are good patches of fynbos giving access to most of the specials associated with this habitat type.

PLATBOS (34°34'03.81" S 19°27'38.78" E) is a privately owned patch of remaining indigenous forest and probably the best example of this habitat type along the entire Cape Whale Coast. Expect to find similar species as those described for Witkrans. Access should be arranged with the owners. At 34°34'32.26" S 19°28'07.78" E one can choose to travel to the Uilenkraals estuary and the Danger Point peninsula, or to go to **BAARDSKEEDERSBOS** (34°35'20.12" S 19°34'13.91" E) and eventually **ELIM** (34°35'28.62" S 19°45'34.45" E) and the Agulhas National Park.

The roads around Papiessvlei, Baardskeedersbos and **WOLVENGAT** (34°40'01.94" S 19°41'49.94" E) are the best in the Cape Whale Coast to find the interesting species normally associated with the Overberg Wheatbelt. These rambling country roads thread their way through an ever-undulating tapestry of changing colours and hues. Water birds are abundant during wetter spells, but this is **Blue Crane** country. It is not uncommon to come across flocks of several hundred of these birds in winter with breeding pairs predominant in summer. One can also expect to find **Denham’s Bustard and Black Harrier**, while large numbers of **White Storks, Lesser Kestrels and Steppe Buzzards** occur in summer. **Amur Falcons** are also found occasionally. Watch out for **Capped Wheatear, Cape Clapper Lark, Agulhas Long-billed Lark, Large-billed Lark and Cape Longclaw** and a variety of birds of prey. This is the best area to practice one’s identification skills on “Little Brown jobs” as all of the region’s larks, pipits and cisticolas are found here - the beauty of this though is that these roads can be travelled safely and at leisure.