



Kasanka Trust Ltd.

NEWSLETTER 2007

Well 2007 came and went, and what an exciting blur of activity, with the usual meld of excitement aplenty, hugely rewarding game-viewing and research and some significant anti-poaching and wildlife population gains.



Sable antelope at Chikufwe plain

As each year passes, visitors are enjoying more and more interesting mammal sightings with populations steadily increasing. The Puku continue to flourish around every corner it seems, but it's the unusual Sitatunga that are now more visible on game drives (and not just from the famous tree hide). Their splayed foothold in and around the Kasanka swamps is becoming a conservation success story of some repute. The Sable also put in a regular appearance, with a mixed herd sharing the beautiful Chikufwe Plain area, along with the Lichtenstein's Hartebeest and Reedbuck too.

The two male Black Lechwes stand out conspicuously from their Puku cousins, and so too their Puchwe offspring. Frequent Buffalo and Zebra sightings are encouraging results from the past translocation projects. Large

troops of Blue Monkeys in the riverine forest beside the Kasanka and Luwombwa Rivers are as fascinated with us as we are with them, and the Vervets, Baboons, Warthogs, Common Duiker and Bush Buck, Bush Pig and Bush Babies along with various Mongooses all contribute to the mammal tally. The elephants however are still the real 'entertainers' and job-creators too as they occasionally take exception to the bush showers.



Sponsored students at nature camp

Kasanka's education project in 2007 coordinated sponsorships for 16 secondary school students, and former sponsored students are doing very well: Higaline has been elected head-boy for 2008 at the highly regarded Serenje Boys Technical School, and has also won a donation of literature for winning an annual Inter-School Drama Competition. Shebbina is in NORTEC to complete his third year of electrical engineering, Abia is now working at Wasa Lodge and Frederick impressed with third place in a national entomology competition and continues to help

the Darwin research team in his holidays. This year we also secured sponsorship for an untrained teacher from a local community school.

A highlight for the sponsored students was the four-day nature camp during August in which we introduced them to different principles of conservation, visited the park and had a lot of fun!



Decorating the Conservation Centre

In July we officially opened the Conservation Centre. It exhibits bones, feathers, plant samples and animal droppings from the park, games and artwork painted by local artist. A visit to the Centre tied in with local excursions is becoming popular with international and local tourists alike, bringing in donations for the Centre itself, Kasanka Pre-School and student sponsorships!

The Darwin Initiative research activities have been ongoing during 2007. The researchers now have almost three years water quality and water source data. The data is currently being collated and analysed to feed into a Hydrology and Fire Management plan for Kasanka.

Three research students were awarded prizes for their theses based on research in Kasanka NP. Victoria for her Masters research project on the use of chili peppers in human animal conflict, and Chloe and James for their Bachelors research work aimed at (i) fire damage and nitrification of guano inputs in the

mushito habitat, and (ii) behaviour and grazing ecology of Sitatunga in the papyrus swamp.

Poaching remains a management challenge for the Trust. The scouts patrol with impressive diligence and during the year made over 30 arrests, confiscating several firearms, more than 60 canoes and retrieving almost 3000 wire snares. The success story with mammal numbers does attract renewed poaching interest however and so the challenge continues. Clearly more scouts are needed and as soon funding is obtained more will be trained and deployed.

Thanks to a parting gift from Dora Troehler, Kasanka was able to start building a new scout office. A donation by Charters and Shutkeiver made it possible to finish the building with prison and armoury. Snare wire was used to reinforce the concrete foundation slabs.

As a testimony to the dedication of the anti-poaching patrols, visitors to the official opening of the Kasanka Conservation Centre, witnessed the concrete burial of 7500 snares collected over the last 8 years.



Concrete burial of snares

Other construction activities in Kasanka included the completion of four new hides in the forest at Fibwe for the BBC. They were put to good use when the team arrived in November! Still considered to be Africa's largest mammal

migration, the BBC team extensively filmed this great phenomenon for their 'Life' series, to be screened in March 2009.



Bats – Richard Kirby

The Community Relations team continued to work with Chitambo Community Resource Board and other groups to uplift resource management outside the national park, educate people on conservation principals and practices, support local enterprise, and ease human animal conflict. A lot of effort was given to chili fences and their use in deterring maize-hungry elephants. In July to August the new Conservation Centre hosted several well-attended workshops on among others Good Governance, Marketing and the Land Use Management Plan for the Kafinda Game Management Area.



Workshop on Good Governance

Financially Kasanka continues to take each month as it comes, operating on tourism

income during the tourist season but still reliant charitable funding during the rainy season. Our huge appreciation is extended to the Holly Hill Trust, The Tusk Trust and to the Finnish Embassy in Zambia, and to all who provide Kasanka with it's life-blood.

Following talks with the World Bank and ZAWA in October, an application was submitted to the World Bank for a GEF medium sized project to fund Kasanka Trust to implement similar management strategies in the nearby Lavushi Manda National Park. This is a truly beautiful wilderness of mountain, open plains, grassy dambos and woodland threaded with riverine, all extending to around 4 times the size of Kasanka. Clearly the area will (did) support vast numbers of game – and this is now a stirring re-establishment challenge, for us all.



Lavushi Manda National Park

At the time of writing we are working on the assigned Project Preparation Grant to get work started and prepare for more sustained funding.

Edmund spent a week-long fund-raising trip to the UK in November and has certainly raised Kasanka's profile. Allied with Lavushi Manda, an extraordinary product is available to visitors who can now enjoy both the established Kasanka success story, and the vast, almost roadless, wilderness experience with our fully-supported camping / walking expeditions.