

Great Ruaha River Water Level | 2010

February 2010

The river is looking really good, as you can see the water is 'black' which means the water from Usangu is flowing through already. According to Park Authorities the Usangu water started on 24th January 2010. This is much earlier than usual, 'normally' it most often reached Ruaha the end of February to early March. The water in the river is usually at its highest mid-March so we will wait and see what happens this year.



Great Ruaha River | Stone Marker – Sue's Old Camp | February 2010

The stone marker in the first photo indicates that the river still has a way to go before the stone is covered, which is the 'normal' highest flow we hope to expect each year.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge | February 2010

The two photos above from the gate show you that the river is flowing very well so far.

I will be most interested to see what happens during this dry season in 2010. Last year 2009 was historic in that the river through most of Ruaha National Park never dried up so... what can we hope for this year?!

31st July 2010

The Great Ruaha River for 31st July 2010 is continuing to flow fairly well, although it is dropping fast.

In the pictures below, the first two depicts the river from my old camp on 30th July 2010 and then below is the same place on 5th August last year, 2009. This is only 5 days later than those taken this year but you can clearly see that the river was substantially higher this time last year than it is now. If you compare the small rock in the water in front of the stone marker you will see that in the August 2009 photo it is barely visible.



Great Ruaha River | Stone Marker – Sue’s Old Camp | 30th July 2010



Great Ruaha River | Stone Marker – Sue’s Old Camp | 5th August 2009

The final photo was taken on 31st July 2010 and depicts the width of the flow past Msembe Bandas at HQ. It is pretty shallow here; 30 cm deep for much of the width, though the main flow channel is more than 60cm deep.

It can be seen from these photos that the river was flowing better this time last year. In fact I have just been examining the photos taken on 28th June this year and they are not dissimilar from those taken in August last year, so I would say the river is approximately one month drier this year, so we will have to see if the flow continues throughout the dry season as it did last year. At this present time it seems unlikely.



Great Ruaha River | Msembe HQ | 31st July 2010

Kind regards,

Sue

2nd September 2010

The general flow of the Great Ruaha River through the western portion of the park (from Jongomero to the bridge – old gate) is not too bad.

Last year it was quite a bit stronger; however, going by the past history of flow for this time of year it is about average to just above average.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge | 2nd September 2010

The photos above were taken from the main bridge (old gate) on 2nd September 2010. The actual flow is now reduced to the single channel depicted, however it is still strong and relatively deep.

Kind regards,

Sue

October 2010

The picture below depicts the river at my old camp which was just flowing on 1st October with a trickle of about 16cm deep and 80cm wide.



Great Ruaha River | Stone Marker – Sue's Old Camp | 1st October 2010

The river was just flowing at the bridge on 1st October (if you look at the photo below you will see this). There were two tiny trickles which joined the deeper channel. The flow was miniscule. But by 3rd October it had stopped at the bridge.

It is still just flowing at my old camp in the Jongomero area, but this will last only a few more days.

The marabou storks are feasting on the dying fish that are now floating in many of the pools along the river, making the water very unpalatable for the animals and aquatic life.

If you look back through my observations you will see that 1st October is the 'traditional' date for the drying of the GRR. This is due to the fact that the rice growers up stream are beginning to flood their paddies, readying them for the rice seedlings. It has long been my question as to why rice growers cannot defer their starting date to 1st December when the rain is more imminent.

Last year we had a major breakthrough in that the river flowed all year without stopping; it was an historic occasion. I have heard some say this is due to good rainfall; however, one needs only to look through rainfall records to see that this is not so. I also heard a rumour that 2009 was not the only year that the river continued to flow, but this is 100% incorrect. I lived about 1 meter away

from the GRR from 1994 till 2006 and during that time (and until 2009), the river dried up every single year. The reason last year was so successful in terms of flow, was because sincere efforts were made to ensure correct usage of water in the irrigated areas up stream of Ruaha National Park were enforced.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge | 2nd October 2010

We now know, that through proper management we can enjoy year round flow of the GRR through Ruaha NP. It is important to note that this is at no detriment to the farmers up stream.

By sound management policies it is possible to keep all stakeholders happy.

Let us continue to strive for this.

Sue Stolberger

November 2010

The Great Ruaha River is a disaster! What has happened to all that progress we made last year?

The state of the GRR is shocking. It is the driest it has been since we had a drought in 2004/05. The river looked like this in January 2005 after the rains failed in December 2004.

Why is it looking like this at the end of November? It can only mean that the off take up stream has increased, and that little or no management of quotas have been observed. This is extremely disappointing. Please can we all work together to improve this alarming state of affairs. It is so easy to make things work for the benefit of the whole if we all pull our weight.



Great Ruaha River | Stone Marker - Sue's Old Camp | November 2010



Great Ruaha River | Sue's Old Camp | November 2010