Kaudulla National Park

Kaudulla National Park, situated alongside the Kaudulla tank, said to have built by Princess Biso Bandara, a sister of King Mahasen, is one of the prominent national parks of Sri Lanka.

The park is unique as it is the only national park where a one-third of its area is surrounded by water. Situated in the Polonnaruwa District, it is in the AGA divisions of Medirigiriya and Hingurakgoda and comprising the villages of Rathnale, Gal Oya, Rotawewa, Sinhagama, Kithulthuwa, Divulankadawala, Viharagama, Tissapura, Memokorowwa and Kaudulla. The western border of the Kaudulla Park signifies a chain of mountains about 60,500 metre in height. And in the east it borders are the Kaudulla tank and a scrubby forest.

The region receives an annual rainfall of 1,500 to 2,000 millimeters from the rain from the North East monsoon. A dry period persists from April to October and temperatures range from 20.6 centigrade (69.1 F) to 34.5 centigrade (94.1 F). Many plant and grass species grow well during the rainy season and due to the abundance of food and water, even during the dry period, large number of herbivorous mammals are attracted to the park.

Most of the tourists visit the park during the dry season, as it is referred to as the spring season of the park. But according to tourism experts the best time to visit Kaudulla National Park is between August and December, as the population of elephants peak to over 200 in September and October.

Apart from the elephants, Kaudulla is home to 23 species of mammals including Sambar deer, Sri Lankan Axis deer, Chevrotain, wild boar, leopard and sloth bear. But a leopard or a sloth bear is sighted very rarely. This park is also one of the sites in which the Grey slender loris is reportedly found in Sri Lanka. Following the discovery of a two-month old albino Sri Lankan axis deer calf, Kaudulla is probably the only national park in Sri Lanka where albino axis deer exists.

In addition, the national park recorded 25 species of reptiles, 26 species of fish and 160 species of birds. Among the large water birds spot-billed pelicans, Lesser Adjutant, Asian Spoonbill, Grey-headed fish eagle, black-headed ibis painted stork, open bill stork are common sights in the park.

It is also home to freshwater turtles, flap-shelled turtle and Indian black turtle.