



You can get your daily breaking news updates instantly via Twitter by following [@whthome](https://twitter.com/whthome), join me on www.facebook.com/WolfgangHThome where the articles also 'cross load' or read the daily postings on my blog via www.wolfganghthome.wordpress.com which you can also 'follow' to get immediate notification when a new article is posted.

First edition January 2013



*I wish all my readers a very Happy, Healthy and indeed a Prosperous New Year 2013
Thank you for all your support over the months, for your feedback and very positive
comments and for the many contributions and tip offs received throughout the year.*

EMIRATES A380 NOW DOUBLE DAILY TO THE BIG APPLE AND TO PARIS



Dubai's national airline Emirates has now commenced double daily Airbus A380 frequencies to New York and Paris, adding significant extra capacity on both routes. Growing demand for long haul travel to both destinations from around the world, and in particular from the airline's African destinations, combined with the growing number of A380 actually delivered by Airbus, have made these added deployments possible. Emirates now operates already 31 of these giant aircraft, with a further 59 on order and to be progressively delivered this year and in coming years, and the new dedicated A380 terminal in Dubai, due to be opened in a few weeks time, will ensure that connecting passengers can expect not just to fly on the most comfortable aircraft in the skies but also get a ground handling experience second to none. Concourse A as it will be known on opening, purpose built over the past years, will be the world's first dedicated A380 terminal handling nothing but these types of aircraft. Extending over 650 metres in

length and 90 metres wide, the new facility covers over 530.000 square metres over 11 storeys. Hotels and shopping malls will be part of the new supersized building which is connected to Terminal 3, another dedicated Emirates terminal, by a metro link.

Emirates sales personnel have in recent weeks specifically highlighted the airline's all wide body fleet, used to fly to their East African destinations, and then allowing passengers to switch from the A330's, A340's and B777's to the giant A380 to ever more airports around the world. It is thought that this is a market specific response to other Gulf competitors and other major airlines like Turkish using single aisle aircraft for their flights to Africa which in-flight experience, compared to a wide body aircraft, is often considered inferior, that being true or not but nevertheless fueling a marketing battle or sorts.

One thing is sure though that Emirates will continue to roll out more destinations, this year and thereafter and that the ongoing delivery of more A380's will see that aircraft make its way to a number of cities around the world, giving their passengers, especially those in First and Business Class, an experience second to none. Say Hello Tomorrow.

EMIRATES' FIRST FLIGHTS LEAVE FROM NEW A380 TERMINAL



Information received from a regular source at the Emirates Kampala office confirmed that yesterday saw the opening gambit of the new A380 terminal at the Dubai International Airport when national airline Emirates boarded the first ever commercial flight from there following a series of successful trial runs.

First out of the blocks was the A380 service to London Heathrow, making history for the new Concourse A as the latest addition to the terminals in Dubai is now known.

4 of the 20 gates have been opened, with the balance going on line progressively over the coming weeks until full capacity has been reached, capable of processing a further 15 million passengers per year.

Information at hand confirms that duty free shops, restaurants and lounges for First and Business Class passengers were fully functional as the first commercial passengers began to arrive at the new terminal building by metro link from the existing terminal buildings.

The opening of Concourse A will raise the overall capacity of DXB to 75 million passengers a year, enough to provide for further growth of the airline and will allow Dubai to overtake London Heathrow as the largest international airport over the course of 2013. Watch this space.

East Africa News

AFRAA SIGNS UP 14 MEMBER AIRLINES FOR RENEWED FUEL DEAL



Information from Nairobi has confirmed that the African Airline Association is in the process of renewing a joint fuel purchase deal for 2013, renewing a previous deal put into place in 2011/12. A tender has reportedly been issued for up to 1 billion litres of Jet A1 fuel to be supplied for the duration of the 1 year contract to participating member airlines.

During the initial agreement some 7 airlines, out of 34 members, including Ethiopian and Kenya Airways, were part of the joint purchase project, while this year twice as many have come on board.

The volume of pooled fuel purchases, though individually paid, made some 660 million litres of fuel and is this year expected to rise to over a billion litres of Jet A1.

The source in Nairobi claimed that Kenya Airways alone made savings in 2012 of almost 2 million US Dollars under the joint purchasing agreement, which would make AFRAA's initiative one of the financially most valuable action plans for their member airlines, at least for those signed up and create a mighty incentive for more to come on board in the future.

AFRAA is based in Nairobi and represents member airlines in negotiations with governments and global aviation bodies to which it is either a member or affiliated to. Watch this space for aviation news.

Uganda News

MORE FERRIES FOR LAKES AND RIVERS



Uganda's Ministry of Transport has confirmed the acquisition of three additional ferries to provide for safe river and lake crossings at select points across the country. The ministry currently operates 6 ferries, facilitating traffic between the mainland and islands on Lake Victoria but also used to cross in particular the Nile at select places where no bridges are available. The estimated cost for each of the new ferries was quoted at approximately 6 billion Uganda Shillings or slightly over 2 million US Dollars each.

One of the new ferries, presently being assembled, will be deployed on Lake Kyoga while the two others will be stationed along the River Nile in Kamuli and near Adjumani. The first of the new ferries is expected to be commissioned this month already.

Some of the most important ferry links in Uganda are on Lake Victoria to the Ssesse Islands from Port Bell, Entebbe or Bukakata near Masaka and the Pakuba ferry across the Nile in Murchison's Falls National Park.

Kenya News

NEW BLOOD IVORY SEIZURE IN HONG KONG TRACED BACK TO KENYA



Reports are coming in from global conservation sources that authorities in Hong Kong have seized another 1.3 tons of blood ivory, stashed away in a container marked as being loaded with 'architectural stones' from Kenya. This latest find, the third major seizure of blood ivory in recent weeks, reveals the shocking level of smuggling and trading in ivory from poached elephant across the African continent.

While Tanzania has for long been at the centre of poaching in East Africa, a parliamentary report in mid of last year suggesting that as many as 30 elephants were being poached per day, Kenya and indeed Uganda have not been spared of the menace. Tanzania's no nonsense Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Amb. Khamis Kageshiki, has of late led the efforts to crack down on poaching in Tanzania but it has been acknowledged that it will take time to win this battle after poaching was spinning out of control for too long.

Usually well informed source in Nairobi contacted about the shipment coming from Mombasa pointed out that the port, as indeed the international airport in Nairobi, was regularly being used as transit and exit point for contraband smuggled from third countries into Kenya. Kenya Wildlife Service in conjunction with Customs are now habitually screening air cargo in Nairobi using sniffer dogs, which has led to significantly increase confiscation and prosecutions in Kenya, but the latest find in Hong Kong of a container shipped from Mombasa via Malaysia shows that more needs to be done.

The forthcoming meeting of CITES in the Thai capital Bangkok in a few weeks time will be faced with loud demands to withdraw China's trading status for ivory, as conservationists have seen a sharp rise in demand from China since it attained this status in 2008, with the Chinese government seemingly doing far too little to crack down on the demand side and subsequently being complicit in the decimation of Africa's wildlife resources. Tanzania two weeks ago also withdrew an application to CITES to sell over 100 tons of so called legal ivory after facing huge opposition from global conservation groups which threatened to decampaign the country as a tourism destination. The move was welcomed by other East African countries too since at last there is now an opportunity to agree on a common strategy of what to do with the growing ivory stocks now held in TANAPA, KWS and UWA strongrooms.

At the same time did poaching of rhinos in 2012 reach another record level with about 650 of the prized animals killed in South Africa alone, while in recent months a spate of rhino killings also took place in Kenya. Here, as is the case with elephant, is China and Vietnam reportedly the largest market, despite of the now scientifically proven fact that ground rhino horn has exactly zero medicinal properties. Watch this space for regular conservation updates from the Eastern African region.

REGULAR VISITORS WITH UNREGISTERED SIM CARDS FACE BLOCKS, FINES AND JAIL TERMS



Regular visitors to East Africa, holding local telecom operators' SIM cards they use on arrival, may be in for a rude shock when next returning to Kenya, where the registration deadline for mobile phone numbers expired at the end of last year and where telecom companies are now starting to switch off non registered numbers.

According to information from Kenya have tens of thousands of such unregistered SIM cards already been deactivated, with an overall number of more than 6 million due for the same, many believed to have been purchased by regular visitors from East African neighbouring countries or further abroad.

Non compliance can under a recently introduced new law attract fines of up to 300.000 Kenya Shillings and / or a jail term of not exceeding 3 years, now by many seen as draconian and likely to be used in political or business vendettas, like in the old days of currency regulations the possession of a mere 20 Dollar bill could end you up in jail, and in several select cases actually did.

Registration on line, in this day and age of e-communications, was ruled out and personal appearances in telecom companies' service centres are required with picture ID documentation at hand, all aimed to combat cyber crime in the economic field, prevent individual threats from 'Number Withheld' phones and eliminate political hate campaigns ahead of Kenya's general election in March this year. The registration applies as much for SIM cards used in phones as well as for those inserted in USB Modems or tablets / iPads. Returning visitors to Kenya, and soon the other East African countries too, will therefore need to set aside time to visit such service centres soon after arrival, to register and have, where needed, their SIM cards reactivated, and the sooner the better as indications are that numbers struck off may in fact be re-allocated to new subscribers in due course. After that period has expired the purchase of new SIM cards with full registration at the time will then be the only option left.

In Uganda the deadline for such registration is reportedly in March this year while in Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi similar exercises are ongoing too. While it is understood that cyber crime is the main focus of the registration requirement, there are also suggestions that state organs could access relevant information from telecom providers and use it against political opponents, with unfettered access in many instances already granted by sweeping anti terrorism legislations forced upon many countries in Africa by supposedly 'friendly countries' which at the time made aid contingent on 'compliance'.

For tourists coming to East Africa, inspite of such new regulations, it is still advisable though to buy a local SIM card which will at reasonable cost allow calls home, uploads of pictures taken to Facebook and Twitter accounts, with some operators in fact allowing free access to FB and Twitter while charging nominal fees for internet 'bundles' which allow browsing on smart phones, tablets and iPads.

Tourism sources in Kenya have in the meantime also given assurance that no tourists are expected to be arrested or prosecuted when they come back to the country with still unregistered SIM cards and attempt to use them or belatedly register them. It was acknowledged that even a single such case would attract widespread negative publicity abroad and lead to similar reactions like any outbreak of violence through anti travel advisories. Watch this space.

HOTELS AND RESORTS MUST BE EXCLUDED FROM ELECTION NO ALCOHOL RULE



A regular source from Kenya's hospitality industry has off the record complained that the currently under discussion legislation, to ban the sale and consumption of alcohol between the 02nd and 04th of March, when Kenya is expected to hold the next Presidential and General Election, must specifically exclude tourist resorts, hotels, safari lodges and restaurants, or risk damaging the country's reputation as a tourist destination.

'The Alcoholic Drinks Control Act as it is known should make provisions for the tourism hospitality industry to be exempted from such rules, because they are draconian and limit the holiday experience tourists come to Kenya for. Being faced with a 50.000 Shilling or 100.000 Shilling fine or jail is not making sense but there are elements in our police and other organizations who could take advantage of such things.

We cannot tell tourists who after all made a choice already to come to Kenya during these elections dates, that they cannot have wine with their dinner or a beer at lunch or a cocktail for sundowner? Surely they will laugh at us and tell us where to go? Parliament must be made aware of such issues and not just pronounce a blanket ban. How do we market our beach hotels and safari lodges if we have to overcome not just the election scares but also tell potential visitors of a no booze clause for two days prior elections and election day too? From what I see, if no provisions are made for an exemption the rule will be largely ignored because we cannot deny tourists their wish to have drinks while here, and are then open for prosecution as a hotel and as a client. This would be just plain stupid' ranted a regular source in a communication overnight, when it became known that the amendment to the 2010 law would likely go into the required third reading before the weekend, leaving almost no time to make representation to the parliamentarians through trade associations and lobby groups.

City hotels with mini bars in the rooms, which include beers, wines and spirits, from where registered guests can access drinks 24 / 7, might also come under the spotlight for potential law violations and may be compelled, according to the same source, to remove all alcoholic drinks over these days or also potentially found in violation of the law. Does that make sense? But then, the law has often been described as an ass and in many cases never did make sense, not here, not elsewhere. Watch this space how this pans out and if either hotels or tourists may be dragged to court in March, away from their dining table or seat of the hotel bar, if found enjoying their 'shaken, not stirred' favourite cocktail.

KENYA AIRWAYS FLIGHT TO CAIRO MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING IN KHARTOUM



Information is starting to come to light about an emergency return of a Kenya Airways B737-700 aircraft, which was enroute to Egypt's capital Cairo after a scheduled stop enroute in Khartoum.

Flight KQ 320 left Nairobi at 17.20 hrs and after about 3 hours landed in Khartoum, disembarking Sudan bound passengers before taking off for Cairo.

Details at hand, though still sketchy as such matter are being handled in Sudan like a state secret, indicate that after take of the aircraft suffered an engine failure and had to return to Khartoum within half an hour of taking off. Some reports speak of a fire in the engine which however appears to have been extinguished using the available fire suppression system in the engine.

A team of engineers from Kenya Airways' Nairobi base maintenance base are reportedly being dispatched to assess the damage and initiate repairs to return the aircraft to Nairobi.

A source in Nairobi would not immediately confirm or deny the situation, asking for a statement to be prepared, indicative that indeed a technical situation arose on the flight.

The aircraft according the one source in South Sudan's capital of Juba, who is well acquainted with all matters aviation, said no injuries had been recorded in Khartoum though some passengers were in an emotionally agitated state. The Kenya Airways station in Khartoum reportedly arranged for immediate transfer of the passengers to hotels in the city until a replacement aircraft can take them to Cairo. Watch this space for the upcoming statement.

Tanzania News

FERRY ACCIDENT ON LAKE TANGANYIKA THE LATEST IN LONG LIST OF MARINE DISASTERS



A ferry operating on Lake Tanganyika between Tanzania and Burundi has sunk with at least 8 passengers dead and more than 20 still missing, by the time the information was passed on in the evening from a source based in Arusha. Reportedly there were over 90 passengers and crew on board when the vessels went down in stormy conditions. At least 60 passengers were rescued in what the source called '*a miracle survival*'.

Tanzania has a sad record of maritime disasters, one of the worst being the MV Bukoba which capsized and then sank during a bodged rescue operation in 1994, with some estimates talking of up to 1,000 dead. More recently did ferry sinkings in 2011 and 2012 off the main shore between Zanzibar and Pemba make negative headlines, more so as several went down in relative succession including one, MV Skagit, which was at one stage grounded but where the owners still managed to take her back to sea.

Tourists, often budget travelers, backpackers and adventurers are regularly warned to take extra precautions when using ferries and boats between the mainland and the islands or when traveling from Unguja to Pemba or use any of the lake transport, to get acquainted with the location of life rafts, life vests and access to decks so as to increase their chances of survival in case another accident strikes. No information could be obtained if any foreign tourists were on board the stricken vessel. Condolences are expressed to relatives and friends of those lost during this latest marine accident in Tanzania.

MOUNTAINEERING FUNDRAISER DIES ON KILIMANJARO



(Picture courtesy of Wikipedia)

Irish citizen Ian McKeever, known for his world record in 2007 to climb the world's seven highest mountains, including Mt. Everest, in record time, has earlier this week died while leading a charity expedition up Mt. Kilimanjaro. Reportedly struck by lightning in during torrential rain at an altitude of over 4,000 metres, the mountaineer was the only one in his group to suffer this cruel fate though a number of others were seriously injured in the freak accident. Aged only 42 Ian led the 23 member strong Kilimanjaro Achievers' Team up the mountain, among them his fiancée, accompanied by local guides and porters.

Ian was known for his passion to participate in extreme sporting events like rowing across the Atlantic or attempting a few weeks earlier to make the fastest climb up Kilimanjaro with an African colleague, aimed to stand up against the rise of racism across the world and his untimely death will affect a wide following he had accumulated from across the world for his charitable work and sportsmanship.

The eTN team in East Africa and in Hawaii express their sincere condolences to the family and friends of the late Ian McKeever.

AIR TANZANIA GETS BACK INTO THE SKIES, AGAIN



Following the extensive repairs to the airline's Bombardier Q300 turboprop aircraft, damaged in a takeoff mishap in April last year in Kigoma, it is understood that Air Tanzania will resume flight operations this week, returning in fact to Kigoma as their first route.

Additional destinations for ATCL will be the Zanzibar and Arusha but also the new Songwe Airport in Mbeya. This according to a regular aviation source in Dar es Salaam, is to be followed by resumed flights to Mtwara.

ATCL's CEO Capt. Lazaro Milton has reportedly also given indication that the airline will, as repeatedly announced last year, introduce additional aircraft to more effectively cover the domestic market but also resume regional flights to such destinations as Nairobi, Entebbe and other financially viable destinations.

Returning to the routes now mentioned will put ATCL in direct competition with Precision Air, which has in end December already announced flights to Mbeya's Songwe Airport and is already on some of the other routes using their workhorse ATR fleet.

Watch this space for breaking and regular news updates from East Africa's vibrant aviation industry.

RWANDAIR CLOSES RECORD 2012 AND LOOKS TO FUTURE



Rwanda's national airline has in 2012 recorded a staggering 40 percent growth in passenger numbers, with a new single day record on the 22nd December of 2,205 passengers flown across the network.

John Mirenge, CEO of RwandAir, expressed his delight over the result when he was quoted in a media release just received: *'We know that we are a fast growing airline, nevertheless we are happy to have set this new record.'*

Ever more passengers experience the quality of our services, our brand new aircraft and our affordable fares'.

The recent delivery of two Bombardier CRJ900NG jets has boosted the fleet to now 6 jets plus one Dash 8-100 turboprop aircraft for domestic and near regional routes. Additional aircraft acquisitions are in the pipeline it is understood to further expand the current number of 14 destinations in 2013 and 2014.

Schedule adjustments played a major role in boosting transit traffic via Kigali, where on arrival from one side of the continent, or in fact from Dubai, easy connections to the other side of Africa are now a reality.

Happy Landings to RwandAir and a Happy New Year to the Board, Management and Staff in Kigali and beyond.

Mauritius News

AIR MAURITIUS IN TALKS WITH PIA TO ESTABLISH FLIGHT CONNECTIONS



Exploratory talks are reportedly underway between Air Mauritius and Pakistan International Airlines about the start of flights between Karachi and Port Louis, which could for the first time connect Pakistan and Mauritius with a nonstop connection. Neither airline currently flies to the other's country leaving passengers to use mainly the Gulf airlines, where Emirates currently has multiple flights from Pakistan to Dubai from where a double daily service goes on to Port Louis.

The same source in Mauritius also indicated that there are early indications that the financial situation at Air Mauritius in the last quarter of 2012 has improved compared with 2011, which if confirmed would be a good pointer that the cost cutting measures, which included the drop of several long haul destinations last year, among other measures, is finally bearing results.

AND in closing today once again some interesting reads from Gill Staden's *The Livingstone Weekly*

Poachers arrested

Three poachers were arrested in Kafue National Park during the week. They were found with dried sable meat, some other dried meat which was not named and a shotgun.

They were remanded in custody in Kaoma.

Convention Centre still on the cards

Ms Sylvia Masebo, Minister of Tourism, is still calling for bidders to construct a convention centre in Livingstone. In the meanwhile a temporary convention centre is being planned at the Falls Resort during the UNWTO.

Ban Export of Sable

Ms Masebo has also called for a ban on exporting sable to other countries.

Release White Rhino

The Lusaka National Park – Zambia’s 20th National Park – has been home to two white rhino which have been kept in a boma for some time. Ms Masebo has told ZAWA that the animals have been there too long and has given them a deadline of two weeks to provide a better environment for the rhino. According to a report in the Times of Zambia: *Ms Masebo wondered why ZAWA acquired the animals if it was not ready to properly look after them.*

Development of Lusaka National Park

In the same article from the Times of Zambia, ZAWA Director-General, Edwin Matokwani, stated that he was waiting for US\$3million funding for the infrastructure at Lusaka National Park. The money was coming from the Interim Environmental Fund managed by the Zambia Environmental Management Agency.

ZIMBABWE

Africa Leadership Awards

Walter Mzembi, Minister of Tourism for Zimbabwe, won three awards at the African Leadership Award ceremony recently held in Mauritius. He won Personal Brand Award, Mark of Excellence Award and African Leadership and Initiative Award.

Zimbabwe won the Leadership Future Destination Award.

Nyaminyami rears its head

Nyaminyami is a river serpent which, it is said, inhabits the Zambezi River. Occasionally there have been sightings near the Victoria Falls, but more often it is seen around Kariba Town in Zimbabwe. It is the Zim/Zam equivalent of the Loch Ness monster.

When the dam was being constructed in 1957/59 the Tonga people said that the river could never be tamed and that nyaminyami would break the dam. Nyaminyami had two good attempts at stopping the construction of the dam sending torrents of water down the gorge and breaking the coffer dam. The two exceptional flood years almost brought the Italian construction company workers to believe in

nyaminyami as they saw their work crashing down. Eventually, though, the dam was built and nyaminyami was quiet.

Now, though, it would seem that nyaminyami is being visible once more. Here is part of a story from the Scotsman:

... State media is reporting that fishermen and residents of Mahombekombe, a suburb of Kariba town, saw Nyaminyami earlier this month.

“We were anchoring our boat near the District Development Fund harbour when we saw a large group of people rushing to the harbour. We quickly roped in our boat and rushed to where the group had gathered.

“I saw, with my own eyes, a monster snake that was almost two hundred metres long,” said fisherman Tapera Siyungungura. “Ask anyone who lives around this area and you will get confirmations of the story.”

“The truth of the matter is that Nyaminyami revealed itself to the people recently,” a second fisherman, Masenzi Dube Zimbabwe newspaper the Sunday Mail.

After the claims, the Mail sent a news crew on the long five-hour drive to Kariba to investigate the claims. The paper reported the beast took 45 minutes to ‘snake’ across the harbour in broad daylight – giving ample time to villagers to watch him and marvel. Eyewitnesses claimed Nyaminyami was so big that a truck would not have killed him if it had run him over.

Nyaminyami’s name is a corruption of a phrase in the local Tonga language that means “pieces of meat”. It’s a reference to Nyaminyami’s selfless character: apparently during times of drought Nyaminyami would let villagers cut pieces of his body to eat. And though you could take a bite out of him, no matter how many bites you took you’d never finish eating the creature up, say locals.

Nyaminyami was separated from his ‘wife’ during the construction of the Kariba dam wall by the colonial authorities during the 1950s, so the story goes. There is a belief that the beast is forever trying to get over the wall to be reunited with her – and those frenzied attempts are what cause the frequent earth tremors in the area.

But not everyone is buying the story that Nyaminyami caused a few houses to fall down in Kariba when he made his surprise appearance this month.

“I can confirm that [he] did not destroy any buildings...It is true that Nyaminyami was sighted here but some residents are just spicing up the story,” fisherman Lovemore Sibanda told the Sunday Mail.

The paper reported on Nyaminyami’s “reappearance” as if it were entirely credible. Some Zimbabweans believe in goblins and mermaids — and the press regularly reports on their appearances too. Earlier this year Water Minister Samuel Sipepa Nkomo claimed that mermaids in two dams in eastern Zimbabwe were preventing the installation of water pumps there. Special rites had to be conducted to appease the mermaids.

Some have tried to offer evidence for Nyaminyami's existence. One theory is that he may be a giant African catfish. Others are more sceptical.

"This is just a python," says one local journalist, who has reported on the story for more than 15 years.

Victoria Falls Airport

Final stages of loan negotiations have been reached between the Zimbabwe Civil Aviation Authority and the Chinese government. The loan is for US\$150million and will be used to complete the runway and the arrivals/departure facilities. Zimbabwe hopes to lure more international airlines to Victoria Falls.
