

The Livingstone Weekly

24 June 2012

Dear All

The Victoria Falls are still full and sending mist high up into the sky. This is one of the best times of the year to see the Falls. They are really beautiful.

Don't the gorges look sinister ...?

The river is dropping so and the levels in the gorges are down.
Whitewater Rafting is now starting at Rapid 10.



Golden Leaf

During the week I went for the first time to Golden Leaf restaurant. Most of us know the restaurant as Ngolide, but Hema and Anay Nana, the owners, decided to take the restaurant out of Ngolide Lodge and move it into its own premises over the road. The new restaurant gives so much more space with an open veranda being very popular.

The standard of cooking is still as good as it was at Ngolide – the best Indian food in town.



While we were there I was introduced to a group of Indian travellers who were 'doing Africa' – Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya. They were all retirees and every year they went on a trip. From the list of countries they told me they had visited, I reckon they had been all over the world. They were more cultural tourists than wildlife tourists and wanted to know about the people and buildings.

This group, of around 12 people, had a large table on the veranda of Golden Leaf. They loved the food too. So if Indians like the food you know it has got to be good.

Filling in a Hole

I watched a couple of men filling in a hole on Industrial Road. They told me it was a hole left by Southern Water and Sewerage Company. I asked them if they were going to remove all the soil they had dropped into the drain. *Oh, yes, they told me ... They didn't, of course.*



New Currency Control

Companies and Government departments have been grappling with the new Statutory Instrument on the use of kwacha for all transactions in Zambia.

All credit card machines are now in kwacha so that all dollars are converted into kwacha for a kwacha account. Any dollar cheque written in Zambia has to be deposited in a kwacha account.

I was told this week that ZAWA and NHCC have complied with the new rule and are now charging entrance to parks in kwacha. Immigration attempted to do likewise for its visas but was faced with chaos at airports as tourists arrived (quite naturally) without any kwacha and were not allowed to pay in dollars. Kwacha is not available in banks outside Zambia unlike Rand or Pula. The attempt was given up and tourists are now allowed to pay visas in foreign currency.

For me, it is so surprising that a Statutory Instrument which does not have to be discussed in Parliament can have such a drastic effect on business.

From British Law, which I assume is similar to our own:

Statutory instruments (SIs) are the most important form of delegated legislation. They are made by Ministers who have been granted such powers to make legislation by an Act of Parliament. SIs deal with matters too detailed to be included in an Act of Parliament and they can easily be amended or repealed thus enabling the Government to respond quickly to changing circumstances. They come under various titles such as Orders, Regulations, or Rules.

According to this definition I find it hard to believe that this Statutory Instrument is dealing with mere details. This is a major upheaval of the business environment, one which I thought the government wanted to improve.

Zambia is a nation of traders. They travel all over Africa and the world to go and buy products for sale in Zambia. But now, without being able to keep their foreign currency in a bank, I assume they will keep it in cash. For myself too I will close my dollar account – there is no need now to have it.

Everyone is wondering when the time will come and all foreign currency accounts will be forced to close. It reminds me of the time when I first arrived in Zambia before multiparty democracy. Then there were no foreign currency accounts and everyone talked in whispers about dollars because there was a flourishing black market. The difference between the black market and bank rates was about 4:1 at that time. Remember when Zimbabwe did the same ... that was a story in history which we hoped never to see again.

Protests from businesses in Zambia I am sure are amassing in in-trays in government offices. The Africa Travel and Tourism Association has already written to the government about the effects of the new rule and states that it is suicide for Zambia tourism especially as we head towards the UNWTO next year.

I am sure the rule is affecting the copper mining and farming exporters – vegetables, wheat and flowers. They must be facing the same problems as the tourist industry.

I am not an economist but it seems to me that the following will happen:

- Those companies which operate in more than one country will keep their foreign currency out of Zambia.
- Small businesses and individuals will keep foreign currency at home in cash.

The result of this is that there will be less foreign currency in circulation and this will lead to banks being unable to meet the needs of customers ... and this will lead to a black market. Once we have a black market the kwacha will devalue. We have seen it before ...

ZAMBIA

Kangaluwi Mine

During the week Zambia Environmental Management Agency held two public meetings near Lower Zambezi National Park to listen to public concerns over the proposed mine within Lower Zambezi National Park.

Participants at the meeting brought up various issues:

- They were concerned that Mwembeshi Resources, the mining company, failed to commit to planned employment of Zambians. They also failed to name development projects for the area and for the surrounding communities.
- On acid mine drainage, Mwembeshi Resources failed to satisfy members of the public that acid mine drainage had been analysed properly and that no specific mitigation measures were outlined.
- As water and power will be required for the mine, Mwembeshi Resources did not state their plans for these utilities and undertake promises that the lives of local communities would not be adversely affected.
- In order to ensure that the mine will be decommissioned at the end of its life there was a call for sufficient funds for this to be guaranteed by a Zambia bank.

It was generally felt that the Environmental Impact Assessment had not been properly prepared and that there were many gaps and inaccuracies in the document.

Zambia has generally got a good environmental background. All we, as the public, can do is to await the response of Zambia Environmental Management Agency.

Zambia has minerals all over the country. In the Copperbelt the landscape is being blotted with open pit mines. Surely ZEMA can see that this mine should not go ahead in one of our beautiful parks. Let the mining company go elsewhere.

From the Zambia Weekly

Ivory Missing

Several tonnes of ivory have gone missing from the armoury at Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) – in unclear circumstances. The story broke on the *Zambian Watchdog*, which, quoting a source, reported that more than 140 pieces of ivory could have been sold to Chinese to raise money for PF's campaigns in the upcoming by-elections – implicating ZAWA Executive Director Edwin Matokwani and Foreign Affairs and Tourism Minister Given Lubinda. Then the *Daily Nation*, quoting a ZAWA source, reported that the ivory was part of a recently received – and nontagged – batch. It also interviewed Matokwani, who denied any high-level involvement, explaining that two suspects had been arrested. Somewhere along the line the police got involved, and the story broke in the public media: Here it was explained that at least 3 tonnes of ivory had been stolen from ZAWA. The stolen ivory had been intercepted in Mumbwa District on 30 May and taken to the armoury for safe keeping. Two game scouts had been arrested, explained Matokwani. The value of the 3 tonnes was reported as 2 billion in the *Daily Mail*; yet in November 2011, 169 pieces of intercepted ivory, weighing 454 kilograms, were valued at about K3 billion. Two years ago Zambia and Tanzania failed to convince a UN Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) to allow them to hold one-off sales of their ivory stockpiles.

Sable in Jail

250 Sable antelope are currently stuck in inadequate enclosures on the outskirts of Lusaka – and have been so for years – having become victims of bureaucracy. In 2008, Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) sold 153 Sables to Swanvest 234 of South Africa for USD734,000. However, South African wildlife producers objected to the influx of Sable, fearing genetic contamination AND that their prices would be undercut (in South Africa a prime Sable bull can sell for as much as USD370,000) – and the whole thing ended up in court in that country. In the meantime, the 153 Sables had been captured and put into temporary enclosures at the incomplete Lusaka National Park, awaiting shipment to South Africa. Here they remain to this day, having in the meantime reproduced to about 250 animals. After *Africa Geographic* Magazine publicised an article about the Sables in February 2012, which caused a great deal of furore in South Africa, a temporary solution was found for the translocation of the Sables to a more suitable environment in Zambia – while the court case rages on; all paid by Swanwest 234, but the move has now stalled, apparently because ZAWA is reluctant to give its written consent.



Anthill Destruction

Humphrey Kunda, an environmentalist and farmer, has pointed out that increasing demand for the soil from anthills to make burnt pan bricks has reduced the number of flying ants (Inswa), over the past few years: “These anthills are a home to insects such as Inswa, which are eaten as relish, but if we continue destroying them; the birds, insects and animals that live there are likely to go into extinction,” Kunda said – and called for the protection of anthills in Kitwe District (Daily Mail 15).

Foot and Mouth in Southern Province

Foot-and-Mouth in Southern Province Foot-and-Mouth Disease has broken out in Livingstone and Kazungula Districts, leading to a complete ban on movements of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and their products as well as slaughter of livestock at abattoirs – affecting farmers, traders and the travelling public.

From Robin Pope Safaris Luangwa

I just loved this photo taken by one of their guests of the hawk with a snake wrapped around its legs.



ZIMBABWE

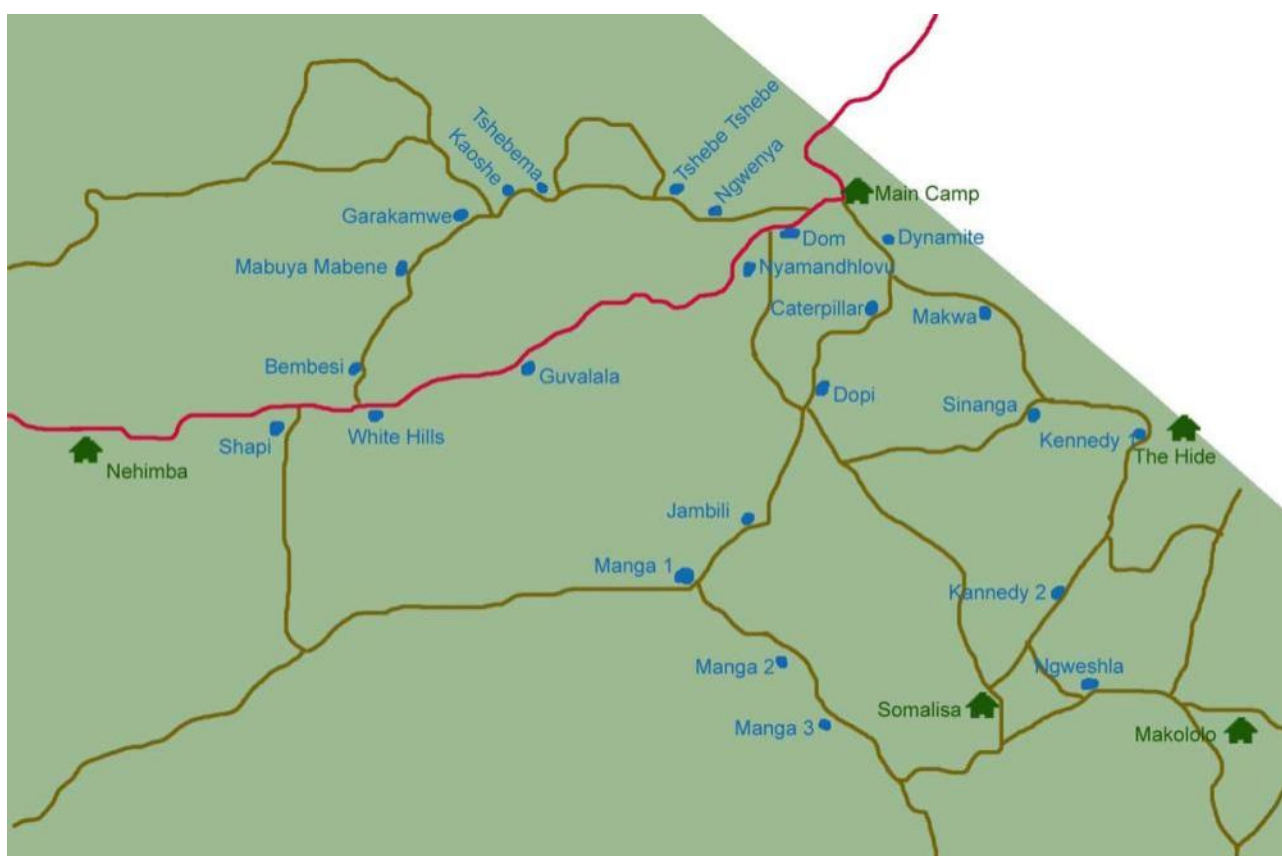
HWANGE – JUNE 2012

We were invited to join several other couples at Ganda Lodge for the weekend (June 15th to 17th) which gave us the opportunity to have a good look at the water situation in the Main Camp area, as a follow up to the trip we made through the park, Main Camp to Sinamatella, at the beginning of May.

Having enjoyed the glorious autumnal colours in May, the trees and grasses were looking decidedly wintery with the reds, oranges and yellows of May fading away to rusty browns and dusty golds while most of the greens were rather drab and lack lustre. Although there were the odd startling patches of colour in parts of the teak forests and mopane woodland, on the whole there was that grey/brown pallor over everything already. Winter is definitely settling in and the park is drying off rapidly.

On the Friday, we took the loop road from Main Camp through to White Hills, looking at the water situation at Ngwenya, Tshebe Tshebe, Tshabema, Kaoshe, Garakamwe, Mabuya Mabena and Bembi. The only water of any significance was at Tshebe Tshebe where pumping was in progress; the trough was full of lovely clean water and was overflowing into the pan. There was not much water in the pan though. There was a very small amount of water at Kaoshe but this will not last much longer. The windmill at Mabuya Mabena still does not appear to be operating as well as we'd hoped but there was a small amount of water with only a dribble coming from the pipe. At Shapi we found the trough full but the pan is pretty much a muddy puddle, sadly. There is evidence of a lot of animals utilizing this water point. White Hills holds no water and Guvalala was very low, mainly due to further engine problems but pumping was in progress there. The water levels at Nyamandhlovu and Dom were much as expected and good for this time of the year. Work has been done at Livingi to build up the trough using the dam scoop. The trough was overflowing into the pan but there was no water of any significance in the pan itself.

On Saturday we started off at Caterpillar finding the trough full and overflowing into the pan which held a small amount of water. There were clouds of Bradfields hornbills, everywhere we looked – quite amazing. Driving through to Dopi, we came across a lovely family outing of nine giraffe and seven zebra very close to the road. Apart from a snort from the stallion and some very curious and haughty glares from some of the giraffe, the animals were very chilled and carried on with their breakfast; the giraffe nibbling away at the tops of the bushes using their long prehensile tongues to scoop the leaves and the one zebra foal continued nursing while mother stood quietly chewing the cud. The engine at Dopi is out of commission due to the engine mount being damaged so work needs to be done there and there was obviously no water there at all. The Jambile pan had a few pools of water. Gary was at Manga One with a team from the Parks water department, attending to a broken rod which they fortunately managed to fix and water was reportedly being pumped again by nightfall. One of the highs from our trip was finding good water at Manga Three, thanks to the efforts of the Somalisa camp providing the diesel for the engine. There were forty to fifty elephant drinking at the pan with a very dark, old male giraffe seemingly wanting to join them. We had just seen a large breeding herd in the tree line obviously making its way to the water as well. The elephants were decidedly skittish, however, and when we attempted to drive on, we sent them scattering away from the water and dashing off into the tree line. It was very windy at the time, with great gusts of dust flying about so it may be that they were just spooked by that as well as the noise of our vehicle. Gary reported that there were about five hundred elephant there when he went past later on showing the pressures that we are going to be subjected to..



This is one of my maps. I have found all the pans except for Livingi ...

We called in at Somalisa to find several groups of visitors and camp looked busy and bustling. Attempts had been made to pump water into a new site away from the main Manga/Ngweshla road but we weren't sure how that was going to work. Somalisa has also recently put in a solar pump half way along the Ho Chi Min trail which we inspected later in the day. We couldn't get a close look at the workings, due to several large grey pachyderms drinking there at the time but there was also quite a good puddle of water in an emerging pan. Ngweshla, of course, was its usual magical place with several giraffe and zebra at the old

main pan and a very handsome roan drinking from there. The water in the main pan is not going to last a lot longer but there was good water in the pan near the picnic site.

The definite “low” of the trip was seeing the sad state of Kennedy Two. There had been a problem with the engine mount at the new borehole site so pumping had been seriously delayed while the solar, of course, battles away with trying to provide enough water for the hundreds of animals that depend on water there. Several elephants were commandeering the outlet pipe while a family of zebra desperately tried unsuccessfully to sneak in for a quick drink. However, Gary reported that he had managed to get the engine going by evening time so hopefully there will be some respite for the animals in the area. Kennedy One, Sinanga and Makwa all hold some water and animals were seen drinking at all three. We received reports from the Lion Research personnel that the natural pans down past Josivanini and into the southern corner of the park were actually holding good water for the time of the year.

It is the time of the year when game water supplies are critical in the park. Unfortunately, Gary is having to assist the Parks Water department even more than normal as they are without a vehicle once again. The diesel situation continues to be a nightmare and although coupons have been procured using donor funds, Parks are always “running out”. A report did come in that a bowser had arrived with 3000 litres being allocated to game water in Main camp area which should relieve the situation briefly. Pumping is constantly being interrupted for one reason or another, so any breakdown at this time of the year that is not immediately attended to means no “catch up” as well as adding untold pressure on other pans that are in operation.

A good time was had by all at Ganda Lodge. The outlook over the pan is lovely and the staff were all very welcoming and friendly. Bird life abounds and the animals visiting the pan were all very relaxed and calm. Although the lodge accommodation is fairly basic, everywhere was clean and tidy, the beds were very comfortable and the food quite adequate.

John and Jenny Brebner

Animal Companionship from Cecil Kop

This is our Basenji dog called Senjie meeting up with Jane the resident female elephant. The setting is our garden which borders onto the Cecil Kop Game park. "Meetings" between the fence have taken place over a period of about 10 months but Jane did the unthinkable 2 weeks back and the pictures tell it all. She "became submissive" to Senjie 3 times on the one encounter. Then 5 days later lay down 4 times for Senjie. This all takes place over a time frame of just over an hour. Her son Chatunga always stays in the back ground grazing quite contently.





BOTSWANA

Tracks of Giants

The Two Ians are now in Botswana and being looked after by Wilderness Safaris.

Post from 21 June

The Tracks team has been in extremely remote areas whilst kayaking from Seronga via Motswiri and the Selinda Spillway into Zibidianja Lagoon, where they were met by the Wilderness Safaris staff. The team has had zero access to any technological equipment, so it has been very difficult to share a full blog. They cannot recharge satellite or cell phones, and no computers are permitted on the kayaks—for obvious reasons!



Fortunately, we just received this brief update from Ian Michler:

"This is going to be a short blog for two reasons. Firstly, its being written at 3.00am while on nightwatch and I want to get back to sleep, and secondly, I am typing on a satellite phone. These last two and a bit weeks on the waterways of northern Botswana have without doubt been the most adventurous and exciting part of the TRACKS journey.

While the mekero leg to Seronga was restful – how can it be anything else while you are being gently poled through such scenic settings, the kayak legs have been somewhat more testing. At times we have had to beat our way through reed and sedge beds, or drag the kayaks across stretches of shallow or dry land.



But for the most part, paddling conditions have been fantastic with over 30kms being clocked on a number of days. We have passed through vast tracts of true wilderness, most of it almost unbelievably scenic and untrammelled, and all of it carrying wildlife of some sort. The number of elephant herds has been incredible – one or two drinking at the river's edge on almost every bend, and great sightings of buffalo, kudu, lechwe, giraffe and zebra as we have drifted by.

Two daily features are the inevitable hippo interactions, some of which have raised the adrenaline levels a notch or two, and then the sense of joy and delight shared around the evening campfire. We are now camped about 35kms down from the mouth of the Savute Channel, and if all goes to plan, we will reach the marsh in three days time. More to come...watch this space!"

SOUTH AFRICA

The Elephant Whisperer

For 12 hours, two herds of wild South African elephants slowly made their way through the Zululand bush until they reached the house of late author Lawrence Anthony, the conservationist who had saved their lives. The formerly violent, rogue elephants, destined to be shot a few years ago as pests, had been rescued and rehabilitated by Anthony, who had grown up in the bush and was known as the "Elephant Whisperer."

For two days the herds loitered at Anthony's rural compound on the vast Thula Thula game reserve – to say good-bye to the man they loved. But how did they know he had died March 7?



Known for his unique ability to calm traumatized elephants, Anthony had become a legend. He is the author of three books, Baghdad Ark, detailing his efforts to rescue the animals at Baghdad Zoo during the Iraqi war, the forthcoming The Last Rhinos, and his bestselling The Elephant Whisperer.

There are two elephant herds at Thula Thula. According to his son Dylan, both arrived at the Anthony family compound shortly after the author's death.

"They had not visited the house for a year and a half and it must have taken them about 12 hours to make the journey,"

Dylan is quoted in various local news accounts. "The first herd arrived on Sunday and the second herd, a day later. They all hung around for about two days before making their way back into the bush." ...

Elephants have long been known to mourn their dead. In India, baby elephants often are raised with a boy who will be their lifelong "mahout." The pair develop legendary bonds – and it is not uncommon for one to waste away without a will to live after the death of the other.



A line of elephants approach the Anthony house (Photo courtesy of the Anthony family)

But these are wild elephants in the 21st century, not some Rudyard Kipling novel.

The first herd to arrive at Thula Thula several years ago were violent. They hated humans. Anthony found himself fighting a desperate battle for their survival and their trust, which he detailed in *The Elephant Whisperer*:

"It was 4:45 a.m. and I was standing in front of Nana, an enraged wild elephant, pleading with her in desperation. Both our lives depended on it. The only thing separating us was an 8,000-volt electric fence that she was preparing to flatten and make her escape.

"Nana, the matriarch of her herd, tensed her enormous frame and flared her ears.

"Don't do it, Nana,' I said, as calmly as I could. She stood there, motionless but tense. The rest of the herd froze.

"This is your home now,' I continued. 'Please don't do it, girl.' I felt her eyes boring into me.



Anthony, Nana and calf (Photo courtesy of the Anthony family)

"They'll kill you all if you break out. This is your home now. You have no need to run any more.'

"Suddenly, the absurdity of the situation struck me," Anthony writes.

"Here I was in pitch darkness, talking to a wild female elephant with a baby, the most dangerous possible combination, as if we were having a friendly chat. But I meant every word. 'You will all die if you go. Stay here. I will be here with you and it's a good place.'

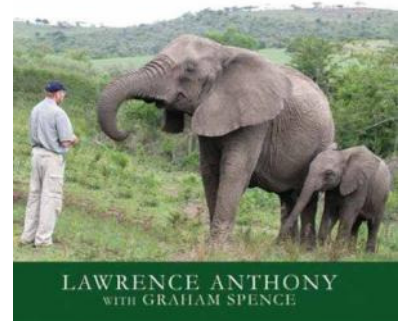
"She took another step forward. I could see her tense up again, preparing to snap the electric wire and be out, the rest of the herd smashing after her in a flash.

"I was in their path, and would only have seconds to scramble out of their way and climb the nearest tree. I wondered if I would be fast enough to avoid being trampled. Possibly not.

"Then something happened between Nana and me, some tiny spark of

THE ELEPHANT WHISPERER

My Life with the Herd in the African Wild



recognition, flaring for the briefest of moments. Then it was gone. Nana turned and melted into the bush. The rest of the herd followed. I couldn't explain what had happened between us, but it gave me the first glimmer-of hope since the elephants had first thundered into my life."

It had all started several weeks earlier with a phone call from an elephant welfare organization. Would Anthony be interested in adopting a problem herd of wild elephants? They lived on a game reserve 600 miles away and were "troublesome," recalled Anthony.

"They had a tendency to break out of reserves and the owners wanted to get rid of them fast. If we didn't take them, they would be shot.

"The woman explained, 'The matriarch is an amazing escape artist and has worked out how to break through electric fences. She just twists the wire around her tusks until it snaps, or takes the pain and smashes through.'

"Why me?" I asked.

"I've heard you have a way with animals. You're right for them. Or maybe they're right for you."

What followed was heart-breaking. One of the females and her baby were shot and killed in the round-up, trying to evade capture.

When the survivors arrived, "they were thumping the inside of the trailer like a gigantic drum. We sedated them with a pole-sized syringe, and once they had calmed down, the door slid open and the matriarch emerged, followed by her baby bull, three females and an 11-year-old bull."

Last off was the 15-year-old son of the dead mother. "He stared at us," writes Anthony, "flared his ears and with a trumpet of rage, charged, pulling up just short of the fence in front of us.

"His mother and baby sister had been shot before his eyes, and here he was, just a teenager, defending his herd. David, my head ranger, named him Mnumzane, which in Zulu means 'Sir'. We christened the matriarch Nana, and the second female-in-command, the most feisty, Frankie, after my wife.

"We had erected a giant enclosure within the reserve to keep them safe until they became calm enough to move out into the reserve proper.

"Nana gathered her clan, loped up to the fence and stretched out her trunk, touching the electric wires.

The 8,000-volt charge sent a jolt shuddering through her bulk. She backed off. Then, with her family in tow, she strode the entire perimeter of the enclosure, pointing her trunk at the wire to check for vibrations from the electric current.

"As I went to bed that night, I noticed the elephants lining up along the fence, facing out towards their former home. It looked ominous. I was woken several hours later by one of the reserve's rangers, shouting, 'The elephants have gone! They've broken out!' The two adult elephants had worked as a team to fell a tree, smashing it onto the electric fence and then charging out of the enclosure.

"I scrambled together a search party and we raced to the border of the game reserve, but we were too late. The fence was down and the animals had broken out.

"They had somehow found the generator that powered the electric fence around the reserve. After trampling it like a tin can, they had pulled the concrete-embedded fence posts out of the ground like matchsticks, and headed north."

The reserve staff chased them – but had competition. "We met a group of locals carrying large caliber rifles, who claimed the elephants were 'fair game' now. On our radios we heard the wildlife authorities were issuing elephant rifles to staff. It was now a simple race against time."

Anthony managed to get the herd back onto Thula Thula property, but problems had just begun:

"Their bid for freedom had, if anything, increased their resentment at being kept in captivity. Nana watched my every move, hostility seeping from every pore, her family behind her. There was no doubt that sooner or later they were going to make another break for freedom.

"Then, in a flash, came the answer. I would live with the herd. To save their lives, I would stay with them, feed them, talk to them. But, most importantly, be with them day and night. We all had to get to know each other."

It worked, as the book describes in detail, notes the London Daily Mail newspaper.

Anthony was later offered another troubled elephant — one that was all alone because the rest of her herd had been shot or sold, and which feared humans. He had to start the process all over again.

And as his reputation spread, more "troublesome" elephants were brought to Thula Thula.

So, how after Anthony's death, did the reserve's elephants — grazing miles away in distant parts of the park — know?

"A good man died suddenly," says Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, Ph.D., "and from miles and miles away, two herds of elephants, sensing that they had lost a beloved human friend, moved in a solemn, almost 'funereal' procession to make a call on the bereaved family at the deceased man's home."

"If there ever were a time, when we can truly sense the wondrous 'interconnectedness of all beings,' it is when we reflect on the elephants of Thula Thula. A man's heart's stops, and hundreds of elephants' hearts are grieving. This man's oh-so-abundantly loving heart offered healing to these elephants, and now, they came to pay loving homage to their friend."

Read more: <http://blog.beliefnet.com/news/2012/03/rescued-wild-elephant-herds-inexplicably-gather-to-mourn-lawrence-anthony-south-africas-elephant-whisperer.php#ixzz1yilACrd1>

WOLFGANG'S COLUMN

KWITA IZINA 2012 – A TALE OF NAMING AND FAMING

(The author, seen here naming 'Umutungo' or 'Fortune' at Kwita Izina in Kinigi / Musanze on June 16th.

Picture courtesy of Telesphore Ngoga)

The eighth annual gorilla naming festival, now globally known as Kwita Izina has over the years named 141 young born baby gorillas, with each and every one of them given a name, all of them different and of a deeper meaning. The choices of names are proposed by the rangers on the ground who are with these endangered animals all the time and their selection reflects the circumstances of the birth or the location they were born at, but the 'namer' makes the final decision, choosing from two or three selected for the particular new born. Rwanda is the only country in the 'gorilla triangle' of the Virunga mountains, which it shares with Uganda and Congo DR, to dedicate an entire festival to the primates, and while gorillas in Uganda too are named by the wardens and the UWA staff, only in Rwanda has the naming been turned into an annual celebration of conservation. 141 births in 8 years sounds both much and little, the latter clearly an indicator that conservation is a hard, long term business and had it not been for Rwanda's extraordinary efforts to protect the species, in conjunction with the communities living around the boundaries of the national park, a similar number could have been recorded as a loss to poaching or illegal trading. The centerpiece of Rwanda's success is found in bringing the community on board, and Musanze has been recorded as the third most successful part of the country to combat and eradicate poverty, attributed to the inflow of tourist visitors, the jobs and investments they helped to create and the money they leave directly in the local economy, besides paying a tracking fee of now US Dollars 750 to the Rwanda Development Board. Local guest houses and hotels thrive and over the Kwita Izina week are fully booked as the regional and international conservation fraternity flocks to Musanze to pay tribute to Rwanda's achievements.



From initially being a one day event, Kwita Izina has grown into a weeklong festival of activities, regularly featuring conservation focused conferences and workshops, exhibitions like this year when sustainable and green technologies were showcased at the Kigali Serena Conference Centre, a cycling race from Kigali to the 'gorilla mountains' and notably, year after year, the handing over of additional community projects.. These are covering the provision of clean drinking as well as irrigation water, health centres, educational facilities and community centres where the locals can meet. 5 percent of the revenue of the permits are given back to the communities, besides a further 5 percent now being contributed to a compensation fund scheme from which anyone suffering proven wildlife damages can receive a payout.

The government of Rwanda has in recent years been regularly represented by the Prime Minister, paying tribute to the work done day by day in and around the park by wardens and park staff, the researchers, NGO's led by the Diane Fossey International Gorilla Fund and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme but also receiving the tribute of the international community for Rwanda's ongoing commitment to protecting the species. This year it was the President of the International Council for Tourism Partners, Prof. Geoffrey Lipman, who stopped in Rwanda enroute from Beijing and Bangkok to Rio de Janeiro where he is attending the Rio20+ Summit, who applauded The Land of a Thousand Hills for their green vision of sustainable tourism developments. Rwanda is a founder member of the ICTP, which launched last year at the WTM in London and will hold its first annual meeting in the Seychelles in 3 weeks time. Prof. Lipman was one of the 20 namers, as was the Founder Chairman of the East African Tourism Platform, which was launched in Rwanda as part of the Kwita Izina week, Richard Rugimbana from the Tourism Confederation of Tanzania.

But this year was special in many ways. Normally reporting from the festival site in Kinigi this correspondent was chosen by RDB as a 'Namer' in recognition of consistent positive reporting about Rwanda tourism and conservation and his contributions to promoting the country abroad through regular feature articles published by eTN and many other media organizations, in his capacity as the eTurboNews correspondent for Eastern African and Indian Ocean islands region. It was an honour for eTN to be such recognized as well as for yours' truly and the occasions was made double special when the first ever opportunity arose to name a semi adult female. She some time ago migrated from the wild, seemingly un-habituated and not recognized by the unique facial features each gorilla has, as a member of any known group in the three countries and is now according to the rangers fully settled and integrated in the Sabinyo Group. It was instantly clear to this correspondent that this gorilla girl had enough sense to recognize, that by coming to Rwanda and becoming part of a habituated group, it sought out the protection of a strong and sustained conservation system where she can live out a full life. As many as 8 tourists a day, or up to 2.920 a year, come to see the gorillas of each of the 8 habituated groups and she too can now be seen on a daily basis, earning her keep by simply being there and letting curious humans see their close relatives in the wild with whom we share 98 percent of DNA.

(Dressed in full regalia of a 'Namer' outside a traditional Rwandan homestead, where the men and women chosen to name are briefed and outfitted before making a grand entrance. Picture courtesy of Telesphore Ngoga)

The chosen name for her was 'Umutungo' or in English 'Fortune' because it was a good fortune which brought her into the safety net of RDB's Tourism and Conservation Department, from now on according her protection and care against 'permitting' to be visited by tourists from around the world. And in the best African tradition, yours' truly claimed 'Umutungo' as his daughter and laid his claim to dowry, also expecting fully to name her first born, as and when that happy event will take place.

The 2012 event once again filled the showground to the brim and more than ever before where the words from the Prime Minister greeted with loud and enthusiastic applause, when he listed the achievements made in this part of the country, attributed to a large extend to tourism activities. It was evident that the local communities, which streamed in their many thousands to the festival ground, were fully behind the event, no wonder considering the benefits tourism has brought and continues to bring to the Musanze and its environs.

In closing I wish 'Umutungo' and the other 19 newly named gorilla babies a long and happy life in the forests of the 5 towering volcanoes, where they can live and give in safe surroundings.

This trip was made possible by the generosity of RwandAir, the national airline of Rwanda, of Serena Hotels and the Rwanda Development Board's Tourism and Conservation Department.

Duke of Cambridge Supports Rhino Conservation

From the BBC

Kate Silverton reports

The Duke of Cambridge is calling for action to stop the illegal trade in rhino horns, warning that the animals are being slaughtered at such a rate they could soon be extinct.

"Along with elephants, they're two of the most heavily poached animals currently in the world," Prince William told the BBC.

"If we don't do something about them it's going to be a tragic loss for everyone."

The royal patron of wildlife charity the Tusk Trust has just lent his support to a programme - run by conservation charity the Aspinall Foundation - to return three rare black rhino born in captivity and raised in Kent to the wild in Tanzania.

'Neglect and ignorance'

Poachers are killing more rhinos in Africa than ever before, conservationists warn, with horns fetching up to \$60,000 (£38,000) a kilo on the black market.

The practice is undermining efforts to stabilise the populations of both black and white rhino which together total some 18,000 in Africa, according to the conservation charity WWF.

The duke says we should all try to do our bit for rhino - by acting collaboratively - before it is too late. It estimates that despite being "critically endangered", 245 black rhino have already been shot this year.

Demand is being driven by a market in Asia which believes powdered rhino horn can cure ailments including cancers - despite no scientific evidence to back this up.

Prince William said: "There's a massive need for education on poaching... rhinos are very vulnerable animals and I think a lot of people don't realise what happens and how rhino horn, or ivory, ends up in a particular area.

"I think [we need to] make people aware of how delicate and fragile these animals are, and how much damage we are doing to them and to the wildlife and natural ecosystem around them just by our neglect and ignorance."

He said those who knowingly took part in the illegal trade were "extremely ignorant, selfish and utterly wrong".

'Culture shock'

Speaking at Port Lympne wildlife park in Kent - where the three young rhinos were raised - the duke said he was keen to work with communities on the ground to ensure they benefited as well as the animals.

"Otherwise many of these countries in Africa will lose prime tourism, prime assets," he added.

The three black rhino, who have now arrived in Tanzania, have armed guards with them 24 hours a day.

Damian Aspinall, from the Aspinall Foundation, said they would have to cope with the stress of adjusting from a "cosy life" in England to the wilds of Africa.

"We think it's fantastic sending them home, but they probably think 'what the hell, strange noises, strange climate', I think any animal you send back will have a bit of a culture shock."

He said educating people in China that there was no medical value in rhino horn would be hard as they had been brought up their entire lives to believe it.

But he said he believed technology could help in the fight - potentially fitting transmitters to horns, or using unmanned drone aircraft to monitor the movement of both rhino and poachers.

'Someone's mantelpiece'

As he fed Zawadi, a five-year-old female now in Tanzania, Prince William explained that his love of rhino stemmed from his time helping to hand rear them at a friend's reserve in Kenya.

He explained that despite looking "bombproof", they were sensitive creatures with wonderful characters. But his tone changed as he explained how Max, one of those he fed, was killed just this year by poachers in an act he described as a "complete waste".

"Sadly he ran into the wrong people and he is now on someone's mantelpiece somewhere probably," he said.

Conservationist Damian Aspinall says animals born in captivity must have a chance to return to the wild. The duke said he wanted to send a message of support to all those taking part in the fight to stop the killing of rhino, but he also wanted to see more education and awareness raised about the issue.

Tusk Trust chief executive Charlie Mayhew said the killing of both white and black rhino was out of control. He said 13 black rhino were killed in South Africa in 2007, compared with 434 just four years later.

Recent rumours that rhino horn powder cured a prominent (but unnamed) politician's cancer have seen prices rise higher than those for gold.

The Aspinall project had been a collaborative effort, with charities and big business coming together - a message echoed by the duke.

"These guys are prehistoric looking. They are the most incredible things and do we really want to live in a world 20, 30 years down the line where there's no such thing as a 'big five' [elephants, lions, rhino, cape buffalo and leopard]?", he said.

"It'll be the big four, then possibly the big three and then where do we go after that?"

"Are our grandchildren ever going to be able to see the big five? I think that's terribly sad and that should never happen."

Gill's Finances

The other week I complained because I was broke and spending too much time on the Weekly and needed to concentrate on more financially productive work. I think I was depressed at the time because I had no power or telephone or internet ... it sort-of 'got to me'.

Anyhow, many people emailed and suggested that I charge subscriptions. If you can afford it, I have set a subscription of US\$50 per year. That is K250,000 if you are in Zambia. Even if 10% of the people who receive this newsletter pay the subs I will be better off. It is, of course, completely optional, but I know lots of people would like to support me.

My Account is:

The Livingstonian

Finance Bank, Livingstone

Sort Code: 11-10-23

Account Number: 0230101449009

If you live outside Zambia, send an email and I will 'make a plan'. As we are now under new financial controls, I would prefer to pick up any dollars or rands when I am travelling – it will help expenses.

Vehicle Problem

Another one of my problems is that my 4x4 is in need of a spare part. It has been grounded for months and I can't get into the bush. If anyone can find me a company which can send me the part, here are the details:

Toyota Hilux 1988

Chassis: YN67-9007448

Engine: 4Y9015418 Petrol

Engine Size 2200cc

What I need is a brake servo.

As you can see it is a very ancient vehicle and no-one seems to have the spares for it anymore. If I can find a company in South Africa or Botswana which can locate the part I can organise payment and get it sent to Zambia. I am imagining a whole year going by without being able to get to the bush ... how sad is that ...

The Irish Millionaire

With apologies to Irishmen

Mick, from Dublin, appeared on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' and towards the end of the program had already won 500,000 euros.

"You've done very well so far," said Chris Tarrant, the show's presenter, "but for a million euros you've only got one life-line left, phone a friend.

Everything is riding on this question. Will you go for it?"

"Sure," said Mick. "I'll have a go!"

"Which of the following birds does NOT build its own nest?"

- a) Sparrow
- b) Thrush,
- c) Magpie,
- d) Cuckoo?"

"I haven't got a clue." said Mick,

"So I'll use my last lifeline and phone my friend Paddy back home in Dublin ..."

Mick called up his mate, and told him the circumstances and repeated the question to him.

"Fookin hell, Mick!" cried Paddy. "Dat's simple it's a cuckoo."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm f**kin sure."

Mick hung up the phone and told Chris, "I'll go with cuckoo as my answer."

"Is that your final answer?" asked Chris.

"Dat it is."

There was a long, long pause and then the presenter screamed, "Cuckoo is the correct answer! Mick, you've won 1 million euros!"

The next night, Mick invited Paddy to their local pub to buy him a drink.

"Tell me, Paddy? How in Heaven's name did you know it was da Cuckoo that doesn't build its own nest?"

"Because he lives in a f**kin clock!"

Have a good week

Gill