**Hippo safety advice**

Hippos are great to watch, but are notoriously bad tempered so always be careful when watching them.

**Be catious around water:** hippos are extremely territorial, and can perceive anything as a threat. When approaching a water body in a vehicle, approach slowly, and keep your eye out for hippos on the bank and in the water. Never get out of your vehicle near water.

**Plan your retreat:** the driver should be aware of the route they will take to back away if the hippo shows aggression

**Be respectful:** don’t lean out of the vehicle, tease or throw things at the animal or get out of the car. Remember that the animal perceives the vehicle as one object, but when you stand up or lean out of it then the animal can identify individuals on the back, which can make them aggressive.

**Hippo body language:** if a hippo looks at you and opens its mouth wide, it is issuing a warning that you are too close. Move slowly away.

**Be wary of mothers:** mother hippos can be very protective when with their calves. Do not get too close to a mother, and do not make fast or erratic movements.

**Be wary at night:** hippos come out onto land at night to feed. Sometimes they may feed on the lawns inside lodges. Ask you lodge if hippos are able to enter the grounds, and ask them to brief you on their safety protocol at night.