

## MEDIA RELEASE - 28 October 2002

### KRUGER NATIONAL PARK GEARS FOR THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

PREPARATIONS at the Kruger National Park for the December 4 total eclipse of the sun are already at an advanced stage and bookings for this event have been received from local as well as international visitors.

Shingwedzi camp in the northern part of Kruger National Park is among the areas in Limpopo Province that are situated in the 100 percent dark zone of the eclipse which will last about 90 seconds.

A total of **2 302 day visitors' permits** have already been sold to members of the public. Phalaborwa, Pafuri and Punda Maria gates will open earlier than normal on December 4. While Phalaborwa will open at 02:30, Pafuri will open at 03:00 and Punda Maria at 04:00.

This will provide guests with Day Visitors' permits enough time to travel to the viewing sites for this historical occasion. However day visitors without permits will only be allowed entry at the normal opening time.

The day visitors' permits have to be purchased in advance at a cost of R50 for adults and R35 for children and these prices are only applicable for the December 4 eclipse event. In other words tourists who will enter the park during normal times will not pay these special tariffs, but the usual R30 and R15 for adults and children respectively. Accommodation in the normal rest camps is already fully booked. An additional 350 sites had been made available to house more visitors and only a few of these are still available.

These sites are only for camping and clients must provide their own camping equipment. Details on these sites and further information on bookings are available at the South African National Parks' reservations office on (012) 428-9111.

Three viewing sites have been identified within the 100 percent dark zone, where people will be allowed to alight from their vehicles and watch the eclipse under the protection of armed Rangers. These are Dzombo, on the southern part of Shingwedzi River, and Boyela and Nwarihangari on the northern side of the river.

Members of the public in possession of the Impala Permit are advised that the permit will not be valid for entry into the park on December 4 before the normal opening time.

*All persons staying within the Kruger or visiting during the week preceding and including the 4<sup>th</sup> December are invited to attend presentations highlighting the ethnic and indigenous aspects of the solar eclipse. These presentations will include 2 afternoon sessions with an evening session dedicated to stargazing. The presentation dates are:*

- *Skukuza – 26 & 27 November,*
- *Satara – 28 & 29 November,*
- *Letaba – 1 & 2 December,*
- *Shingwedzi – 3 & 4 December.*

*Solar Eclipse viewers' **glasses** will be available at a nominal cost at various outlets throughout the Kruger.*

***PLEASE REMEMBER:** Without suitable eye-protection NEVER LOOK AT THE SUN.*

\*\*\* Ends\*\*\*

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