



**BLOUBERG NATURE RESERVE
WILDERNESS TRAILS
(Including the Awesome 'Vulture View' Trail)**



'...one of my most incredible wildlife experiences ever!' Villiers Steyn (Wildlife Travel Journalist and Photographer)

Our exclusive nature and birding experience is truly remarkable.

Based at the Tamboti Trails Camp, our guided 4 night nature and birding adventure involves traversing the reserve in an open game viewing vehicle and undertaking guided day walks in selected habitats. Vulture activities include a visit to the vulture restaurant, viewing the vulture colony from the base of the cliffs and a hard but exhilarating one day hike to the top of the mountain for an eye level view of the vultures as they soar above the cliffs. This is a low impact hike designed not to disturb the vultures, and is sanctioned by the relevant conservation authorities.



Rates for the trail are R850 pppn sharing, this includes:

- Accommodation in 2-bedded Safari tents
- Bedding and towels
- All meals
- Reserve entrance fees
- All game drives
- Services of an experienced, registered guide (Jonathan Turner)

Tamboti Trails Camp is solar and gas powered, with communal ablutions.

A maximum group size of 6 guests ensures a superior experience.

Typical Itinerary (can be changed by arrangement between guests / guide):

Day 1	Arrival: Late afternoon drive / walk	Buffalo Pan area
Day 2 AM	Early morning walk	Tamboti area
	Drive (mid-morning)	Vulture Restaurant
Day 2 PM	Drive / walk	Fig Forest area
Day 3	Walk	Vulture Trail *
(alternative activity)	Game Drive (for guests opting not to	Various areas

	tackle Vulture Trail)	
Day 4 AM	Drive / Walk	Vulture viewing point
Day 4 PM	Sunset / night drive	Various areas
Day 5 AM	Leisurely Breakfast and departure	In camp

*** N.B. Guests are advised that the Vulture Trail is quite a stiff test of endurance and hiking ability. All guests wishing to tackle the trail must be physically fit and in very good health.**

General Trail Information:

- A high level of fitness is required for the mountain hike and a reasonable level of fitness is required for all other walks.
- Solar lighting is provided in the camp but guests are requested to also bring a torch.
- Tea, coffee and drinking water are provided at the camp. Guests may bring their own beverages, however we do request that alcohol should only be consumed in camp.
- Special dietary requirements may be requested and negotiated at time of booking.
- The camp is unfenced. Guests are reminded of the presence of dangerous game on the Reserve so please be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- All guests must complete the required indemnity form on arrival.

For further information and reservation enquiries please contact Jonathan (accipitertours@wbs.co.za 082 492 2880) or Rick (rick@kunemoya.co.za 082 874 6132) or Rob (rob@kunemoya.co.za 082 466 0409) or visit our website - www.kunemoya.co.za/blouberg.htm

Blouberg Nature Reserve is a 9500 ha pristine Limpopo Parks nature reserve situated in Limpopo Province, a comfortable 4½ to 5 hours drive on tar roads from Gauteng.

The reserve has amazing biodiversity and includes the eastern Blouberg Mountain. Vegetation varies from different types of savanna vegetation in the plains, riverine bush along some of the drainage lines, to montane grassland and forest patches on the mountain.

The iconic attraction of the reserve is a colony of over 800 pairs of endangered Cape Vultures roosting and breeding in the cliffs. This is the largest colony in Southern Africa of these endemic vultures.

With buffalo, leopard, sable, other animals, a wide spectrum of trees and over 250 species of birds, this is a unique wildlife destination.

Due to the presence of dangerous game on the Reserve only guided hikes are permitted.



CAPE VULTURES AT EYE LEVEL – BLOUBERGS NEW VULTURE TRAIL

The inaugural **vulture trail** took place on 9 July 2012.

Accompanied by 4 guests, including Johan van Wyk the Blouberg Reserve Manager, I had the privilege of guiding this trail. Starting along a well worn buffalo path below Rampanyana’s Neck, the vulture trail enters the kloof and then climbs steeply up the back of East Blouberg Mountain to eventually reach the top near the cliffs.

Arriving at the sour mountain grasslands at the top after a hard climb, we found the vultures already in the air at 9.30 am – hundreds of them riding the updraft at the cliffs about 1 km ahead of us. The “friendly” vultures bridged this gap and crossed the kilometer over the grasslands to welcome us and escort us back to their home and playground.

Once above the cliffs, we sat quietly and as concealed as we could be to enjoy the spectacle. Is this playing in the wind just vulture fun, or is this some form of social interaction? Many were riding in tandem and some even in formations of up to 6. At times they raced along the cliff face with wings in dive mode, and at times they rode the wind motionless just above us intent on investigating our presence, and then there was all manner of flight behavior in between.

There were hundreds of vultures everywhere. Above us, below us and at eye level. They were so close at times that we could hear the wind through their feathers. It was the only disturbance in the otherwise complete silence. It was also unusual to see their beautiful colouring and wing patterns from above.

We had the sense that the vultures had invited us into their home and were entertaining us, and in return we seemed to be providing them with entertainment as well. It was amazing behavior, so different from the squabbling at a carcass and so much more intimate than following them as mere specks in the sky. We seemed to be part of their community. We sat and enjoyed it in amazement and after 2 hours of this absorbing experience we departed.

This is a tough hike recommended only for the very fit, and is an integral part of the also newly established Blouberg Wilderness Trails – a 4 night adventure based at Tamboti Camp experiencing Blouberg on foot.

Care has been taken to ensure that the vulture trail causes no adverse disturbance, and monitoring of the vultures confirmed this to be the case. The vulture trail is an important part of the strategy of putting Blouberg on the map with eco-friendly tourism.

Johna Turner



Aasvoelstaproete van Blouberg - Johan van Wyk

By [Johan van Wyk](#) in [Blouberg Nature Reserve](#)

In die donker kom die Land Cruiser se ligte deur die bome vanaf Tambotie kamp aan oppad na die reservaat kantoor. Ons staan en skerts met mekaar senuwee-agtig oor wat voorlê. Almal sê hulle is reg.

Die rit in die half donker na die afklim plek aan die Noordelike voethang van die berg lewer nie veel op nie, net koue wind. Dit voorspel nie goeie weer nie en dit word beswetig hoe nader ons aan die berg kom. Die aasvoëlkrans is toe onder 'n wolk-kombers vanoggend.

Maar ons is hier met die een doel voor oë, 10:00 wil ons bo wees en die aasvoëls van naby betrag. Nadat 'n groepfoto geneem is val ons in enkel gelid in 'n goed uitgetrapte buffel pad. Ek ken die pad goed, dit lei na die fontein in die berg midde 'n skerp kloof. En natuurlik lok dit nie net buffels nie maar ook alle ander wild. Ons eerste ontmoeting is met twee bosvarke, salig onbewus van hul toeskouers. Verder aan 'n familie klipspringers, die eerstes van baie wat ons sou tee kom op die staproete.

Die staproete is nie gemessel in sement nie. Dit staan nog in sy kinderskoene en elke keer word 'n ander roete gevolg. Die klim is veeleisend en daar word getoets vir makliker alternatiewe. Ons stap verby ou reïnes (wat nog ondersoek moet word). Die kloof word al nouer en steeds is daar nie water nie, net bewyse dat daar was. Ons bestyg die Noordelike hang uit. Dis steil en beide jou hande is nodig. Twee dinge is gewaarborg, dat jy aasvoëls van naby gaan beleef en dat jy gaan val. En so is Tabby die eerste slagoffer. Darem nie te ernstig. Ons rus so kort-kort en betrag die uitsig oor die reservaat na rigting Botswana. Dit doen mens se hart goed om die stuk wildernis so te sien.

Uiteindelik is ons op die plato en die grasveld lê uitgestrek. Ons beweeg verder Wes en nie lank toe is die lug bo ons vol aasvoëls, 'n verwelomings partytjie! Ons staan in verwondering en weet as ons eers by die nes-krans kom ons selfs op oogvlak met hulle sal wees. Die wolke hang steeds lag en die agtergrond vir goeie fotos is maar grou.

Die stewels knars weer op die droeë gras en ons vind die plek waar Jonathan waterbottels versteek het. Gelukkig het die bobbejane dit nie ontdek nie. Hier en daar word waterbottels hervul, neute geëet en energie opgebou vir die laaste 30minute se stap tot by die krans. Hoewel die stap nou makliker is, is dit nie maklik op die reeds uitgeputte bene nie.

Net meer as 3 uur sedert ons die voertuig verlaat het neem ons posisie by die krans in. Dis aasvoëls uit alle hoeke en hoogtes. Bo 'n mens, onder en oogvlak. Hulle lewer vir ons 'n ware lugskou. Van vormasie vlug, tot 6 in vormasie, duik draai, sweef ens. Dis 'n unieke belewenis. Die voëls vermaak ons, of ons dalk vir hulle want hulle koppe draai met elke verbyvlug. Die flatter deur die vere is so duidelik aangesien hulle etlike meters van ons af verby swiep.

Die kans word ook gebruik vir inerlike versterking, dis mos middagete in gewone mense se tyd. Te gou is twee ure verby en mik ons terug onder toe. Weer verby die wateropgaar om aan te vul. Ons vat ietwat ander roete af. Die voete begin brand en die dag se eise begin nou wys. Almal is stil, elk besig met eie gedagtes, oorlewingstryd en motivering. Uiteindelik is ons weer op die buffelpad. Kouer bier begroet ons by die Land Cruiser. Ek wil weer!!!! Twee dinge was verseker, daar is geen maklike roete op of af nie. Die aasvoëls was 'n belewenis wat vir mis beskore is.