

Dear All

My header is a bit of an odd one for me – a school in Siansowa. But, because I used to be a teacher, I think it is justified.

This primary school is near Kariba Bush Club and is being supported by School Club Zambia. I went to visit and, I have to say, I was saddened ... I think too that this is a common story throughout Zambia in village primary schools.

The facts of this school are:

There are 600 students.

The teachers run 3 shifts in a day, so effectively they run three 'schools' to cope with the number of children.

The government built 5 classrooms for the school but two of them are occupied by teachers as their homes because there is no accommodation for them in the village. So the classes are run in three classrooms and under a tree.

It is unlikely that any of the children will go on to secondary school.

The Millenium Development Goals for Zambia in primary education have been reached – ie we have 100% enrolment in primary school. The 2011 UN report states for Zambia, though: *The emphasis needs to be on the quality of education ...*



Yes, we have our children in schools, but have they got a teacher? Have they got books? Are their teachers properly trained?

For anyone reading this you take *reading* for granted. But not everyone is so lucky. The primary school education which the children are given in this one example of a village school will probably be very scanty. And, after leaving school, because there is little or no access to books, the chances are that the children will forget how to read – they will *lapse into illiteracy*.

We cannot expect our teachers to take on the workload of three sessions in a day. When I was a teacher I spent as much time marking books and preparing lessons as I did in the classroom. Where is the time for our teachers to prepare interesting lessons and to mark the children's work?

The government has a lot of work to do but I also feel that the parents need to be more pro-active in their children's education. At the school in Siansowa I was told that the parents felt that it was the government's job to provide the education for the children. We need our parents to realise that they have a responsibility to help ... The parents in and around Siansowa pay very little tax as they are mostly subsistence farmers. We also know that they don't have much money, but, surely they can help the school in maintenance, clearing the grounds and, those who can read, can help by listening to their children read ... all sorts of ways. These children are Zambia's future ...

The School Club Zambia is working with several schools in Livingstone and Kariba. The aim of the NGO is to help the schools raise funds to buy books and equipment. At the school in Siansowa they are starting a garden. The produce grown in the garden can then be sold by the school.



The first job was to put a fence around the garden to stop cattle and goats entering and eating the crops. The fence poles were put in place and ... then there was no money.

The two volunteers helping with School Club Zambia – Katie Prowse and Gráinne de Fevre – made a plan to raise the money. They decided to do a bungee jump from the Vic Falls bridge. They advertised their proposed jump and well-wishers pledged money if the pair actually completed the bungee.

On 31 October, the girls threw themselves off the bridge.

They raised £1,400. That's enough for the fence ... and a lot more besides ...



ZAWA Wins Again ...

Last week I was told a story about a French couple who had kayaked from the source of the Zambezi to Livingstone. (Not too sure about the starting point as the story did not say. So I don't know, but doubt, that they did the Angola bit). The distance covered by the couple in their kayak would have been over 800 km and taken them many days.

This is an amazing feat and one which Zambia should be proud to use as part of its marketing. But what happens when they kayak the last stretch to The Waterfront? They are seen by ZAWA scouts who promptly made chase to catch the culprits for boating in the park ... ZAWA wanted its pound of flesh in Park Fees.

We always shoot ourselves in the foot in Zambia when it comes to marketing. We are having more and more people wanting to do expeditions of an odd nature, like this one of kayaking along the Zambezi or David Lemon walking along it. We also have journalists and film-makers who want to make professional films about Zambia. But what do we do? We want to charge them for each camera; we want to charge them filming rates for entering our parks ... the list goes on. If Zambia really wants to promote itself to the outside world, we should be paying these people to visit us ... At least we could let them come in for free ...

Yellow Fever

The requirement for all people travelling from Zambia to South Africa to have a Yellow Fever certification has really damaged Zambia's tourist appeal. For about a year now this rule has been in place by South African authorities and no-one can really understand how it came about. Felix Chaila, CEO of Zambia Tourist Board states the arrivals in Livingstone have dropped by 20%.

According to the World Health Organisation there are no reported cases of Yellow Fever in Zambia. I was told that South Africa had made a mistake, but I can't believe that ... So what reason could there have been for its imposition ... South Africa is keeping very quiet ...

We are told that discussions between Zambia and South Africa to lift the requirement for Yellow Fever inoculation are 'at an advanced stage' ...

Fishing Competition – Gwabi Lodge

November 23 at 3:00pm until November 25 at 6:00pm

Livingstone Roads

Government has allocated K118 billion to repair and reconstruct roads in Livingstone. The work will be carried out by Inyatsi Construction Zambia. Inyatsi is a company originating from Swaziland which concentrates on road works. From their website, they seem to be a very reputable company. Let's hope so. The work should be completed by August next year in time for the UNWTO.

Kingsley is Cross

Kingsley Lilamono, the Chairman of the Livingstone Tourism Association, is very cross about government's progress towards the UNWTO. He was reported in the press this week:

We do have a big challenge as far as preparations are concerned. From the outside, it appears we do have a local organizing committee but that is not the case. There is nothing happening on the ground. The truth is that our friends in Zimbabwe have made significant progress and we don't seem to be moving at all. The only progress we have recorded is the modernisation of the Harry Mwaanga International Airport.

We worked very well with Minister Lubinda when he was in charge of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, we all worked very well with other past PS's for Southern Province over the general assembly but since the coming in of Dr. Mulenga, things have not moved.

Kingsley feels that the organisation should be done by Livingstone and that this should be spearheaded by the private sector and not government.

Kingsley is, of course, right. We have been down this road before. When Livingstone was to celebrate the town's centenary, the whole organisation was done in Lusaka and the event went off like a damp squib. Government has to understand that Livingstone has some incredibly talented people in the private sector who can run the UNWTO without any stress. Politicians and bureaucrats from government often just get in the way.

ZAMBIA

From the Zambia Weekly

Minimum wage doesn't apply to all

The Lusaka High Court has ruled that Labour Minister Fackson Shamenda was "on firm ground" when he in July introduced Statutory Instruments 46 and 47, which increased minimum wages by 67% with back-dated effect. The Zambia Federation of Employers had sought judicial review of the decision to issue the two instruments.

However, Justice Mubanga Kondolo ruled that the minister did not contravene the law, and that he was not mandated to consult the tripartite labour council on labour-related issues. He did however rule that Shamenda should attend to ZFE's application for a review of the same matter – and he declared the Shamenda's attempt at extending the minimum wages to unionised workers covered by collective agreements was "bad at law and null and void".

Public Holiday

31 December will this year be a public holiday to allow banks to fully prepare for the introduction of the rebased Kwacha on 1 January.

Citizens Economic Empowerment

The new government has once again confirmed that the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) has been appallingly managed – releasing yet another snippet of information, this time explaining that a single unnamed entrepreneur had been paid over K3.5 billion, reported the Daily Mail. Since its inception in 2008, the CEEC has paid out about K204 billion to a total of 1,593 companies – but more than half of the loans have not been recovered. For instance, CEEC announced in September that Chisamba MP Moses Muteteka (MMD), as director of Omega Transport and Maintenance, had paid back his loan of K498 million – after he was sued for defaulting.

Accordingly, the PF government stopped all funding to the CEEC in February, and is now awaiting the results of a forensic audit of disbursement of funds. In the meantime, government has “cleaned up” the system, including appointing a new Director General, Likando Mukumbuta, in September. Mukumbuta was prior to his appointment CEO of the Zambia Agribusiness Technical Assistance Centre and consulting CEO of the Yapyu Youth Investment Trust.

The CEEC assists local entrepreneurs with loans, mentorship and capacity building. It has funded projects such as Kauba and Luwaka vegetable farms in Northwestern Province, Kechas General Dealers in Central Province and Western Cashew Industries.

Dog registration in Ndola

The Ndola City Council has embarked on a combined registration and rabies-vaccination exercise of dogs. The council told the Times of Zambia that unregistered dogs would be “destroyed”. In April, the Lusaka City Council embarked on a successful register-or-have-your-dog-shot exercise – after police constable Carlos Msimuko was mauled by a pack of dogs.

Trees

Government will produce 25.5 million tree seedlings to address deforestation through a National Tree Planting Programme.

Minister of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Wylbur Simuusa told parliament that government will establish 11 large-scale nurseries; one in each of Zambia’s 10 provinces and one at Kitwe’s Forestry Research Centre, to produce 17.5 million seedlings, while the rest will come from outgrowers. About 5,000 people (452 at each nursery) will be employed initially, while the National Tree Planting Programme, once rolled out, could employ 200,000 people.

The seedlings will be planted throughout Zambia, including Muchinga Province (10,000 hectares), Northern (5,000 hectares), Luapula (5,000), Copperbelt (5,000), Northwestern (5,000), Western (5,000), Lusaka (4,000), Southern (3,000), Eastern (2,700) and Central (700).

Species to be planted include pine and eucalyptus (timber, poles and resins), *Faidherbia albida* (animal fodder, nitrogen fixation and firewood), *Moringa oleifera* (medicine and oil) as well as a range of fruit trees such as Guava, Lemon, Pawpaw, Pomegranate, Mango and Avocado.

The Times of Zambia reported that the seedlings will be raised by 15 December, this year. An initial K12 billion has been allocated to the exercise.

Gill Comment: What about our indigenous trees? These trees are suited to our climate and environment. They produce fruit and fodder. Why do we think that foreign is better? All the fruit trees like lemons, guava, pawpaw need water throughout the year to survive. We should not be wasting water on imported trees when our own can do the same job and not use water.

Heat killed fish in Maramba River

The Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) says preliminary findings suggest that hundreds of fish and amphibians died in the Maramba River in Livingstone last week due to stress caused by high water temperatures of about 30°C and related low dissolved oxygen in a lagoon. Initially, ZEMA suspected upstream poisoning, reported the Daily Mail.

Solar Power

Government has encouraged ZESCO to facilitate the construction of solar farms for generation of electricity into the national grid – under a Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) arrangement, whereby the solar farms will be privately built and operated, until ownership is transferred to ZESCO, reported the Times of Zambia.

Money Raised for Luangwa Projects

From the Cheshum Examiner, UK

Pupils and teachers from Elmtree School made more than £600 for charity from selling recycled items at the Local Produce Market in Chesham.

The school has helped a textiles company Tribal Textiles set up a sewing project using sewing machines donated by WorkAid among others with all of the profits going to the Charity Project Luangwa.

The project sets up and supports the education of children in the South Luangwa area of Zambia.



The pupils and teachers from Elmtree school sold 'amaizing' bags made from recycled maize sacks combined with hand dyed tribal textiles fabric and hand-made greeting cards that were created using lino prints of wild animals that were based on photographs taken in the South Luangwa area of Zambia.

From Emily, Robin Pope Safaris in Luangwa

One particularly special moment happened on Saturday morning when Rob and I were heading up to check on the camps. Having just crossed the river we came across an impala who had literally just dropped her baby! Wow! We must have spent a good 45 minutes watching as the youngster tried desperately to get up and failed time and again before eventually (with a little encouragement from

mum) made it up on its four very bandy legs and took its first few wobbly steps. What a special and magical moment!



ZIMBABWE

A Journey from Victoria Falls Town to Bulawayo

The other week I took the road to Bulawayo. My car had just passed its Fitness Test in Zambia so I felt confident. The first road block was just outside Victoria Falls Town and they asked me for all the usual things which I had and then they noticed a crack in my windscreen. The crack was a small one and did not interfere with my ability to see, so I had not done anything. The policeman, though, said that my car was unroadworthy. I argued with him and said that I would get it fixed. He let me go. Not much further at another road block I had the same 'wagging of the finger' about my cracked windscreen. Again I argued my way out of the problem. The third time I was stopped and asked about my cracked windscreen I knew that cracked windscreens were the 'flavour of the month' for the Zim Police. I paid my fine of US\$10, pleading guilty to an unroadworthy car. This road block was in Gwaai and two of the ladies selling clay pots were witness to my misdemeanour. I asked them afterwards why the police were so unkind and they told me that the police had been told that they must 'earn' US\$100 per day on their road blocks ...

As I went through over 10 road blocks between Victoria Falls Town and Bulawayo and that each road block was manned by 4 police officers, I calculated that every day the Zimbabwe Police is earning US\$4,000 from the public. That's a good business ...

There is a bit of good news to follow this story ...

A Zimbabwe court has judged that Triangles and Fire Extinguishers are no longer necessary in a vehicle. For me, travelling as I did, with 2 Fire Extinguishers in my car, I find this a bit sad ... I was doubly prepared for the police with my fire extinguishers and all they were interested in was a crack in my windscreen ... you can't win sometimes.

Where has the Money Gone from the Diamonds?

There was no news about Zimbabwe's preparation for the UNWTO this week as all eyes were on the Diamond Conference being held in Victoria Falls Town. It is said that Zimbabwe now has around 25% of the world's diamonds.

The conference was attended by people from around the world and the president had the chance to address the meeting. His comments were predictable: *Addressing Zimbabwe's inaugural diamond conference in Victoria Falls yesterday, Mugabe said the country has been unable to trade competitively and realise full benefits from its diamonds due to economic sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union.*

It was brought up at the conference that US\$2 billion in revenue from the diamond mining in Zimbabwe was not accounted for. From a report about the missing diamond money:

On Tuesday, Zimbabwe's mines minister Obert Mpofu said the report was "nonsensical" and a work of "detractors."

"The first thing about detractors is: Who do they want to please by raising issues which are only nonsensical? They always run around to do those things," he said. "This is sponsored by their governments who imposed sanctions on us. It is real desperate attempt by people who are criminals just to create a smoke screen." ...

Delegates to the conference expected to discuss ways of ensuring Zimbabwe's diamonds benefit the country, not just a few individuals. Delegates left the two-day conference without any solution to the problem.

From Associated Press:

Mugabe's government staged the conference in the resort city of Victoria Falls to gain international credibility for Zimbabwe's huge production of diamonds in the Marange fields in eastern Zimbabwe. But the Mugabe government's efforts to win respectability have been overshadowed by allegations that \$2 billion of diamond proceeds have been stolen by Mugabe's cronies. Zimbabwe government officials denied the charges of corruption in the report by the Partnership Africa Canada, a group campaigning against conflict diamonds.

Meanwhile, **Gweru**: There is a new state of the art conference facility in Gweru which is being built in time for ZANU-PF Annual Conference in December. The cost is said to be US\$6.5million.

And then, ... **Mount Hampden**: The government is to construct a new capital city at Mount Hampden, Robert Mugabe's home area. The project is already underway on a site 40 km west of Harare with a new Parliament building.

From SW Radio:

Political analyst Professor John Makumbe dismissed the project (New Capital) as “ridiculous”, saying Mugabe is trying to crown his legacy by moving the entire the capital city to his backyard. “These are dreams of old, wild men,” Makumbe said.

Asked how such a huge project is being funded, Makumbe said: “We know that the Chinese are in charge of it. They built the National Military Academy in record time and are building the Gweru Conference Centre, which must be finished before the 4th December. For both projects they are getting diamonds,” Makumbe explained.

All these stories are very confusing. Missing diamond money, a new and expensive conference facility in Gweru and a new capital. And yet it appears that the government does not feel that it has to be accountable to its people who are daily scratching a living in a broken economy. The mind boggles ...

Tree Campaign

Environment Africa

The official launch of 'For Every Child A Tree' will be held at the University of Zimbabwe on 3rd December. The aim of the campaign is to plant 14 million trees in Zimbabwe.

This is quite a dream, but Environment Africa is making a start with the planting of 500 trees on the launch day.

To find out more or get involved, visit their website: www.environmentafrica.org

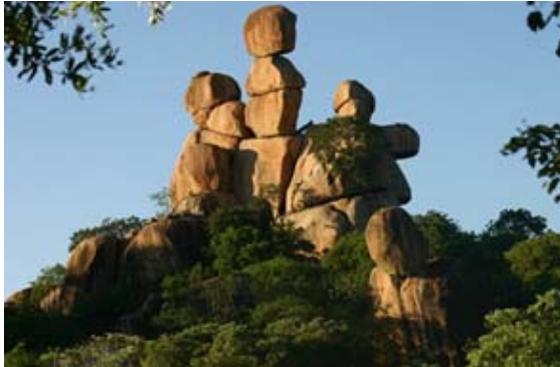
Matobo Hills

Matobo National Park (formerly Matopos) is a World Heritage Site near Bulawayo. The World Heritage Status was awarded to the area because it: *exhibits a profusion of distinctive rock landforms rising above the granite shield that covers much of Zimbabwe.*

I have stolen the map from Expert Africa because it is excellent and I haven't got time to draw one of my classics!



The park is known for its balancing rocks, ancient rock art and for the grave site of Cecil Rhodes. Mzilikazi was buried near to the park too. The park is home to a variety of wildlife and, most precious of all, are the black and white rhino.



In order to protect the park and the wildlife which belong to it, it has been decided that it must be fenced. Well-wishers are pitching in to pay for and put up the fence. Bulawayo residents are supplying 10 km of fencing; Amalinda is supplying 7 km.

Anti poaching patrols will be continued. Nonnie and Ian Batchelor have donated 20 tents and sleeping bags for the rangers.

Mana Pools

Mana Pools Safari Camp – Vine Site
Zambezi Society

The Zambezi Society is disappointed to report that construction has begun (see picture) on one of the controversial new 24-bed “lodge” developments along the Zambezi River shoreline in Mana Pools National Park, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Core Area of the recently-declared UNESCO Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve. This despite recommendations against such development in the recent Park Management Plan, which cites potential damage to the fragile riverine eco-system at Mana Pools which is already stressed by tourism impact.



A lease for the proposed 24-bed (plus 24 staff) “Mana Pools Safari Camp” with a 1-km exclusion zone centered on the Vine Camp Site (about 15 kms upstream from the Park headquarters in Nyamepi) was granted to ECIS Investments (Ms Li Song) by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management and signed by the Minister of the Environment in September 2010. An EIA was completed in June 2011 by Vibes Consultancy, and was approved by the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) shortly thereafter. The EIA describes this as a “semi-permanent” camp with 12 thatched double chalets on raised metal & wood platforms above the Zambezi River floodplain, a large, thatched living/dining/ bar area, a brick-under-tin-roof kitchen/workshop/garage/storeroom complex, a vast (280sq m) brick-under-tin quarters for 24 staff, a fence, a swimming pool, 14 septic tanks and a cold-room – all of this powered by a “solar-system with a back-up generator”.

The Vine Camp Site area contains one of the Park’s prime examples of magnificent alluvial woodland covering the banks of the Zambezi River. Within this precious woodland are vast specimens of very ancient Zambezi fig trees, Natal Mahoganies and River Litchis, rare climbing lianes such as the beautiful “Tail-less Tailflower” and other species special to the Zambezi “alluvial floodplain”. The woodland is a favoured spot for a host of wildlife species, including elephants and the predators that Mana Pools is so famous for: lions, leopard and wild dog.

This EIA was approved by Zimbabwe's Environmental Management Agency (EMA) without wide consultation. Important and informed stakeholders from Zambia, UNESCO, the Zimbabwean Department of Museums and Monuments and relevant NGOs including the Zambezi Society were not informed or consulted during the process.

The Society obtained a copy of the EIA only after it had already been approved. We found it to be inadequate, inaccurate and ill-informed. We consulted with environmental experts including the Chairman of the UNESCO Mana and Biosphere Committee in Zimbabwe and obtained their critical reviews of this document. In March 2012 we submitted these, with our own formal objection to the EIA, to the Environmental Management Agency and copied to relevant authorities in National Parks and UNESCO. Our letter stated:-

"We ask that EMA consider these comments seriously, in the light of our sincere concern for the future of the wildlife and wilderness resources of Mana Pools. We urge you to reconsider your approval of this EIA and ask that a more professional and detailed Assessment be undertaken, with wider public consultation, in view of the global significance of Mana Pools. We also request that, should the EIA be re-submitted, those parties copied in this letter be given the opportunity to evaluate the EIA prior to it being authorised.

The Zambezi Society is ready and willing to assist in this process in order to achieve a solution which will sufficiently protect the biological value of Mana Pools while allowing economic benefit from tourism development in the Park."

To this date, we have had no response from EMA.

We then wrote similarly to the Minister of the Environment and have, to this date, had no response. In June 2012, we met with the head of the National Committee of UNESCO in Zimbabwe to brief him about this situation along with colleagues from the Department of Museums and Monuments who, themselves had not been consulted during the EIA process for this development. They have agreed to undertake a "high level" visit to the construction site as soon as possible to assess the situation for themselves.

In the meantime, the Society is liaising with colleagues in Zambia to advise them of the situation and to see what assistance they may be able to provide.

Please contact the Zambezi Society if you have any reliable and factual information which you feel can contribute to our efforts in seeking to mitigate the damage that this development may cause.

For more information go to: <http://www.zamsoc.org/?p=1548>

Gill Comment. According to a report in the Financial Gazette of Zimbabwe the Mana Pools Safari Camp is to cost US\$500,000. This amount is far too small to cover the cost of a 'proper' construction and to mitigate environmental impacts.

In another report about Mana Pools, Jerry Gotora, a ZimParks board member commented that Zim Parks were 'sprucing up the site' and that they had a lot of plans for the area including upmarket accommodation to promote tourism. I assume that this is Mana Pools Safari Camp. At US\$500,000 for 12 chalets, housing for 24 staff, septic tanks, water reticulation, cold rooms, generator room, etc, this is cannot be upmarket ...

I assume too that the other plans will include dredging the rivers to find minerals ...

Private Radio Stations

In Zambia we have lots of private radio stations and everyone loves them. They give a real local flavour to events and I, for one, always have one of our radio stations on in my car.

It seems that Zimbabwe is finally allowing private radio stations to start up. Star FM was started in June this year in Harare and Bulawayo and is now expanding its operations to Mutare, Masvingo, Victoria Falls and Mutorashanga. The equipment for the new transmissions should be up and running by December.

Cresta Sprayview

It has been announced that the well known Cresta Hotels group have entered into an agreement to manage the Sprayview Hotel. Redevelopment and refurbishment work is due to start almost immediately and the Hotel is aiming to re-launch before next year's UNWTO conference in August.

Sprayview was originally opened in the 1970s and offers 64 rooms, two restaurants, two bars, and three conference rooms. Aimed at the mid range three star market, the hotel will offer much needed accommodation within this sector within Victoria Falls. Cresta Hotels currently operate thirteen hotels across the region, with eight in Botswana, one in Zambia and four in Zimbabwe.

From Friends of Hwange, October

Due to heartfelt concern expressed by many of you about reports of the dire circumstances in Hwange, a response to try to keep things in perspective is necessary. We feel it pertinent to point out that problems during the dry season have beset HNP since its very early first days.

Because the Park is situated in an area where there are no rivers except in the very north of the park, there is NO natural surface water available during the dry season. Ted Davison – first warden and founder of Hwange - made it a priority to drill boreholes throughout the Park in order to ensure water availability when natural pans dry up. That he managed to prevent wildlife from migrating, so enabling it to breed and multiply in abundance, is testament to the fact that his strategy was a spectacular success.

The problems facing all animals in HNP, especially elephant and buffalo due to their size and numbers, as well as breeding herds with young, is that the browse and grazing in close proximity to pumped waterholes becomes very scarce as the dry season progresses. Thus the distance the wildlife needs to travel from water to food increases dramatically. It is the lack of food and the extreme heat experienced during the months of Oct and Nov when energy is at its lowest ebb that poses the greatest threat to wildlife, not only the lack of water.

It is an interesting fact that most elephant deaths occur very close to reasonable supplies of water. It should also be noted that as distressing as it is to see dead and dying animals, the natural law of the bush dictates survival of the fittest, and in a very harsh season, there are always going to be some casualties.

It is our aim to ensure that we keep as many waterholes as we can pumping over as large an area as possible to try and spread out the wildlife, and thus try to decrease impact on the vegetation in isolated areas.

This year, we had ample warning of a desperately harsh dry season ahead as early as March due to the scant and patchy rains experienced in and around the Park. We quickly approached many donors and organizations for funds to try and minimize the impact.

Thanks to much generosity, we have managed to keep most waterholes supplied with water. We are particularly grateful to Save Australia, Hwange Conservation Society UK, Zimbabwe Wildlife Fund Australia and WEZ Matabeleland who provide ongoing crucial support. As well, the operators have all done their duty in making water available on their concessions to help spread the load.

Finally we have this week had the wonderful news from Gary that there has been some meaningful and widespread early rainfall received which has relieved pressure on the pans. More importantly, the grass and trees will immediately send out fresh green shoots - the beginnings of the truly miraculous annual recovery of the bush. And for us come feelings of huge relief that we have made it through the worst of the drought this year. As always we are humbled by the support, care and concern from you all - thank you.

The Trustees, Friends of Hwange Trust

Gill Comment. Hwange is an enormous park. The Wildlife Society of Zimbabwe has been raising funds to put in new boreholes. Their annual 'Pumping Legs for Water' cycle rally through the park is their main fund raising event. It seems to me that the work done by the society is excellent and if more boreholes were sited away from the over-utilized areas it would give the animals more chance of survival and give the environment around the present waterholes time to regenerate.

WILD DOG

There has again been a brilliant response with photos of Wild Dog seen in the various areas given below. These have been a tremendous help for the ongoing research by Dr Gregory Rasmussen who is Research Director based at Hwange National Park.

One of the responses received has helped him identify the Nyakasanka pack and note that one of the pups is missing.

The Longpool pack (*Mana Pools*) lost five pups due to a move caused by den disturbance and he now needs to identify which of the pups are remaining in the Longpool pack.

MATUSADONA

We are very keen for any information and pictures to find out if there any dogs left in the Matusadona area on Lake Kariba.

They were there in 1998 as a litter was seen which was from females of the 1997 translocation and a male from the area. There were also reliable reports from 1999-2000 but then information dried up. If you have, please forward any information on the Matusadona area as well as the others listed below.

Currently they are working on spot satellite imagery to assess what viable landscape currently exists. Though this will take time it will highlight where good conservation can be done and which habitat has been converted beyond recovery for these beautiful animals that we are not looking after sufficiently and who will soon be lost forever if we do not take the time to improve and protect the areas they are still alive in.

AFRICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND is looking for any information on WILD DOG sightings in the KARIBA, MAKUTI, CHIRUNDU, MANA, ZAMBEZI RIVER AREAS

ANY of the below information would be of great help.

DATE - If no exact date, month or approximate month of the year from 2011 to date.

SEEN WHERE - If unable to be exact, area Example: Makuti to Kariba road approx half way between Makuti and Kariba.

HOW MANY - ADULTS OR ADULTS AND PUPS -

PICTURES - If any that can be sent by email

Any other information you can advise –

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Report sightings of wild dogs, noting when, where and how many dogs were seen.

Take photographs wherever possible – side profiles. These can be used to identify individual dogs through their unique coat patterns – allowing us to get an idea of population sizes and survival.

WHO TO REPORT TO:

Send reports for the Zambezi Valley to gailscanvas@gmail.com

For the Lowveld area rosemary@africanwildlifeconservationfund.org

For the Vic Falls & Hwange area to PDC (*Painted Dog Foundation*).

Support an organisation involved in wild dog conservation, go to www.africanwildlifeconservationfund.org

BOTSWANA

No More Hunting

From National Geographic

The President of Botswana, Lieutenant General Ian Khama, announced recently at a public meeting in Maun, the gateway to the Okavango Delta, that no further hunting licenses would be issued from 2013, and that all hunting in Botswana would be impossible by 2014. This new ban extends to all 'citizen hunting' and covers all species, including elephant and lion that can only be shot when designated as "problem animals". President Khama stated that ecotourism has become increasingly important for Botswana and contributes more than 12% of their overall GDP, noting that wildlife control measure through issuance of hunting licenses had reached its limit. Furthermore, he said the issuance of hunting licenses had fueled poaching and the resultant "catastrophic" declines in wildlife, while preventing sustained growth in the tourism industry. The global tourism industry must support this move by sending thousands more tourists to see Botswana's natural heritage. Next year, the Okavango Delta will be nominated to be a UNESCO World Heritage Site and what better way to celebrate than this halt of the issuance of hunting licenses...

Poachers in Court

From the Botswana Voice

A Wildlife Officer and three others have appeared in court on a charge of illegally possessing a rhinoceros horn. 34-year-old Israel Mogotsi Morokane, from Pandamatenga village near Kasane, along with Nametso Alex Morokane (34) and Moses Tlou (30) both of Gaborone alongside Dumisane Moyo (47) of Zimbabwe were granted bail after their arrest and detention in custody on 22 October.

The four men were detained after the rhino horn was found when the car they were travelling in was searched for meat products at a routine roadblock mounted at the Francistown/Orapa junction. In opposing bail the prosecution feared that the accused persons would dispose of other rhino horns suspected to be in their possession, but yet to be recovered by the police.

In granting bail, Francistown Principal Magistrate Kgololesego Segabo argued that the prosecution had not demonstrated the impact of releasing the suspects, adding that there must be an indication that remanding the accused persons in jail would not be prejudicial to them.

“In this case the investigating officer was never called to testify in court and give detailed reasons to argue for remanding the suspects in jail,” the magistrate said.

The case is due to continue on 17 November.

MALAWI

I continue my quest to find out more about Malawi. So here is a bit I found about Nkhotakota.

... Malawi is enjoying a quiet resurgence. An infectious optimism has been spreading across the country since its new president Joyce Banda came into office in April. New luxury lodges on the lake and in the once forgotten national parks and reserves are extending their appeal to more affluent travellers while simultaneously helping local communities and wildlife conservation.

One such lodge is Tongole, which opened in May last year in Nkhotakota. Developed by two British philanthropists, David Cole and David Gridley, and a Malawian, Bentry Kalanga, as a legacy for Kalanga's son who died in a car crash in the UK, its whole raison d'être is to help his former childhood community.



The lodge's main building centres around two towering tree trunks. A spiral staircase curves around one, leading to a mezzanine lounge overlooking the river and Kasukusuka. Below, the dining area has huge mango wood tables and a bar with life-size caricatures of two customers painted on the wall, so you never have to drink alone. ...

Read more: <http://www.thenational.ae/lifestyle/travel/why-malawi-is-turning-into-a-travellers-paradise#ixzz2CSKzpst6>



Children in the Wilderness

Wilderness announced that they will be offering a "Children in the Wilderness" Mvuu Lodge Special over the period of Nov 30th – Dec 20th 2012. Every year, Wilderness Safaris closes down Mvuu Camp to paying guests in order to host CITW, an environmental and life skills education programme for children based around Liwonde National Park. CITW will run a set of three weeklong camp sessions this year and for the duration of the camp; Wilderness will be offering guests a stay at Mvuu Lodge for the camp price.

SOUTH AFRICA

Rhino Horn Conviction

Chumlong Lemtongthai is the most senior figure in a smuggling ring ever convicted in South Africa - sentenced to 40 years imprisonment. (Pic Supplied) The rhino was shot by Marnus Steyl & Harry Claassens - the above photo is for propaganda pseudo "Sport Hunting" purposes.



Killing for Profit

From Rhino News

A terrifying true story of greed, corruption, depravity and ruthless criminal enterprise.

On the black markets of Southeast Asia, rhino horn is worth more than gold, cocaine and heroin. This is the story of a more than two-year-long investigation into a dangerous criminal underworld where merciless syndicates will stop at nothing to attain their prize. It is a tale of greed, folly and corruption, and of an increasingly desperate battle to save rhinos – which have existed for more than 50 million years – from extinction.

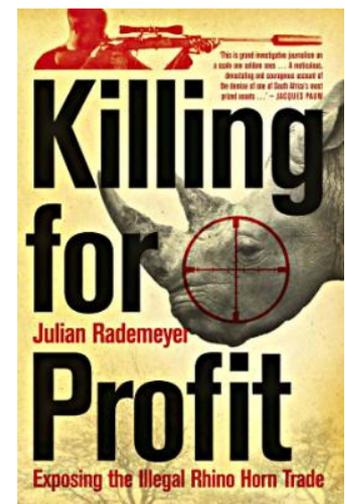
Killing for Profit is a meticulous, devastating and revelatory account of one of the world's most secretive trades. It exposes poachers, scoundrels, gangsters, conmen, mercenaries, killers, gun-runners, diplomats, government officials and kingpins behind the slaughter. And it follows the bloody trail from the frontlines of the rhino wars in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to the medicine markets of Vietnam and the lair of a wildlife-trafficking kingpin on the banks of the Mekong River in Laos ...

The author

Julian Rademeyer is an award-winning investigative journalist. He has written and worked for many of South Africa's major newspapers including City Press, Beeld, the Sunday Times, Pretoria News and The Herald. He has been a stringer for Reuters and freelanced for the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Associated Press.

Until he resigned to write this book, he was chief reporter for Media24 Investigations. In a career spanning two decades, he has reported from some of the world's most troubled countries including Somalia, Equatorial Guinea, Niger, Belarus, Egypt and Lebanon.

In 2005 he won the Vodacom Journalist of the Year award for print news. He was a recipient of the 2009 Mondi Shanduka Newspaper Award for hard news. He has twice been a finalist for the Taco Kuiper Award, South Africa's leading investigative journalism prize. His work has been published in two books:



Troublemakers: The Best of South Africa's Investigative Journalism and the BY Bedkassieboek, a compilation of the best of Afrikaans newspaper writing.

WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

BWINDI GORILLAS CROSS THE 400 MARK

The Uganda Wildlife Authority has yesterday released the data of the last count carried out earlier in the year, confirming a positive trend in gorilla numbers as a result of increased protection and years of focused conservation efforts. The latest number available now stands at an estimated 400 mountain gorillas of an overall population in the Virunga mountain range of about 880.

The most recent game count is based on a dual count, where over the space of weeks teams went twice across the Bwindi Forest with the proverbial toothcomb, to ensure that their findings would hold water and stand the scientific test of time.

Bwindi is home to 36 distinct groups of gorilla families, led by a silverback, but at least 16 solitary males have also been identified. Out of this number, 10 groups have been habituated for human contact, out of which 8 can be tracked by tourists while 2 have been set aside for research purposes to study their behavior and learn more about their social interaction. The International Gorilla Conservation Programme technical advisor M. Gray was quoted in a media release from UWA as having said: 'This method gives us the clearest picture of the status of mountain gorillas in Bwindi that we have yet had. Even with evolving census methods, the results indicate that this population has indeed increased over the last five years, and that is very encouraging for this critically endangered species.' ...

KWS TO CONDUCT WILDLIFE COUNT IN NORTHERN KENYA

The Kenya Wildlife Service will commence an aerial wildlife count with special aim on elephant and Grevy zebra starting from November 25th, involving as many as 12 aircraft and lasting until November 30th. Target areas are the Samburu National Park, the Marsabit area and Shaba Game Reserve, where the exercise will kick off. All three areas are part of a wider range for the elephant with regular migration of significant numbers of animals, following available pastures after seasonal and unseasonal rains.

The count is a follow up of earlier such activities to establish population trends in the semi arid North of the country and expectations are that while the elephant population has grown in recent years the rarer Grevy zebra population may have reduced, putting the species firmly on the endangered list.

A source close to KWS in Nairobi has put the cost of the exercise into the 15 million Kenya Shilling range with most of the expense going to aircraft hire and fuel for KWS' own helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. As and when results become available, be sure to read about it here.

SERENGETI MUST NOT DIE – RELOADED VERSION 2.0

With the contentious and potentially lethal Serengeti Highway not yet fully out of the picture, and the route of a proposed railway line to from Tanga to Musoma on Lake Victoria kept a tightly guarded secret, rousing more suspicion about another battle between conservationists and politicians looming in the distance, it is now news about an equally contentious project to build an international airport near the Serengeti at Mugumu which is raising the temperatures once again.

The current management plan for the greater Serengeti ecosystem, drawn up in 2005, specifically mentions human settlements and encroachment as one of the Serengeti's greatest future threats, urging the authorities to refrain from encouraging ever more people moving into the border areas of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, something a major aviation facility will inevitably prompt, being

located so close by and requiring a large number of staff, and a constant flow of supplies to keep it going.

'We have been opposing this airport development for reasons which are self evident. Poaching in and around the Serengeti have been on the rise. Mwanza is an existing international airport which should be enlarged and modernized and from there small planes can reach all the airstrips in the Grumeti Sector and the main Serengeti very fast. If you put up a new international airport at Mugumu it requires a complete back up with a logistics train involving fuel, catering supplies and a constant movement of a large number of staff. Take offs and landing will mean aircraft are flying low and that noise will have an impact on the wildlife in the area and much greater than a few hot air balloons flying over the savannah. A new airport means new roads, new settlements, new warehouses, pollution and all and that means a lot more people coming to live in a critically near area outside the park boundaries. It seems our politicians have not learned one thing from the global opposition and decampaigning our country has seen over the highway plans. If this were to be an airstrip like at Seronera or some of the camp airstrips, even if tarmacked, it would be different but a complete airport? We have to say no to that and even though TCAA has given the thumbs up they are after all just mouthpieces of the politicians. We hope the upcoming EIA will state what we all know, that it is unsustainable to put an airport up there where a fragile environment would just be destroyed. And we hope it is not doctored as we have seen it before. It is the same almost like these insane plans to put a soda ash plant in the middle of the flamingo breeding grounds or put a harbour into the Coelacanth marine park. There is no amount of mitigation to undo the damage and this is why TATA pulled away because they realized they would be the punching bag if they started a soda ash factory. This airport madness is exactly the same. And have no doubt here, this matter will go to court if the government goes ahead with it. And those who back it will be named and shamed too. If Tudor [Paul Tudor Jones, an American billionaire businessman with vested interests in several top of the range safari lodges in the area, i.e. Singita Tanzania] is going to raise the finance, be sure that his safari business is going to be named as responsible for this act of destruction and once under the spotlight who will want to go there and be branded an enemy of the environment, an enemy of the Serengeti? We are encouraged by the East African Court of Justice in Arusha to take up such issues with them, should our own judiciary fail us. Once the government tries to create facts on the ground we shall seek a permanent injunction while we prosecute our cases in court' said a regular senior conservation source in Arusha when discussing the issue yesterday.

Recalling the massive opposition the Serengeti highway plans caused around the world, which united the global conservation fraternity like few other issues and had and continues to have Tanzania's track record on conservation, already under the spotlight over a number of other equally controversial plans, called into question, a new front could have a serious impact on the country's tourism performance. Suggestions by government sources of the positive impact an airport in Mugumu would have on tourism incomes generated from Serengeti visits therefore seems like a castle in the air, as it seems to neglect the negative impact of a campaign directed against the project.

As new battle fronts are being staked out over yet another project which could irreversibly alter the fabric of the Serengeti, be sure to watch this space for news how this latest conservation saga in Tanzania is unfolding.

MORE TANZANIA BLOOD IVORY NABBED IN HONG KONG

Information was just received that customs in Hong Kong have again detected and confiscated more than a ton of blood ivory, shipped from Dar es Salaam via Dubai and destined for onward transport to an un-named final destination thought to be on the China mainland.

More than 1.3 tons of ivory, in a total of 569 pieces, worth nearly 1.4 million US Dollars, was detected in a container declared as sunflower seeds and plastic waste. Only last month were two shipments of blood ivory detected in one day, making it a record haul but prompting an initial series of denials from

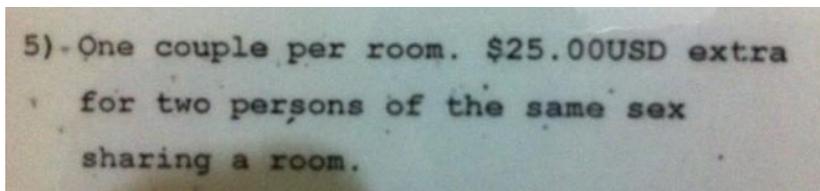
Tanzanian officials, until arrest warrants were issued through Interpol for at least 3 individuals resident in Tanzania, asking yet more questions on the country's ability to stem poaching. Earlier in the year were several wildlife officials sacked and demoted as a result of the role they played in illegal wildlife exports and it is understood from a reliable source in Dar es Salaam, that no nonsense Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Ambassador Kagesheki, is leaving no stone unturned at present to have a new anti poaching strategy developed and put into place.

Tanzania has applied to CITES for the one off sale of over 100 tons of what they describe 'legal' ivory to raise funds for anti poaching activities and seems set to commit the entire proceeds to the purpose of wildlife conservation and management this time, unlike at the last CITES Conference when there was some deliberate vagueness in the proposal how any funds would be spent. At the time did the CITES Secretariat also compile a report about the state of affairs in Tanzania vis a vis wildlife smuggling and poaching. Compared to 2 years ago, the number of elephant now killed every day is estimated to be in excess of 30, mostly in the Selous Game Reserve, the Mikumi National Park and in fact across the country, which has seriously impacted on Tanzania's standing in the international arena. This latest find of blood ivory will only fuel demands that the time for words has gone and that some major new initiative to combat the commercial style slaughter of elephant for their tusks is now needed, or else the last big herds of elephant will soon only be found in film and books as narratives but no longer in free range.

Watch this space.

THE SMILE

After my article about homosexuality, one of my readers sent me this advert:



5) - One couple per room. \$25.00USD extra
for two persons of the same sex
sharing a room.

Have a good week

Gill