

MATOBO



SOCIETY

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

NEWSLETTER 67 / AUGUST 2009

1 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for 29 November at Gordon Park. We plan to make a weekend of it, with a number of events taking place. Members are welcome to attend all or some of the various activities. Please support your society, and see the details provided elsewhere in this newsletter. We are holding the AGM at Gordon Park as a mark of respect and celebration as Scouting Zimbabwe, and in particular First Bulawayo (Pioneer) Troop, celebrate their Centenary.

2 – WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY – MATOPOS CLEANUP DAY

Our start to the 2009 RMNP cleanup day was certainly warmer than in the previous year, and we expected a large turn-out. Approximately 22 people joined us for the cleanup day, with several non-members participating. We would like to thank everyone who made the effort to turn out for this worthy cause, especially those who are not members. We are pleased to report that two participants so enjoyed cleaning up the Park that they decided to join our Society!

Upon arrival at the Sandy Spruit entrance, we were pleasantly surprised to learn that our hosts were indeed expecting us and arrangements had been made for a Ranger to accompany us on our tour of the Park. Mr Ndlovu was duly collected from Hazelside offices and he worked like a Trojan in assisting us clean up certain selected picnic sites.

We started at the base of World's View and worked the western side of Circular Drive. Whilst we did collect a number of bags of "old" rubbish, we are extremely pleased to report that in general the condition of the picnic sites visited was very good, with very little "current" rubbish to be collected. It would appear that Parks management is making considerable effort to ensure that rubbish is properly managed. It is, however, disappointing to see that there is still a large amount of old rubbish present at some sites and it will take considerable effort to get this all cleared out. A case in point is Lower Outspan, where there is a pile of old rusted beer cans lying in the thickets just above the dam wall, but which proved extremely difficult to reach on account of the bush. We encourage all members visiting the Park to be on the lookout for such rubbish and assist Parks management by removing whatever they can and returning it to Bulawayo.

Our cleanup process ended at Lower Outspan where a most enjoyable late afternoon picnic lunch was had by all at a very clean site! Our thanks go to everyone involved. Thanks to Jean Whiley for transporting Ranger Ndlovu and to Portland Holdings for the rubbish bags.

3 – BOOK RAFFLE

In our last newsletter we advised about the impending raffle, in which the book prizes (donated by Elspeth Parry and Brian Kalshoven) "Albizia Southern Africa" by Martinus Steyn and "Legacy on the Rocks" by Elspeth Parry will be raffled. The tickets will be on sale at our next outing, and at future WEZ and Birdlife events, as well as our AGM at which time the draw will be conducted. The proceeds will go towards the establishment of a suitable web-site.

4 – CALENDAR

20 September 2009 Fort Mangwe Topic - Historical

29 November 2009 Gordon Park; Topic – AGM, and Zimbabwe Scouting Centenary

5 - NEXT EVENT

Date	20 September 2009
Venue	Fort Mangwe and the Mangwe Pass
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Churchill Arms Hotel
Travel	All vehicles
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!

Our resident archaeologist Paul Hubbard will be taking us on a history tour to the far western Matobo Hills, where we will explore forts, pioneer trails, monuments, ruined houses, cemeteries and see a genuine 1890's wagon. This promises to be an interesting and fascinating day out not to be missed. We will travel out towards Plumtree, and then south from Marula to the Mangwe Pass. After Marula we will be on dirt roads.

6 – CECIL JOHN RHODES NDEBELE CULTURAL VILLAGE

Members have been invited to the formal dedication of the Cecil John Rhodes Ndebele Cultural Village at 2pm on Wednesday 2nd September 2009. The Village is located 7km's beyond Masiye Camp on the Toghwana River, just beyond Mtshelili Dam. It promises to be a day full of interest. For those who have the time, activities start in the morning, and all our members will be more than welcome.

7 – REPORT BACK

Our members met at the Churchill Arms on 21st June, and despite it being mid-winter, we enjoyed a warm day out in the hills. We started by visiting Cyrene Mission – well you might say that the Mission is not exactly located in the Hills, so why visit the site? Apart from the wonderful Chapel and its art work, the Mission is located near the Westacre Junction, and so is on the old rail route into the Hills. By starting at the mission, we could follow the route of the old railway line, and see the approach to the hills that was so familiar to visitors before the 1930's. We then proceeded to the Old Matopos Terminus, and again were given a fascinating history of the site, before exploring the surrounds to locate the old houses and offices of the once thriving "Matopos" hamlet. After an extended lunch time picnic, the convoy moved onto the site of the 1896 "Maleme Camp" which was the base camp for General Carrington's Matabele Campaign and the battles within the Matopos. Old pictures were used to check our location – and it was intriguing to stand exactly where the photographer once stood, and to see the changes, if any, to the environment.

The various talks given by Rob Burrett filled the day with interest and his participation was much appreciated by all who took part in the day's outing.

8 – MATOBO COMMUNITY UPDATE

(With acknowledgment to Mrs E Parry, August 2009)

An excellent and productive 2nd term in which 18 trips were made to 32 schools. During this time, we accomplished the following:

- Distributed stationary/pens and pencils, sports equipment – all donated by the British Embassy.
- Put up educational posters in classrooms
- Distributed books from Book Aid International – courtesy of the Rotary Club of Bulawayo South.
- Gave 32 workshops to Conservation Club members on 'Endangered Species' to include the Southern Ground Hornbill, (and in some cases, to other interested pupils)
- Distributed blankets from anonymous French and Scottish donors to orphans
- Distributed 2nd hand clothing within the communities.
- Mrs Parry spoke to several SDC committees and answered queries from their members.
- Distributed a questionnaire asking Head of Schools for an assessment and opinions on the project – from the schools and the communities
- Recorded further Ground Hornbill nests and roosting sites. We now have 25 confirmed nests and we have information collected from pupils that require follow up in these coming holidays that may lead to further nests and roosts.
- Visited a local Chief to update him and his community on the ongoing success of the project

This is our 22nd trip of the year and to date we have done 4 500 kms.

We have targeted the orphans at all the schools – at some of these schools this category makes up 75% of each form.

9 – PRESS STORIES

"Poachers wiping out Zimbabwe's rhinos as demand surges" The Guardian (UK) 9 June 2009, David Smith in Harare

Zimbabwe's rhinos are being wiped out amid a surge in poaching driven by Chinese demand for the animals' horns, a wildlife conservation group warned today. Around 120 rhinos have been killed since last March to feed the lucrative Chinese black market, said Johnny Rodrigues, chairman of the independent Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force. Since last year economic collapse and the breakdown of law and order have contributed to a rapid escalation in poaching by organised gangs. "In the past 15 months we've lost 120 rhinos, and we're still losing two to four per month," Rodrigues said. "We used to have 1,000 in this country." The exact size of Zimbabwe's current rhino population is debated. Save the Rhino, a British-based charity, puts the total at above 700. Rodrigues says it is about 400. Both agree the situation represents a crisis. Rodrigues said that Zimbabwe's trade links with China, where the rhino horn is highly prized as medicinal, are a driving factor. "We're now down to about 400 rhinos, black and white, since the opening of the Chinese market. Normally the first thing the Chinese ask when they come here is, 'Have you got rhino? Have you got rhino?'" He added: "It's all linked to the top. All those corrupt ministers are trying to cream off as much as possible before the next election. But if the carnage continues over the next two years we'll have nothing left. The devastation taking place is not sustainable."

A rhino horn can sell for thousands of pounds on the black market. Along with Chinese medicine, the horns are used for ornamental dagger handles in some Middle Eastern countries. Rodrigues said gangs were now using a Chinese-made version of a tranquillising agent that can be fired noiselessly from a dart gun to avoid drawing attention. The gangs then chop off the horn and leave the unconscious animal for dead. "They don't reverse the tranquilliser, so the rhino overheats and dies," Rodrigues said. "Anyone who then finds it can't eat the meat, you will die if you do. The removal of the horn is very harsh. They use an axe and disfigure the rhino's face. The humane thing to do is put a bullet through its head and burn the carcass." Rodrigues is preparing to hand a dossier to the Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai, in the hope that the country's unity government will take tougher action. Government vets have made attempts to de-horn rhinos so they no longer have value for poachers, but the process must be repeated because the horns regrow.

The army and police have been called in to conservation areas and national parks to defend the animals, but it is alleged that some soldiers turn poachers themselves. Poachers have little to fear. Even those who are caught are usually freed on minimum bail because there is often no fuel to bring them to court. Zimbabwe's Parks and Wildlife Management Authority challenged Rodrigues' claims, but refused to give a figure for the rhino population. "We definitely have more than 400," said Vitalis Chadenga, director of conservation. "But it's true we're facing an upsurge in the poaching of rhinos. This has taken place mostly on private farms, though parks have also suffered losses. He insisted: "The government takes it very seriously. We have de-horned some rhinos and relocated some to safer areas where we can afford them maximum protection – if you come here in 10 years' time you will still see the rhino. They are safe but they are under threat. There is not a soft touch in terms of law enforcement." The Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species has said it will discuss the threat to Zimbabwe's rhinos at its next meeting in July. The government has said tourism is one of its best opportunities for quick economic revival. But Rodrigues warned: "We were the jewel of Africa, but we've gone back 15 or 20 years. The wildlife has been decimated to such a stage that there'll be nothing left for tourists when they come back to the country."

"Four Poachers die in shootout" – The Herald, 10 June 2009

Harare - Police in Masvingo at the weekend shot and killed four poachers including one believed to be a soldier following a shootout at Ruware Conservancy in Chiredzi, bringing to seven the number of poachers killed in the Lowveld over the past month. It is believed that the four, who were part of a group of seven suspected poachers, wanted to kill and de-horn rhinos when they were intercepted by a police team working in conjunction with game rangers from the conservancy. The poachers reportedly started firing at the police and the game rangers after they were ambushed and ordered to surrender. Two of the suspects fled, but one was arrested and police were able to impound an Isuzu truck that was used for the abortive mission and two rifles, a pistol and more than 10 live rounds of ammunition and spent cartridges. The death of the four poachers comes hard on the heels of last month's shooting of three suspected poachers by police in the nearby Malilangwe Conservancy Trust. The poachers were also after rhinos. The four were identified as Marvelous Masvauro (48) a soldier based in Masvingo and attached to Operation Maguta, Godfrey Dhlwayo, Jameson Madividze and Bothwell Mazhetesi,

all of Masvingo. Support Unit police spokesperson Inspector Charles Jack said the four's accomplice Innocent Mudzviti (30) of Masvingo helped them identify the poachers after he was arrested. Masvingo provincial police spokesperson Inspector Phibion Nyambo on Monday confirmed the shooting of the four poachers in the Lowveld, saying investigations were continuing. "We shot and killed four poachers at Ruware Conservancy and the poachers had fired at the police first when they were ordered to surrender and we want to strongly warn such elements that in future we will not hesitate to shoot because rhino poaching is on the increase in the Lowveld," said Insp Nyambo. He said police were intensifying patrols in the Lowveld. It is believed police in Chiredzi received a tip-off that there were some poachers on the prowl in the Ruware Conservancy area and they teamed up with game rangers from the conservancy before ambushing them. When the suspects were confronted by the joint team of police and game rangers, they allegedly opened fire and a shootout ensued resulting in the death of the four. Cases of poaching have been on the increase in the Lowveld and during the past 12 months. Zimbabwe has lost more than 70 rhinos to poachers earning the country censure from Cites and putting the country on the group's agenda next year. The poachers are believed to comprise local and foreign nationals who have woven well-organised syndicates that are lured by big money that accrues from selling rhino horns abroad.

"Exclusive" – "Ministers in illicit rhino horn trade" -The Standard's (Sunday July 13)

The report says a "massive official cover-up could be underway after police investigations into the ballooning illegal trade in rhino horns netted 2 Zanu PF ministers" (who it says cannot be named). "The 2 politicians have been saved from prosecution after the dockets "mysteriously disappeared" from the magistrates' court recently. Judicial sources said yesterday the dockets were too hot to handle." The report says Environmental and Natural Resources Management Minister, Francis Nhema admitted on Thursday that senior Zanu PF officials had been implicated in the resurgent cases of rhino poaching. "Yes, it might be possible that some government officials are abusing their powers and are involved in rhino poaching but we do not have the names. We are still investigating the matter. The HE (President Mugabe) is even concerned about the issue. He asked me for the names of the ministers involved." Nhema said an unnamed minister was implicated in a case where a Chinese national was arrested for poaching rhinos.

10 – SUBSCRIPTIONS 2009/2010

FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL R 50

SPECIAL / PENSION R 15

CORPORATE R 150

These subs were due by 31st July 2009.

11 – MTB RIDES

The National Mountain Bike Series held its 3 lap race starting at the Matopo Mission, and passing around (and over) Mwazi, the highest point in the Matopos on 6th June, and was full of action and challenge.

There are a number of one and two day rides scheduled for the remainder of the year. Contact the Secretary if you require more information.

12 – MUSEUM COLLECTION RESCUED

Bulawayo's Natural History Museum contains one of the world's most impressive Entomological Collections. Sadly, this national treasure has become seriously neglected as funding for our Museums all but dried up. However, concerned former and present curators, led by our member Mr Mike Gardener, have undertaken to rescue the collection, and Portland Holdings Ltd (PPC Zimbabwe) stepped into the breach in June this year by securing and donating the required naphthalene. The collection has therefore been saved to serve future generations of Zimbabweans, both lay visitors and serious researchers.

13 – MATOPOS DVD ON SALE

Members will recall that the MCS, through the kind services of Osprey Productions, produced a video on the Matobo Hills for the World Heritage submission. The video proved to be very popular, and has now been produced in DVD format. Members wanting to acquire copies (Christmas is not too far away!) should contact the Secretary to place orders.

14 – SCOUTING JAMBOREE

To celebrate the centenary of First Bulawayo (Pioneer) Scout Troop, the oldest in the country, and the second oldest world wide, a National Scout Jamboree (Centenary Camp) was held at Gordon Park over the Heroes' week-end. Scouts from across the length and breadth of the country converged on the historic camping ground for four days of activities and scouting challenges. Teams participated in hikes to Fort Usher, where Lord Baden Powell was based in 1896 – one such hiking party got chased by a rhino! Others went on shorter hikes to sites such as White Rhino Shelter, whilst they were all kept busy at various bases around the Gordon Park Grounds. A special Church Service, conducted by Fr Martin Schupp, was held on the Sunday at the open air St Georges Chapel, whilst an opening parade was attend by the Minister of Education, Sport ad Culture, The Hon Senator Dave Coltart, and Zimbabwe's Acting Chief Scout Commissioner Ignitius Kajego. At the closing ceremony, the scouts formed up into the words "Zimbabwe Scouts 100". As always, the success of the event was largely due to the considerable efforts of Norman Scott!

15 – PROTECTED SPECIES

For our member's information, we have made an extract from the National Parks and Wildlife Act 14/75 in respect of protected species. We especially bring this to our member's attention as your Committee Members have on a number of occasions seen street vendors selling indigenous orchids, ferns and other protected species around the city. These plants have been illegally removed from their natural environment, and this practice threatens our natural heritage. Members should inform the Police or your committee if you come across any of these illicit dealers – and you should not buy from them! Please note that in terms of the law the word "WILDLIFE" refers to animal and plant species.

NATIONAL PARKS WILDLIFE ACT 14/75 (1 August 1990 Amended)

S 15 No person shall pick any plant in a National Park

S 35-93 Specially Protected Indigenous Plants

No person, subject to certain provisions, shall pick any specially protected indigenous plant.

<u>Specific name</u>	<u>Common name</u>
Cysbanthes	Fire Lilies
Dierama	Hairbells
Adenium multiflorum	Sabi Star
Borassus aethiopum	Borassus Palm
Raphia farinitera	Raffia Palm
Juniperus procera	African Juniper
Cyathia	Tree Ferns
Aloe	All species, including hybrids
Encephalartos	Cycades
Gloriosa superba	Flame Lily
Platynerium Alcicorne	Staghorn Fern
Epiphytic/lithophilic	Orchids

16– UN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY

Don't forget our UNEA tree planting programme for 2009!

17 – CONTACT DETAILS

Please don't forget to keep the Society updated on your contact details, especially your e-mail address! We endeavour to keep in touch with our members – but it is a two-way exercise and we need your help and co-operation.

Friends of members are always welcome to attend our quarterly outings.

The Society is always looking for new members – help to attract new members to the MCS.

Members are always invited to make submissions to our newsletter.

18 – MCS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The programme for the AGM on the week-end of 28 / 29 November is intended to include a series of meetings with stakeholders, a strategic planning session, and then the AGM itself. We are sure that Norman will supply the usual obstacle course for those who need the extra activity – and we hope that the "Spouses" race will be well supported – plenty of time to get your better half into training!

There are many challenges facing the Matobo Hills, the National Park, the World Heritage Site, and therefore your Society. Given the considerable changes that the country has gone through, and continues to experience, your committee felt it prudent that we take stock of the direction of the Society. Whilst specific stakeholders will be invited, this does not preclude the participation of our members – so please do join in.

Saturday 28th Nov 09:00am Stakeholders Meeting
 02:00pm Strategic Planning
 06:00pm Social Braai
Sunday 29th Nov 08:00am Tree and bird walk and talk
 10:00am Tea
 11:00am AGM
 12:30pm Social Lunch
 14:00pm Activities

19 – CONTINENT’S POPULTAION REACHES ONE BILLION

allAfrica.com; Thursday August 20, 2009

AFRICA - One billion people now live in Africa, says a new report. The continent's population is growing by about 24 million a year, and will double to nearly two billion by 2050, the report adds. These statistics have been released by the Population Reference Bureau, a Washington-based non-profit organisation, in a report published jointly with USAID, the United States government aid agency. The report, the "2009 World Population Data Sheet," shows that Africa is the continent with the world's highest birth rate and the highest projected population growth rate to 2050. Although population growth has slowed in North African countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, on average women in sub-Saharan Africa have more children than women elsewhere. While globally the average woman has 2.6 children, in sub-Saharan Africa she has 5.3 children (which is down from 6.7 children in around 1950). The world's highest fertility rate is in Niger, where women have on average 7.4 children. Worldwide, 62 percent of married women of childbearing age use contraception, but in Africa the figure is 28 percent. The report also reveals that sub-Saharan Africa has the world's most youthful population, "and is projected to stay that way for decades." In 1950, nine percent of the world's youths were African. In 2050, the continent is expected to have 349 million youths, or 29 percent of the world's total. The report says of the world's young people: "This very large group will arrive at working age with a right to expect gainful employment, adequate health care, and the ability to raise a family with an appropriate living standard if they so choose... But will the economic conditions of their country be able to meet their rising expectations? This will be one of the major social questions of the next few decades."

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20 – SUBSCRIPTIONS 2009/10

Due by 31 July 2009. Changed Address? Please update our records if you have changes

NAME	ADDRESS
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	
AMOUNT Cheque / Cash	
EMAIL	

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