

Gansbaai and environs **(approx 100 km)**

Leave Stanford by going up Queen Victoria Street towards the R43. Turn right towards Gansbaai, which is about 25 km away.

Gansbaai is the shark diving centre of the Overstrand – if not the world. Celebrities include Michael Schumacher; the prince of Jordan and Brad Pitt. This is a whole-day affair and if you want to do some shark diving please contact our Stanford Tourism Office who may be able to assist with last-minute bookings etc.

You can also book a boat tour to Dyer Island. Dyer Island is the home to seals (a favourite meal for the Great White Shark which abounds in the sea around here) and the African Penguin. The removal of guano from the island has resulted in the African Penguin's nesting sites being destroyed as they burrow into the guano to lay their eggs. Conservationists have designed a small conical shaped fibre glass nest which the penguins are now learning to use.

If you are not shark-diving, before you arrive in Gansbaai, about 1km after passing the turn-off to De Kelders turn to your right at the Stanford Cove sign-board. It is from this cove that Robert Stanford sent his produce to Cape Town by boat. This sheltered bay with its grass covered terrace is the ideal place to have a light picnic and watch the sun go down over Walker Bay. Hundreds of cormorants fly in formation low over the sea on their way to roost on Dyer Island.

After entering Gansbaai watch out for the harbour signpost and turn right to get to the fishing harbour. Here you can see hundreds of gulls waiting for the fishing boats to come in with their catch as do the seals. There is a working fish factory and shop to buy fresh and frozen sea products.

Go back to the main road through Gansbaai, turn right and on reaching a four way stop sign on the outskirts of the town and turn right to Kleinbaai.

A few kilometres down the road you will find a sign to the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary on your left – well worth a visit to see all the good work done by the Dyer Island Conservation Trust.

At the same intersection there is a road to the right to the Danger Point lighthouse where the legendary HMS Birkenhead sank on 26 February 1852 (“ladies and children first”). You need to make prior arrangements. There is an excellent restaurant (Afrikanos) close to the lighthouse – with a soon-to-be crocodile farm!

Go back to the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary, turn right until you arrive in Franskraal and turn right again. Carry on to the end of the road. Dyer Island can be seen on the horizon. At the “T” junction turn left and you will arrive at the Franskraal beach. A short stroll down the beach will bring you to the mouth of the Uilskraal River. You may be lucky enough to see a Cape Clawless Otter swimming either in the sea or up the fresh water river. The brownish colour of the water is a result of tannins leaching out of the fynbos as the water passes over these plants. Should you turn right rather than left at the “T” junction, you will get to the minute Strandveld Museum on the left.

Once you've completed your tour of Franskraal, you need to go back to the R43, turn right and travel for about 25 km to Pearly Beach. This is mainly a holiday destination, but has a beautiful sandy beach. Angling from the shore is another popular pastime in this sleepy spot. Die Rooi Bier is famous for its one kg prawn platter – and the no-nonsense way in which it is presented!

Return to the R43 and continue further south-east towards Buffelsjacht. This is mainly a fishing community but the drive along the rocky shore is worth a visit. There once was an abundance of abalone to be found, but sadly it is a poacher's paradise and all that is left are the tell-tale shells along the shoreline.

Back on the R43 continue to the end of the road to Die Dam. Park your car at the designated area and walk the short distance to the beach. This deserted sandy beach stretches for kilometres to your left. Please take care if you swim here as there will be nobody to assist you should you experience difficulties.

At the end of the day take the R43 back to Stanford.