

Chobe National Park

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Chobe National Park is [Botswana](#)'s first national park, and also the most [biologically diverse](#). Located in the north of the country, it is Botswana's third largest park, after [Central Kalahari Game Reserve](#) and [Gemsbok National Park](#), and has one of the greatest concentrations of [game](#) in all of [Africa](#).

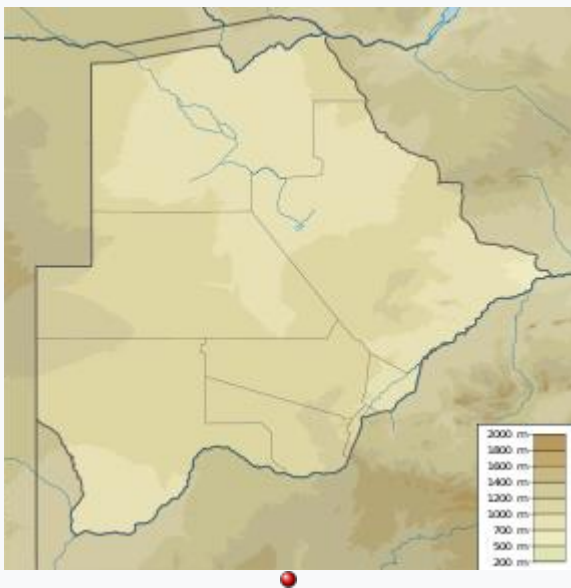
This park is noted for having a [population](#) of [lions](#) which prey on elephants, mostly calves or juveniles, but also subadults.^[1]

Chobe National Park

[IUCN category II \(national park\)](#)




[Wildebeest](#) and [zebras](#) in Chobe National Park



Location [Botswana](#)

Nearest city [Kasane](#)

Coordinates	 18°40′S 24°30′ECoordinates: 18°40′S 24°30′E
Area	11,700 km ² (4,500 sq mi)
Established	1967

History[edit]

The original inhabitants of this area were the San [bushmen](#) (also known as the [Basarwa](#) people in Botswana). They were nomadic hunter-gatherers who were constantly moving from place to place to find food sources, namely fruits, water and wild animals. Nowadays one can find San paintings inside rocky hills of the park.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the region that would become Botswana was divided into different land tenure systems. At that time, a major part of the park's area was classified as [crown land](#). The idea of a [national park](#) to protect the varied wildlife found here as well as promote [tourism](#) first appeared in 1931. The following year, 24,000 km² (9,300 sq mi) around Chobe district were officially declared non-hunting area; this area was expanded to 31,600 km² (12,200 sq mi) two years later.

In 1943, heavy [tsetse](#) infestations occurred throughout the region, delaying the creation of the national park. By 1953, the project received governmental attention again: 21,000 km² (8,100 sq mi) were suggested to become a game reserve. Chobe Game Reserve was officially created in 1960, though smaller than initially desired. In 1967, the reserve was declared a national park.

At that time there were several industrial settlements in the region, especially at Serondela, where the [timber industry](#) proliferated. These settlements were gradually moved out of the park, and it was not until 1975 that the whole protected area was exempt from human activity. Nowadays traces of the prior timber industry are still visible at Serondela. Minor expansions of the park took place in 1980 and 1987.^[*citation needed*]

Geography and ecosystems[edit]

The park can be divided up to 4 areas, each corresponding to one distinct [ecosystem](#):

- The Serondela area (or **Chobe riverfront**), situated in the extreme Northeast of the park, has as its main geographical features lush floodplains and dense woodland of [mahogany](#), [teak](#) and other hardwoods now largely reduced by heavy elephant pressure. The [Chobe River](#), which flows along the Northeast border of the park, is a major watering spot, especially in the dry season (May through October) for large breeding herds of [elephants](#), as well as families of [giraffe](#), sable and cape [Cape buffalo](#). The flood plains are the only place in Botswana where the puku [antelope](#) can be seen. Birding is also available. Large numbers of [carmine bee eaters](#) are spotted in season. When in flood [spoonbills](#), [ibis](#), various species of [storks](#), [ducks](#) and other [waterfowl](#) flock to the area. This is likely Chobe's most visited section, in large part because of its proximity to the [Victoria Falls](#). The town of [Kasane](#), situated just downstream, is the most important town of the region and serves as the northern entrance to the park.
- The Savuti Marsh area, 10,878 km² (4,200 sq mi) large, constitutes the western stretch of the park (50 km (31 mi) north of Mababe Gate). The Savuti Marsh is the relic of a large inland lake whose water supply was cut a long time ago by [tectonic movements](#). Nowadays the marsh is fed by the erratic Savuti Channel, which dries up for long periods then curiously flows again, a consequence of tectonic activity in the area. It is currently flowing again and in January 2010 reached Savuti Marsh for the first time since 1982. As a result of this variable flow, there are hundred of dead trees along the channel's bank. The region is also covered with extensive [savannahs](#) and rolling [grasslands](#), which makes wildlife particularly dynamic in this section of the park. During [dry seasons](#), tourists going on a safari often sight [rhinoceros](#) (both [black](#) and [white](#)), [warthog](#), [kudu](#), [impala](#), [zebra](#), [wildebeest](#) and a herd of elephants. During [rain seasons](#), the rich [birdlife](#) of the park, 450 species in the whole park, is well represented. Prides of [lions](#), [hyenas](#), [zebras](#) or more rarely [cheetahs](#) are sighted as well. This region is reputed for its annual migration of zebras and predators.^[*citation needed*]

- The **Linyanti Marsh**, located at the northwest corner of the park and to the north of Savuti, is adjacent to the [Linyanti River](#). To the west of this area lies Selinda Reserve and on the northern bank of [Kwando River](#) is Namibia's [Nkasa Rupara National Park](#). Around these two rivers are riverine woodlands, open woodlands as well as [lagoons](#), and the rest of the region mainly consists of flood plains. There are large concentrations of lion prides, [leopard](#), [African wild dog](#), [roan antelope](#), [sable antelope](#), a [hippopotamus](#) pod and herds of African bush elephant. The rarer [red lechwe](#), [sitatunga](#) and a bask of [Nile crocodiles](#) also occur in the area. Bird diversity is rich.
- Between Linyanti and Savuti Marshes lies a hot and dry **hinterland**, mainly occupied by the Nogatsaa grass woodland. This section is little known and is a great place for spotting [eland](#)s.

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