

SANParks announces dates for SA National Parks Week

In line with its vision statement of 'A sustainable National Park System Connecting Society', South African National Parks' (SANParks), in partnership with Total SA and FNB, will open its 12th SA National Parks Week at Golden Gate Highlands National Park from 18 to 22 September 2017.



Pavel Špindler via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Golden Gate Highlands National Park

Since its inception in 2006, National Parks Week, under the theme 'Know Your National Parks', has seen an influx of over 286,935 day visitors in all participating parks. SANParks Chief Executive Officer, Fundisile Mketeni says that the idea of a national parks focus week is a worldwide campaign. "The week was established in a bid to cultivate a sense of pride in South Africa's natural, cultural and historical heritage, protected by the national parks system."

The week grants free access to most of the 21 national parks for day visitors, especially people from the local communities. It should be noted that free access to parks does not include free access to accommodation facilities and other tourist activities. Some of the parks will be extending the week to include the weekend with individual park dates to be announced soon.

Survival of SA's natural and cultural heritage is everyone's responsibility

SA National Parks Week has proved to be a successful campaign in terms of education and awareness on conservation issues. "The survival of the South African national parks system and our natural and cultural heritage lies in the people of South Africa. Environmental education and protection are the responsibility of everyone, not just a privileged few," said Mketeni.

All of the parks managed by SANParks excluding Namaqua National Park and Boulders Penguin Colony in Table Mountain National Park will be participating in the initiative to give the public an understanding of the role that SANParks plays as custodian of the country's natural heritage. The excluded parks will apply normal entry tariffs, as they have been declared non-participants in the free access scheme, due to the seasonality of their product offering.

"If we are to create a sense of ownership of the natural heritage of South Africa in all South Africans, then all South Africans must be able to have access to such. We especially want our young people to take advantage of this opportunity because this heritage will be under their protection in the near future," concluded Mketeni.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>