



Dear All

We have rain ... at least a bit of it ... The bush has woken up and everything looks green. Love it.

Rebasing of the Kwacha

As we all know the Zambian Kwacha is to be rebased and three zeros are to be knocked off. Zimbabwe did this many of times. Now Zambia is set to follow suit with its rebasing exercise which is due to start on 1 January 2013. On 31 December 2012 there will be a public holiday to allow the banks to prepare. I am assuming that bank staff don't get this holiday ... I wonder if they will get one in lieu???

Anyhow, the banks are spending loads of money trying to cope with the change but the real test of their resolve will come into play at the end of December with all the ATMs. People have got used to drawing money from the banks through an ATM but, of course, these machines will not be operational until they have been reconfigured and repacked with new notes. How long will this take? No-one is really sure.

In the meantime it is a holiday and Livingstone will be hosting many visitors – domestic or international – and they will not be able to get cash for payment of their bills. Now that we cannot use other currencies this is probably going to have dire consequences for some travellers.

So, anyone who is travelling to us here at the Victoria Falls will have to make proper contingency plans about access to money ... or you can always go and stay in Victoria Falls Town where they accept all currencies ... except the Zambian kwacha ... and ATMs spew out US dollars.

Corruption Perceptions 2012 From Transparency International

I found this on the internet and thought that it was interesting. Transparency International has just published its latest results of research on corruption. As you can see Denmark, Finland and New Zealand top the charts as being corruption-free ... but look at the rest of us ... right down to Somalia at the bottom ...

- 1 Denmark, Finland and New Zealand
- 30 Botswana
- 58 Namibia

69	South Africa
88	Zambia
163	Zimbabwe
174	Somalia (Bottom)

ZAMBIA

Economic Development for Livingstone

A response by a Livingstone Weekly Reader

I read your piece about Ruth's speech. I couldn't agree more. Having a proper, strategic, well-thought-through tourism policy was something I advocated when I was part of the scene up there. We wrote many proposals, documents etc. at the time, in an effort to help government.

Marketing is so important. I was hugely disappointed at the new Zambia slogan that was announced last year. 'Explore Zambia' says nothing to differentiate the country. It also places the onus on the tourist rather than expressing anything the destination has to offer.

Something else that Zambia can do is look at the fees for filming in the country. Film makers are a marketeers best friend - they make the country famous. Encourage them.

Tourism is not a magic wand. It requires hard work, sacrifice and vision to make it work. But the end result is worth it, as it creates jobs, protects the environment and earns revenue for the country.

Filming Zambia

We charge an extraordinary amount for film crews to work in Zambia – so much per day per camera and all sorts of other charges. As the reader above states we should be encouraging these crews. Maybe we should be paying them.

Here is a documentary for the Victoria Falls produced by the BBC. I wonder how much they were charged for the privilege of marketing our country.
<http://www.thegreatplanet.com/natural-world-victoria-falls-the-smoke-that-thunders-bbc/>

In another article this week in the Times of Zambia, Kingsley, Chairman of the Livingstone Tourism Association hoped that National Heritage Conservation Commission and Zambia Wildlife Authority will waive filming fees for a South African film crew:

SOUTH African consultants hired to design a marketing plan for the promotion of Livingstone tourism will soon publish a book on tourism products. The consultants will also film various products in Zambia's tourist capital. Livingstone Tourism Association (LTA) chairperson Kingsley Lilamono said in an interview that the

Manager Needed

For Tented Camp in Livingstone area

Must have several years experience, with references with a strong marketing background & be used to dealing & training staff. Experience of catering & customer service essential.

Accommodation provided on site.

Must have driving licence.

Contact Andy Tel: 0979959981

info@pranazambia.com

book would be distributed in Zambia and South Africa. He said the consultants, The Journey, from Cape Town were expected to start filming various tourism products in Livingstone in January next year so that the city's tourism products could be marketed in South Africa. ...

Mr Lilamono said the marketing plan for the promotion of Livingstone tourism was sponsored by the European Union at a cost of 130,000 Euros.

"We have already started implementing the marketing plan designed by South African consultants and we will soon have a book on Livingstone tourism products.

"There is also another aspect of free filming of Livingstone tourism products which will happen in early January 2013. After filming, the consultants will showcase our products on South African television for free," Mr Lilamono said.

He urged the Zambia Wildlife Authority and National Heritage Conservation Commission to consider waiving filming fees as the project would benefit Livingstone and Zambia at large. ...

BirdWatch Zambia

Surprise friends, family or employees with this beautiful Bird Calendar or help selling it among your friends and colleagues.

Available for sale and wholesale at Kachelo, Leopards Hill Road

Also for sale in Arcades bookshop and at the Dutch Reformed Craft market on Saturday 15th of December.

Phone Trish Bingham (0966698983) for questions.

Phone Sue Clayton (0977925131) or send an email to susanclayton66@gmail.com , if you are interested to buy a batch of 50 or more for Company advertising for the wholesale price of K40,000 each. (This includes the price of the advertisement that hangs below the calendar.)



Gill Comment. *I have a couple of readers who would like to get some of the calendars. Let me know if you want some and I can order 50 to come to Livingstone.*

Dakar Rally

Dave Reeve is the first ZAMBIAN to be invited to enter the DAKAR.

Local artist Theo Pieterse has donated 2 of his paintings to be auctioned in support!



Biography About David:

Born in Chikankata, Mazabuka in 1973

Son of Tom Reeve Zambian Motor Sport pioneer
Farming on Dorvic Farm - Family business since 1952

Married to Emma - Two sons who are budding off road racers

About The Artist:

Theo Pieterse is a local artist who has exhibited internationally, including USA, South Africa, Germany, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Theo started painting in the late '70's and was inspired by and learnt a lot from watching David Shepherd



work while employed by Norman Carr. Theo is drawn to Conservation Exhibitions, chosen as one of the top wildlife artists, he always uses the best materials available to him, namely Winsor & Newton oil paints.

AUCTION CLOSES: MIDNIGHT - SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER

WINNER ANNOUNCED: MONDAY 24 DECEMBER

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Art-Auction-Supporting-David-Reeves-Journey-to-Dakar/479008008809298>

Kasanka park hosts 300 tourists in 1 month

By KENNEDY MUPESENI – Times of Zambia

KASANKA Trust National Park has hosted more than 300 tourists in less than one month due to the massive migration of straw-coloured fruit-bats from the Democratic Republic of Congo between November and December every year. By November 22, this year over 10 million fruit-bats were reported to have arrived at the park from Congo.

Kasanka Trust National Park general manager Ernest Jacob said Kasanka had attracted more than 300 local and foreign tourists who had visited the tourist and safari site.

“Yes, they started arriving in early October this year and we believe approximately 10 million have since migrated here. They are currently at their peak and will leave Kasanka around mid-December, this year,” Mr Jacobs said.

In an interview from Kasanka yesterday, Mr Jacobs said approximately, 300 bed nights at Kasanka in November were filled because of the migration which he said always attracted tourists because of the spectacular scenery bats created. ...

Tourism in Africa – learning from history

A Gill Article

The concept of a holiday is one where people travel to relax and enjoy different experiences. Originally the word came from Holy Day and these were days set aside by the church for religious observances and people had a day off work to go to church. Now, though the word holiday is used for any break from work.

In the 1800s the upper classes in Europe were always off on holiday. Later when rail and steam ship travel became available, the middle classes joined in and took holidays. By early 1900s working class people took holidays to the coast and to lake resorts. Sometimes these holidays were organised by a church or by a company for their staff. Doctors were advocating holidays for people to get away from the hectic lives or just to get out of a drab environment. Bus and train loads of people arrived at English coastal resorts during the summer months.

Nowadays most people in Europe, America and other quasi European countries like to go on holiday. It is part of their culture. Many people will save a bit of money every month and put it aside so that they can go on holiday; a holiday in Africa may take several years of saving. Asians too are now becoming tourists as they become more affluent.

What about African people? Well, from my experience, friends of mine in Africa rarely go on holiday. When they get leave from work they will either stay at home or travel to see friends or family; if they have a bit of money they will go to Johannesburg to go shopping.

I have often commented that no-one should be employed in the Ministry of Tourism or in the Zambia Tourist Board until they have paid for themselves to go on a holiday – not to Johannesburg to go shopping

but to a National Park or to the coast in South Africa/Mozambique . It is important that they understand the value of getting out of their personal environments to experience something new.

Having a holiday is a concept that is either in your psyche or it is not. It would be like me understanding the finer points of rugby – I will never get it. While we have so many officers in the Ministry of Tourism who have never paid for a holiday for themselves and their families they will never be able to promote tourism in Zambia ... because they just 'don't get it' ... like me and rugby ...

Meanwhile our journalists in Zambia are trying to get to grips with the notion of tourism. We are getting more and more articles written by journalists on Zambia's tourism product. Here is a bit of one which I found very interesting from Stanslous Ngosa, Times of Zambia:

TOURISM is increasingly becoming important to the Zambian economy as Government looks to the sector to provide solutions to the country's social and economic development. The tourism sector is mainly based on wildlife, the Victoria Falls and Lake Tanganyika, among others. ...

The tourism sector is guided by the Tourism Policy (1999) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2002) which stresses the importance of tourism development as a means of reducing poverty with special focus on rural areas. The goal of the policy is to facilitate the development of a diversified, sustainable and regionally competitive tourism industry and ensure a quality environment and sustainable utilisation of heritage and natural resources.

However, the tourism industry in its existing state has failed to make any meaningful contribution to the country's national development due to several factors which include infrastructure that is either poor or in the wrong place and uneconomical routes. Other factors include poor marketing of Zambia as a tourist destination of choice, unstable exchange rates and other cost factors leading to the cost of a bed night in Zambia being the highest in the Southern African region.

The Zambia Wildlife Authority in its current form under the Zambia Wildlife Authority Act of 1998 has been extorting exorbitant fees from tourism operators and has also not been honouring its financial obligations of sharing fees with local communities in the Game Management Areas (GMAs). As a result, the country is one of the most expensive and least known destinations for any visiting tourist in the Southern African region. Additionally, the failure to control the human-animal conflict in GMAs is another factor which has led to increased levels of hunger and poverty.

It is against this background that Government decided to review the policy in an effort to respond to the changing trends in the tourism business environment and make the country a tourism prime destination in Africa. The policy under formulation is one that would take into account three sub-sectors which include hospitality, tourism, arts and culture.

Tourism and Arts Minister Sylvia Masebo, who launched the process recently, however, said there was need for key players in the sector to contribute to the creation of the policy. So far the creation of a new comprehensive tourism policy has been launched and Government is inviting proposals and comments towards the formulation of the policy.

Livingstone Tourism Association president Kingsley Lilamono, who echoed similar sentiments, added that the policy should recognise the tourism policy so that it is backed by a legal framework. Mr Lilamono said the policy should tally with the Patriotic Front (PF)'s manifesto which is explicit on the development of the sector. According to the PF manifesto, Government wants the sector to contribute to increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita within a short period of time, thus contributing to employment creation and opportunities.

Government wants the new policy to promote the growth of resource-based tourism which is environmentally sustainable and should be accessible to future generations. Enhancing employment of

village scouts to ensure rural employment opportunities and incomes are some of the issues Government wants to address in the new policy. Promotion of well-targeted Government investment in infrastructure development, opening up new tourist sites, and establishing collaborations with the private sector to introduce economic routes by road and air to viable tourist destinations are being taken care of in the new policy. ...

The article went on with some more quotes from Zambians espousing the need for better conditions for tourism enterprises, especially for financing.

This article is good, but it is still just words. We need a change in psyche of the people. We need our authorities to understand tourism and we also need to promote domestic tourism. A very simple example of a problem with domestic tourism will illustrate this:

We are always having conferences in Livingstone. The Zambezi Sun is a good conference facility and I have watched as participants in the conference go to the restaurant for lunch. What do they eat? Most of them head straight for the mealie meal and stew without looking at the huge range of delicious alternatives available. If a Zambian cannot even experiment with eating a different meal now and again how are we ever going to get him to take a holiday!

If we accept that the concept of a holiday is generally not in the national culture we have to work with it and see how we go forwards. In Livingstone we have a few tourist operations which are run successfully by Zambians. In Zimbabwe and Botswana too there are operations run by black people. But ... it took years for them to understand the tourist mind. So, for Livingstone we have to nurture up-and-coming black operations but in the meantime we have to promote the 'foreign' operators.

Most of our 'foreign' operators have actually been in Zambia for years; some were born here, others just came because they thought they could run a good business here. The fact that any 'white' businessman is called in the press 'foreign' or 'investor' is no longer applicable. We should have a new name for 'investors'; maybe we can call them 'national developers', because basically that is what they are.

If Zambia wants to re-focus its tourism policy it needs to look for help from the private sector. If there is a member of the Ministry of Tourism or Zambia Tourist Board who has actually paid for a holiday for themselves and their family to a National Park in Zambia, maybe they can have an input ... The private sector is made up of 'national developers' and Zambians – yes we do have some excellent Zambian tour operators ... those are the people we need ...

For me, I realised several years ago that I had lived in Livingstone for years and had worked, and worked some more, without actually going to see all the wonderful places around Livingstone. I also knew that if I didn't get out of the office and into my car and travel, I would be dead or decrepit. So throughout the years I have travelled on little or no money and told you all about it. And I know I have sparked interest in all the amazing places there are to see and I know that many of you have taken to your cars too and travelled ...

These are just some rambling thoughts on tourism but as all of us, not only Livingstone people, need to rethink a positive future for tourism – for the benefits of national economies and employment – government has to listen to the private sector ... and, really, we do not need foreign consultants to come and tell us how it will work ... we actually know ourselves ... if only we listen to each other ...

ZIMBABWE

New Regulations for parents travelling with children

If you are a single parent travelling with your child (under 18), you will need to prove that you have permission to travel with him/her.

You will need an affidavit from the other parent giving permission to travel out of Zimbabwe

A copy of that parent's ID, stamped and signed

A certified copy of the child's birth certificate

Fire Extinguishers and Triangles

A High Court ruling has stated that fire extinguishers and triangles need not be carried in vehicles in Zimbabwe. But we are informed that until this information gets to the police on duty, vehicles should continue to carry them.

It didn't say anything about reflective jackets, long red strips on the back of pick-ups and cracks in the windscreen ... For me, those are my favourite misdemeanours resulting in payments to the police retirement funds ...

Mining in Gwaai Conservancy

Over the months I have written about mining activities in the Gwaai (Gwayi) Conservancy. From what I know there is not much to conserve these days as the area collapsed with the forced take-over of the farms which made up the conservancy. However the area is home to the Gwaai-Shangani Dam which is set to be a holding dam for the proposed pipeline from the Zambezi River to Bulawayo. Also, it would seem that the Gwaai people would prefer to reclaim its status as a conservancy rather than be the home of open-pit mining.

The Chinese have been in the area mining for coal and have already been fined for illegal activities.

This week Francis Nhema, Minister of Environment told the press that the government would not approve mining projects in the area without approval from the Environmental Management Authority. Francis Nhema's counterpart in the Ministry of Mines, Obert Mpofu, however has stated that mining will always take precedence over other economic activities ... can we assume then that mining will also take precedence over the environment?

KARIBA ANIMAL WELFARE FUND TRUST

The Kariba Animal Welfare Trust continues to work hard patrolling the area around Kariba Town. Scouts are employed to walk every day to look for snares and to make a note of any animals seen.

Sadly this week there was a report of two dead elephants which had stumbled into an electricity cable. The cable was dragging near to the ground after a pole had rotted and fallen. Also a young dead elephant was found with a snare round its neck.



But the saddest thing of all was this story:

KIDS – FIRE CRACKERS – ANTELOPE ISLAND

On Tuesday 4 December, Parks and Wildlife Area Manager received a call that a number of shots were heard at Antelope Island.

Suspecting Poachers !!! and all ready with his back up Rangers to climb on the boat and head over to Antelope, he phoned KAWFT and asked for more back up, to collect the Rangers from Nyanyana and to meet them at Antelope Island.

Fortunately before everyone hurtled off to pursue suspected Poachers it was established that the 25 to 30 Houseboats parked at the island with youngsters celebrating end of year school and examinations were throwing fire crackers.

Whilst this may seem a giggle to some, it is not to the Buffalo, impala, Kudu etc. that live on the island.

It is LAW that no Fireworks/crackers are allowed in Parks and Wild Life Areas unless permission has been given and culprits are subject to prosecution.

There are times and places to act irresponsible and to act responsible - PLEASE THINK BEFORE YOU DO THINGS THAT AFFECT PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE AROUND YOU

Gill Comment: I doubt that next year's youngsters will be welcome in Kariba next year. And, anyway, is this the right venue to host such a large gathering of teenagers bent on celebrating the end of their exams?

Mana Pools

We all have digital cameras these days. Most of you are probably like me – I click away just hoping for the best. If I get one reasonable photograph I am happy.

More and more, though, experienced photographers are taking safaris into the parks and actually teaching you how to use the camera to best effect.



Morkel Erasmus took this beautiful photo of elephant in Mana Pools. He is running a photographic safari in Mana Pools in July next year. Check out details on <http://photography.wild-eye.co.za/>

Angel in a Thorn Bush

Rob Fynn

OUT SOON ...

FOREWARD

Rob Fynn - a long-standing friend and mentor – is an extraordinary man who has led an extraordinary life, as you will find once you get past this foreword and into his book.

I first met him in 1979 when – as a wet-behind-the-ears immigrant fresh from the UK – I washed up on the shores of Fothergill Island, on Lake Kariba. This was astonishing in itself, as the then Rhodesia was in the final throes of the vicious bush war that resulted in an independent Zimbabwe a couple of years later. The country wasn't exactly flush with tourists, in those days.

Nevertheless, a year or so previously, Rob had successfully completed the building of his Fothergill bush camp – an exercise that involved the acquisition of enormous quantities of sand, cement, gumpoles, thatch, and all other necessary items, their transport across some 30km of open lake, and assembly into what was, in those days, an amazingly luxurious and comfortable safari lodge – all this in the midst of the aforementioned war. This was, I’ve always felt, a defining achievement. Rob exemplifies the southern African ‘can do’ mindset.

Not long after, I returned to Fothergill for six weeks and stayed there for three years, during which, through his instruction and example, I was privileged to acquire the basics of wildlife guiding at the hands of one of the finest bushmen in Africa. Rob’s knowledge of Zambezi flora and fauna is encyclopaedic; his bushcraft and knowledge of animal behaviour is

extraordinary; and his patience with raw Pommies almost (not quite!) inexhaustible - the eruption can be a long time a-coming, but is volcanic when it does.

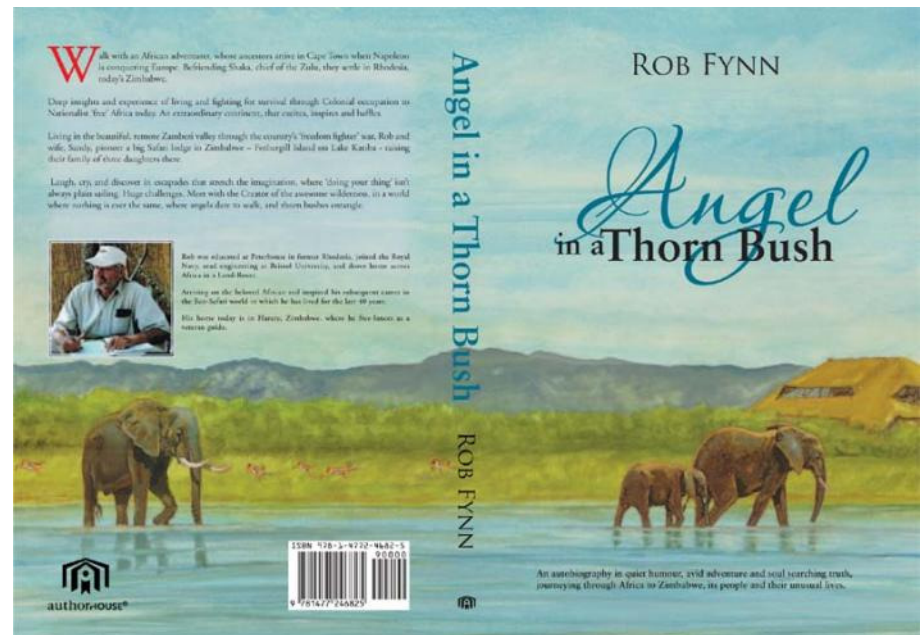
Since then we have, I like to think, maintained and strengthened our friendship in spite of long absences and sometimes divergent pathways. But what does one really learn of the “inner man” beneath the youthful Royal Navy officer, the genuinely intrepid aviator, accomplished sailor, dedicated conservationist and totally expert bushman?

I’ve already noted his “can do, let’s make a plan” attitude and should say, in passing, that – coming, as I had, from a feather-bedded environment in which this is almost unheard-of – it also came as a profound revelation and example that I have tried to follow ever since.

But the bedrock, I believe, is Rob the thinker and Rob the seeker. Over the years I have known him Rob has explored many avenues, none – I suspect – fully satisfying, but each contributing a little to his journey towards what some like to label truth, enlightenment, or – maybe more correctly – a personally satisfying philosophy of life. I say this partly because we have, over the years, shared many such discussions; but also because of the way in which he has melded his lifetime of adventure and mental explorations with some priceless – and ageless – attributes: an old-school courtesy and sense of fair play; loyalty to friends and family; and a self-deprecating sense of humour that is never cruel and always at hand.

You will learn vastly more as you read his book. But I think one thing will become obvious to you. Rob is sui generis; one of a kind; and – sadly – they don’t often make ‘em like that any more. I’ve been privileged to enjoy his friendship, and to write this foreword, and I commend him and his book to you.

Dick Pitman



Hunting in National Parks

There was a report in the media that the Minister of Environment wants to award hunting concessions in National Parks. The parks are Bwabwata National Park, Waterberg Plateau, Daan Viljoen, Von Bach Resort and Namib-Naukluft Park. Hunting concessions are also being given in the Kavango region.

For me, hunting safaris and photographic safaris are two totally separate operations and cannot be mixed. Someone on a photographic safari does not want to bump into a hunter who is bent on killing an elephant caught by the photographer's lens. Hearing gun shots in the distance is not a comforting feeling for someone hiking through the bush.

Also, animals need to know when they are safe. In Zambia we have game management areas (for hunting) next to national parks. The animals know that they are generally safe in the national park. You can watch them cross a road just to move from game management areas into the park when they see a vehicle approaching!

So I did some research on these parks in Namibia ...

Bwabwata National Park is a multi-use park where people live as well as the animals. It is a large park and I can see that hunting concessions can be in places where photographic safaris do not take place. I think hunting has been going on there for some years already.

Waterberg Plateau is just over 400 km² (about the same size as Kasanka in Zambia). It is a smallish park with stunning scenery where black and white rhino were introduced along with other animals for their protection. It is to the east of Otjiwarongo.

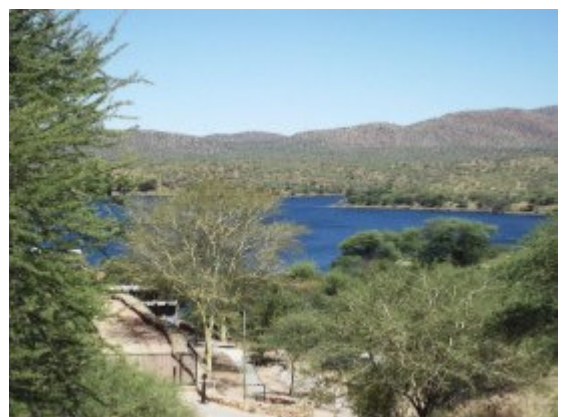
Waterberg Plateau. Photo from Namibia Wallpapers

Daan Viljoen Game Reserve is about 25 km north of Windhoek and is popular for hiking. Again it is a smallish park of around 400 km². The camp has recently been renovated and welcomes visitors in chalets and camping ...

Von Bach Recreation Resort is a mere 43 km² and attracts visitors for water sports and angling.

Von Bach Resort. Photo from Namiweb.com

Namib-Naukluft Park is an enormous park – mostly desert. It is just under 50,000 km² and home to black rhino, gemsbok, Hartmann's zebra, giraffe, springbok, brown hyena and leopard. This is where the diamonds and uranium are.



Mangetti National Park was a bit of a research nightmare because it wasn't listed on many tourist websites. Eventually I found it ... It is about 400 km² and was proclaimed a park in 2008. It used to be a breeding camp for endangered animals like rhino. From reports on the web, it seems that it is not open to the public as yet.

According to the report on hunting concessions in The Namibian:

The species to be hunted include elephant, leopard, roan, spotted hyaena, blue wildebeest, duiker, steenbok, buffalo, hippopotamus, crocodile, sable, lechwe, eland, giraffe, Hartman zebra, kudu, impala, eland, warthog, oryx and klipspringer.

The ministry said trophy hunting removes mostly old, post-reproductive animals or single males, which are usually in excess in natural populations. Controlled hunting is thus viewed as sustainable use of wildlife populations.

I must say that I find this all very confusing ... Hunters rarely want to shoot the old mangy animals; they tend to like them in the prime of their lives ... so that they look good when mounted on their walls at home ...



SOUTH AFRICA

Aerial Surveillance Project

KwaZulu-Natal's embattled game reserves have received a welcome boost to their rhino anti-poaching efforts with the launch of Project Rhino KZN's aerial surveillance project, which yesterday assisted in the arrest of three rhino poachers.

More than 10 private and state-owned game reserves in the northern KZN region will benefit from the Zululand Anti-Poaching Wing (ZAP-Wing), which consists of a fully funded Cheetah aircraft and dedicated pilot, access to a BAC-owned helicopter for emergencies and a core group of three additional pilots from the Project Rhino KZN association. The project has been 10 months in the making and is a collaboration between private game reserves, leading conservation NGOs and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.



The Cheetah began flying daily patrols last week. "60 rhino have been poached in Zululand this year - almost double last year's figure," said Dr Jacques Flamand of the WWF Black Rhino Range Expansion Project who sourced funds for the aircraft's purchase. "With this surge in poaching, it was easy for us to justify buying another aircraft as the first one had demonstrated its usefulness in monitoring rhinos and in assuring their security. The Cheetah's addition to the ZAP-Wing will provide more eyes in the sky and, I trust, prove effective in Zululand's anti-poaching drive. I am really excited and hopeful."

Funding for the three-year employment of a dedicated ZAP-Wing pilot was a collaborative effort between the Wildlands Conservation Trust and the African Conservation Trust's Skydive for Rhinos campaign. "Being

one of the founding members of Project Rhino KZN in September last year, it is a massive achievement to see the launch of the Air Wing into northern Zululand, after several months of dedicated fundraising and assessments of what will actually make a difference,” said Kevin McCann from Wildlands. “We know that aerial support to the key rhino properties in northern Zululand is going to make a significant difference to halt the dramatic increase in Rhino poaching in KZN, and we acknowledge those that have played a hand in making this happen.”

The ZAP-Wing pilot has also flown helicopter assistance for three joint anti-poaching operations recently; the latest one last Wednesday that resulted in one poacher being shot dead and three arrested before rhinos could be attacked on a private game reserve.

Simon Naylor of the Zululand Wildlife Security Initiative expressed his relief at the launch saying, “Project Rhino KZN’s Cheetah has added another effective tool available to Zululand private and community game reserves in their fight against rhino poaching. The threat to our rhinos is increasing every day, so the introduction of cost effective aerial patrols will allow large areas to be covered for monitoring, routine patrols, information gathering and possibly reaction. Encompassing a number of private game reserves and community reserves, this co-ordinated regional aerial effort will, I firmly believe, act as a deterrent and effective tool to combat this scourge.”

Lawrence Munro, Wildlife Investigation Officer for Zululand who is coordinating the project says that ZAP-Wing will provide ground surveillance from an aerial platform, to reduce wildlife poaching with a specific focus on rhinos. “Creating a multi-pronged approach to combating rhino poachers is the overall goal, with the aircraft serving to augment and assist ground-based anti-poaching teams when they are deployed on active duty and in volatile situations,” he stated.

A second light aircraft - Ezemvelo’s Bantam – has been incorporated into the ZAP-Wing project to provide aerial surveillance for state-owned reserves in the region. Regular aerial patrols, directed by coordinated intelligence will form the basis of the ZAP-Wing surveillance function. The core group of dedicated pilots will ensure fast and efficient reaction to rhino security threats in private, state and community reserves alike.

WOLFGANG’S COLUMN

DOHA’S FAILURE SPELLS DOOM FOR AFRICA

Kyoto extended till 2020, resolution package forced through by conference chair, new draft treaty to be ready by 2015 but no funds yet for Africa and small island states to mitigate the sins of the polluters – that could be said in summary about the just ended Doha 2012 Climate Change Conference, aka COP18. Attempts to label Doha a success, after the summit ended a day late due to the stubborn intransigence and opposition of a number of delegations, including the Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Americans and a few others had to be reduced to labeling the conference not an outright failure as only the bare minimum of agreements could be accomplished.

In spite of the writing now being clearly on the wall, and climate change projections suggesting an average rise of temperatures by 2 degrees C in 40 years from now, and up to 5+ degrees C by the end of the century, have the main polluters once again succeeded to push tough decision into the future. This caused dismay among the African delegations as well as among the block of small island nations, which was led by Seychelles’ Ronny Jumeau in recognition of the archipelago’s long standing efforts to highlight the consequences of rising sea levels for their very survival. ...

GOOGLE COMES TO THE AID OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Google’s Global Impact Award Programme has given the World Wide Fund for Nature, in short WWF, a grant of 5 million US Dollars, assisting in the tracking and protection of endangered species via remote operated drones. The UAV’s could soon be deployed over poaching hotspots, linked to radio collared animals, able to have eyes in the skies above them and spotting poachers on foot or by vehicle approach.

UAV technology today is able to secure facial recognition as well as identify vehicle registration numbers and vehicle markings, evidence which can later be used in court to convict the criminals involved in the unprecedented slaughter of wildlife across much of sub Saharan Africa. ...

COMESA BUSINESS COUNCIL RELEASES 'MUNYONYO DECLARATION'

Following the conclusion of the COMESA Business Forum, held alongside the 16th COMESA Summit at the end of last month in Kampala, has the secretariat now released the 'Munyonyo Declaration' in which key elements discussed by hundreds of delegates, and the respective conclusions and recommendations are now available on the COMESA Business Council website www.comesabusinessforum.org

The 12 key points contained in the document deal with such wide topics as the green economy, micro small and medium enterprises, agriculture and food security, the all important infrastructure development, boosting intra COMESA trade, gender and business, youth and enterprise development and for the first time tourism.

The latter was reflected as follows:

Recognizing that tourism is the second largest contributor to Africa's economy, after agriculture, member states are urged to improve on various innovative mechanisms of upscaling the sector.

To this effect, member states are requested to work closely with the private sector in order to promote and market tourism at national, regional and international level.

The private sector further requests the COMESA Secretariat to table an agenda item on the marketing and promotion of tourism in the COMESA Region, during the upcoming UN – World Tourism Organization Annual General Meeting in 2013, jointly hosted by Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Further issues raised at the forum included the need to streamline a common Visa regime, ultimately permitting foreign tourists to travel within the COMESA region on a single Visa, as well as raising the importance of tourism on national levels as a top priority economic sector.

Notably has IGAD also included tourism in its various activities and programmes, presently developing a foundation of a common regional tourism masterplan, as has the East African Community, underscoring the growing recognition the sector now receives within regional trade and political frameworks and by national governments. ...

EACJ WILL HEAR SERENGETI HIGHWAY CASE FROM 23 JAN 2013

The East African Court of Justice in Arusha has last Friday announced the trial date for the case environmental groups have brought against the Tanzanian government over the controversial routing of a planned highway across the Serengeti.

The case will commence on January 23rd but the Arusha based source was unable to fill in any further details as to the expected timeframe the hearing might take.

The Africa Network for Animal Welfare is acting as main plaintiff on behalf of a number of other organizations and individuals vehemently opposed to the highway plans, and the lukewarm attitude of the Tanzanian government and often misleading statements have done little to dispel rumours of imminent attempts to create facts on the ground. ...

CONGO'S ANTI RWANDA MILITIAS SUSPECTED IN RAID ON GORILLA MONITORING CAMP

The attack yesterday morning on the Kazi Camp, operated by the Diane Fossey Gorilla Fund International, which killed one staff and saw others injured, was swiftly denounced by several sources close to the powers that be in Rwanda. Fingers were also immediately pointed to perpetrators suspected to have come across the open wilderness border from Congo Dr as the most likely scenario, as the attackers mainly concentrated to loot communications equipment which with the set frequencies will let them listen into Rwandan park personnel talking among themselves and to security units deployed along the porous border. The camp itself, after being looted of everything mobile, was then destroyed, which included expensive solar panels and other equipment on the ground, leaving only a shell of what used to be one of two key camps for monitoring and research in the Volcanoes National Park.

All activities were suspended by the fund following the attack while security arrangements and cordons are being reviewed. ...

To read more of Wolfgang's East African news: www.wolfganghthome.wordpress.com

OTHER STUFF

From International Rivers Organisation

Creative advances in wind technology continue to create more options for cost-effective, clean and efficient renewable energy solutions.

WIND ENERGY TECHNOLOGY IS BLOWING IN THE right direction thanks to a new invention by the Tunisian group Saphon Energy. The group invented a bladeless wind turbine that mimics the function of a sail. Instead of rotating blades, the turbine collects the kinetic energy of the wind. The resulting mechanical energy moves pistons that generate hydraulic pressure that can be stored or converted into electricity. The Saphonian, named after a wind deity that was worshipped by the ancient Carthaginians, is more efficient and less expensive than its bladed counterparts. While current technologies only capture 30% of the wind's kinetic energy, the Saphonian – which eliminates aerodynamic and mechanical losses associated with conventional turbines – is more like 80% efficient, according to its inventor, Anis Aouini. The bladeless turbine is not a threat to birds and wildlife, and is much quieter. In Tunisia alone, the Saphonian could potentially produce up to 20% of the country's domestic energy. ...



Should Trophy Hunting of Lions be Banned? From the Smithsonian

Nowhere in the world is it legal to hunt wild tigers, as each remaining subspecies of the giant cat is infamously on the verge of extinction.

Yet the close cousin of the tiger, the lion—almost equally large, equally charismatic and, in places, equally threatened—is legally killed by trophy hunters across its shrinking African range. The remaining lion population, centered in eastern and southern Africa, has declined by as much as 30 percent in the past 20 years, and the cats are considered seriously imperiled. Yet every year 600 lions fall to the bullets of licensed and legal tourists on safari hunts. The activity is opposed by many, but those in favor argue that trophy hunting of lions and other prized targets generates employment and revenue for local economies. The Huffington Post ran an editorial in March 2011 in which the author—lion researcher Luke Hunter—condemned the act of shooting a big cat but still argued that lion hunting is an important tool in generating revenue for land preservation. The author reported that trophy-hunting tourists may pay \$125,000 in fees and guide services for the privilege of killing a lion, and he questioned the wisdom in protecting the animals under the Endangered Species Act, an action the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering. A hunter's organization called Conservation Force also makes the case on its website that African "tourist safari hunting" benefits land, wildlife and communities while imparting "no detrimental biological impact."

But a report published in 2011 says otherwise—that the environmental and economic benefits of trophy hunting in Africa are negligible. The paper, produced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, states that in 11 sub-Saharan countries that allow trophy hunting of large game, 272 million acres—or 15 percent of the land—is open to the sport. However, returns from trophy hunting are dismal. While hunters in Africa kill, in addition to lions, 800 leopards, 640 elephants and more than 3,000 water buffalo each year, among other species, they leave behind only 44 cents per acre of hunting land. In Tanzania, that figure is much smaller—a per-acre benefit of less than two cents. A closer look by the report's authors at seven of the 11 countries—Namibia, Tanzania, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Burkina Faso and Benin—revealed that trophy hunting employs not even 10,000 people on a permanent and part-time basis. About 100 million people live in these seven nations.

The IUCN's report points out that since the economic benefits of trophy hunting appear to be virtually nil in Africa, the only way hunting can be used as a conservation tool is by allowing it as part of carefully designed

conservation strategies. Which beckons the question: What species are to gain by hunters prowling their habitat? Certainly, in some cases of overpopulation—usually of grazing herd animals—hunting can serve a direct purpose and even benefit ecosystems. Even elephants are widely said to be overpopulated in certain locations and in need of intervention via rifles.

Female and juvenile lions are off-limits to hunters, but whole prides may be impacted when trophy hunters remove the most powerful breeding males from a population. Photo courtesy of Flickr user kibuyu. But for lions, can the intentional removal of any animals from remaining populations be tolerated? Their numbers are crashing from historic levels. Lions once occurred in most of Africa, southern Europe, the Arabian peninsula and southern Asia as far east as India. But nation by nation, lions have disappeared. In Greece, they were gone by A.D. 100. In the 1100s, lions vanished from Palestine. The species' greatest decline occurred in the 20th century, when Syria, Iran and Iraq saw their last lions die. In 1950, there may have been 400,000 left in the wild; by 1975, perhaps only 200,000. By the 1990s, their numbers had been halved again. Today, an isolated population in the Gir Forest of India numbers more than 400 and seems even to be growing. But the current African population of 32,000 to 35,000 is declining fast. (Defenders of Wildlife has estimated that not even 21,000 lions remain.) In Kenya, the situation is dire: In 2009, wildlife officials guessed they were losing about 100 lions per year in a national population of just 2,000 and that they might be extinct within 20 years. The causes are multiple but related; loss of habitat and decline of prey species are huge factors which, in turn, mean increased lion conflicts with livestock herders—and, often, dead lions; and as numbers drop, the gene pool is dwindling, causing inbreeding and weakened immune systems. Disease outbreaks have also had devastating impacts.

Then there is trophy hunting, which may remove powerful breeding males from a population. David Youldon, the chief operating officer of the conservation group Lion Alert, said in an e-mail that no existing lion population needs culling. The only potential benefit from hunting could come as revenue for land preservation and local communities—but this, he says, isn't happening.

"Hunting has the potential to generate conservation benefits, but the industry needs a complete overhaul, improved regulation and greater benefit to Africa if such benefits are to be realized, and I see little motivation within the industry to make those changes," he wrote.

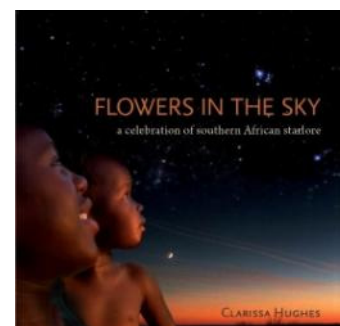
Incredibly, as lions disappear, tourists spur the decline; they may still shoot lions in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Ethiopia also allows very limited hunting. Fifty-three percent of the cats are taken by Americans, according to Lion Alert, which has reviewed the IUCN's report and warns on its website that the societal benefits of hunting in most of Africa are so minimal that the activity, in effect, creates little or no impetus to preserve land for the activity, maintain populations of target animals or stop poaching.

So what can travelers do to help? Take more pictures, perhaps. "Photographic tourism" generates 39 times the permanent employment that trophy hunting does, the IUCN report says, while protected lands generate on average two times the tourist revenue per acre as do hunting reserves. That is still just pennies—but at least it leaves the lions alive.

Flowers in the Sky

"Every now and then a really lovely book comes along that is quite different. FLOWERS IN THE SKY by Clarissa Hughes is one such book.

Describing the stars as 'flowers' we felt illustrated the loveliness of this enchanting book. As we are aware, southern Africa with its clear skies offers some of the best stargazing in the world. Combine this with tales and legends of southern Africa's indigenous people, and one discovers a whole new understanding and appreciation of our awesome cosmic world.



Working in tourism and having lived in Botswana and Zambia for many years, Clarissa met many people from different tribes on a daily basis. With her passion for African culture and her understanding that this is intimately connected to the natural environment and survival of many people, Clarissa has put together a beautiful book that justly deserves a place on everyone's book shelf.

Using illustrations, truly superb photography, poetry, and quotes from others, Clarissa includes tales from the Bushmen, Sotho, Zulu, Shona, Xhosa, Venda, Batswana, Tsonga, and Karanga, using their chosen names and different interpretations of the stars.



One does not need knowledge of astronomy to enjoy and appreciate this book, though being well researched it would also appeal to the more well-informed astronomer. Clarissa also raises some interesting questions as how ancient legends and 21st-century beliefs and challenges can be so similar." Lesley Thomson.

"This is a gem of a book. It is historically significant in that it reminds us that one of the great psychological tasks we face as human beings is that of our search for meaning, continuity and a sense of belonging in our world. We must never forget the continuity that exists between the 'just so' stories of the human narrative and the 'so it is' discoveries of modern science. Born from the same creative crucible of the human imagination, modern astronomy now confirms what human intuition has somehow always suspected – that the fiery lives of stars have something to do with us. Indeed, without them, the trace elements that ultimately define biological life would not exist. Yes, we are connected, not only to the stars but to the lives of all living things.

Imbued with fun, mischief and wisdom, it is what the traditional stories compiled by Clarissa Hughes conveys. As an environmentalist with a special interest in the lessons we learn about ourselves from the wild, this book will be a red-blooded companion to the teaching of the basic yet awesome principles of astronomy."

Ian McCallum, author of Ecological Intelligence and Tracks of Giants trekker.

Gill Comment: *If anyone wants a copy of the book, let me know. If there are sufficient numbers I can get them all sent up together.*

THE SMILE

A Photo doing the rounds entitled:

Please do not hurt my mum ...



Have a good week
Gill