

MEDIA RELEASE – 1 December 2003

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SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS TO ADJUST CHILDREN'S AGE LIMIT FOR ITS TOURISM PRODUCTS

SOUTH African National Parks is to amend the age limit on its pricing system for children – in line with the tourism industry standards and norms. The new age limit thresholds come into effect on 1 November 2004.

In terms of the revised policy, as from 1 November 2004, all persons under the age of 12 will pay children's fees on accommodation and selected activities such as game drives (other activities such as walks and wilderness trails in parks with dangerous game do not permit children). Persons aged 12 and above will be subject to the standard fees charged for such activities or additional person rates on accommodation units.

Although this means there is no change on activities, it is a departure from the existing rules for additional persons in accommodation, where persons under the age of 16 pay the children's rate.

All current bookings for children will not be affected by this revised system.

SANParks Director of Tourism Glenn Phillips said the organisation has been under pressure from the tourism sector to conform to established industry standards and norms.

"Where possible the organisation tries to accommodate such norms. However some standards require a departure from what the public may have become accustomed to over the years.

"In standardising and moving the threshold to the industry norm of under-12, SANParks is also looking at the consumptive impact such an individual has on accommodation and activities," said Phillips.

He added that because SANParks was moving away from an established practice over many years, the organisation was giving over 11 months notice and would only apply this revised age category from 1 November 2004.

Phillips said: "While it is our intention to attract families to national parks, and reducing the age threshold for children could impact on this, we also have to look at best business practice. The anomalies of SANParks rules have alienated us from the tourism sector in the past."

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Issued by:

Lulama Luti
Manager: Media Liaison and PR
South African National Parks
Tel: (012) 426-5203 or 082-746-3529
E-mail: lulamal@parks-sa.co.za

Enquiries:

Wanda Mkutshulwa
Head: Communications
South African National Parks
Tel: 012-426-5201 or 082-908-2692
E-mail: wandam@parks-sa.co.za