

24.1.2018 Oyster Bay, Kareedouw, Die Vlugt

This morning Werner caught his first fish, a 'Cape Stumpnose'. Well, dinner is secured we can set off. We want to travel along Route 62 which is running parallel inland to the Garden Route at the coast.



We drive through pastoral countryside, a lot of dairy farms are located here. Looking from the outside, we think that dairy farming doesn't really make sense in this dry area. It doesn't seem sustainable because dairy farming needs a considerable amount of water and water is scarce here. But this is another topic...

Similar to a few days ago we see again many storks on the paddocks. What a nice sight, in Europe they are an endangered species and one hardly sees storks anymore.



In drizzling rain we arrive in Kareedouw and discover the „Twins & Co Café“. The friendly owner – one of the twins – is welcoming us very excitedly, as she has recognized the Unimog immediately. She explained that her sister is very fond of such a truck and is dreaming about owning one herself because they always need to drive on so much gravel road.

From her we learn that the current drought in this area is already lasting for three years. In the meantime they already have to truck water to their sheep every day; their borehole is 110 m deep – a sign of the dropping ground water level.



The Route 62 leads through the Langkloof Valley where orchards and agricultural production are dominating the landscape. Over many many kilometers, almost through the entire valley apple, pear and peach trees are standing next to each other. We are on approximately 800 m elevation and the climate is ideal for growing these fruits.



In Avontuur we turn left into the Prince Alfred Pass (R339), which will bring us back to the coast. At the highest point of the pass we reach 1,040m altitude. Travelling the pass takes much longer than anticipated, so we decide to stop at the Thomas Bain picnic area for the night.

Thomas Bain, born in 1830 in Graff-Reinet, has built almost all of the important and largest passes in South Africa. He built the 70 km long Prince Alfred Pass – where we are currently travelling on – between 1863 and 1867. During the time of construction, this picnic area was his official picnic site.



It is really astonishing, how little we are disturbed in this country. A farmer is greeting us, a little boy just sits 50m away at the front of his house but is only looking curiously and not coming over. In other countries where we have travelled, the children would have come running towards us and ask for sweets...

During our evening walk around, we learn that we are just around the corner of famous “Angie’s G Spot”.



25.1.2018 Knysna

Our hopes for better weather and clearer views are materializing the next day and we can drive the remainder of the Prince Albert Pass with great vistas.



During the drive we see monkeys and also visit some „Big Trees“, which are between 600 to 700 years old. These old trees are the very few surviving witnesses of the times in the 19th century where intense logging killed almost the whole forest.

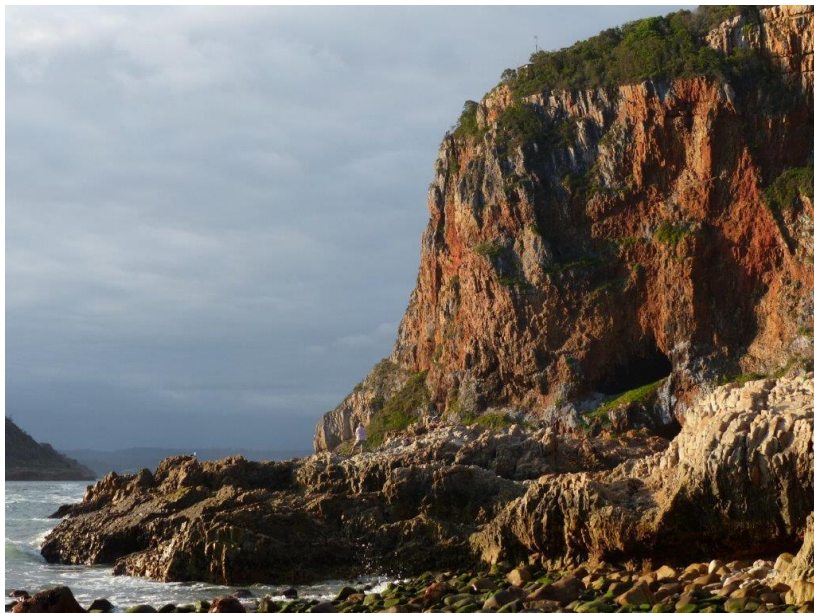


The Prince Alfred Pass ends just 3km before Knysna. One turn from the narrow forest road directly onto a multi-lane-highway and within seconds we are back to civilization.

Knysna is a major stop-over point and attraction of the Garden Route and quite touristy, especially the „Waterfront“. As often, it doesn't feel and look like being in Africa. The first thing we are confronted with in Knysna are busloads full of German tourists. Of course, most of them ask us about our Unimog and the standard question is always whether we drove here all the way from Germany.



A very steep and narrow street leads through residential area to the Coney Glen Beach at Knysna Big Heads, where the rock formations entice Werner to go fishing.



26.1.2018 Brent-on-Sea

In the evening we drive to Brent-on-Sea, where the bad weather is catching up with us. Despite the drizzle our Unimog is asked to be the backdrop of the photo shoot. Maybe we'll become famous one day? At least it seems that 'Joshua' is on his way to be a celebrity.



In June 2017 there was a huge bush fire in Brent-on-Sea which claimed 15 houses. We can see burned street signs, charcoaled trees and a few burnt house ruins. Some people were luckier than others – one can see how the flames just stopped very close to their houses and they got away undamaged while their neighbors must have lost everything.



27.1.2018 Swartvlei

It continues to drizzle while we drive only 35 km further to Swartvlei, where there is another inviting beach for fishing. The beach is busy, people have a swim, go for a walk or are fishing. But in the evening, after everyone went home, the entire beach is ours.



We learn that the parking lots at the beaches are ideal camping spots. Mostly there are toilets and sometimes even a cold shower... It seems that it is tolerated to stay here overnight, and people go to camp sites only if they want to use the infrastructure there.

As we are 100% self-sufficient, we are happy not to check into a campsite too often.



28.1.2018 Swartvlei

The morning greets us with a bright blue sky and we decide the stay for another night. Time for a beach-day-off. We are amazed how busy this beach is. People are coming and going and the parking is always full.



We also learn about a new sport: Paragliding on the beach. This young man was hovering just barely above the sand for quite a long time, his legs in bag. It looked like he was training to steer and fly his paraglide and did so skillfully just 1 m above ground.



Werner caught today two catfish, the filets taste quite nice. While we have a chat with other unsuccessful fishermen, we learn that fishing today is not so good as the water is too clear!

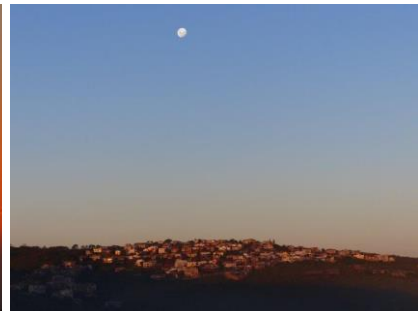
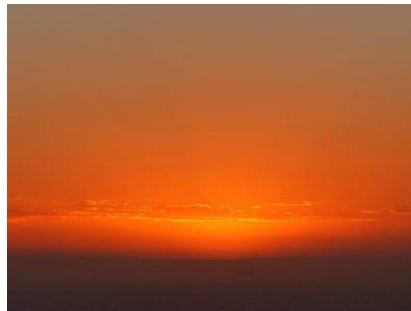
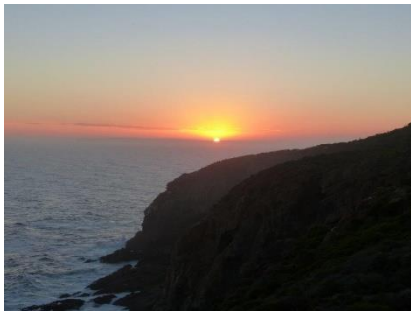
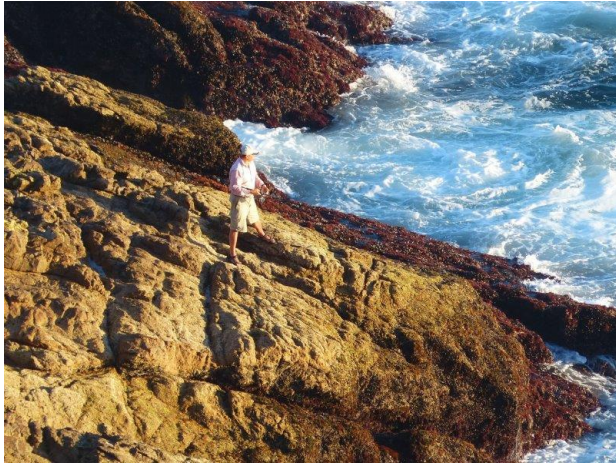
Ahhh, when the fish are not biting it is either not the right bait or the wrong wind or the wrong tide or or or... But we have never heard the excuse that the visibility in the water is too good for not bringing any fish home for dinner.

29.1.2018 George, Herolds Bay

We have clear blue sky and it's really hot as we arrive in George. At the entrance to the city is the huge 'Garden Route Mall', a gigantic shopping mall providing everything you need and want to buy. We have a few things on our to-do-list: replacing a broken wine glass, shoe repair and stocking up on groceries.

A few kilometers further South, we stop in Herolds Bay for the night. A quite daring angling spot is located here, steep rocks prone to freak waves. Three wooden crosses on the cliff are documenting the danger for fishermen to be swept into the sea and drowning. Nevertheless, as usual early evening quite a few fishermen arrive to try out their luck and Werner is joining them.





Just as the sun sets, an unusual and loud sound appears. A man and his daughter are blowing into long curled Kudu horns.

A lady passing by, is explaining that in the old days they tried to attract whales with these sounds. We are wondering whether the two musicians are training or following a ceremony?

30.1.2018 Mossel Bay

The weather here varies a lot, yesterday it was really hot and today dropped 10 degrees to only 22 degrees and it's cloudy. In fact, we can hardly sit outside and relax, as it is always either too windy, too hot or too wet.

In drizzling rain we reach Mossel Bay and as it is all grey in grey, we can't see much of the city and do drive-by-sightseeing only. On a sunny day Mossel Bay is surely more inviting.

At the beach there are a lot of emergency services and police, even rescue divers. What could have happened? Later we read in the newspaper that someone thought a person was drowning but luckily it turned out to be a false alarm.



Our destination for today is the beach at the Kanon Private Nature Reserve. A small road is leading there. We find a parking lot between the fenced nature reserves with braai facilities and of course a few good angling spots.



31.1.2018 Gouritzmond, Stillbaai

We are surprised by the dramatic temperature swings and the ongoing drizzling rain of the last few days. It is hard to believe that there is a severe water shortage. However, water shortage, especially in and around Cape Town, is a fact and reports about water shortage are dominating the national and international news.

Basically, almost all dams in the Eastern Cape are empty and the fine drizzle rain is not able to fill them up. Nevertheless, one can still see a lot of water wastage, caused by poor maintenance, poor management or plain ignorance.

We drive further along the coast line accompanied by wet and stormy weather. This feels more like being at the North Sea in Germany rather than in Africa.



We pass through Gouritzmond and drive until Stillbaai or Stillbay. Here, there are often two names for cities and places, one in English the other in Afrikaans. Signposting is sometimes a bit confusing as both names are used freely.

In Stillbaai we discover one of the best fish & chips shops. 'Die Lapskuit', a simple restaurant which evolved from a take-away kiosk, is so busy that we do not get a table without a booking! Luckily, we do not have to carry our take-away fish & chips too far as we park directly in front of the door...



For the night we park in front of the Skulpiesbaai Nature Reserve, which is located right behind Stillbaai. A quiet and safe place to stay overnight.

