

Punda Maria Camp, Kruger National Park - Access for the Mobility Impaired

Punda Maria is the most northerly SANParks run camp in Kruger National Park. It is in a unique part of the park, habitat wise – and there are plant and animal species that are only found in the surrounding area and nowhere else in the park. It is particularly popular with birders. The rest camp itself is an old one and the original bungalows date back to the 1930s and consequently have national monument status. The camp is best accessed through Punda Maria Gate 8km from camp. All in all the camp has 31 units and 40 campsites. Punda Maria has a charm like no other camp in the park and for many people is a firm favourite and the Mahonie Loop, short drive to Thulamila windmill and the drive to Pafuri are always popular and rewarding drives.



A

Guests staying at the camp must first check in at reception, which with the camp's hillside location is above the parking area (C). There are ramps leading to the reception (B), with the initial part quite steep. The restaurant (A & D) and shop (E) are both in the same complex as reception and are both fairly accessible to wheelchair users.



E



B



C



D

Accessible Accommodation: Unfortunately the original bungalows, quaint as they are, are not wheelchair accessible, but elsewhere in the camp there is one safari tent and one family cottage that are adapted to cater for wheelchair guests. The camping ablutions can be entered in a wheelchair, but there are no adaptations for guests with mobility impairment.

The **Accessible Family Cottage** (below left) can sleep 6 people. The unit has ramped access. There are 3 bedrooms (one upstairs) and 2 bathrooms, one of which is converted for use by guests with mobility difficulties. This bathroom contains a toilet with grab rails and a roll-in shower with a height adjustable, detachable shower. A support grab rail needs to be inserted in the shower on the side wall. The unit has an open plan kitchen and a lounge with DSTV.

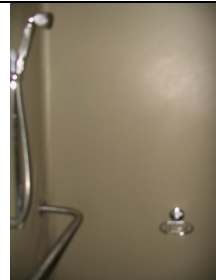




The **Safari Tents** are located up the hill past the reception/restaurant block and the accessible one (ST2Z) is unit 1. The tents' provide an excellent view and are set in the surrounding indigenous bush. The unit's parking is adequate for wheelchairs and access into the unit is via a wooden ramp. The unit's veranda is open plan and accessible with a fridge, a table and chairs, a sink, hotplate stove and braai facility. The tents bedroom chamber has comfortable beds of a good height for transfer and with sufficient space alongside. There is a ceiling fan and arm-chair in the unit and the wardrobe space is open and accessible



The unit's toilet has grab rails beside and behind the toilet, which has a basin within reach, but the rail on the side wall is below the height of the toilet seat making it redundant as a transfer aid.



The unit's shower has a hump over the door frame that is difficult to negotiate unaided in a wheelchair. Then there is no fold-down seat to transfer onto forcing wheelchair users to shower in their chair. There are grab rails and a height adjustable, detachable shower, but the layout must be reconfigured to make it genuinely accessible.

Other Camp Facilities and Activities:

Guided Game Drives (wheelchair users will have to be lifted on and off the vehicle). Punda Maria also has fuel, a swimming pool (not easily accessed), and a hide with a ramp (rather steep), but once inside there are gaps where chairs can view from.

