



Kasanka Trust Ltd.

NEWSLETTER FIRST HALF 2009



Tsessebe, Black Lewche and Zebra, Shoebill Camp

After a busy year with many exciting happenings and staff changes described in the previous newsletters, we started the year with well deserved breaks. Many of the Zambian staff took leave time to work on their fields with their families and the expatriates to visit their home countries. But not for too long... because Kasanka is so beautiful in the rainy season; the deep green of the forest, the rising water levels in the lakes, the Puku with offspring, dragonflies, butterflies and reed frogs everywhere! We were lucky to be visited at Wasa by the elephants many times, and seeing small groups of Roan and Waterbuck near the confluence of Mulembo and Luwombwa area, the Rock Hyrax with its baby in Luwombwa, a Spot-necked Otter in the Kasanka river between Kabwe and Pontoon and since June hearing the Hyena calling at night!

Few of these amazing sightings were shared with visitors unfortunately as only in the second quarter did tourists start to visit Kasanka again in numbers. There were many coming to Bangweulu of course. Imagine the excitement of the visitors to Shoebill camp seeing the Shoebills,

tens of thousands of Black Lechwe, herds of Tsessebe and thousands of Glossy Ibises and other water birds.

Maybe we'll receive more visitors after all the attention from media that we received lately, including the release of the French Ushuaia documentary on Kasanka bats and the Shoebill, Frank's interviews on Dutch radio and television, a big article in the Tusk Talk, and Open Africa footage on Kasanka on YouTube. Later this year we hope to see the BBC documentary *Life* covering the bat migration.



Blue Monkey

We are very grateful that the Trust received many donations for the education project. We were able to accept six new sponsored students and continued the sponsorship of 12 students. Bringing the total of sponsored students since 2000 to 72! One of them, the always smiling Higaline, sponsored through High School by Andrew from Australia, was employed after his graduation at the Mulembo checkpoint. Community teacher Rita Moono finished her training at Malcolm Moffat college with the help of Paul and Cilla from the UK. Through the Kasanka Trust Netherlands 6 students are sponsored this year!



Teacher Rita Moono

Ranelagh school from the UK fundraised a few thousand pounds for Kafinda Basic School to build ten student toilets and buy a lot of needed furniture and books.

Chenga OVC (for Orphans and Vulnerable Children) and Kalungu school were rehabilitated with the help of a corporate donor. Donations through the Netherlands Trust, by individuals such as Jan, Kitty and Cornelie, and through projects such as the 1% Club, raised enough to pay the salaries of several scouts for the year. We'd like to express our heartfelt thanks to all these and other sponsors!

The ambulance bought by Penicuik for Africa, a UK based charity, was donated through the Trust to the Ministry of Health for Chitambo Hospital. It was handed over in January.

*Kim handing over the ambulance keys
District Commissioner from Serenje*



Successful activities carried out by community relations and education project staff included a workshop for ex-poachers. The ten attending ex-poachers formed a drama group that will participate in the sensitization of the community! Frederick developed more chili fences to protect farmers in the community from hungry elephants, organized a beekeeping workshop for Kapepa Community Centre, and procured a boat and new fishing nets for fish farmers in Luwembe area. The environmental education co-coordinator Jonas visited eight schools in the Chalilo and Chipundu areas on a conservation awareness tour with Peace corps volunteer Jason, and organized a World Environmental Day exposition at the conservation centre with over 200 visitors from the surrounding communities.

On May 1st we celebrated Labour day with all the Kasanka Trust staff: there were games, and prizes for the hardest working employees and for employees who showed most improvement in their duties.



Labour day games



With the increased number of researchers visiting Kasanka it is proving itself to be an excellent research location. In June we had four students from Aberdeen University working on the behaviour of hippopotamus, parasite loads in tsetse flies and ecology of mosquitoes. Another research group came all the way from Washington University of St. Louis and the German Primate Centre of Gottingen. They have started work on Baboons. We hope Anna will get the chance to start a PhD project on our Kinda baboons! Several other research groups will arrive in July.



O'Shaugnessy Thicktoed Gecko

We had two volunteers this period: Polly who helped us out with a very useful office manual, and Edward a Gap year student who helped out with various tasks.

And then there was good news for the birders. Again three species were added to the list, bringing the total to 443 species! The Striped Pipit was found near Mambilima Falls, a Black-rumped Buttonquail was heard calling several times at Wasa and Kittlitz's Plover could finally be added after a bird was seen near Kabwe. Other interesting observations include a Pallid Honeyguide at Wasa, at least one pair of Rosy-breasted Longclaw in the Kabwe plains, a very big flock of White Storks over Fibwe, and a group of 106 Glossy Ibis over Wasa.

Interesting reptile observations include Gunther's Garter Snake, Schmidt's Blind Snake and O'Shaugnessy's Thick-toed

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Gecko. One day in March we had so much rain that Common and Peter's Platannas were swimming on the footpaths in Wasa!

We should not forget to mention the works of the infrastructure team that prepared the park for the main tourism season: re-grading roads, repairing bridges, starting the controlled burning program, building new structures such as toilets for staff in Wasa camp, a shelter for the main law enforcement office in Wasa, as well as renovating Chantete scout camp and the reed structures in Luwombwa. And of course the wildlife scouts who had a tough time patrolling the wet forests but managed to remove many snares and apprehended several suspects in the park. We have to end by saying that control of poaching and directly related to that, sourcing funding for core management activities and overheads remain the main challenges for the Trust.

*Let's keep in touch!
The Kasanka Team*



Praying Mantis