

July 2014



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge | 23rd July 2014

As you can see from the above photo taken on 23rd July 2014, the river is still looking quite good.

Please be aware though, that this is the flow we would have considered to be normal only about 8 years ago. Unfortunately, the river is dropping fast, about 1.5cm per day. However, sadly, we cannot attribute the more expansive flow to positive human intervention. It is solely the result of unusually heavy rainfall throughout this region, during March and April.

Comparisons 2014 v 2013



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge
18th June 2014

You can see that the river is flowing almost bank to bank. This is what we would call 'normal' flow for June. This is due to excessive rainfall in the catchment area. One of the higher flows on recent record.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge
15th June 2013

This is how it looked at the same spot last year at almost the same time. You can see that there are slightly more green islands showing last year, but alarmingly it does not look much different to this year. 2013 was one of the lowest flows on record.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge
July 23rd 2014

Now compare these two photos for July. They look almost the same! How can this be? 2014 had huge rainfall and a record flow but you wouldn't know that now! This just shows the huge off-take despite the fact the crops have already been harvested.



Great Ruaha River | Main Bridge
July 9th 2013

This is how the river looked at the same spot this time last year. Remember that 2013 had the lowest flows on record. When you compare the photos on the left to those on the right you can clearly see that even more water has been abstracted this year than last year at this time!

The Rice Problem

Photos from the Kapunga rice scheme, the second scheme to be started in the Usangu basin in 1987. This is but one of the 3 major schemes that draw off water from the Great Ruaha River. These areas are extraordinarily green, lush and covered with acres and acres of water. It was really shocking to see the huge wastage of water... that is normal!



Kapunga Rice Scheme



These photos are all taken on 6th July 2014.

Harvested paddies lie idle but are still flooded with precious water to keep the weeds down. They will remain flooded until they are replanted in November; the height of the dry season!

These photos show the extent of the flooding that is still taking place despite crops having been harvested.



We observed many channels being dammed, with sub channels currently under construction to take off yet more water to areas further afield.

This particular rice scheme is 13 km long; however, once we left here, water was everywhere. Acres and acres of it, like shown in the above photos, from Kapunga to Rujewa, some 45 km.

Surely a small fraction of this can be saved for other investors; such as tourism, fishing and hydroelectricity.

Why are these farmers allowed to take it all and squander it?