



Kasanka Trust Ltd.

NEWSLETTER FIRST HALF OF 2008

The year started very wet, with the water reaching the base of the lodge, flooding staff houses in Mulaushi camp and changing Mulaushi dambo into Lake Mulaushi! Boats were used to cross the 'lake' well into February which made reaching Wasa quite an adventure. In July the pontoon is still in use and Shoebill camp is still an island with no vehicle access yet.



Kim crossing Mulaushi dambo in February

Shoebill Island was spectacular as usual during the wet season. A group of 7 Elephants and 180 Buffalo spent most of the period close to, or even IN the camp, and huge numbers of water birds were present in the flooded plains of Chikuni.

One of the most surprising sightings in Kasanka was the discovery of an albino Common Duiker near Wasa camp. It is still present at the date of publication of this newsletter. A new curio (together with the puchwes - offspring of Puku and Black Lechwe) to our mammal list!



Albino Common Duiker near Wasa camp

Other interesting observations include the resident Porcupine raiding the compost heap at Wasa, several family groups of Blue Monkey at Fibwe totaling at least 25 animals, and many sightings of groups of Elephant (some of the more cheeky ones damaging campsite buildings).



How close can you get to the Shoebill?

For bird migration most notable were the sightings of at least 900 Steppe Buzzard and several other raptor species counted in one hour at Fibwe on 9 March, and a flock of 2100 White Stork passing over Lake Wasa on 23 March. These

observations suggest that Kasanka lies within the main Eurasian-African migration route (following the Rift Valley from Turkey south through Israel and Africa, at least as far south as Lake Tanganyika). Little is known about the route(s) these birds follow from the Tanzanian-Zambian border southwards. This adds another conservation interest to the area.

A pair of Wattled Cranes was regularly seen at Wasa and Chisambe Waponde with the young of 2007, which has thus apparently survived the critical first six months of it's life.

At Wasa camp, a pair of the scarce and sought-after Böhm's Flycatcher successfully raised 2 young. The family was seen daily at the camp from the end of January up till 20 April, joining a large resident flock of five more flycatcher species and many other bird species.



Young Black-necked Spitting Cobra, Wasa

An African Python, nicknamed Boerwors, was seen regularly at Wasa. The most spectacular observation was that of a beautiful young Black-necked Spitting Cobra caught at Wasa, enlivening a management meeting.

Despite of all these fantastic sightings the tourism numbers have been low. Even the number of residents visiting has reduced. This is probably due to the rising prices in Zambia and newly imposed visum fees. Kasanka is struggling to pay salaries every month because of this!

The entire Kasanka fleet of vehicles and boats had a serious makeover by Paul, a Lusaka panel beater / painter. The tractor looks newer then ever with its bright blue Ford colour!!



'Cycle of Life' Team in Kasanka Conservation Centre

We had some visitors with different yet exciting reasons for visiting the area. The Tusk Trust 'Cycle of Life Expedition'. cycled from Namibia, through Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania to Kenya to raise money for community programs in conservation areas (www.cycleoflife2008.com). Then there was Phil, a guy who started paddling the Congo from source (near Kasama) to sea?! And of course a team from African Parks using Kasanka as its base to research their options in taking on Chikuni Partnership Park.

The Education and Community programs are still going strong. In January a new academic year started for Kasanka sponsored students. We have accepted six new pupils: three girls for Mkushi High School, three boys for Serenje Technical High School and three pupils in nearby basic schools. The total of sponsored students is now 22!



Kasanka School kids welcoming new staff members

Successful conservation education activities included a workshop for Chongololo teachers, a fun day on World Environmental Day with more than 100

community members visiting the Centre!) and new activities for the exchange program between Kafinda Basic School Chongololo club and the Elout Basic School in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In February the Kafinda kids made passports of themselves and took their own pictures with a disposable camera. This material was sent to their Dutch friends. In return they received Dutch passports.

Kasanka's Pre-school and First grade now has 25 kids in class, of which 11 in first grade! The teachers Idah Mulenga and Aubrey Kanche run the school together with great enthusiasm. In the meantime Kasanka is preparing the building of a school for the children at Mulaushi camp. The foundation was laid in 2007 with the ceremonial burying of 7500 snares in concrete.



Contestants and their produce (chikanda) at the Natural Resources Competition

The Community Project started off with some difficulties in the first months of 2008 because of the floods that made it impossible to reach communities on the fringes of the Bangweulu wetlands and many places were cut off from areas along the tarred road. From April on the Chitambo Community Resources Board newsletter was written, a workshop for conservation groups of senior citizens was held, the long awaited Natural resources Competition was held, and the Community Relations Coordinator went on an exchange visit to the University of Glasgow-Scotland. He addressed MPs at

the Scottish parliament and apparently made a memorable speech.



Community relations coordinator Frederick Mbulwe (r) and Henry Sichingabula from University of Zambia in Scotland

Exciting news is the approval of a Project Preparation Grant from the Global Environmental Facility (through the World Bank) to start working in Lavushi Manda National Park. The project (2009-2013) will seek to protect Kasanka and Lavushi Manda National Parks. In this preparation year we need to construct a base camp, an airstrip and roads, carry out consultancies with the surrounding communities and improve the Trusts administration.

In June a World Bank delegation visited us. We took them into Lavushi Manda National Park and camped there, held a very positive meeting with Chief Chiundaponde and spent an evening dancing in Nakapalayo Village, a community tourism initiative. In May ZAWA appointed 10 scouts for patrolling in Lavushi Manda.



World Bank team in Lavushi Manda National Park

More exciting news is the strengthening of Kasanka trust with a new foreign-based trust: Kasanka Trust Netherlands (Stichting Kasanka Nederland - www.kasanka.nl). Its formation was initiated by our former community relations officer Cornelie and other Kasanka supporters. The Trust will fundraise for park protection, community and education projects. And the best news is that they have already achieved significant results such as funding for several sponsored students, the salary of the community relations officer and the furnishing Kapepa Community Centre!



The swallow research team with new colleague Jonas Kunda

Between November 2007 and March 2008, a Dutch research team led by Bennie van den Brink, visited Kasanka six times to study Barn Swallows. In November, no less than half a million Barn Swallows were present here, making this one of the larger roosts in the Africa! The team managed to catch and ring hundreds of birds. Unfortunately, the swallows left the roost after December 2007. The visits in February and March yielded only some tens of birds in total being caught.

In March the Darwin Initiative project came to an end with the departure of Dr. Mike Kenny and his assistant Lackson. They left Kasanka a draft copy of a hydrology and fire management for the park, an excellent guide-training manual and several successful conservation projects in the community, including involving the local schools in weather monitoring, tree planting and biodiversity discussions. In June we formally said our goodbyes during a workshop that was

attended by Professor Racey, Martin Stanley and all local stakeholders.

For the readers who know us personally there have been many staff changes this year. New are Inge and Frank, volunteers last year, who came to assist Kasanka as coordinator of the World Bank project and as research coordinator/guide. Also new is Jonas, who was taken on to manage the Conservation Centre, guide (international) visitors and school groups in the Centre, and visit schools for the Conservation education program. The main office at Wasa has been strengthened by two keen young Zambians, Kebby (former sponsored student) as management assistant and Mabvuto (son of Shoebill manager David Phiri) as bookkeeper. Sad news is the departure of several colleagues, including our education officer Leigh, guide Leslie, and nanny Priscilla and her lovely daughter Alice.



Kebby and Mabvuto in the office

Alongside these exciting developments the Trust is facing a huge financial challenge. Macro-economic changes have increased operational costs for both tourism and conservation and in order to cease the great opportunities for conservation which are before us the Trust needs to increase its charitable income. All support whether material, financial or ideas and suggestions for ways to fund continuation and exciting development opportunities before us, would be most welcome!

Let's keep in touch!
The Kasanka team