

Kasanka National Park



Further Links

- Millions of migrating bats
- Remote unspoilt game viewing
- Huge herds of Lechwe
- Combines well with Luangwa Valley

Situation

North - East Zambia

Activities

Game drives, walks and viewing from Fibwe Hide.

Kasanka is a small and remote national park north of the Luangwa Valley. A great destination for Africa addicts wanting something different and off the beaten track. It is home to huge numbers of Sitatunga antelope but the main spectacle is the bat migration late in the year. Kasanka is on the southern fringes of Bangweulu Swamps. It is a very flat area which gets high rainfall in the wet season of about 1200mm. There is a mixture of Miombo Woodland, small forests and flooded dambos.

Each year from the end of October, millions of Straw-coloured Fruit Bats congregate in one of Africa's hugest but little known mammal migrations. These animals can have an almost metre wide wing span and arrive in huge colonies numbering over eight million.

This is due to the abundance of wild fruits in the forest particularly those of the water berry, wild loquat and red milkwood trees. The bats act as a seed depository and fertiliser before they return about 2000km to their usual home in the Democratic Republic of Congo! There is a tree hide in a mahogany tree which looks over the Kapabi Swamp. About 6 in the evening the bats all appear in the skies and the sheer numbers darken the skies and fly off to feed.

Other animals found in Kasanka include huge numbers of Sitatunga (water antelope). The most common antelope here is the Puku plus Bushbuck, Reedbuck, Defassa Waterbuck, Sable and Roan Antelope and others. There are Buffalo and zebra but they are more scarce and elephants are found here only in small numbers. Larger predators such as Lion, Leopard, Spotted Hyena and Wildcats are present but rarely seen and smaller carnivores are more abundant with Caracal, Jackal, Civet and Genet more frequently seen. This is a great location for birding with over 420 species recorded.

Kasanka was made a National Park in 1972 but was poorly maintained and poaching was a huge problem. The Kasanka Trust took over the running of the park in 1990 and has developed it with the location community to improve wildlife and tourism in the area. The trust operates Wasa Camp in Kasanka and another camp in neighbouring Bangweulu Swamps.

There are several interesting sites to visit in the region around Kasanka such as:

Kundalila Falls are just over an hours drive from Kasanka and worth a visit - this is a very pretty area where the Kaombe River fall over the edge of Muchinga escarpment (forming the border of the Luangwa Valley). This area is famous for it's wild flowers and is a great place for a picnic. A path goes to the base of the falls where the water arrives into a deep pool after a 65m drop - if you don't mind the cold you can take a dip in the water!

Nsalu Cave is a National Monument which shows strange lines and 'ladders' in bush art, rather than the conventional people and animals pictures. These unexplained sketches are Stone Age and thought to be up to 100,000 years old. The Kasanka Trust is trying to get the authorities to protect this site as it is a bit run down at the moment.

Lake Waka Waka is an hours drive from the park and is a crystal clear crocodile free lake, perfect for a swim! It's ideal for a day trip or hire a hut (there are two) for a basic overnight camp out. There are scenic walks in the rocky hills and wildlife includes Roan and Sable Antelope, Sitatunga, Warthog and Baboons.

Kasanka Trust is involved in the **Nakapalyo Tourism Project** and can arrange for you to visit the local Bisa tribes people in their village.

Kasanka is located in the Kafinda area, under the traditional leadership of Chief Chitambo IV. It was this Chief's great grandfather who received **David Livingstone** on his deathbed and a **memorial** is found today near the park marking the spot where this great explorer died.

