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PhotoMail is an occasional picture newsletter for those with an interest in photography, nature and the environment, travel, Africa, Zambia, Zambian life and happening things And especially for those who just like looking at pictures

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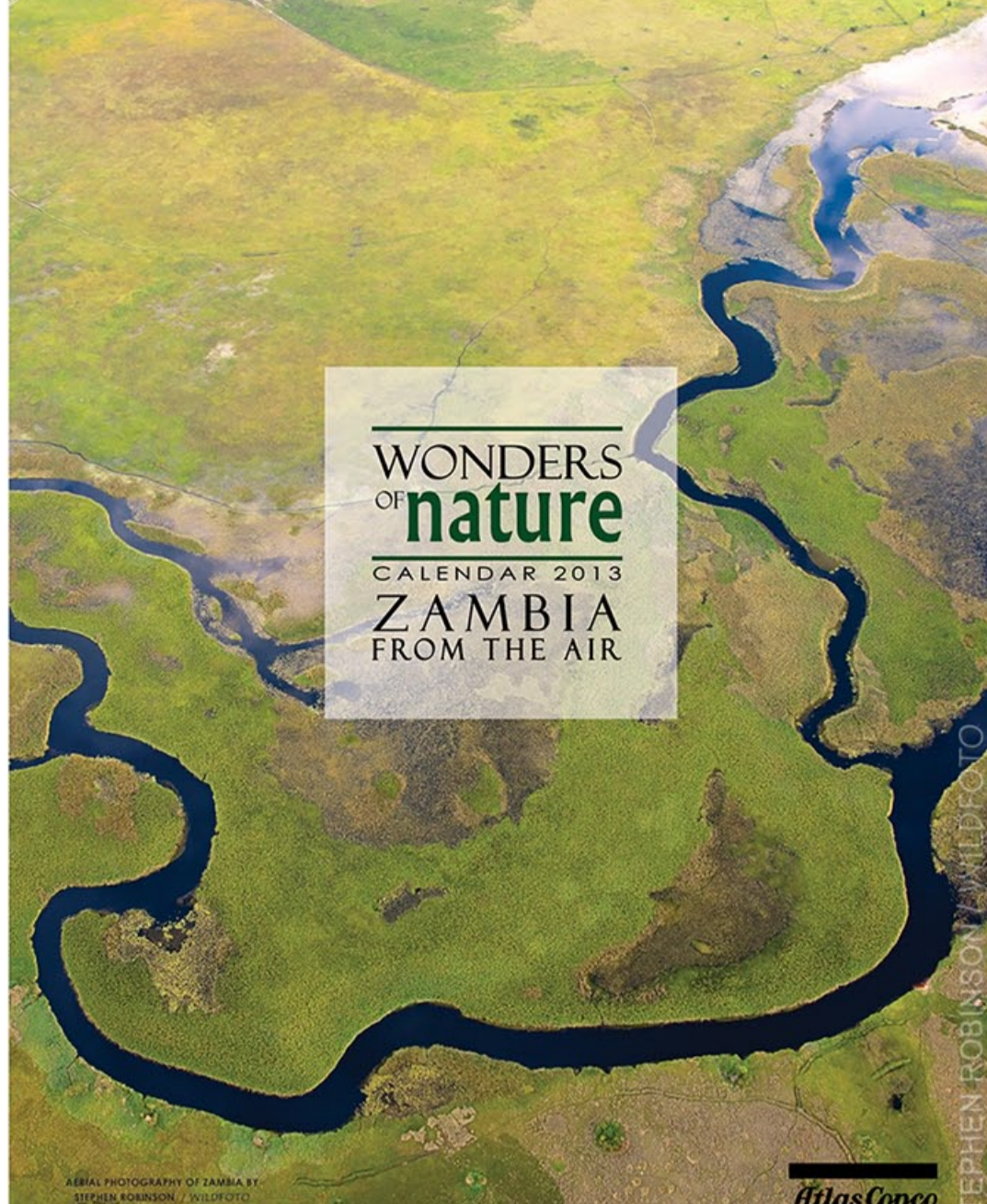
The Story Behind the Pictures: Wonders of Nature Calendar 2013 - Zambia from the Air

In this PhotoMail, we take a break from the photo-series on four big European cities, and get back to Zambia.

Atlas Copco has again given its support to the Spirit of the Land project and it's Zambia environment awareness effort, by commissioning a wall calendar for 2013. Atlas Copco is the Sweden-based worldwide mining & construction equipment manufacturing-services group which operates very positive policies towards the environment and its protection, so it's great to have this support. The theme of the calendar is 'Zambia from the Air', featuring aerial photography of the remote Zambian landscape - views not seen by most. The calendar will be published in January. I will have a limited number for free distribution to WILDFOTO customers and Spirit of the Land print customers, so if this includes you, please let me know if you would like one. But the number is limited and so I'm afraid the offer has to be on a first come basis! Of course, if you've made the wise decision to be a customer of Atlas Copco.....



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Cover - Chambeshi River Floodplain, N Zambia



Chambeshi River, N Zambia

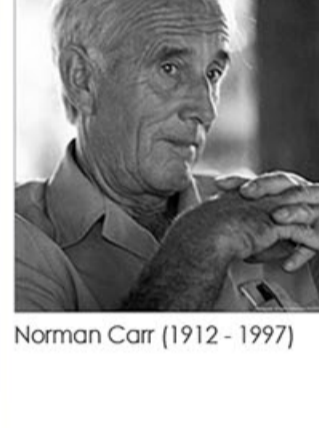
The reason that Zambia has so much water, is that the country sits at the juncture of two of Africa's major river systems: the Congo Basin and the Zambezi basin. The Great North Road is located roughly along a ridge between the two systems, such that, if you drive North from Kapiri Mposhi, just about all the water courses and dams on the right (East) side are part of the Zambezi system, and all those on the left (West) side are part of the Congo system. The Chambeshi River drains a huge area of Northern Zambia into the Bangweulu Swamps and Lake Bangweulu, which then drains South to form the Luapula River and then turns back North into Lake Mweru, and on eventually into the Congo River.



Luangwa River, E Zambia

The Luangwa Valley is now Zambia's premier wildlife and safari tourism area and one of Africa's very best. The valley and its abundant wildlife inhabitants have been given very effective natural protection by the valley's geography and geology - it is remotely located below the steep Eastern edge of the Central African Plateau (the Muchinga Escarpment) and the river is dynamic, flooding and changing course frequently to rejuvenate the valley floor and its lagoons at each rain season.

Luangwa has also been blessed by the presence of one particularly abundant species - the Tsetse Fly. In years gone by, this little animal kept the area closed to cattle herders and human settlement. I was lucky enough to know and work with a remarkable man called Norman Carr (1912 - 1997, pictured at left), who was the father of conservation in Zambia, as well as the pioneer of Luangwa Valley wildlife safaris and of the African walking safari. He always said that, for the above reasons, the Tsetse Fly was his favourite animal.



Norman Carr (1912 - 1997)



Kafue River & Wellands, S Zambia

Zambia is truly blessed with "water, water, everywhere". But there are growing concerns at the devastation caused by deforestation and the effects that this will have on Zambia's precious forest and water resources. With the current mining boom and recovering economy, we seem to be in a mad rush for "development" but with little thought and planning given to the eventual effects of schemes involving land-use change, forest clearance and hydro power projects.

According to the FAO's 2011 study, in 2010 Zambia had a forest cover (all forest types) of some 49.5 million hectares and a deforestation rate of 0.33% p.a. Now, one-third of one percent doesn't sound very much - until you think of it in practical terms, because it is a loss of over 160,000 hectares of forest p.a., which equates to deforestation of an area equivalent to 641 football pitches PER DAY, EVERY DAY.

Just from an economy & business view, if we are really serious about tourism in the long term, shouldn't we be doing more to protect and properly utilise those natural resources on which tourism wholly depends?

From the viewpoint of providing a livelihood for the poor, the same goes: in this region some 40 million people depend entirely (100%) on the Miombo Woodland that is the forest type of the Central African Plateau region, which is some 2.4 million sq km in area. What happens when that forest is gone?



Zambezi River & Barotse Floodplain, W Zambia



Mwomboshi River Gorge & Mwomboshi / Mulungushi Rivers Confluence, C Zambia



Chambeshi River Floodplain, N Zambia



Sunrise & Dambo Mist, Miombo Woodland, N Zambia

This shot and the Bangweulu shot below are two "out-takes" from the final edit for this calendar

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PHOTOGRAPHER FOR HIRE
 Stephen Robinson is a photographer operating from his Zambia base. He undertakes photo assignment work in the corporate, industrial, mining, donor-aid project and environmental fields, including the production of photo based communications, advertising and promotional media.
 This commercial work supports his nature photography speciality, including landscape, environment, conservation and wildlife work - and including his well-known panoramic photography project and exhibitions on the remote landscape, peoples and environment of Zambia.
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Black Lechwe, Bangweulu Swamps, N Zambia

NEXT PhotoMail ISSUE
 More impressions from four of Europe's big cities, and the stories behind the pictures

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