

Media Release - 12 July 2001

Kruger First Quarter Tourism Stats Tell a Different Story

Despite all the negative publicity and accusations of poor service standards in the Kruger National Park, the park's tourism statistics for the first quarter of the year (April-May-June 2001) paint the picture of a destination still very popular among nature lovers. According to the figures, which were released by the park authorities last week, the following trends have emerged:

1. The accumulated unit occupancy is up 10.6%, from 60.1% for the previous year to 66.5% currently. The camp with the best unit occupancy was Tamboti tent camp, with a 97.2% occupancy for the month of June alone.
2. The accumulated figures for bed occupancy figures were up by 11.8% from 49.0% to 54.8%. The best bed occupancy for June is Letaba tents phase 2 with 92.9%.
3. The cumulative figures for campsite occupancy were up by 30.5% from 51.8% to 67.6%. The best campsite occupancy for June was Letaba with 100%.
4. The cumulative figures for Admissions are up by 16.7% from 183 174 persons to 213 727 persons. The number of foreign visitors was up by 23.9% compared to the same period last year.

These figures show that the Kruger Park is in actual fact in good shape when compared to the hotel industry. Key trading statistics for this industry released by Statistics SA for April 2001 revealed that room occupancy is down from 52% in April 2000 to 51.9%. Bed occupancy is also down 0.8% from 36.5% to 36.2% for the comparable period.

According to Richard Willys, the SANParks Director for Marketing and Tourism Development, the Kruger results indicate that the public still perceives the park to be value for money from both accommodation and visitor experience points of view. *"We are very encouraged by these figures and we hope to achieve an even better performance now that the park has been restructured into a more efficient and cost effective operation"*, Willys said.

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[\[back\]](#) [\[top\]](#)