

# **Jeff Currier** *global fly fishing*

Malawi, Africa

November 24, 2005 7:14 AM

Dear family and friends,



**Granny holds the front seat of the bus, moments before it's hijacked !**

Today is the end of day one of a series of travel days ahead of us. We have been on Lake Malawi in Malawi this past week chasing the ever so cool cichlid fishes.

As all bus travel days go, we had to look forward to getting squashed into a mini van in 100 degree temperature and dealing with touts galore. I have seen nearly everything you can imagine for sale at bus stations, but today I saw something new. A kid came up to my window while we were waiting to fill up with a tray of birds. Not live birds - grilled birds, and I don't mean chickens. These were tweety birds - house sparrows,

canaries, blue finches and some of the most beautiful songbirds of Africa. They had been grilled whole; head, guts, wings and legs with little bitty charred feet. The only thing missing were most of the feathers which had been plucked.

Happy Thanksgiving folks!

That was about as close to Thanksgiving as Granny and I will get. Things have been tough for us today. We have been continuing to struggle with the ground travel of Africa. This week we are in Malawi, the small country between Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. It's

a great place and home to Lake Malawi which boast some 500 species of fish, mainly cichlids. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa and more dangerous than we expected. Today on our mini bus ride, we faced an attempted hijacking that was horrifying. Granny and I just about have this mini bus travel dialed. The front seat of the van is the best place to sit. Up here it's the driver and only 2 passengers. I like those to be Granny and I and these days will do about anything to make it happen, because in back it's 5 rows of 4 to a seat. That's 20 people in the back of a van! Unreal! To get such positioning I have to be pretty aggressive and demanding.

Fortunately, that's easy to do these days. We have been traveling like animals for nearly 2 months now and it shows. I have that scary look in my eye, I haven't had a shave since I left home and my beard goes straight to my chest and both Granny and I have clothes that are so dirty and worn that no one really wants to mess with us. The system works. The only problem was, we were in the front seat of the bus for the attack.

We were about 2 miles outside the town of Salima and a potential passenger was flagging the bus. When we stopped, out came a pile of guys that tried to take over the bus. In stations, I'm used to being bombarded by touts, but this was a roadside pick up and when 3 guys began grabbing me and trying to open my door I was caught by surprise. Then when I saw more guys on my opposite side beating the bus driver and trying to grab the keys from the ignition I knew it was time to fight. Of course while this was on up front; the same was going on in back.



**One of the many beautiful cichlid's of Lake Malawi**



**One of the unusual fish Jeff and Granny caught from the depths of Lake Malawi**

My first move was to try to crank up the window. And while I throwing a couple frantic jabs I eventually got the job done. Then I couldn't find the lock but with all my might I managed to keep the door mostly shut. Meanwhile the bus driver who has obviously been

through this before was wining on his side as well and had us slowly getting momentum as we pulled away. In

20 seconds or less we were out of there, everyone in panic, with the bad guys giving up the chase. The bus driver was now actually digging for his knife which once found flashed out the window as if to say "next time guys you'll be sorry!"

Not to cool friends! Not too cool.

At the moment, Granny and I are in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi. Like all African cities it's a tough town. We need a travel break so we are stopping here for some trinkets. We came through here 5 days ago and realized this is a great place for wood African Crafts.



**Lioness from South Luanga National Park, Zambia**

We have been on Lake Malawi, fishing snorkeling and swimming for 4 days. It was unreal and we racked up a few new species. We even went 12 km out in a row boat to over 300 feet deep and hand lined for some crazy fish with some locals. That's another story on its own as we got tossed badly in 10 foot swells. If you look at Lake Malawi on the map you can see it's a giant lake.

Before that we were at Luanga National Park and we saw 5 lions and had a herd of elephants trash our camp. Very exciting I must say.

Okay computer is acting funny. Time for a quick end.

be good!

JEFF