



Aloes & uMkuze KZN Bird Clubs' Rendezvous



Bird club members will enjoy a birders-only day at the homestead garden with a feast of aloes, indigenous plants and the birds attracted to this space. This garden has to be seen to be seen to be believed!

**13 July 2024 @ 07h30
12-15 July Weekend Away dates
uMkuze and surrounds**

Join us for the day to enjoy the garden or make it a weekend (or longer) trip and stayover in the area to bird with the group

See Brochure for more details.



BEKZN Zimanga Aloes & uMkhuze Game Reserve, in the iSimangaliso World Heritage Site

Hosted by Nicolette & Ticky Forbes



BirdLife eThekwini KZN arrangements

A short guide and suggestions for the weekend

Friday 12 July – Monday 15 July 2024

FRIDAY 12/7

(not compulsory but for those who are making a long weekend of it)

Arrive at the uMkhuze area accommodation in your own time. Let us know on the whatsapp group where you are and when so we can all keep in contact and safe. Perhaps even indicate when you are leaving Durban and your arrival so we can keep an ear and eye out that you arrive safely. Details including directions, pins etc will be posted to the participants on the whatsapp group.

We would suggest that you stay somewhere closer to the Aloe Homestead for Friday night for easier access on Saturday (or drive up on the Saturday morning bearing in mind it's at least 3,5 hr drive) and then stay over at uMkhuze Game Reserve for Saturday (and Sunday if you can).

A number of options are available -

- Ghost Mountain Inn
- Igula
- Baobab Inn
- Manyoni Game Reserve

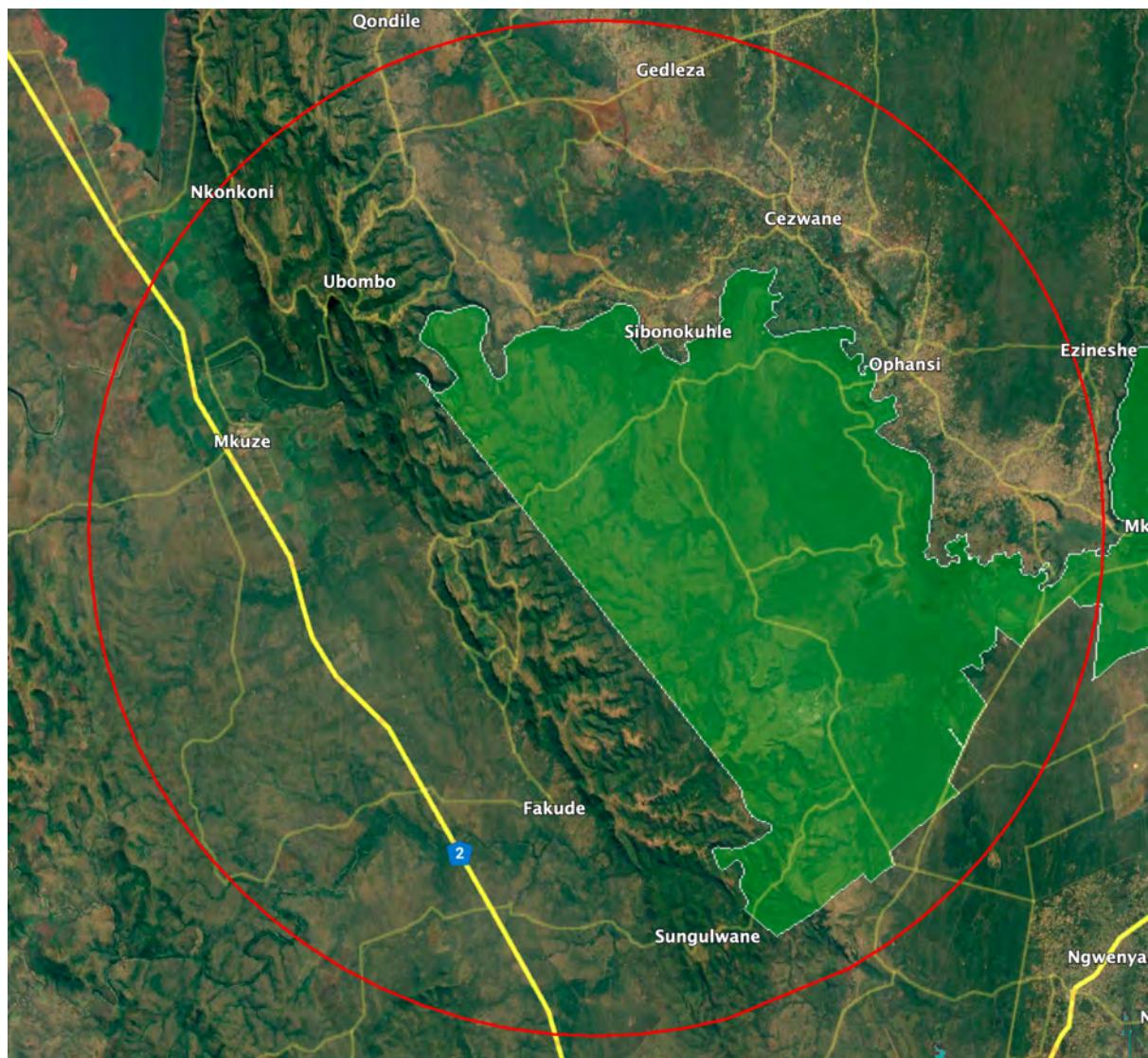
Also the following options available | Baobab Inn (close and very reasonable with a restaurant on site), Umziki Chalets, Biweda Nguni B&B, and a number of more expensive luxury options including the camps in Manyoni.



Weekend Atlas Challenge | At midnight on Thursday the BirdLasser Aloes and uMkhuze Challenge begins – to register for this, answer the poll on the whatsapp group (**the one you used to register for birdlasser**) along with your name or team name and the participants in your group and I will add you. Only two teams signed up so far!

Please register for this sooner rather than later as it will be trickier to add you while in the middle of the drive or at the venue. Note this is for individuals or teams. The

red circle shows the challenge area with the green dot as the central point (25km radius) – it includes the whole of the uMkhuze Game Reserve, the Aloe Garden and some of the surrounds which have the nearby accommodation (see pic below).



SATURDAY 13/7 – Zimanga Aloe Garden and uMkhuze Game Reserve

07h30 Zimanga Aloe Garden opens – arrive at your own pace – the gardens are open until 16h30. Enter the gate and keep left to the Homestead – no entry fee at the gate (a donation at the gardens for the charity fund run by the owners which assist the local community in the area). We will post a pin for the gate so you can find your way there. The gate is off the main N2 road.

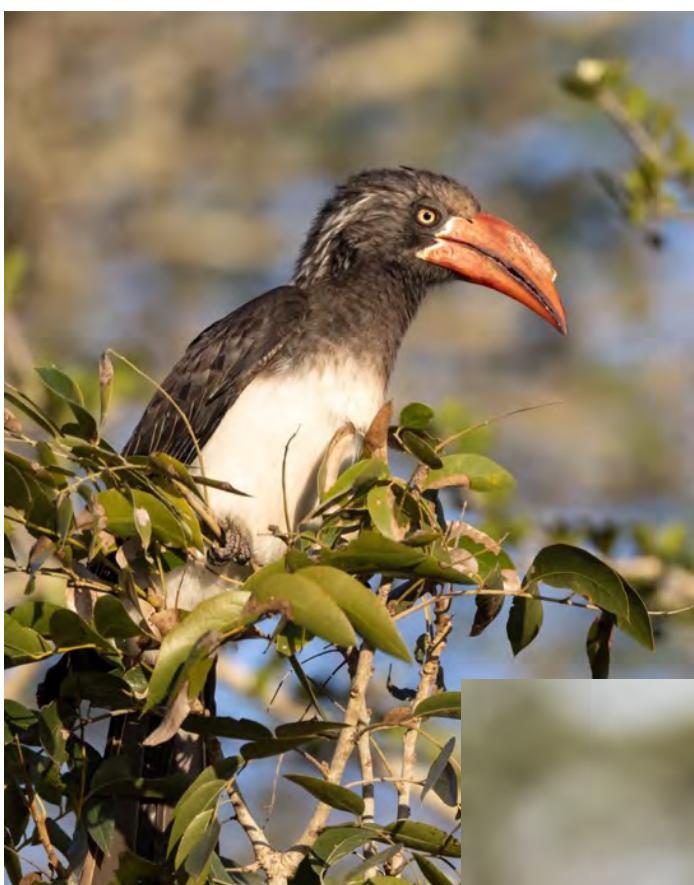
Lunchtime (or at your own pace) - Ticky and I will leave the aloe garden around late morning/lunchtime – you can stay as long as you want. The garden is large with a huge amount of bird activity (not just sunbirds). Species seen previously include Scimitarbill, Chinspot Batis, Black-headed Oriole, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Honeyguides, Grey Penduline-tit, weavers, waxbills, firefinch, raptors and many more. The Zimanga

Homestead garden is surrounded by the Zimanga game reserve so there is a chance of many bushveld Zululand species.



At the Aloe Garden our hosts will provide an urn with hot water and set out tables on the lawn. Bring your own food and refreshments and picnic amongst splendour.





uMkhuze Game Reserve – arrive at your leisure and check into your accommodation. Most people will likely be staying at Mantuma Camp

The camp is unfenced so be aware of this – lion, cheetah, leopard, rhino and elephant have all been seen in the camp in the past. Last year during the weekend the elephants were right in the camp and around the self-catering huts.

uMkhuze has a range of accommodation all of which are delightful – huts (communal kitchen and ablutions), chalets – 2,4, and 6 bed, safari tents (en-suite with kitchens). To book use either the online porttal or **phone 033 845 1000. Seniors and Rhino card discounts only available if you book telephonically.**

We will all bird through the reserve on Saturday afternoon. There will be day and night drives available for you to book at the Mantuma office in uMkhuze. These can be excellent. Everyone will be in contact when signal allows on the WhatsApp group to communicate where we all are and what is being sighted by participants.

Braai Together | We will braai at the public communal area next to the main office. Bring your own food, charcoal and firelighters. The shop does sell a few things and is usually well stocked, but this can be erratic. We will go through the bird checklist at the braai and discuss identifications, locations etc.

We will all bird the reserve and meet up as and when – there are four to five hides which are all excellent for birding, the roads are good with a main tarred road around the reserve (marked in red on the map below). Note that the roads leading into the reserve can be quite rough so don't be put off - the end point is really worth it. This reserve is one of KZN's jewels.

Sunday and Monday 14/7 – uMkhuze Game Reserve with options to bird Muzi Swamp on the way out for some.

The BirdLasser challenge and bird trip list will continue as we all explore and bird. Breakfast picnics at Nsumo Pan picnic sites are recommended, as is booking the Fig Forest Walk which provides the possibility of riverine forest species including Pel's Fishing Owl.

You can exit out back to the N2 (Emshopi Gate) or onto the R22 from the eastern gate (Ophansi Gate) from the reserve and pass Muzi swamp on the way out.

MAP 7 iSIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK uMKHUZE

