

GEELKRANS NATURE RESERVE (Near Stilbaai)

Contact numbers

RESERVE OFFICE
087 087 8670

RESERVATIONS
087 087 8250

EMERGENCIES
082 496 2522

Gate times
07h30 – 16h00

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Geelkrans Nature Reserve

Nestled on the eastern side of Stilbaai, Geelkrans Nature Reserve beckons travellers with its breathtaking coastal beauty. Established in 1977, this 440-hectare sanctuary is a natural wonderland, bordering the core conservation area of the Stilbaai Marine Protected Area (MPA) along its coastal boundary.

Adventurous souls can explore the reserve via coastal hikes, revelling in dynamic sandstone cliffs and extensive intertidal zones. Scenic wooden

decks provide perfect spots for picnics and taking in the picturesque views. In winter, the reserve is adorned with blombos and boegoe flowers, while summer offers fantastic family snorkelling opportunities.

To reach this coastal haven, simply follow Preekstoel Road when entering Stilbaai, and as you arrive at the road's end, continue east, following the signs leading to the reserve. GPS coordinates: 34°21'55.0"S 21°27'43.0"E. Don't miss the chance to immerse yourself in the wonders of Geelkrans Nature Reserve

Climate

A typical Mediterranean climate prevails in the region - summers are warm and winters mild. Annual rainfall is about 430mm and August is usually the wettest month. Sea mists also occur. The most frequent summer winds are south easterly, while westerly and south-westerly winds prevail in winter.

Flora

Geelkrans Nature Reserve forms part of the world's smallest and most threatened plant kingdom - the Cape Floral Kingdom. Fynbos is the dominant vegetation within this kingdom - largely confined to nutrient-poor soils in the winter rainfall areas of the Western Cape. Fynbos is adapted to fire and drought and characterised by four growth forms:

- **proteas** - tall shrubs with large leaves
- **ericas** - heath-like shrubs
- **restios** - wiry, reed-like plants which are always present in fynbos
- **geophytes** - bulbs that store moisture in fleshy underground organs

Geelkrans is important for the conservation of coastal fynbos as it contains Blombos Strandveld, Dune thicket and Littoral vegetation. The Greater Stilbaai Area, of which Geelkrans is a part of, has an estimated 1 200 plant species of the approximately 9 000 species found in the Cape Floristic Region. A total of 194 plant species of interest to conservation occur on Geelkrans Nature Reserve.

Fauna

Geelkrans supports several species of small mammals such as grysbok, steenbok and grey duiker. The only notable predator is the caracal which is seldom seen. Reptiles and amphibians are well represented, and visitors should be on the alert for puff adders - particularly in spring.

The marine environment is likewise home to a variety of life forms. Marine mammals such as dolphins and seals occur in the waters off the coast, and southern right whales calve and mate in the sheltered bay of Stilbaai each year between June and November. At least 234 fish and 14 shark and ray species occur in the Marine Protected Area.

Geelkrans has a variety of resident and migratory bird species and more than 144 species may be viewed throughout the year on the reserve. The yellow cliffs on the reserve attracts breeding birds such as rock kestrel, cape cormorant and kelp gull.

Activities

Geelkrans offers day activities that can be adapted to last the whole day or a few hours to suit the needs of the visitor. Some of the activities visitors enjoy on the reserve are hiking, picnicking, bird watching, swimming and snorkelling.



Hiking

Geelkrans's two-day trails allow visitors to explore the reserve's rich plant and wildlife. The Geelkrans route circles back along the coast which is perfect for exploring rock pools and the beach. The Taaibos route offers beautiful scenery of the greater Stilbaai area. (see day trails map overleaf)



Birding

Bring along your binoculars for a closer look at some of the 144 bird species in the reserve.



Whale Watching

During whale season, enjoy whale watching from the coastal decks and vantage points.



Swim and Snorkel

Visitors can enjoy swimming and snorkeling in large, clear rock pools which is sheltered from currents and waves at low tide. The core conservation area of the Stilbaai MPA makes for a pristine coastal experience.



Picnicking

There are two wooden decks along the hiking trail, perfect for picnicking.



No fishing or removal of any living marine resources allowed

The entire length of the Geelkrans coastal area falls within the core conservation zone (Restricted) of the Stilbaai Marine Protected Area and fishing or bait collecting is not permitted. Visitors should take care not to disturb or remove marine organisms.

Facilities



Currently there are two wooden decks in the reserve where the visitor can stop and rest or picnic whilst enjoying the beautiful coastal scenery.

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.

Stay safe when venturing outdoors

- Wear comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen and a hat
- Don't hike alone
- Carry enough food and water for the trip
- Make sure to check the weather and tidal times before departing
- Take a warm jacket/raincoat in winter
- Take a field medical kit along for emergencies
- Obey all signage
- Stay in a group and keep to marked trails

PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR PROTECTED AREAS PRISTINE



Geelkrans

NATURE RESERVE &
MARINE PROTECTED AREA



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