



Deon Small



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Jen Small

Date: 20 September 2026

Distance: 6km

Weather: Cloudy and cool becoming warm.

Number of hikers: 15

Severity of hike: An easy hike with a few river crossings.

Report by: Deon

Grey Mare Falls Shawswood Led by Deon

The weather leading up to Sunday was not good, with over 80mm in some places, leading up to the hike. The call was made that it will not be cancelled – our skin is waterproof after all.

The day dawned cool but dry with rain forecasted for later in the afternoon, that made for perfect hiking weather even though the paths could still be a bit muddy and slippery after all the rain. This meant that I potentially had to change the plan on the fly to keep everyone in the group safe.

We set off with cool overcast conditions and were soon sweating as we hit the first few uphill, and all began to shed a layer as soon as the sun started to peek through the clouds. The path that leads to the entrance of the forest, has a spot where you have a beautiful view of the whole of Gray Mares Falls, and we took some time to admire the falls that were flowing quite strongly after all the rain. Entering the forest is always a magical experience, the dull yellow road makes way to lush green hues, the White Stinkwoods are all beginning to bud and their light green leaves stand out like fresh heads of broccoli in the forest canopy. The forest floor was damp and covered in leaves and this made it less muddy than expected, however the first river crossing was tricky, as was the second one, where the opposite bank was quite muddy.

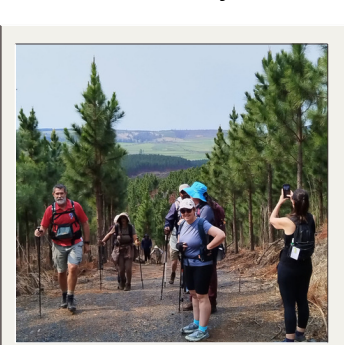
We moved quietly through the forest and spooked a group of Samango Monkeys that call this section of the forest home. They primarily live in the forest canopy and are seldom seen, so we were totally blessed to see them running through the forest canopy. Unfortunately, the elusive Knysna Turaco, remained elusive and we will have to have another trip to see if we can sight them in the forest. We made our way to the ladder section and after I scouted the route up, most of us set off to see how far we could get to the falls. Unfortunately, we had to stop short of the bottom of the falls, as the rocks were still wet from all the rain and were as slippery as soap. After some photos and admiring the falls from a distance, we turned back and slowly made our way back down over the slippery rocks.

Max the resident Jack Russel, followed us all the way up and back down, just to make sure we didn't get lost, and after some help up and down the ladder, he sprinted out in front of us ensuring we got home safely.

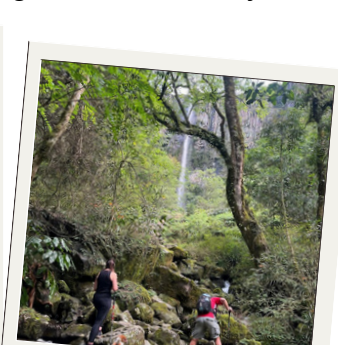
It was not a long walk out, and by 12:00 we were back at the car park, with enough time left to still enjoy a Sunday roast, if you wanted to. Sometimes a short day out with good friends is all you need to recharge for the upcoming work week.



Jen Small



Tracy



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