

Limpopo Tented Camp, Mapungubwe National Park - Access for Guests with Mobility Challenges

Limpopo Tented Camp is a small 7-tent camp in the Western Section of Mapungubwe National Park. The camp is set in the tall riverine trees of the Limpopo River. One of the tents (number 3) is adapted to be accessible to guests with mobility challenges. The camp is a birder's paradise and the cacophony of sound during the dawn chorus is breathtaking. The camp is also regularly visited by several smaller mammals such as tree squirrels, bushbuck, monkey and baboon. The baboons are a major threat and visitors must take great care to ensure their belongings (particularly food) are safe from theft. Leopards are also known to enter the camp, so caution is required at all times.



The designated shaded parking area (shown above) is supported by wooden poles, but because it is an open structure there is sufficient space for a wheelchair to disembark on either side of the vehicle. The area is well trampled and mostly devoid of thorns, but it is bare earth and after rains the parking area and the route to the tent entrance then gets muddy. The route while firm is also quite uneven until one gets to the entrance gate where a shallow paved ramp has been provided. At the entrance a concrete ramp has been provided with the appropriate gradient. This has now been inserted deep below the external ground level as erosion was a big issue when the unit was first built, but now the access ramp is of a suitable gradient with no rain induced step.



The other side of the unit's entrance leads into the unit's boma area where residents can braai. The braai is accessible from all sides in a spacious open area. A concrete ramp similar to the one linking the unit with the exterior has been laid into this boma clearing. Previously soft sand and erosion after periods of heavy rain was a problem, but the area is now more wheelchair accessible.





If one turns immediately right at the entrance gate one is led up a wooden ramp onto the unit's deck area that joins the bedroom chambers and the open plan kitchen. The ramp may be a little steep for some people, but for most should present no problem for self propulsion. The kitchen area (not shown clearly here) is open plan and the sink is fitted with lever taps to aid those with limited hand control. The area (like the bedroom chambers) is secured by a zip down canvas tent wall. Wheelchair users will require assistance to pin this open when the unit is occupied, but when away from the unit occupants will need zip things up securely as the local baboons are very mischievous and always on the prowl for opportunities to raid food and other possessions.

The bedroom chambers like the kitchen is secured by a zipped up canvas wall. Wheelchair users will need assistance to pin these open should they so desire. The bedroom consists of 2 single beds, an door-less cupboard, a ceiling fan and a small table and 2 chairs. This table is a bit low for wheelchair use, but the one on the deck is suitable with sufficient clearance.



The unit's en-suite ablutions are pretty comfortable for wheelchair users. The toilet is free-standing, so it has been equipped with a wall to floor grab rail. The basin is sadly out of reach from the toilet, but has plenty of clearance underneath and a well positioned mirror. The taps on the basin are turn taps and not lever style. In the roll-in shower however there is a push lever mixer, a fold down seat and an adjustable shower head on a sliding rail. A 2nd grab rail (straight or cranked) needs to be inserted horizontally below the mixer to assist transfer and stability.



All in all Limpopo Tented Camp is a hidden jewel in SANParks. For campers there is also Mazhou Campsite (1 km away) which has wheelchair accessible ablutions. The nearby Maloutswa Hide (3km from camp) is a must. It is not currently the most wheelchair accessible hides, as the viewing slots are too high and the pathway can be very muddy in the rainy season and has a rough latté bridge, but the hide has a constant stream of game and when in flood a plethora of birdlife. Leopard, bushpig and sizeable elephant herds are regularly seen. The plain crossed to get to the hide offers great game too, including jackal, elephant, zebra, warthog and various antelope.