

# NEWSLETTER: CLUB SKYAFRICA

FEB 2004

## HOWZIT from AFRICA

Having started the year with a rather busy schedule we have experienced the heaviest Rainfalls for the last decade.

This was welcome relieve to the farmers after a long period of severe drought.

Some places that we fly too have not seen rain for the last 9 months and then it came down in Buckets.

The Bushveld is lush and green like we have hardly ever seen it.

This freak weather made for some interesting flying to say the least.

But it all went well without too many hitches some diversions and one IF Letdown guess we are a bit spoiled here with the weather most of our overseas guests found it quite normal.

### CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Anthony first solo

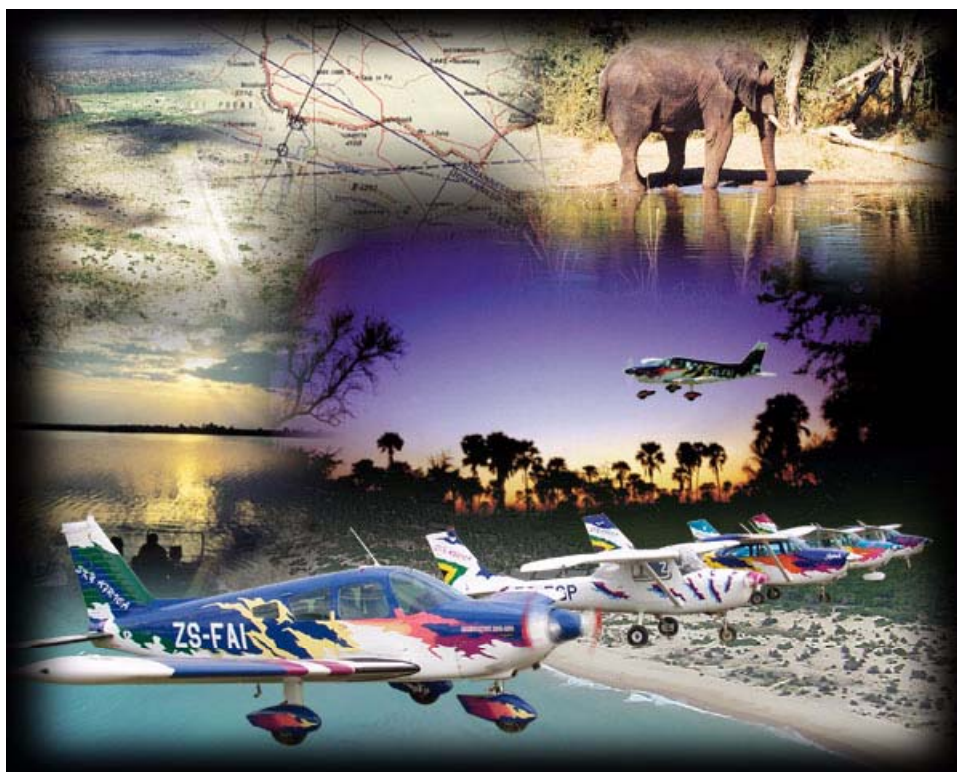
Georg IF and Twin-rating

### Website

Our new web-site should be on-line any day now more current information and a user-friendly reply-system has been incorporated

Check it out and let us know what you think

# SKY AFRICA



*Come Fly with us...* **SKY AFRICA**

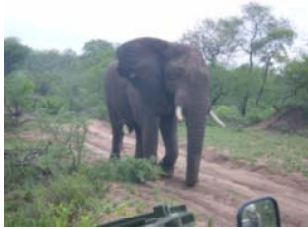
## FLYING NEWS

### Elephant and Dolphin Safari Jan 2004

In January was also affected by Rainstorms and we decided to do the first leg of the safari by car.

The Manyeleti river in the Sabi Sabi area had not run for the last 4 years and whilst we were down there it rose to 6 meters making our lodge into an island only reachable by air.

Although the game tends to take shelter in the bush when it rains our sightings were good.



THE LOWVELD



We came across all big 5 on the game drives and especially a lone hole-eared Elephant bull caught our attention as he slid up and down the muddy riverbanks.

Thanks to the rangers at Elephant plains for some superb game spotting

Barbs and Mark ferried the Planes down to the Bushstrip having some fun and games over the Drakensberg escarpment on heir first attempt but got through the second day.

The air traffic controllers at Lowveld Information know our call signs, first, second and third names dress size, hat size and other intimate details by now.

That's how often we spoke to them.

Thanks guys for your support and for guiding us through not so friendly skies safely

The trip from Kruger to Inhambane was at 2000 foot in calm weather.

Fred in the 182 scouting ahead meeting the Indian ocean at Bilene and then turning northeasterly to follow the coastline

A few more Charlie Bravo had to be circumnavigated and Inhambane greeted us in bright sunshine.

On the return Anselm hit some low cloud and eventually diverted to Vilanculos eating some more good seafood and photographic opportunities for Gabi.

Returning trough a bit of benign IMC the Highveld greeted all of us green and blue skies. Another lekker safe trip.

Continuing or little series about SKYAFRICA Flying destinations below a little write up on Inhambane In Mozambique.

Safe flying to all

Erika

# SKYAFRICA DESTINATIONS

## ***The Sands of Inhambane***

Taking off Rwy 05 Kruger International Airport on the fringes of the world famous Kruger National Park we head out on 84 magnetic on our last leg of our Elephant and Dolphin Safari.

Staying VFR at 2000'AGL makes good viewing as we cross the Lebombo mountain ranges the oldest Rock formation on the oldest of all continents, Africa.  
250 miles to go an easy two and a half hours in the C-172.

In front of us the flat Mozambican plains stretching to the horizon.  
Lowveld hands us over and the controller on Maputo Info sounds refreshingly clear and friendly on the radio.

As we cross the Limpopo river we can see signs of habitation along the banks, Kraals Cattle rural Africa.

Then flat again

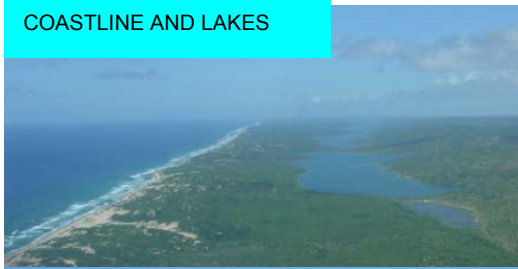
Blue skies a few specks of cumuli and we decide to change our heading 15 degrees southward and descend to 1000 ft AGL.

45 minutes later we reach the Coastline at Bilene and turn northerly again to follow the endless white beach line.

Passing the town of Xai-Xai one can see signs of re-construction, neat holiday cottages growing along the coastline.

Coconut palms are lining the inland lakes and there is very little sign of habitation.

COASTLINE AND LAKES



BEACH AND MANGROVES



The cyan coloured Indian Ocean reveals the location of its coral reefs below by throwing the odd white breaker.

Some whale sharks heading the same direction as us are overtaken and all to soon we are inbound to Inhambane on 118.4

The peninsula viewed from above looks like a crocodile's gaping jaws in the process of eating some unsuspecting islands.

The Airport is located on the bottom Jaw.

Cleared land Rwy 16 Airfield Elevation 30 ft always an amazing thing to land so slowly when you are used to flying at the Highveld with its 5500' airports.



INHAMBANE AIRPORT

BARRA PENINSULA



Clearing refuelling done sees the SKYAFRICA crew an hour later sipping the first gin tonic on Barra beach.

Once an Arab trading post in Mozambique not all that much has changed in Inhambane since the 11<sup>th</sup> century

The dhows still sail in and out of the bay and time is still measured by the tides

Early morning and late afternoon are much the same: the sand is yellow gold, the waves tumble onto the beach shooting rainbow colours as the sunlight catches the spray and there are dhows beyond the breakers.

The only difference between morning and evening is whether the boats are sailing out to sea or back to the harbour at Inhambane or Maxixe across the bay.

A day at Barra Beach is the space between the passing of the dhows.

All the rest is detail.



DHOWS PASSING



OLD HARBOUR FRONT

Around the saw-toothed peninsula, you will find there are a number of alcoves and bays where you'd like to find yourself with nothing to do but loaf. Tofu and Tofinho are beautiful, though there's very little sand nowadays at the latter as the sea has scoured away the beach exposing the underlying rock. Not good for beach bathers, but good for crabs which have a multitude of nooks and crannies to hideout at low tide.



BARRA BEACH



THE DIVING TEAM

The beach at Barra is best of all.

It's long and straight and there's nothing fickle about the currents for swimmers. When the wind is up it's really exciting to take out a Lazer or the Hobie Cat.

A walkway leads into the mangrove swamps

And then there is the snorkelling and scuba diving.

The reefs are fantastically colourful and dense with fish and other ocean fauna. Being pilots, scuba diving is something one has to plan carefully not to avoid getting the bends at Flight level 95 on the way back

Make a point of booking a trip to Pourcos (pig) Island, so named because of a temperamental Portuguese missionary who tried to set up a mission station on the island. He had rather a tough time with the locals and used to run after them shouting "*Pourcos! Pourcos!*"

We found a traditional dhow builder at work and a shoemaker hiding out in one of the small huts, making the perfect-fit shoes for the equivalent of about \$4.



MAXIXE MARKET



PAST GLORY DAYS

There are women cooking' mussels and shelling oysters and children dipping their hands into bowls

to snack on a crab's leg.

Inhambane town is worth spending day exploring. Bargain a little if you plan to shop, but the prices are generally cheap.

The Arabs who first used Inhambane as a stopover traded mostly in fabrics, so by the time the Portuguese arrived in the 1500s, a cotton-spinning industry was already established.

There's nothing much left of the old trade, tribal invasions by the Gaza chief Shoshangane in the 19th century, civil war and a shifting economic focus towards Maputo (then Lourenço Marques) in the south began the slow decline from which Inhambane has never quite recovered.

For the pilot navigating along these white untouched beaches along a warm ocean is balsam to the soul.

Waving goodbye to the old Tofu lighthouse we wing our way back across the Limpopo River to return for sure.



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