

November 2014

## NEWSFLASH

### Wilderness Air Zimbabwe INCREASES Number of Seats on Schedule

With immediate effect, we have increased the number of seats on our Zimbabwe flying schedule to 20 seats on all sectors – where previously we had either 4 or 11 seats on specific routes.

### Zambian Departure Tax Increase

The International Departure Tax has increased by US\$ 5.00, making the total amount payable **US\$ 45.00** (no longer US\$ 40.00). The total for Domestic tax remains US\$ 16.00. Paid direct at the airport when guests depart from Livingstone, Lusaka or Mfuwe Airports, the currency used may be either Kwacha or US\$. It is possible to pay by credit card (major ones such as Visa & MasterCard), however, due to potential operational or connectivity problems we recommend using cash. Travellers Cheques however, are not accepted for this purpose. Airport taxes are included by most airlines in the cost of the air ticket – and excluded on all private charters or seat in charter schedules.

### Reduction in Rates for River Club in 2015

Applicable to all new bookings, the 2015 standard chalet rates at The River Club have reduced and are now commensurate with Toka Leya.

### The Impact of Ebola

Concerns regarding Ebola and travel are front of mind for many, and understandably so. However, the article below from The Economist provides a different perspective as to the far-reaching implications this is having on the continent of Africa as a whole, and its people.

<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21632641-virus-claiming-new-victimsafrican-tourism-and-football-ignorance>

## IMPORTANT

### Festive Season Hours

The trading hours for all Wilderness Safaris Travel Shops (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Namibia, Botswana, Zambezi) between 26 November 2014 and 5 January 2015 are as follows – including additional holidays for specific offices. As always, our After Hours Service will provide assistance with any **emergencies** over these periods.

Wednesday 24 December – Closed from 1pm for Christmas Eve

Thursday 25 December – Closed for Christmas Day

Friday 26 December – Closed for Day of Goodwill (Boxing Day in some countries)

Wednesday 31 December – Closed from 1pm for New Year's Eve

Thursday 1 January 2016 – Closed for New Year's Day

Johannesburg & Cape Town (Mobile/cell: +27 82 576 9173 Email: [WSAfterHours@wilderness.co.za](mailto:WSAfterHours@wilderness.co.za)):

- Friday 28 November – Johannesburg offices closed from 12pm for year end company function
- Friday 28 November – Cape Town offices closed all day for year end company function
- Tuesday 16 December – Day of Reconciliation (South Africa), there will be a limited service available on this day

Namibia (Mobile/cell: +264 81 124 3066):

- Friday 28 November – Closed due to Namibian Elections
- Tuesday 10 December – Closed for International Human Rights Day

Zambezi (Mobile/cell: +263 712 456 557 Email: [tours@wilderness.co.zw](mailto:tours@wilderness.co.zw)):

- Monday 22 December – Closed for Unity Day

## GENERAL

### Documents on the New Information Centre

- Wildlife Viewing & Weather Information: providing details on fishing, game and bird viewing patterns plus weather conditions in our areas of operation, these updated documents are found under Product Information,

FAQ.

- Pre-tour Information: regular changes are made as and when there are developments at our camps or in the regions in which we operate. Please always refer to the copies available on the Information Centre as the most current and up to date version.
- Tipping Guidelines for 2015: our tipping guidelines remain the same for next year as they were in 2014.

## **WILDERNESS AIR**

### **Excess Luggage Costs**

Please refer to the General Information Manual and country specific Rates Sheets for details on booking and charging for excess luggage on our scheduled circuits.

## **BOTSWANA**

### **Reminder - Activities at Kalahari Plains**

The walking option available at Kalahari Plains is a guided Bushman walk in close proximity to the camp, led by camp staff members who are descendants of the San Bushmen. Other activities on offer include morning and afternoon game drives, day trips with picnic lunch to Deception Valley and star-bed sleep-outs. Night drives are not an option as the camp is located in a National Park. After receiving some much-needed rain, the area is sprouting beautiful green grass and the wildlife is arriving en masse, so it is going to a very productive summer season in the Kalahari!

### **Update – Researchers at Seba Camp**

We no longer have elephant researchers permanently based in the Seba concession. Interaction with wildlife researchers (not specifically elephants) is possible if they are in the area, however, we can no longer guarantee this as an "activity". All requests are therefore subject to availability.

### **Queen Sylvia Barge Currently Unavailable**

Due to the low water levels in the Linyanti, it has become increasingly difficult to operate the Queen Sylvia barge. Until such time as the water levels rise, the Queen Sylvia cannot be offered as an activity from Kings Pool.

### **No Mokoros at Little Tubu & Tubu Tree**

Due to low water levels in the channels and a prevalence of large crocodiles in the area, we have temporarily stopped mokoro activities from Tubu Tree and Little Tubu.

## **NAMIBIA**

### **Update on Skeleton Coast Excursion from Hoanib**

As previously advised, this activity is subject to weather conditions - in particular, the coastal fog. The excursion may be cancelled entirely, have the departure delayed until the fog lifts or occasionally cut short if the fog rolls in fast from the coast. In all instances, the pilot reserves the right to make a decision accordingly as safety of all is paramount. There are some operational parameters to be borne in mind too, the logistics of which are managed by the Operations team on the ground:

- There are 2 vehicles available at the coast – 1 x 5 seater and 1 x 8 seater giving a total of 13 seats. Accounting for the Hoanib guide and 2 drivers, we only have 10 seats available for guests. **The Skeleton Coast Excursion is therefore limited to 10 people per day.**
- The standard aircraft based at Skeleton Coast is a Cessna 210 (carrying 5). Two trips will be required to accommodate the maximum of 10 guests at one time.
- When possible, Wilderness Air will use a Caravan to take parties larger than 5 to the coast, avoiding the back to back flights.
- On those occasions where guests cannot fly in the morning due to the fog, the camp will take guests to the coast by vehicle (depending on sightings and guests, this takes 3 – 4 hours). The plane will fly in later to collect guests and will do a scenic flight with them on the way back to camp.
- It is possible to drive back if flying is not an option. This is a long day however, some guests have really enjoyed the experience.

### **Airport Lounge at Windhoek International**

A great value-add to our Namibian offering is the Wilderness Safaris Airport Lounge at Hosea Kutako International Airport. Our guests are taken care of by a dedicated team and have exclusive use of the Lounge facilities – making arrivals, departures and lay-overs a more pleasant experience.

- Open 7 Days a week, including Public Holidays and the Festive Season, from half an hour before the first International flight arrival until after the last International flight arrival in the evening
- Complimentary WiFi and a computer is available for use
- Luggage can be stored (for Wilderness Safaris guests only)

Duties of the Airport Lounge Representatives:

- Welcome all Wilderness Safaris guests who transit through Hosea Kutako International Airport on a complimentary basis.
- At a cost, provide a full Meet & Greet service as required (possible in French and German too). Booking a Meet & Greet is imperative for all self-drives as the staff on duty will go through the full itinerary and routing, providing tips regarding driving conditions and information relevant for each program.
- Where possible, check all car rentals before guests arrival to eliminate any last minute problems.
- Check transfers and liaise with transfer companies accordingly.
- Follow up with the airlines regarding lost luggage and ensure the airlines deliver the bag/s to the next destination.
- Host departing guests in the Lounge and assist them with check-in.
- Assist Wilderness Air with the weighing of luggage and preparation of correct luggage before pilot arrives (the Lounge is a sales point of Wilderness branded bags).
- Store luggage in the facilities provided in the Lounge. Due to limited space, we can only store luggage for guests who have booked their full Namibian itinerary with Wilderness Safaris
- Offer a VIP service (must be pre-booked) for VIP guests or elderly guests with a lot of luggage, which gives the staff member access the apron so that they can assist the pilot.

### **Wilderness Air Namibia and Serra Cafema**

When planning itineraries, we would recommend you book Serra Cafema for 3 nights for the best possible guest experience. Due to the Wilderness Air Namibia arrival time of 14:10 at the Serra Cafema Airstrip, and a departure time of 09:30 – plus a minimum 1 hour transfer between camp and airstrip – guests on a 2 night stay will only really have 1 full day in camp, and may therefore only participate in 2 activities.

### **Boating Activity at Serra Cafema**

Low water levels on the Kunene river are having an impact on the boating activity. Subject to sluice gate openings upriver at Ruacana – some days the boat trips are shorter while on others, it is not offered at all as we do not wish to endanger guests nor damage the boats. The camp will make the decision on the day and advise guests in camp accordingly.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Chef Bruce Robertson**

Renown in the South African food industry, Chef Bruce Robertson passed away very suddenly earlier this month. Alternative arrangements have been made for guests that were booked at his restaurant The Flagship. The Peninsula tour with The Flagship has been discontinued, while our standard Peninsula tour with preferred restaurants continues to operate.

## **SEYCHELLES**

### **North Island – New Boats & Excursions**

The arrival of two new boats at North Island presents guests with the opportunity to explore the Seychelles archipelago. Full-day activities include: visits to the main island of Mahé with its colourful, bustling capital Victoria, where French, British and Creole influences merge into the unique Seychellois way of life; the natural wonders of Vallée de Mai on Praslin Island, once thought to be the Garden of Eden and home to the unique coco de mer; the laid-back retreat of La Digue with its stunning beaches and narrow bicycle paths; or the bird-watching paradises of Cousin and Aride islands. Active excursions include deep-sea fishing off the continental shelf, advanced wreck diving, and golf on Praslin's unique beachside PGA-approved 18-hole course. Activities are tailor-made to suit guest requirements and include all food and beverages.

## **ZAMBIA**

### **Reminder – 2015 Zambezi Region Packages & Specials**

- Rovos Rail plus Hwange or Livingstone
- Complimentary Ballooning on the Busanga Plains, available as an activity from August to October only
- Complimentary private guide in Zimbabwe
- 50% flying on minimum 3 night stays at Wilderness camps in Zimbabwe
- Six Countries until 31 March 2015

### **Update - Lusaka/Chirundu Transfer**

We received reports this year regarding the poor condition of the road between Lusaka and Chirundu, and longer travelling times. Road works have been underway on this route for some time and Lusaka does have a traffic congestion problem, especially when travelling through the city. These road works are almost complete - including a new "circle" road, which will allow one to drive around Lusaka to the airport, and not through it. We are hopeful that road works and traffic issues should be greatly reduced by the time the new Ruckomechi season starts in May 2015.

## **ZIMBABWE**

### **New Victoria Falls Airport**

The building of the new Victoria Falls Airport is progressing well. The new runways (capable of handling all size of aircraft) should be complete by the end of 2014, with the new terminal building scheduled for completion in July 2015. Various international airlines have expressed interest in adding Victoria Falls to their schedules, while SAA and Comair have committed to larger aircraft and added frequency.

### **Viewing the Victoria Falls**

The Zambian side of the Falls starts drying up around September and levels remain low until the rains start in December. During this period, it is recommended that all guests staying on the Zambian side of the Falls are given the option of adding a Tour of the Falls on the Zimbabwe side. Note that this is at additional cost and will require the necessary visa entry for Zimbabwe – until the new “Univisa” is operational. Levels rise between January and March, reaching a peak around April/May. The best months to view the Falls are probably June and July – there is less spray than at its peak but still an impressive amount of water coming over.

### **New Restaurant to Open in Victoria Falls**

Operated by Wild Horizons, “The Bistro On The Edge” is located at the current Wild Horizons ‘Lookout’ jump site, on the edge of the Batoka Gorge, overlooking the Victoria Falls Bridge. Scheduled to open on 31 December, it will offer breakfast, lunch and a cocktail menu. The Wild Horizons activities, such as the Gorge Swing and Victoria Falls Canopy Tour, will continue to operate from the same location, enabling jumpers and their travel companions to enjoy modern, Mediterranean cuisine and drinks while watching the activities, and enjoying free WiFi plus live acoustic musicians.

### **“Swimming under the Falls”**

*Swimming in the rock pools below the Falls, surrounded by the massive black basaltic rock towering up above you and the water cascading down, seemingly out of the sky, is an unforgettable experience!* This new activity is possible 3 times per day at 9:30, 12:30 and 14:30, or in combination with Full and Half Day White Water Rafting excursions, done on the same day just before rafting starts. Contact your Journey Specialist for further details.

## **AIRLINES**

### **Air Botswana - 2015/16 IT Fares**

The Air Botswana 2015/16 Inclusive Tour Airfares have not increased when compared to the 2014/15 Inclusive Tour Airfares.

### **Air Zimbabwe & Departure Taxes**

Tickets issued by Air Zimbabwe from 1 November 2014, no longer include the PSC and AIDF taxes, and passengers will have to pay these directly at Harare, Kariba and Victoria Falls Airports.

International - Passenger Service Charge	US\$ 35.00
International – Aviation Infrastructure Development Fund	<u>US\$ 15.00</u>
Total	US\$ 50.00
Domestic - Passenger Service Charge	US\$ 10.00
Domestic – Aviation Infrastructure Development Fund	<u>US\$ 5.00</u>
Total	US\$ 15.00

### **Condor spreads its wings in Namibia**

Operating twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays, German leisure carrier, Condor, has launched flights between Frankfurt and Windhoek.

## **RATES UPDATE**

### **Seychelles 2014**

2014.03	Meet & Greet loaded/updated for new season	27/10/14	Page 2
2014.04	Helicopter loaded/updated for new season	27/10/14	Page 3

### **South Africa 2014**

2014.07	Pafuri Walking Trail has been removed from the rate sheets	03/11/14	Page 5
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### **Zimbabwe 2014**

2014.11	Note added that from 16 November 2014, 20 seats are allocated to the schedule, 7 days a week.	29/10/2014	Page 8
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### **Seychelles 2015**

2015.01	Meet & Greet loaded/updated for new season	27/10/14	Page 2
2015.02	Helicopter loaded/updated for new season	27/10/14	Page 3

### South Africa 2015

2015.02	Road transfer from Tembe to Rocktail added	24/10/14	Page 3
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### Zambia 2015

2015.02	The River Club standard rates have reduced for 2015	21/11/14	Pages 1 & 4
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### Zimbabwe 2015

2015.04	Note added for departure taxes	30/10/2014	Page 4
2015.05	Note added 20 seats are allocated to the schedule, 7 days a week. Additional seats may be possible – on a request basis.	30/10/2014	Page 7

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Warm regards,  
Tina

### Wilderness Product Services Manager

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For further information on Wilderness product or rates, please refer to the Information Centre on the Wilderness Window 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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