

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

[www.matobo.org](http://www.matobo.org)

Welfare No: W/0 30/94

## **NEWSLETTER 72 / DECEMBER 2010**

### **1 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Our AGM was held in the delightful surrounds of Granite Ridge. Whilst attendance was modest, the day was enjoyable. Your committee remains the same, except with the addition of Hazel Robinson, whom we welcome onto the Committee. The newly elected Committee therefore comprises office bearers Chairman Gavin Stephens, Secretary Jean Whiley and Treasurer Adele Edwards, and members Gaynor Lightfoot, Duncan Purchase, Paul Hubbard and Shelagh Adams.

Verity Bowman, Director of Marwell Zimbabwe Trust was our guest speaker. She introduced the new branding of MZT to Dambari Wildlife Trust, and outlined the change in direction that the Trust will be taking – not just "Conservation across Boundaries" but also the fact that it will focus on the Matobo Hills. This is exciting for the MCS as it brings an almost dedicated research team to focus on the Hills, and one of the boundaries to be "crossed" is that of the people vs conservation boundary.

### **2 – MCS CHANGES**

The members attending the AGM voted to adopt two important changes to the MCS Constitution. Firstly, it was agreed to change the functional currency from South African Rand (ZAR) to United States Dollars (USD). This means that subscriptions will be set in USD and our year end accounts reported in USD.

Secondly, the proposed changes as notified to members in Newsletter 70 were adopted and this means that subscriptions will fall due at the end of the Financial Year, that is 30 September.

### **3 – BOOK RAFFLE**

At our AGM we finally got to draw our raffle. The winners were as follows:

- 1) Ticket F01 James Alexander (Legacy on the Rocks)
- 2) Ticket N13 Lex Lucas (Albizia Southern Africa)
- 3) Ticket G24 Fozzie Forster
- 4) Ticket D11 Gavin Stephens
- 5) Ticket D24 Penny Feather
- 6) Ticket H22 Duncan Purchase

We record our appreciation to the sponsors "Legacy on the Rocks" by Elspeth Parry (donated by Elspeth Parry) and "Albizia Southern Africa" by Martinus Steyn (donated by Brian Kalshoven). We know that our winners will enjoy the books and we thank all those who participated.

### **4 – MATOPOS MERCHANDISE ON SALE**

Members are reminded that the Matobo Hills World Heritage submission DVD is Available. Members wanting to acquire copies should contact the Secretary to place orders.

The Society also has both branded hats and caps for sale, at a price of \$10.00 per item. These articles have proved popular in the past. Please contact the Secretary for orders.

We hope to be able to make available shirts and other items during 2011.

### **5 – MEMBERSHIP DETAILS**

Please don't forget to keep the Society updated on your contact details, especially your e-mail address! Friends of members are always welcome to attend our quarterly outings.

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

Members are invited to make submissions to our newsletter and / or website.

## 6 - NEXT EVENT

Date	30 January 2011
Venue	Tshingengoma
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, <u>Ascot Service Station</u>
Travel	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!
Details	All vehicles

Whilst the primary purpose of the outing will be to climb Tshingengoma (Drum Kopje) we hope to explore the eastern hills a little further, and reach some waterfalls in that area. Thereafter we will explore the Ntazi River, and possibly look for the *Stretocarpus eylesii*. We may also visit Dianna's Pool and the Orbicular granite site.

## 7 – REPORT BACK

Members attending the AGM at the Granite Ridge were treated to some fine walks on the private estate. It is always a privilege to be invited onto the private conservancies, and as always, we enjoyed spectacular views and places of interest. Some members resigned themselves to the front lawn – whilst the youngest members barely left the swimming pool! As always, a delightful day was enjoyed by all, and we thank Dave Harrison and staff for their hospitality.

## 8 – RAINFALL

The rains started late this year, after a scorcher of an October. Indeed, October 12<sup>th</sup> recorded the hottest ever temperature for Bulawayo at 38.2C – the first time that temperatures exceeded 100°F. The heat carried on into November, but finally the rains arrived! The hills seem to be looking better than ever - or is it just the lovely clean air, and washed dwalas, trickling water, green foliage – and the smell of rain on the hot rock?

As at 22 December 2010, the rainfall records are as follows - the eastern Matopos has received 262mm, the Eastern Matopos 205mm, and Bulawayo 233mm.

At this time last year, the Matopos had recorded 205mm, and Bulawayo 259mm, whilst over the past six years, four have been above average, with the last two about 50% above normal. 2007 was a mere 20mm short of average. Forecasts for 2011 are for an above normal rainfall.

## 9 – RHODES REMAINS BLOCKING RAINS – ZANU (PF) GOVERNOR

Bulawayo, December 14, 2010 – The Zanu (PF) Bulawayo Governor, Cain Mathema said he is pushing for the exhumation of Cecil John Rhodes remains in Matopo area, which he accuses of blocking the rains Rhodes is buried at Malindidzimu hill in Matopos just outside Bulawayo.

*"I wonder why years after Independence of Zimbabwe his grave is still found there. We are going to exhume it and send it to Britain where it belongs. Right now, we are failing to get rains because of Rhodes' bones buried at Matopo Hills"* Mathema told Radio VOP. Mathema also said he is very angry with Rhodes' grave and this has made him stop visiting Matopo area.

Rhodes was born in England on July 5, 1853 and was buried in Matopo on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1902. He was elected to the Cape Parliament in South Africa and by 1890 became Prime Minister. During this time, he actively pursued north of the Limpopo River. The result of his endeavours produced new British annexations: Nyasaland (now Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Mathema added he wanted the David Livingstone's statue in Victoria Falls removed and replaced by the one for President Mugabe.

(Both these issues have been settled at Cabinet level many years ago and are unlikely to change)

## 10 – [www.matobo.org](http://www.matobo.org)

We trust you have visited our website! We recently gave the web-site a facelift, so be sure to log in and follow the progress of the Society. Please give us news, views and links to other sites. Photos from MCS outings are particularly welcome for our "photo gallery" as well as any other of a general interest.

## 11 – WORLD HERITAGE UPDATE

Sadly, there have been no new developments on the Matobo Hills World Heritage Site Management Committee. However recent events at the Victoria Falls highlight the need to resolve this issue, as like

the Victoria Falls, both National Parks and National Museums have a vested interest in the Matobo Hills, and we could not afford a debacle such as reported at the Victoria Falls.

The chaos at Victoria Falls underscores the sad lack of direction within the bodies whose role it is to protect Zimbabwe's Heritage. Funding for these bodies started deteriorating after Independence, and of course like all Government bodies had collapsed by 2008. This has led to this pathetic squabbling over money and resources, with no appreciation of the underlying rationale for their existence. Victoria Falls is a National Monument, and not a National Park, but is administered by National Parks, and this is what has led to the current fracas. And of course in all this the principles of the World heritage Site get ignored.

"The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, the Environmental Management Authority and other stakeholders are on a collision course with National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority after the later consented to a restaurant in the Victoria Falls Rainforest. The restaurant, critics say, could have a negative impact on the area's World Heritage Site status. The facility has seen the number of tourists' spending money in the rainforest increasing. In a meeting called by local NGO Environment Africa to discuss the effects of the restaurant on the community and World Heritage Site Status, NMMZ, EMA and others accused Parks officials of failing to follow procedures when carrying out developments in the rainforest." – *Herald, Thursday October 21, 2010*

## **12 – NEW UNESCO BIOSPHERE DECLARED – ZAMBEZI VALLEY**

UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE, (*Zambesi Traveller, Second Issue 2010*)

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010, the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme declared Zimbabwe's Middle Zambezi Valley a Biosphere Reserve. This designation is a first for Zimbabwe, and indeed the immediate region – the only other Biosphere Reserves in Southern Africa being in South Africa and Malawi.

Biosphere Reserves are areas designated under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme to serve as places to test different approaches to integrated management of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine resources and biodiversity. Biosphere Reserves are thus sites for experimenting with and learning about sustainable development.

Zimbabwe's new Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve stretches over approximately 40,000km in the Zambezi valley. It includes riverine and terrestrial ecosystems unique to the subcontinent, one of its largest man-made reservoirs, Lake Kariba, and two core National Park areas: the Matusadona National Park on Lake Kariba's southern shores, and Mana Pools National Park, already a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Zimbabwe's designation was announced along with 12 other new Biosphere Reserve sites and five extensions in 15 different countries. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) now numbers 564 sites in 109 countries.

## **13 – HEAR! HEAR!**

President Mugabe has called on Zimbabweans to preserve the country's natural resources and to desist from deforestation, saying environmental heritage provides multiple benefits. Speaking at the National Tree Planting Day commemorations at Chishawasha Primary School yesterday, he was informed Zimbabwe loses 330 000ha of forest every year due to the needless loss of trees. "With a forest and woodland cover of approximately 17 mln hectares, this implies that it would only take about 53 years to wipe out all forests in Zimbabwe. This trend has to change" – *Sunday Mail, December 5*

## **14 – MATOBO HILLS CLASSIC**

The annual Matobo Hills Classic MTB was held on the 20 / 21 November 2010 with twenty riders taking part – more from Harare than from Bulawayo! The route was challenging, offering some of the best MTB cycling possible, and interesting. The MCS again provided a detailed route guide on places of interest along the 120km route. The event realised a profit of \$120 which has been donated to the MCS.

## **15 – LITTER**

"Zimbabweans may soon find themselves being arrested and fined up to \$20 for littering, especially for "careless" discarding of plastic (*NewsDay, Saturday December 4*). EMA director general Mutsa Chasi told Parliament on Friday that her organisation would soon move to enforce the law and arrest and fine people in accordance with the Environmental Management Act. Statutory Instrument SI 98 of 2010 stipulated that anyone found littering would be charged a fine of \$20. "The Plastic Packaging and

Plastic Bottles Regulations were enacted on the 28th May, 2010, and these regulations encourage packaging using recyclable and reusable materials." *Sunday Mail*, December 5. *The Chronicle* carried a similar story with information gleaned from the EMA's environmental education and publicity officer for the Midlands province, Timothy Nyoka.

As they say the proof of the pudding will be in the eating! The dumping of waste outside Bulawayo on approach roads to the Matopos, especially on the Old Gwanda Rd, is appalling. The Bulawayo Publicity Association recently wrote to the Mayor of Bulawayo advising that it is very difficult to promote the City when large parts of it look like a tip. Long gone is the City pride in having the cleanest City in the country – indeed in Southern Africa, but the problem lies not so much with the City Council, but with its citizens, who freely dump waste and litter. We can make a difference by reporting culprits to the City, ZRP or to EMA.

## **16 - TICKS**

*(With appreciation to Moira Fitzpatrick, we will be bringing you a short series on Ticks)*

Ticks are the most important external parasites of domestic animals and wildlife in Southern Africa. They do harm both directly and indirectly. Directly ticks cause deterioration in the condition of their hosts resulting in loss of blood, tick worry and toxicosis. Oxpeckers feed almost entirely on engorged ticks taken directly from their hosts, but these birds are unable to control heavy tick infestations. Animals irritated by ticks spend time self-grooming or indulging in mud or dust baths. The general condition of animals declines because of the time and energy wasted in these activities. Both "tick worry" and tick toxicoses have been recorded in the Matobo National Park. The bites are also damaging in themselves, and can allow invasion of secondary infections causing abscesses and deep seated suppurating sores. Indirectly the ticks act as vectors for a wide range of pathogenic organisms causing serious diseases and loss of life.

In broad outlines the life cycle of a tick is as follows: The fully-fed female, which is a soft bodied creature, dark grey to yellowish brown in colour, drops from her host to the ground. There she seeks shelter in a crack in the soil, under a tuft of grass or similar hiding place. After a time (from a few days to months) she lays a large batch of several thousand eggs and then dies. These eggs then hatch into minute 6-legged larvae or "seed ticks" or "pepper ticks". After hardening they climb up grass stems or similar objects and form a small cluster while they wait for a passing animal to which they can attach. After feeding for several days the larva goes through a period during which structural changes take place inside its skin. When these changes are complete the larval skin is cast off and a slightly larger, 8-legged nymph emerges. This in turn feeds for a few days, and then moults into the adult. The adults mate and after a feed, usually lasting for a week to 10 days or so, the engorged females drop off to lay eggs and start a new cycle. The males however may stay on the host and accumulate there for several months before they die. The males look different from the females as they have a hard shield or scutum covering the entire upper surface of their bodies while the females only have a relatively small hard shield area just behind the head, while the rest of the females body is leathery in appearance and extremely expandable.

Most ticks in Zimbabwe are either a two-host or three-host tick. Two-host ticks attach themselves to an animal as larvae, feed and stay on the same animal while developing into nymphae. The nymphae reattach, feed and then drop to the ground to continue their development. When the adults emerge they have to find a second animal on which to feed. A three-host tick requires three animals to complete their life cycle because each stage drops off the host after feeding to moult. The larvae and nymphae of a particular tick species normal do not normally feed on the same host species and are normally found on smaller animals such as shrews, and as adults feed on the large mammals.

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