

Ban Ki-Moon visits Livingstone

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, visited Zambia last week and part of his tour was to come to Livingstone to see the Victoria Falls and to open the new One-Stop Shop. The One-Stop Shop has desks for many government departments and it is hoped that it will encourage business, especially investment, in Livingstone.

Ban Ki-Moon, in his speech, said that in his home country of South Korea they had similar offices and that they had helped the business community. He congratulated the Zambian government on the initiative.

Ban Ki-Moon also came to Zambia to offer support in our co-hosting of the UNWTO Assembly meeting in August 2013. He emphasised that in the run-up to the meeting we should consider the environment; Zambia should work towards a 'green economy'.

Gill Comment: When I popped into the One-Stop shop the other week there was only one desk occupied by a lady from the Ministry of the Environment. She told me that there were still problems with who was going to occupy the offices – some departments wanting more desks; some people being slow to move. I really hope this has been sorted out. A building is one thing; the people who occupy it are much more important. One of the biggest problems in Zambia is difficulty of doing business. Livingstone's economy has been stagnant for many years and this One-Stop Shop should be a catalyst for improvement ... but, as I said, it all depends on the people who occupy that building.

FORMER MINISTER OF SOUTHERN PROVINCE MAKES AMENDS BY PLANTING 100 TREES

The former Minister of Southern Province, Miles Sampa, who upset many members of the Livingstone Community by cutting down some big trees at the Ministerial House, has tried to make amends by planting

100 trees. The Livingstone Branch of the Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia (WECSZ) had written to the Minister expressing concern about the cutting of the trees. Not long after receiving the letter, the Minister got in touch with the Chairman, Benjamin Mibenge, and said he had acquired 100 trees and was going to plant them at the Ministerial House to make up for the ones he had cut. Later, the Minister met with a few members of the Society and explained his reasons for cutting the trees, which include his concern about snakes, concern that some of the trees were old and might fall, and his desire to create a view of the Victoria Falls from the house.

However, he said he now realised that perhaps he should not have done such a thing, and he had not realised how much his action would upset the Livingstone community. He said maybe what he should have done was just to prune the trees. So he said he now wanted to make amends and had purchased 100 tree seedlings which he wished to plant at the same premises and would give the Wildlife Society funds to pay someone to look after them.

Members of the WECSZ were a bit concerned that all the new trees planted were exotic, not indigenous Zambian trees. So they offered to donate some indigenous trees to add to the others. The Minister was quite agreeable to this idea, although this would have to be arranged through Cabinet Office and the City Council.

On 4th March 2012 the Minister invited members of the Wildlife Society and the press to a ceremony where he handed over the trees which had been planted, and also handed over a cheque of K3 million to the WECSZ. He said this was to pay a gardener to water and care for the trees. This would be arranged through Cabinet Office and he said he would keep coming to check on the trees to see how they were doing.

The Permanent Secretary for Southern Province, Ms In'utu Suba, congratulated the Minister for his action and for the example he was setting to other politicians. Mr Mibenge thanked him for his gesture. He

said that people were normally encouraged to plant two trees for every one cut, but he said the minister had gone much further by planting 100 trees. He said he hoped that wherever the Minister was posted he would continue to be concerned about the environment.

The Minister then cut the ribbon surrounding the new “Extra Miles Orchard”, which he had planted with guava, pawpaw and other fruit trees. Some of the other trees had been planted along the driveways.

The WECSZ hopes to continue working with the authorities to replace some of the old indigenous trees at the residence, with proper planning so that they would not cause any problems in future. It is also hoped that the trees that have been planted will be looked after properly and survive for years to come.

Clare Mateke

Secretary, Livingstone Branch, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia

Gill Comment: Our new Minister of Southern Province is Obvious Mwaliteta, Kafue Member of Parliament.

British High Commission

The new British High Commissioner, James Thornton, visited Livingstone last week to meet members of the business community. A cocktail party was organised at the River Club.

He listened to ideas and opinions from everyone as he was whisked from one group to another under the direction of Peter Jones, owner of the River Club.

The dress code was ‘smart casual’ but Phil went one step further, arriving in a suit. James is the one in the check shirt.

Livingstone to Nata Lodge – First Part of my Travel Story

I left Livingstone on Thursday 16th February to cross to Victoria Falls Town. I was using a Hemingways 4x4 and had, I thought, all the right documents. On reaching the Zim side of the border the Customs lady was not happy; the letter of authority for me to drive the car did not have the company logo on it. She also mentioned that the letter was from Peter Hemingway and not from Hemingways Limited and ... how did she know that Peter Hemingway was the owner of Hemingways? I sort-of said to her that it was pretty obvious, but she would not agree. She had a discussion with one of her colleagues in the local language and I heard the word 'discretion' – I don't suppose there is an equivalent word in the local language which was why it popped up in English. Eventually the decision was made by my Customs lady and she told me that I needed a CVG.

What's that?

You have to get a clearing agent and they must get a CVG – Customs Vehicle Guarantee. We have to make sure that you do not disappear with the vehicle in Zimbabwe.

A clearing agent was found quickly (of course?) and wrote out a piece of paper which cost me another US\$30, making my total for crossing the border US\$85. I thought that this was a pretty heavy amount but knew that Zambia can charge over US\$100 when they feel inclined ... Finally I was allowed to leave ...

I spent the night at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge with friends. Josh and I set off for Kazungula around 9am on our journey to Nata Lodge, Botswana. The Kazungula road was quiet; we only saw some ground hornbill for a bit of entertainment. The Kazungula border was painless; the Botswana side costing P120 (US\$17) – quite a difference from US\$85.

Kazungula now has a start of a shopping centre so there was no need to go into Kasane. We got some breakfast at Bimbos, filled up with fuel

and bought a Botswana Sim card for the phone. Then we headed south towards Nata.

The road to Pandamatenga was still the old road but was fine to drive. We saw a few lone elephant bulls along the road and a large monitor lizard which escaped my camera because, at that point, the camera battery decided to go flat.

Pandamatenga is the centre of a farming community. Just north of the town there are enormous fields of crops – it is quite a spectacle to drive through this flat landscape with fields stretching for miles.

After Pandamatenga we came to the road works. I think it has to be over 2 years that the Botswana government has been working on this stretch of road and very little of it has been completed. So it was a case of driving on the new road, driving on a diversion and driving on the old road ... it seemed to take a long time.

Eventually we reached Nata, passing straight through to Nata Lodge about 15 km south. Arriving at the lodge we booked in and enquired about a drive onto Sua Pan. They didn't have one going that day so we decided to try it out ourselves. I was not looking forward to this – the pan would be wet. Anyhow, after dumping our bags in our chalet we headed for Nata Bird Sanctuary a few kilometres further south.

It cost us P125 (US\$18) for the two of us and the vehicle to enter the Sanctuary. We asked the lady at the office if it was safe to drive and she told us to keep to the main tracks, not to go onto the grass, and we could get as far as the hide beside the pan. Off we went.

The first puddles were quite tame and we sauntered through without too much of a problem. Then we came to a bigger one and I drove through quite nervously. The next puddle was large and we could see some vehicles in the distance so, with my heart in my mouth, I started to drive. We got through with a bit of slipping and sliding to arrive at the

next dry spot quite close to the vehicles we had seen ... they were stuck ...

There was a Jenman overland truck and another lorry which had been called to extricate the stricken Jenman vehicle. It too had got bogged down. That was enough for me: This is as far as we go, I said. We watched the men trying to put poles under the vehicles; listened as they revved the engines trying to get out. No use. I knew we couldn't help although we did give a bit of advice (?) and said that they should reduce the pressure in the tyres – it might help.

We left them and drove back through the puddles and just sat for a while with a beer on the road. We were not going to reach the pan and would not see the birds – flamingoes and pelicans. But at least we were not up to our axles in mud and could look forward to the rest of our holiday.

We went back to Nata Lodge for dinner under the stars. There was a group of very sad-looking tourists at one table and I wondered if they had anything to do with the stricken truck on the pan.

In the morning there was a beautiful sunrise through the palm trees. I sat and had tea on the veranda of the chalet and enjoyed it and the birds which were constantly rummaging through the bushes by the chalet picking at the fruit.

The rooms at Nata Lodge are spacious with everything you need – especially the kettle, teabags and coffee. The shower is 'outside', so morning ablutions are done under the sun. The veranda is a private place to sit and relax with a book or, for me, my notepad and pen.

Breakfast was served outside on the terrace and I noticed that the lodge had a bird-feeding area. There was water and lots of food down. The birds were great entertainment as they hopped about from tree to tree and down to the bird feeding area. Someone had even thrown down

some bread left over from breakfast so the barbets and bulbuls were feasting nicely. Thank you very much.

Nata Lodge is a popular spot for travellers. It is 200 km from Francistown; 300 km from Kazungula; 300 km from Maun. It is surrounded by palm trees and, I am told, this was the reason why the first owner of the lodge chose the spot. Apart from being a good stop-over it is also easy to get onto Sua Pan ... although getting off Sua Pan might be a bit more difficult in the wet season. I intend to do a trip when it is dry so that I can drive around. The birds will have gone but there are animals too – wildebeest, zebra, jackals. The sunsets can be glorious.

Getting back to breakfast at the lodge ... I noticed the group of tourists sitting around gloomily and asked them if they belonged to the stuck truck. Yes. They had got stuck early the previous morning, had spent several hours on the pan before being given a lift back to Nata Lodge. They were now waiting for another vehicle to arrive so that they could continue their journey onto Moremi – their own truck was still bogged down.

We left the lodge to carry on with our own journey to Maun.

ZAMBIA

Economic Growth in Zambia

Kanni Wignarija, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia has said: Zambia has tremendous potential to grow its tourism industry which can become a trigger of economic growth.

The secretary-general has heard a lot about Zambia's development such as the peaceful elections last year. These are not to be taken for granted and so he wants to come and see for himself. She was briefing the media prior to the visit of Ban Ki-Moon.

Ban Ki-Moon's visit was seen as support for Zambia and Zimbabwe's bid to co-host the UNWTO meeting next year.

Floods Again

Although our region has not seen too much rain this year, the rain in Angola and Western Zambia has been good. The water is on the way to our region through the Zambezi River and the Kavango into the Okavango Delta. The levels, though, are not as high as last year.

Tourism in Zambia

I am always on the internet looking up travel information in our region. Last year most of the information about Zambia was pretty boring. Tour operators and travel agents churned out the usual stuff about the Victoria Falls, South Luangwa, Lower Zambezi and Kafue National Parks. But I could feel in the literature that most travel agents held out little hope that Zambia would be the holiday of choice. Zambia being the most expensive destination in our region and with far-flung parks and bad infrastructure, could never compete with our neighbours.

With the new government and hopefully a change of image for Zambia, the information 'out there' is becoming more positive. Travel agents are making tentative steps to promote Zambia, but still a bit in 'wait and see' mode. Nothing has actually changed much in the tourism industry but there are hopes that, in a few years, Zambia will be able to compete favourably.

With visits from UN, World Bank and other International organisations who are constantly trying to promote investment in the tourism industry,

we can only hope that things will improve. Not only can tourism bring in a lot of money for Zambia it can create employment too.

So, what has Zambia got to offer? One of Zambia's most unexploited assets is its rivers. If you have ever looked at a map of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana or South Africa you will see that they do not have our abundance of water. We have the Zambezi, yes, but there are Kafue, Luangwa, Lunga, Kabompo, Kalungwishi, Chambeshi, and lots more. Many of the rivers have amazing waterfalls; they all attract birdlife. We have lakes, swamps and floodplains, again a magnet for wildlife and birds.

We have culture too. With over 70 different tribes and their cultural diversity, this too can be promoted (Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia have around 8-9 tribal groups each). Chief Mukuni, over the years, has re-awakened his people's self esteem by bringing back many of their old traditions and using their ceremonies to attract international visitors. Can you imagine Zambia if we rekindled the ceremonies of all our 70 tribes – we could have a traditional ceremony somewhere in Zambia almost every day!

Anyway, I could go on and on, but I won't. I was spurred to write the above because I have seen some good literature about Zambia on one of the websites. I quote some bits of it:

Zambia is a land blessed with natural beauty and an abundance of wildlife. The country also enjoys the title of one of the World's fastest economically reformed countries (World Bank, 2010) and is regarded as one of the safest destinations to visit. The multitude of attractions and activities make Zambia an ideal travel destination for everyone from seasoned safari goers and thrill seekers to honeymooners and families alike.

Unusual tree-climbing lions found only in Kafue National Park.

Despite the remoteness of a lot of areas in Zambia, getting to the country is a lot more straightforward than people think. The international airport in Lusaka, Zambia's capital, serves several major airlines including KLM, SAA and Emirates. Once there, smaller chartered planes or overland transfers take you to your destination with ease. ...

A lot of camps in Zambia are seasonal (especially in the South Luangwa) which means that they're taken down during the rainy season, and rebuilt at the start of each safari season, by skilled local craftsmen. This, coupled with the fact that the camps are pretty small, means that availability is something one must definitely take in to consideration. It's advisable to book well in advance, so get those Zambian thinking caps on early...

Zambia is famed for walking safaris

During the rainy season, also known as the emerald season, the bush is really lush, thick and green which makes for amazing photographs. Seasonal flowers bloom and the entire landscape is transformed into an Eden for birds and animals. There are over 740 recorded species of bird in Zambia, with each vegetation habitat hosting its own distinctive set. A bird lovers treat!

Zambia is one of the best places to go on walking safari in the world. If you've been on safari before, and are seeking a more authentic, purist experience, then a walking safari is for you. Experience nature the way our ancestors did by walking in amongst it in the South Luangwa National Park. Experienced, trained guides escort you safely through the African bush whilst educating you on the unique fauna and flora as you go. This exhilarating experience is one that you won't soon forget. ...

Speaking of elephants, the local herd at Mfuwe Lodge are known to wander through the lodge and right up to reception en route to eat mangoes off a nearby tree in fruiting season. Where else in the world could you pass elephants peacefully munching on mangoes on your way to breakfast? ...

Zambia awaits!

Barotse Agreement of 1964

When Zambia became independent there was a problem to solve. Western Province or Barotseland, as it was then known, was a vast area of Zambia and the chief or Litunga had ruled over the Lozi people and many minor tribes within his domain - most of Northern Rhodesia as it was then called. It was through his influence over his people that the British moved into this area of Central Africa, as opposed to the Portuguese. The British people held the Litunga in high esteem and when Zambia became independent an agreement was drawn up which gave Barotseland a measure of autonomy.

From the Zambia Weekly

The Barotseland Agreement of 1964 amalgamated the two British protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Barotseland (roughly but larger than Western Province) into Zambia. Litunga (King) Mwanawina Lewanika III signed the agreement on condition that Barotseland retained its local autonomy, with the Litunga as the principal authority. The Zambian government, however, would have “the same general responsibility for financial support for the administration and economic development of Barotseland as it has for other parts of the republic and shall ensure that, in discharge of this responsibility, Barotseland is treated fairly and equally in relation to other parts of the republic”. Yet, Western Province is the second-poorest in Zambia.

Barotseland’s special status within Zambia was however destroyed by the Kaunda government through the enactment of the Local Government Act of 1965, which curtailed the operations of the Barotse National Council, and later by the passing of the Constitutional (Amendment) Act of 1969, which annulled the Barotseland Agreement 1964. Since then, there have been attempts at restoring the agreement, but it has been ignored by all of the constitutional review commissions, including Chona (set up in 1972), Mvunga (1990), Mwanakatwe (1993),

Mung'omba (2003) and the National Constitutional Conference (2007-2010).

The real hardliners (www.barotseiland.info) want to see a full secession of Barotseiland (which is not supported by the agreement), while softer voices say the agreement could form a basis for devolution of powers to Western Province – as is seen in other places of the world such as Zanzibar in Tanzania and Scotland in the United Kingdom.

ZIMBABWE

THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS MASVINGO AUTHORITIES COMMENCE SHOOTING OF STRAY DOGS TO CURB ANTHRAX.

We have received alarming reports that various authorities within Masvingo have commenced the sanctioned shooting of "stray" dogs.

The exercise is attributed to curbing the spread of anthrax. Anthrax is a serious zoonotic disease that can infect most mammals and several species of birds, but is particularly virulent in herbivores. Anthrax is not commonly found in dogs.

Various publications have attributed the Masvingo SPCA as having sanctioned the exercise, quoting statements allegedly made by Mr. John Chikomo, an inspector with the Masvingo SPCA. In addition the Municipality of Masvingo and The Department of Veterinary services are also quoted as being involved.

The ZNSPCA views such indiscriminate actions as barbaric and inhumane.

No SPCA within Zimbabwe has been authorised to partake in any such exercise. Alternative humane and ethical destruction methods exist. We

are currently investigating these reports and will commence prosecution against any individuals partaking in such activities.

Individuals with concerns pertaining to anthrax should contact their nearest Department of Veterinary Services or Veterinary extension officer for further advice. Anthrax is a reportable disease.

Carry In, Carry Out

Zimbabwe Parks are adopting a policy of Carry In, Carry Out in their National Parks. All visitors are required to take out all their refuse after their visit.

Francis Nhema, Minister of Tourism: All tourists into Mana Pools will receive a complimentary refuse bag when they check in at the park. This initiative is part of the Zimbabwe National Parks' mission to improve the sustainability of its parks and to enhance their attractiveness to all stakeholders.

Mugabe turns 88

Mugabe was treated to a birthday party and a cake in the shape of a crocodile in Mutare. The party was said to have cost K650,000 for his 20,000 supporters.

Bulawayo Water Project to go Ahead

According to a report, the Zimbabwean government has secured a loan for around US\$900 million from a Chinese Bank for a Chinese developer to undertake the National Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project. The project is to extract water from the Zambezi River and to take it to Bulawayo which has always had water shortages.

The project will first construct the dam at Gwayi-Shangani, then lay a pipeline for 450 km to Bulawayo, followed by another pipeline from the Zambezi River to Gwayi-Shangani dam.

BOTSWANA

From the Ngami Times

Name: Okavango Field Guide

Authors: Lee Gutteridge and Tony Reumerman

Imprint: Southbound Field Guides

The first all-encompassing field guide to the Okavango ever published has been produced by two authors with an intimate knowledge of the delta and its flora and fauna.

Lee Gutteridge and Tony Reumerman – both very well-known in Southern Africa as guides and guide trainers - have produced an 800-page guide dealing with everything one needs to know about what has become known as the world's biggest inland delta.

Starting with a perspective written by the incredibly knowledgeable Map Ives of how the delta was formed over thousands of years, the colour-coded guide takes the reader through the mammals that inhabit this part of the world, the wide variety of bird life which is so special in the delta, the reptiles, the amphibians that inhabit the myriad of rivers and channels, the spiders and insects one finds, the plant life, and the huge number of animals and their tracks and signs.

Also introduced are herbaceous plants and flowers, a large diverse group of small to medium-sized plants with one thing they all have in common: a non-woody stem.

There are many hundreds of species and due to the extremely wide variety, a selection has been described in the guide.

Every page of every sub-section is liberally illustrated with over 3 000 colour images, which will make it easier for readers and travellers to identify what they may come across.

The colour coding makes it simple to use and means that one need not carry more than one guide when visiting the Okavango.

The foreword is by David and Cathy Kays, of the Jao Reserve, and they have nothing but praise for the work that has gone into the publishing of the field guide. It is a publication that should be on every bookshelf of those who appreciate and love the bush. That's how valuable this work is to Botswana.

The Guide can be obtained from Patience Motshereganyi on 6860086 or patienceM@wilderness.co.bw Reviewed by Norman Chandler

NAMIBIA

Lightning Struck 78 Cattle

Alfred Mutakalilumo, a farmer at Kwena village, about 40 km from Katima Mulilo faced a dilemma when 78 of his cattle were struck and killed by lightning. Tradition states that the meat should not be eaten. However, when veterinarians arrived and pronounced much of the meat fit to eat, the meat was distributed among the villagers.

Alfred Mutakalilumo had never had such a catastrophe happen to him before and he says that he was not insured. He said that insurance companies are not happy to insure livestock belonging to communal farmers.

MOZAMBIQUE

Zambezi River for Transport? No, says Mozambique

When David Livingstone was exploring our part of Africa in the 1850s, he wanted the Zambezi River to become a highway for transport into the 'interior'. In those days it was only ox-wagons which ventured into central Africa and often, because of tsetse fly, even they could not be used. The order of the day was on foot.

David Livingstone found that the Zambezi River did not make transport easy – rapids, waterfalls - they all seemed to get in the way of his dream. In the end it was the railways which provided the first method of transport into the interior, followed by roads.

Now in 2012, Rio Tinto who mine at various places in Mozambique, one of them Benga, on the Zambezi River want to use the Zambezi to transport coal to the coast. Permission has been refused for environmental reasons.

SOUTH AFRICA

Rhino Poaching Stats for 2012

(92) 02 - 3 Knp - Ngwanetsi

(89) 02 March 2012 : 2 white rhino carcasses found 1 week old Vryburg North West

(87) 01 March 2012 : 2 rhino's Malalane at John Hume's game reserve

(85) 29 February 2012 : 1 Rhino Kariega, (2 dehorned but still alive)

(84) 28 February 2012 : 2 Rhino found Mopani area near Letaba KNP

(82) 28 February 2012 : 3 Rhino found near Pretoriuskop, KNP

(79) 28 February 2012 : 2 Rhino found near Pretoriuskop, KNP

- (77) 25 February 2012 : 1 Rhino carcas found near Crocodile Bridge area, KNP
- (76) 23 February 2012 : 1 White Rhino, Assen, NW
- (75) 22 February 2012 : 5 Rhino carcasses - KNP (some of the carcasses are at least 1 month)
- (70) 20 February 2012 : 1 Rhino Thanda Game Reserve, KZN
- (69) 19 February 2012 : 2 Rhino Mpofini lodge Vryheid
- (67) 17 February 2012 : 1 Rhino KNP - awaiting confirmation of location
- (66) 17 Feburary 2012 : 1 White Rhino Borakolalo Game Reserve (had to be put down)
- (65) 15 February 2012 : 1 White rhino (1 month old carcass), Pilanesberg,NP
- (64) 15 February 2012 : 1 carcass found Manyeleti, KNP
- (63) 14 February 2012 : 8 carcasses found KNP
- (55) 13 February 2012 : 2 Rhino Chicks Game Lodge Hluhluwe
- (53) 13 February 2012 : 2 Madikwe White Rhino Bull both horns taken
- (51) 11 February 2012 : 1 Madikwe white bull
- (50) 09 February 2012 : 3 Letsitele, Limpopo - Pregnant mother and calf + unborn baby added
- (47) 08 Februrary 2012: 1 Ndumo
- (46) 08 February 2012 : 2 iMfolozi
- (44) 07 February 2012 : 1 White Rhino Bull - Hoedspruit - private reserve
- (43) 06 February 2012 : 1 Rhino bull Thabazimbi-Rooiberg area
- (42) 06 February 2012 : 1 Carcass found KNP (poached Sat probably) - North of Letaba
- (41) 06 February 2012 : 1 Madikwe - Black Rhino
- (40) 26 January 2012 : 2 Limpopo Province - Waterberg area
- (38) 26 January 2012 : 2 North West Province (to be confirmed)
- (36) 19 January 2012 : 1 Hluhluwe iMfolozi found recently date unknown
- (35) 16 January 2912 : 3 White Rhino Rooiberg area
- (32) 16 January 2012 : 1 Mossel Bay, Kobus Crous - Farm Bergsig

- (31) 15 January 2012 : 2 Madikwe 1 carcass found, Ndumo 2 month old carcass
- (29) 13 January 2012 : 4 KNP - Pretoriuskop area
- (25) 11 January 2012 : 5 Rhino Private Reserve near Stofberg
- (20) 11 January 2012 : 3 Rhino - KNP
- (17) 09 January 2012 : 2 White Rhino at Ndumo and 1 Black Rhino at Mkhusi
- (14) 09/10 January 2012 : 9 KNP (4 near Pretoriuskop, 2 near Lower-Sabie and 2 near Crocodile Bridge + 1 other area to be confirmed)
- (5) 04 January 2012 : 4 KNP Satara area
- (1) 04 January 2012 : 1 Rhino Gravelotte area, Limpopo

How unlucky/lucky can you be?

Four men in possession of rhino horn were involved in a car accident in Bedfordville, Gauteng last week. The driver of the other vehicle involved in the crash noticed one of the men hide a cooler box under a nearby tree after the accident.

When the police arrived they investigated the hidden cooler box and found a rhino horn which had recently been hacked off – it still had wet blood on the stump. The four men were arrested and will appear in court.

WOLFGANG'S COLUM

NEW 11.000 ACRES CONSERVANCY LAUNCHED AT TSAVO WEST BOUNDARIES

The Mbulia Group Ranch, located along the boundaries of Tsavo West National Park, has recently signed a long term agreement with 'New African Territories' to turn 11.400 acres of their land into a wildlife conservancy on which a new tented eco lodge is being set up to cater for tourist visitors. Overwhelmingly a dry area the acreage proved to be of

little value to either farming or livestock grazing but was home to significant numbers of wildlife, including elephant, which will now find a permanent home without competing over the scarce food sources with goats or cattle.

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

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

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

OTHER STUFF

From National Wildlife Humane Society

Ancient footprints

The fossilized gigantic footprints detected in the Arabian dessert belong to a herd of elephants, scientists say. The seven-million-year-old discovery marks the world's oldest evidence on how these ancient mammals lived.

The world's oldest elephant tracks have now been revealed in the Arabian Desert, researchers say. These prehistoric footsteps, likely the

work of some 13 four-tusked elephant ancestors, are the earliest direct evidence of how the ancestors of modern elephants interacted socially, and the oldest evidence of an elephant herd.

"Basically, this is fossilized behavior," said researcher Faysal Bibi, a vertebrate paleontologist at the Museum for Natural History in Berlin. "This is an absolutely unique site, a really rare opportunity in the fossil record that lets you see animal behavior in a way you couldn't otherwise do with bones or teeth"...

A Natural Approach to a Problem

Many farmers now are going organic and refusing to use chemicals either for fertilizer or as an insecticide/fungicide. Insects naturally eat each other in the food chain, so if you have a balanced environment, the insects cannot do too much damage. It has been found that birds will readily consume huge amounts of insects too, so birds are encouraged around farms.

Some time ago, a solution was sought for rats and mice which often devour crops too. And the answer was barn owls and kestrels – the barn owls operate at night and the kestrels during the day. In Israel they have made boxes out of old ammunition cases which can be homes for barn owls and kestrels. Over 2,000 boxes have been distributed to farmers to attract barn owls to nest and the results are impressive.

Biological pesticide project coordinator Shauli Aviel: [From] the moment the barn owls nested there, the damage stopped.

The story of the use of barn owls is on a video. Visit [yuvaldax1's](#) YouTube channel - this film won first prize in the expert and instructive films category at the [Agrofilm Festival](#) held in 2011 at Nitra, Slovakia. This award-winning film was produced by Yuval Dax.

THE SMILE

How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?

If money doesn't grow on trees then why do banks have branches?

Since bread is square, then why is sandwich meat round?

What did cured ham actually have?

How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up like every two hours?

If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?

Why are you IN a movie, but you are ON TV?

Have a good week

Gill