

## **5 DAY GARDEN ROUTE TOUR - Itinerary**

### ***Day 1 – Wilderness***

Today, I will collect you at your accommodation or home in Cape Town. It's approximately a 5hr drive to our accommodation (Reflections Eco-reserve). The Garden Route is a picture-perfect ocean, fynbos, wetland and forest habitat and on our way to wilderness we can already be scanning for Forest Buzzard. Our 1<sup>st</sup> stop will be at Kaaimans River and this is where our birding journey will start. We will then head to Reflections Eco-reserve to settle in at our accommodation, before leaving for an afternoon bird walk on one of the forest trails. We will then head back to the reserve for dinner, and just before dark, we will go to search for the Grass Owl.

**Overnight:** Reflections Eco-reserve [Breakfast & Dinner Included]

### ***Day 2 – Wilderness***

Today at sunrise we will head out to my secret spot in the forest for an awesome picnic at 10am, it's here where you most likely to see your Chorister Robin Chat (lifer). But before we get to the breakfast, we will visit, what I call the Dieprivier Lookout, drive a few farm roads and visit a few hotspots in the forest for more of those special species you are here for. After our picnic in the forest, we will head out to the same forest trail as we did on day 1 to get a second chance on some of the forest bird species, depending on what species we have found on day 1. At 1pm we will go for lunch and some refreshments at one of the restaurants in Wilderness. With the sun beating down, our tummy's full, and a bag full of lifers, we will now head back to the reserve for those who want to chill out after a long forest walk. We'll then do some afternoon birding on the reserve. Knysna Woodpeckers, Black Cuckooshrike, Willow Warblers, Scaly throated Honeyguides, Osprey, Fish Eagles are some of the regulars on the reserve and many waterbird species on the Rondevlei dam on the border of the reserve. If we haven't succeeded to see the Grass Owl on the first night, we can give it a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance tonight.

**Overnight:** Reflections Eco-reserve [Breakfast & Dinner Included]

### ***Day 3 – Swartvlei to Plettenberg Bay***

Today, we will head out to Beervlei at 5h30am for some last forest birding in Wilderness, then return to the reserve, load our luggage and do a sit-down breakfast at the reserve. Our next stop will be at Swartvlei, the largest and deepest lake in Wilderness, a popular hangout for waders and other waterbirds. If time allows, we'll do a part of the Phantom Pass before we move on to another water body called Woodbourne Resort in Knysna. As we move on and getting closer to our next destination, we will do a quick bird scan at a place the locals call Goose Marsh, also popular for waders. If time allows, we will do our last stop before we

reach Natures Way, the Bitou. Reaching Natures Way Farm, we will settle in, unpack and explore this beautiful forest reserve on the farm where we stay.

**Overnight:** Natures Way [Packed breakfast included, for dinner we will do a braai, get a take-away or visit a Restaurant]

#### ***Day 4 – Natures Valley***

This morning, we will head out to the beautiful Natures Valley, over the Grootrivier Pass, which is an ancient sea-bed now at 220m above sea-level, through dense coastal forest, down to the resort of Natures Valley. At the mouth of Natures Valley we will do a quick scan for waders and enter a forest trail to one spot, where we perhaps can find the White starred Robin, that's if we didn't find it on our journey yet. Upwards and forwards we will head to the lookout point on the pass with some fynbos habitat and a perfect view down to Natures Valley. By this time the sun will be beating down, so I'm taking you for a nice scenic drive to the old, over grown by forest, Bloukrans pass. A quick visit at the border between the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, before we head back to Natures Valley. Tonight, at dinner, we will discuss the birds we have seen on this tour, smile about all the bird species you guys added to your life list and cry about the one that got away.

Overnight: Natures Way [Packed breakfast included, for dinner we will do a braai, get a take-away or visit a Restaurant]

#### ***Day 5 – Heading back to Cape Town***

This morning, we'll do a last walk through the forest reserve on the farm and do a sit-down breakfast before we hit the road home. At Mossel Bay we will do a bit of a detour, turning off the N2 highway and do a gravel road along the border fence of the Gondwana Private Game Reserve that will bring us back to the N2 highway. This road is full of surprises and one can always "expect the unexpected" on this road and perhaps spot some mammals.

#### **Our target species:**

Knysna Turaco  
Narina Trogon  
Green Wood Hoopoe  
Green backed Camaroptera  
Yellow throated Woodland Warbler  
Grey Cuckooshrike  
Black bellied Starling  
Collared Sunbird  
Black backed Puffback  
Terrestrial Brownbul  
Red necked Spurfowl  
Chorister Robin Chat

Forest Buzzard  
Black headed Oriole  
Denhams Bustard  
Scaly throated Honeyguide  
Knysna Warbler  
White starred Robin  
Half Collared Kingfisher  
Black winged Lapwing [possible]  
\*Long crested Eagle & Crowned Eagle [if we lucky enough]\*  
Grass Owl  
Black Cuckooshrike  
African Cuckoo Hawk  
African Emerald Cuckoo  
Red chested cuckoo  
Black Cuckoo  
Lesser striped Swallow  
Brown hooded Kingfisher  
Lemmon dove  
Grey Sunbird  
African Rail  
Squacco

