



Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends January–June 2025

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1. About this Report

This report provides an overview of the latest data from local tourism offices in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo between January and June 2025.

The information provides insights into the origin of visitors to the region as well as their preferred activities, ages, group sizes and spending patterns. The research is not intended to represent tourism for the region, as the sample of visitors represents only the footfall at participating tourism offices.



2. Methodology

This report provides an overview of the tourism trends and patterns in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo. The findings illustrate key visitor trends obtained from the regional visitor tracking surveys.

Responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys are used as a proxy to indicate the key trends in the Western Cape and the various regions. It is important to note that absolute figures cannot be determined from these surveys, as the survey responses are a sample of the responses from tourists in the respective tourism offices across the Western Cape and would thus represent a sample of the visitors. Therefore, where statistically relevant, absolute numbers may be given; however, a share is provided to indicate the trend. This is based on international best practice in the use of surveys in the tourism industry for determining key trends (Wesgro Regional Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025).

Definition

Visitor: *Any person travelling to a place other than his/her usual environment for less than 12 months and whose main purpose for the travel is other than the exercise of an activity to be remunerated at the place visited (South African Tourism, 2025).*

3. Sample Size

Between January and June 2025, a total of 1,770 responses to the regional visitor tracking surveys were received from the towns of Mossel Bay, Knysna, Wilderness and George in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo. This is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Total number of responses from visitors to four towns in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, between January and June 2025

Towns	Domestic Visitors	Overseas Visitors	Unspecified	Total
1. Mossel Bay	306	767	-	1 073
2. Knysna	279	264	2	545
3. Wilderness	41	61	-	102
4. George	17	32	1	50
Total	643	1 124	3	1 770

Source: Wesgro Regional Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

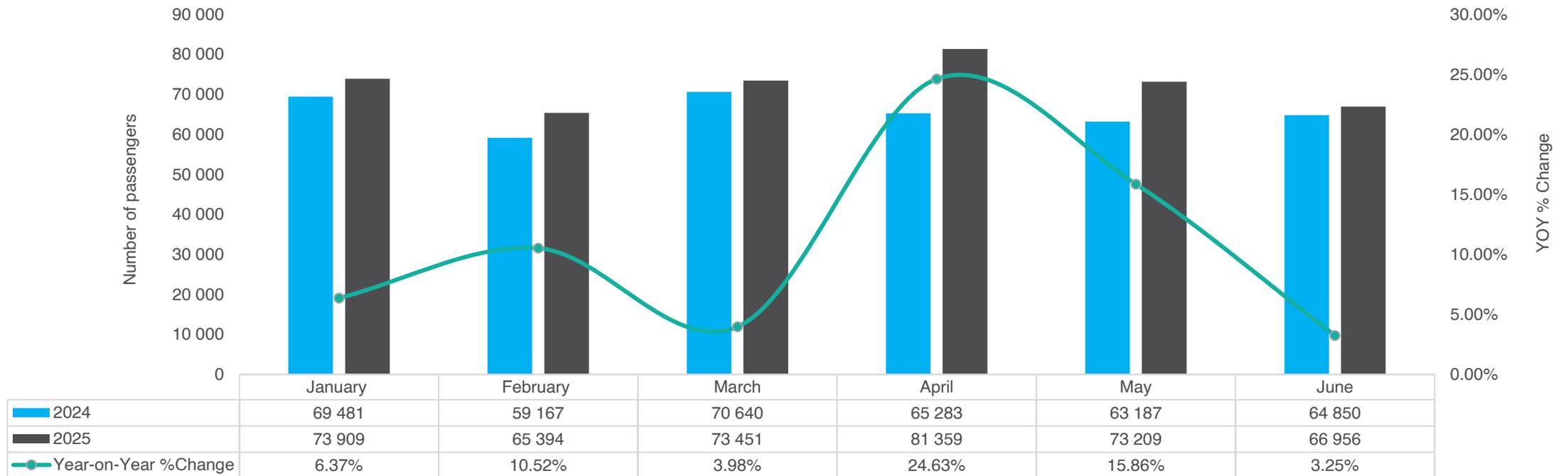
4. Key Insights

- The information provided in the report is obtained from the visitor tracking surveys distributed by Wesgro to tourism offices in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, namely George, Wilderness, Mossel Bay and Knysna.
- **Visitor segment and origin:** Between January and June 2025, 63.50% of visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were international tourists, primarily from Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. On the other hand, domestic visitors accounted for 36.33% of respondents, shared between all of the country's nine provinces. Some 21.81% of the domestic travellers were locals from the Western Cape, followed by visitors from Gauteng (6.84%) and the Eastern Cape (2.82%).
- **Demographics:** Visitors to the region were mostly between the ages of 20 and 35 years.
- **Length of stay:** Most visitors were overnight visitors staying for one night and more with a combined total of 45.14%, while day visitors held a 22.60% share of total visitor arrivals in the region for the period.
- **Information sources:** Most visitors relied on tourism offices and their visitor information centres as well as the internet/websites and social media platforms being the leading sources of information.
- **Transportation and accommodation preferences:** Both domestic and international travellers had a preference for using rental transportation as well as their own motor vehicles when travelling to the region. When observing visitor accommodation preferences, hotels (chosen by 3.84% of visitors) and guesthouses (for 2.77% of visitors) were preferred.
- **Visitor spending:** Visitor spending was concentrated in the mid-to-high categories, with 4.58% of travellers reporting daily expenditures of between R1,001 and R2,000, as well as those spending more than R2,000 in the region.
- **Purpose of visit:** The majority of visitors (40.34%) reported that their primary purpose for visiting the region was leisure and holiday travel.
- **Activities:** Food and restaurants (chosen by 6.10% of respondents) was the leading attraction among visitors to the region. Others (4.52%) enjoyed the pristine beaches found along the Garden Route, while 3.33% of visitors participated in outdoor activities; 2.32% engaged in adventure pursuits; and 2.26% of tourists visited craft stores and markets.
- **Attractions:** Visitor data was obtained from both CapeNature for the six nature reserves located in the region and from the Cango Caves.
- Additional information relating to passenger movement at George Airport, and visitor trends relating to different towns, is also provided.

5. George Airport Passenger Movement

- Between January and June 2025, George Airport recorded a total of 434,278 two-way passengers, representing a 10.61% year-on-year increase compared to the same period in 2024. This growth, illustrated in Figure 1, reflects the rising popularity of the region as a tourist destination.
- The busiest months for travel were January, with 73,909 arrivals, and April, which saw 81,359 passengers.

Figure 1: Two-way Passenger movement through George Airport, January–June 2025



Source: Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) (2025)

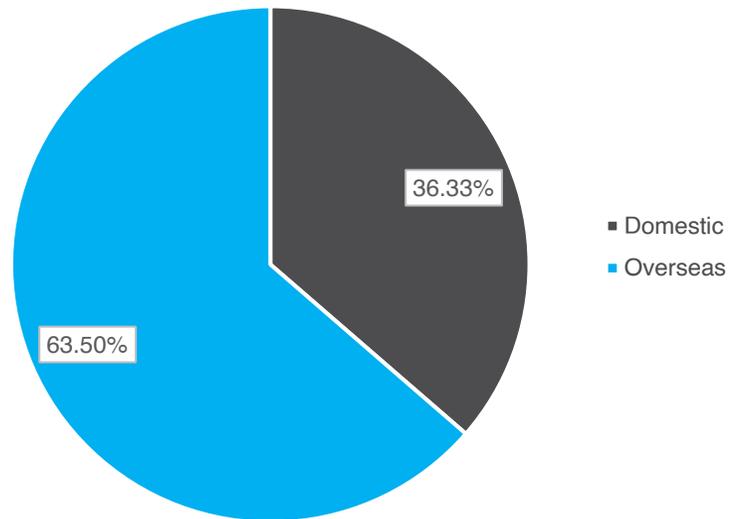
6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns

Wesgro Primary Research: Regional Visitor Tracking Surveys
Review Period: January–June 2025

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Origin of Visitors

- Between January and June 2025, 36.33% of visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were domestic visitors, while 63.50% were international travellers. This distribution of visitors is illustrated in Figure 1.
- Among domestic visitors, 21.81% originated from the Western Cape, followed by 6.84% from Gauteng and 2.82% from the Eastern Cape. The percentage share of other domestic visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region is detailed in Figure 2, which shows the influx of tourists from the respective provinces in South Africa.

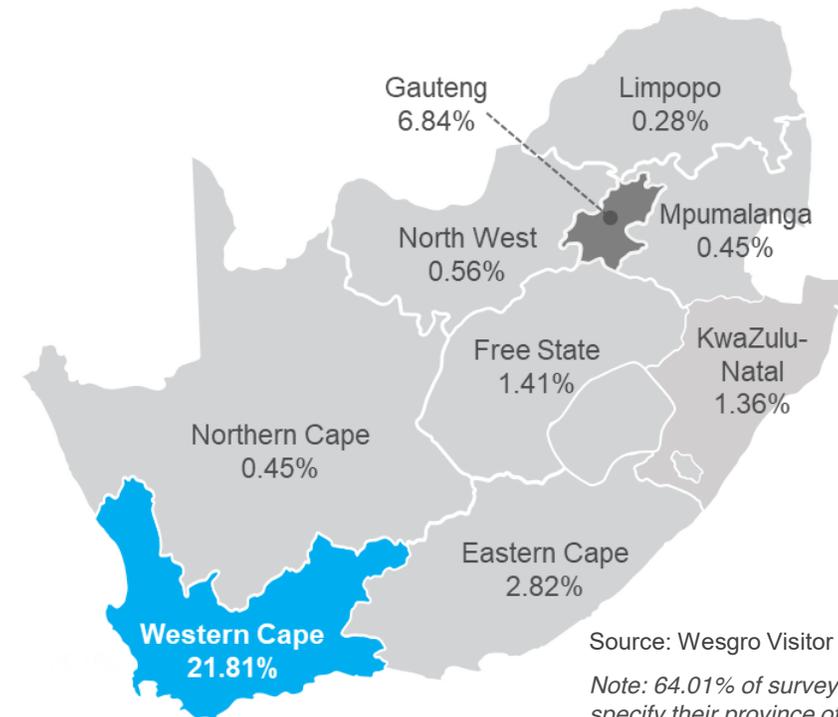
Figure 1: Overseas and domestic visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 0.17% of survey respondents did not specify their origin.

Figure 2: Origin of domestic visitors visiting the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



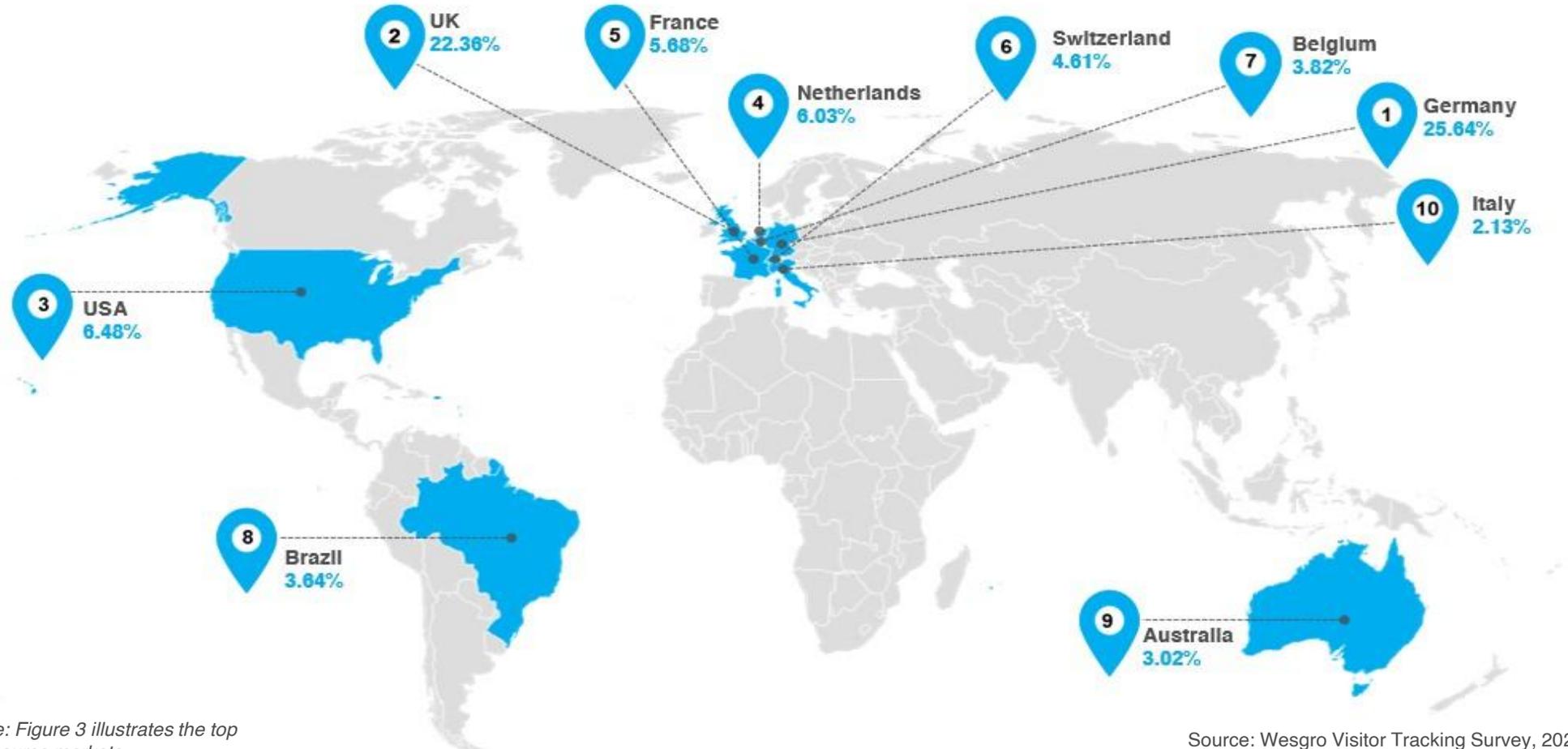
Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 64.01% of survey respondents did not specify their province of origin.

6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Source Markets

- According to Figure 3, the largest share of overseas travellers visiting the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region between January and June 2025 were from Germany (25.64%), the United Kingdom (22.36%) and the United States (6.48%). These countries were the top 3 source markets from the sample of 10 shown in figure 3.

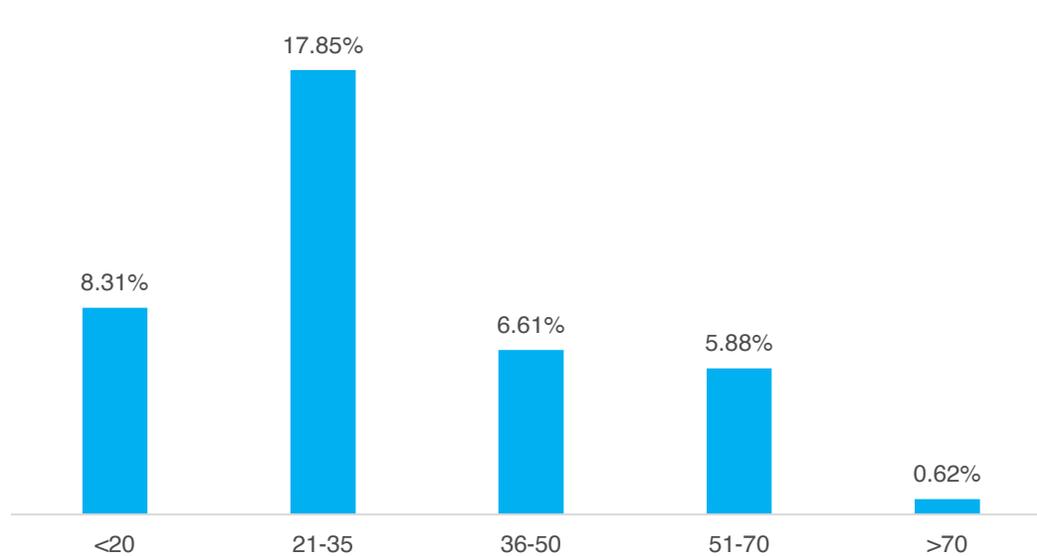
Figure 3: Origin of overseas visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



6. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Demographics

- Figure 4 provides an overview of visitor demographics in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region between January and June 2025. Visitors to the region were mostly between 21 and 35 years (17.85%) and those who were 20 years and below (8.31%).
- Regarding travel group size, the data reveals that a significant portion of visitors preferred to travel in pairs (32.82%) followed by solo travellers (16.61%). Smaller proportions were recorded for groups of four (6.16%), and groups of three (4.69%). This can be seen in Figure 5.

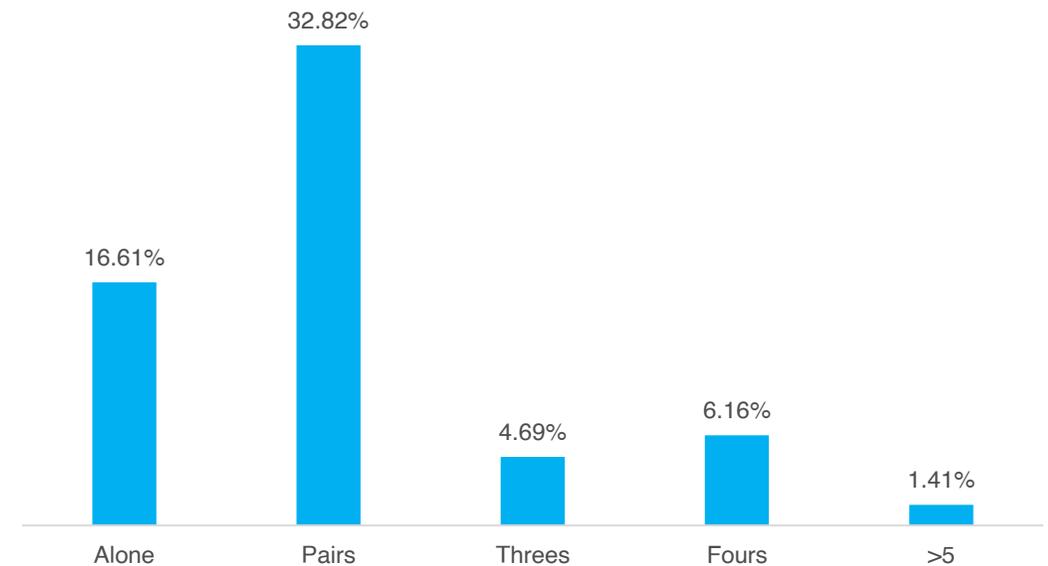
Figure 4: Age groups of visitors, January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 60.73% of survey respondents did not specify their age.

Figure 5: Travel group sizes of visitors, January–June 2025



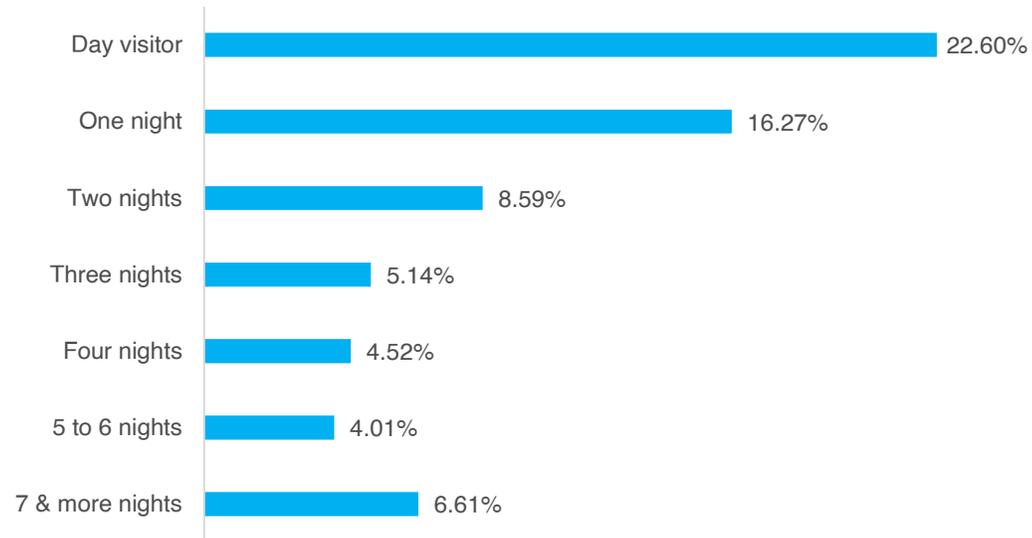
Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 38.31% of survey respondents did not specify their travel group size.

5. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Length of Stay

- According to Figure 6, visitors travelling to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were predominantly day visitors (22.60%), followed by visitors who stayed overnight (16.27%) and those who stayed for two nights or a weekend (8.59%). A variety of length in stay is reflected, showing that the Garden Route is a destination that can cater for all types of visitors.
- Figure 7 illustrates the types of accommodation used by both domestic and international visitors. The data shows that 3.84% of travellers preferred hotels, followed by those who used guesthouses (2.77%) and self-catering establishments (2.66%). The Garden Route attracts a diverse range of visitors—including nature lovers, adventure seekers, families, and those seeking cultural or leisure experiences—which explains the wide variety of accommodation options available, ranging from backpacker hostels and holiday homes to camping facilities.

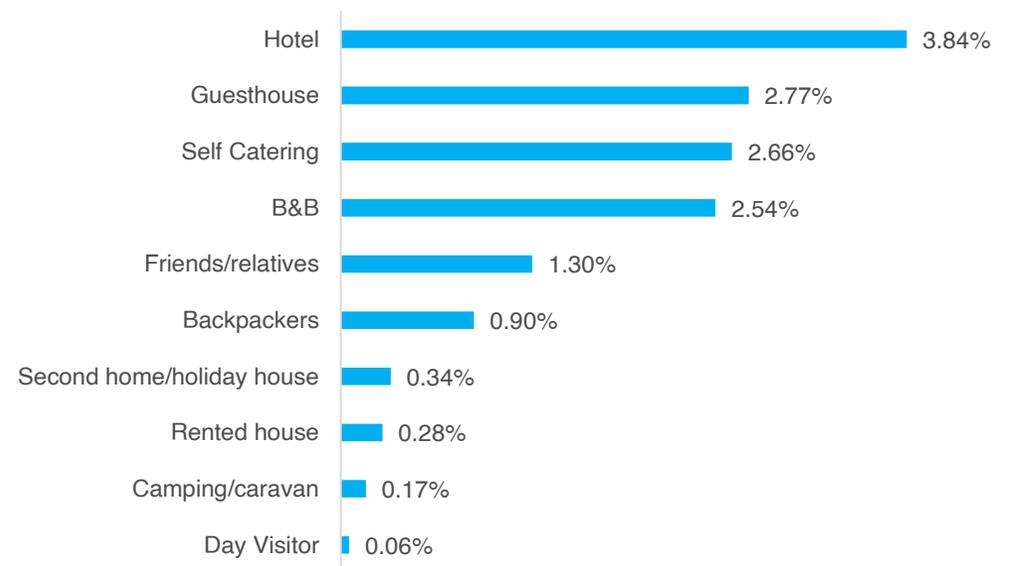
Figure 6: Average length of stay in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region, January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 32.26% of respondents did not indicate their length of stay.

Figure 7: Accommodation usage in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo region, January–June 2025



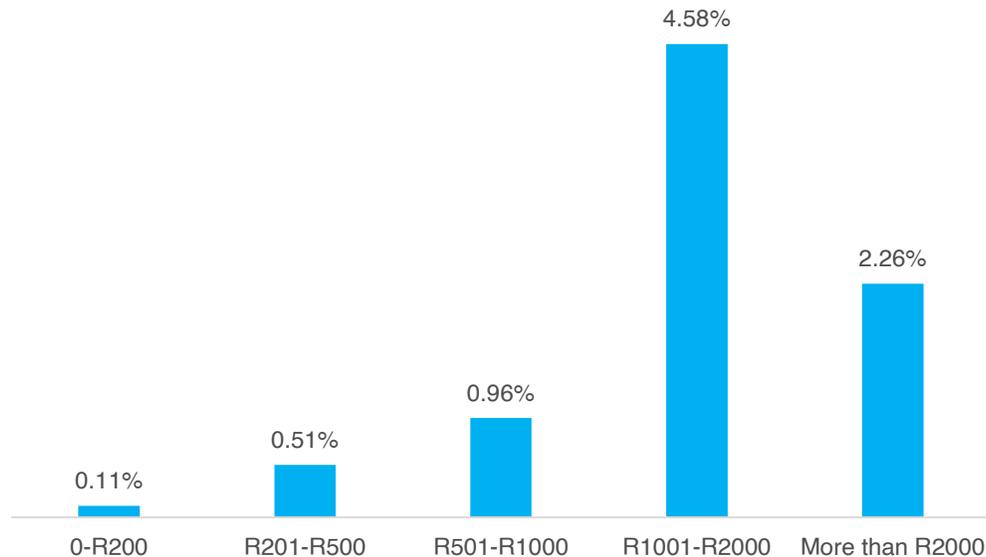
Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 85.14% of respondents did not indicate their accommodation preference.

5. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Visitor Spending & Info Sources

- Figure 8 presents the average daily spend reported by visitors. Less than 1% of visitors provided their spending patterns. However, the information available shows that some 4.58% of travellers indicated that they spent between R1001 and R2000 per day as well as those who indicated spending more than R2000 in the region. The other three categories (0-R200, R201-R500 and R501-R1000) each reflected a share below 1%.
- Figure 9 highlights the main information sources used by travellers to the region. The leading sources of influence for visitors travelling to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo were visitor information centers (7.80%), internet and websites (4.75%), social media engagements (1.69%) as well as word of mouth referrals (1.02%).

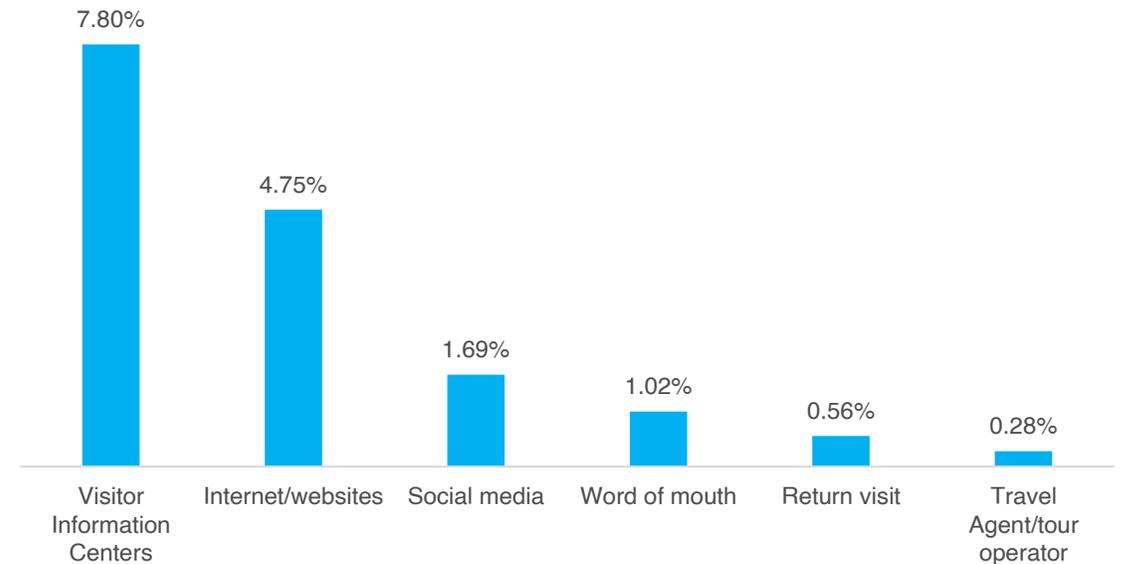
Figure 8: Average daily spend in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 91.58% of the respondents to the survey did not specify their average daily spend.

Figure 9: Top information sources used by visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



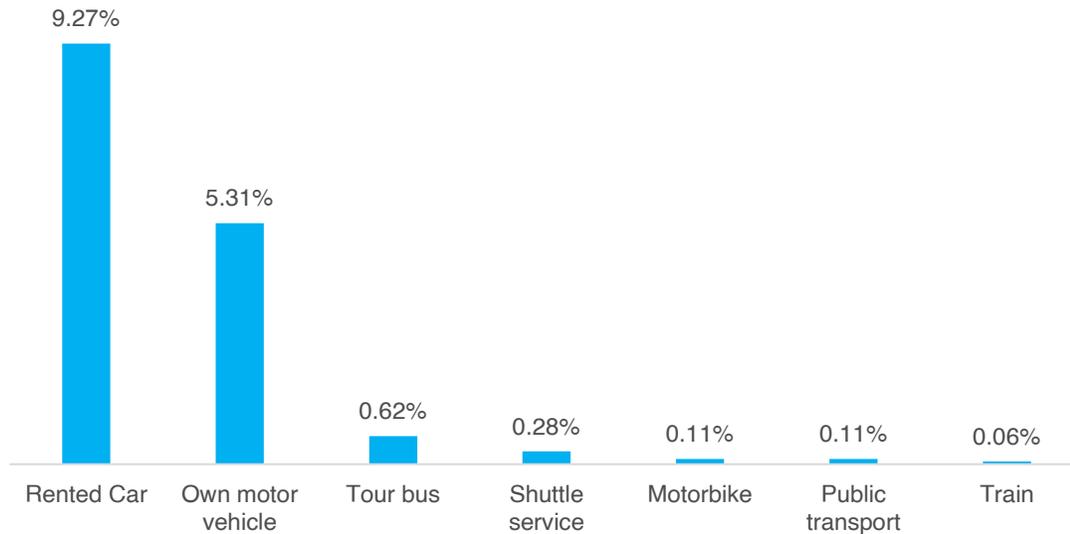
Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey, 2025

Note: 83.90% of the respondents to the survey did not specify their top information source.

5. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Modes of Transport

- Figures 10 and 11 provide insights into transportation preferences among domestic and overseas visitors who travelled to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo.
- Rented cars were the most-used form of travel in the region by both international (12.28%) and domestic (9.27%) visitors. Other modes of transport for domestic travellers included own motor vehicles (5.31%), tour buses (0.62%) and other forms of public transport, as shown in Figure 10.
- Alternative modes of transport used by international visitors were own motor vehicles and tour buses, as was the case with domestic travellers.

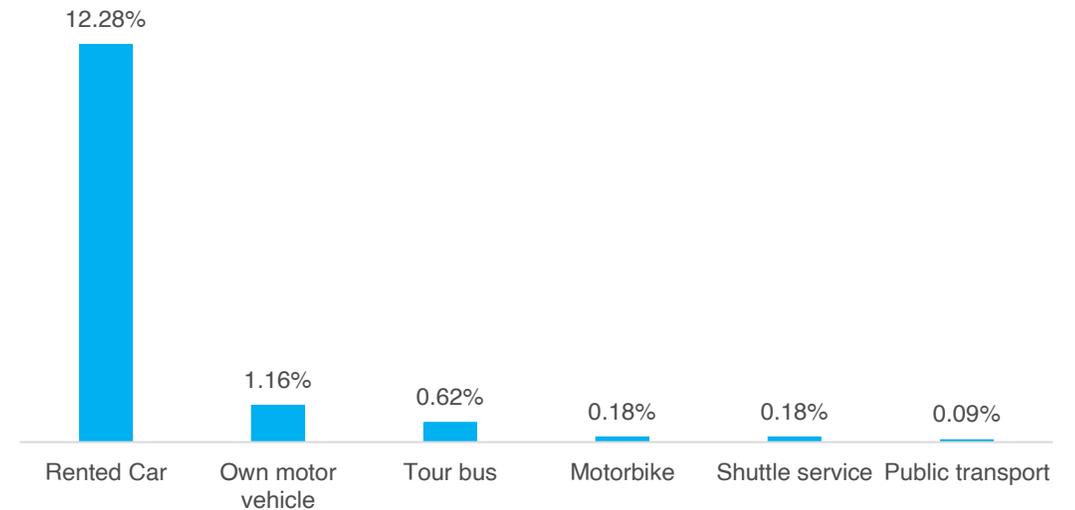
Figure 10: Modes of transport used by domestic visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Note: 84.24% of survey respondents did not specify their preferred mode of transport

Figure 11: Modes of transport used by overseas visitors in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025

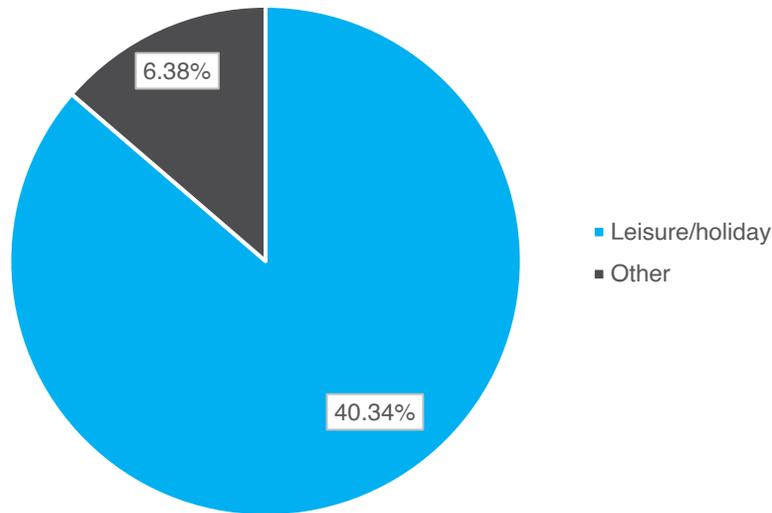


Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

5. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Visitor Trends & Patterns: Travel Motivations

- Figure 12 indicates that most tourists (40.34%) visited the region for leisure purposes, followed by those (6.38%) who travelled for business, weddings/honeymoons, seeing friends and relatives and religion which form a part of the “other” category illustrated in the diagram.
- An analysis of the top tourism activities reveals that gastronomy and fine dining (participated in by 6.10% of visitors) was the leading choice of activity among visitors to the region, while 4.52% of visitors enjoyed the pristine beaches along the Garden Route coast; 3.33% of visitors participated in outdoor activities; 2.32% engaged in adventure pursuits; and 2.26% of tourists visited craft stores and markets. This is shown in Figure 13.

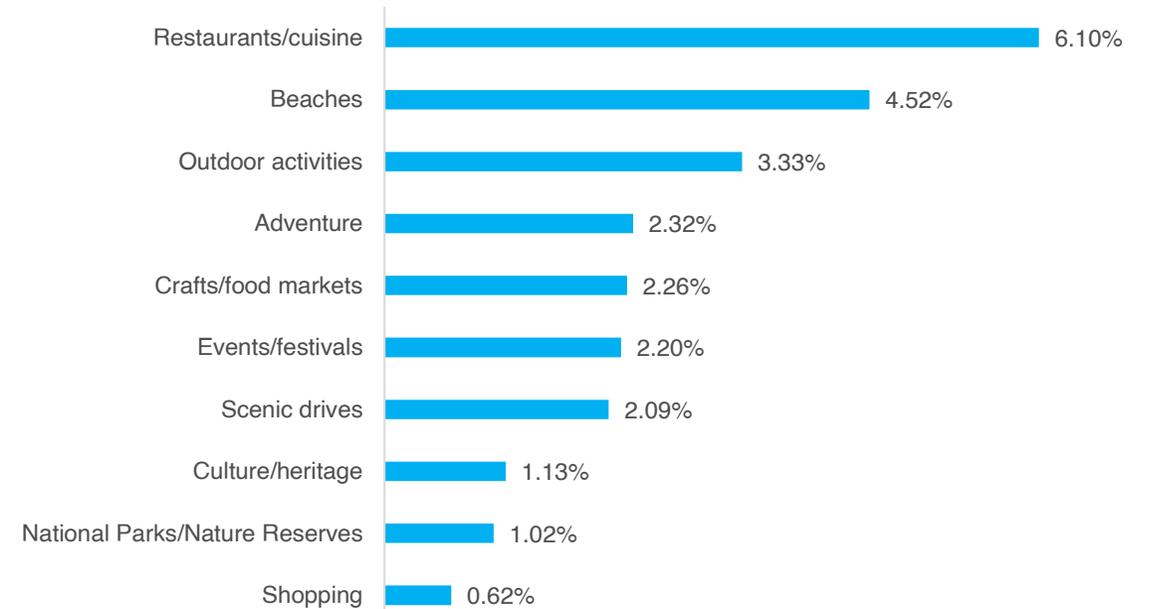
Figure 12: Purpose of visit to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Note: 53.28% of the respondents to the survey did not specify their main purpose of visit in the region.

Figure 13: Top activities undertaken by visitors to the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



Source: Wesgro Visitor Tracking Survey (2025)

Note: A high share of respondents did not specify their main activities enjoyed in the region.

6. Visitor Trends & Patterns in Various Towns in the Region

Table 2: Overview of visitor trends and patterns by town, January–June 2025

Tourism indicators	Mossel Bay	Knysna	Wilderness	George
% Share domestic visitors	28.52%	51.19%	40.20%	34.00%
% Share overseas visitors	71.48%	48.44%	59.80%	64.00%
Top 3 international markets	United Kingdom (23.34%) Germany (23.21%) United States (8.47%)	Germany (30.83%) United Kingdom (22.93%) France (7.89%) & Netherlands (7.89%)	Germany (39.34%) France (11.48%) Netherlands (11.48%)	United Kingdom (21.21%) Germany (15.15%) Australia (9.09%)
Top 3 domestic markets	Western Cape (14.54%) Gauteng (6.43%) Eastern Cape (1.96%)	Western Cape (37.06%) Gauteng (8.26%) Eastern Cape (2.02%)	Western Cape (21.51%) Eastern Cape (10.78%) Free State (2.94%)	Eastern Cape (14.00%) Gauteng (12.00%) Western Cape (6.00%)
Main purpose of visit	Leisure/holiday (10.25%) Business (0.75%) Friends/relatives (0.56%)	Leisure/holiday (85.32%) Other (14.68%)	Leisure/holiday (94.12%) Friends/relatives (5.88%)	Leisure/holiday (86.00%) Friends/relatives (10.00%) Business (2.00%)
Age profile of visitors	<20 years (13.61%) 21-35 years (27.87%) 36-50 years (4.75%)	Visitors did not specify (100%)	36-50 years (51.96%) 51-70 years (39.22%)	36-50 years (26.00%) 51-70 years (48.00%)
Group size	Alone (16.03%); Pairs (26.19%)	Alone (21.83%); Pairs (43.67%)	Fours (54.90%); Pairs (35.29%)	Pairs (52.00%) Fours (14.00%)
Length of stay	Two nights (18.53%) Three nights (12.29%)	Day visitor (31.59%) One night (23.11%)	5 to 6 nights (23.53%) 7 and more nights (52.94%)	Two nights (28.00%) 7 & more nights (24.00%)
Top 3 information sources	Visitor information centre (8.48%) Internet/websites (2.14%) Social media (0.75%)	Visitors did not specify	Internet/websites (56.86%) Social media (21.97%) Word of mouth (11.76%)	Visitor information centres (94.00%) Internet/websites (6.00%)
Average daily budget	Visitors did not specify	Visitors did not specify	R1001-R2000 (59.80%) More than R2000 (28.43%)	R1001-R2000 (40.00%) More than R2000 (22.00%)
Average budget for accommodation	Visitors did not specify	Visitors did not specify	R1001-R2000 (18.63%) R2001-R5000 (66.67%)	R501-R1000 (24.00%) R1001-R2000 (26.00%)
Type of accommodation	Hotel (3.26%) Guesthouse (2.89%) Self catering (1.58%)	Visitors did not specify	B&B (34.31%) Hotel (18.63%) Friends/relatives (11.76%)	Hotel (28.00%) Friends/relatives (18.00%) Guesthouse (16.00%)
Mode of transport	Rented Car (6.80%) Own motor vehicle (3.82%) Tour bus (0.93%)	Visitors did not specify	Rented car (64.71%) Own motor vehicle (33.33%)	Rented Car (50.00%) Own motor vehicle (38.00%)
Top activities undertaken	Adventure (1.12%); Culture/heritage (0.93%)	Visitors did not specify	Gourmet/cuisine (88.24%); Beaches (50.98); Outdoor activities (36.27%)	Beaches (38.00%); Outdoor activities (34.00%); Scenic drives (32.00%)

An aerial photograph of a coastline featuring a range of mountains and a large body of water. The mountains are dark and rugged, with some peaks appearing sharp. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall scene is serene and scenic.

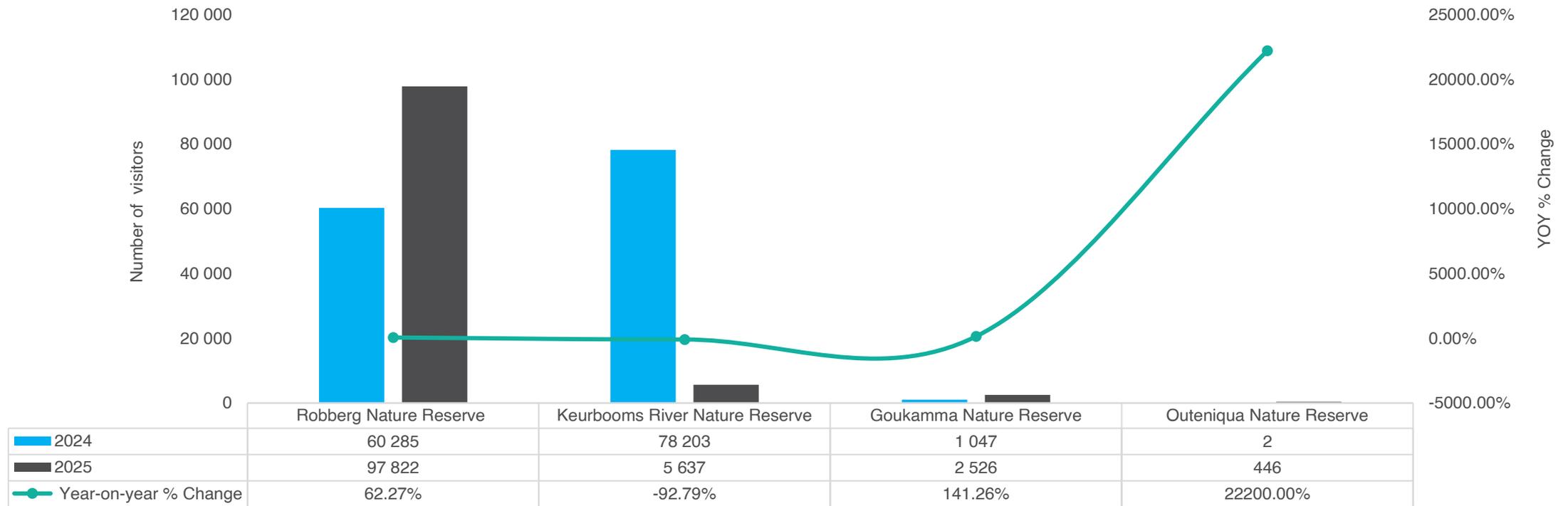
7. Performance of Attractions in Garden Route & Klein Karoo

January–June 2025

7. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: CapeNature

- Figure 14 shows the annual visitor arrivals for the four CapeNature reserves found in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, namely Robberg, Keurbooms River, Goukamma and the Outeniqua nature reserves.
- Between January and June 2025, Robberg Nature Reserve had the highest share of visitors with 97,822 visitor arrivals which represented a 62.27% growth in visitors when compared to the same period in 2024.

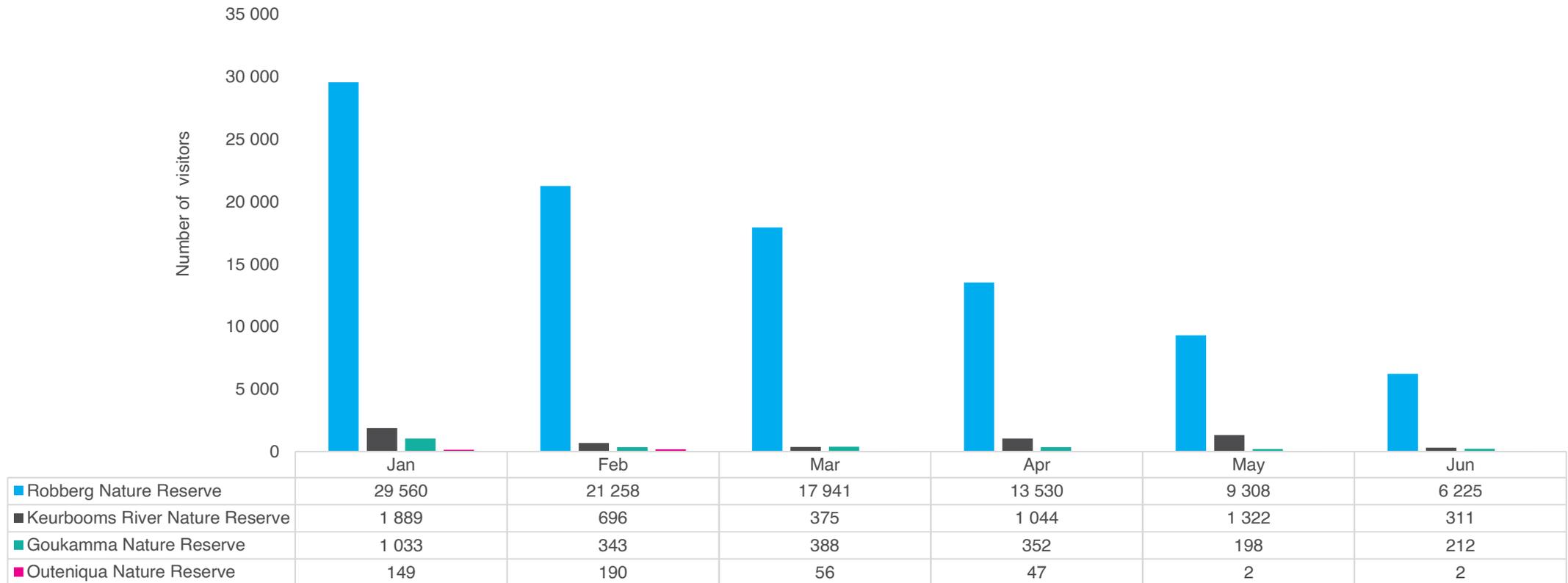
Figure 14: Visitor arrivals in CapeNature reserves in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



7. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: CapeNature

- A monthly breakdown of visitor arrivals at the respective reserves is presented in Figure 15. Quarter 1 (January–March 2025) recorded the highest number of visitors across the region. Robberg Nature Reserve welcomed 68,759 visitors, followed by Keurbooms River Nature Reserve with 2,950 visitors, and Goukamma Nature Reserve with 1,764 visitors. Outeniqua Nature Reserve also began gaining momentum after reopening early in 2025, having received 395 visitors during the first quarter.

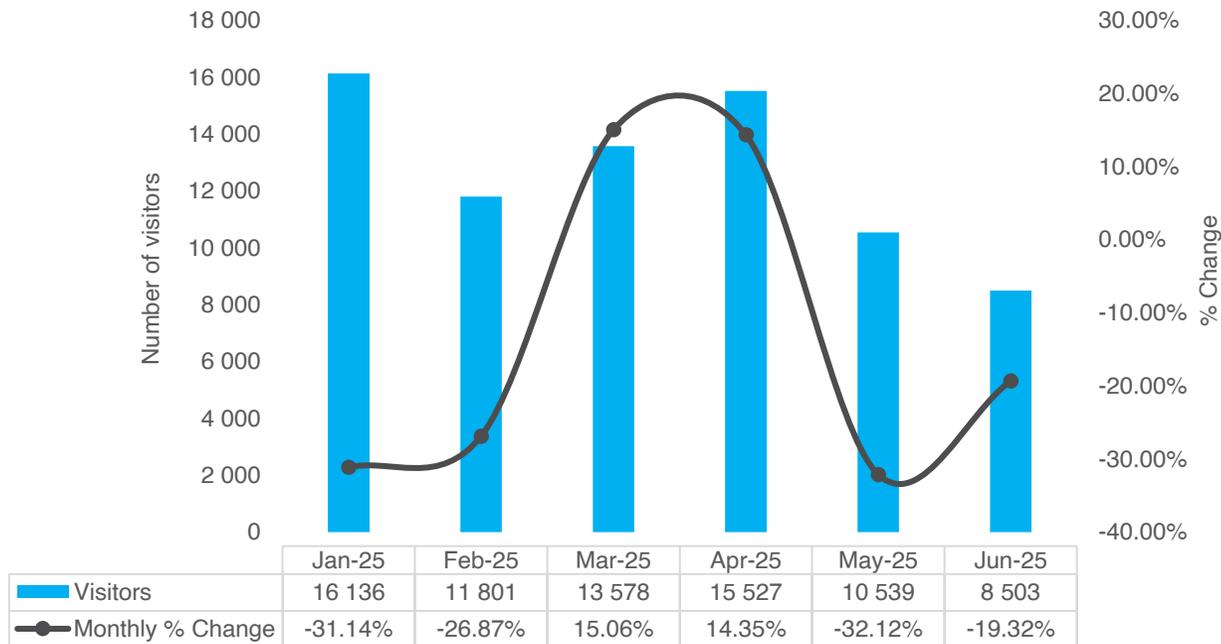
Figure 15: Monthly visitor arrivals in CapeNature reserves in the Garden Route & Klein Karoo, January–June 2025



7. Garden Route & Klein Karoo Attractions: Cango Caves

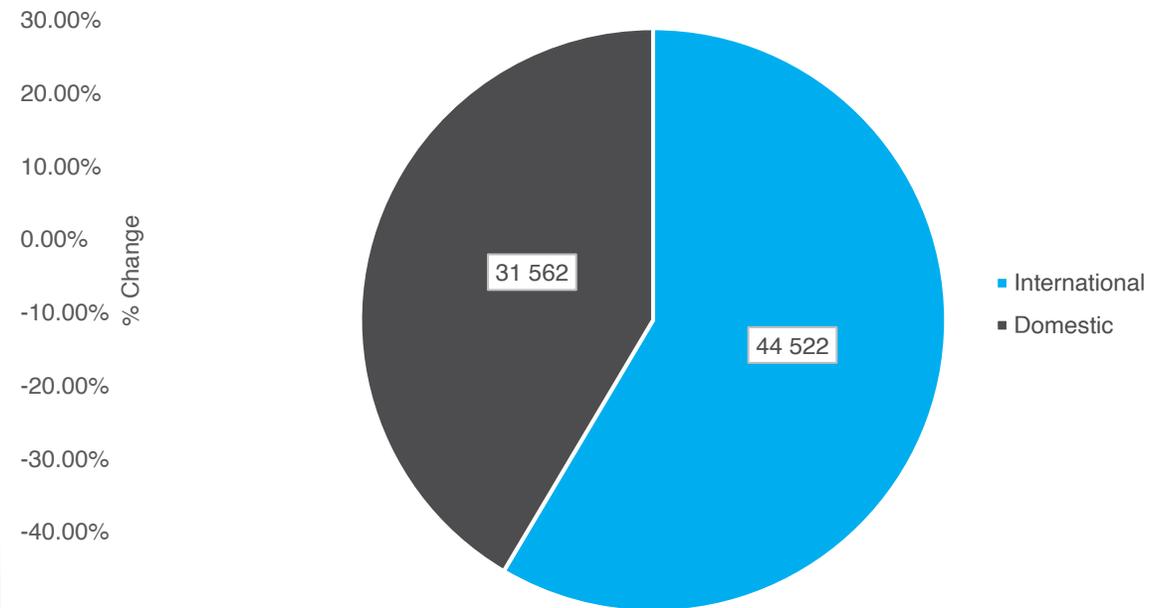
- The Cango Caves welcomed a total of 120,606 visitors between January and June 2025, reflecting a year-on-year increase of 15.04% when compared to the same period in 2024. According to Figure 16, January (with 16,136 visitors) and April (with 15,527) recorded the highest monthly arrivals in visitors to the Caves. Both months are peak seasons for travel by international travellers and students.
- A total of 44,522 visitors were international tourists, while 31,562 were domestic visitors between January to June 2025. This can be seen in Figure 17.

Figure 16: Monthly visitor arrivals at the Cango Caves, January–June 2025



Source: CapeNature (2025)

Figure 17: International and Domestic visitors to the Cango Caves, January–June 2025

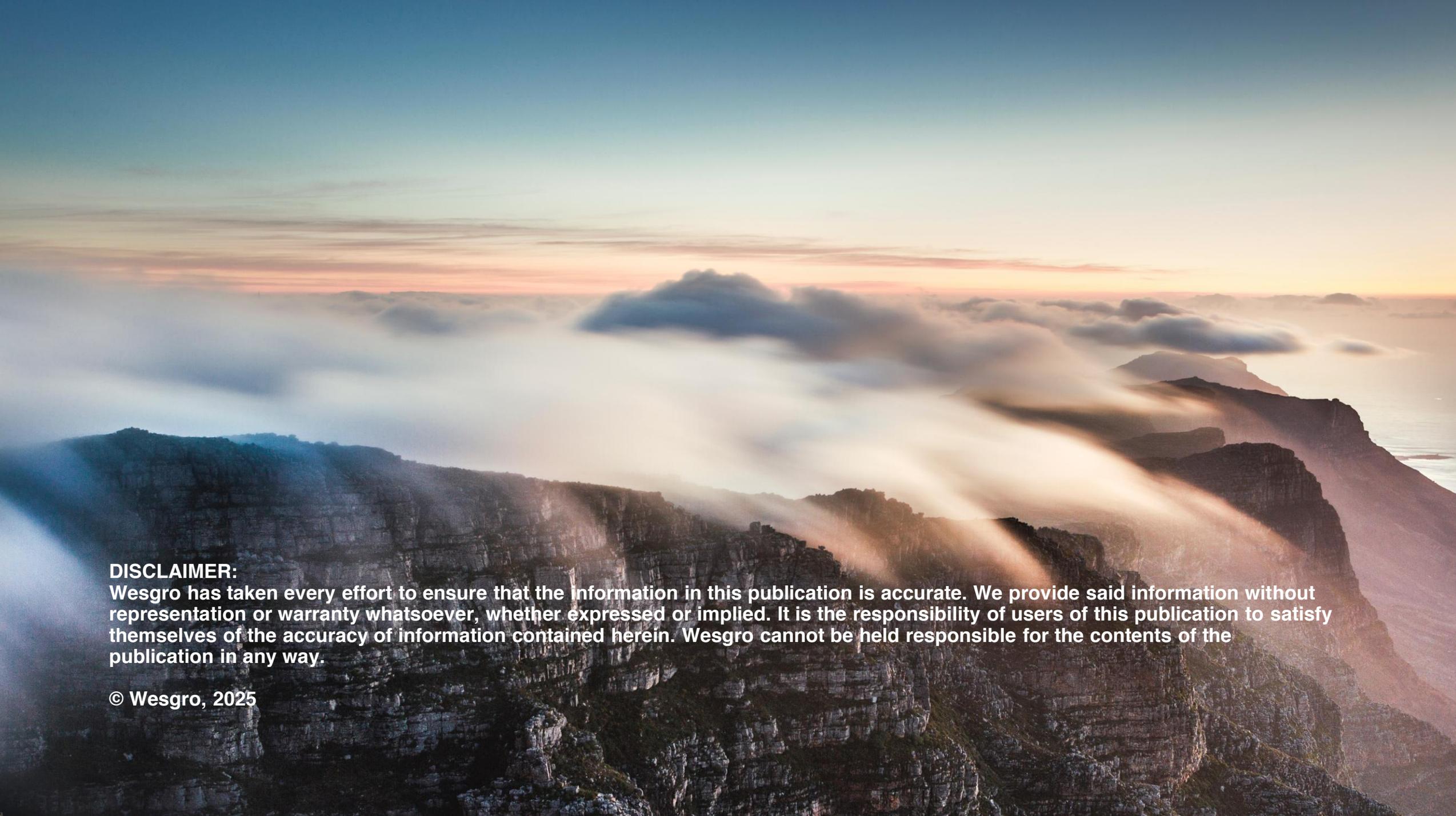


Source: CapeNature (2025)

8. Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements and many thanks go to the following for supplying the primary data which made this publication possible and whose continued and unwavering support will sustain the forthcoming issues.

- Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA)
- CapeNature
- Cango Caves
- George Tourism Office
- Mossel Bay Tourism
- Knysna Tourism



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