

25 January 2018

NEWSFLASH

Water Level/Activity Update for Botswana

General water levels are currently very low in Botswana, particularly where there is little to no permanent water. We may still get some rain over the next few months but it is unlikely to be enough to make a substantial difference and the annual inundation does not arrive until April/May. Accordingly, water based activities are now very limited and may be like this for the next three or four months. Please do advise your guests prior to arrival so that expectations are met:

- Vumbura Concession - boating and mokoro still on offer
- Abu/Seba - no boating/mokoro excursions
- Kings Pool - no barge
- Xigera - only mokoro excursions at the moment
- DumaTau - boating on offer year round
- Qorokwe - only mokoro excursions at the moment
- All camps in the Jao Concession – no boating/mokoro excursions

IMPORTANT

Use of Drones & UAVs on Wilderness Concessions

The use of drones is illegal in most of the countries in which we operate, in addition to the various other ethical and safety issues at stake. There are serious consequences if caught flying or travelling with a drone in most African countries; i.e., possible confiscation of and even prosecution for flying drones without clearance/licensing. Wilderness Safaris has therefore issued a **No Drone Flying Policy** in all of its concessions in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This policy extends to terrestrial UAVs, as well as to aerial UAVs, or drones. Details are included in our General Information Manual and our position statement is on the Info Centre under FAQs. Please ensure your guests are aware of this policy prior to travel.

Wi-Fi at Wilderness Camps & our Disconnect to Reconnect Policy

So that expectations are met, please reiterate our policy regarding Wi-Fi with your clients, preferably at the time of booking. We have received a number of complaints recently from guests who travelled to our camps and said they did not know there was no Wi-Fi. We are proud of the fact that we have a number of camps with no Wi-Fi in our portfolio as it is also our firm belief that we should contribute to keeping some areas of the planet wild and remote. Many travellers are consciously choosing to get off the grid in order to 'disconnect to reconnect'. That said we know there are also travellers who need to remain connected during their trip. By ensuring they receive the correct information regarding which of our camps offer 'Free Wi-Fi' and those that are 'Wi-Fi Free', they can choose the camps best suited to their needs and make the decision to disconnect (or not) on their own. Please refer to the General Information Manual for details on this policy (including the relevant list of camps).

REMINDERS

Information & Tools at Your Disposal

There is a wealth of constantly updated information available to you via various channels and platforms:

- Our Monthly Newsletter
- Our Monthly Product Update
- The Wilderness Safaris website <http://www.wilderness-safaris.com/>
- On the Info Centre: <https://www.wilderness-window.com/>
 - Camp Information Sheets
 - General Information Manual
 - Published Country Rates Sheets (not only rates but a lot of other key information)
 - Wilderness Air Flying Circuit Flyers

- A multitude of standalone documents addressing all aspects of our offering and operation
- The Wilderness Safaris Agents Manual App (+/-300Mb): add the App to your device via your Apple or Google Play Store by searching for Wilderness Safaris Agent Manual or connect your device to your PC and download it via one of these links:
 - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.coolideas.eproducts.wildernessagent>
 - <https://itunes.apple.com/app/wilderness-safaris-agent-manual/id991680198?ls=1&mt=8>

Fat Bikes at Kulala Desert Lodge

E-powered Fat Bikes, with their "fat" tyres and an electric hub motor, are a fun and easy way to explore the Kulala concession. Exclusive to guests staying at Kulala Desert Lodge, these electric bicycles are environmentally friendly, using solar power to re-charge.

- The cost is NAD/ZAR 351.00 per person. Excursions are booked and paid for directly in camp.
- Most routes are 2 to 3 hours long, while one is close to 4 hours.
- There is no upper or lower age limit but due to the size and weight of the bike, a minimum height requirement of 1.5 metres applies.

No Coastal Scenic Flight between Sossusvlei & Swakopmund

For some time now, Wilderness Air Namibia flights departing Sossusvlei head directly to Swakopmund, and do not travel via the coast. Regular fog along the coast in the morning regularly prevents this, and changing the flight routing at the last minute as a result had a knock-on effect on operations.

WILDERNESS TOURING & TRANSFERS – ZAMBEZI

Devil's Pool Closure

Due to high water levels, the Devil's Pool closed on 10 January 2018. There is an alternative swimming pool called "Angel's pool" where guests may take a dip.

High Water Rafting Season Started 9 January 2018

Due to the rising water levels of the Zambezi River, the high-water run from rapids 11 – 23 is now in operation. Guests are picked up from their hotels between approximately 07:30 and 8:00 and transported to the launch site at number 11, and can expect to be back in Victoria Falls town around 15:00, after having lunch at the top of rapid number 23.

Wild Horizons Changes Elephant Interactions

Wild Horizons no longer offers elephant-back safaris, focusing instead on an elephant conservation experience at the Wild Horizons Wildlife Sanctuary at Victoria Falls. An 'Elephant Encounter' offers visitors the opportunity to spend time walking through the bush with the elephants, observing them up close in the wild and getting to know their individual characters, and learning more about the importance of elephant conservation from the guides who have raised the elephants and gained unique insight along the way.

BOTSWANA

Balloon Season Extended at Vumbura Plains & Little Vumbura

Air Ventures have extended their operational period for 2018. The balloon season will now be 1 April to 14 October 2018, instead of 1 April to 30 September.

Fishing in Botswana is Seasonal

To allow for breeding, fishing is prohibited in Botswana during the months of January and February.

SEYCHELLES

North Island specials for 2018

Herewith a link for details on the relevant North Island specials for 2018 - <http://www.north-island.com/specials/>.

ZAMBIA

Access to the Busanga Plains

Over and above the Wilderness Air (operated by Staravia) flights, a further alternative will be available in 2018. On certain days of the week, between 15 June and 31 October, Proflight will fly between Lusaka and Lufupa. A road transfer may then be booked between Lufupa and Busanga Bush Camp or Shumba (or vice versa). Operating with a minimum of 2, and maximum 7, it is based on seat rates. Applicable to connections with Proflight only, private transfers are not possible and the driving time is approximately 3.5 hours through the park. Should any other link-up be required between our camps on the Busanga Plains and another camp in the Kafue, a private vehicle must be booked and charged for.

AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

Air Seychelles to Suspend Paris flights in April

From 24 April 2018, Air Seychelles will focus on domestic and regional networks. A number of international carriers are currently flying into the Seychelles – Qatar, Emirates, Etihad, Kenya Airways, Austrian Airways are just a few – with British Airways and Air France introducing services during 2018.

Cathay Pacific to Launch Direct Hong Kong-Cape Town Flights

Later this year, Cathay Pacific plan to launch a direct service between Cape Town and its hub in Hong Kong.

Singapore Airlines to Introduce Daily Flights to Cape Town

From 26 March 2018, Singapore Airlines will fly daily to Cape Town via Johannesburg - an increase from its current four flights per week.

Cheers
Tina
Wilderness Product Manager



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