

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Saadani village is located roughly 45 km north of Bagamoyo. However in order to cross the Wami a 150 km detour has to be made via Msata, although a bridge is planned. Dar es Salaam is at about 200 km away from Saadani village (4 hours' drive via Chalinze). From the North you can reach Mkwaja Headquarters from Tanga by crossing Pangani river with a ferry (75 km / 3 hours' drive). From here it will be another 35 km to Saadani village. Zanzibar is about 40 km away from the Park. Transfer by airplane can be arranged to Mkwaja or Saadani airstrip. There is also a daily bus connection between Dar es Salaam and Saadani village, as well as between Tanga and Mkwaja village. In the rainy season (March–April), the muddy roads can make travelling in the southern parts of the Park very difficult. It is advisable to inquire about the quality of the road before planning a trip.

TANAPA guesthouses are available near Saadani village and at Mkwaja HQ. Camping is allowed at the Wami River (Kinyonga), Tengwe and Beach campsites. Accommodation is also offered in-



side the park by *Saadani Safari Lodge* (www.saadanolodge.com) and immediately outside the park by *KISAMPA* (www.sanctuary-tz.com) and *A Tent with a View* (www.saadani.com). 🦋

ADDRESSES & CONTACT

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Further readings & sources:

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PARK RULES & REGULATIONS

Because of its situation on the coastal part of Tanzania and the many conflicting interests in the development of this region, Saadani National Park faces many threats to its survival. The most serious are poaching and the ever increasing demand for land to feed a large and growing human population that borders the park. Your behaviour can be as damaging as that of a poacher's snare. Driving off road where it is not allowed damages the fragile soils and plants of these sensitive ecosystems, and can disturb species during critical breeding periods. You can help to preserve Saadani National Park and its unique character by respecting our rules and regulations.

- Keep to the 50 kph speed limit. This is for your safety and the safety of all wildlife.
- Driving at night is not allowed (7 pm to 6 am).
- Stay on the roads/tracks except where you are specifically allowed to drive off-road.

- Be considerate of the wildlife – do not harass, feed or interfere with wildlife. Act accordingly – do not get out of, stand on, or hang out of vehicles near any animal.
- Green turtles are endangered and their breeding sites are limited. Please do not disturb adults, hatchlings or nests on the beach.
- Coral reefs are sensitive habitats for marine life. Please do not break off or walk on the fragile corals.
- Leave all plants, animals, skulls, bones, rocks or any objects in the Park where they belong.
- Do not bring any animal or plant into the Park.
- Picnic at specially authorised places and avoid disturbing the wildlife.
- Please do not leave your trash behind: make sure to either take it with you, or dispose of it properly. Extinguish your cigarettes in your vehicle's ashtray to avoid bush fires
- Do not start fires unless at authorised camps.
- Remember that the Park's gates open at 6 am and close at 6 pm.

Saadani National Park



Located in the centre of the historic triangle of Bagamoyo, Pangani and Zanzibar, Saadani National Park covers 1100 km². It is the only wildlife sanctuary in Tanzania bordering the sea. The climate is coastal, hot and humid. It offers a unique combination of both marine and mainland flora and fauna in a culturally fascinating setting. About 30 species of larger mammals are present as well as numerous reptiles and birds. Besides many species of fish (over 40), Green turtles, Humpback whales (nyangumi) and dolphins (pomboo) also occur in the ocean nearby.

Gazetted in 2005, it encompasses a preserved ecosystem including the former Saadani game reserve, the former Mkwaja ranch area, the Wami River as well as the Zaraninge Forest. Many villages exist around the boundaries of the Park. In 1969, when Saadani Game Reserve was officially created, Saadani village elders were consulted and the loss of cultivated land was compensated for. Before being included in the national park, the Zaraninge Forest was managed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) whose goal was to preserve the extremely high botanical diversity of one of the last coastal rain forests remaining in Tanzania. The Mkwaja area is the reminder of a large cattle ranch which has been run from 1952 to 2000. The presence of many dams and paddocks attest to the former existence of the ranch. 🦋

HISTORY & CULTURE

Saadani village once was an important harbour-town and slave trading centre in East Africa. Now it is a small Swahili fishing village with about 800 inhabitants whose livelihood is mostly fishing. In the other villages adjacent to the Park, coconut growing and farming are other important sources of revenue.

After periods of Portuguese and Arab domination, the region gained importance in the 18th and 19th century following a rising international demand for ivory and slaves. The actual Saadani village emerged, together with towns like Bagamoyo and Pangani, as new trading centres connecting Zanzibar with long-distance trade routes from Tabora. At the end of the 19th century, Bwana Heri bin Juma was ruling Saadani. In oral tradition he is the mythological founder-hero of the village as he resisted all Zanzibari attempts to occupy the town and defeated the Sultan's troops in 1882. Bwana Heri was initially not opposed to European traders until the arrival

of the German colonialists. In 1886 the German protectorate's borders were established. Two years later, the coastal people organized resistance against the Germans under the joint leadership of Abushiri bin Salim al Harth and Bwana Heri. On 6th June 1889 Saadani was bombarded and taken by the Germans. Bwana Heri being considered by the Germans as an honourable enemy, he was told to rebuild Saadani.

Saadani's and Bagamoyo's caravan trade went into decline at the end of the 19th century while Dar es Salaam rose to be the most important trading centre of the coastal region. Commercial production along the coast, such as rice, sugar and copra, which were exported to Zanzibar and the Indian Ocean, disappeared after the German invasion. They were replaced by cash crops such as coffee, cotton and sisal for the European market. Following the transfer of the protectorate to the British after the First World War sisal, kapok, cashew estates and cattle ranches were established in the Saadani area. Ruins of stone houses still bear testimony to the former flourishing conditions. An old German boma (government house) and several graves can still be found in Saadani. 🦋

SAVANNA

The humid savanna of Saadani National Park can be divided into three easily distinguishable types: tall grass savanna, with herbaceous cover growing up to 2 m and scattered palm trees; short grass grazing lands mostly situated on former sisal plantations; and black cotton plains, where the clayey soil creates particular harsh conditions. Moreover different degrees of tree cover can be distinguished. Typical for Saadani is *Acacia zanzibarica* with its long spines, which covers large areas of the park.



Fire plays an important role in these habitats in keeping them open. A careful fire management is therefore indispensable, which means controlled burning of selected areas. The other important factor regulating vegetation development in savannas are the herbivores. They can roughly be separated into two main groups depending on their feeding habits: browsers (leaf eaters) and grazers (grass eaters).

Typical inhabitants of the tall grass savannas are the buffalo (*Syncerus caffer caffer*, nyati or mbogo), which weigh up to 850 kg. Several herds of Liechtenstein's hartebeests (*Alcelaphus lichtensteinii*, kongoni) can be observed grazing in Saadani National Park. The common waterbucks (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*, kuro) occur all over the Park area. Weighting up to 270 kg these grazers can be easily recognised by the white ring around their tails. The density of Bohor reedbucks (*Redunca redunca*, tohe) is especially high in Saadani National Park, although this medium-sized antelope (45 kg) might be difficult to spot in tall grass where they lie down for shelter. Warthogs (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*, ngiri) are also omnipresent and even come into Saadani village. As most of the villagers are Muslim and avoid pork, they have learned that they will not be harmed.



Saadani National Park is also known for its numerous giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*, twiga), the national symbol of Tanzania and tallest animal in the world. Their tongues have

special callus plates which make them particularly well adapted to browse on spiny acacia trees.

Large herds of White-bearded wildebeests (*Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus*, nyumbu) also graze in the short grass savannas. They were released in the area in the 1970's when the Game reserve's zoo, for which they were initially imported from northern Tanzania, was closed. Other introduced species are Plains zebra (*Equus burchelli*, punda milia) and Eland (*Tragelaphus oryx*, pofu).

The Lion (*Panthera leo*, simba), the largest of the African carnivores, is also found in Saadani, although it is rarely seen. At night you may also hear the hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*, fisi) and encounter genetids (*Genetta sp.*, kanu), porcupines (*Hystrix cristata*, nungunungu) and civets (*Civetticis civetta*, fungo). Other species which can be observed within the perimeter of the Park are Bushbucks (*Tragelaphus scriptus*, pongo), Bushpigs (*Potamochoerus porcus*, nguruwe mwitu), Yellow baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*, nyani) or Vervet monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiopicus*, tumbili).



RIVER & OCEAN

From East to West, the open ocean with coral reefs changes to brackish water ecosystems characterized by mangrove forests, salt pans and bare saline areas. Further inland, the Wami river is the most important fresh water source besides numerous temporary rivers and dams. At low tide the sea retreats up to 100 meters and forms a convenient passage for local people and wild animals. These beaches are the only place North of Dar es Salaam where sea turtles still come to lay their eggs. The most common species is the Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, kasa uziwa), the largest of the hard-shelled sea turtles. Besides nest thieves on the beach, turtles are particularly threatened by commercial fisheries and water pollution. The marine extension of the park includes the Mafui sandbanks, whose colourful coral reefs are important breeding sites for many fish species.



Evergreen mangrove trees grow in the transitional zone, just above the mean sea water level. These salt tolerant tidal forests provide a resting and feeding place for many bird species, bats, monkeys, hippos and reptiles. Numerous species of fish or prawns also lay their eggs in these protected

habitats. The high demand for the resistant mangrove wood leads to overexploitation, making the protection of these forests even more important. In Saadani National Park, large mangrove forests grow along the Wami River. This is also the place where large groups of hippos (*Hippopotamus amphibius*, kiboko) can be observed. Nile crocodiles (*Crocodilus niloticus*, mamba) also live here. The Wami River is also a good place for watching birds such as kingfishers, fish eagles and many species of wading birds.



FORESTS & SHRUBS

The poorly known coastal forests are characterized by a high biodiversity with many plants occurring only in these areas (endemics). Forests play an important role in protecting the soil against erosion and thus regulate the water cycle. They are especially vulnerable to illegal logging, charcoal production and farming expansion. Besides the two large forests of Zaraninge and Kwamsisi, many of the smaller patches of forest and shrubs represent important habitats for animals.

In Saadani, elephants (*Loxodonta africana*, tembo or ndovu) are relatively shy and usually hide during the day in woody parts of the Park. Leopards (*Panthera pardus*, chui) also occur in dense bush and thickets. Seldom seen, these animals are mainly nocturnal and can live in close proximity to humans. Other showy animals living mostly in woody areas are the



Greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*, tandala) and smaller antelopes such as Suni (*Neotragus moschatus*, paa) and Duiker (*Cephalophus sp.*, funo). The crowns of the trees are inhabited by Colobus monkeys (*Colobus guereza*, mbega) which, unlike most other monkeys, subsist mainly on leaves, strictly nocturnal bush babies (*Galagos sp.*, komba), as well as many fruit-eating bird species, insects and butterflies.

Key

- Main road
- Minor road
- Ranger trails
- ▲ Villages; lodges, campsites
- ✈ Airstrips
- ▲ Waterholes
- ==== Railway
- ▭ Saadani National Park
- ▭ See, river
- ▭ Territory outside park boundaries
- ▭ Forest (inside/outside)
- ▭ Black cotton plain

Map based on a research project of the Integrated Institute of Biology, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich