

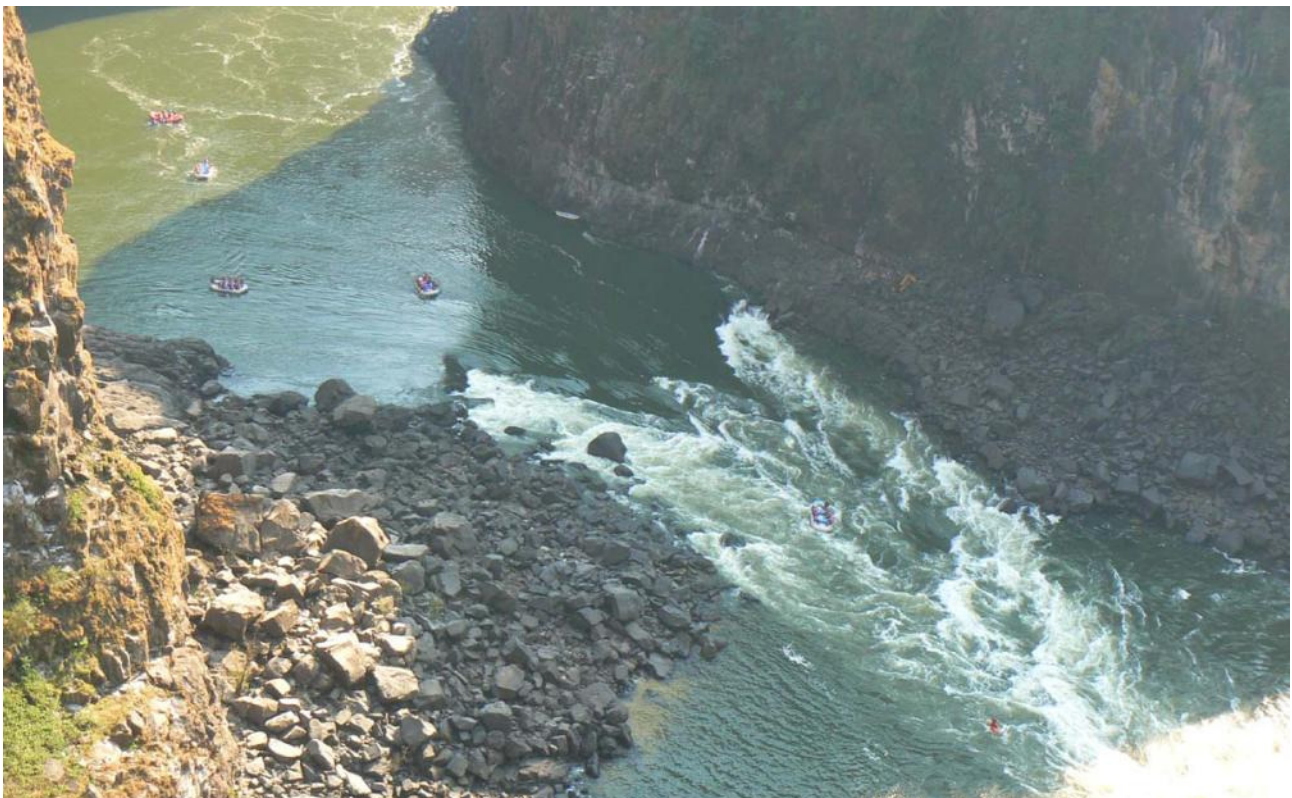
The Livingstone Weekly



Dear All

At this time of year the water over the Victoria Falls gets less and less until the Zambian side virtually dries up. It is good news that the government is saying that they are going to reduce the water take-off for the hydropower station to allow Zambia to have a bit of water from time to time.

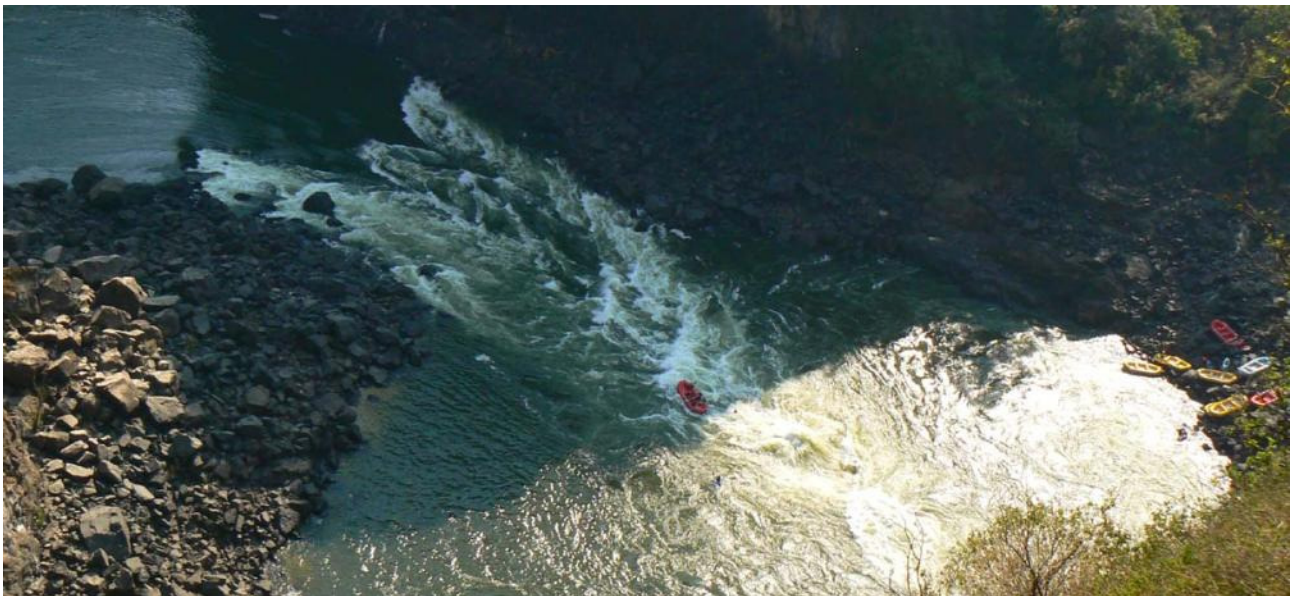
But just look at the rafts in the gorge. It is possible to take the rafts above Rapid 1 to see the falls from below. It must be magical. This, of course, can only be done when the water is low and is only available on the Zambian side because we have access to the gorge at the Boiling Pot via a footpath which winds down from the National Park.



Once the rafters have had their fill of the Falls they get to raft through Rapid 1. Looks like fun, but not for me ...



I was standing on the bridge overlooking the Boiling Pot below ... I am a good spectator ...



David Lemon

David has been staying in Livingstone during the past week or so. He needed to build up some reserves to continue his trek along the Zambezi. Karien and Peter Kermer from Wild Side Tours have looked after him and fed him up until he was strong enough to start off again.

I chatted with David for a while in Karien's office. He is so passionate about Africa. He has loved every minute of his journey even though there have been tough times. His journey is about travelling the length

of the Zambezi River from the source to its emergence into the Indian Ocean at Chinde in Mozambique. He was denied entry into Angola to do that stretch because bureaucracy in Angola is totally out of control (how, one wonders, are they ever to promote tourism?). Sadly, jumping that section of the river, David was driven to Chavuma where the Zambezi River re-enters Zambia and continued his journey.

He says that the people have been absolutely amazing. He has needed to find footpaths to walk as close as he can to the river and has had to ask for help along the way. Often, he said, the villagers wanted to accompany him for a distance along his walk, sometimes for kilometres as they chatted along the way.

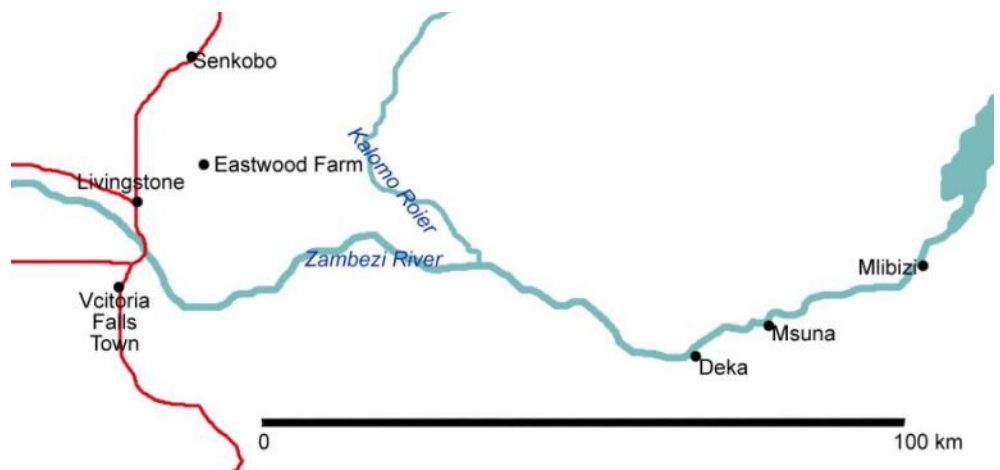
He has met chiefs along the route, talking to them about the environment and how people live and work along it. He has been fed by villagers who knew he needed some 'proper' Africa food. Surprisingly, or not, he found that people knew who he was as he arrived in remote villagers – was it jungle drums or the radio???

David walks for about 4-5 hours a day while it is cool and then relaxes in the shade while it is hot. And how does he fill those hours? He has a kindle ... hundreds of books on one small machine ...

Feeling fully fit again, David was taken to Eastwood Farm where he was given a guide who was to take him from there to the Kalomo River which they will follow back to the Zambezi River. The gorges are not a place for an easy trek and David decided that he would have to ignore that section. David Lemon's only concern is finding water along the route.

The photograph is David with another David. The other David knows the path to the Zambezi and will act as guide. It is a several days walk – looks to be about 50 km in a straight line, but there are lots of lumps and bumps to negotiate.

Next stop in civilization will be Kariba Bush Club, so I am hoping to catch up with David then – it will be an excuse for me to go and visit Muftau.



UNWTO Preparations

According to Kingsley Lilamono, Chairman of the Livingstone Tourism Association, the private sector in Livingstone is fully prepared for the UNWTO. They are, though, just waiting for government to do their 'thing'.

On Monday, Edwin Zumbunu, Southern Province Permanent Secretary, addressed government departments and private sector. From Edwin Zumbunu:

The committees at national level include ministerial committee, national steering committee, a secretariat and a national technical committee. At the local level in Livingstone, there will be a local organising committee which will be chaired by the provincial permanent secretary.

According to Edwin Zumbunu, there will also be various sub-committees to deal with other aspects such as accommodation, security, immigration, protocol, health, etc.

Why do we always have so many meetings? Yes, meetings are necessary, but we need some action, some decisions. We always overdo the meetings ... I sometimes wonder if our government staff define their jobs by the number of meetings they attend ... In the past I used to attend many meetings and the only positive thing to come out of them was the date of the next meeting ...

During the week, the Minister of Tourism, Sylvia Masebo, also visited. She is yoyo-ing to and from Lusaka and Livingstone these days. Sylvia Masebo seems to be concentrating her efforts into the cleanliness of Livingstone. With street vendors now 'legal' it is quite a task to see how we can change the face of Livingstone which has become a market all along our corridors.

Interestingly there is an association of street vendors. It is called the United Street Vendors Foundation. The Chairman is Patrick Mubanga. Patrick Mubanga says that the Foundation has set up several groups to clean the streets (I can't say that I have noticed) and also that some of them would be willing to move to designated sites if they could be identified. He also said he hoped that they could have a Saturday market near the museum so that they could showcase their products. However, the vendors who deal in cellphones and other electronic bits and bobs want their own street from which they can trade.

There is, of course, a huge dilemma in allowing street vendors their own patch along the pavement. Firstly, of course, the shop owners pay for the privilege of occupying their premises and trading from there. Street vendors pay nothing and intimidate would-be customers in the shops. I use the word 'intimidate' to show that many people now do not go to the town centre because they cannot stand the irritation of weaving their way through cellphones, underpants and bananas spread along the pavement.

So, what is the answer? I really don't know. But I do know that most of the traders are actually quite harmless; they are merely trying to make a living to feed themselves and their families. They also tend to be the younger generation who cannot find jobs. They cannot find jobs because there are few jobs to be had and they have no skills.

Why do they cling to the pavements and not go and find a spot out of town? Of course, they are in town because that is where the would-be buyers are. They also like the corridors (this is what we call the pavements under a roof) because they give shade. It seems to me that an area should be identified in the town where these traders can operate – they need good, clean, shady premises where they should pay a minimal rent and take responsibility for their surroundings. If government wants to allow these people to operate in some legal way they should be given their own area, built at government expense, and they must be made to pay for the privilege. It is only through paying, even just a small amount, do people understand that life is not for free.

Eagles Rest

The other week I stayed at Eagles Rest and I mentioned that, following the new minimum wage, the management there was reducing staff and had decided to do away with the restaurant. I got it a bit wrong, so here is the information 'from the horse's mouth':

INTRODUCING Self Catering with a Twist at Eagles Rest

To Cook or Not to Cook?

We now supply equipment for self catering, everything you need to cook a great family meal.

Breakfast served in the restaurant from 7.00 to 10.30 hours.

Toasted Sandwiches and delicious homemade Micro Meals available at the Beach Bar from 9.00 to 21.00 hours.

Shop now open in reception from 7.00 to 18.00 hours selling Top Quality Meat products, cheese, butter, bread and selection of dry goods.

What is the Twist I hear you cry ??

Don't feel like cooking, from 17.00 to 21.00 hours our chef is available to cook for you.

Monday to Thursday he will cook in our restaurant and serve to you either at the restaurant or at the Beach Bar.

Friday Saturday and Sunday he will Braai and serve your meal at the Beach Bar.

Also we have choice of side dishes for you to buy to go with your meal.

Amaizing Bags

Gillie Lightfoot is known for her range of textiles from her company, Tribal Textiles. Gillie operates in Luangwa Valley. Recently she has come up with a new product: The Amaizing Bag. Made from Mealie Meal bags, The Amaizing Bag is strong and literally has Zambia stamped all over it. There are bags, purses, handbags, laptop bags and pencil cases available.

Profits from the sale of The Amaizing Bags go to Project Luangwa which supports education in Luangwa Valley.



For more information about the 'Amaizing Bag' project go to: www.tribaltextiles.co.zm

Find out more about Project Luangwa: www.projectluangwa.org

It's Wild

I have often seen packaging of rice, etc, with the label 'It's Wild'. I didn't know about the company at all until I found this on the internet:

By Graham Salinger

Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO), the group behind the It's Wild local food brand in Zambia that sells everything from organic rice to honey, is expanding its conservation efforts to the western regions of the Luangwa Valley.

COMACO hopes that a recent plan to strengthen incentives for practicing sustainable agriculture will help preserve the Luangwa Valley's environment and wildlife.

COMACO was founded thirty years ago and helps farmers in Zambia grow indigenous crops instead of relying on poaching wildlife as their primary source of income. COMACO also works to reduce the practice of chitemene, which involves cutting down and burning trees as a method of producing ash to improve crop yield. The organization focuses on training farmers in conservation methods and establishing markets to sell products through the It's Wild brand. The It's Wild brand is sold in major supermarket chains across Zambia, including ShopRite, Checkers, and Spar.

COMACO has provided training for more than 40,000 small-scale farming families living across the Luangwa Valley. In 2009 it purchased over 3,000 tons of agricultural commodities from small scale farmers. COMACO works with over 1,329 former hunters in efforts to use agriculture as an alternative to poaching.

Looking to build on these successes, COMACO is working with the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) to extend its operations to areas in the west that have not been involved in the process. This year, ZAWA has given COMACO data on areas where illegal poaching is still common, allowing COMACO to target its efforts to specific regions. The new plan offers increased incentives for people to give up hunting in favor of farming, "the whole principle of COMACO is to offer communities a choice: a better life with skills, trade and food security through COMACO—or —a continued reliance on natural resource destruction at their own risk...." explained COMACO in announcing plans to strengthen current efforts.

According to the new arrangement, if ZAWA reports zero poaching arrests in a community, COMACO will reward the community by purchasing agricultural commodities at twice the price they currently offer. The hope is that by increasing economic incentives to farm, COMACO can continue to draw people away from destructive practices while increasing income and food security in the region.

Graham Salinger is a research intern with the Nourishing the Planet project.

Kasanka News

My name is Bastiaan and I work for the Kasanka Trust Ltd in Northern Zambia, a not-for-profit conservation trust tasked with the management of Kasanka and Lavushi Manda National Parks in Northern Zambia. We have been based in Kasanka for the past 25 years and this area has thus been well-surveyed. We currently boast a good 50 or so recorded Reptile species (including 31 snakes!), and a similar number of Amphibians, but there are still some definite 'gaps' in our records. At four times the size of Kasanka, Lavushi Manda represents a true wilderness, explored and let alone surveyed by very few. Dominated by Mt Lavushi, a 26km rocky ridge and one of the only significant free-standing mountains in Zambia, this National Park no doubt holds many secrets and interesting species due to its isolation, altitudinal variation and variety of habitats.

As a Trust that is forever looking for new ways of expanding our client base and thereby hopefully one day achieving our management goal of becoming financially self-sufficient from tourism, we have come up with an idea. We would like to offer a once-off 10 day catered bush-camping experience to Lavushi Manda and

Kasanka to sample our herps and help in the vitally important task of collecting baseline data on the lesser known creatures that call this area home. In addition, participants would be some of the first visitors to enter this remote area of Zambia and bring in some valuable income in the form of bed-nights and such to the Trust that manages it.

This post is meant to gauge the response and see if it would be feasible for us to go ahead and further develop the project and set some dates. It would probably best to email me personally on bastiaanboon@gmail.com as browsing the web does not always work on our rather slow internet connection back in the Park!

Many thanks, looking forward to hearing from you!

Kariba Dam

From <http://www.internationalrivers.org>

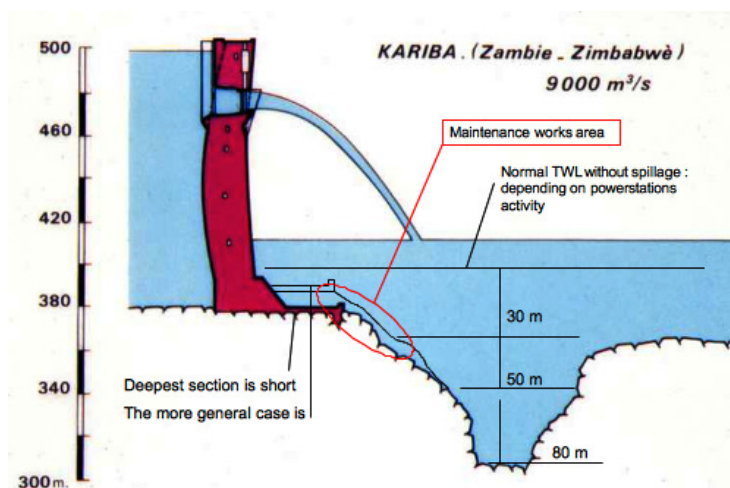
The Kariba Dam holds back Africa's biggest reservoir. Millions of people live downstream of it in the Zambezi River Basin. The safety of the 53-year-old dam has been called into question a few times, for various reasons.

Multi-beam bathymetric photo of the Kariba Dam plunge pool.

Source ZRA ppt, 2012

Most recently, at a meeting of dam operators in July 2012, engineers from the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) revealed that the plunge pool below the Kariba Dam has deepened beyond expectation: it has now eroded to a depth of more than 90m into the rock substrate. The plunge pool is the area where the water is released after going through the dam's spillways. The main concern is not the depth of the

plunge pool, but that it has been eroding towards the dam wall, with the likely possibility of undercutting the foundation of the 128-meter-high wall. This is of great concern, as an unstable foundation can lead to dam failure, a potentially catastrophic event for the hundreds of thousand people living downstream of the Kariba Dam.



Kariba holds back over 64,800 Mm³ of water – about a year's worth of the Zambezi's flow. The design has six spillway gates that release water at the rate of 9000m³/s when the reservoir levels go above the maximum flow stipulated by a "rule curve." At most times the spillway gates are opened in advance of predicted floods for dam safety reasons.

In the July presentation, ZRA noted that dam releases eroded approximately 150,000m³ of rock between 1962 and 1981, when the 19th dam-safety survey was done. Since 1981 there have been no significant changes due to limited spilling during this 30-year period. With the current situation, the stability of the plunge pool will be affected if the spillway is operated with more than three gates open at the same time. The need to open the gates may be necessitated by large floods resulting from heavy rainfall events in the Upper Zambezi catchment – a condition that is likely to increase with a changing climate.

ZRA has engaged consultants who have proposed a number of options to address the problem. The preferred option is one that will excavate and widen the hole in order to dissipate the energy from the spillways, thus removing 295,000m³ of rock. The bigger plunge pool will reduce the excessive turbulence that scours the hole. This work will involve building a cofferdam 18-20m downstream of the plunge pool,

dewatering and blasting the pool area in order to widen it. The work will cost millions of dollars and will take over a year to complete. ZRA said they prefer the work to be done during the nine-month dry period and that generation of electricity will continue during that time. A second opinion regarding methods and estimated design is being sought before the work can begin, possibly as early as next year.

Questions about the dam's safety in regards to the plunge pool issue include:

Will the vibrations resulting from plunge-pool blasting damage the dam wall or compromise its stability?

How effective will the new plunge pool be in limiting future damage to the 128-metre wall?

What do experts believe is the remaining life span of the dam?

And how will the current situation affect flood management?

Kariba Dam operators have been advised to open only three spillways in an event of a flood, to alternate the gates that they open, and not to open Gate 6 at all. The downstream Cahora Bassa Dam is far smaller and will not contain the flood from Kariba. How are they going to cope with huge floods in the face of climate change? How safe will the proposed Mphanda Nkuwa Dam in downstream Mozambique be? What kind of evacuation plan would be needed should the dam fail in some way, and is that plan in place?

We'll be monitoring this situation and reporting on any new developments.

BOTSWANA

A letter to Ngami Times

Listen to the vultures about extinction

Sir , - I was prompted to write in response to the letter by Tin Hogesnose which appeared in last week's Ngami Times (3/8/12).

In many ways, I'm reiterating the views espoused since BirdLife Botswana shares Tin's concern over the poisoning of wildlife in the country. The only area where I differ from him relates to the poisoning of vultures in the Kwando area earlier this year – in fact, over 200 vultures were killed (not 170 as stated).

This means that Botswana now holds the dubious record for the most vultures killed in a single poisoning incident in Africa (the previous record-holder being Kenya where 187 were killed in one incident. Most vultures are now facing imminent extinction in Kenya, as explained at the recent Pan African Vulture Summit held there).

It is little wonder that all five of the major vulture species found in Botswana are now in the Red Data Book, as follows: Endangered: Hooded Vulture, White-backed Vulture; Vulnerable: Cape Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, White-headed Vulture

I am surprised to see the Hooded and White-backed vultures are at a higher level of threat than the seemingly rarer Lappet-faced and White-headed vultures? This is because the populations of these two species have collapsed throughout the rest of Africa (due primarily to poisoning).

It looks as though the Botswana populations are soon to follow the same course. A few more incidents like the Kwando one, and our vultures will also be facing local extinction.

Regrettably, even though it is largely true that people don't care much about the future of our vultures, or other wildlife, as Tin states, they also don't seem to care much about their own future either. I thought that it is a well-known fact that birds are good environmental indicators, and that what is not good for them is not good for humankind either.

The poison Carbofuran (or Furadan as it is also known) is manufactured by FMC in the United States but is banned from use in that country and throughout the European Union. Doesn't that speak volumes? Apparently, Carbofuran is for “non-food” crops (being obviously toxic to humans when used on food crops). Now what non-food crops are growing in Botswana, and just how much are they contributing to our well-being?

Carbofuran is being used more to facilitate illegal activities in Botswana – not only to kill vultures as a cover-up for poaching, but also to kill watchdogs during house-breaking and robberies.

There was a time when DDT was good for us and the environment, but now we look back on those days with embarrassment – what were we thinking? It was Peregrine Falcons and birds of prey that warned us of the persistently harmful effects of this wonder-chemical. Now the vultures are sending the same signal.

Ngwana yo o sa utlweng molao wa batsadi o utlwa wa manong

If we don't listen to our parents and elders, and we don't even listen to the vultures, then who are we going to listen to? We'll ultimately suffer the consequences.

PETE HANCOCK
BirdLife Botswana, Maun

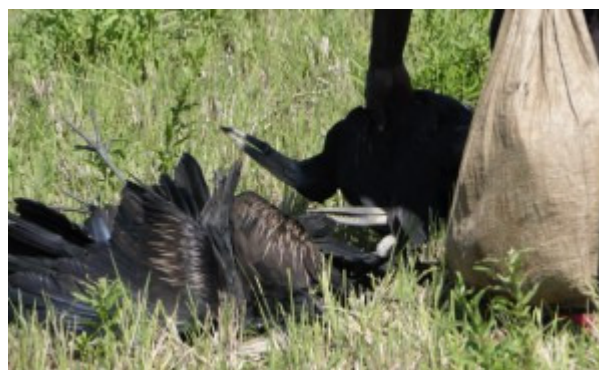
Bird Poisoning in Kenya

In a related article from Kenya, we are told that people are using poison to deliberately poison birds for food. Bunyala Rice Irrigation Scheme is a magnet for migratory birds with all the water, but the people have found that these birds form a good source of protein for their meals.

Poisoned palaeartic migrant waders inclusive of Wood Sandpipers, Green Sandpipers and Ruffs among other species



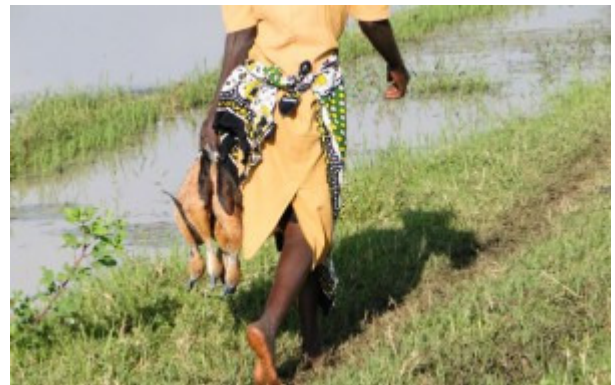
Poacher collecting Openbills after he poisoned them



Poisoned Fulvous whistling ducks. It is worth noting this species in the United States was Endangered and pesticide poisoning was ranked as its leading threat. In Bunyala, it is deliberately poisoned using pesticide poison such as Furadan.



A mother taking home purchased Fulvous Whistling ducks



Martin Odino is running a conservation programme to try to keep the poachers at bay and save the birdlife but with an area of over 5,000 ha and only two scouts. He is appealing for help. To read his story: <http://stopwildlifepoisoning.wildlifedirect.org/2012/08/15/support-the-vigilance-strategy-to-end-bird-poisoning-in-bunyala-rice-irrigation-scheme-kenya/>

WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

TANZANIA PARLIAMENT TOLD OF 30 POACHED ELEPHANT A DAY

A report recently submitted to and discussed by parliament in Dodoma makes stark reading and confirms what has been rumoured for long, that the rate of poaching is way higher than Tanzanian officials have previously admitted.

During the period between 2006 and 2009 as many as 30.000 elephant, many from the poorly guarded Selous but generally right across the country and often under the very noses of law enforcement, have been slaughtered in a silent massacre, which casts a dark shadow over the country's commitment to conservation.

The commercial scale killings continue unabated and experts think that as many as 30 elephant are now being killed a day, which would put the annual figure to a staggering 10.000+ and for which the chairman of the committee on land, natural resources and environment as well as the shadow minister for natural resources and tourism blasted the government. Committee chair James Lembeli was quoted to this correspondent to have said when talking about the ongoing wildlife massacres: 'The committee directs the government to address poaching issues in its entirety and stop poaching activities in the country' while Peter Msigwa, shadow minister on the opposition benches for natural resources and tourism challenged the ministerial statement to the house by reportedly saying: 'It is a shame to hear the government say that

poachers have a lot of money and use highly sophisticated methods, when we expect the government to ensure the security of the wild animals'. ...

THE SMILE

A New Loo

This is not funny; it is deadly serious, but it might put a smile on your face.

The Gates Foundation has just awarded prizes for the development of a better loo. For years we have had the same design for The Loo. In fact it originated in the 1700s when the flush toilet was patented.

There were three prizes handed out for new loo designs. The first went to Caltech, America, which invented a solar-powered toilet which reused water, poo and pee to make fertilizer and hydrogen to provide energy. The second went to Loughborough University, UK, who are looking at turning poo into charcoal. The third prize went to Toronto University, Canada, which recycled the water to render it 'clean'.



In the blurb accompanying the story, about the new loos, it mentioned the fact that 1.5 million children under the age of 5 die each year because of sanitation problems. I doubt that this is going to alter that – many of our villagers have to walk miles just to get a bucket of water for drinking. Interesting, just the same ...

Have a good week

Gill