



Dear All

As I write this I am overlooking the floodplain at Nanzhila Plains Safari Lodge. Josh and I have been on the road for 11 days and I was too tired to drive today! So we are enjoying Nanzhila and will be on our way tomorrow to Livingstone. Hopefully, then, this Weekly will hit the internet and reach your inboxes.

We have had an amazing trip:

Day 1: Nanzhila Plains Safari Lodge, Southern Kafue

Day 2: Musungwa Lodge, Itezhi-Tezhi

Day 3-4: Mukambi Safari Lodge, Mumbwa GMA

Day 5-6: Leopard Lodge, Lunga Luswishi GMA

Day 7: Mukambi Safari Lodge

Day 8-9: Kaingu Safari Lodge, Namwala GMA

Day 10-11: Nanzhila Plains Safari Lodge

Day 12: Home? I jolly well hope so. We are travelled out and I have no clean clothes!

Overall impression of the trip is that Kafue National Park is an amazing park but that we have a lot of work to do in order to make it a first class destination.

### Roads

We found that some of the roads are excellent but others are horrid. Notable in the horrid category is the Itezhi-Tezhi Road to the Lusaka-Mongu Road. The 110km took us 4½ hours. Because of this road, Itezhi-Tezhi is virtually cut off from the rest of Zambia. The other really nasty bit of Zambian 'road-age' was the Mumbwa-Kasempa Road. Another dirt road which had not been graded for years, it seems. We travelled along it for an hour, covering 20 km, and I turned back because I couldn't take any more.

Roads in the park were generally good with the odd bad stretches but, sometimes we don't care too much about park roads because bad roads can be part of the enjoyment.

### Events on the Way

13-15 September: Fishing Competition.

Eagles Rest, Siavonga

20-21 September: Golf Competition.

Victoria Falls Town

28 September: World Rhino Day

2-4 October: Fishing Competition.

Kariba Town

26 October: Zambezi Kayak Festival.

Livingstone

26-31 October: World Adventure

Travel Summit. Windhoek

### Bushfires

Most of the park was either burned or in the process of being burned. Personally, I don't like any burning of the bush and neither do tortoises which get caught up in them ... and all the other small creatures which live in the soil. The trees are blackened the plants are dead.



I know that many people say that it is best to do an 'early burn' because, if the bush burns in October when it is really hot, much more damage is done to the environment.

If only we could stop burning altogether we would have a much better environment – less erosion, more plant diversity, better wildlife ...

### Wildlife

The wildlife was OK. We didn't see an awful lot. The park is still recovering from the devastation of the 1990s when the wildlife was decimated. I had thought that the northern section of the park would be fine, but the wildlife there was also pretty thin on the ground. I am told, in the north, the wildlife often moves to Busanga Plains at this time of the year. That maybe so; it may also be that we were just unlucky. However, we were told that poaching is still an issue. There are poachers who shoot for the pot but there are others who shoot for commercial gain. I was told that there was a growing market for bushmeat in Lusaka with the up-and-coming middle class who like to have it for dinner. I don't know how true this is and, with the concern by Zambians about their natural environment you wouldn't believe it. But, maybe ...



*At this point I gave up because I had no internet. The rest of the Weekly is done in a bit of a rush, just to get something out. Mostly 'copy and paste', but it will mean that I can work nicely on the next Weekly without worrying about the weeks gone by ...*

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## ZAMBIA

### From the Zambia Weekly

#### Solwezi to become 5th international airport?

Solwezi Airport is ready to become an international airport following the extension of its runway from 1.3 kilometres to 2.8 kilometres. The runway has also been widened, allowing for large aircraft such as Boeing 737. The \$9 million project was funded by First Quantum Minerals, reported the Daily Mail. Zambia has four international airports in Lusaka, Ndola, Livingstone and Mfuwe.

### **UNWTO contract irregularities**

Auditor General Anna Chifungula has handed over a report to the Anti-Corruption Commission on officials from the Ministry of Tourism believed to have perpetrated irregularities in awarding contracts for the UNWTO conference. The irregularities were picked up by Tourism Minister Sylvia Masebo, who suspended the officials, pending further investigations, reported the Post.

### **Fewer business licences**

Government has eliminated 113 business licences out of the targeted 170 deemed to be unnecessary – as part of its private sector development reform programme. In 2008, an inventory recommended that out of Zambia's 517 business licences, 170 should be eliminated, 57 be reclassified and 99 be amalgamated into 21.

### **British Airways will suspend its 3-times-a-week**

London-Lusaka route with effect from 27 October – due to low revenues – after more than 70 years in Zambia. Instead, the airline intends to increase the number of flights to Accra in Ghana and Entebbe in Uganda. The local tourism industry was quick to protest, as the UK is Zambia's main source of European visitors – tourists and businesspeople alike. Zambia Tourism Board said it would mobilise other stakeholders to try and persuade British Airways to stay. Earlier this year, British Airways stopped flying to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and it is still to resume its route to Harare in Zimbabwe, which was cancelled in 2007. After pulling out of Zambia, British Airways will now be serving eight sub-Saharan African countries directly from London, including Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and Uganda.

### **Maybe consider encrypting your emails?**

According to the [Zambian Watchdog](#), Huawei Technologies Limited of China has completed installing email hacking devices at all Internet Service Providers in Zambia. As at the beginning of October, all emails may be intercepted by government, reported the online publication. The only way to avoid this is by adding one's own encryption.

### **No chicken for Christmas?**

The Poultry Association of Zambia has warned of a shortage of chickens this coming Christmas, as the country's largest chick producer, Hybrid Poultry Farm in Chambishi, is experiencing lower output due to pollution. Hybrid Poultry breeds 28% of all chicks in Zambia, the association told the Post. The farm neighbours Nonferrous Corporation Africa (NFCA) Mining and its smelter. Breeder flocks are allegedly very sensitive to noise, water and air pollution.

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## **ZIMBABWE**

### **Zim elephants a jumbo problem**

[SCHALK MOUTON, Times Live](#)

The Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Authority said in an article in the Zimbabwe Gazette last week that the country's elephant population was 100 000 strong and becoming too large to manage. Zimparks spokesman Caroline Washaya-Moyo said the elephant population - the third-biggest in the world - was putting a strain on the resources in the country's parks and the animals were becoming easy targets for poachers.

"Law enforcement requires operational equipment such as patrol kits, uniforms, radio communication kits, vehicles, boats, tracking equipment [eg GPS]," said Washaya-Moyo.

"Currently, most of the existing field equipment is old and obsolete. Poachers are getting sophisticated. In some situations poachers are using hi-tech gear including night-vision equipment, veterinary tranquillisers, silencers and helicopters."

Washaya-Moyo said that, unlike in other countries, Zimparks was not funded by the government. The parks authority currently owned a stockpile of 62 374.33 tons of ivory worth \$15.6-million (about R159.5-million), which it was not allowed to export as it is bound by regulations from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites).

"The authority is therefore saying elephant ivory in store represents animals that are already dead. Why should we not use the dead to look after living animals?" she asked.

Conservationists in Zimbabwe are, however, sceptical about the numbers of elephants quoted.

The last comprehensive elephant census in the country was done in 2001, when their largest population, in Hwange National Park, was counted. Elephant estimates from the International Union for Conservation of Nature's elephant database from last year indicates an estimated 76930 animals in the country with only 47366 being "definite".

"Any figure of elephant numbers is a spurious guess," said Sally Wynn, spokesman for the Zambezi Society.

Johnny Rodrigues, chairman of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, said the parks authority was trying to spread "propaganda" to get Cites to allow an ivory sale.

"A couple of months back the numbers of elephant in the country were between 40000 and 45000 and that was sustainable. Now [the number of elephant] is 100 000. How do they come up with those figures?" he said.

Cites banned the commercial sale of ivory in 1989, but in 1997 allowed Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to sell their existing stock of ivory to Japan in 1999 and allowed a second sale that included South Africa in 2008.

Daphne Sheldrick, a conservationist based in Nairobi, last week said about 36000 elephants were killed in Africa last year, and elephants could be extinct in 12 years.

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## **Zimbabwe: Govt Urged to Enact Tougher Poaching Penalties After Mass Elephant Poisoning**

By Alex Bell, SW Radio Africa

The deliberate poisoning of more than 40 elephants in the Hwange National Park has sparked outcry across the world, with a growing chorus of voices demanding that stricter poaching penalties be implemented.

The elephants died after members of a suspected poaching syndicate laced salt with the toxic chemical cyanide and distributed the salt in a drinking pool used by elephants in Hwange. The carcasses of the animals were discovered late last month after park rangers heard gunshots within the park.

Investigations by the police resulted in the grisly discovery of the elephants, with their tusks removed. Further investigations led the police to nearby Mafu homestead, where six suspected members of the poaching gang were arrested and 17 elephant tusks were recovered.



The story has made international news headlines and around the world people have been calling for tough measures to be taken to punish the poachers and prevent a further incident like this from happening.

Johnny Rodrigues, the Chairman of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, said that current poaching penalties are "very lenient," and often "nothing more than a slap on the wrist." He told SW Radio Africa that while stricter anti-poaching laws are necessary, this was only part of a much bigger problem.

"The main problem we have is with high unemployment. There is a market for people to be paid by syndicates to kill the animals, in return for ready money," Rodrigues said.

He explained that it is desperation more than criminality that is fuelling the poaching crisis, with even National Parks staff (who have not been paid in many months) sometimes being implicated in providing poachers with information, in return for cash.

"There's a thriving market in Zimbabwe for poaching syndicates and it is disgusting. This (the incident in Hwange) will have a huge impact on other animals, especially your scavengers like vultures who eat the meat and then also die," Rodrigues said.

He added: "There is also a human side, because people, if they find it, will take the meat and eat it. So it's not just the animals at risk here."

Although it cannot be confirmed where this syndicate accessed the cyanide, observers who spoke to SW Radio Africa said it was no coincidence that many of the gold mining firms in Zimbabwe are Chinese run and cyanide has been used for years in Zimbabwe's gold mining industry. The highly toxic substance is used to separate the gold from the ore it is contained in.

And, as Rodrigues said: "There are so many Chinese in Zimbabwe with ready money who are interested in getting their hands on the ivory."

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## **Hwange Appeal**

HWANGE NATIONAL PARK is very dry this year and needs support.

The residents of Bulawayo are doing all they can through Wildlife Environment Zimbabwe (WEZ) but they can't do it alone. At the moment we have a drilling rig in the Park cleaning out a few critical boreholes but we need to do more and whilst the rig is there it would be great if we could find the money to do a few more to make the exercise worthwhile.

Friends of Hwange Trust is doing all it can keeping the pumps going. We held a fundraising dinner in May and although we raised a reasonable sum of money it is not enough to get the Park through the dry season and definitely not enough to spend on major rehabilitation like the work being done at the moment on the boreholes.

Please support this great National Park by generously donating as a matter of urgency.

Bank: NMB, Branch: Borrowdale

Branch Code: 11106

Acc No: 260093754

Acc Name: Friends of Hwange Trust

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# BOTSWANA

## CROSSING INTO BOTSWANA

A very new regulation has been introduced by the Botswana immigration department. This has been in effect since July 2013.

When travelling with children under the age of 16 years the following documents are required:

- Original or Certified copy of their Birth Certificate (safer to take the Original along so that they can see it alongside the Certified Copy)
- An affidavit signed by a commissioner of oaths stating that either/or both parents are in fact the parents of that particular child.

If you do not comply with these regulations, they will turn the whole family away until the documents are to their satisfaction.

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# NAMIBIA

## Elephant Poachers Poison Hundreds of Vultures to Evade Authorities

Darcy Ogada, Explorers Journal, National Geographic

The ongoing slaughter of Africa's elephants is at record levels. The situation has gotten out of hand in many countries, especially those lacking the resources to fight the increase in demand for ivory from the Far East.

With wildlife authorities struggling to save the remaining tuskers, there has been little attention paid to the other casualties of elephant poaching. In what is now becoming commonplace across the continent, poachers lace the discarded elephant carcass with cheap poisons to kill vultures in mass. Why? Because vultures circling in the sky alert wildlife authorities to the location of poachers' activities. Vultures are highly specialized to locate carcasses quickly so as to avoid competition from larger mammalian predators. Poachers would prefer their nefarious activities to remain undetected to escape arrest. So to a poacher capable of gunning down a 7-ton beast, poisoning several hundred vultures along the way is all in a days' work.

And if recent reports are anything to go by, many of Africa's 11 species of vulture are in imminent danger of extinction. In July this year up to 600 vultures died at a single elephant carcass that was poisoned near Namibia's Bwabwata National Park. There have been three other similar incidents in the wider region since the end of 2012, with each incident killing hundreds of vultures.

Vultures are long-lived birds that reproduce very slowly, producing an average of one chick every other year. Their current mortality rates are well above what is sustainable and populations of all species are crashing across the continent.

And if you don't love vultures, you should. They are nature's most efficient and effective clean-up crew. They go about their daily business without any fanfare. Yet, in their little appreciated role, they are

ensuring that our increasingly polluted planet remains a bit less polluted from the bacteria and other pathogens that accumulate on carcasses and at garbage dumps. If you have ever seen the immaculately cleaned bones remaining from a carcass scavenged by vultures, you'll know of the magic of these supremely adapted scavengers.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

### **Is SA's water too precious to frack with?**

Rebecca Davis. Daily Maverick

This week, Water Affairs Minister Edna Molewa confirmed that a notice of intention to declare hydraulic fracturing – fracking – a controlled activity, had been gazetted for public comment. Other cabinet members have said recently that shale gas exploration could be authorised before the 2014 elections. And while Molewa says she wants to ensure fracking won't damage South Africa's water resources, critics believe this is impossible.

... Water scarcity is one of the reasons why fracking has attracted such controversy in South Africa, since the process will be extremely water-expensive in an already water-stressed area (the Karoo). It is also feared that fracking might contaminate the Karoo's existing groundwater. As such, even though it will be the Department of Mineral Resources' task to issue exploration licenses to successfully-bidding oil and gas companies, fracking is obviously also going to be the baby of the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs.

"I have taken the decision to issue a notice of intention to declare fracking a controlled activity in terms of section 38 of the National Water Act," Edna Molewa announced to journalists on Tuesday. This means that companies exploring for natural gas in the Karoo will require a "water use license", enabling a greater degree of departmental control and oversight during the extraction process. ...

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## OTHER STUFF

### **To stop ivory poaching, treat it like drug trafficking**

By Chris Davis, China Daily

When Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta made his first state visit to China last month, one of the several hefty packages he returned with was Beijing's promise to help the East African nation with its wildlife poaching problem.

Kenyatta said the Chinese government offered to help improve surveillance around national parks and game reserves, and "help with capacity building to enable the Kenya Wildlife Service deal with poachers effectively", a press release from the State House in Nakuru read.

The problem, by anyone's numbers, is bad. And it's not just in Kenya. UNESCO recently said "the massacre of wild species has reached an industrial scale, in particular the poaching of animals for their ivory". The UN's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species says that 30,000 elephants are slaughtered every year for their ivory and could become extinct in 15 to 20 years.

Matthew Lewis, senior program officer with the World Wildlife Fund and a specialist in African species conservation, said that poaching of elephants in Africa is "at the highest levels we've seen since we've been tracking it".

Lewis says that "without question, demand in China has largely driven this increase in elephant ivory poaching. The growth in the economy of China has a strong correlation with demand. The availability of spending money for the average Chinese individual means that ivory as a status symbol is highly in demand in China."

What can China do about it? Lewis thinks it goes way beyond giving money to Africa's anti-poaching efforts. He calls for a much deeper relationship between African governments and China in combating the crime, working very closely hand-in-hand on enforcement issues.

"Certainly money for anti-poaching would be crucial, the rangers need better equipment, better training and more of them," he said. "But follow-up on basic enforcement would be absolutely crucial."

A Chinese individual gets arrested with ivory on the African continent and is given a slap on the wrist or hefty fine, sometimes a sentence, but beyond that nothing. In Lewis' ideal world, the Chinese government would do follow-up investigations, find out who that person is linked to, is he an organized criminal involved with a syndicate? "It's not arresting the poacher that's going to get us over this crisis, it's going to be taking down these large multi-national syndicates of organized criminals with kingpins at their head who are making millions and millions of dollars out of this trade," Lewis said.

Ideally, it would be better to have cooperation at all ends of the chain and track it, detected the ivory in transit then let it go through and set up an ambush at the port and see who comes to pick up the container, and follow that individual back. "It's very similar to the way drug trafficking is investigated," he said.

"If China can cooperate with African governments to get that kind of investigation going, that would be fantastic," he said. "Then we'll start to put a dent in the problem." ...

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## Crayfish Control

Four years ago, UW-Madison researchers wrapped up a multi-year effort to dramatically reduce the population of a destructive invasive species in a northern Wisconsin lake. Now, a recent survey of the lake shows that not only have fish, insect and plant communities bounced back in Sparkling Lake, but the invasive rusty crayfish is on the ropes.

Gretchen Hansen, a former postdoctoral researcher in the UW Center for Limnology and lead author of the study published in the July issue of the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, says that when rusty crayfish invade a lake, they use their claws to snip aquatic plants right at their roots. Scientists think this lets crayfish better spot approaching predators, but it also removes critical cover for other species, leaving them nowhere to hide from predators like smallmouth bass.

In the early 2000s, when UW researchers began the rusty removal experiment, Sparkling Lake was essentially deforested. There were no beds of aquatic plants, no spawning sunfish and tons of invasive crayfish. "Rusties then were crazy abundant," Hansen recalls, adding that crayfish boils were not an



uncommon occurrence for the students and other scientists working on the project. "We were catching 1,000 a day and eating them all the time."

Today, researchers are more likely to have a fish fry.

By suppressing the rusty crayfish population, Hansen says, researchers enabled plant communities to grow back and, with them, the aquatic invertebrates and fish that called them home. It was an outcome researchers aspired to but weren't sure was possible.

Previous studies suggested that many plant species wouldn't regrow from the lake bottom seed bank and Sparkling Lake's fish populations were tenuous at best.

"We thought that pumpkinseeds (*a type of fish*) might come back, but we were a little concerned that [bluegills] had been extirpated," she says, noting that from 2000 to 2004, extensive surveys of Sparkling Lake turned up only a couple dozen pumpkinseeds and no bluegills. Today, says Hansen, now a research scientist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, rebounding populations of fish like bluegill and pumpkinseed are helping keep rusty crayfish populations down by preying on juvenile crayfish and larvae. ...

Read more at: <http://phys.org/news/2013-09-whole-lake-invasive-crayfish-met.html#jCp>

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## **Chobe project poses fresh threat to Victoria Falls**

Mmegi Online

The attractiveness of the mighty Victoria Falls, one of the natural wonders of the world, is under threat if Botswana goes ahead with its planned extraction of large volumes of water from Chobe River for use in its interior, a cabinet minister has said. This would affect foreign currency inflows for both Zimbabwe and Zambia pumped in by tourists who throng the falls annually to witness the "smoke that thunders."

Botswana has notified other southern African countries of its intentions to abstract some 30 cubic metres from the Chobe River where it meets the Zambezi River for a planned irrigation scheme in the Pandamatenga area and for domestic water supply.

The Minister of Water Resources Development and Management, Samuel Sipepa-Nkomo recently told parliament that Zimbabwe was considering Botswana's submission.

He, however, noted the project might have serious repercussions on Victoria Falls, the largest curtain of water in the world, which is 1,708 metres wide.

"They have notified us because the Zamcom (Zambezi Watercourse Commission) agreement requires them to do that and we are now considering their submissions," said Sipepa-Nkomo.

"Though more studies may be necessary, it looks like 30 cubic metres is a lot of water which might deprive the attractiveness of the Victoria Falls." Remarkably preserved in its natural state, Victoria Falls inspires visitors as much today as it did to David Livingstone in the 1860s. ...

Gill Comment: *This article does not state the rate of extraction. Is it 30 cu m per second, per minute, per day ... Does anyone know? What is good about this article is that we are taking this extraction as a potential threat to all of us downstream of Botswana. We really must know the consequences ...*

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### **Woman drives over thieves' legs**

From the Zambia Weekly

Two small-scale farmers from Chikumbi near Kabangwe, James Gumbo and Clever Mutangama, are nursing broken legs in hospital in Lusaka, after an unnamed woman farmer drove over their legs. The duo had been helping themselves to tomato stakes at her farm. After ordering her employees to tie them up, she drove over their legs, and left them helpless in the field, they told the Post.

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### **The Mind Boggles**

Zimbabwe plans to build "Disneyland in Africa" at the world famous Victoria Falls to boost tourism, according to new plans unveiled by the Zimbabwean government. ...

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Have a good week

Gill