



The 7th International Palaeontological Congress

FIELDTRIP

West Coast Fossil Park

PRE003

Day trip to West Coast Fossil Park (2-hour drive from Cape Town)

Fieldtrip leader: Pippa Haarhoff, Fay-yaad Toefy and Roger Smith

Dates: 29 November 2026 (Full Day)

Approximate cost: R1 000 per person

Minimum pax: 25

Maximum pax: 28

What to bring: Sunblock, comfortable walking shoes, hat

Tour includes: Transport, refreshments, light lunch, guide, entrance fee to the Park and Dig Site.

Tour excludes: Items of a personal nature

Instagram: @westcoastfossilpark

Facebook: @westcoastfossilpark

Website: <https://fossilpark.org.za/>

Brief description and overview of the trip

The fossil site of Langebaanweg is located in the West Coast Fossil Park (WCFP), approximately 150 km north of Cape Town (a 2-hour drive), and is world-renowned for its exceptionally well-preserved fossil faunal remains that date to the terminal Miocene/early Pliocene (circa 5.2 million years ago).

A national and international team of researchers are currently unravelling the fascinating and unique history of fossils from the West Coast Fossil Park and attempting to recreate the environment and climate of the West Coast some 5 million years ago. At this time many animals that are now extinct, such as saber-toothed cats, short-necked giraffes, hunting hyenas and African bears roamed the west coast which then had a more subtropical climate with lush, riverine forests and open grasslands.

A new Visitor Centre has been constructed using funds from the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) and now hosts a brand-new exhibition hall, restaurant, shop, amphitheatre, conference, meeting and office facilities in addition to the open dig site that many past visitors are familiar with.

Dig Site

The West Coast Fossil Park preserves fossil evidence from approximately 5 million years ago. In 1998 a team of professional archaeologists and palaeontologists began excavating the current dig site that is open to the public. The site was chosen based on the fossils that were collected in this area by Dr Brett Hendey in 1975 and 1976 whilst the phosphate mine was in full operation. Dr Roger Smith heads up the current “public” excavation site which is dominated by numerous sivathere remains. The particular species of sivathere found here is named after Brett Hendey, *Sivatherium hendeyi*. Fully mature adults are estimated to have weighed up to 2000kg. A number of the fossils were removed and are now housed at the Iziko National Museum in Cape Town. However, some of the excavation has been preserved in situ (in their original place) so that members of the public can learn about this site and the amazing animals that have been discovered here.

DAY 1 – 29 November 2026 (Cape Town / Langebaan)

08:30: Depart Baxter Theatre for a scenic trip through to the West Coast Fossil Park. Arrive at the West Coast Fossil Park around 10:30. Refreshments and a light snack will be served. followed by a guided tour of the Museum and the Dig Site. Lunch will be provided and delegates will depart at 15:00 to arrive back at the Baxter Theatre around 17:00.