



Know Your National Parks

Did you know that Zambia has 19 national parks? Most visitors head for at least one of the ‘big three’ – South Luangwa, Kafue and Lower Zambezi – while a few smaller parks, such as Kasanka, also receive a regular trickle. But many others hardly see a visitor from one year to the next. In some cases this is because they are virtually inaccessible, or so badly neglected that little wildlife remains. But there are also many hidden gems awaiting the discerning traveller.

- **Blue Lagoon National Park:** northern Kafue Flats, west of Lusaka; flooded during the rains; excellent bird life; one lodge.
- **Isangano National Park:** east of the Bangweulu Swamps; no facilities, little wildlife.
- **Kafue National Park:** western Zambia; country’s largest park, and divided into north and south sections; exceptionally wide variety of habitats and wildlife; many lodges, but less developed than South Luangwa.
- **Kasanka National Park:** small park south of the Bangweulu Swamps: birdlife, bats and sitatunga; one lodge.
- **Lavushi Manda National Park:** east of the Bangweulu Swamps; no facilities; hilly and wooded terrain; wildlife scarce, but good potential.
- **Liuwa Plain National Park:** remote far west; few roads or facilities, but under development; one campsite; large herds of wildebeest in season.
- **Lochinvar National Park:** wide floodplains beside the Kafue River; prolific bird life and lechwe; floods in season; one lodge.
- **Lower Zambezi National Park:** east of Lusaka; great wildlife viewing by land and water on the Zambezi River; several lodges.
- **Luambe National Park:** small park close to South Luangwa; long neglected but currently under development and wildlife returning; one lodge.
- **Lukusuzi National Park:** east of Luangwa Valley near Malawi border; no facilities but great potential.
- **Lusenga Plain National Park:** east of Lake Mweru, no facilities and little wildlife.
- **Mosi-oo-Tunya (Victoria Falls) National Park:** small park on the edge of Livingstone (plentiful accommodation); includes a small ‘safari park’.
- **Mweru Wantipa National Park:** on the shores of lake Mweru in far north; neglected, with no facilities and little wildlife, but great potential.
- **North Luangwa National Park:** remote northern sibling of South Luangwa; temporary bush camps only; focus on walking safaris; excellent wildlife, notably buffalo and lion.
- **Nsumbu (Sumbu) National Park:** on shore of Lake Tanganyika in far north; needs redevelopment, but has good wildlife potential and lakeside game viewing; three lodges.
- **Nyika National Park:** in far east, along Malawi border, and best reached from Malawi side; highland scenery; excellent flowers and birdwatching; one lodge

- **Sioma Ngwezi National Park:** in remote far south-west; wide variety of wildlife; no facilities but currently under development.
- **South Luangwa National Park:** eastern Zambia; nation’s premier park, with superb game viewing, especially walking safaris; numerous lodges
- **West Lunga National Park:** in northwest; neglected, with no facilities or easy access, but good potential for redevelopment.

National Park or GMA?

National parks are administered by the Zambia Wildlife Authority. Most are surrounded by large Game Management Areas (GMAs), which contain local communities. GMAs are designed to provide a buffer between the pristine national park and the developed land beyond. In theory they offer the same habitat and ecosystem as the park, but in practice there is usually less wildlife due to illegal hunting and pressure for land. Conservation projects aim to reverse this trend by regenerating game resources and helping communities live sustainably. Controlled hunting is permitted in GMAs but not in national parks.



White pelicans and Kafue lechwe at Lochinvar National Park

ZAMBIA NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD



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Downstream with the lion man

Looking for something different on safari? **Philip Dickson** ventures out on the Kafue River with Chris McBride, Africa’s legendary ‘white lion’ man.

As the cool early morning haze hangs eerily over the Kafue, we drift silently downstream in a boat reminiscent of the *African Queen*, listening intently to avoid an unwelcome collision with any of the imposing pods of local hippos.

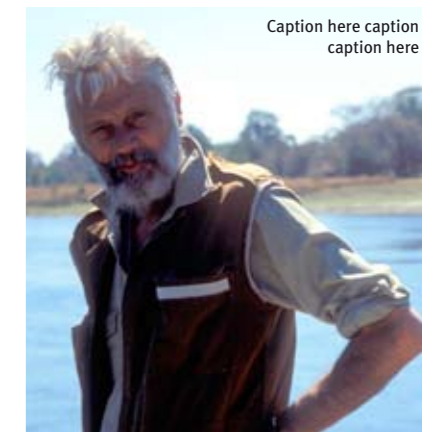
Our vessel, the *Fish Eagle*, is as bizarre as its name: an ancient banana boat, seemingly built from tin and thatch, that takes us right into the intimate lives of the riverine wildlife. ‘Look’ exclaims McBride, pointing to the river bank, as crocodiles devour the underside of a

half-submerged hippo carcass, surfacing only to gulp down large chunks of rotting flesh before diving again for more. Meanwhile squadrons of skimmers swoop low over the river scooping out fish with their trailing bills, while on the bank a skittish leopard laps hypnotically and elephants graze amongst the shadowy papyrus beds.

Lion expert and author Chris McBride, best known for bringing his extraordinary discovery of South Africa’s rare white lion cubs to the outside world in the late

70s, has since relocated to Zambia’s Kafue National Park. Here, with his wife Charlotte, he runs the rustic McBrides Camp in the northeastern section, an isolated wilderness characterised by its maze of oxbow lakes and vast floodplains. Now 65, McBride is still obsessed with lions, and there is a charming – almost Victorian – character to his energetic eccentricities.

Puttering downstream to a remote fly camp close to the ‘golden’ pride’s territory, we pass sluggish crocodiles basking benignly on the sandbanks beneath the warming sun. Fly camping in Zambia is wild and intimate and the *Fish Eagle* delivers us right into the raw heart of the bush. The only concession to civilisation here is a long-drop loo and a bucket shower, and the local wildlife rarely encounters humans. Bushwalking through the crackling *miombo* woodland and open savannah soon lulls you into nature’s own rhythm. At night, under the colossal black vacuum of a moonless sky with only a campfire for solace, deep chest-heaving lion roars both terrify and tantalise for the day ahead.



Caption here caption here

Game viewing and access is best during the dry season from June to October. Details at: www.mcbridescamp.com

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of tourists visiting Zambia is estimated to have increased by 6.4 percent to 805,059 in 2007. In turn, the tourism sector’s earnings increased to an estimated US \$188 million from US \$177 million in 2006.

Visa values

On 26 January Zambia’s tourist visa policy changed overnight, reports the African Travel & Tourism Association (ATTA). The visa fee waiver policy was abolished with immediate effect and, at the same time, the price of visas was raised. The cost of single-entry visas is now as follows:

- UK nationals: US\$140
- Other EU members: US\$50
- USA nationals: US\$135
- Canada nationals US\$55

This decision has caused some consternation in the travel and tourism industry, which at present is lobbying the government for change. ‘The cost of these new visas is high and the lack of a visa-waiver for bona fide tourists is a real hit,’ says Chris McIntyre of leading UK tour operator Expert Africa. ‘Sadly, it may put visitors off safaris in Zambia, and be self-defeating.’

Details at: www.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm (Zambian Immigration Department) or www.atta.travel (African Travel & Tourism Association).



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More firsts for Kafue



Many national parks claim to offer ‘the real Africa’, but few can compare with Kafue for sheer size and wilderness. After years of neglect and under-investment, some exciting developments are returning this magnificent park to its former glory. **Tim Henshall** reports on the latest.

Konkamoya Lodge, located on the banks of Lake Itezhy Tezhy in the southern sector of Kafue, opened early in 2008. This intimate camp, lovingly created by the Cooke family, consists of just three chalets and thus ensures a very personal experience for nature lovers. Game viewing is conducted in an open 4WD vehicle, on foot or by boat on the lake itself. Fishing, as you might expect, is a speciality, as are canoeing safaris, and there’s a definite thrill to gently floating on the lake while elephants wallow nearby. The Cookes also offer excursions to their fly camps within the park.

Konkamoya joins independent lodges around the park, including Kaingu Safari Lodge and Nanzhila Plains Camp, to form the **Kushiyana Collection**. This collection, which means ‘variety’ in the local *nyanja* language, has been refined ahead of a relaunch later this year. Each camp is situated in a spectacular and distinct location, from the eastern riverine bush of Kaingu to the sweeping savannah of Nanzhila Plains and lakeshore of Konkamoya. Together they offer the complete spectrum of Kafue’s diverse landscapes and attractions.

Details at www.cookesafricansafaris.com and www.kushiyana.com

Photographer’s tips

Everybody can be a better photographer. The answer is not technique or equipment, but the human eye. Cameras are tools that take pictures, but only people make photographs. The ‘technique’ of photography is a trade or craft, just like carpentry or knitting. The ‘art’ of photography is about just one thing: ‘seeing’ the picture.

We can train ourselves to better ‘see’ the picture. Try looking in a whole new way at every image, scene or event you come across. As you go about your daily life, whether at home, at work or even in the pub, try taking photographs in your head. Soon ‘seeing’ will be second nature. Then, putting a camera in your hands will put you in a sort of ‘seeing zone’.

As one of photography’s greats, Dorothea Lange, explained it: “A camera is a tool that allows those without one to see.”

Stephen Robinson is a Zambia-based photographer who specialises in nature and environmental subjects. His Spirit of the Land project explores Zambia’s landscapes and the people who depend so directly upon them. For more of his work visit www.spirit-of-the-land.com (and see p36–39 of this edition).

Hands-on in Luambe

A unique chance to get involved with wildlife conservation awaits visitors to Luambe National Park (northeast of South Luangwa NP), reports **Tim Henshall**.

Luangwa Wilderness Lodge is offering guests a limited and exclusive opportunity to make a practical contribution to conservation. During September, well-known and respected elephant expert, Dr Olaf Behlert (also chairman of Conservation Luambe, the owners of Luangwa Wilderness Lodge), will visit the lodge to oversee the latest phase of its wildlife monitoring programme. This includes capturing data on the area’s resident leopards via a collaring project. Guests will be able to accompany Olaf and his team during their vital work, which has witnessed a dramatic increase in animal numbers in the park. With Luambe still essentially under development, every visitor to the park can play a role – not least by staying at the lodge, which contributes a percentage of all visitor fees to conservation and community projects in the area.

Find out more at www.luangwawilderness.com and www.conservation-luambe.com





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Community welcome in North Luangwa

North Luangwa National Park is one of Zambia's wildest wildlife destinations. There is no permanent accommodation inside the park, with just a handful of temporary camps open in the dry season. But a nearby community campsite allows visitors to enjoy the park and its surroundings throughout the year. **Claire Lewis** reports.

Natwange means 'Let's celebrate and have fun' – and, in this case, do it with nature. Natwange Community Campsite, opened in 2002, is located on the Mwaleshi River near the Mano Gate entrance to North Luangwa. Managed entirely by and for the benefit of the Mukungule Community and the Community Resources Board, it is a perfect example of active community participation in a conservation area. The site provides self-catering camping facilities (you can even rent tents), including six private camping spots each with its own hot shower and flush toilet, car parking and

BBQ/braai areas. A gift shop opening this year will offer Bisa cultural souvenirs made by local community members and women's groups.

Game viewing in the vicinity includes large herds of buffalo, for which North Luangwa is particularly well known, while zebra, impala, Cookson's wildebeest and puku are common, and larger carnivores include lion, leopard, hyena and occasional wild dog. Near the Muchinga Escarpment you may also spot the rare Lichtenstein's hartebeest. Community tour guides offer spectacular birding trips on the edge of this escarpment, with specialities including

African finfoot, Lady Ross's turaco, Narina trogon and white-winged Starling. Other activities include fishing and hiking along the Mwaleshi river.

The campsite is located approximately 42km east of the Great North Road and is within striking distance of Shiwa Ng'andu and Kapishya Hot Springs. It thus makes a great addition to a trip around northern Zambia. During the dry season, adventurous visitors who relish an off-the-beaten-track challenge can cross the Luangwa River and follow its eastern bank to Luambe NP and on to South Luangwa NP.

For details and reservations contact: moses@fzs.org or clairelewis@fzs.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ New faces at Chongwe

Chongwe River Camp (Lower Zambezi NP) is pleased to announce a new partnership with Mr. Thierry Dalais, co-founder and chairman of North Island in the Seychelles. Meanwhile the camp has also introduced new faces to the management team: Robin and Storm Mason have arrived from Tanzania, with a wealth of bush and lodge experience; Brendan and Clem Raisbeck have arrived from Robin Pope Safaris in South Luangwa to take over Chongwe River House – no doubt

ably assisted by Bruce, their young son, who will enhance the family feeling of this family-friendly safari location.

Details at: www.chongwe.com

■ Chiawa makeover

Chiawa Camp (Lower Zambezi NP) completed its facelift in time for the 2008 season, rebuilding the entire front-of-house area, including the *sitenje* (lounge/bar), dining room and loos. Returning guests can rest assured that the camp retains all its old charm and rustic luxury: a little height has been added to the rooms, old thatch has been replaced with new, and timber decks added for

more warmth and luxury. Guests will also benefit from the addition of another game viewing vehicle, new boat engines and an improved, silent power-generation system.

Details at: www.chiawa.com





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NEWS IN BRIEF

■ New languages and licences at Wildlife Camp

Dora Troehler, from Kasaka, has joined Colleen Brink on the management team at Wildlife Camp (South Luangwa National Park), bringing guests the advantage of her many languages, namely English, German, French, Italian and Spanish.

Meanwhile, as we go to press, the camp's Grade 2 guides (qualified for driving but not walking safaris), namely Billy Nkoma, Philemon Banda, Andrew Mweetwa and Sylvester Mbaama, are all sitting exams for their walking guide licence. Travel Zambia wishes them the best of luck.

Details at: www.wildlifecamp-zambia.com

■ New walking trails camp for South Luangwa

This July the Bushcamp Company launches its new walking trails camp in the pristine and unexplored southern area of South Luangwa National Park. The camp, named Zungulila, will run walking safaris only and accommodate just 6–8 guests. It offers a chance to become immersed in the sights, sounds and smells of the African bush, all under the expert direction of some of Africa's most experienced and knowledgeable guides.

Details at: www.bushcampcompany.com

■ Kasaka photographic safari

Kasaka River Lodge offers a new photographic safari with a professional safari guide and photographer. Enjoy an all-inclusive five or seven-night stay at Kasaka River Lodge for six people on 6–23 May or 3–10 June. Details from Simon Cooke: simon.cooke@totalise.co.uk or Alex Medinger: kasaka@coppernet.zm

■ Island beach break with NCS

Norman Carr Safaris has combined with top Zanzibar beach resort, Fumba Beach Lodge, to offer a great new bush/beach package. Guests can now follow their exhilarating safari in South Luangwa National Park with a few relaxing days beside the Indian Ocean. Details at www.normancarsafaris.com

■ New terrace for Islands of Siankaba

Islands of Siankaba (Livingstone) closed for a month's refurbishment from mid Jan–mid Feb. As a result, guests can now relax with a drink on a brand-new stone slate terrace, enjoying an unspoilt view of the Zambezi and the green hills beyond. Details at: www.siankaba.net

■ Tongabezi in the limelight

Tujatane, a Tongabezi Trust School, has been doubling as an international acting school and film set. Earlier this year an English film crew completed a movie featuring the students of the school and their everyday lives. The children also enjoyed some acting lessons and performed in the Amphitheatre for Tongabezi's guests. Details at: www.tongabezi.com

A HELPING HAND



All Power to Mukwashi

The pupils at Mukwashi Trust Primary School, just west of Lusaka, are excited to learn that electricity will soon be coming their way, reports **Laura Manni**.

Thanks to the hugely successful fundraising drive by the students from Cardinal Carter High School in Richmond Hill, Canada, Mukwashi is at last about to secure electricity. Everyone is keen to use our donated computers, and the electricity will also help extend and improve adult classes by supplying lighting in the evenings.

Mukwashi officially opened its doors in September 2006 and is currently in its second full school year. Originally conceived to provide accessible, high-quality education to children of the employees of the farm upon which the school is built, it is now the school of choice for many in the local community. Previously, many of its 183 pupils did not attend school, and many of those who did walked at least 15km to school and back each day.

In addition to the importance placed on classroom learning, Mukwashi is also committed to providing opportunities for children to develop artistically, athletically and socially. Sports training takes place twice a week, while after-school clubs such as agriculture, chess and drama run three days a week. Mukwashi's drama group presents plays to adult audiences, tackling socially relevant issues such as AIDS and alcoholism.

The school has benefited greatly from the support of both Zambian and international donors. Their generosity helped build the school and set up a school library, and now continues to pay teachers' salaries, provide a daily meal for all pupils, replenish resources and fund a local artist who teaches art once a week.

Laura Manni joined Mukwashi Trust Primary School in September 2006, where she was involved in all aspects of school life. She returned to Zambia in March 2008 to continue supporting Mukwashi Trust and to begin work on a new school in Chisamba. Find out more at: <http://mukwashi.googlepages.com> or contact Mukwashi at mukwashi@googlemail.com.





A HELPING HAND

Mkasanga forges ahead

Remote Africa Safaris in South Luangwa (www.remoteafrica.com) helps support education and healthcare in the local community. The Tafika Fund, established with donations from guests and tour operators, supports a local school, Mkasanga. **Carol Coppinger** reports on a year of progress.



The Tafika Fund made a big leap forward in 2007, with 28 sponsored high school students, three teachers at training college, a hotel and catering student, two accounts students and our medical officer entering his final year. Meanwhile Majoru Investments in Lusaka provided work experience to three 2006 school leavers.

Thanks are due, as ever, to our many supporters. This year we received an amazing US\$22,000 from guests and agents, a Swiss Charity called Sidcole and Peter and Cathy Herb-Kelly, who pay most of our teachers' salaries each month.

Meanwhile Tracy Solman conducted an inspired ten-day teachers' motivational workshop. Cherri Briggs of Explore Inc., together with 'Hope Through Education', a USA Charity, generously donated US\$15,000 for desks, text books and teacher's furniture. Chris Breen of Wildlife Worldwide brought Mkasanga to the attention of Promethean UK, manufacturers of interactive white boards, who donated £10,000 to renovate the school buildings and secure the classrooms.

We were also delighted to provide a wheelchair for 18-year-old Zephus Mbewe, who has been unable to walk since losing the use of his legs after an accident at the age of ten. Having completed primary school in 2006, Zephus had been unable to travel to nearby high schools. This year, with the help of friends to push him around, he will at last attend high school. Meanwhile the Tafika Fund will install ramps to make Mkasanga more wheelchair-friendly. We wish Zephus all the very best in his high school career.

To sponsor a child or find out more, contact Carol Coppinger at tafika@remoteafrica.com

■ Bushcamps behind beehives

The Bushcamp Company (www.bushcampcompany.com) in South Luangwa National Park is supporting a beekeeping project in the local community of Malama. The project involves setting up beehives for the local community to manage and sell honey. It provides employment, serves as a source of nutrition and helps in tree conservation. So far the BCC has successfully provided several thousand beehives and now plans to implement the project in other local communities. The cost of building a beehive structure is \$US50; all donations to this highly worthwhile project are welcome.



A HELPING HAND

■ Simonga donations

The River Club (Livingstone) has been involved with nearby Simonga Village for eight years. In March, a group from Norwich Union, hosted by Green Route, toured the village and donated an amazing US\$10,000 towards future projects. This will be used to construct a new classroom and continue the expansion of the area's water supply. Also in March, US\$600 worth of gardening equipment was donated by Rory and Fania Stoney, Anna and Benita Hickson, Charles Bark and five youngsters from Ireland to five of the classes at Simonga Basic School. Each class will grow vegetables for use in the school canteen. *Find out more at: www.wilderness-safaris*

EXPO for Zambia

Zambia's first ever EXPO took place on April 24–26 at Lusaka's Mulungushi International Conference Centre.

This inaugural event of the Zambian International Travel Show (ZITS) is a new marketing initiative that aims to compliment efforts to tap into the 2010 World Cup. It received the full support of the Ministry of Tourism and was officially opened by the Honorable Minister Michael Kaingu. With over 150 stands at the show, exhibitors hailed the event as a great success and are already looking forward to the next one.

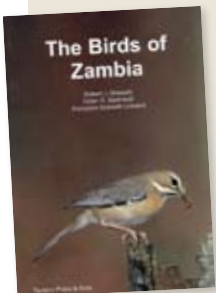


■ Good Safari Guides Awards

Zambia was proud to have several finalists in the 2008 Good Safari Guides Awards. The Awards Ceremony took place on 9th May, prior to Indaba, at the Edward Hotel in Durban. This was just as *Travel Zambia* hit the shelves, so by the time you're reading this the results will have been announced. Meanwhile we are keeping our fingers crossed for the following finalists:

- Chiawa: nominated for Best Safari Property in Southern Africa and Best Safari Guiding Team in Africa
- Proflight: nominated for Best Private Charter Airline in Africa
- Robin Pope Safaris: nominated for Best Safari Accommodation Group in Africa, Best Safari Guiding Team in Africa and Best Community Property in Africa (Nkwali)
- Wilderness Safaris: nominated for Best Safari Accommodation Group in Africa and Best Safari Guiding Team in Africa,
- Zambian National Tourist Board: nominated for Best African National Tourist Board

Bookshelf: new bird bible



Look out for a comprehensive new book on Zambian birds: *Birds of Zambia* by Dowsett, Aspinwall & Dowsett-Lemaire is published by Turaco Press and distributed by the UK-based Natural History Book Service. It is not so much a field guide as a handbook and distribution atlas to all the 750 species that occur in the country, and contains the very latest data and research. Order a copy at: www.nhbs.com