

May 2014

May has been a busy month in South Africa with three travel trade shows in short succession! The overall feeling was very positive – Africa is definitely a key destination with a lot to offer the traveller, and of course, important to all of us is the crucial role that tourism plays in protecting our wildlife and wilderness areas.

## **NEWSFLASH**

### **Segera Stay 4, Pay 3**

We have introduced a Stay 4, Pay 3 special at Segera Retreat in Kenya. Valid from 1 June to 15 December 2014, it is applicable to all room types, and all ages. Please contact your Journey Specialist or Sales Manager should you require further details, or access the flyer on the Information Centre.

### **UPDATE: VAT in Zimbabwe for 2015**

To date, we have had no clarification regarding the proposed VAT of 15% on accommodation and/or tourism services in Zimbabwe for 2015. At this time, all 2015 quotes for Zimbabwe services (whether Wilderness Safaris or Associated Product) will be quoted subject to change.

### **eVisa for Visitors to Zimbabwe**

Applications for all pre-arranged Zimbabwe visas are to be processed using their online visa system. The Zimbabwe Department of Immigration will no longer accept hard copy applications. Please refer your clients to either the Zimbabwe Immigration website or the eVisa link below for further details:

<http://www.zimimmigration.gov.zw/>

<https://www.evisa.gov.zw/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

### **Limited Availability in Victoria Falls from 13 to 19 August 2014**

There is an SADC (Southern African Development Community) conference in Victoria Falls from 13 to 19 August 2014 so availability will be limited over this period in both Victoria Falls and Livingstone.

## **IMPORTANT**

### **Shumba Camp Re-classification**

When Shumba re-opens on 1 August 2014, it will be categorised as a Classic 1 camp instead of a Premier camp. The two reasons for doing this are:

- Firstly, the camp has always been priced at a Classic rate rather than a Premier rate
- Secondly, feedback received from some of our trade partners last year indicated that, despite this lower Classic-level price, the Premier classification was resulting in guest expectation of a Botswana-style experience in line with the Premier camps such as Vumbura Plains or Kings Pool

The new main area will not differ significantly from the original one, destroyed in a fire caused by lightning, and the guest experience will continue to be at the same high standards that we have always offered at Shumba. However, we do believe that reclassifying the camp as a Classic will serve all of our interests better in terms of managing guest expectation, experience and repeat business.

### **Access to Sossusvlei from the Kulala Lodges**

The Kulala access gate from our property into the national park only opens at sunrise and there are NO exceptions for earlier entry. For keen photographers wishing to photograph the dunes at sunrise, our recommendation is to stay at Sossusvlei Dune Lodge for the first night (as they do have access to the park before the gates open) and then continue to the Kulala camps for the balance of the stay.

### **Focus on Walking in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is a fantastic destination for walking - whether it is from the camps in Hwange or at Ruckomechi in Mana Pools. Our qualified walking guides will add great value to an itinerary as being on foot is one of the best ways to experience the fauna and flora, both large and small!

### **Construction at the Kazungula Ferry**

Construction is taking place at the ferry on the Zambian side, causing congestion at the border and resulting in delay – which could have a knock-on effect with flight schedules. We do not know when construction will be complete so in the interim, our recommendation is to utilise an air transfer instead between Kasane and Livingstone or vice versa.

As soon as we receive any updates, we will advise accordingly.

## **GENERAL**

### **UPDATE: US Dollars Accepted in Zambia**

The tourism industry in Zambia has welcomed the immediate revocation of statutory instruments number 55 and number 33. Implemented in 2012, they empowered the Bank of Zambia to monitor international transactions and prohibited companies from using foreign currency for domestic transactions. The revoking of SI33 means that foreign currency may be used for domestic transactions, not only Kwacha. Credit card machines in Zambia are in the process of changing back to USD, which will simplify transactions for foreign travellers.

## **BOTSWANA UPDATE**

### **Reminder – Botswana Immigration & Emergency or Temporary Passports**

Botswana Immigration do not consider travelling on holiday an emergency and will therefore not grant entry to any guest travelling on an emergency/temporary travel document. Please ensure your clients are aware of this and ensure they have the appropriate travel documentation before departing on their safari.

### **US Dollars in Botswana**

Botswana banks will accept US Dollar notes from 2007, provided they are not damaged or marked. Any US Dollar notes issued prior to 2007 however, are not accepted.

## **CONGO UPDATE**

### **Congo Visas**

Important to note is that from the time we submit the draft Letter of Invitation and relevant information, it will take a minimum of 14 days, sometimes longer, for our office to secure the official Letter of Invitation.

## **NAMIBIA UPDATE**

### **Steps & Layout at Ongava Lodge**

Built on the slopes of a hill, Ongava Lodge near Etosha has amazing views over the floodplain and waterhole. However, due to the location and design, access to the main area is via a large number of steps, the main area itself has several levels and to access the rooms and pool, further use of steps is required. Accordingly, it is not ideal for elderly guests or those with walking disabilities. Although, Little Ongava is slightly higher up on the same hill, the layout of the camp is more level, with the rooms accessed via boardwalks and the main area on one level.

### **Desert Rhino Pick-Up Times**

The pick-up times for self-drive guests booked into Desert Rhino Camp are as follows, with the pick-up point being Two Palms:

14:00 in Winter – 1 April to 31 August

15:00 in Summer – 1 September to 31 March

### **Use of Credit Cards in Namibia**

International MasterCard and Visa credit cards are generally accepted throughout Namibia. Holders of other cards are advised to clarify with a commercial bank whether their card is acceptable in Namibia, although with effect from 31 March 2014, Diners Club and Amex specifically are no longer accepted in Namibia. Some fuel filling stations will not accept credit cards as a form of payment.

## **SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE**

### **Late Arrivals at Pafuri**

Late arrivals (until 21:00) into the Kruger National Park are only allowed in the event of an emergency (proof and valid reason required). Guests must have pre-booked accommodation at certain camps within 10km from the relevant gate and a late arrival fee is charged, payable at the gate. However, for the Pafuri, Phalaborwa or Phabeni Gates (and any other gates where the camps are more than 10km away from the entrance), no late arrivals are allowed at all. All guests travelling to Pafuri to take part in the Walking Trail, must adhere to the park regulations and times. No driving after dark is permitted so to reach camp by 18:00 you will need to enter the Punda Maria and Pafuri gates no later than 16:45.

### **Pafuri Walking Trail Start & End Times**

Guests need to arrive at the rendezvous point at the Luvuvhu bridge no later than 14:00 on the day that the trail commences, and on the last day, guests are transferred back to their vehicles/transfer pick-up point at Maleteni at approximately 10:00. Please ensure that travel plans to/from the trail take this into account.

## **ZAMBIA UPDATE**

### UPDATE: Amendment to Park Fees for Fishing, Rhino Tracking & Guided Walks at Toka Leya Camp

In the April product update we advised the following:

*From 1 March 2014 and per instruction from ZAWA – the Zambian parks authority - guests staying at Toka Leya and wishing to fish will be required to pay US\$ 5.00 per person per excursion, and US\$ 10.00 per person per excursion for guided walks and/or rhino tracking. All park fees are settled direct in camp.*

Note that there has been a slight change to this - the US\$ 5.00 per person per excursion for fishing still applies, however, the US\$ 10.00 for the walking is per excursion NOT per person i.e. so 2 pax will pay US\$ 5.00 each, 4 pax will pay US\$ 2.50 each.

### Update: New Rooms at The River Club

See below for some images of the new rooms at River Club – tasteful, light and elegant with sliding glass windows. One room remains blocked off in WISH until 17 June 2014 while the conversion of all rooms is completed.



### ZIMBABWE UPDATE

#### Hwange Road Transfers

Guests travelling on a self-drive basis may not access our private concession, and will require a transfer with Wilderness Safaris to the camps. Collection from Hwange Main Camp is at 12:00 and at 13:00 from the Ngweshla picnic site, where vehicles are parked at own risk. The transfer from Hwange Main Camp to Little Makalolo or Davison's and vice versa is at additional cost. Note that there is no longer a charge for the transfer from Ngweshla picnic site to Little Makalolo or Davison's and vice versa.

### RATES UPDATE

#### Zimbabwe

2014.09	The transfer rate from Hwange Main Camp to Davisons /Little Makalolo Camp has been added to the rate sheet and notes have been updated.	29/04/2014	Page 10
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Warm regards,  
Tina

### Wilderness Product Services Manager

For further information on Wilderness product or rates, please refer to our Agent Portal or contact either myself [tinak@wilderness.co.za](mailto:tinak@wilderness.co.za) or your reservations cluster/Journey Specialist directly.

[www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com)

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