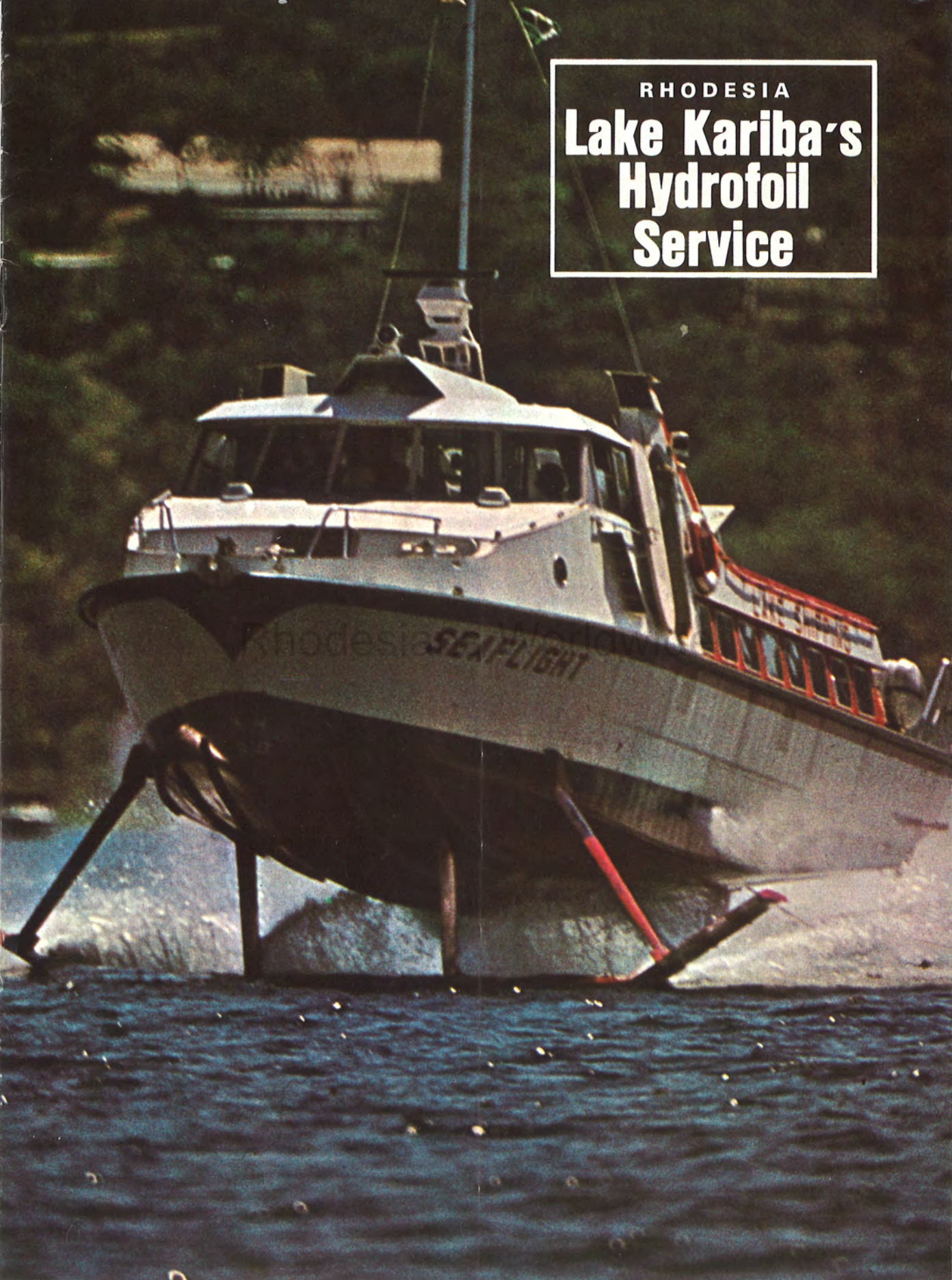


RHODESIA  
**Lake Kariba's  
Hydrofoil  
Service**



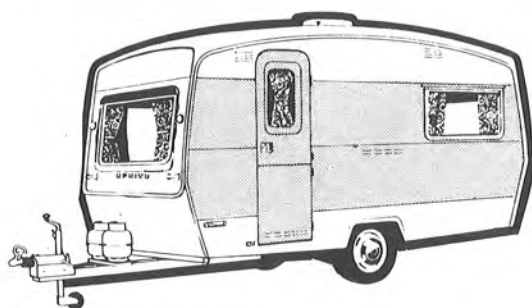




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## BUNDU DEN

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P.O. Box 487, Salisbury,  
Rhodesia.



The airy and spacious main cabin of the *Sea Flight* provides armchair comfort for 54 passengers, and the large windows allow everyone a view of the lakeside scenery.

**L**AKE KARIBA, the largest man-made lake in the world, now boasts the most sophisticated form of high-speed water transport in Africa: the Lake Shipping Company's hydrofoil *Sea Flight*.

The hydrofoil is an unusual vessel: it has a conventional hull on which it rides at speeds below 36 km/h; above this speed, up to its cruising level of 64 km/h, the hull is lifted clear of the water on huge, wing-like foils at the bow and stern. With the water resistance of the large hull removed, the effect of the waves on the vessel are almost completely eliminated, resulting in a smooth and comfortable passage across the lake.

In addition to the wing-like foils on which the *Sea Flight* rides, there are other similarities between an aircraft and the hydrofoil. It is, for its size, a very light vessel, weighing only 25 tons, and is constructed entirely of aluminium. Within its main cabin are 54 aircraft-type seats which provide superb comfort for the passengers, and rows of large windows on each side allow everyone a panoramic view of the passing scenery.

Forward of the main cabin is an inside viewing deck where passengers may look through the large windows on the bridge, and watch the helmsman at the wheel. Passengers are not allowed on the outside deck of

the hydrofoil while it is moving. The dangers of being swept overboard by the 64 km/h wind the forward speed of the vessel produces are obvious.

During the passage the captain invites passengers to come up to the bridge to see how the hydrofoil is operated. It is typical of the friendly service the Lake Shipping Company provides, and is the highlight of the trip for many passengers, especially the children. The view of the lake rushing past from the bridge, which is three metres above the surface of the water, is one that sends most visitors searching for their cameras.

Below the bridge is a capacious toilet with hand wash basin. The

## Circular tourist route

With the introduction of the *Sea Flight* hydrofoil service, which traverses the length of Lake Kariba on the longest scheduled hydrofoil service in the world, a complete, circular, round-Rhodesia tourist route is now available to the visitor.

Motorists arriving from South Africa at Beitbridge may commence their circular route by driving north-east (to the Zimbabwe Ruins, Salisbury and Kariba) or north-west (to Bulawayo, Wankie National Park and the Victoria Falls), linking up by travelling west or east on the hydrofoil service.

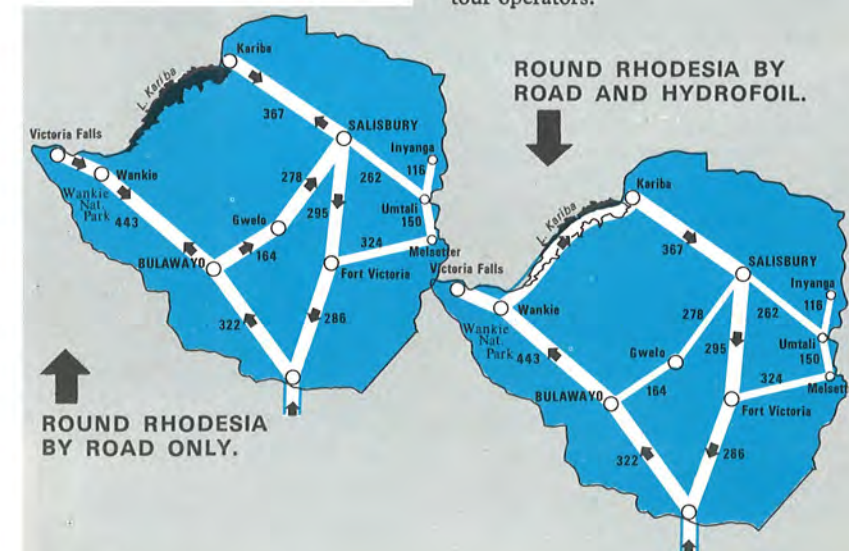
As can be seen from the maps, before the introduction of the hydrofoil service a motorist who had visited the Victoria Falls and who also intended to travel to Salisbury and Kariba found it necessary to return to Bulawayo over 443 km of road he had already traversed, then drive 442 km to Salisbury and a further 367 km to Kariba over a road he would need to follow again on his return to South Africa.

With the completion of this new tourist circle he can now drive 159 km south of Victoria Falls, take the hydrofoil service and be in Kariba the same day, or stop over at one of the lakeside resorts for a day or two. This effects a saving in road travel of over 1 300 km. And not only is the trip along the lake a unique experience, it relieves the motorist of a day behind the wheel.

The motorist's car is transported on a car ferry, which reaches Kariba the morning after the *Sea Flight*.

Thus a complete round-Rhodesia tour, including Rhodesia's Eastern Highlands, can now be made by the motorist, involving only 2 300 km of road travel.

Travellers who are flying by Air Rhodesia may also utilise the hydrofoil service by link-up services with the *Sea Flight* arranged from airports at Kariba, Wankie and Victoria Falls by tour operators.







Above: The 128-metre-high Kariba Dam, opened in 1960, holds back a lake with an area of 5 000 square kilometres. The centre of the dam is the border between Rhodesia and Zambia.



Left: For holiday-makers at Kariba whose plans do not include the hydrofoil service uplake, pleasure cruises are operated when the *Sea Flight* is not on its scheduled run. Here it speeds past the harbour of Venture Cruises Hotel, one of the lakeside resorts at Kariba.

Below: In the 1 350-square-kilometre Matusadona Game Reserve, two private companies operate photographic and game-viewing safaris. There is also a National Parks camp, for campers only.



*Sea Flight* is also equipped with full safety requirements, dinghies, and automatic fire extinguishers.

The introduction of the hydrofoil service has opened up areas of the lake rich in interest for the tourist. These areas did not formerly receive the attention they deserved, mainly because of the difficulty of access. One area did not have a road connection and others could only be reached by varying distances along gravel roads. The regular, scheduled hydrofoil service now brings these resorts within easy reach of the traveller. Whether he is a motorist taking advantage of the considerable road distance the hydrofoil saves, or an air passenger who wishes to see Lake Kariba more closely, the opportunity to spend a few days at one of these resorts is now conveniently provided.

The westbound passage begins at Andorra harbour at Kariba, a busy marine basin overlooked by the steep, wooded hills on which the town is built, and a few kilometres from the local, lakeside hotels. The *Sea Flight* proceeds out of the harbour at a slow speed, but once out into open water, the two 750-horsepower turbo-diesel engines are advanced and the hydrofoil increases its speed to its cruising level of 64 km/h. The transition on to the foils is so gradual and controlled that the passenger is completely unaware of it. Such is the smoothness of the vessel's progress that its speed is not appreciated until one looks at the surface of the lake flashing past.

Passengers aboard who have cars or caravans will have loaded them the morning before on to the Lake Shipping Company's car ferry *Sea Horse*, a front-loading vessel that can accommodate nine cars. As the speed of the *Sea Horse* is much slower than the *Sea Flight*, it leaves the day before, travelling partly through the night with the aid of radar, to arrive at Msuna at the western end of the lake shortly before the *Sea Flight*. Cars may also be off-loaded at any scheduled stop on the lake (Bumi Hills, Binga and Mlibizi). Ground transport from the hotels in Kariba to the *Sea Flight* is available for passengers who have embarked their cars on the *Sea Horse*.

Leaving Andorra the course is set for the first scheduled stop: Bumi Hills, 60 km up lake. As the hills at Kariba diminish in size over the

Right: A generously portioned lunch is provided free on board the *Sea Flight*, during an hour-long lunch stop in the middle of the lake. These stops are made in areas where game is often seen on the shore.



Below: The car ferry *Sea Horse* can carry up to nine cars, or larger vehicles such as caravans or buses. The front ramp has been slightly lowered in this picture to show the cars within. This vessel operates with the assistance of radar for night travel.



Passengers on the *Sea Flight* are invited by the captain to come up to the spacious bridge and learn how the hydrofoil is operated. This is a fine vantage point for photography.

stern, the Matusadona Mountains on the southern shore of the lake come more clearly into view on the left. Below the mountains is a lake-side plain lying between the Sanyati Gorge and the mouth of the Bumi River. This is part of the Matusadona Game Reserve, which extends over the plain and mountains for 1 350 square kilometres. Within the reserve, at Tshinga, is a National Parks camp which provides an ablution block and fireplaces. The camp is linked to a small harbour and a network of game-viewing roads, and, during the dry season, to Bumi Hills.

The roads are suitable for 4-wheel-drive vehicles only. Two private safari companies, Camera Africa Safaris and Kazangula Safaris, operate within the reserve, both providing luxury tent accommodation, all meals and game-viewing drives. They provide pick-up boat services to Kariba or can link up with the hydrofoil service itself. This remote reserve is rich in flora and fauna, and elephant and other game may often be seen on the lake shore.

Within ten minutes of leaving Kariba the wedge-shaped heights of Bumi Hills come into view on the horizon ahead. Only 40 minutes later the hydrofoil slows to enter Bumi harbour, skirting the stark, dead trees that remind the traveller that there are hundreds of square kilometres of drowned forest beneath the blue waters of the lake.

On the hill above the lake is the Bumi Hills Safari Lodge, a hotel with full facilities, a swimming pool and boats and fishing tackle for hire. From a large verandah built out over the edge of the hillside, the visitor enjoys views over the island-studded lake and may often see game on the plain below. The hotel provides game-viewing drives in the immediate vicinity and along the lake shore.

From Bumi Hills the *Sea Flight* continues its journey westwards through the Sibelobelo lagoon, passing through a narrow strait at 40-Mile Island to the main lake again. On the eastbound passage, lunch is taken in this lagoon.

Skimming through the Sengwa Sound, with the landmark of Kotakota Mountain in Zambia to the right, the hydrofoil passes into the Sengwa Basin, the central area of Lake Kariba. Soon yet another



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game reserve, Chete, is reached. There are no facilities for visitors in this area, but the passenger with binoculars will often be rewarded by the sight of elephant on the shore, particularly during the dry weather.

Soon Chete Gorge, the narrowest part of the lake through which the hydrofoil passes, is reached. Here the island on the right is Zambian territory and the shore on the left is Rhodesia. The steep sides of the gorge, particularly on the Rhodesian side, seems to be perilously close as the hydrofoil speeds through, but there is ample deep water. Once through the Chete Gorge, the *Sea Flight* heaves to, and lunch is served.

This is an aircraft-type meal of cold meats and fresh salads, followed by a dessert and coffee. With the engines stilled, this is a time to relax for an hour. The Rhodesian shore is still part of the Chete Game Reserve, and off-shore, among the dead trees, the nests of the lovely fish-eagle may be seen, or the haunting cry of one of these handsome brown and white birds may echo over the water.

Lunch over, the westward journey continues, with perhaps a flag stop at Sijarira to embark or disembark a passenger to the hunting, fishing and photo-safari camp operated by Zambezi Hunters in this forest area adjacent to the Chete Game Reserve. It is called a flag stop, because the hydrofoil will only make a call if a flag is hoisted on the mainland. Bookings for this camp must be made in advance.

The second scheduled stop is at Binga, a small administrative centre

The *Sea Horse* is loaded at Msuna, in preparation for its eastward passage to Kariba. This sturdy vessel was specially designed and constructed in Rhodesia for operation on Lake Kariba, and conforms to the highest safety standards. The hydrofoil *Sea Flight* was built in Italy, and is rated A1 at Lloyds of London.



for a vast tribal trust land. Here the Van Jaarsveldt brothers operate a holiday complex which includes fully furnished chalets, caravan and camping site, bar, garage and store.

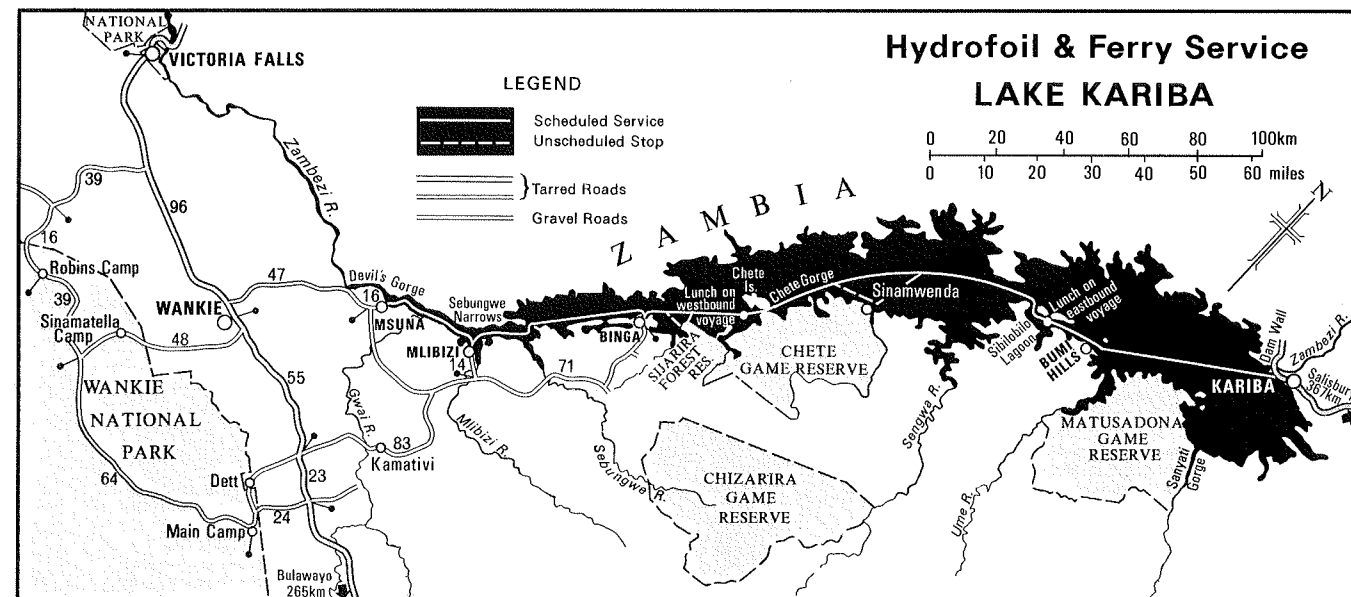
Features of interest at Binga for the visitor are the crocodile farm located near the jetty, the Batonka curios on sale, and a thermal spring which is fed into a swimming pool.

Leaving Binga, the hydrofoil enters the western end of Lake Kariba, passing through yet another narrow passage, the Sebungwe Narrows, where one of the earliest missions to this part of Africa, the Zambezi Mission, may be seen perched high on a cliff overlooking the lake. As the lake narrows beyond Sebungwe, large areas of the Kariba weed (*Salvinia auriculata*) are encountered. This poses no problem

for the *Sea Flight*: the speed is reduced so that the hull settles into the water and the propellers and rudder descend two-and-a-half metres below the weed. The hydrofoil noses through and, when clear, picks up speed once more. These banks of weed sometimes extend for five kilometres in depth and stretch from bank to bank.

Where the Mlibizi River meets the lake, the hydrofoil makes a stop for tea at the charming Mlibizi resort. Here there are luxury chalets, a restaurant, bar, and boats and fishing tackle for hire. There is good game-viewing in the surrounding area and a natural thermal spring to visit. Fishing in this part of the lake, particularly for tiger-fish, is most rewarding.

The hydrofoil leaves Mlibizi in







The lush growth along the lake shore attracts a wide variety of game. This picture was taken at Bumi Hills, but is typical of the animal life along almost the whole shore of the lake.

A bubbling hot spring that feeds a swimming pool is only one of the attractions at Binga, where furnished accommodation is available for visitors. There is also a crocodile farm here.



Part of the double bedroom in one of the luxury chalets at Mlibizi. With private bathrooms and individual mosquito-screened verandahs overlooking the lake, these represent superb comfort. Mlibizi is a fully serviced resort, with restaurant and bar.

Fishing for tiger, bream, chessa, nkupi and the giant vundu is one of the principal attractions at all the resorts on the lake shore. Here a couple display their day's catch at Msuna, the westernmost resort on the lake.



the late afternoon for the final, and perhaps most exciting, part of the journey — through the Devil's Gorge to Msuna. Here the lake is nearing its western tip, and passes through a winding gorge for 23 kilometres. The thickly-treed slopes and rocky cliffs tower on either hand as the *Sea Flight* winds its way at speed towards journey's end. Here and there the gorge widens as a river enters the lake, particularly at the Gwaai River, where on the flat marshes game may be seen at the time the hydrofoil passes. As the vessel's progress is so quiet the animals do not hear it coming and are often surprised at the water's edge.

Six hours and 281 km after leaving Kariba the hydrofoil reaches its westernmost terminus at Msuna, where the resort of Msuna-by-the-lake is situated. This is the end of the longest scheduled service by hydrofoil anywhere in the world.

The excellent fishing at Msuna is the reason for the resort's establishment, and for the casual visitor boats and fishing tackle may be hired. Self-contained chalets and a caravan and camping site are available, and a restaurant is planned. Until it is completed, meals for hydrofoil passengers can be arranged. There is also a well-equipped store, petrol and a comfortable bar where fishermen gather in the evening to tell their tales.

From Msuna there is 16 km of gravel road to Deka, from here a 3 m tar road leads for 47 km to the main Victoria Falls-Bulawayo highway (A8) at the town of Wankie. From Wankie it is 96 km to the Victoria Falls and 105 km to the Main Camp in the Wankie National Park.

For visitors who do not bring their own cars on the car ferry, Southern Cross Safaris or the United Touring Company will arrange transport to Wankie, Wankie National Park or the Victoria Falls.

The morning after arrival at Msuna the *Sea Flight* completes an east-bound passage to Kariba, arriving again same the afternoon. The car ferry arrives the morning after at about 10 a.m.

Reservations and further enquiries concerning the hydrofoil should be made to:  
Lake Shipping Co., 18-19 Mervyn  
Arcade, Forbes Avenue, Salisbury,  
Rhodesia.  
(Phone 703610. Telex RH 2188.)

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