



## **Animal Interaction Policy**

This policy sets out the general guidelines for humans interacting with animals in Gondwana Park Zoo. Each section of the zoo will have its own policies and procedures specific to the needs and requirements of the species represented. Each person who comes into contact with those species must abide by the section guidelines and, where there is any doubt, defer to the qualified professionals working in that section for assistance.

### **Animal-human contact**

There is a high level of risk associated with animal-human contact such as touching, holding, stroking, feeding or taking photographs with animals. Due to the highly unpredictable nature of wild animals, humans risk personal injury and safety. Animals are also susceptible to injury and have their safety compromised if they are mishandled. Both humans and animals are prone to zoonoses, the transmission of disease between animals and humans.

As a result of these risks, animal and human contact should be avoided at all times, unless under the direction and supervision of a qualified professional such as a keeper. In such instances, the interaction period should be strictly limited and there should be strict hygiene and safety controls in place to ensure the welfare of both the human and the animal. Public feeding shall not be allowed (unless under the direction and supervision of a keeper at a specific event) because this can have a severely detrimental affect on the nutritional requirements and behaviours of the animal.

### **Safety to staff and visitors**

Animal enclosures shall be maintained to the highest possible standard to ensure minimal human-animal interactions. Any defects or malfunctions shall be repaired or rectified as soon as possible to ensure the proper function of the enclosure. Proper signage shall be in place in appropriate areas around the zoo warning visitors of potential dangers. All staff shall be vaccinated against relevant zoonotic infections.