



P.O. Box 202
The Craggs
6602
South Africa

Tel : 044-5348170
Fax : 044-5348170
Cell : 082-4144416
082-4861515

Email : info@tenikwa.co.za
Web : www.tenikwa.co.za

Date: 6 June 2017

Tenikwa Wildlife Rehabilitation and Awareness Centre Response to Video posted on social media.

“Cheetah Bites/Attacks Guide @ Tenikwa”

Firstly, we Tenikwa Wildlife Rehabilitation and Awareness Centre want to apologize to all our supporters and the public that viewed the video posted online.

The action portrayed in this clip by a Tenikwa guide is completely and utterly unacceptable and against our principals, philosophy and policies hence the action taken from our Management team.

On 18 May 2017 a Junior Tenikwa tour guide neglected his training and broke company protocols by entering a cheetah enclosure without a senior/second guide. He entered the enclosure with the intent to feed 2 of our cheetahs. Our Safety and Tour protocols clearly state that anyone entering a cheetah enclosure should call for a backup /senior guide and wait for them to arrive before proceeding, which the guide in question neglected to do. According to witnesses that were outside the enclosure, "our guide proceeded to feed the cheetahs and at no point did he provoke or attempt to intimidate the cats". He placed a bowl of food down for the first cheetah, in the separate cheetah feeding area, and then turned to commence and feed the second cheetah. He turned his back toward the first cheetah and according to reports from witnesses the first Cheetah got up and engaged the guide by grabbing him and biting onto his lower leg.

Assistance was called, staff reacted to the scene. A senior guide entered the enclosure to assist the junior guide. According to witness reports the cheetah then let go of the junior guide and reacted towards the second guide, as can be seen on the video footage posted. The junior guide then grabbed the cheetah by his left hind leg, swung it around and proceeded to mock kick the cheetah. (Fortunately he did NOT kick the cheetah)

The junior guide's reaction to the cheetah and continued behaviour, as portrayed on the video footage was completely unacceptable and will never be tolerated at Tenikwa. The details of the incident, including this junior guide's reaction to the cheetah, only came to our Management's attention when the incident investigation process was initiated the same day.

*Come with an open mind
Tread with a lighter step
Leave with a change of heart*

It need be reiterated that there were no guests in the enclosure when the incident occurred, neither are guests allowed to enter enclosures when animals are being fed. This cheetah is also not part of any tourism related program at Tenikwa. He is a very strong and dominant, 65kg intact male, and we respect him for that.

Irrespective of the junior guide`s unacceptable actions, he was transported by the Tenikwa team to Hospital to get his wounds treated. He then also decided to leave the Hospital without receiving treatment. We started a formal inquiry that same day and took witness statements from the visitors that witnessed the event and then from our staff that was involved in assisting and witnessed the incident.

During the inquiry it came to our attention that the guide in question compromised himself and the company by not following his training and not implementing company safety protocols. It also came to our attention that he acted out towards the cat after the cheetah disengaged as seen on the footage. We continued the incident investigation and started a formal inquiry leading to disciplinary steps. The guide resigned from Tenikwa before the formal inquiry and disciplinary steps could proceed further. Tenikwa Wildlife Rehabilitation and Awareness Centre will not tolerate abuse of any of our animals. We were shocked when the footage came to light but know that we implemented the correct procedures of investigation and can assure that the footage portrayed in the video was a result of an irresponsible reaction and due to company policy being broken by a junior guide who is no longer part of our team.

It need be mentioned that all staff who witnessed the incident made it clear in their statements that they found the junior guide`s actions unacceptable. When the video was posted on the 5th of June on social media, the content confirmed the statements of our staff and supported the Disciplinary Actions taken by management, including suspending the junior guide until the Official Inquiry was to be conducted. The junior guide resigned from our service on the 22nd of May 2017 before the Official Inquiry was to be finalised.

We would like to highlight that none of our programs at Tenikwa allow any tourist initiated interactions with our Cats.

Kind Regards

Tenikwa Wildlife Rehabilitation and Awareness Centre Team

*Come with an open mind
Tread with a lighter step
Leave with a change of heart*