

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

## **NEWSLETTER 44 / JUNE 2004**

### **1 – WORLD HERITAGE**

The Matobo Hills World Heritage Management Committee and the Technical Committee set up to draft the Management Plan have been busy, though your committee has not been able to contribute as much as it would have liked to have done. The World Heritage Bureau has given an extension to the MHWMC for the submission of the management plan.

### **2 – SNAKES**

A group of hikers in March this year had a narrow escape with a Black Mamba (*Dendroaspis polylepis*). The good rains this year are likely to see a surge in the rodent population after winter, and with it an increase in the snake population. We thought it well timed to bring you a series on snakes, and the treatment of bites. Bulawayo has more poisonous snakes in its vicinity than any other city in Zimbabwe, and the world's largest Black Mamba came from the Matopos! However the Mamba is not the only dangerous snake that we have, and like so many wild animals, they prefer to remain undisturbed, and do not seek to attack humans.

As a conservation society we are committed to the preservation of all species, and so don't support the age-old adage of "the only good snake is a dead one!" Rather we seek to inform our members of the importance of snakes in our environment, and to provide information on the treatment of snakebites should they occur. The next newsletter will deal with the treatment of bites, and thereafter we will identify the three major groups of dangerous snakes to be found in the Matopos.

### **3 – WILDLIFE NOTES**

During the month of March two species of animal, not commonly found in the Hills, were identified near Big Cave Camp in the western Matopos

Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)

Cape Pangolin (*Manis temmincki*)

The ongoing research in the Matopos has also confirmed the presence of the following

Brown Hyena (*Hyaena brunnea*)

Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)

Studies in the eastern hills identified for the first time the McKinders Eagle Owl (*Bubo capensis mackinderi*). This has regularly been located in the western hills, but this was a first for the eastern Matopos. We will endeavour to keep you posted on the various work underway in the Matopos at present.

### **4 – TRANSEPT OF VENUS**

On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June, starting at 07:30hrs, and going for 6 hours, the planet Venus crossed the face of the Sun. This rare event occurs only 13 times every thousand years, and last took place in 1852. Unfortunately, this newsletter will be too late to inform members, but we wonder if any did get to see the event?

### **5 – SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions have been increased more or less in line with inflation, as per the mandate of our members at the last AGM. Special / Pensioner rates have been further reduced to 25% of the normal subscription. However members who need time to settle, or may have difficulty in meeting these costs, should contact the Secretary. A number of donors have offered to assist our members on fixed incomes, so please don't cancel!

FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL	\$ 10,000
SPECIAL / PENSION	\$ 2,500
CORPORATE	\$100,000

Please see overleaf for a remittance advice, which you asked to complete and submit with your subscriptions.

## **6 - NEXT EVENT**

Date	18 July 2004
Venue	Malalangwe Camp
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Churchill Arms
Travel	All vehicles
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!

Richard and Bookey Peak have kindly invited us to visit the well-known Malalangwe Camp in the far Western Hills. We will be taken on a visit around the camp and estate, and will enjoy a few walks of interest.

## **7 – REPORT BACK**

Butterflies are associated with sunshine, and for two weeks before our Butterfly outing on 4<sup>th</sup> April, there was no sun to be seen. However, on the day, the clouds parted, the sun shone, and the butterflies came out to play! About 30 members travelled to Silozwane for the field trip. On arrival tea was enjoyed by all, followed by a visit to the famous cave. During this time Mike Gardiner had installed two butterfly traps, and he then proceeded to talk to the group. During the discussion, butterflies lazily floated past - adding a realistic dimension to the talk. Only one (Charaxes) butterfly was actually caught in a trap. Members found the talk, which lasted about an hour, very interesting and informative.

Apart from learning more about the butterflies, it was a delight to travel through the Park (at no charge) and then through the Khumalo Communal Lands. Whilst the roads are in desperate need of attention, it was lovely seeing all the water flowing; every stream and rivulet was full, the roads were full of puddles.

## **8 – MATOPOS ACTIVITIES**

The annual Matopos 33 Miler (56km's) road race was held on 20<sup>th</sup> March with approximately 60 runners. The race started at Matopos Dam at 6am, went around the circular drive one and a half times and finished at Maleme. The winning time was 3hr 23 minutes. A short half-course was also included for the first time.

Further Adventure Races are planned in the Matopos for the remainder of the year. Those interested in participating – or simply joining in on the outing, can contact the Secretary for more information.

## **9 – MATOPOS CLEANUP**

World Environment (5<sup>th</sup> June) did not go as planned. The chaos in our Private Schools earlier in the school term resulted in many of the affected schools being unable to provide funds for their environmental clubs. However, the DNPWM had committed to assisting with the cleanup and an attempt to arrange this later in the year, possibly in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Bulawayo, will be considered.

## **10 – RAINFALL**

The 2003/2004 rainy season ended on a high note, with good rains falling right through to the end of April. It goes without saying that the dams have filled and spilt, the rivers are all flowing well, and the wetlands have been refilled for the season ahead. As at the end of April the following had been recorded - Eastern Matopos at 975mm (39"), and the Western Hills at 750mm (30").

## **11 – MATOPOS VIDEO FOR SALE**

The committee has been unable to source blank video's. Until this can be arranged, members who would like to have a copy are asked to provide their own tapes, along with a fee of \$15,000 and a copy will be provided.

The film is approximately 25 minutes in length. Please place your name and address clearly on the cover and send the video and cash / cheque to the Secretary.

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**12 – SUBSCRIPTIONS 2004/2005**

Due by 31 July 2004. Changed Address? Please update our records

NAME	ADDRESS
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
AMOUNT <span style="float: right;">Cheque / Cash</span>	
EMAIL	

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