Okavango Delta: Floods of Life describes the unique, functioning, life and people of this remarkable wetland. In combination, no other body of water in Africa is so large, well protected, pristine, economically valuable, and well-known internationally. This blend of values could be unique worldwide.

The Delta brings to mind wildlife and water. But there is much more: it is an interface between wetland and dryland and a rich reservoir of nutrients. It runs on internal processes that shift water from one area to another and keep the water fresh. Pulses of water retreat and then inundate the following season to permit the recycling of nutrients and life to spring from sediments. Each square metre of sediment may contain fifty thousand crustacean eggs, for example, and countless other constituents of life.

Spike McCarthy, who has contributed much to our knowledge of the Delta, wrote: ‘It is almost as if the Okavango is a single organism, with the different communities serving the function of specific organs, and working together to ensure the well-being of the whole – a kind of super-organism. The Okavango has been around a long time and is pretty robust, but it too has its jugular.’

There is a need to understand the jugular and to debate the future, considering the competing challenges and opportunities that depend on this pristine wetland. Okavango Delta: Floods of Life provides information and ideas to encourage that debate in the hope that this wonderful resource remains one of planet earth’s great assets.