

The Livingstone Weekly

10 May 2013

Dear All

My header is the rainclouds on the Maun-Nata road. In January we had taken a trip to Namibia and Botswana. It had been a dry trip until we arrived in Botswana and then the rain came down. We left Maun for Elephant Sands late in the day because the rain did not want to stop and the back of the car was just a load of puddles. Finally, though, we set sail only to be rained upon most of the way.

We headed towards Elephant Sands, just 50 km north of Nata. Obviously we weren't going to put up the soggy tent, but booked a chalet and relaxed in the homely atmosphere of the lodge just looking at the rain clouds which seemed to surround us.



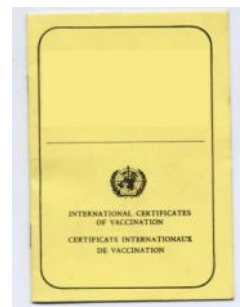
Throughout our trip we had encountered Buffalo Weavers at almost every stop. Elephant Sands was no different and the weavers had made their nest in one of the acacia trees nearby. The birds seemed to be our only companions as we sat by the waterhole.

We only stayed at Elephant Sands for the night. But that was fine; we knew that the animals had plenty of water out there in the forests and did not need to come to Elephant Sands' waterhole to drink.

Ben, the owner, continues to upgrade the facilities at Elephant Sands and we could see some more improvements. I had to smile at the Christmas tree which was still decorating the entrance to the lodge and wondered if, at this late stage, it was to become a permanent fixture. (If you don't recognise it, it is a pile of elephant poo!)

Yellow Fever Doc

Southend Travel is selling the required doc for International Certificates of Vaccination – the one required to show a Yellow Fever Certificate.



ZAMBIA

Donation of microlight to monitor and protect wildlife

From Peace Parks Foundation

On 26 February 2013, Ms Sylvia T. Masebo, MP, the Zambian Minister of Tourism and Arts officially opened a hangar, constructed by Peace Parks Foundation, and launched a Bat Hawk microlight for Sioma Ngwezi National Park.



The hangar and the microlight were both sponsored by Mr Neville and Mrs Pamela Isdell. Mrs Isdell is a Founder Member of the Peace Parks Club, having supported the Foundation's work since 1998. With this munificent donation of \$100 000, Mr Neville and Mrs Pamela Isdell have now upgraded their membership to the corporate level. Peace Parks Foundation thanks Mr and Mrs Isdell for their generosity and for their continued support over so many years.

The microlight will be used to monitor and protect the wildlife of Sioma Ngwezi National Park. Sioma Ngwezi is being developed as an integral component of the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA), with a €3.3 million grant from the German Federal Ministry for Cooperation and Development, through KfW.

In August 2012, Minister Masebo commissioned new headquarters and staff accommodation for the park, which are presently being constructed.

At the launching of the Bat Hawk microlight, Minister Masebo thanked Mr and Mrs Isdell for their donation, and Peace Parks Foundation for facilitating it. She also thanked both for supporting the development of Sioma Ngwezi National Park. Minister Masebo reiterated the importance of developing the KAZA TFCA as a vehicle for regional economic integration through the sustainable management of transboundary natural resources and tourism development.

Private sector responds to Forex control

From the Zambia Weekly

The private sector has come out strongly against government's plans to introduce foreign exchange control in Zambia via the Bank of Zambia (amendment) Bill. Government has suggested to allow the Bank of Zambia to "regulate and monitor" a range of financial in- and outflows to "promote the efficient operation of the foreign exchange system".

The private sector submitted that it "would like to advise that the key ingredient in any economy is confidence. The word REGULATE in the preamble (...) conjures up fears of possibility of remittances or receipts of foreign exchange being delayed, denied or interfered with".

In addition, the new Bill is proposing that the Bank of Zambia may "prescribe the maximum rate of interest and other charges that financial service providers may impose".

The private sector submitted that government should pursue other courses of action than "over-regulation". It proposed that "government should devote more effort to developing the financial sector as articulated in the Financial Sector Development Plan. In addition government should continue limiting its domestic borrowing in order to avoid crowding out the private sector."

"Short-term cyclical fluctuations in the foreign exchange or any other markets must not be the reason to take permanent legislative measures that will have long-term negative consequences on the economy. Furthermore, misbehaviour of few companies should not justify enacting legislation that will affect investment flows". It pointed out that the Bill would be "likely to work contrary towards government objectives of employment creation and poverty reduction".

Finally, the private sector submitted that government (again) had introduced regulatory measures without consultation, and it therefore proposed that the Bill should be withdrawn from parliament to allow for extensive consultations and an analysis of other options available.

The submission was made by the Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Mines, the National Farmers Union, the Chambers of Small and Medium Business Associations, and the Tourism Council.

Zambia's tourism

After my trip to Namibia which has a thriving tourism industry, I had to do some research. Throughout the trip I was wondering why tourism worked in Namibia better than it worked in Zambia.

I found out was that Namibia earns about US\$1,000million from its tourist industry; Zambia around US\$125million. Namibia has a population of 2.3million; Zambia a population of 13.5million. The tourism industry in Namibia employs around 80,000; in Zambia it is around 20,000. It is perfectly clear from these figures that Zambia has work to do.



Namibia has a coastline where line-fishing is very popular; it has Etosha Pan National Park and it has lots of desert! Compare that to Zambia's 20 National Parks including South Luangwa, Lower Zambezi and Kafue – amazing attractions, all of them. And we have the Victoria Falls, a World Heritage Site and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. We have the Zambezi, Luangwa and Kafue Rivers. Where are we going wrong?

I have read loads of reports on the internet about why Zambia's tourism does not work and they all point to the cost of travel and accommodation in Zambia. Also, interestingly, one report stated that our workforce did not perform as well – that it took either more people or more time to achieve the same result as in other countries.

Namibia's international tourism is mainly from Angola (360,000) South Africa (250,000) and Germany (80,000). About half of the African visitors came to Namibia to visit 'Friends or Family'. I had to smile at one comment in this report: *It is important to note that Zambians came mainly for shopping in the town of Katima Mulilo entering through the Wenela border post and therefore do not stay long.*

I must say that I am perplexed at the number of Angolans coming to Namibia. Apart from those who come to visit friends and family, I think we can assume that most of them go to Namibia to go shopping, like Zambians who visit. Whatever the case, the money which is spent by Zambians and Angolans is equally an input into the national economy, although small in comparison to visitors who go 'on holiday'.

The report by Namibia Tourism stated that the non-African tourists were the ones who spent the money and it was here that the government had to concentrate its marketing.

So, what did I see and notice while I was on my trip? The country was fairly quiet as this was not a major tourism time. Most European tourists come to Namibia in July-September with some over the Christmas period. We were travelling in January.

On infrastructure: generally the roads were excellent. Although many minor roads were dirt (or salt along the coast), there were graders working – we saw plenty. The road signage was good – I knew exactly where we were and where we were going from the signs.

Accommodation. We stayed in Etosha National Park which is run by Namibia Tourism. The facilities were good, although I did not like the atmosphere because they are made for many tourists and I felt that the campsites lacked character. Having said that, we do not have, in Zambia, any government campsites or budget accommodation worth talking of ... whether good, bad or indifferent. The campsites and chalets which used to be in Zambia in our National Parks have long-gone. Ngoma Lodge in Kafue is now a Scout Camp. Lochinvar Lodge is the same and although there was a campsite it was burnt down several years ago with only the hand pump for water operating (I hear that this has since stopped working).



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The private facilities we stayed at en route in Namibia were also very good and reasonably priced. Each campsite had its own table and bench, electricity point, barbeque stand and rubbish bin. Ablution facilities in government and private were clean and all had hot water.

Who else was travelling? Those that I did see were white people, with one coloured family I noticed at Okaukuejo. Along the coast and fishing were white and coloured people. The coloured people have a passion for sea fishing and come in droves to the Skeleton Coast equipped with tents or caravans and a big fridge to take home their catch. Most of the people spoke Afrikaans so I am assuming that they were either Namibian or South African.



Money. I think my only complaint about Namibia's tourism is its lack of bureaux de change. Also it was difficult to pay for anything in any other currency than Namibian dollars or Rand. There were, though, ATMs at most petrol stations which I thought was a great innovation. I just know that had I been able to buy things in US\$ we would have spent more. In Zambia we have just re-introduced currency controls which require products and services to be advertised and paid in kwacha. This, I am sure, has meant that our visitors will spend less because we are, like Namibia, making it more difficult to spend money.

Borders. Our borders are well-known for being slow and expensive. It took about 5 minutes to go through the border with Namibia. In Zambia it takes a minimum of 30 minutes ... and can take many hours. It cost us two, on British passports, nothing in visa fees into Namibia and US\$30 for the vehicle. In Zambia two Brits would have paid US\$100 in visas and about US\$100 for the car.

So, if Zambia wishes to compete with its neighbours in tourism we need radical changes to the way we operate. Namibia recognises that western tourists are those who should be promoted because they tend to actually come to Namibia 'on holiday' and they spend more. On the domestic tourism front, according to the report, they feel that Namibians are more likely to travel 'on holiday' to see cultural activities and historical sites rather than nature-based tourism. The government, therefore, is intent on improving their historical sites and to promote more cultural festivals in Namibia.

So, what are my recommendations for improving tourism in Zambia?

Firstly we have to reduce the costs. I have heard that visas may change and we hope that government will realise that if we can increase our tourist numbers we do not need the income from visas. If visas are imposed for political motives then we have to accept this and realise that we are reducing our numbers of tourists. The cost of bringing in a vehicle is one which has to change, as does the time it takes to cross our borders.

Secondly, Zambia has to do something with its facilities. Take Lochinvar and Blue Lagoon National Parks. There are absolutely no facilities at either. Poaching thrives because the people have no jobs and are poor. Either government should come in and provide accommodation and camping facilities, or the parks have to work on a public-private basis with investors coming in to provide those facilities ... and, along with it the jobs for the people and the protection of the wildlife.

Lastly, as Namibia has seen, domestic tourism can be increased by promoting cultural and historical tourism. I think I would like to add to this sporting tourism. We are a country in love with football. Were we to support more football leagues we would find that it would also increase our domestic tourism as people travelled to support their team.

OPENING OF SPILLWAY GATES AT THE KARIBA DAM

AS A FOLLOW UP TO OUR FEBRUARY 2013 NOTICE ABOUT THE OPENING OF THE SPILLWAY GATES, PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT TWO SPILLWAY GATES WILL BE OPENED AT 50% EACH TO DISCHARGE A TOTAL OF ABOUT 1,500M³/S.

DATE: SATURDAY, 16TH MARCH 2013
TIME: 12.00 HOURS
GATES: TWO, OPEN HALFWAY

THIS IS AIMED AT LOWERING THE LAKE WATERS TO WITHIN SAFE OPERATING LEVELS. THE GATES WILL REMAIN OPEN UNTIL THE SAFE OPERATING LEVEL HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS, THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND COMMUNITIES ALONG THE ZAMBEZI RIVER DOWNSTREAM OF THE KARIBA DAM ARE ADVISED TO TAKE THIS NOTICE SERIOUSLY TO AVOID LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY.

MEANWHILE, THE AUTHORITY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE WEATHER AND HYDROLOGICAL SITUATION OVER THE ZAMBEZI CATCHMENT AREA UPSTREAM OF THE KARIBA DAM.

ZIMBABWE

Tourism Police in Victoria Falls Town

TO ALL BUSINESSES AND STAKEHOLDERS IN VICTORIA FALLS - The Tourism Police Committee are making an urgent appeal to all businesses to come forward as contributors to the Tourism Police Unit. This Unit whilst not flawless has been an integral component of the revival of tourism in our town and has been emulated in other towns and cities in Zimbabwe and the region. Tourism Police ensure that visitors to Victoria Falls can walk around in the town in a safe and hassle free environment. Unfortunately the Unit sometimes falls short on this mandate but blame can only be apportioned to under staffing and inadequate funding which can easily be rectified if the entire business community took responsibility. Funding and support of the Tourism Police has been left to a handful of private sector tourism related businesses which is unacceptable as every business in Victoria Falls directly or indirectly benefits from it. ...

At present with the existing contributions there is insufficient funding to cover monthly salaries for the Tourism Police Officers and closure of this vital unit is imminent. We challenge retail and wholesale businesses; banks and financial services; restaurants and food outlets; lodges and tour operators to immediately commit to a monthly contribution to ensure continuity of this important service. ...

HWANGE ADVENTURE CYCLE PUMPING LEGS FOR WATER 2013 HWANGE NATIONAL PARK : 25 – 27 JULY 2013

If you want to participate, details are on:

<http://storiesbeyondthevictoriafalls.wordpress.com/zimbabwe/hwange-national-park/>

Kariba's Lions

During the week it was panic stations as three lions killed two people near Kariba Town. Kariba is actually a spread-out town as it ranges around the hills. The authorities were quick to warn the people not to walk around at night, especially to outlying bars and for religious gatherings.

Several attempts were made to catch the lions with, on one occasion, a scout being injured by a stray bullet.

The Wildlife Authority used a zebra carcass to bait the lions and laid in wait. Here is the final report from Kariba Animal Welfare Fund:

UPDATE - LIONS IN KARIBA

KARIBA ANIMAL WELFARE FUND TRUST IN CONJUNCTION WITH ZIMBABWE PARKS & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The 3 Lionesses - 1 Mother and her 2 sub adult cubs were captured and put to sleep on Thursday night.

Thanks and praise goes out to Parks and Wildlife for taking the lead in this and to all other Departments, Authorities, Residents and Volunteers who played a part in ending the 4 nerve wrecking days.

As was suspected the Mother Lioness had a thick scarring around her neck from a wire snare and her back leg was lame and badly swollen.

We cannot stress enough to all, the need to report any suspected injured Wild Animals.

African Woman's Art Exhibition

Victoria Falls Safari Lodge on the 4th of May 2013

Patron Mr Larry Norton

So far the following Artists have confirmed to exhibit

From Zimbabwe, Kerry Bradford, paintings, Nicole Sanderson, paintings, Harare,

<http://nicolesandersonpaintings.blogspot.com/search/label/Gallery>

Alison Baker, paintings, Alision Baker Art on facebook, Sharon Perry, Papier Mache Sculptures

Sue Cotteral, mixed media, Luciana Dinara, papier Mache

From Botswana, Bettina Kelly, Mosaics , Tina Claffey, Photography, Sue Griesel Paintings,

Cathy Rann Paintings, Pandamatenga Womans Group, quilting.

From Zambia, Alli Shanton, Mosaics, Tamryn Middleton www.tamrynpohl.com watercolours

If you are keen to join us, please email the organizer Bettina Kelly. bettina.coffeebuzz@gmail.com

Victoria Fall Safari Lodge offers a Special on the weekend of the 3rd, 4th and 5th of May for anyone that is attending the Art Exhibition. Bed & Breakfast for 93 US per Person only. Bookings can be made under.

resman@saf lodge.co.zw

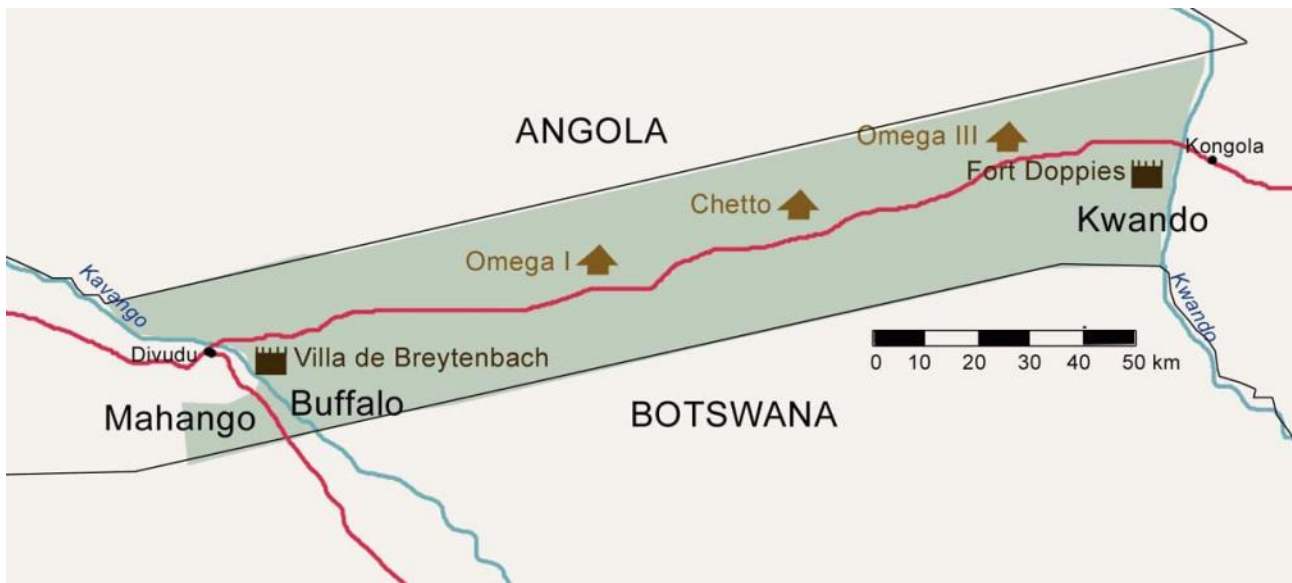
Entrance Fee will be US 2 per person.

Moneys raised will be going towards ROAC (Rock Of A Community)

An Education and Skills Training Program for vulnerable women and their children in Victoria Falls under Sharon Parry

If you would like to find out more or support ROAC please feel free to contact Sharon Parry shineforafrica@yahoo.com

The Problems in Bwabawata

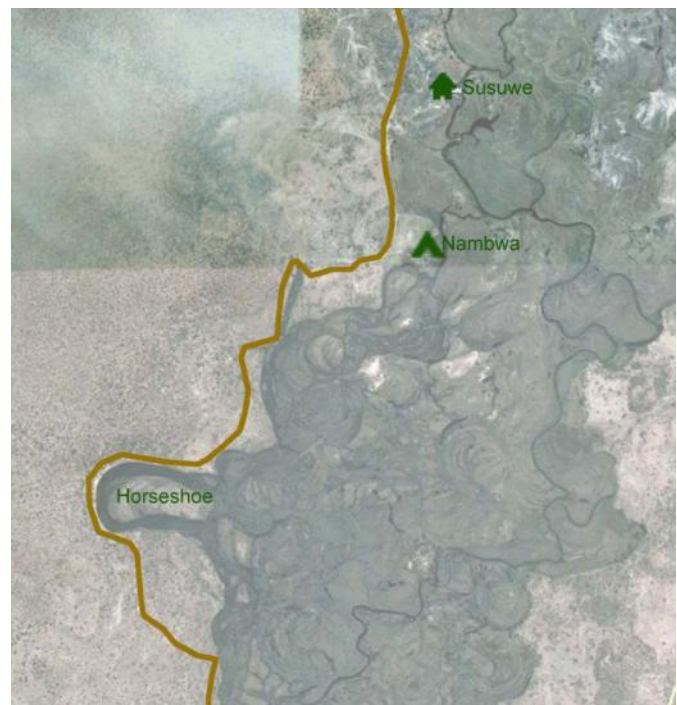


The main problem with Bwabwata National Park in the Caprivi Strip is that it is long and thin with only water at each end. Between the Kwando River to the east and the Kavango River to the west, there is no perennial water, a distance of 200 km.

We have heard in the past about the villagers, (for villages do exist within the park), who have little or no access to livelihoods, being allowed to harvest some medicinal plants from the forests and also being allowed to keep some small domestic animals. Because the area has been proclaimed a park the main income-generating projects for the people are either in wildlife management or in tourism. But tourism is not great in the centre and is concentrated at either end.

At the moment a row has erupted between the Traditional Authorities – Mashi and Muyuni, with the Mayeyi on the sidelines, as they vie for inclusion in new concessions along the Kwando River. A concession to include, according to a report, The Horseshoe, a stunningly beautiful piece of floodplain along the Kwando, is allocated to the Mashi Traditional Authority.

Just upriver, not 4 km away, from The Horseshoe is Nambwa Campsite and the Muyuni Traditional Authority had applied for a renewal of their concession to include a tented camp on a 25-year lease.



Conservationists claim that no Environmental Impact Assessment has been conducted in the area which they feel is very sensitive. As the numbers of animals increase with their continued protection they need to get to the river to drink and bathe. Development, therefore, they feel has to be carefully planned to protect the lives of people and the wildlife in the area, as well as protecting a fragile floodplain.

The row, I am sure will continue, but finally be resolved. It just seems to me that, while the villagers argue over a small stretch of land along the river – maybe 5 km in length – the rest of the park lies idle with many more villagers needing an income. Surely, Bwabwata needs to copy the model of Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, where boreholes are constructed throughout the park for the benefit of wildlife and the people who will earn an income from wildlife and tourism.

Water in Windhoek

Windhoek is supplied by water from three dams. This year the rains have not been good to Windhoek and the dams are low

The manager of corporate communications at the City of Windhoek, Joshua Amukugo: *Dam levels are substantially lower than at the same time last year and total water in storage in the three central area dams as on February 25 2013 was 54% compared to the 91% on February 27 2012. The three central area dams are hence 37% lower than last year. Due to the dry and extremely hot conditions in January 2013, demand in Windhoek was more than 10% higher than January 2012. At the current demand patterns, and taking normal demand growth into consideration, the current effective supply from storage will not be able to sustain the demand.*

WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

KENYA AIRWAYS TO COMMENCE FLIGHTS TO LIVINGSTONE

News are coming out of Nairobi that The Pride of Africa will launch flights to Livingstone / Zambia in June, then routing on to Harare / Zimbabwe. The available schedule information pegs the operations between 02nd of June until initially 25th October, but if successful might extend further beyond that date. The aircraft on the route will be an Embraer 190E, which increasingly has turned into the domestic and regional work horse aircraft for Kenya Airways, as more of these sleep birds await delivery in coming months. ...

TANZANIA LISTED ALONGSIDE CHINA, VIETNAM AND THAILAND FOR IVORY SANCTIONS

It was learned overnight through communications from sources attending the CITES Conference in Bangkok / Thailand that the global anger and outrage over the steady flow of blood ivory from Africa to Asia is now finally turning into some action, as CITES has threatened China, Vietnam, Thailand and Tanzania, among others, to either pull up their socks in the fight against the criminal trade or else face a ban from trading as part of an extensive sanctions regime which would come into force in a year if no improvements are seen. The countries named will have to produce, on the fast track, a new management plan how they intend to combat poaching and smuggling and if targets set by March next year are not met face major sanctions. Tanzania's own parliament last year received an undisputed report that nearly 30 elephant a day were killed in the country, largely in the little guarded Selous and Ruaha, though later reports seen earlier this year put the figure substantially higher. ...

OTHER STUFF

International Rivers Organisation

From San Francisco Herald

A 26-person Berkeley nonprofit that's saved rivers across the globe is getting a little global attention itself. International Rivers, headquartered in the Brower Center, on Thursday won a coveted MacArthur Foundation prize, worth \$750,000, for its work opposing dams and helping countries and corporations around the world find alternative energy sources.

"We are absolutely thrilled and honored to receive this award, plus the recognition that goes along with it," said Aviva Imhof, campaign director for International Rivers. "This will help us tremendously." The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation since 2006 has awarded cash prizes, up to \$1.5 million, to organizations that show "exceptional creativity and effectiveness" in tackling human rights and environmental issues, ranging from juvenile justice reform to rain forest preservation.

Where International Rivers Works



From International Rivers Organisation

March 14 is the International Day of Action for Rivers and Against Dams. Every year, thousands of people around the world lift their voices to celebrate the world's rivers and those who struggle to protect them. The International Day of Action for Rivers is a day to celebrate victories such as dam removal and river restoration. It is a day to take to the streets, demonstrate and demand improvements in the policies and practices of decision makers. It is a day to educate one another about the threats facing our rivers, and learn about better water and energy solutions. Above all, it is a day to unite – by acting together, we demonstrate that these issues are not merely local, but global in scope.

The Zambezi River: My Inspiration

Anabel Lemos, (Zambia)

The Zambezi River is the fourth largest in Africa and the largest system flowing into the Indian Ocean. Born in Zambia, it crosses Angola, Namibia, Botswana, back to Zambia, then Zimbabwe and finally flows through the heart of Mozambique, pumping life into one of the most diverse and important ecosystems in Africa.

The first time I saw the Zambezi, I fell in love with this marvelous river and its people. A night on the river is unforgettable, the peacefulness of the night with a sky full of stars, the water flowing, the sound of hippos and of drums in the distance - it is one of the most wonderful and magical experiences. The more time you spend along the Zambezi the more you understand its beauty. Seeing the way traditional habits harmonize with natural patterns, how floods link up with floodplain farming, the way wildlife migration patterns and mating timed themselves to seasonal changes of the river. A beautiful coexistence has been achieved through millions of years of coevolution.

But as with many things in Africa, great beauty is often mixed with abuse and suffering. In the case of the Zambezi, large dam such as the Kariba and Cahora Bassa have been at the heart of this abuse and suffering. The dams have artificially regulated the river, killing the seasonal patterns responsible for so many natural and social functions. Now wetlands no longer receive fresh flood water as often. Seawater is creeping inland, making farming impossible in once-fertile areas. Subsistence farmers lose their food crops from unexpected dam releases. The dams have turned floods from a blessing into a curse. And all this to produce energy for export while less than 14% of Mozambique's population has access to electricity.

Now the Mozambique government wants to build another mega-dam, Mphanda Nkuwa, which will only worsen these existing problems.

I have a dream that one day the Zambezi River will be free from the impacts of dams - that it will once again support millions of people and the biodiversity that has made the Zambezi so special. I have been fighting for this for a decade and will continue to fight till my end. I cannot accept the greed, corruption and lack of insight that threaten this ecosystem that brings so much good to so many. The need for energy cannot supersede the right of the people along the Zambezi to live. The past has shown that the consequences of dams can be a life or death matter for many. Rivers are life!

From Top 25 Photographs in the Wilderness National Geographic



The forest herd, by guide Etienne Oosthuizen. "Buffalo herds drift through the Lower Zambezi flood plains like nomads. Moving through the Winter Thorn forest on their way to the Zambezi river to quench their thirst. They come from the vast open plains that lie along the Zambezi escarpment. This cycle plays out each and every day, but as the winter goes deeper into dryness they tend to linger longer at the water's edge before returning to the foothills. I captured this group, which were part of a much larger herd of about 500 animals, waiting in a forest clearing. I did not expect this channel to form, parting the herd for this big bull to walk through. He was kicking up dust as he walked. A magical moment..." (Etienne Oosthuizen / photographic africa.com)

A pirate walked into a bar, and the bartender said "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while. What happened? You look terrible."

"What do you mean?" said the pirate, "I feel fine."

"What about the wooden leg? You didn't have that before."

"Well," said the pirate, "We were in a battle, and I got hit by a cannon ball, but I'm fine now."

The bartender replied, "Well, OK, but what about that hook? "What happened to your hand?"

The pirate explained, "We were in another battle. I boarded a ship and got into a sword fight. My hand was cut off. I got fitted with a hook, but I'm fine, really."

"What about that eye patch?"

"Oh," said the pirate, "One day we were at sea, and a flock of birds flew over. I looked up, and one of them pooped in my eye."

"You're kidding," said the bartender. "You couldn't lose an eye just from a little bird's turd."

"It was my first day using the hook."

Have a good week

Gill