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*Second edition October 2013*

#### **East Africa News**

#### **QATAR AIRWAYS BAGS ‘BEST MIDDLE EAST AIRLINE’ FOR THE 8<sup>TH</sup> TIME**

(Posted 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Qatar Airways, one of East Africa’s best liked foreign airlines, has just been awarded the TTG Asia Travel Awards ‘*Best Airline in the Middle East*’ trophy.

QR presently flies to Entebbe in conjunction with Kigali daily and double daily to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, but also serves Kilimanjaro and Addis Ababa in the wider region.

The national airline of Qatar was voted by readers of one of the most respected travel trade magazines in the Asia Pacific, TTG Asia. Readers based their voting on the strength of the airline’s customer service, its route network, services and its marketing and advertising programmes.

Qatar Airways’ Chief Commercial Officer Marwan Kolehvat (Picture shown below), who accepted the award on behalf of the airline, said that the honour demonstrated the airline’s continued popularity amongst passengers. *‘Qatar Airways continues to consolidate its position as one of the world’s leading airlines by winning several awards year on year. Winning the Best Middle Eastern Airline award reiterates the airline’s commitment to create superior travel experiences for its passengers and to offer them the best service levels. We are very proud of this recognition from our esteemed customers who are true advocates of our product. Asia Pacific is one of the most significant regions for Qatar Airways and we will continue to focus on delivering excellent customer service while, of course, expanding our operations in this region.*



Qatar Airways has over the past years seen rapid growth after just 16 years of operations. The airline currently operates a modern fleet of 129 aircraft to 132 key business and leisure destinations across Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia Pacific and The Americas and will in March next year take delivery of their first Airbus A380, after being the Middle East launch customer for Boeing's B787 Dreamliner.

In 2013, Qatar Airways has launched nine destinations to date – Gassim (Saudi Arabia), Najaf (Iraq), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Chicago (USA), Salalah (Oman), Basra (Iraq), Sulaymaniyah (Iraq), Chengdu (China), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), and most recently Ta'if (Saudi Arabia).

Over the next few weeks and months, the network will grow further with Clark Manila International Airport, Philippines (October 27) and Philadelphia, USA (April 2, 2014).

Watch this space for regular and breaking aviation news in the Eastern African region.

## Uganda News

### UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY LAUNCHES INTELLIGENCE UNIT

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



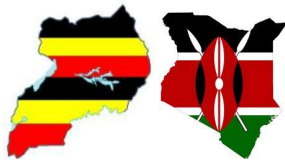
80 rangers were selected by UWA to take part in an intelligence course conducted for them by leading intelligence experts from the Uganda People's Defense Force, to form the core of a new unit tasked with gathering information on poaching, illegal trade, smuggling of wildlife, birds and reptiles and the illicit game meat trade, among other functions. The 80 were passed out earlier this week at the army's school of military intelligence and security in Fort Portal, Western Uganda, where UWA's executive director Dr. Andrew Seguya said: ***'The biggest challenge we have been having is collecting information. You may have a strong force but without information, you can't achieve a lot. You can never have enough boots on the ground because we [have to] control about 10 per cent of the country's total surface [being protected areas like national parks and game reserves]. This step [The formation of an UWA Intelligence Unit] will go a long way in combating illegal activities in our parks.'***

Seguya then went on to speak on the deployment of the newly trained officers and added: ***'We will first take care of the most vulnerable spots. These are parks near the borders. We want to break the back of the poaching rings – because it is a well-coordinated business with funders from South East Asia'*** leaving no doubt where in his mind, and in the opinion of the entire conservation fraternity in Uganda, the core of the problem of poaching is rooted.

The newly passed out intelligence officers, 15 of whom are female it was pointed out to this correspondent, learned techniques to analyze intelligence information aimed at ensuring the security of wildlife and tourists. The course unit included training in operational intelligence, counter terrorism, political education and criminal investigation, among others. More courses for selected UWA rangers have already been agreed in order to strengthen the new team and allow for effectively covering all the protected areas across the country. Well done UWA and congratulations to the 80 graduates.

### NEW IVORY SEIZURE IN MOMBASA PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON UGANDA AGAIN

(Posted 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The seizure last weekend at the port of Mombasa of a container with nearly 2 tons of ivory concealed among the cargo of seeds, put fresh spotlight on Uganda. Only a few weeks ago were two containers seized at a cargo yard, likely as a result of a tip off, where a big consignment of blood ivory was subsequently confiscated by customs, security and wildlife officers. Those containers had originated from Uganda, as did the container which got nabbed last Friday. Official sources in both Kenya and Uganda are tightlipped as to where the ivory could have come from, as poaching numbers in Uganda are relatively low compared to those in Tanzania, Kenya itself or, as is suspected, in either Eastern Congo's Garamba National Park or the parks in South Sudan.

*'It is premature to point fingers at this stage. What is confirmed is that the container came from Uganda. What we do not know is where the ivory came from. Forensic tests have been ordered but those will take time. We don't even have the results yet of the ivory shipment we got a few weeks ago. We know that Uganda's poaching figures are very low, so there is suspicion the ivory could have come from neighbouring countries and you can look at those countries which could be fingered. We know it is most unlikely Rwanda because there they enforce anti poaching with overwhelming power. But there are other candidates, in particular where there is civil unrest and internal strife. Those are breeding grounds for poaching because law enforcement is lax or not bothered with such crimes when they have to deal with human conflict'* said a Mombasa based source close to the action, and credible does his explanation sound. Another source contacted in Nairobi made reference to the vigilance of enforcement personnel in Mombasa and paid tribute to the officers involved when he wrote: *'The number of containers found with ivory or other illegal wildlife products in them has increased a lot since about two years ago. That means that the deployment of sniffer dogs has worked. The added technology now available is also helping to scan containers and the idea is to eventually scan every single container before it goes on a ship. Kenya has been blamed for being not fully committed to fight poaching and the trade but Kenya in fact is committed. There is no way we can allow elephants to be butchered like in other countries. The numbers here run into the low hundreds and that is not acceptable, but not like in other places where they talk of thousands. You must also look at the track record of what is being seized in Nairobi at JKIA [Jomo Kenyatta International Airport] and how our courts are now handling those cases. In the past the culprits got away with a small fine and now they go to prison for several years and have to pay a huge fine on top. So I think Kenya should be commended and not blamed for catching ivory shipments especially when it is clear they are from third countries'*.



In Uganda itself it was not possible to get an immediate comment from any of the top managers of UWA but it is known that the Uganda Wildlife Authority has reported only a handful of poaching incidents, and some of those were caused by outraged villagers trying to fight off the jumbos from entering their farms and eating their crops. In summary though it is lamentable that with all the activity going on to make poaching a major economic crime and to name and shame countries involved in the importation of blood ivory, the flow of such illegal contraband seems to continue unabated, as in the last few weeks again major hauls were intercepted in ports of the Far and South East and in the Middle East where shipments are channeled through. This battle has only just started and there will be a long way to go until all countries involved will have come to an international agreement to stop the illegal trade and make possession of blood ivory a criminal offense with long sentences and crippling financial fines being handed down by courts. Watch this space.

## **BRUSSELS AIRLINES TAKES LEAD IN SUPPORTING 'MISS TOURISM UGANDA' EVENT**

(Posted 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013)

When Uganda's Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Maria Mutagamba a few days ago called the chairman of the Board of Airline Representatives in Uganda, Mr. Benjamin Puissant, to request for support for the revival of **Miss Tourism Uganda**, the subsequent meeting was not short of spectacular results. From initially dozens of contestants did the judges meanwhile reduce the number to only 9, and those 9 will have the added experience to carry Uganda's flag to the home hubs of the 7 participating airlines, which have consented to offer two seats each to one contestant and one cameraman to capture her exploits in faraway lands. Brussels Airlines was immediately joined by Kenya Airways, KLM, Ethiopian Airlines, South African Airways, Turkish Airlines and Uganda's own Air Uganda, the latter in fact giving tickets for 2 contestants to fly to a destination within their East African network. The contestants will be looked after by the sponsoring airlines and have the opportunity to explore such cities as Nairobi, Amsterdam, Addis Ababa, Johannesburg, Istanbul and two East African capitals, probably Kigali and Dar es Salaam, and bring back their experience and new knowledge about travel and tourism when the competition goes into the final stages with yet more contestants being eliminated before **Miss Tourism Uganda** will be crowned during a Gala Night in Kampala later in the year. Said Benjamin to this correspondent during a phone interview: *'Brussels Airlines has always been a partner of Uganda Tourism and we do what we can to support the destination. Many of our fellow airlines immediately responded positively to our request to join Brussels Airlines in offering the contestants tickets and I thank them for their generosity. Four of them declined to be part of this great opportunity to promote Uganda as a destination but the support is enough to take care of the remaining 9 contestants'*. In fact, alongside this event Brussels Airlines offered a 10 percent rebate on their published fares for travelers wanting to visit Uganda from anywhere across their network, which includes New York, Washington DC and literally all the European capitals and commercial cities. A big thank you and bouquets to the participating airlines and the Ministry of Tourism for their initiative and barbs for those who snubbed Uganda's call to be part of promoting the country abroad and increase visitor numbers to **The Pearl of Africa**.



(Seen above is one of the lead contestants in the *Miss Tourism Uganda* contest, Miss Ayishar Nagudi, who will fly later today to Brussels, courtesy of Brussels Airlines)

## BIG BIRDING WEEKEND AIMS TO SHOWCASE UGANDA'S ATTRACTIONS

(Posted 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Next weekend will see the return of Uganda's national *Big Birding Day* as part of a weekend of bird watching across the entire country.

Uganda's *Big Birding Day* will this year be organized as a three day event on the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 before, when the results are in and reconciled, the *Birding Festival* will then take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October. The birding event will include guided nature walks throughout the country with expert ornithologists and / or bird guides from among Nature Uganda members who will lead participants at various locations to a competition on bird watching throughout the country.

The bird watching competition will involve groups of at least two 2 members who are experienced bird watchers / guides to confirm the species identification. All birds seen and heard calling within the sites will be recorded by the group at the site. The weekend's competition will aim to update the species list for birds in Uganda and promoting avian tourism in Uganda, which has in recent years established herself as one of the world's greatest bird watching destinations, with for instance Queen Elizabeth National Park alone featuring well over 600 birds.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> of October: Launch of the Big Birding Day at the Uganda Museum starting at 4:30 pm (16.30 hrs)

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> of October: Bid Birding Day in all parts of the country starting from midnight to midnight

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of October: Big Birding Day Festival at Ndere Cultural Center starting at 7:00 am to 4:00 pm

All activities are free as is entrance to the national parks and other protected areas for registered participants, courtesy of the Uganda Wildlife Authority! Registration can be done on line via this link:

[www.natureuganda.org/bbd\\_registration.php](http://www.natureuganda.org/bbd_registration.php)

For social media users, in particular those on Twitter, the following '*Hashtags*' have been introduced which should be used to send in results and sightings but even more important, for everyone to be able to follow the competition from anywhere around the world. Log into Twitter and enter any of the hashtags to get the updates: #BBD or #bigbirdingday or #BBDUganda to shout out about what's going on.

Meanwhile thanks go to Nature Uganda and the Uganda Wildlife Authority and all the supporters who have generously sponsored this event again and have made it possible to put Uganda once more on the map.

**BIG BIRDING DAY**  
Connecting People to Birds and Nature

Come join the biggest ever  
**BIRDING RACE**  
in Uganda on October 19th 2013

To register contact NatureUganda:  
lot 1 katalima Crescent, lower Naguru | P.O. Box 27034, Kampala, Uganda | Tel: +256 (0) 414 - 540 719  
Fax: +256 (0) 414 - 533 528 | Email: nature@natureuganda.org | www.natureuganda.org

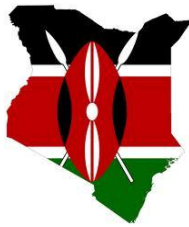
or contact Uganda Wildlife Authority:  
lot 7 Kira Road, Kamwokya | P.O. Box 3530, Kampala, Uganda | Tel: +256 414 355 000, +256 312 355 000

Bird watching will take place in all National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, Forest Reserves, Important Bird Areas, Ramsar sites and any other Sites.

**Friday October 18**  
Launch of the  
**THE BIG BIRDING DAY**  
at the Uganda Museum  
starting at 4:30PM

**Saturday October 19**  
\*\*\* 24 HRS \*\*\*  
**BIG BIRDING DAY**  
in all parts of the country  
(Midnight - Midnight)

**Saturday October 26**  
(07:00 AM - 4:00 PM)  
**BIG BIRDING DAY FESTIVAL**  
Ndere Cultural Centre, Kisaasi, Kira Road



*'The only way to go is forward and to go forward means we need to leave the past behind us' wrote a regular contributor when discussing the direction Kenya Tourism was taking after recent events in the country. 'SKAL gave us a vote of confidence when they stood with us and gave Mombasa 2015 the thumbs up. That was important to us because those are travel professionals, the movers and shakers of the industry around the world, many of them people who actually decide if a destination is featured in their brochures, on their websites or otherwise dropped. Their message was loud and clear: Kenya here we come in 2015. With that confidence booster we can now start a decisive week in the aftermath of Westgate. On the 16<sup>th</sup> we have the World Travel Awards come to Nairobi to honour Africa's best at the home of Africa's best. Last year we were voted best tourism board and Wednesday there will be a number of Kenyan companies standing up there claiming their top prize. And then our Travel Expo Magical Kenya will showcase our best attractions, to Kenyans, to the expatriate community of Kenya and East Africa and to our visitors from near and far. Some will display their newly won World Travel Award trophies at their stand and send out the message that Kenya still very much got it. And from there we will be promoting Kenya to the world in London in early November at World Travel Market, united as a tourism sector and confident we can lay the foundation for a great 2014'.*

In fact, right about that time this conversation took place did the Kenya Tourism Board release another statement highlighting their take on the two events next week:

**Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) will be hosting over 40 countries for two key global events to be held mid this month.**

**The two events; World Travel Awards (WTA) and the Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE) which will be held on 16<sup>th</sup>, 18-20<sup>th</sup> September respectively are poised to boost the brand equity of the country coming soon after the Westgate attack.**

**The WTA dubbed the Oscars of travel industry is one of its kinds to be held in Kenya and it seeks to reward outstanding performers in the travel and the hospitality industry.**

**These awards are also coming at a time when Kenya is defending her 2012 title as the Best Tourism Board in Africa as voted last year by WTA.**

**The MKTE on the other hand is the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition which KTB has continued to position as a leading travel trade exhibition in Kenya and Africa.**

**The expo has become increasingly important and continues to attract international buyers as well as local and regional exhibitors alike.**

**It has the representation from regional and international Tourism Boards such as Seychelles and India Tourism. Other Tourism Boards that expressed interest in the Expo and were still in the registration process are Burundi, Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa.**

**Hosted buyers**

**The confirmation of representation of international travel agents and tour operators (collectively referred to as the "hosted buyers") from our key source markets include ; US, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, France, Czech Republic, Poland, India, China.**

**Other countries are; Australia, Japan, Korea, Gulf Co-operation Countries (GCC), Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, UK, Scandinavia, Italy, Benelux, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Ghana and Uganda.**

**Before the exhibition, hosted buyers will get first hand information on the attractions that Kenya has to offer; they will be taken for familiarization excursions to sample Kenya's key attractions in various parts of the country prior to interfacing with the exhibitors during the Expo.**

*The events also spice up the celebrations on the achievements of destination Kenya beyond the tourism agenda: 50 years of independence, new governance, and focus on environmental conservation, new constitution, and improved infrastructure amongst other successes.*



Couldn't agree more? If so make sure you do watch this space for live reports from the World Travel Awards and the Magical Kenya Travel Expo. Kenya Airways, *The Pride of Africa* has extended even more generous support this year to the Kenya Tourism Board, a sign that the key stakeholders know what is at stake this year. Main media partner Nation Media Group is joined by [www.eTurboNews.com](http://www.eTurboNews.com) as one of the event's global partners among the world's leading travel and tourism publications.

#### Event Partners



#### Supporting Partners



#### Media Partners



#### NO ESCAPE FROM YET ANOTHER LIGHT AIRCRAFT CRASH

(Posted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



A Cessna 172 Skyhawk trainer aircraft crashed yesterday shortly after taking off from Nairobi's Wilson Airport, it was learned overnight. The aircraft, owned and operated by Skylink Aviation, reportedly nosedived after takeoff just two minutes into the flight and crashed, killing both instructor, a Capt. Sam Gathara and his student pilot.

The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority has launched an air accident investigation to establish the cause of the crash though one eye witness based at Wilson commented off the record that the sudden dive of the aircraft could indicate that a mechanical failure took place midair causing the pilots to instantly lose control of the craft. That however has to be confirmed by the unfolding air accident enquiry as other reasons too could have come into play. The date of manufacture of the aircraft and entry into service at Skylink Aviation could not be ascertained at the time of uploading the report.

This is the third light aircraft crash reported here over the past days, first one from Tanzania – also a training flight from which instructor and student pilot walked away – and a few days ago a single engine Piper coming down near Kilifi where the pilot also survived but this was sadly not third time lucky too. Condolences to the families and friends of the two crash victims.

## MARA NORTH CONSERVANCY WANTS BALLOONS BANNED FROM THEIR SKY OVER THE MARA

(Posted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



An epic legal battle is shaping up between the Mara North Conservancy and Transworld Safaris' balloon operations, according to information received from Nairobi, to determine who owns the skies over the Masai Mara. The High Court in Nairobi earlier this week issued an injunction, halting any flights by Transworld Balloons over the Mara North Conservancy, inspite of the operation being duly licensed by the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority, which for all intent and purpose controls the skies over Kenya, irrespective of where those skies are located.

The High Court reportedly also ordered the plaintiffs, the Mara North Conservancy, to deposit 3 million Kenya Shillings to have funds instantly available to compensate Transworld Safaris' balloon operations, should the case fail to get a verdict in the plaintiff's favour. Should the funds not be deposited with the court, will the injunction lapse and the status quo ante would be restored.

The case appears based on suggestions, that flights by balloons would endanger the lives of those living or being present on the ground below as well as on alleged complaints from tourists about the noise of the balloons' burners. The High Court has granted leave to the respondents to challenge the decision in a superior court as Transworld is reportedly seeking to have the injunction overturned to continue doing business while the case is being heard.

Tourism stakeholders have reacted by majority in condemning the Mara North Conservancy, claiming the entire issue is neither about the dangers to those on the ground nor the noise levels but simply an attempt to extract greater royalties from the balloon operators for any landing they are performing after a balloon flight inside the Mara North Conservancy, as according to the unison opinion of several usually well informed individuals '**... they are not satisfied with the amount they are getting, have allegedly tried to negotiate higher royalties and when that failed launched a case in the High Court** [the word *frivolous* was used more than once]. **Balloon safaris are part of the tourism experience in the Mara and have been since Alan Root started his test flights and Keekorok became the first base for such flights. For us it is a question of the conservancy managers trying to use the court as a stick to beat the balloon operator to get what they want. The next thing they will claim that flights of tourists by light aircraft are also a danger to those on the ground and make too much noise. They are not serious and this case will do more damage to their reputation than good**' wrote another senior stakeholder when asked to comment on the legal battle. '**If it were only on the principle of conservation or preventing the noise during that one hour maximum balloon ride, that would be one thing but from all I hear it is really about the money which renders their core claims void in my humble opinion**' wrote yet another source.

Added information provided also claims that a previous court order had in fact ruled that Transworld Safaris could continue to operate as long as they were paying 50 US Dollars per person carried in the balloon, when landing inside the Mara North Conservancy area which adjoins other conservancies and the main Masai Mara Game Reserve.

Which begs for the question to be asked, is it really all about the money as the majority of responses would suggest or are the sole two replies in defense of the Mara North Conservancy right which apparently believe a holier than thou attitude towards the purest conservation standards of no noise and nothing falling from the skies? But then, clients arriving by vehicle or aircraft, they also bring noise and pollution with them, so what now? Where does now

sensibly start and where does one sensibly draw the line in the sand when it comes to conservation? Watch this space to follow this case as and when more news become available.

## **IDEAL HOSPITALITY EXPO SHOWCASES PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

(Posted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Another major hospitality exhibition is now underway at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi, just days prior to the Magical Kenya Travel Expo which is organized annually by the Kenya Tourism Board.

The second edition of the IHE was formally launched yesterday by the Chief Executive of Sun Africa Hotels Mr. Rahul Sood, who was invited as chief guest to the event.

The exhibition brings together suppliers to the hospitality industry on the one hand to exhibit their products and services, and key hoteliers and managers on the other hand to sample the exhibits and see the innovations and state of the art equipment, helping to cut down on the input of energy, labour and save wastages through targeted recycling readiness. The meeting of buyers and sellers is aimed to create an environment for networking, sealing of deals and forging of alliances that will enable the industry move forward in unity to expand, grow and meet the ever changing demands of the market effectively together. For more details about the event and news updates from the organizers visit [www.idealhospitality.co.ke](http://www.idealhospitality.co.ke)

## **SERENA HOTELS PRESENT THE NEW LOOK MARA SERENA SAFARI LODGE**

(Posted 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Extensive refurbishments and upgrades have taken place over the past year at two of Serena Hotels' most popular lodges and camps, Sweetwaters Serena Camp on Ol Pejeta and their Mara Serena Safari Lodge.

The latter's transformation has caught wide attention as the lodge now has not only a new shine but has for all purposes transformed from what has been a familiar face since the mid 1970's when the lodge was first opened into an architectural marvel.



The newly transformed public areas are now fully functional and the remaining works on creating more terraces for guests will be completed, according to information received from Serena Hotels, by early December this year in time for the busy Christmas and New Year season. Guests now enjoy an open view when entering the new reception area, besides finding a new boutique, bar and lounge with a new fire place, a reshaped main terrace and a new look dining room. Besides those, and for many these days quintessential, was the introduction of Serena's branded Maisha Spa and Gym, much in demand as everywhere Serena has a Maisha in operation.

At Sweetwaters the entire camp was since July last year progressively transformed into a state of the art 5 star facility, with the introduction of 11 more luxurious tents, called the Morani Wing, and other facilities in line with Serena's drive to offer that unique blend of location, service and ambience. Guests coming to Ol Pejeta, one of Kenya's private conservancies, besides being an active cattle ranch, and choosing to stay at the Sweetwaters Serena Camp will no doubt be delighted with the many improvements they will find. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from Eastern Africa's vibrant hospitality industry.

## WORLD TRAVEL AWARD ANTICIPATION REACHES FEVER PITCH IN KENYA

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Kenya's tourism industry is counting down towards the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, when in a gala ceremony in Nairobi the 2013 winners of the coveted World Travel Awards will be announced.

Speculation is rife among the nominees, not only from Kenya but from around Africa, as the African winners will be announced in Kenya's capital city next week.

Inside information however has it that the winners have already been notified of their success, while those who have not heard yet from the WTA organizers will perhaps still harbour some hope that the email has ended up in their Spam filter, against the odds that is.

Kenyan companies expect to take the lion's share of this year's podium positions, as the quality of nominations has been termed '*exceptional and outstanding*' by a source close to the award organizers, suggesting that the race for leadership in African tourism continues unabated to the benefit of discerning travelers who, spoiled for choice by a range of top safari destinations on the continent are looking to get the best their money can buy.

Be sure you watch this space as the winners will be announced right here during the ceremony in Nairobi on Twitter and later that night in greater detail for the benefit of our readers.

## TURKISH TO UP MOMBASA FLIGHTS TO DAILY

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



After a year of operating into Mombasa, via Kilimanjaro, has Turkish Airlines now announced plans to increase their flights from presently 5 a week to daily services, connecting Kenya's Indian Ocean port city and gateway to the fabulous beaches of Diani and Watamu to their global network. The announcement at this particular moment in time will be warmly welcomed by a beleaguered tourism fraternity at the Kenya coast, which has seen a number of charters withdraw over the past year and a half. Demands for more scheduled flights to Mombasa by more airlines have yet to yield results as the Kenyan civil aviation authorities continue to stand on the brakes, at least as far as Qatar Airways is concerned, which has for long indicated their desire to connect Mombasa to their network, but subject to be granted 5<sup>th</sup> freedom rights to another waypoint.

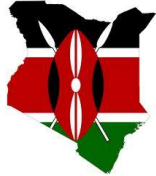
Meanwhile are tourism stakeholders at the coast apparently also struggling to ascertain what airlines are operating how many flights to Mombasa from the start of the winter season, which is now only weeks away, as the information given by the airport in Mombasa was found outdated and containing airlines in their listing which have long abandoned Kenya or even gone out of business. '*The least we must expect from them is to have such data at their finger tips. After all they must know who is coming and when? Is it a sign of complacency or of a don't care attitude? Either is bad and suggests someone somewhere is not doing their job. These are challenging times and we need all hands on deck now and not some elements go awol on us*' ranted a regular contributor from Mombasa when discussing efforts by sections of the stakeholder community at the coast to obtain this information.

Calls are also emerging that national airline Kenya Airways develop Mombasa as a second international hub to connect the Kenya coast directly to key market places, especially as it has been pointed out to this correspondent that the schedule of Kenya Airways out of Mombasa apparently no longer allows for a connection to their morning departure to Amsterdam, something a Dutch tour operator termed as *‘making selling Mombasa more difficult rather than easier’*.

Meanwhile though will Turkish’s decision to fly daily put some light back on the horizon as Kenya’s coast looks ahead at better times.

## ANOTHER PILOT CHEATS DEATH

(Posted 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013)

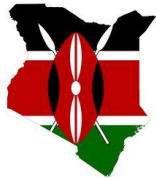


The pilot of a privately owned, single engine Piper PA 28R 200 Arrow, registration 5Y ALJ, escaped death when he managed to bring down his aircraft in thick bush, which apparently cushioned his impact on the ground, leaving the aircraft almost intact apart from some damage to the landing gear, underbelly and propeller, and saw him walk away without a scratch.

The aircraft was enroute from Malindi to the Ukunda airstrip on Diani Beach when the incident happened and the cause of the accident is now subject to an unfolding enquiry by the air accident department of the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority. Sources quoted in the Kenya media attributed the crash landing to an apparent power failure in the engine but only the investigation will be able to unravel the exact cause. This comes close on the heels of a crash of a trainer aircraft in Dar es Salaam last week, where both instructor and student pilot walked away with minor injuries.

## US EMBASSY AGAIN BARS PERSONNEL FROM TRAVELLING TO MOMBASA

(Posted 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



In breaking news it has come to light that the American Embassy in Nairobi has once again prohibited staff of the Embassy and of US government organizations to travel to Mombasa and its environs, as a cancellation made at a leading resort, citing this as a reason, was shared just moments ago.

The source sharing the details was swift in condemning this latest American anti travel advisory against Kenya by saying: *‘That much support from our ‘friends’’ !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

*I\* know many far more dangerous places in the US than on Kenya’s coast !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

Other tourism stakeholders immediately contacted professed to know nothing as yet about the directive, which is a repeat of a similar warning last year which came to naught and was quietly withdrawn a week later, but not without doing some serious damage to Mombasa’s reputation and the occupancies of beach resorts that Easter weekend.

*‘I am no longer surprised. The American administration is notorious about such things and they were the first to slap Kenya with anti travel advisories after the Westgate attack, after first professing to be our friends and supporting us. Preventing Americans from travelling to and within Kenya is not a friendly act and will accomplish one of the objectives of the terrorists, to damage our tourism industry, cause the loss of jobs and create an environment in which radicals can breed with ease’* said another source when confronted with this latest development before adding *‘Next week our Magical Kenya Travel Expo will take place in Nairobi and I hope that the majority of our diplomatic missions and of our ever growing expatriate community will come and see what fantastic deals are on offer this year. They can take advantage of packages including airfares and transfers, or just book a resort and drive down to the coast, but abandoning us at this crucial stage is a grave error of*

**judgment. We in Kenya's tourism industry absolutely resent such advisories and those responsible for making such drastic decisions, you are not our friends, you are as bad an enemy to our country as they come'.** Harsh words but understandable considering what is at stake and what impact such measures taken by the American Embassy can ultimately have. Other sources suggested immediately that the Obama administration has clearly issues with Kenya's leadership, as the snub of visiting Tanzania and not the country of his late father also went to demonstrate, a fact not lost on some who promptly played the China card when hearing of the news. Watch this space for updates on this matter, if any of the other embassies or High Commissions will follow suit and what official reactions will be coming out of Nairobi.

## **FLY-SAX SET FOR COMOROS FLIGHTS**

(Posted 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Information was just confirmed that SAX, one of Kenya's private charter and safari airlines, will commence flights to the Comoros on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> of October. Initially the airline will serve Moroni twice a week, leaving Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on Friday and Monday morning, with the return flights on the same day in the afternoon.

The launch of the Comoros route adds to Fly-SAX's beach and safari destinations in and around Kenya. The network currently includes the coastal destinations of Lamu, Malindi and Ukunda and the safari locations of Amboseli, Loisaba, Nanyuki and Maasai Mara.

Said Don Smith, CEO of Fly-SAX in the media release just received: ***'We're delighted to be expanding our flight network with a further international route. The Comoros is a beautiful and developing tourist destination that is not adequately served at present. Our new flights will significantly enhance passenger choice as well as support the continued progression of the islands through increasing accessibility with the continent'***.

The Comoros is an archipelago consisting of four islands, characterized by picturesque sandy beaches, the largest of which is Ngazidja or Grande Comore, which is home to the Union capital and seat of the government, Moroni. The islands are located in the Indian Ocean, in the Mozambique Channel, just 200 miles off the east African coast.

The Comoros is a member of the ***Vanilla Island Organization*** which was recently launched, comprising Reunion, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mayotte, the Seychelles and the Maldives.

## **KENYA AIRWAYS' MASAI MARA MARATHON WINNERS GET LONDON SPONSORSHIP**

(Posted 06<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The Kenya Airways' sponsored Masai Mara Marathon, which took place yesterday morning, produced some fine results and also established the 5 top runners who will next year in April fly with Kenya Airways to the UK for the famous London Marathon.

Leonard Kipkoech won the men's race and Caroline Kilel, a former Boston Marathon winner, claimed the top prize in the ladies' race, both of them bagging half a million Kenya Shillings in winner's fees on top of the trip to London next year. The two will be joined by Ezra Sang, David Oloisan and Faith Jeruto, who ended their respective races in the Masai Mara ahead of some 1.000 other competitors.

Kenya Airways has over the years consistently engaged with sports sponsorships in Kenya, from the Rugby 7 over the Classic Safari Rally and the Masai Mara Marathon to a range of other sports, including golf tournaments, helping to develop local talent and promoting Kenya as a key sports tourism destination in East Africa. ***Proud of The Pride of Africa ...***

## **Tanzania News**

### **ZANZIBAR INTRODUCES TOURIST POLICE**

(Posted 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Tourism stakeholders in Zanzibar have hailed the move by the islands' government to introduce dedicated tourism police patrols, aimed to reassure visitors of their safety after some less than desirable negative publicity over incidents involving tourist visitors aside from the general reporting about the security situation on the main Zanzibar island of Unguja.

Information sent from a regular source in Zanzibar speaks of several arrests having been affected already, where the suspects were alleged to have committed or were in the process of committing crimes against tourist visitors, though no details of those alleged crimes was made available.

However, a quote was sent given by the island government's Minister of Tourism Said Ali Mbarouk who reportedly said: '***We have established a tourist patrol unit and have established tourist committees in all the districts***'.

The minister was also quoted to have encouraged the private sector to come on board and participate in all such activities as they would benefit from a better image of Zanzibar abroad while promising that additional police stations would be constructed to provide better security.

Zanzibar has of late been able to position itself as a key Indian Ocean island destination and has been given indication already by the Vanilla Island Organization to receive a formal invitation to join the presently 7 member strong island group. Watch this space.

## **TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT REJECTS PRECISION AIR BAILOUT**

(Posted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The Tanzanian government has again played their *Kenya card* when explaining why, after initially agreeing to support a financial bailout package for struggling Precision Air, they ultimately decided not to come to the aid of Tanzania's largest private airline, quoted on the Dar es Salaam stock exchange.

Comments made by government officials point clearly into the direction that they were unhappy with Kenya Airways being a major shareholder in Precision Air, and used this Kenya link to bring the deal down.

Aviation observers, many of whom have in the past severely criticized the Tanzanian government for repeatedly bailing out moribund national airline Air Tanzania with billions of shillings of tax payers money, were equally swift to condemn the refusal to aid Precision Air with one regular source writing: '***It shows the full bias of the Tanzanian government establishment towards anything to do with Kenya. It also shows that they are happy to violate the principle of equality when they keep pouring money into Air Tanzania which has nothing whatsoever to show for those subsidies while letting Precision Air hang, just because KQ is a shareholder there. For me it confirms what has been seen many times before, when they [Precision Air] opened their hangar the taxi way had not been completed, the obstacles to have their IPO take place as scheduled and even letting them suffer at the hands of the Congo civil aviation when they could not get permits to land in Lubumbashi a few months ago and our government did nothing to intervene. For Air Tanzania they would have sent a special envoy even but for a private company? In fact rumour has it that they hope to see Precision go bust so that their scheme to revive Air Tanzania can perhaps take off and there will be a lot more money to eat again. It sends a bad, a very bad message to investors***'.

The decision is thought to set on a collision course the promoters and marketers in the tourism industry with the government's decision to lay the problem on the door step of Kenya Airways, as, should Precision Air not be able to continue operate their scheduled flights, tourism arrivals would be seriously affected as would travel to secondary airports across the entire country where presently only Precision Air offers air services. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from the Eastern African aviation scene.

## **AURIC AIR INCREASES FREQUENCIES TO KEY TOURISM LOCATIONS**

(Posted 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Auric Air has just announced a number of increased frequencies to some of Tanzania's best tourism destinations but also to destinations mostly traveled to by local Tanzanians on missions of trade and commerce.

New are flights to Kigoma and Njombe, flights to Pemba in the afternoon to ensure the best possible connectivity for passengers coming from the safari circuit destinations and the increase to three flights a day to Bukoba, six flights a week to Songea and nine flights a week to Iringa. Special fares to Mpanda, which Auric Air now serves four times a week, have also just been made available to promote travel by air to Western Tanzania.

The list of destinations by Auric Air, a local airline flying Cessna 208B Grand Caravans purchased brand new between 2008 and last year, has grown in leaps and bounds in the recent past and shows an impressive pedigree of 18 scheduled and even more on demand destinations across Tanzania. With more than 3.000 passengers a month Auric Air clearly has become an airline of choice for many safari clients and local business travelers.

<a href="#">Mwanza</a>	<a href="#">Sumbawanga</a>
<a href="#">Bukoba</a>	<a href="#">Serengeti</a>
<a href="#">Mbeya</a>	<a href="#">Iringa</a>
<a href="#">Dar E Salaam</a>	<a href="#">Lake Manyara</a>
<a href="#">Songea</a>	<a href="#">Rubondo Island</a>
<a href="#">Zanzibar</a>	<a href="#">Pemba</a>
<a href="#">Tanga</a>	<a href="#">Katavi</a>
<a href="#">Ruaha</a>	<a href="#">Mpanda</a>
<a href="#">Njombe</a>	<a href="#">Mafia</a>

Click on the respective destination, except Njombe where details are still being put together, to read more about those places. Happy Landings.

## HYATT HOTELS COMMIT TO TWO MORE HOTELS IN ARUSHA AND ZANZIBAR

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Hyatt Hotels have confirmed their interest to put up two more hotels in Tanzania, in partnership with ASB Holdings, over the space of the next year.

One of the new properties will be located in East Africa's safari capital of Arusha, where the group aims at a 144 rooms and suites hotel in the centre of Arusha. The other property will, subject to regulatory approvals, be located in the old stone town of Zanzibar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where special requirements vis a vis architecture and blending into the existing texture of the area must be met, as Serena Hotels did when they converted several large sea front residences to create the Zanzibar Serena Inn. The Hyatt property in the old stone town will reportedly comprise some 72 rooms and suites when ready.

One Peter Norman, Senior Vice President for Hyatt in Europe, Africa and the Middle East in charge of real estate developments, was quoted to this correspondent to have said when making the announcement: '***We are thrilled to expand Hyatt's presence in Tanzania, one of the premier tourism destinations in Africa. We are confident that the company's experience in developing world-class hotels will help us drive preference for the Hyatt brand in Tanzania***'.

Following the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> African Hotel Investment Conference in Nairobi / Kenya, have several major global chains expressed their interest in further investments in the wider Eastern African region, including Rwanda, Uganda,

Kenya and Tanzania and even South Sudan appears set to get their first major operator with Rotana coming in to be part of a new hotel development. Good news for Tanzania's tourism industry as such quality operations are only adding to the destination's appeal and will aid marketing efforts by the Tanzania Tourist Board. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from Eastern Africa's vibrant hospitality sector.

## **TANZANIA WAIVES VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUTH AFRICANS**

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Tanzania's tourism sector has welcomed the government's move to abolish Visa requirements for South African citizens, as stakeholders see new opportunities arise to market safaris and beach holidays in the South African market place.

Already is Mango, one of South Africa's low cost carriers, flying twice a week now between Johannesburg and Zanzibar, after 'upgrading' the flight from charter to a scheduled service. According to previous information a third flight in fact is planned for the upcoming high season to cater for the anticipated strong demand, which will only be accelerated by no longer requiring a Visa from South Africans.

Still pending though is the start of flights by FastJet from Dar es Salaam to Johannesburg, after South African civil aviation bureaucrats threw a spanner in the works on the eve of the inaugural flights, demanding for yet more documents in an apparent move to give home boys South African Airways a few more clear weeks to milk the market with ridiculously high fares.

*'We have been to Indaba many times and there is strong demand for holidays in Tanzania, especially Zanzibar. When it gets cold in South Africa during their winter the people want to get away and we in Tanzania can offer competitive packages. Our quality of Zanzibar resorts are equal in many ways to some of the Indian Ocean island South Africans are used to travel to. Our safari lodges and camps are rated highly too. Removing Visa requirements was the right move to open the doors wide for a lot more South African people to come to Tanzania and enjoy our beaches and parks'* commented a regular source before adding *'When FastJet finally can take off with their flights to South Africa, they have very very affordable airfares on the market to come to Dar es Salaam and from there can easily take the ferries to Zanzibar, or fly with FastJet to Kilimanjaro and start a safari from there. My colleagues and I are very excited about these prospects'*.

Tanzania, besides being a member of the East African Community is also a member of SADC and as such has been keen in recent months to accelerate economic and political cooperation with SADC's lead nation South Africa. Watch this space.

## **TATO MEMBERS MARCHED AGAINST POACHING**

(Posted 08<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The Tanzania Association of Tour Operators was a the forefront of the 5 kilometer march against poaching last Friday, which took place in Arusha, East Africa's self proclaimed safari capital.

TATO members and other tourism stakeholders were joined by the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Amb. Khamis Kagesheki, who used the opportunity to speak on the challenges his ministry faced vis a vis poaching and the legal mechanism available at this time, pointed out that fines permitted were as low as 30.000 Tanzania Shillings for killing an elephant, the same as if one would kill a goat on the road. Tanzania, like other countries in East Africa, have been struggling to come to terms with commercial scale poaching and in the view of many conservationists failed to amend their wildlife laws in a timely fashion to respond to this threat to their tourism industry. *'Like in Kenya we need to improve our laws. Financial fines should no longer be an option but be handed down alongside long prison terms. The fines should also be very high because otherwise the poachers will just laugh and pay. Those caught poaching and all those involved in the illegal trade and shipment of our ivory should go to prison for at least 10 years, and in severe cases twice as long. Let the minister not shed crocodile tears, it is up to him to bring an amendment to parliament and have stricter laws passed. Meanwhile however his field staff needs to be given new terms of reference when coming across poachers. Rules of engagement have to change, these guys carry automatic weapons and rangers should be allowed to shoot to kill before they get shot themselves'* wrote a regular source from Arusha over the weekend, while passing the details of the march and contents of the speeches made.

With much of the seized ivory over the past years apparently being shipped from Tanzania, and originating largely from inside Tanzania though there are also quantities of ivory being smuggled through the the port of Dar es Salaam from third countries, pressure has increased to pull out all stops to reverse the trend. However, lack of adequate numbers of rangers and lack of equipment and funds to run large scale counter operations have hampered the fight against poaching in particular in areas like the sprawling Selous Game Reserve or the Ruaha National Park, though poaching is now effectively taking place literally anywhere across the country.

A big thank you to TATO and other tourism trade associations and their members for taking a stand and marching against poaching last week.

## WORLD BANK REPORT ON 61 MILLION US DOLLAR MACEMP PROJECT HUGELY CRITICAL

(Posted 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



THE WORLD BANK

Working for a World  
Free of Poverty

A World Bank report, assessing the impact and sustainability of a 61 million US Dollar project aimed to improve environmental practices along the Tanzanian coast line, has passed some damning judgment, certain to raise howls of outrage from government mouthpieces, who of late seem to be on the warpath with the global environmental and green lobbies, not only denying any impact of several hugely controversial projects but insisting those will go ahead by hook or crook.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2013/08/18136080/tanzania-marine-coastal-environment-management-project>

### *Tanzania - Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project (English)*

#### ABSTRACT

**Ratings** for the Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project for Tanzania *were as follows*: outcomes were moderately *unsatisfactory*, GEO outcome was moderately *unsatisfactory*, *risk* to development outcome was *substantial*, *risk* to GEO outcome was *substantial*...

Local conservationists immediately commented on the ongoing destructive nature of dynamite fishing, which has destroyed sections of the reefs off the main shores but also once more laid into the government's plans to build a deep sea harbour in the centre of the Coelacanth marine national park. This marine national park was only created a few years ago after the prehistoric fish was discovered near Tanga, one of only a very few locations around the world where marine biologists, researchers and tourists can actually have a chance to come face to face with a species previously thought to be long extinct.

*‘These 61 million Dollars were not exactly or completely wasted but for sure also did not meet the targets and objectives, that is what one has to conclude from the report. If risks to development and GEO outcomes are called ‘SUBSTANTIAL’ in the World Bank’s diplomatic language, it means in real terms that those outcomes are a highly endangered species about to go extinct. The Tanzanian government’s track record on conservation is now all but gone, these are no longer the days of Mwalimu [Tanzania’s founder president Julius Nyerere, fondly called Mwalimu by the Tanzanian people, Kiswahili for teacher]. When you just look at the utterances of Rweyemamu [State House Communications Director in Dar es Salaam] last week, when he told the global scientific community to shut up, that is the true face of what our country does these days. They peddle Uranium mining as safe and yet they all know, WE all know, that it is a highly toxic and radioactive mineral. The devastation in other countries where such mining has taken place in the past is making my hair stand. Even this weekend we had a symposium in Dar es Salaam where international experts warned of these dangers. Anyone who does not believe can google the facts and those facts say that our government mouthpieces are misleading the wananchi. Every single one singing those tunes should be probed if they have been corrupted by the mining companies, because for me there is no other explanation why anyone should lie to the public and belittle the obvious dangers. But back to this MACEMP project. We like to know how much of that money was a grant and how much was repayable loans because if the project has performed so badly, we still got to pay it back with our taxes. It is time for fundamental change in Tanzania because we have been had for too long. If we fail to stand up for our environment, our children and grand children will have a very heavy price to pay and it will not be pretty’* said a regular conservation source from Tanzania in the cause of an online chat, as usual insisting no name be given for fear of serious repercussions.

Indeed, a weekend of bad ratings and negative reports about Tanzania’s commitment towards conservation as other articles filed since last weekend will go to show. *‘Our president has lost control of those forces inside his administration. Already they are jockeying for the nomination for his succession. These campaigns cost money, a lot of money and those in the running are mortgaging their political future and ability to make decision in the best interest of our country to their financiers. There were lots of rumours at the last elections where the campaign funds came from and if that last election is anything to go by, we are in for a future of pollution and ransacking our mineral wealth because the politician elected will have to pay for all the IOU’s he is now signing. Why does anyone think is our government now pushing for the Serengeti highway or the soda ash plant or has taken the Eastern Arc mountains off the UNESCO WHS application list. To mine, log and extract our wealth so that payback can be made and the money will keep flowing for the next election. Make no mistake, that is the reality here in Tanzania today. Once we were a mighty fortress against corruption and even if Mwalimu made wrong decisions, he did so because he believed it was the best for Tanzania. Today, decisions are made for what is best for the elite’* added another source after reading earlier reports filed here. Watch this space.

## **ZANZIBAR’S AIRPORT AUTHORITY GETS EQUIPMENT FROM THE UK**

(Posted 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



## **ZANZIBAR AIRPORTS AUTHORITY**

Last weekend saw the handover of aviation security equipment and training materials for ZAA staff by the UK’s High Commissioner to the United Republic of Tanzania, Ms. Diana Melrose, at a ceremony attended by the island’s Minister for Information and Tourism Said Ali Mbarouk who was accompanied by the Deputy Minister for Communication and Infrastructure Issa Haji Ussi.

ZAA’s Director General Said Iddi received the equipment which included walk through scanners as well as hand held scanners and appealed for greater assistance to train Zanzibari manpower in security operations over and above the security cooperation already in place.

Zanzibar, one of East Africa’s most magical tourism destinations, also known as the ***Spice Island***, receives direct charter flights from key European airports as well as regular scheduled flights from within the region but also from Ethiopia, Oman and South Africa.

ZAA was formed in August 2011 when the Zanzibari assembly passed two laws, as reported at the time here via <http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/08/02/tanzania-aviation-news-zanzibar-to-get-an-own-airport-authority/>

Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from the Eastern African region.

## IN YOUR FACE STATE HOUSE DAR ES SALAAM TELLS CONSERVATION CRITICS

(Posted 06<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Critics of a recent conservation award given in the US to President Kikwete, which some described as making the goat the gardener in reference to his time in State House presiding over an unprecedented slaughter of elephants in Tanzania going into the tens of thousands, have been told to shut up by the Director of Communications at State House Dar es Salaam Mr. Salva Rweyemamu, who was clearly stung by the intensity of the criticism so soon and so harshly no sooner than his boss had been given an award termed by conservationists '**worth nothing, nothing at all**'. Rweyemamu in fact exposed the government's true intent, willingly or just by shooting his mouth off as has been suggested, that the highway across the migration routes of the Serengeti will be built by hook or crook, Uranium in the Selous would be mined by hook or crook and the soda ash extraction plant at Lake Natron too would be built, even though it would destroy the only breeding place for the entire East African flamingo population. Conservation sources immediately rubbished his assertion though that President Kikwete had vowed to use the army against poaching, with one source writing: '**Kikwete promised that last year too and the only thing which happened is that senior army officers were since then implicated in poaching themselves. The rot in his government goes just too deep and too many of his own establishment are up to their hair tips involved in poaching and ivory smuggling. Such retorts are no longer holding water and he and his government are standing exposed as the worst environmental offenders in Tanzania's entire history. In fact, Mwalimu must be turning in his grave considering his strong commitment to conservation, which has now all but gone down the drain for shortlived profits and alleged bribes**'.

Other conservation sources pointed to CITES and other international bodies reports which have suggested that the majority of the blood ivory comes from Tanzania and mainly from the Selous and Ruaha where hardly any protection exists in the deep of those reserves and parks, allowing for commercial scale slaughter which opposition figures in parliament have pegged at well over the 30 elephant a day poached given in an official report by government.

Another regular source, in reference to this author's article *The Corridor of Destruction* (<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/05/01/tanzania-conservation-breaking-news-the-corridor-of-destruction-from-the-coast-to-the-lake/>) wrote that the arrogance of government officials would only lead to a yet more active decampaigning of Tanzania by exposing their every move and urging travellers to rather visit other destination in East Africa which take conservation more seriously and do more than just pay mere lip service. The decision on the Serengeti Highway now rests with the East African Court of Justice, where one source mentioned recently that it was not lost on the judges what historic decision they had to take in order to protect the great migration. However it is clear that this latest uncontrolled outburst in public by a senior government official shows just how sensitive this matter has now become and that clearly the establishment is stung by the renewed global criticism which had earlier this year already resulted in Tanzania withdrawing her ill considered application to CITES for a one off sale of 100 tons of ivory held in storage across the country.

Additional feature articles referring to similar conservation issues can be accessed via the following links:

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/01/18/tanzania-conservation-news-corridor-of-destruction-reloaded/>  
<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/07/10/is-tanzanias-coelacanth-marine-national-park-at-mwambani-damned-for-destruction/>

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2013/05/06/mwambani-evictions-denounced-by-residents-and-human-rights-groups/>

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/06/07/president-kikwetes-world-environment-day-speech-raises-eyebrows-over-its-sincerity/>

## CONSERVATIONISTS OPPOSE ADDITIONAL LODGES ON NGORONGORO CRATER RIM

(Posted 06<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



News emerging over the weekend, that the Tanzanian government has apparently reversed its position of no longer allowing lodges and camps inside the national parks, were met with disappointment if not outright anger by the conservation fraternity. Some years ago, upon the opening of the Bilila Lodge in the central Serengeti, did President Kikwete announce that no more lodges or camps would be permitted inside the park, and by general understanding then in ANY of the parks.

Information therefore, that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism apparently directed the Ngorongoro Conservation Area administration to process four new leases were first met with incredulity but when later confirmed with a range of comments by regular sources not fit to repeat here.



Said one of the calmer commentators: *‘I can understand that there may be some space for a camp in the Lake Ndutu area. This is where the late Hugo von Lawick had his camp which upon his passing was then removed. That transition area between Ngorongoro and the Serengeti proper is at certain times of the year teeming with wildlife and never enough beds then. What is not explainable however is that the company which was given the concession only has to pay half of the regular fees. The Minister must explain that or else raise suspicions similar to the ones his predecessor caused who did very funny deals with hunting companies back then before he was sacked.*

*There should however not be more lodges on the rim of the crater, that is a no no really from the environmental and conservation standpoint. Already we have hundreds of vehicles entering the crater every day and the conservation area managers have started to limit access into the crater. In the past one could choose to go in the morning or the afternoon or stay all day and from their directive it is now only half day, either morning or afternoon. But the guests at a new lodge will also want to go down into the crater, so more cars still? It is contrary to what has been said before. There is human wildlife conflict in the crater area. More and more people are literally migrating there claiming they have birthrights but how many are truly born there? The numbers are far too big now and in the interest of conservation they should relocate outside the park. They have started to grow food crops inside the conservation area contrary to orders by the park but who is in control there really? Like Loliondo, the government has made too many U-turns in the past and seems to be unable to come up and follow through with a consistent conservation policy. No wonder people like you have so much to say about the state of conservation in our country, because it is absolutely true’.*

The matter is likely to be raised in parliament where conservation issues like Loliondo or the on again / off again / on again / off again issue of resettling significant numbers of people from inside the Ngorongoro Conservation Area have regularly raised the political heat among proponents and opponents. One cannot but agree though with one comment which read: *‘Just another nail in the coffin of our national parks and conservation’*. Watch this space.

## Rwanda News

### VISITORS TO KIGALI WILL SOON HAVE EVEN MORE TO SMILE ABOUT

(Posted 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



When tourists and business travellers arrive in Rwanda by air, their first impression at the airport is one of some serious expansion work going on, which started a year ago and, according to the work schedule available, should be completed early in early 2014. Once ready the Kigali International Airport will be able to accommodate the sharply grown number of passengers, and flights and is expected to suffice until the brand new international airport some 25 kilometres outside the city at Bugesera will be ready by 2016 or thereabout.

As the visitors drive into Kigali, a modern, well planned capital city unfolds before their eyes, orderly traffic flow, observance of traffic rules, pothole free city highways, all lit at night and the sense of having come to a safe place as people are walking unhindered and unimpeded even late at night with security being visible, and at times invisible but certainly there. One can be forgiven to think to have actually arrived in a European city and not in Africa, living proof that the clichés the world has about Africa do certainly not apply to Rwanda, which has lived up to their by-name of being the *Switzerland of Africa*.

Much has been written here about the progress Rwanda has made and how it has risen like the proverbial Phoenix from the ashes of the post 1994 genocide, and has become a beacon of hope for many Africans across the continent who hope their own leaders can and will take a leaf from how Rwanda is governed.

The ongoing renaissance has taken root, the country is on the run, tourist numbers have grown by double digit numbers in recent years and the three national parks and plenty of other scenic areas like the Lake Kivu zone have gained global acclaim.

But it is in the city of Kigali where some of the most striking developments have taken place in recent years, making visitors smile. An entirely new city mapping exercise was completed, with road names and easily recognizable grid patterns, making sure those exploring Kigali on their own do not get lost. Wifi in public busses has been rolled out over the past months and only weeks ago were free wifi hotspots launched across the capital, giving visitors as well as the locals access to the internet on the move, to the knowledge of this correspondent the first such undertaking anywhere in Africa. The launch of a city public transport system recently, while still fully finding its footing, too had brought changes to the way one can reach places but it is the latest move by the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority which will probably make business visitors smile even more. RURA has given taxi operators licensed to ply their trade an 18<sup>th</sup> October deadline to install meters showing approved fares, and while commending the 318 licensed cabs which already installed the gadget, hundreds more are now under pressure to comply or else to see their license pulled until they do. From information given on arrival in Kigali last evening it was learned that airport taxis will then be allowed to charge 600 Rwandan Francs per kilometre, about 1 US Dollar, while taxis in the city will have to make do with 500 Rwandan Francs per kilometre but have the advantage to get a minimum charge of 1.500 Rwandan Francs covering the first three kilometres.

This will make sure that the nightmare stories from other African cities, where travelers have in the past been literally held hostage by unscrupulous taxi drives when they refused to pay Gagaland tariffs, will not be repeated in Rwanda, when the deadline comes up and the new tariffs will then be charged. It is understood that clients can still negotiate full day rates with drivers or owners of the cabs but for one off trips it will be the metered amount which will be due, plus, depending on the level of service, a decent tip of course.

The Kigali Taxi Owners Association has reportedly endorsed the move while working hand in hand with the city administration. Another first for Rwanda, another first for Kigali and another feather in the hat of *The Land of a Thousand Hills*. Visit [www.rwandatourism.com](http://www.rwandatourism.com) for more information about the destination or else click on to [www.rwandair.com](http://www.rwandair.com) to get schedules and fares for flights to Rwanda.

## **PRESIDENT KAGAME APPOINTS AMB. RUGWABIZA AS NEW CEO OF RDB**

(Posted 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The former Deputy Director General of the World Trade Organization, Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza, was yesterday appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Development Board and in addition also made a member of the Rwandan cabinet.

Amb. Rugwabiza follows in the footsteps of the organization's first CEO Joe Ritchie, under whose leadership the RDB, then a new umbrella organization in Rwanda for a range of former parastatals bodies united under one common structure, and his successor John Gara, who moved to a different function within government in June 2012 to oversee the National Legal Reform Commission. Joe Ritchie has since his departure from RDB become a key member of the Presidential Advisory Council for President Paul Kagame.

Claire Akamanzi, who has been holding fort until yesterday, returns to her full time position as Chief Operating Officer of RDB.

It is a warm welcome for Valentine to her new position, in which she is also the one ultimately overseeing the Tourism and Conservation Department, headed by Rica Rwigamba, which is tasked with not only wildlife conservation, research and surveillance – Rwanda has the lowest poaching numbers across the entire East African Community, but also for marketing the country abroad. Tourism has in recent years firmly established itself as the leading sector in the Rwandan economy for foreign exchange earnings and also attracted a range of international investments in the hotel sector, bringing such reputable names as Marriott Hotels to Kigali.

## **KENYA ASSOCIATION OF HOTEL KEEPERS WELCOMES RWANDA DELEGATION IN NAIROBI**

(Posted 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Members of the Rwanda Hospitality Association and the Tourism Chamber are presently in Nairobi, where they started a counterpart visit to get acquainted with standards of operation and a range of other details, aimed to align Rwanda's hospitality industry to the level of regional industry leader Kenya.

At the start of the visit yesterday evening did the Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers welcome their guests at the Stanley Hotel in the heart of Nairobi, where cocktails allowed for visitors and hosts to get acquainted with each other and form crucial business relationships besides getting to know each other and the who is who of Kenya's tourism sector who were invited.

Rwanda has been keen to lift standards through increased training but also through the adoption of the common East African standards for hotel grading and classification, which the Rwanda Development Board's Tourism and Conservation Department has implemented progressively over the past two years.

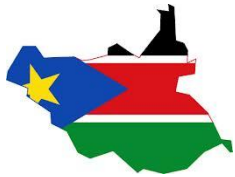
Notably have both countries abolished work permit requirements for their respective citizens, allowing Kenyans to work in the sector in Rwanda while Rwandans are able to work and gain experience in East Africa's most vibrant tourism destination. Recent trilateral meetings between the heads of state of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have also resulted in the Kenyan and Rwandan tourism sectors taking a fresh look at the growing range of opportunities which are now emerging and where the two hospitality sectors, and in fact tourism sectors in general, can cooperate more closely yet towards promoting the region as a single destination with many unique attractions.

The working visit will continue until this Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October, giving ample time for field visits and other activities. Karibuni Kenya!

## **South Sudan News**

### **SOUTH SUPREME AIRLINE COMMENCES ENTEBBE FLIGHTS**

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Recent South Sudanese start up airline South Supreme has, in what has been termed an ‘*ambitious move*’ launched flights from Juba to Entebbe, which will for the time being be served three times a week, according to a source close to the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority.

Entebbe is the second international destination for the new upstart after launching flights to Khartoum some weeks ago, as was reported here at the time. The launch fares out of Juba were given at US Dollars 200 one way inclusive of all taxes, considerably below present fare levels in place between the two countries. Southern Supreme is taking on Air Uganda, which has been serving Juba double daily using a right sized CRJ 200, whereas the newcomer has settled for the larger B737-300.

According to information from Juba, the airline is also eyeing flights to Nairobi, where it will compete with Kenya Airways and others already on the route.

Airline observers in Uganda and the region, when discussing the new airline, have noted that when searching the web no website could be found, nor were any logos available on the net either, indicating that the publicity work of the new airline was clearly lagging behind their route rollout, something which will hopefully in due course be addressed. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from the Eastern African region because this is where you very often read it first.

## Reunion News

### NEW DOLPHIN SPECIES SEEN OFF REUNION BRINGS OVERALL NUMBER TO 22

(Posted 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



The scientific mission Ce`TO (Cetaceans Turtles Birds) announced that a new species of dolphins was recently found in the waters Reunion after the Risso's Dolphin was observed for the first time to the island of La Reunion. Dolphins live in tropical and temperate in both hemispheres and are regular ‘guests’ in the blue waters off the Reunion shores as recently witnessed during a visit to the island.

Supported by Globice and Kélonia Ecomar the Ke`TO scientific mission is devoted to the study of whales, turtles and birds. It aims to enrich the knowledge of marine biodiversity in the waters of the Indian Ocean off the island of La Reunion.

Scientists have pointed out that with a preference for deeper waters, observing the Risso's Dolphin is difficult at best. For the first time was it now possible to observe this species of the dolphins coming to or near to the island of La Reunion.

Off the Sainte-Suzanne beaches were five Risso's Dolphins recently discovered during the second phase of the Ke`TO program. This part of the observer mission was aimed to explore this more remote coastal marine areas of La Reunion, including the south and east coasts from where little data is currently available.

The 17 participating observers in this scientific mission had their wish come true. Besides sighting the traditional schools of dolphins they also spotted a large sperm whale, a fin whale and several Risso's Dolphins. The first two species have already been observed off the island but it was a first for the Risso's dolphin, bringing to 22 the number of cetacean species recorded in Reunion waters.

Participants had expressed their hope before setting out to discover rarer or indeed new species and their success was widely applauded among the scientific community but also by tourism sources, as whale watching and dolphin watching is one of the island's most popular tourist activities besides exploring the island's interior by helicopter, road or by taking hiking trips. Visit [www.reunion.fr](http://www.reunion.fr) for more details on the island's tourism attractions.

### REUNION TOURISM OFFICE, AIR AUSTRAL AND LUX\* RESORTS WORK GERMAN MARKET

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Reunion Tourism has launched a new online training option for German tourism professionals through their office in Frankfurt, partnering in the exercise with Lux\* Resorts and the island's own airline Air Austral.

This training is divided into two modules. The first part will cover the preparation for the journey to the island of La Reunion, providing step by step practical information on the destination and explaining the unique selling points across the island. Also part of this segment is the screening of the promotional film of Reunion Tourism.

In the second module are details given describing the different regions of the island of La Reunion and what tourist visitors can expect to find in terms of attractions, accommodation and other important details. At the end of each session, participating travel agents are asked to answer a questionnaire summarizing the points presented to them during the webinar.

A trip for two to the island of La Reunion can be won by a lucky participant of the webinar who has successfully completed the online training before but no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November this year. This winning trip is sponsored by Air Austral and LUX \* Resorts, both of which have impressed this correspondent during a recent visit to Reunion.

Visit [www.reunion.fr](http://www.reunion.fr) for more details on the destination or look up [www.luxresorts.com](http://www.luxresorts.com) and [www.air-austral.com](http://www.air-austral.com).

Connections to La Reunion from Germany have to route via Paris CDG from where Air Austral flies presently 12 times a week with B777 aircraft to St. Denis, the capital of the French region of La Reunion.

Reunion is part of the *Vanilla Island Organization* which was formally incorporated in September alongside a UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism for Small Islands.

## REUNION TOURISM AND CARRERE HOUSE PARTNER IN 'GRAN MER CAL' PERFORMANCE

(Posted 09<sup>th</sup> October 2013)



Reunion's history and folklore are coming to life in a presentation, jointly sponsored by Reunion's Tourism Office and Maison Carrere, depicting and narrating the story of local mythical figure '*Gran Mer Kal*'. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of October will an evening performance give visitors to La Reunion, as well as the local community, the opportunity to learn more about the myths and legends which have evolved over the centuries.

'*Gran Mer Kal*' has been described as a mythical figure of the island of La Reunion, a character associated with slavery and legend has it that his wandering soul haunts the west coast of the island of La Reunion. It is also according to local lore associated with the Piton de la Fournaise, the active volcano on the island.

Reunion's local Tourist Office North and Carrère House have come together to bring the stories to life reviving the legend of the mythical character who marked the Reunion Island: '*Gran Mer Kal*'.

Between stories and songs, visitors to the performance will discover the history of the local lore and myths, which have been making the rounds for many generations on the island. Visitors will also have free access to the exhibition rooms of Carrere House and be offered snacks in the interval of the presentation. The full programme is available through the Reunion Intercommunal Tourism North office' website [www.lebeaupays.com](http://www.lebeaupays.com) where also bookings can be made.

## Seychelles News

### SEYCHELLES TOURISM MINISTER ENGAGES GLOBAL MEDIA AT JUST ENDED WORLD ROUTES



*Victoria, Kapital Lemonn Kreol*

Seychelles Minister for Tourism and Culture Alain St. Ange, one of the key note speakers at the recently ended World Routes meeting in Las Vegas, used his presence in the United States to engage with the global and local media present at the event to showcase the archipelago as a destination and promote travel to the Seychelles islands, now possible from almost anywhere in the world with just one stop at any of the key hubs of the Gulf airlines flying to Mahe, Etihad and Emirates.

***‘As small as we are in the big world of tourism, we are walking tall with today's giants’*** said the Seychelles Minister at the World ROUTES in Las Vegas, unperturbed by the archipelago missing out on the top prize as best marketed destination in the world, in the opinion of this correspondent a faux pax by the panel of judges who clearly did not connect all the dots, considering the size of the islands and the impact their global marketing juggernaut had on the world stage of tourism.

Alain St. Ange, the Seychelles Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture who was personally in Las Vegas for the 2013 World ROUTES meeting and always a perfect diplomat, said he was honoured to have again seen Seychelles nominated for the Destination category. The Seychelles Minister spoke to the press at the Garden of the Gods at Caesars’ Palace in Las Vegas. LAS VEGAS, Nevada. Tourism Australia was declared the overall winner of the World Routes Awards 2013 for best marketed destination, which was formally announced during the gala night dinner for the hundreds of delegates who had come to the US for this event. The nominated countries for this category were Tourism Australia, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, Turismo de Tenerife, Republic of Turkey and the winner at Routes Africa held earlier in the year in Kampala / Uganda, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Seychelles Tourism Board.

Seychelles is one country where tourism remains a key pillar of its economy. The government of these mid-ocean islands has long recognized the importance of tourism and some two years ago created a fully fledged Ministry responsible for Tourism. ***‘Our tourism industry is working today more than ever before. We are small in size and budget, this we know and accept, but we work hard to remain relevant in the world of tourism and to remain visible. On a year to date basis we are recording an increase of 13% in visitor arrival numbers and this positive result has scenario has been repeated year after year since 2009 when the Seychelles relaunched its tourism industry with a new approach called the Seychelles Brand of Tourism. Today this approach is bringing result because through this brand we ensure that our people are directly involved in their country's tourism industry. This is why the people of Seychelles support and defend their tourism industry’*** Minister Alain St. Ange of the Seychelles told the assembled media houses and correspondents.

The Seychelles Minister went on to spell out that Seychelles prides itself of not only the exceptional beauty of its 115 islands made up of both flat coral islands and of lush mountain clad granitic ones, but also of its diversity in population called the Seychelles Creoles united as one people.

On the successes in the field of tourism Minister Alain St. Ange said that he cannot look at tourism figures of Australia or of the USA as all is relative. ***‘We can say that ours is working because of our Tourism Master Plan drawn up from a bottom up approach after lengthy consultative meetings. Today we see that our visitor arrival numbers are over two and a half times of our total population and over five times our adult workforce. We see tourism retaining its position as the main pillar of our country's economy. These indicators show that our industry is working for us, for our economy and for our people’*** the minister added.

***Seychelles, truly Another World*** but clearly only for those with eyes to see.



(Alain St. Ange seen here addressing the global and local media in Las Vegas)

Meanwhile, after successfully concluding the first ever Seychelles – India Day weekend, which according to reports from Victoria absolutely thrilled the locals and foreign visitors alike, is the archipelago gearing up towards the annual Festival Kreol which will be celebrated between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of October and for which Creole people from around the world are expected, including the President of the Regional Council of La Reunion Mr. Didier Robert and other dignitaries from as far as the Caribbean island of Martinique. Watch this space for life updates from Victoria during the festival and reports about all that is new from across the archipelago.

**AND** in closing today once again some selected reads taken from *The Livingstone Weekly* by Gill Staden:

#### Gill Staden

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The Livingstone Weekly: [www.thelivingstoneweekly.wordpress.com](http://www.thelivingstoneweekly.wordpress.com)

Stories and Updates: [www.storiesbeyondthevictoriafalls.wordpress.com](http://www.storiesbeyondthevictoriafalls.wordpress.com)



#### Events on the Way

26 October: Zambezi Kayak Festival.  
Livingstone

25-28 October: Elephant Charge.  
Starting Lusaka.

26-31 October: World Adventure  
Travel Summit. Windhoek

9 November: Fireworks at Acacia  
School

24 November: Zambia Art and Design  
Show. Lusaka

7 December: Car Boot Sale. Protea  
Hotel

30-31 December: Vic Falls Festival.  
Victoria Falls Town

# ZAMBIA

## Leopard Lodge

I told you last week about our stay at Mukambi Safari Lodge. Our next official stop was Leopard Lodge. We had tried to get there a few days previously but the Kasempa Road from Mumbwa had defeated us. We had made a beeline for Mukambi for some R&R.

Our new plan was to drive through the park, do a U-bend north of the Kabanga Gate and then come south to Leopard Lodge. It was a tall order for one day but we had camping equipment on the back and I expected that we would stop over for a night on the way.



We entered at Hook Bridge and asked the Wildlife Officer if he knew where we could spend the night camping and how the road was. He couldn't answer either question. I thought then that our Scouts need to be informed better and they should be taken on recces of the park every now and again to see the situation on the ground.

We headed north along the park track and the first thing we found was a tortoise walking along the road. He was all muddy. A bit further along we found another. In fact we saw 4 tortoises – all muddy. Then I remembered that we had had a freak storm the other day and I could only assume that the tortoises had got a bit confused. They should, of course, still be hiding away.



We stopped off at Lufupa, a Wilderness Camp, to get some help with checking the vehicle and chatted to the staff there. Lufupa has closed their campsite, so we asked about Lunga River Lodge and were told that it was closed too. We thought we could possibly find a place to camp at Kabanga Gate. We continued north.



We weren't seeing much wildlife – a few bits and bobs like hartebeest, warthog, kudu, bushbuck. There were still pools of water away from the river covered in lilies, usually with herons or storks stalking the edges.



As we neared the Moshi Airstrip we found a couple of wooden bridges. I really didn't like the second one and contemplated it for a while before Josh told me just to 'get on with it'. We really didn't have any option.

The Moshi Airstrip didn't look as if it had been used for years and the old Moshi Camp was just a ruin. We continued north. The road from here was excellent and we potted along nicely. On reaching Kabanga we asked the Wildlife Officer if there was a place we could camp for the night. He just looked bewildered. So, because it wasn't that late and the Gate was more of a village than a conducive place to camp we continued north out of the park and took the Kasempa Road south. This for

me was a new road – I had never done this before. Excitement!

The road was OK – not as bad as the bit near Mumbwa. As it was in a GMA it was lovely forest with trees coming in to leaf and the odd fleeting glimpse of wildlife as it watched us from a safe distance off the road.

To cross the Lunga River we found a pontoon. There was a very steep incline to it as the river is low. Being an idiot I hadn't put the car in 4-wheel drive and nearly disappeared off the other end of the pontoon.



Onward and southward we continued along the road eventually arriving at Leopard Lodge just after dark. Our hostess was Elize who was there to meet us with torch in hand and direct us towards the deck and lounge area. It wasn't long before we had a beer in our hands and could relax. We chatted for a while, ate a delicious meal which the kitchen managed to rustle up for us and then collapsed in a heap in our chalet.

The following morning we were off on a drive into the park on the opposite side of the river. Leopard Lodge is on the north side of the Kafue River in Lunga Luswishi Game Management Area. They do get plenty of wildlife in the lodge grounds but the viewing is often better within the park. We crossed the river by boat and then got onto their safari vehicle. Peter, the driver, and Honest, the guide, were perfect companions taking us round all the spots which are favoured by wildlife. And, what did we see? Not a lot!



We spent the heat of the day relaxing watching the

river and chatting. And then it was time for the afternoon ride around Lunga Luswishi. First we went to have a look at some nearby hot springs. Hot springs always amaze me – where do they come from and why do they bubble up to the surface – my geology is not that good, so maybe someone can enlighten me.

Then we drove to a high point known as Kaingu View. From here we could see for miles over the park and along the river. Looking down we could see elephants, seeming like ants. The trees were mirrored in the river. The distance was haze.



Peter and Honest were telling us stories of what they had seen on previous occasions and of all the incidents with wildlife they had witnessed. But what did we see? Not a lot. I thought to myself that seeing 'notalot' was going to be the story of our safari to Kafue National Park this time. I am never disappointed because I am in the parks so often and I know that this happens. It is not every day you get to see leopards or wild dogs. You know they are there, though, and just unlucky enough not to see them.

We returned to camp, seeing one serval in the spotlight. I felt so sorry for Peter and Honest who were so keen to show us all the fantastic wildlife in the area. They really tried. But, I'm afraid, it was 'notalot'.

Well, we were off again the following day ... but I was woken in the morning by the sound of lions nearby. It was that lion noise which is not threatening; just the sound they make to communicate and let the world know that they are lions and that this is their territory.



When I walked to the deck, Peter and Honest were there with binoculars looking over the river. He told me that the lions were within the treeline by the river. And then we saw one of them padding through the dry grass.

Elize appeared. *Would you like to go over and find them?* I said: *Yes, please.* Peter and Honest quickly organised the boat and off we went, crossing the river and climbing onto the vehicle. We drove off. The lions had disappeared. The grass was that yellow long stuff. Where were they? We waited. Honest told Peter to take the vehicle through the long grass to a particular spot. We bumped over the floodplain, stopped and waited. And then, after a while, there they came - two males in the prime of life. We watched. Amazing.



There was some 'icing on the cake' of our trip to Kafue. It doesn't matter how much we kid ourselves that seeing one of Africa's predators 'is not important', it certainly does make a difference. I smiled as I watched them walk through the grass along the Kafue River.

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## Chembe Bird Sanctuary

From the Zambia Weekly

Government will soon remove squatters and 84 saw millers operating in Chembe Bird Sanctuary in Kalulushi – which it intends to revive to promote tourism, reported the Daily Mail.

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## Take the canal ferry to Angola!

From the Zambia Weekly

Angola has started the \$40 million Shang'ombo-Rivungu Canal Development Project in Western Province. The 8-10-kilometre (depending on reports) canal is meant to create a new trade route between Zambia (Shang'ombo) and Angola (Rivungo). Even though the entire canal is within Angola, the contractor, Clay Disposal of South Africa, will be working from Zambia. In this area the border is located at the eastern bank of the floodplain of the Cuando River. This is where Shang'ombo is located, while Rivungo is on the western bank of the river further downstream. The project will consist of a ferry system capable of carrying a truckload of up to 60 tonnes along with passengers. In addition, customs and immigrations offices, police and banking facilities, terminal buildings and staff housing will be built in both countries.

The canal project was the brainchild of the previous MMD government. In 2007, the project was reported to cost about \$240,000, but then it also included a 7-kilometre bridge across the Cuando River and a railway link. The two latter components are still on the agenda: Angola is allegedly building a railway to Rivungo, an oil pipeline and a fuel depot at Rivungo, and authorities in Zambia are still talking about the bridge.

I have had a go at drawing a map just to see where this new canal will be located and whether it will help tourism. It could, of course, but only if Angola does something about its borders. I doubt that there is much wildlife left in all the Reserves shown in Angola but it would certainly be nice to see.

The Cuando River, of course, becomes the Kwando when it enters Namibia.

