

MATOBO



SOCIETY

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/0 30/94

NEWSLETTER 50 / DECEMBER 2005

1 – EDITION NUMBER 50

You will have no doubt noted that this is a special milestone, yes, our 50th newsletter! An interim committee to establish the MCS was set up in 2002 and the first Newsletter was published in early April 2003. This was sent to all those persons who had expressed an interest in the initial stages of the Society. The second newsletter was issued in September 2003 ahead of the establishment of the MCS in October 2003, and the third issued in June 2004. Since that time, we have issued a newsletter every quarter. Copies of all our publications are with the Bulawayo Reference Library.

2 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NEWS

The AGM of the Society was held at Big Cave Camp in the Matopos. Forty members attended the meeting, held under a threatening sky, which held off until after the meeting. A vote of thanks was passed in appreciation to Carolyn MacDowall who stepped in as Secretary at the AGM. Our Secretary Allison Moon had to travel away at short notice, and having sent apologies, also arranged for a stand-by minute taker! We also record our appreciation to Mike Waddy for the interesting address he gave the meeting, and for Big Cave Camp for hosting the Society.

The Committee was returned to office, and two additional members have been subsequently co-opted:

Chairman	Gavin Stephens	Vice-Chairman	Bobby Hogan
Secretary	Allison Moon	Treasurer	Barbara Mucchetere
Members	Shelagh Adams, Norman Scott, Roy Stephens,		
Co-opted Members	Judy Ross and Mike Phillips		

3 – AVIAN FLU

The Matopos has a number of migrant bird species, many of which arrived before avian flu was detected in Europe. Consequently, we do not believe there is much reason to panic, but it is always better to be informed, and so we provide you with a summary of safety steps below (courtesy Birdlife Matabeleland).

Dr P Moyo, the Provincial Veterinary Officer for Matabeleland North, recommends the following procedure:

1. If you find a “fresh” dead bird, put on a pair of rubber gloves and put it into plastic bags and seal as tightly as possible.
2. Deliver it to your nearest Veterinary Department as soon as possible. The Department will then arrange for the sample to be tested locally or sent on to Harare or both.
3. Do not refrigerate or freeze the carcass.
4. If you find an “unfresh” dead bird, put on your rubber gloves, dig a nice deep hole and bury it.
5. If you find a sick bird, again put on your gloves and take it to the nearest Veterinary Department who will take blood samples. It’s possible they will also retain the bird.

Testing is done in two ways, under ideal circumstances: either by blood sampling, or by tissue culture, or both. The former produces quick results, the latter takes a couple of weeks.

For Bulawayo, birds should be taken to the Veterinary Officer in charge of the laboratory, situated within the offices on Anthony Taylor Avenue, Raylton (past the Railway Station, over the railway crossing and on your right before the road bends left). The Receptionist will guide you to the right office. For other areas, please take the specimens to your local provincial veterinary offices.

Chicken meat must be well cooked and no raw eggs are eaten or used. Eggs should be very well cooked, baked or fried.

4 - FAREWELL

Di Hubbard and Ann Hunt will be immigrating at the end of 2005. We wish them well, and will miss them at our outings. Jonathan and Jenny Timberlake have now settled in the United Kingdom, but remain in touch with the Society.

5 – SUBSCRIPTIONS

As agreed at the AGM, the Society will levy a supplementary subscription, to be paid by 31st January 2006. There is no supplementary subscription charged to corporate members. This shall be as follows:

Ordinary members	(single or family)	\$60,000
Special Members	(pensioner)	\$15,000

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR AND SAFE TRAVELS!

6 – NEXT EVENT 1

Date	22 January 2006
Venue	Cave of the Stork
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Ascot Shopping Centre
Travel	All vehicles, but see the note below
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!

This trip will be into the eastern Matopos, in the same area as the visit to the Cave of the White Leopard. Members will recall the spectacular scenery of this area, and if we have had good rains, then participants will be rewarded with crystal streams and tumbling brooks, whilst the lovely Mountain Acacia (*Brachystegia glaucescens*) forests will be a treat in any event. The views from the summit of the hill are magnificent – up the Mtshabezi Gorge, over the Mtshabezi Dam, and across the eastern hills. Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick will accompany us to talk about spiders, scorpions and other Matopos fauna, which will be of interest.

Whilst most of the route is accessible to all cars, trucks are preferred. If a car cannot make the final two kilometres, we will arrange a system of lifts from, and return to, that point. Drivers exiting down the Zhilo Pass must have high clearance trucks.

7 - NEXT EVENT 2

Date	26 February 2006
Venue	Besna Kobila Farm (Camp Dwala)
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Churchill Arms Hotel
Travel	All vehicles, but see the note below
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks

Dr Don Broadly will accompany us on this visit, which will focus on reptiles and amphibians and promises to be interesting. The route is via the Old Gwanda Road, (subject to rain) with which members are familiar. Limited accommodation is available in the area the night before the outing for those who want to make a weekend of the event. Phone Des Stephens on 091211156.

8 – REPORT BACK

The Society visited Big Cave Camp on 13th November 2005. Mike Waddy accompanied us, and showed members around the luxury lodge “on the rocks”. He was able to answer questions about both the property and the Lodge. A walk followed over the nearby dwalas, which provided lovely views, and even some game spotting in the valley below. We record our thanks to Big Cave Camp for hosting our last event of 2005.

9 – NATIONAL PARKS UPDATE

The Parks and Wildlife Management Authority Regional Office (Western Region – Bulawayo) has moved to Coal House, between 9th and 10th Avenue along Robert Mugabe Rd. Telephone numbers remain the same. This is a much-needed improvement in the standard of ZPWA offices, is more

centrally located, and is not far from the Bulawayo Publicity Offices - which is good for accommodation bookings and visitor information.

With effect from 1st November, and without notice, the ZPWMA increased entry fees to all Parks. We understand the need for the increases, but are disappointed that once again that there has been no public information, and no stakeholder discussion.

Entry	\$ 80,000	VAT \$94,000 (non resident US\$15)
Car	\$ 20,000	VAT \$23,500
Eagle	\$940,000	
Lodge	\$880,000	
Cottage	\$587,000	
Camping	\$150,000 per person per night	

10 – RAINFALL

The start of the rainy season was particularly late, placing both the veld and the wildlife (not forgetting the people of the hills) under considerable pressure. This had also resulted in additional bush fires, as the veld remained dry for so long. However, from mid-November the rains started, and early December was particularly wet. Forecasts suggest a normal season.

As at the 12th of December rainfall totals were - Eastern Matopos 322mm, Western Matopos 240mm.

11 – VIDEOS AND HATS FOR SALE

New stocks of the popular video have been delivered to the WEZ shop, Fife Street, and new MCS hats are also available from the Chairman, or at the next outing. MCS Brochures are also available at the WEZ shop.

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12 – SUPPLEMENTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS 2006

Due by 31 January 2006. Changed Address? Please update our records

NAME	ADDRESS
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
AMOUNT	Cheque / Cash
EMAIL	

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