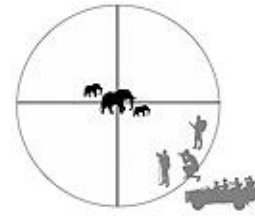




in
collaboration
with
**LOWER ZAMBEZI
TOUR OPERATORS
ASSOCIATION**



CHITAKE SPRING CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VISITORS

Welcome to a wild and fragile part of Mana Pools National Park and World Heritage Site. All visitors to Chitake Spring are expected to respect the honoured status of this special place and to uphold the highest ethics with respect to its wilderness and wildlife values.

Due to its fragile nature and concentrated source of water, Chitake is NOT designed as a drive-to-view experience. There is only one road from the river crossing, past “the fig tree” and on to the sacred hill of baobabs. Your experience must be restricted to this road, to skilled and respectful walking and /or remaining in your camp.

Treat all the animals and the secluded and tranquil environment of Chitake with the utmost respect. Rather forgo a sought-after photograph than disrupt the natural behaviour of the targeted animal(s). Never support the practice of encouraging lions to mock-charge.

Please note that to protect and preserve this pristine wilderness a number of rules and regulations have been in force for many years via the Parks and Wildlife Act (General Regulations). In addition, this CODE OF CONDUCT, compiled by ZimParks and stakeholders, is designed to enhance every visitor’s experience during their stay. Please ensure that ALL the members in your party are aware of its content.

Breach of the park rules will lead to: a fine of up to \$1,000, being banned from the park and/or having your vehicle impounded. So please read on! Ignorance will not be a mitigating factor.

We wish you a relaxing and enjoyable stay.

GENERAL

- 1) Chitake Spring is a walking, sitting and viewing tourist experience. Game viewing is not meant to take place by driving around, and off-road driving will be heavily penalised.
- 2) In the dry season this is the only water for many kilometres and animals come to the Spring stressed and thirsty. Be patient, respect the animals’ space, give them right of way, allow them to approach, drink and retire undisturbed. This will often require a selfless attitude. Avoid crowding or surrounding animals. All observers should watch from the same viewing quadrant (preferably downwind) - see the following diagram:-

- 3) Photographic parties are required to adhere to all the above demands to respect animals’ space. Note that Commercial Photography is ONLY allowed with a valid Permit from ZimParks.
- 4) The registered tour operators have agreed to adhere to a high stand of ethical guiding. Please do not pressure them to breach agreed protocols. They, and members of the public are entitled, by law, to report anyone who breaks the rules to the park authorities.
- 5) You can only be at Chitake if you hold a valid booking for one of the camp sites. Adjacent concessions are not permitted at Chitake, nor is drive-through game viewing without a booking.
- 6) Refrain from any behaviour likely to disturb wildlife or other park users. Do not encroach on other visitor groups. Do not enter campsites for which you do not have a booking.
- 7) Walking entirely at your own risk is allowed, but only with a permit purchased at the entry gate. It is strongly recommended that those without considerable experience with wildlife do not walk. Rather hire a guide.
- 8) Feeding of animals or birds is strictly prohibited. This includes the enticing of animals using natural, locally available foods.
- 9) Game-driving at night is prohibited. Spotlights can only be used if fitted with infrared filters
- 10) No generators are allowed.
- 11) Do not tamper with the Spring by digging holes.
- 12) Note that all plants, animals and soils are protected and cannot be removed from the park. This includes firewood, feathers, seeds & seed pods, fruits, bones, teeth, horns, skins, flowers, insects, cultural artefacts etc.
- 13) Any commercial safari activities within the park must be conducted by a registered Mana Pools Tour Operator.
- 14) All firearms must be declared on entry to the park and (unless carried by tour operators licensed for this park, or their guides) must be handed in or sealed at the Park office at Marongora.

FIRES & FIREWOOD

- 15) We encourage the use of gas to preserve firewood. Dead trees form a haven or food source for many species in the wild. Note that it is prohibited to collect your own firewood from the surrounding area. All firewood must be purchased at the Nyakasikana Gate. If you must use wood, please keep your fire size to minimum. For the benefit of those who come after you, please dispose of the ash from your fire by burying it.
- 16) Use the long drop provided for your toiletry purposes. Please report any untidy camp sites at Nyakasikana Gate. Take a date/time picture as proof to show Parks staff.

CODE OF CONDUCT AT CAMP SITES

- 17) Be considerate to other visitors by leaving your camp site in the condition in which you would like to find it i.e. FREE of litter, ash and toilet paper. Dispose of ash from your fire by burying it carefully or removing it from the Park. Do not put soil or ash into the "long-drops." Do not bury litter as honey badgers and hyenas will unearth it. Take it out of the park for safe disposal.
- 18) Drinking water and water for washing should have been brought in with you. No water should be collected from the Spring.
- 19) Music or radios can only be played through earphones/headphones (so as not to create disturbance). No speakers. No rowdy behaviour.

LITTER

- 20) A CARRY IN CARRY OUT policy applies. ALL non-biodegradable waste must be removed from the park. Do not bury litter as honey badgers and hyenas will unearth it. It is not unreasonable to request that "what you brought in you must take out". You may be required to show your CARRY OUT litter at the exit gate. Failure to do so will result in a \$100 fine.
- 21) If you see any litter in the park, please assist by picking it up for safe disposal.
- 22) Dispose of your litter outside the park ONLY at a designated bin in one of the TOWNS that you pass through. DO NOT use roadside or lay-by bins as these are seldom emptied.

OFF-ROAD DRIVING

- 23) No driving off road under any circumstances. Only drive on designated/graded roads and DO NOT FOLLOW other people's off-road tracks – you are not entitled to break the law as they have.
- 24) The road along the East of the Spring is strictly for Parks staff use only. Using the road for game

viewing is extremely disruptive to wildlife needing to access the Spring.

- 25) Absolutely NO driving in riverbeds except at designated crossing points.
- 26) If you get stuck in sand at a river crossing and are recovered, fill in any holes you may have made.

OFFROAD DRIVING IS TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY. IF FOUND DRIVING OFF-ROAD OR IN RIVERBEDS, YOU WILL BE LIABLE TO HAVE YOUR VEHICLE IMPOUNDED UNTIL SETTLEMENT OF A FINE AND YOU MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE PARK.

ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

- 27) You can be of great assistance to park management if you report any illegal activities. In the event of off-road driving, note vehicle details i.e. colour, make, registration number and the location where this occurred. Where possible take a time/dated photograph for proof.
- 28) All registered tour operators act as an intermediary for ZimParks so feel free to report any suspicious activities or incidents to them and they will guide you or take appropriate action.
- 29) If you hear any shots please report to ZimParks giving the time and an estimated location.
- 30) The use of drones is prohibited unless you have a permit. All drones to be declared at the reception.
- 31) No unregistered communication radios are to be used in the Park except in an emergency.
- 32) No recorded sounds are to be used to attract predators.
- 33) Foreign tour operators/guides can only operate under the permit of a local Mana Pools operator.

NOTE that persons contravening any of the above regulations WILL BE SUBJECT TO ONE OR A RANGE OF THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES: a fine of up to US\$ 1,000; impoundment of your vehicle; instruction to leave the Park, which will also include a ban on entering any other National Park in Zimbabwe for 12 months. Your full details will be entered on a data base which will be held at national level.

Please be advised that due to an increase in insensitive behaviour by certain persons in recent years, which has impacted on wildlife as well as visitor experiences, ZimParks and concerned stakeholders will now pursue compliance of the park rules and this CODE OF CONDUCT with renewed determination.