

## Flora and Fauna

Situated between sea and mountains and laced with rivers and lakes, the geographical diversity of the Wilderness area has given rise to a wide diversity of indigenous plants. On the seaward slopes of the inland dunes and the [Rondevelei](#) area many fynbos species can be admired, while hikers can still marvel at the Afro-mountain tree species that cling to the steep kloofs and river courses. Much of the native forests were exploited over the centuries

Despite the increase in human residents over the years, the dense forests, fynbos, lakes and vleis provide food and ideal living conditions for a variety of fauna...baboon, vervet monkey, bushbuck, grysbok, porcupine, bushpig, honey badger, various mongooses, snakes and rodents...which in turn support animals of prey such as caracal and the occasional leopard. And if you do not see the animals themselves, you will undoubtedly see their tracks and spoor on any walk where the ground is soft.

The Wilderness area is an important place for birds, and is therefore an excellent place for bird-watching. These interconnected coastal lakes, linked to the ocean, are listed by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands as being "of International importance" for birds.

[Rondevelei](#), for example, an old basin inundated with seawater, is an important habitat to many bird species – and notable for a well-positioned bird hide, accessed via a boardwalk through dense reedbeds. Birds of particular interest here include African rails, red-chested flufftails, great crested grebes, yellow-billed egrets, purple herons and even Baillon's crakes – plus more easily seen species like fish eagles, marsh harriers and sometimes, in summer, ospreys. In some years, visitors to the easterly Kleinkrantz beach have been rewarded with the sight of several hundred Flamingos!

