Dear All

They say ‘no news is good news’, but these past two weeks have probably been the quietest days on record. The good news is that, according to a report, the cholera in Livingstone seems to have ended. This has to do with the fact that we have had no rain and the town is dry. However, it only needs rain and a cholera-infected person to arrive on the bus from Lusaka and it will start all over again.

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**ZAMBIA**

**Ethiopian Airlines acquires 45 percent of Zambia Airways**
Lusaka Voice

Ethiopian Airlines on Tuesday announced that it has finalized shareholders agreement with the Government of Zambia to acquire 45 percent of Zambia Airways. In a statement it released on Tuesday, the Ethiopian Airlines said the governments of the two African nations have agreed to re-launch of Zambia Airways and the Government of Zambia will be the majority shareholder with 55 percent and Ethiopian will have 45 percent stakes in the airline.

**Rehabilitation works on the K147m Kafue hook bridge have stalled.**
ZNBC

However, Road development Agency-RDA- board chairperson Samuel Mukupa says he is optimistic that funds will be released in the first quarter of this year to enable the contractor resume works on the structure which connects western province to the rest of the country. …

So far over 33 million Kwacha has been paid out to the contractor engaged to carry out the rehabilitation works on the bridge after it developed cracks.

And the contractor China Henan has assured the RDA team of completing the project on time once funds are available. …
New Crime Fighting Equipment for the Department of National Parks and Wildlife

Wildlife Crime Prevention

5th January 2018, Chilanga, Lusaka: the Department of National Parks & Wildlife (DNPW) hosted a ceremony at their headquarters for the official handover of motor vehicles and other equipment to help address the illegal wildlife trade in Zambia from Wildlife Crime Prevention (WCP).

At the event the Director of the DNPW, Mr. Paul Zyambo was presented with ten vehicles, laptops, smart phones, cameras and other equipment by WCP, with funding from the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). In attendance were the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Arts, Dr. Liya Mutale as well as representatives from the United States Embassy and the African Parks Network.

The U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Intl Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL) leads the United States’ anti-crime and counter-narcotics efforts and assists its partner nations in increasing their law enforcement capacities. As part of a joint grant “ZAPIT – Zambian Prevention of International Trade in Wildlife” WCP along with Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and African Parks have been awarded 2 years of funding to support DNPW in combatting wildlife trafficking in the North Luangwa/Bangweulu Wetlands region.

Since 1986, FZS has been working with DNPW in the North Luangwa region and has been involved in the management of North Luangwa National Park and its surrounding areas. The Bangweulu Wetlands are managed through the Bangweulu Wetlands Management Board, a public-private partnership between African Parks, DNPW and the six Bangweulu communities. This northern region of Zambia is home to important elephant, rhino and lion populations, in need of protection from increasing wildlife crime.

This project will pursue a cross border approach to strengthening law enforcement and criminal justice institutions tackling the wildlife trafficking hotspots across this northern region of Zambia. Operational funding will be provided for 12 Intelligence and Investigations Units in the area which borders both Tanzania and Malawi and is under increasing threat from organised transnational wildlife crime syndicates.

In 2017, WCP’s support to the DNPW Intelligence and Investigations Units throughout Zambia aided in the arrest of 1,263 suspects, the seizure of 3,062kgs of ivory, 34 heavy calibre rifles, 356 rifles (shotguns and muzzleloaders), 5,591kgs of bushmeat and 70 pangolin. This has been possible due to funding from our partners who include The Wildcat Foundation, Vulcan Inc. and The Elephant Crisis Fund.

Wildlife Crime Prevention continues to support the Department of National Parks and Wildlife under the Ministry of Tourism and Arts in working tirelessly to ensure wildlife criminals are brought to justice in Zambia.
Community Support

CLZ held its 4th annual community sport's day 'Rubatano' with over 1,000 spectators.

Chiawa GMA M'bell womens group received a new sewing machine to enhance their work.

The third Anti-Snare Campaign and a Chilli Growing and Elephant Behaviour Workshop were held in the Chiawa GMA.

CLZ supported Human Wildlife Conflict patrols for the peak conflict months in 2017.

Environmental Education

CLZ's outreach programme reached 3,195 pupils from 63 schools surrounding the park.

146 pupils and 18 teachers from 41 schools visited CLZ for 6 Education Centre Visits.

29 teachers from Luangwa and Rufunsa GMAs visited CLZ for a Teacher Training Workshop.

CLZ modernised its EEP by implementing educational tablets with environmental education curriculums on them.

Other Operations

CLZ hosted DNPW officers, trainers, donors, pilots, community members and more making up 1,619 bed-nights in 2017.

75 candidates sat for Safari Guide Exams with a 53% pass rate.

Former Lower Zambezi Senior Warden, Solomon Chidunuka was awarded with Tusk Ranger Award.

CLZ employs over 50 people and through donors, contributed almost $750,000 in support to wildlife protection, education and community development.

Wildlife Protection & Law Enforcement

CLZ supported 11,048 patrol man-days in 2017.

67 poachers were apprehended and 9 firearms and 29 pieces of ivory recovered.

DNPW Detection & Tracking Dog Unit apprehended 20 suspects along with many other ivory, bushmeat and firearm confiscations.

>70% decrease of poached elephants in LZNPs and GMAs in 2017 compared to alarming 2016 results.

The CLZ plane flew 201 hours of aerial patrols.
A Window on Zambia

I have been working on the website. I have added some stories about the Kingdoms of Zambia – The Chewa, The Lunda, The Lozi, The Bemba and The Ngoni. Fascinating stories which show how rich our culture is in Zambia. We really do not promote it enough.

I have also redone the map for Kafue – the first one was a bit of a pig’s ear … It looks better now.

And now I am working on bird lists and animal lists for each park. I have put in some bird lists which I have put on files which can be easily downloaded so that visitors can print and then go through our parks to ‘tick off’ what they see. This is a lot of fun for the children. The link can be found under The Wild Stuff on park pages.

This photograph is of the Ngoni from Eastern Province. it is an old one I had from many years ago when we had Cultural Festivals in Livingstone. I am short of photographs for the other kingdoms. If you have one or two I can use, please let me have them. I am really conscious of copyright issues and will not just ‘copy and paste’ from the internet.

Lower Zambezi Catch & Release Initiative

We have been supporting the Department of Fisheries in implementing the recently reinstated annual fishing ban on the Lower Zambezi.

For many waters in Zambia the annual ban is the only respite for fish stocks from the pressure of commercial exploitation and recreational angling. In the past, the ban has been criticized for being poorly enforced. However, with cooperation between the private sector, the community and the authorities, the annual fishing ban can form part of an integrated conservation strategy.

There is still much work to be done to properly manage the sustainable use of the Lower Zambezi fishery, but establishing a culture of adherence to existing fishing regulations is an important first step.

During the fishing ban period we urge everyone to obey the law and refrain from all fishing activities until 1 March 2018. Although Zimbabwean waters do not fall under the ban, we also urge all Zimbabwean anglers and lodge operators to respect the ban and refrain from fishing in Zambian waters.

Thanks to Conservation Lower Zambezi - CLZ, Mwambashi River Lodge, Zambia and Wildtracks Lodge for supporting the Department of Fisheries during this operation.
Sesheke-Livingstone road trouble for Nam truckers
New Era

Windhoek-Namibian trucking firms making use of the Sesheke-Livingstone road in Zambia, which forms part of the Walvis Bay Corridor and stretches all the way to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are bemoaning its deplorable state.

Namibian and other truckers lose valuable time and money which impacts on their efficiency and ultimately their competitiveness within the logistics sector.

The heavily-potholed Sesheke-Livingstone road covers a stretch of only 97km, which makes up a portion of the Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi Development Corridor as part of the overall Walvis Bay Corridor. It should take about an hour and a half to drive, but due to gaping potholes that stretch across almost its entire length truck drivers, bus drivers and other motorists take between three to five hours to travel this important road.

To make matters worse, motorists entering Zambia pay a raft of hefty border fees that include insurance paid only in American dollars. In comparison Zambian motorists only pay a pittance when entering Namibia.

Zambian transporters also use the road to convey that country’s main export product, copper, through Namibia to overseas markets, while Namibians transport fish, salt and other exports to Zambia via that road.

“This road is a critical piece of infrastructure for the corridor. Our Zambia office is working tirelessly to ensure the Zambian government prioritises infrastructure development on that road,” said Johny Smith, CEO of the Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG).

The Walvis Bay corridors are marketed as an integrated system of “well-maintained tarred roads” and rail networks from the port of Walvis Bay via the Trans-Kalahari, Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi Development Corridor (previously known as the Trans-Capriv), Trans-Cunene and Trans-Oranje corridors, providing landlocked Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries access to transatlantic markets.

“The new and well-maintained port and corridor infrastructure and the safe and efficient transport services provided by the transport industry, coupled with the reliable support of the regulatory authorities, give the Walvis Bay Corridor Group a competitive positioning in achieving its aim of becoming the leading trade route in southern Africa,” reads the WBCG website. …
Painted Dog Conservation

It is with a heavy heart, our dear friends, that we let you know Rocket did not make it. She succumbed to the same fate as 9 of her pack members. We can officially say all 10 members of the Mabuyemabhema pack were killed by rabies.

G: This shows us how important campaigns are to inoculate the local domestic dog populations against rabies.

Matusadona Anti Poaching Project

ZPWMA continue to achieve remarkable results in the Sanyati Gorge as they tackle fish poachers who are illegally targeting spawning tiger and other fish species. During last nights patrol approximately 3000 meters of netting was recovered, 2 wooden dingies were destroyed, 1 metal dingy was recovered, and 3 poachers bases were destroyed. The gorge is a protected area and their (poachers) presence and activities are strictly illegal. Well done ZPWMA supported by MAPP, YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

Rail Link between Zim and Zam

Transport and Infrastructural Development minister Joram Gumbo has said the government is reviving plans to construct the Lions Den-Kafue, Zambia, railway line, which was mooted in 1980. (G: Lions Den is near Chinhoyi) …

“We are not forgetting you in terms of a railway line. We have a plan for a railway line from Lions Den passing through Kariba to Kafue in Zambia,” he said.

G: We keep hearing politicians in both Zambia and Zimbabwe talk of new railways lines. This one between Lions Den and Kafue would be a mammoth task as it would have to go up and down the Escarpment on both sides of the river. I have put the altitudes on the map. Anyone who has driven along the road between Makuti and Chirundu will know how steep the incline is. We know that trains do not like hills, so you can imagine the cost of construction …
Elephants Without Borders

Life and death in Botswana. On one of EWB’s anti-poaching aerial patrols this carcass was spotted surrounded by crocodiles. This elephant is presumed to have died of natural causes but we also record all poached elephant sightings as part of a database that helps to quantify the impacts of poaching on Botswana’s elephants.

Zambian Food Import Ban Claims First Victims in Namibia
New Era

Katima Mulilo — The cholera outbreak in Zambia and the food import ban implemented by Namibia with effect from Monday this week means Namibian fish traders will not be allowed to import boxes of frozen fish from the north-eastern neighbouring country. Fresh fish traders in the Zambezi Region - whose livelihoods depend on importing fish from a farmer who has several commercial fish ponds in Zambia - have been left in despair after the government’s decision to ban the import of perishable and unprocessed food from that country.

The ban came effective on Monday, due to the cholera outbreak that has besieged Zambia for the past three months.

New Cranes for Walvis Bay
Namib Times

The heavy lift vessel Zhen Hua 8 is expected in Walvis Bay on 13 February this year to deliver four ship to shore (sts) cranes to Namport in the port of Walvis Bay. These cranes will be installed on the container terminal on reclaimed land in port and is the first of its kind cranes for Namibia. The vessel is underway from Shanghai in China and bad weather at sea resulted in the ship’s arrival postponed to 13 February. Bolloré Africa Logistics is the shipping agent for this historic delivery by sea.
Slaughter at the Brandberg

Niel Terblanche
A sheep farmer in the communal farming area in the vicinity of the Brandberg woke up to a slaughter in the enclosure where his animals were kept overnight.

Two well known desert adapted lions of the Ugab River in the vicinity of the White Lady Lodge are held responsible for the killing of 172 sheep and goats.

Despite suffering heavy financial damage in terms of stock losses the man responsible for the farming, Mr. Tertius Roos said that he holds no grudge against the lions.

“We found the tracks of at least two lions in the pen where the sheep were kept during the night. This area is the home to the lions as well. The damage is bad but we will have to live with it for now.”

He said the sheep belongs to the owner of the White Lady lodge, Mr. Naude de Jager, and that the animals were farmed to provide the lodge with a steady supply of meat.

Officials from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism along with the well-known lion expert, Dr. Flip Stander have already travelled to the lodge to assess the damage and to find a way to save the lions from being killed.

According to Mr. Roos the lions will be darted and fitted with radio collars. The collars will enable officials and conservationists to monitor the movements of the predators which mean they will be able to prevent similar events in the future.

In the meantime the dead sheep were butchered and the meat packed away in every available freezing facility in the area. Some of the meat has already been transported to Uis where it will be sold.

‘AudioMoth’ device aims to deliver low-cost, power-efficient monitoring of remote landscapes

Mongabay

UK-based researchers who have developed a low-power, open-source acoustic monitoring device say it shows promise for monitoring wildlife and illicit incursions by mankind into remote habitats.

The researchers say that the device, which is about the size of a matchbox, can be made for as little as $43 per unit — a price-point that could be key to ensuring coverage across large landscapes, where numerous monitoring devices are required.

The AudioMoth can be programmed to monitor wildlife populations by recording the calls of specific target species while at the same time serving as an alert system when the sounds of human exploitation, such as the blast of a shotgun or the roar of a chainsaw, are detected.

Researchers in the UK who have developed a low-power, open-source acoustic monitoring device say it shows promise for monitoring wildlife and illicit incursions by mankind into remote habitats.
Big news and big day today for wildlife.
Freeland

Police in Thailand have arrested Boonchai Bach – a member of Asia’s “top wildlife crime family”. We have been following this notorious wildlife trafficking kingpin and the syndicate he’s part of for more than a decade. This guy is suspected of being responsible for the deaths of thousands of endangered animals. Congrats to Thai law enforcement agencies!
The rain is dripping down as I write this but it has been dry for the past two weeks. Crops not looking good..

Have a good two weeks

Gill