

**AVIATION, TOURISM AND CONSERVATION NEWS from Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.**  
*A weekly roundup of breaking news, reports, travel stories and opinions by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome*



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

*Fourth edition February 2012*

### **AFRICA ABSENT AS WORLD UNITES AGAINST THE EU'S ETS**

As the war of words intensifies, between the European Union on one side and key global powers like China, Russia and the United States, over the hugely controversial emission trading scheme the EU had introduced on January 01 this year, African governments are notably absent again from the scene and silent on the subject, much to the disappointment of leading African airlines like Ethiopian, Kenya Airways, South African Airways, Egypt Air and others flying scheduled or on demand services to European airports.

An aviation conference convened in Moscow earlier in the week saw Russia introduce a document denouncing the EU's demands and the United States and Chinese delegations were joined in co-signing the declarations by countries like India and Brazil, Mexico and Saudi Arabia amongst others. This sets the stage to make a formal, widely supported complaint to ICAO as well as opens the doors to ban more national or designated airlines from paying the fees the EU demands, likely to force a head on confrontation between the EU and a growing number of key countries from around the world. China had already prohibited their airlines from paying up and it remains to be seen what the EU authorities will actually do to enforce payment. Should they opt, as they could, to for instance impound an aircraft in lieu of payment or deny an airline 'in default' landing rights, it might trigger an instant retaliation vis a vis the loss of traffic rights into China for European airlines. The EU airlines are keenly eyeing the situation and hoping to be spared becoming a political punching bag by EU bureaucrats who ignored and dismissed stakeholder input about the ETS and implemented it anyway. Countries opposed to the EU's scheme could also use a range of other regulatory and political measures to bring the EU back to the negotiating table after first suspending the scheme until a global solution has been reached.

African airlines in the meantime are lobbying that their own governments are taking a stand and formally denounce the EU's ETS too and AFRAA, the association of African airlines based in Nairobi, has left no doubt in the recent past where they stand, when the organization demanded continental solidarity and action, best expressed through an African Union resolution to which member states can they specifically sign on.

The African carriers now flying to Europe have however all been forced to comply with EU demands and according to a source in Nairobi see the present global trend as a saviour: *'We on our own are too weak, too insignificant in terms of traffic to Europe, but if China, India, Russia and the US put their foot down and prohibit their own airlines from paying, they can force a new round of negotiations and make the EU suspend the scheme. The current rise of cost of aviation fuel is already eating into the narrow profit margins of African airline and the Eurozone crisis is impacting on demand for air travel. The EU never really showed cause of what the extra levies are used for and therefore purely a cost factor for us and a source of general income for the EU authorities. We hope our governments finally stand up for us now. Here in East Africa the EU is pushing for us to sign trade agreements and we can just stop talking to them until they in turn show some common sense and do away with their ETS'* said a regular aviation contributor from Kenya.

Watch this space as the rest of the world stands up to the EU and how this will play out in coming days and weeks and in particular see how Africa reacts, or else does not.

### **Uganda News**

#### **ICAO TO HOLD REGIONAL MEETING IN KAMPALA**

A source from Uganda's civil aviation authority has confirmed that ICAO will hold a meeting for Africa and the Indian Ocean islands in Kampala between March 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. The 18<sup>th</sup> such meeting of the Africa – Indian Ocean Regional Planning and Implementation Group, in short APIRG, will alongside also hold the first ever regional air safety group meeting, addressing key issues of ICAO's declared commitment to improve aviation safety in Africa. Present in Kampala will be the ICAO Secretary General Raymond Benjamin, members of the ICAO Council and at least 250 delegates from ICAO member countries and civil aviation and aviation regulatory bodies from around the world.

Uganda presently holds the chair of APIRG and is also an ICAO Council member, representing African states at the ICAO headquarters in Montreal / Canada.

#### **EMIRATES UPS AMSTERDAM TO A380**



A regular source at the airline's Kampala office has confirmed that come August this year, Emirates will begin to operate their route from Dubai to Amsterdam with a daily A 380 flight, compared to the present use of a B777. Launched only 9 months ago, the shift to the largest passenger aircraft in the world – Emirates is also the largest A380 operator – indicates that the performance of the destination has exceeded expectations in both passenger and cargo uplifts. Ugandan travelers to Europe will now have one more destination to sample the double decker sky giant which continues to excite passengers with the facilities on board, especially for those travelling in First or Business Class. Meanwhile will exporters of flowers and fresh produce too be happy to see an increase in uplift capacity between Dubai and Amsterdam, the latter Europe's largest flower market and the former fast establishing itself as a global cargo transit point, where key producer and consumer markets from around the world are now connected with one stop enroute only.

Other East African destinations like Nairobi and Dar es Salaam will also benefit from this development according to a press statement from the airline's regional office in Kenya. Notably though is Emirates still absent from Kigali, where RwandAir is presently serving the route exclusively 6 times a week with a B737-800, although it is understood that Emirates is evaluating the potential of introducing flights to Rwanda on a reciprocal basis and in line with the existing bilateral air services agreement between the UAE and Rwanda. Watch this space.

#### **AMAZING RACE FREELANCE PRODUCER MEETS TRAGIC FATE IN UGANDA**

A reliable source from one of Kampala's leading hotels has confirmed that Jeff Rice, a producer on the '*Amazing Race*' series, has died under unclear circumstances, and that his travelling companion has been admitted in a coma condition in a local surgery. Allegations are sweeping Kampala now that drugs had been discovered in their room at the hotel and police investigations into the case are now ongoing due to the suspicious circumstances. The involvement of local '*suspects*' has not being ruled out. Notably have Ugandan daily newspapers and media not yet caught on to the story, something which is bound to change overnight now that the news are out in the open.

It was not clear why Jeff Rice had been in Uganda, whether on a private vacation or if he could have been researching locations for another '*Amazing Race*' sequence, now that the 20<sup>th</sup> season of the show has just premiered last week. Uganda has been named as the top destination in the '*Lonely Planet Guide*' for 2012, leading to renewed interest for the country as a tourism destination from overseas and could therefore be of increased interest to movie and series producers from abroad.

Allegations made in US based blogs, that the duo was poisoned as part of a robbery attempt, have been discounted by the source, leaving other motives and scenarios however wide open to speculation.

#### **KAMPALA LOSES ALBERTINE RIFT CONSERVATION SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS TO KIGALI**

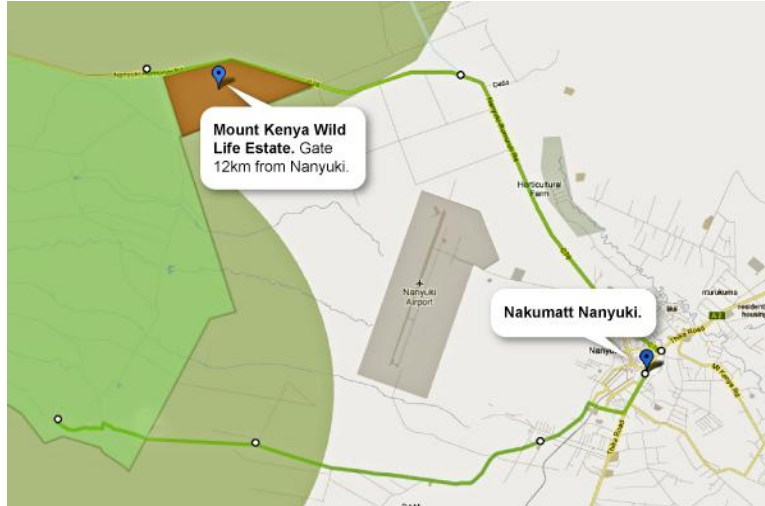
It was learned overnight that the UK based ARCS has apparently decided to shift its regional office, presently located in Kampala / Uganda, to Kigali / Rwanda, where a new proposed US \$ 350,000 head office is to be built, once discussions between the NGO and the Rwandan government have been concluded.

The UK office is reportedly then also being shifted to the new location, closer 'to the action' as a source in Kigali put it, as the main aim of the NGO is to work on maintaining biodiversity in the Albertine Rift, which stretches from Uganda's Lake Albert to Lake Tanganyika. The combined centre is then to provide information and training as well as act as a research centre, from which other NGO's and the conservation fraternity at large can benefit.

It could not be established overnight why the organization decided to move from Uganda to Rwanda and if local government policies vis a vis conservation NGO's played a role in the decision, while it is of course known that Rwanda is unambiguous and supportive for any support it can get to protect natural resources and biodiversity. Watch this space.

## Kenya News

### LIVING WITH WILDLIFE – OL PEJETA BREAKS NEW GROUND



When international wheeler dealer and notorious arms trader Adnan Kashoggi bought the then 160,000 acre Ol Pejeta estate outside Nanyuki on the Laikipia plains in the 1970's, it was to ranch cattle and create a private retreat where the '*Happy Valley Days of yesteryear*' were being recreated when he was there, but at times also when he was not there, if memory serves me right. Kashoggi of course '*lost*' the ranch when he defaulted on several loans provided to him by the late Tiny Rowland, then chairman and absolute ruler over his Lonrho empire and the property was taken over by Lonrho at the time as part of the securities provided for the loans. Of course much has changed since those days and Ol Pejeta is now a byword for wildlife conservation in Kenya.

Today the Ol Pejeta mixed conservancy, home to the largest concentration of Eastern Black Rhinos in East Africa, home to 4 of only 7 surviving Northern White Rhinos, home to a chimpanzee sanctuary, home to the '*Big Five*' and home to such upmarket safari lodges like Serena's Sweetwaters and Porini's Rhino Camp, is a prime example how a visionary management team can turn conservation into a profitable business. Cattle ranching and wildlife conservation now go hand in hand since the strict division of both has been lifted in what proved a masterstroke for the bottom line of the company. As witnessed directly and close up the ranching does hardly interfere with the game drives of tourists staying on the conservancy, as the cattle herds are largely kept out of the way of the core parts of the sprawling 90,000 acres conservancy which has the equator run right through it, offering the added attraction to visitors to repeatedly cross from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere and vice versa.

News were now received that Ol Pejeta is set to create a 1,000 acre '*Mount Kenya Wildlife Estate*' along the Eastern boundary of the conservancy, on which in a secure gated community will be created. Depending on demand, which is set to get a considerable boost through a weekend site visit for prospective buyers on 03/04 March, between 65 and 100 homes will be constructed, with adequate infrastructure like road, track, water and electricity connections, although solar technology will rank high on the agenda to minimize the carbon footprint of the new development. Residences, offering between 3 – 5 bedrooms, are available for purchase and while foreign buyers cannot get a freehold title, they can obtain 99 year leases which are renewable on expiry. Estate management will be undertaken by the company and a dedicated '*club house and swimming pool area*' will be available to the residents, since no private pools are permitted due to the policy to conserve water in this often dry part of Kenya. An '*owners association committee*' will take care of giving the residents of the estate their own voice.

Spectacular views of Mt. Kenya, weather permitting of course, will be a hallmark of the estate, as will be the presence of plains game and other wildlife at their doorsteps, attracted by specially created watering holes, fed by a permanent river running across this part of the conservancy.

The new estate can be reached with ease from Nairobi by air with several scheduled daily services by SafariLink and other airlines from Wilson Airport, or by charter to the Ol Pejeta airstrip and of course by road from Kenya's capital

Nairobi, which should take not more than 3 hours, depending on traffic, with scenic views along the way as one gets near the ‘central highlands’ and the Aberdare mountains and Mt. Kenya come into sight. This correspondent intends to visit the site during an upcoming trip to Kenya and will return with more details and updates from Ol Pejeta. Meanwhile, for more information visit [www.olpejetaconservancy.org](http://www.olpejetaconservancy.org) or [www.mountkenyawave.com](http://www.mountkenyawave.com)

### **NEW 11.000 ACRES CONSERVANCY LAUNCHED AT TSAVO WEST BOUNDARIES**

The Mbulia Group Ranch, located along the boundaries of Tsavo West National Park, has recently signed a long term agreement with ‘*New African Territories*’ to turn 11.400 acres of their land into a wildlife conservancy on which a new tented eco lodge is being set up to cater for tourist visitors. Overwhelmingly a dry area the acreage proved to be of little value to either farming or livestock grazing but was home to significant numbers of wildlife, including elephant, which will now find a permanent home without competing over the scarce food sources with goats or cattle.

The deal was reportedly several years in the making with negotiations only concluded recently, and the new conservancy follows in the footsteps of such pioneers as Lewa Downs, Ol Pejeta and the Porini conservancies, to name but a few commercially successful ventures which have stood the test of time.

Work is presently underway by New African Territories to ‘*cut and open*’ a direct access route through Tsavo West to the main Nairobi – Mombasa highway, turning a hitherto little used track into their main access road some 13 kilometres off the tarmac. Expect information here when the safari camp is ready to receive guests

The team running the conservancy and camp are ‘*old hands*’ – said with no disrespect to the ladies and referring to their bushcraft rather than their true age - Tamsin Corcoran and Nana Grosse-Woodley, both of whom have extensive experience in hospitality and conservation operations with Nana in particular well acquainted with the Tsavo area. Watch this space.

### **KENYA’S TOURISM INDUSTRY DEMANDS CLARITY ON ELECTION DATES**

Leading stakeholders in Kenya’s tourism industry are getting more vocal now about the government’s dragging out the announcement of an election date, due to be held later this year.

Following the collapse of tourism in the wake of the post election violence in early 2008 have in particular tour operators from overseas looked at contingency measures to avoid having tourists caught up in a similar scenario once again, especially as the last elections at the end of December 2007 coincided with the peak of the peak tourism season between Christmas and New Year. Said a UK based representative of a company sending thousands of visitors to Kenya every year on condition of anonymity: ‘*Last time we were caught unaware and by surprise, how violence started to spread. True, not one tourists was harmed as a result of the exemplary and extraordinary efforts of Kenya’s tourism associations, KTB and KWS but it was a very difficult time for us to get our tourists safely home again. We have asked our partners in Kenya to seek clarification on the next election dates because there are too many conflicting statements in the media. We need to know if those elections are held before Christmas or like last time just before New Year and then we can discuss with our partners in Kenya how to go about it. From my perspective everyone in our business will be very cautious, some may in fact use the expected foreign office travel advisories for Kenya ahead of the elections as an added reason to go slow on promotions and have fallback positions. Look at the Maldives now, they are also suffering big time from the political upheavals but we were prepared because the indicators were all there. First their ban on Spas, then the huge increase on airport fees, then the overthrow of the President. We could shift traffic almost immediately to other Indian Ocean destinations like Sri Lanka, Seychelles or Mauritius. With Kenya it will be a similar scenario. The better prepared we are, the more swiftly we can react. Of course we will look at all options and scenarios to be sure that tourists are safe and if necessary can be evacuated in conjunction with our High Commission and our tourism partners in Kenya. What happened 4 years ago is just still too fresh in everyone’s mind and although Kenya has been superb in bringing tourism back to life and do so well, the election period is a time when I think everyone needs hope for the best but also to prepare for the worst.*’

Kenya’s Tourism Federation but also trade associations like the Kenya Association of Tour Operators and the Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers have in past weeks intensified their internal discussions with the aim of getting an early resolution to the election date, so that in the words of a regular contributor ‘*we can finally prepare and make contingencies for that week or two before and after the elections, especially after the elections*’.

It became also known that the chairman of KAHK, who is also the Managing Director of Sarova Hotels, Mr. J.S. Vohra, has earlier in the week called on government to finally announce a date when he was quoted as saying: ‘*We want the government to announce the election date because people are in limbo over the exact time when it would be held. This will enable us to get prepared*’. Other sources close to the tourist board were guarded over their own preparations towards the elections and their various promotional activities, nor would they readily discuss the



various *'what if'* scenarios other than saying that they were preparing. Kenya will next year celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence from Britain in 1963, first **'Madaraka Day'** in June, when Kenya attained internal self governance before **'Uhuru Day'** on 12<sup>th</sup> December, when the late father of the nation Jomo Kenyatta led the celebrations as the Union Jack came down for the last time as a colonial power. Kenya intends to capitalize on the golden jubilee with added marketing activities and is seeking to break the arrival and revenue records of 2011 and the announcement of an election date would come as a huge relief to the tourism industry both in Kenya as well as overseas.

From neighbouring countries official comments were also not available, though informal off the record responses all said in unison that it was hoped that Kenya's elections would be conducted in a peaceful manner and that tourism and aviation would not be disrupted as it could have a serious fallout on the entire region, much of which gets tourist and business traffic via East Africa's main hub in Nairobi. Watch this space!

### **NAIROBI TO HOST E-TOURISM CONFERENCE IN MARCH**

Kenya's capital city has once again been chosen to host a major continental tourism conference in March this year. E-tourism guru Damian Cook will be leading the field of global e-tourism experts who will come to Kenya to help transform the sector's approach to the new media and train and counsel the over 200 participants in how to best tap into social media and make a market impact.

In the past many tourism stakeholders found themselves restricted by small advertising and marketing budgets, but can now at last use the power of social media and web based marketing to take their message to the rest of the world without having to travel long distances to attend one or two tourism trade fairs.

Said a smaller tour operator from Nairobi, frequently in touch with this correspondent on all matters concerning tourism developments in East Africa: ***'When we set up our company we could hardly afford to print brochures and had to decide between going to ITB or WTM due to budget constraints. When the internet became what it is today, for a little investment we managed to put up a web site and when Facebook and Twitter and LinkedIn and U Tube came along and became popular, we managed to put ourselves on the map.'***

***E-Tourism levels the playing field a lot more, not completely, but a lot more now. We can showcase ourselves and the more active one is on the web, the more visible the company is also. The big boys in our industry still have a lot of advantages but the smaller companies with just as good guides and expertise no longer are out in the cold. We get business that way and we hope for more in the future as we learn more from such conferences'.***

Notably have secure booking and payment solutions been developed by financial services providers which help to avoid past problems, making the use of internet based transaction, often referred to as e-Commerce, more viable and more widely available. Major credit and debit card organizations setting up offices in Nairobi to serve the wider region too have helped as transaction speeds have increased considerably, with participating merchants no longer having to wait weeks to see funds credited.

Developed countries are now thought to transact up to 50 percent of business via e-Commerce solutions while on the African continent the percentage is notably still way below the 10 percent mark, with some countries in fact not even registering on the scale yet. It is here that the 2 day conference is set to prepare greater market acceptance and wider participation in doing business ***'the new way'*** and to catapult Africa as a destination continent truly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Watch this space.

### **KENYA AIRWAYS AND SKY TEAM PARTNERS LAUNCH 'GO AFRICA AIRPASS'**



Sky Team has announced the introduction of a comprehensive air pass for flights into and across Africa, based on the scheduled network of partner airline Kenya Airways via Nairobi. It is available for sale with immediate effect and flights booked can commence as of March 01<sup>st</sup> this year. All 15 Sky Team members are offering the deal, which will see rebates of up to 75 percent compared to published fares for travelers taking advantage of the offer.

Kenya Airways presently connects some 45 destinations across the African continent. The airpass must contain a minimum of 3 flight coupons and can hold as many as 16 flight coupons under one transaction. It requires no minimum stay and *'open jaw'* sectors are permitted, including multiple stops at any given point.

A number of member airlines from Sky Team are flying to African destinations besides Kenya Airways, like KLM / Air France, Alitalia and Delta Airlines, while soon to join Saudi Arabian Airlines and Middle East Airlines too have regular services to the African continent, making the airpass a highly valued *'commodity'* for travelers with multiple stops on the continent.



The source also re-confirmed that Korean Air, another Sky Team member, will commence flights from Seoul to Nairobi in June this year, adding a long expected and much needed new connection to the Far East, from which both trade and tourism in Kenya are set to benefit substantially. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from East Africa's aviation sector.

#### **TURKANA FESTIVAL SCHEDULED FOR MAY 18 – 20**

The diversity and heritage of the Turkana people and region in Kenya will be celebrated once again this year in May at Loiyangalani, for the fifth year running. Supported by the German Embassy, the Kenya Tourist Board / Magical Kenya, the National Museums of Kenya, the local communities and Private Safaris (K) since its inception in 2008 the festival brings together the cultures and traditions of the Turkana, El Molo, Rendille, Samburu, Dassanach, Ghabra, Borana, Konso, Burji and Wata tribes. While dance, song and poetry will be performed the festival also highlights the living conditions of people living for multi generations in this part of Kenya. At the festival site in Loiyangalani will also be replicas of traditional homesteads as will the locally made dishes be available for visitors to see and sample. An extensive festival programme has been put together, including visits to the local '*Desert Museum*' and to see rock art for those who make their way by road or air to Turkana.

While blessed with breathtaking vistas around the '*Jade Lake*', formerly known as '*Lake Rudolf*', home of the Sibiloi National Park and the world famous prehistoric sites unearthed by the Leakey family, life generally is hard for the tribespeople, as the waters of the lake have been receding for the past decades and in particular last year famine struck the region, making widespread food aid necessary.

Visit [www.laketurkanafestival.com](http://www.laketurkanafestival.com) for more information.

#### **KWS AND TANAPA LAUNCH GAME COUNT IN GREATER AMBOSELI / KILIMANJARO AREA**

Information was confirmed yesterday that Kenya Wildlife Service, in conjunction with their Tanzanian counterparts Tanzania National Parks Authority have last weekend launched a two week game count in the transboundary ecosystem of the Kilimanjaro / Amboseli area. Also on board is the African Wildlife Fund (AWF) and the aim of the count is to get up to date information and data to allow the setting up of a longer term game and wildlife monitoring programme.

Main target of the census are carnivores like lion, leopard, hyenas and other predator species, all of which have in recent years suffered from drought which decimated the numbers of plains game on which they normally prey, leading to increased incidents of domestic livestock being attacked for food. In turn, herdsman took to poisoning, trapping and spearing of predators, putting additional strain on their shrinking populations.

The census data will be processed and interpreted and should be available, according to a source close to KWS in Nairobi, within the next three months, giving valuable information on the way forward.

#### **KENYA AIRWAYS AND KLM LAUNCH JOINT CARGO FLIGHTS**



It was announced in Nairobi yesterday that Kenya Airways has launched joint cargo services with KLM to operate from Nairobi to both Guangzhou / China and Lagos / Nigeria, with a link to Amsterdam.

The new cargo routing has been given as Amsterdam – Guangzhou – Sharjah – Nairobi – Lagos – Nairobi - Amsterdam using the airline's B747-400F aircraft with a maximum uplift of 120 metric tons of palletized cargo.

The aircraft has been named '*Safari Connection*' highlighting the tourism potential between China, Europe and Kenya while flying cargo between the continents and has reportedly been sourced from Martinair, a subsidiary of the KLM / Air France Group which owns 26 percent of the Kenya Airways shares.

Kenya Airways uplifted some 56.000 tons of cargo on its wide body passenger aircraft in 2011 and is set to become a major force in cargo aviation with the imminent introduction of added cargo aircraft of B737-300F make, which will be deployed to deliver and collect cargo from the wider region and then process it via the airline's Nairobi hub.

Said a regular aviation source from Nairobi: '*They have finally recognized that cargo operations need their own*

*fleet if to be successful. They must have studied the success of Ethiopian Airlines which has for years been operating pure cargo aircraft and now that Nairobi is the biggest cargo transit point in Africa, KQ simply could not leave the bulk of the shipments to other airlines. They had to react and while it took them really far too long, they are finally now getting there'.*

It is further understood from a source close to the airline that as part of the ongoing and planned fleet expansion several more cargo aircraft are to be sourced in coming years to tap into the growing and profitable air cargo market and become the airline of choice in Africa, covering all political and commercial capitals across the continent. Watch this space for regular and breaking news from East Africa's aviation sector.

#### **NAIROBI TO HOST AFRICAN AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CONFERENCE**

The African Aviation's annual aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul conference, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> edition, is taking place for the first time in Nairobi / Kenya and will start today.

Nairobi has established itself in the recent past as a major centre for aircraft maintenance, led by Kenya Airways' own MRO where it carries out even heavy maintenance of their fleet, while a number of other MRO's have also been taking roots, not just at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport but notably also for light aircraft at Nairobi's Wilson Airport. Representatives of airlines from Africa will meet with experts from aircraft, engine and component manufacturers to discuss aircraft maintenance and repairs according to the conference chairman, aviation journalist Nick Fadugba.

While Africa's lead airlines like Ethiopian, Kenya Airways, South African Airways and Egypt Air all have their own maintenance facilities ensuring compliance with Airworthiness Directives by manufacturers, the continent of Africa is also a continent of stark contrasts, with these airlines having attained global recognition and been certified by IATA with IOSA certification, while plenty of others are banned from entering European airspace over safety concerns while the continent continues as a whole to have the worst global aviation accident history of recent times. And again, while the lead airlines of Africa are all present in Nairobi, those who need to be there the most to improve their dismal records, are conspicuously absent. Watch this space.

#### **Tanzania News**

#### **PRECISION AIR / KENYA AIRWAYS PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS PUBLIC WITH MORE FLIGHTS**



The intense partnership and schedule coordination between Tanzania's leading airline Precision Air and regional giant Kenya Airways has now resulted in a 5<sup>th</sup> daily flight being introduced on the route between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, giving passengers an added choice of departure.

Precision Air, using their B737-300 on the route, will operate three of the code shared flights while Kenya Airways is operating the remaining two frequencies. Travelers from Dar es Salaam can now connect in Nairobi with greater ease to a range of regional, continental and international destinations, as the fifth frequency removes capacity bottle necks which in particular during peak travel times existed in the past.

Precision Air has also shifted their departure for flights from Dar es Salaam to Johannesburg to 17.00 hrs to allow for better connectivity and network connections both ways. Watch this space for regular aviation news updates from the Eastern Africa region.

#### **TANZANIA'S NEW CROSS BORDER VEHICLE FEES DISOWNED BY GOVERNMENT**

Information from Dar es Salaam overnight confirmed that the Minister for East African Cooperation Mr. Samuel Sitta, has denounced the introduction of a US D 200 border crossing vehicle fee 10 days ago was not sanctioned by government, saying it was a unilateral and unauthorized decision by border authorities.

There were rowdy scenes reported at the main land borders at Taveta and Namanga, when Tanzanian officials tried to extract the extra payment, prompting a range of measures from in particular Kenya, which yesterday sent a high ranking delegation to Dar es Salaam to seek clarification on the issue and demand an immediate withdrawal of what has been called '*a punitive and discriminatory measure by a partner state in the EAC*'.

Traders and regular business travelers however let fly in much harsher terms as sentiments against Tanzania again boiled over, accusing the country to be lukewarm towards the East African Community, making doing business with them difficult through a range of non tariff barriers and being '*frankly paranoid about anything Kenyan*' according to a regular source from Nairobi. A leading business organization representative added: '*The restrictions on even the trade in shares, where the limits of foreign participation, and mind you, even us EAC member countries are*

*termed foreign for the purpose of that restriction, are not good for the integration of our economies. Look at Uganda and Rwanda, they have NO limits at all and cross listing there, or having us invest in companies, is very easy now and helps them raise capital. Then there is the issue of work permits. Again, Rwanda and Uganda and Kenya are in agreement to do away with these requirements and limit the need for work permits to citizens from outside the EAC. Yet, Tanzania treats us as foreigners. They prohibit Ugandan, Rwandan and Kenyan safari companies to take their tourists to the national parks in Tanzania, while again between the other member states such prohibitive measures do not exist. They limit our charter airlines from Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya to fly safari passengers only to the main airports and prohibit landing in the parks to drop tourists off, making for unnecessary expenses and wasting time. We appreciate governments have to talk nice but I think the time has come to call Tanzania's bluff and let them show their true colours, either they are East Africans or they are not in which case let them part company. We are fed up with such things, taking 200 Dollars from someone crossing the border to sell or buy goods? And let us not be lied to, nothing happens in Tanzania without government sanction on that level. It was a move aimed against Kenya and against Kenyans and we had enough of it now'.*

Ugandan aviation sources yesterday again confirmed the restrictive handling of flight clearances for charters operating from Entebbe to Tanzania, claiming it undermined the spirit of East African cooperation and the various protocols in place governing EAC internal relations but also continental aviation resolutions like made in Lusaka and in Yamoussoukro.

No commitment was made by the minister though that the punitive and extortionist fee of US Dollars 200 would be lifted with immediate effect, only speaking of an upcoming site visit to gather additional information, leaving motorists crossing into Tanzania from neighbouring Kenya to suffer the fallout of apparent internal squabbles over jurisdiction. Watch this space.

#### **Rwanda News**

##### **NYUNGWE AND CONGO NILE TRAIL TO BENEFIT FROM DISTRICT TOURISM PROMOTION**

Nyamasheke District, into which the 'Nyungwe Forest National Park' (see a related previous article on this via [www.wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/07/26/rwanda-conservation-news-a-visit-to-the-enchanted-nyungwe-forest-national-park/](http://www.wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/07/26/rwanda-conservation-news-a-visit-to-the-enchanted-nyungwe-forest-national-park/)) and sections of the 'Congo Nile Trail' fall, will embark on its own dedicated tourism promotion efforts with the launch of a district tourism development plan.

A regular source in Kigali has commented that such initiatives will boost and strengthen the promotional efforts of the Rwanda Development Board and of the Congo Nile Trail organization to highlight the immense tourism potential in the area along Lake Kivu and into the Nyungwe Forest National Park, attracting more visitors and hopefully also investments in tourism facilities. *'...inspite of strong efforts Rwanda is globally still known as a gorilla tracking destination. But over the past years our country has diversified a lot and offers much more for visitors than just our famous gorillas. RDB has established birding trails outside the parks working hand in hand with communities. Gishwati Forest is well advancing its own development and could soon officially become our fourth national park after Volcanoes, Akagera and Nyungwe. And the Congo Nile Trail has opened the entire shoreline from Kamembe to Gisenyi. RwandAir now flies daily to both destinations, making a visit to Lake Kivu very easy. There is a Serena Hotel in Gisenyi, there are other very nice place along the trail route and in Nyungwe we have the prize winning Nyungwe Forest Lodge and the canopy walk which is the one and only in East Africa. So this district of Nyamasheke now starting a tourism development plan and promoting itself is another good development'* the Kigali based stakeholder wrote while responding to a mail on the issue before continuing: *'If we can attract more quality investment, maybe another hotel group like Serena, to open a resort on one of the many islands, or along the beaches, or even at Gishwati like Dubai World did in Nyungwe, that would be a great boost for tourism. It would also create more jobs and offer visitors more reasons even than just the spectacular nature scenery which is there'.*

Information received from Rwanda indicates that the district has set aside an initial budget of 20 million Rwanda Francs to get the study and plan completed before then embarking on marketing itself as a prime tourism and investment destination within Rwanda. For more information on the country visit [www.rwandatourism.com](http://www.rwandatourism.com)

##### **RDB – TOURISM & CONSERVATION PROMOTES INCREASED CUSTOMER CARE**

Information was received overnight that the Rwanda Development Board's Tourism and Conservation Department has partnered with the hospitality industry to promote better customer care and service delivery across a broad section of hotels, lodges and restaurants.

20 participants were drawn from the Quality and Standards Task Force of the tourism chamber, the heads of the sectoral trade associations for hotels, restaurants and bars, officials from the Ministry of Commerce and key stakeholders. This follows a meeting chaired by the Rwandan Prime Minister earlier in February, when the need to



improve skills in the hospitality industry was discussed, following the concluded grading and classification of hotels in line with East African Community standards.

Ms. Rica Rwigamba, Head of the Tourism & Conservation Department at RDB, had this to say: *'The hospitality sector is a service oriented sector, hence customer care should at the chore of every business success. Our priority this year is to ensure that businesses in the tourism sector offer high quality service and we are ready to work hand in hand with them to achieve this objective. However we shall take appropriate measures for those that will not fulfill basic requirements'*.

It was also learned that RDB plans to '*name and shame*' establishments which fail to uplift standards and bring the tourism and hospitality industry into disrepute with foreign visitors as well as local patrons, to ensure that failure to train staff and improve standards will not go unpunished – while at the same time awarding the best performing companies in a high profile event.

Rwanda's tourism sector has grown in recent years in leaps and bounds and revenues and foreign exchange earnings have risen by nearly 25 percent again in 2011 to now over 252 million US Dollars. Visit [www.rwandatourism.com](http://www.rwandatourism.com) for more information on the country's three national parks and other attractions like the Congo Nile Trail along Lake Kivu and the various birding trails established last year.

### **RWANDA GETS AU BACKING TO TAKE OVER AT UNSC AS NON PERMANENT MEMBER**

Rwanda's contributions to UN peace keeping missions in Darfur and the long term deployment of police contingents in Haiti have earned Rwanda the respect of fellow AU member countries, which have now reciprocated to give provisional clearance for Rwanda to step into a two year term, from January 2013 onwards, of the UN Security Council where non permanent members are elected by the General Assembly following the support of their respective regional groups like the AU.

Rwanda has since the 1994 genocide made a phoenix like recovery, has restored an independent judiciary and made huge strides towards reconciliation and reconstruction benefiting erstwhile ethnic foes. The prevailing peace and economic stability has catapulted tourism to the top of the performance list, bringing hundreds of thousands of visitors to the '*Land of a Thousand Hills*' who can witness through their own experience how the country has developed from a largely agriculture based society to become a hub of new technologies and communications. Having become an Anglophone country too has spurred added developments and global integration and the country is often hailed as the '*Switzerland of Africa*' if such a stereotype can even begin to explain how Rwanda now compares with other countries on the continent.

Visitors flying to Kigali, with national carrier RwandAir – itself a distinct force for development now – read on arrival that they have entered a corruption free zone, and security is evident, as is all else, when the travelers are driven into Kigali city, modern, well maintained and clean, almost belying the fact that this country would truly be located in the heart of Africa.

All these accolades have now resulted in the country being selected by fellow African nations to step up when South Africa's current term as a non permanent member of the UN Security Council comes to an end in 10 months time, while Rwanda now has time to prepare the agenda in close cooperation with the African Union, what Africa stands for and expects from the rest of the world, come January 2013. Well done indeed and congratulations are in order, perhaps a bit early but most definitely deserved.

### **RWANDAIR'S DECISION ON NEW JETS POSTPONED TILL LATER IN THE YEAR**



It was learned from a regular source in Kigali, that the anticipated delivery of two brand new regional jets in the 100 seat range will be delayed until later in the year. Two aircraft manufacturers are said to be in the running for the order to replace two CRJ 200 jets, which no longer met the growing demand for seats on the routes they were deployed, and it is understood Bombardier is trying to sell their CRJ 900 series – waiting for the highly acclaimed C-Series would probably take too long for RwandAir to wait for although it is a potential future aircraft to be considered – while Embraer is trying to sell the E190 in a two class configuration, backed by the very likely launch of an East Africa based maintenance base facility to service these state of the art jets.

The source would not be drawn into a discussion over the reasons for the delay, leaving it open to speculation if further evaluations of offers and aircraft types are ongoing to determine the best options in terms of operations, training and maintenance cost in the long term, or if it is the ability of the most likely manufacturer to deliver an aircraft order in time, and put the financial package together, could be the overriding motive for the delay.

It could also not be ascertained what decision has been made, if any yet, to replace the Bombardier Dash 8-100 with a larger turboprop to meet the growing demand on the route from Kamembe to Kigali as well as on short regional flights, so there is much to look forward to about RwandAir in coming weeks and months. Watch this space to be sure not to miss the news when they break.

#### Congo News

##### BRUSSELS AIRLINES TO LAUNCH NEW AIRLINE IN CONGO



Information was confirmed by a source from Brussels Airlines that the Belgian flag carrier will launch flight operations in Congo through a new airline, 70 percent owned by SN with the balance of shares held by Congolese investors. '**Korongo Airlines**', operating under IATA two letter code ZC, is expected to take to the skies in the early second quarter of 2012 and will operate three wetleased aircraft, all provided by Brussels Airlines.

The initial routes will be from Lubumbashi, where the airline is headquartered, to Kinshasa and Johannesburg, using a B737-300 while domestic routes will be added once the two additional BAE 146 planes have been deployed. The source specifically pointed out that all aircraft will remain registered in Belgium and will be subject to the EU's stringent safety and maintenance oversight, assuring passengers that this latest Congolese airline will indeed meet all expected safety standards. Congo's civil aviation and other government departments have reportedly approved the importation of the three aircraft and granted all pre-requisite permits like an air services license and an air operators certificate. The flights to Kinshasa are due to be linked to the arrival of SN's scheduled services between Brussels and Kinshasa to provide convenient onward connections both ways.

Meanwhile has another SN source confirmed that passengers from Paris, connecting in Brussels to the airline's African services, including Kinshasa, can now check in their baggage a day early PLUS will get an added 9 free kilograms of added baggage allowance, limited to two checked pieces of luggage. This, it was pointed out, will make for a hassle free trip on the day of travel when individuals, but more so families, can concentrate on enjoying their journey instead of having to deal with bags and trolleys. Watch this space.

#### Mauritius News

##### ST. REGIS OPENING POSTPONED BY 4 MONTHS TILL SEPTEMBER



(Picture courtesy of St. Regis Mauritius picture, showing a sample bedroom)

The much anticipated grand opening by the new St. Regis Mauritius, named by the Forbes Travel Guide as one of the world's 10 most anticipated new hotel and resort openings in 2012, has been moved from the 15<sup>th</sup> of May to the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, according to a source from Port Louis.

In an overnight communication sent to this correspondent were substantial delays in getting the furniture and equipment on to the site cited and a press release from the hotel's pre-opening team states as much, underlining that the resort would only be opened with all services available to guests from day one, and not in a phased advance.

The hotel is the first St. Regis in sub Saharan Africa and the 173 villa and suite resort will be the latest addition to a number of top rated 5 star resorts on Mauritius, adding more glitz and glamour to the destination. Located at the scenic '*Le Morne*' peninsula in the South West of the island it enjoys spectacular views over the turquoise waters of a lagoon on the ocean side and the backdrop of *Mt. Brabant*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The new resort is expected to climb the official rankings quickly and fast become a darling of such travel sites as TripAdvisor, when finally open in 6 months time. Watch this space for more updates, as and when available.

Visit [www.stregismauritius.com](http://www.stregismauritius.com) for more information or else see the Starwood Hotels site and follow the St. Regis link to the new property.

### Seychelles News

#### CARNIVAL SEASON ENDS ACROSS THE WORLD, ABOUT TO START IN THE SEYCHELLES



As the traditional carnival nations like Brazil and Germany celebrate the very last day of this year's festival and parade season, due to end at midnight when Ash Wednesday rings in the Christian 40 days of fasting, elsewhere preparations are in high gear to welcome participants from around the world in celebrating the Seychelles own Carnaval de Carnivals, the Carnival International de Victoria from March 02 to 04.

At the stroke of midnight will the last songs have been played and the last dance ended in Germany's carnival capital of Duesseldorf, but key players and actors will be packing their suitcases to fly with Etihad via Abu Dhabi to Mahe to perform their skills and arts of funny, comic and often sarcastic displays on a float, when the main parade in Victoria goes underway. They are joined by Brazil's Samba Queen, who is also coming with her troupe from Rio de Janeiro on Emirates, making the journey to extend their own carnival season by a precious extra week, before the costumes – tiny as they are – will be mothballed for another year. Another at least 20 teams, including a delegation from the UK's Notting Hill carnival, will also be present to beef up the displays and show a truly global array of performances from their respective countries.

Organizing the '*Mother of all Carnivals*' in the Seychelles was a genius masterstroke by the Seychelles Tourism Board, as it brings the key actors from the world stages of Carnival to the archipelago, getting the global media to take notice and report about it and having tourists who would traditionally fly to Rio or the German '*Rheinland*' come to the tropical island paradise for a few added days of carnival fun.

In Germany, when carnival ends tonight, the next season will traditionally kick off on 11.11 at 11.11 hrs with the first '*festive*' meeting of the lead organizations but for aficionados, there is always that escape to the Seychelles, to get that little bit of extra carnival experience once elsewhere the doors have been shut.

9 days and counting as preparations at the Bel Ombre head quarters of the Seychelles Tourism Board are now in the final countdown to the big day, 02<sup>nd</sup> of March. See you in Victoria, but if not, watch this space, watch live tweets from the streets of the Seychelles capital city or visit [www.seychelles.travel](http://www.seychelles.travel)

**AND in closing today the usual '*dose*' of news from '*further down South*' – ably put together week in and week out by Gill Staden, received as always with great many thanks!**

---

**ZAMBIA**

## Air Namibia to fly to Livingstone

Air Namibia is to start flying (again) to Livingstone. The flights will be four times every week and will start in October. Air Namibia already flies to Victoria Falls Airport in Zimbabwe but the company feels that the demand for a flight to Livingstone is increasing.

---

## Climate Change and Hydropower

There are various articles and/or up and coming workshops about the effects of climate change on our environment and how we can cope with these changes. The other week there was a meeting attended by many countries in the southern African region to discuss the needs of electricity producers in the whole of the region. The meeting looked at how all the countries could share their resources. Looking through the literature available there was no mention of Batoka Dam or other new dams in Zambia. It seemed that they were all looking at the Congo and the proposed Grand Inga Dam.

From International Rivers:

*Grand Inga could produce up to 39,000 MW of electricity, over twice the power generation of Three Gorges Dam in China, and more than a third of the total electricity currently produced in Africa. While feasibility studies for Grand Inga are not yet finished, the project is already being touted as a way to "light Africa" by both companies that stand to benefit from it and governments that hope to receive power from it. ....*

**From Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)**

**<http://cdkn.org/2012/02/powering-southern-africa-the-future-of-hydro-in-the-zambezi-river-basin/>**

*The impact of climate change and upstream irrigation development on hydropower in the Zambezi River Basin is the subject of a new project launched by CDKN in February. A consortium of institutions – including University of Cape Town, Pöyry Management Consulting, OneWorld Sustainable Investments, Centre for Energy Environment Engineering Zambia, University of Zambia and University of Eduardo Mondlane – will tackle both the analysis of how climate, development, water and power intersect in the region, and engage with key stakeholders in the region around these critical issues.*

This article does not state how long this research will take. Let's hope it is not too long and that results are ready for government before any decision is made on any future dams, especially Batoka.

## Climate Resilience Meeting – March 12-13 at Zambezi Sun

From the Climate Investment Fund website:

*The Climate Investment Funds are a pair of funds to help developing countries pilot low-emissions and climate-resilient development. With CIF support, 46 developing countries are piloting transformations in clean technology, sustainable management of forests, increased energy access through renewable energy, and climate-resilient development.*

*The fifth meeting of pilot countries and regions participating in the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) has been rescheduled and will now take place on March 12-13, 2012 in Livingstone, Zambia.*



*The objectives of the meeting will be to provide a space for countries to discuss and prepare for the challenges and opportunities of maintaining a programmatic approach in the implementation of their PPCR Strategic Programs; and to exchange views on the design and implementation of systems to monitor results and manage knowledge. In addition, a segment on climate information systems and hydro-meteorological services has been organized in recognition of the large proportion of PPCR pilot countries that plan to make investments in this area. The segments of the meeting have been primarily organized as workshops rather than plenary discussions. It is expected that this approach will help participants move beyond information exchange towards commonly working on implementation issues.*

---

## **Safety of Kariba Dam**

While Zambia and Zimbabwe are considering yet another dam on the Zambezi River at Batoka Gorge, there are concerns about the safety of Kariba Dam.

From International Rivers:

*The 128-meter-high Kariba Dam is one of Africa's biggest. Operated by the Zambezi River Authority on behalf of Zimbabwe and Zambia, it has been a cause for concern on a number of safety issues, including from its earliest days when the filling of its reservoir caused earthquakes, to more recent times when rumors began to surface that the huge dam had structural problems and suffered from poor maintenance. Kariba has also worsened the region's floods in recent years. ...*

*The filling of what was then the world's largest reservoir was followed by considerable earthquake activity. The weight of Kariba's reservoir translates into a mass of 180 billion metric tons. The reservoir is located in a tectonically active area, at the southern end of the African Rift Valley. Since its construction and filling in the early 1960s, Kariba has caused numerous earthquakes in the area, 20 of them larger than magnitude 5 on the Richter scale. Project documents did not discuss the possibility of reservoir-induced seismicity and the need to take this into account in the design of the dam, so the seismic activity's affect on the dam's safety is unknown. ...*

*After the devastating March 2000 floods in Mozambique, the US Army Corps of Engineers was requested to do site visits at three Zambezi dams, including Kariba. The team was given full access to Cahora Bassa and Kafue dams, but not Kariba. "Though our mission was to inspect the dam, this was not possible due to the reluctance of the Authority to share operational data with the Team," notes the Army Corps' final report. "The inability to obtain operational data seriously hampers informed consideration of the dam and raises serious questions concerning the operation of Kariba." Most recently, emergency releases from Kariba to prevent damage to the dam from rapidly rising waters led to flood alerts and evacuations for thousands of downstream dwellers. ...*

*Kariba, like many dams, has been affected by a condition that mars its concrete, known as "alkali-aggregate reaction." While regional concern about the dam's condition is widespread, little is known about the extent of the problem or its implications for dam safety. The US Army Corps noted in its 2000 report, "the severity of this reaction was not disclosed." The Corps report notes, "With the limited information provided, no conclusive assessment can be made of the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions, structural stability, or the overall dam safety aspects." The World Bank reports that inspections of Kariba are carried out every five years by the engineering firm Coyne and Bellier, but these reports are not made public. A Zambezi river expert who lives downstream of Kariba notes that concern about the dam's safety*

*arises especially during large floods, because "the dam walls vibrate when several or more sluice gates are open and pass large discharges." He adds, "The dam operators adamantly deny that there are any problems, and it is certainly in their interest to make sure the walls are stable - so I hope they are doing so!"*

International Dams again about dams in China:

*The Three Gorges Dam is the world's largest hydropower project and most notorious dam. The massive project sets records for number of people displaced (more than 1.2 million), number of cities and towns flooded (13 cities, 140 towns, 1,350 villages), and length of reservoir (more than 600 kilometers). The project has been plagued by corruption, spiraling costs, environmental impacts, human rights violations and resettlement difficulties.*

*The environmental impacts of the project are profound, and are likely to get worse as time goes on. The submergence of hundreds of factories, mines and waste dumps, and the presence of massive industrial centers upstream are creating a festering bog of effluent, silt, industrial pollutants and rubbish in the reservoir. Erosion of the reservoir and downstream riverbanks is causing landslides, and threatening one of the world's biggest fisheries in the East China Sea. The weight of the reservoir's water has many scientists concerned over reservoir-induced seismicity. In 2011, China's highest government body for the first time officially acknowledged the "urgent problems" of the Three Gorges Dam.*

*The Three Gorges Dam is a model for disaster, yet Chinese companies are replicating this model both domestically and internationally. Within China, huge hydropower cascades have been proposed and are being constructed in some of China's most pristine and biologically and culturally diverse river basins - the Lancang (Upper Mekong) River, Nu (Salween) River and upstream of Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River and tributaries.*

*Through the Three Gorges Project, China has acquired the know-how to build large hydropower schemes, and has begun exporting similar projects around the world. Now that the project's problems have been acknowledged, it is important to draw lessons from the experience so that the problems of the Yangtze dam are not repeated.*

*While Three Gorges is the world's biggest hydro project, the problems at Three Gorges are not unique. Around the world, large dams are causing social and environmental devastation while better alternatives are being ignored. ...*

---

### **Solenta Aviation pulls out of Zimbabwe by WildZambezi.com**

Solenta Aviation, which, for the past two years has provided small aircraft charter services throughout Zimbabwe and scheduled services linking Harare and Victoria Falls with Bumi Hills, Kariba, Mana Pools and other remote destinations in the Zambezi Valley, has announced that it is suspending its operations from 1 May 2012.

"Any reservations taken after 30th April 2012 will unfortunately be cancelled. We will be in touch with our clients to discuss other options and solutions regarding current bookings beyond May 2012", says a Press Release issued by the company on 16th February.

This is very disappointing news for visitors, travel agents and operators seeking air access into Zimbabwe's lesser-known destinations like Kariba and the Zambezi Valley which are not currently serviced by an international airport hub like the one at Victoria Falls.

Alternative solutions are, however, springing into life to fill the gap left by Solenta.

- 1) The new Safari Logistics' "Air Taxi Service" operated by African Bush Camps links Victoria Falls with Mana Pools and offers various destination hops along the way. This is a single-engine Cessna 206 service carrying four passengers. For more information see this link: [New Air Taxi Service links Vic Falls-Hwange-Bumi-Kariba-Mana Pools](#).
- 2) Bumi Hills Safari Lodge starts a new twin-engine air service on 1 March 2012 with a 5-seater Baron 55 linking Victoria Falls with Bumi Hills and offering flexibility on additional hops to Kariba and other lakeside destinations. More information on this and a new Bumi boat transfer option will be published by Wild Zambezi shortly.

---

## ZIMBABWE

### **Solenta Aviation pulls out of Zimbabwe by WildZambezi.com**

Solenta Aviation, which, for the past two years has provided small aircraft charter services throughout Zimbabwe and scheduled services linking Harare and Victoria Falls with Bumi Hills, Kariba, Mana Pools and other remote destinations in the Zambezi Valley, has announced that it is suspending its operations from 1 May 2012.

"Any reservations taken after 30th April 2012 will unfortunately be cancelled. We will be in touch with our clients to discuss other options and solutions regarding current bookings beyond May 2012", says a Press Release issued by the company on 16th February.

This is very disappointing news for visitors, travel agents and operators seeking air access into Zimbabwe's lesser-known destinations like Kariba and the Zambezi Valley which are not currently serviced by an international airport hub like the one at Victoria Falls.

Alternative solutions are, however, springing into life to fill the gap left by Solenta.

- 1) The new Safari Logistics' "Air Taxi Service" operated by African Bush Camps links Victoria Falls with Mana Pools and offers various destination hops along the way. This is a single-engine Cessna 206 service carrying four passengers. For more information see this link: [New Air Taxi Service links Vic Falls-Hwange-Bumi-Kariba-Mana Pools](#).
- 2) Bumi Hills Safari Lodge starts a new twin-engine air service on 1 March 2012 with a 5-seater Baron 55 linking Victoria Falls with Bumi Hills and offering flexibility on additional hops to Kariba and other lakeside destinations. More information on this and a new Bumi boat transfer option will be published by Wild Zambezi shortly.

Plans are ahead for this year's static count in Hwange National Park on Saturday-Sunday (29-30 September).

The count is conducted by volunteers who are stationed for a 24-hour period at a waterhole and count the animals which they see.

If you would like to be involved contact Pam Birch on the above email address.

---

## BOTSWANA

### **Tourism Air Fuel Crisis**

Maun has several companies which fly clients into the Okavango Delta. Many areas of the Delta are inaccessible by road. So when the news came that there was going to be a shortage of aviation fuel (avgas) it caused panic in the tourism industry.

*We face a catastrophe. The effect on the local industry and local economy will be dreadful if things don't change quickly.*

*We have all had extremely good bookings for the season and we will be shot in the knee if the fuel problem persists.*

Avgas comes from a refinery in Durban and according to a report the shortage of avgas is affecting the whole region of southern Africa.

---