

**MATOBO**



**SOCIETY**

PO Box FM 648, Famona. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

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

Welfare No: W/O 30/94

### NEWSLETTER 85 / OCTOBER 2013

#### **1 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This year we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, and so have made arrangements for a special celebration and Annual General Meeting. We also mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Matopos being declared a World Heritage Site.

Please give serious thought to your nominations for the new Committee.

#### **2 – AGM 2013**

Arrangements are well advanced for the holding of our AGM, and are outlined below

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>

- 9:00 am Bike ride to Nsvatuke Cave from Maleme Rest Camp. All welcome (and by car!)  
Tea back at Maleme Rest Camp
- 2:00 pm Official Check-in at Maleme Rest Camp
- 3:00 pm Tree walk to Maleme Dam
- 6:00 pm Drinks followed by dinner at 7:00 pm, under the stars at the tennis court (weather permitting!)

Bring your own chairs and tables, crockery and cutlery will be provided, but please supply your own drinks and glasses. Please let the secretary know (at least two weeks in advance) of any special meal requirements you may need.

- 9:00pm Star identification (weather permitting).

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>

- 07:00am Bird walk to Maleme Dam
- 10:00am Official Check out from Maleme Rest Camp
- 10:00 am Walk to Pomongwe Cave, for those who want the exercise!
- 11:00 am Annual General Meeting, inside Pomongwe cave.
- 12:00 Picnic lunch at Pomongwe cave car park and “Best Picnic Table” Competition.

#### **Costs**

Accommodation per selection of unit, as follows (payable to the Secretary, MCS):

- Mbila \$80 (4 pax)
- Lodge \$65 (4 pax)
- Chalet \$20 (2 pax) \$40 (4 pax)
- Camping \$5 per person (pay directly to National parks on arrival)

Dinner and AGM \$25 per person (Child u/13 \$15 per head)  
(This includes NMMZ fees of \$4 per person for Nsvatuke and Pomongwe)

Park entry fees (\$3 per person and \$3 per car) payable at the main gate on arrival  
There are reduced entry fees for over persons over 65 years of age.

#### **WHAT TO DO**

Contact the Secretary to make an accommodation booking.  
Add this cost to that of \$25 per person for the dinner and AGM.  
Pay this amount to the Secretary to confirm your reservation.

### 3 - NEXT EVENT

Date	6 October 2013
Venue	Mazhowe River
Meet	8:15am to leave by 8:30am, Churchill Arms Hotel
Travel	All vehicles, trucks preferred
Details	Provide own chairs, tables, meals and drinks. Don't forget your hat!

This trip will focus on trees, and we will be travelling to the Mazhowe River, in the Eastern Matopos to walk amongst the *Brachystegia tamarindoides* which have burst into leaf in the past few days. There are two particularly fine specimens that we will visit, amongst the other tree species in the valley.

We will picnic in this area. Given the time of the year, there won't be much water, but we will be able to visit the weirs on the river and see the impact of siltation on them.

We will be travelling down the Old Gwanda Road. Those wanting to leave earlier and avoid the dust, can meet at the Matopo Mission at 09:00hrs. SEE ITEM 15 BELOW for more information.

### 4 – REPORT BACK

On Sunday 8 September a small party of members met at Cresta Churchill Hotel and travelled out to Badja Secondary School in the Khumalo (West) Communal lands. En route we stopped for the traditional tea in the breath-taking scenery of the western Hills (even if it was dry there is a special quality of the bush colours and rocks in the Matopos at this time of year) – the drive marred only by the still smouldering (and in places burning) fires that had swept from Nsvatuke, through Big Cave Camp and the National Park, and into the Game Park in the previous 24 hours. Later in the afternoon we could still see the smoke from this fire burning north of Bambata.

At Badja, we were met by representatives of Dambari Wildlife Trust, and shown the work being done at that school (one of a dozen in the project) to educate the children on conservation, and to assist with the biodiversity study being undertaken by Dambari as part of the CAB (Conservation Across Boundaries) project. This address included but not limited to the following:

- The reason the project was launched, the schools included and the number of monitors involved,
- Achievements, results and challenges up to date and future plans.
- Demonstration of some of the methods that the monitors use.

We travelled on north up the Figtree road for lunch on the banks of a dam on the Mpophoma River. Finally, we returned home via Figtree.

Appreciation to Farai Mavhiya (Education Officer) of Dambari, and students Vimbai Vhera, Noleeth Moyo and Kudzanai Chimutanda who accompanied us and gave the presentation. This is a research programme to which your society has contributed funds.

### 5 – MATOPOS CLASSIC MTB

The annual three-day Matopos Classic MTB event was staged from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September. On Friday afternoon the riders started out for their first goal, passing along the Tuli gorge and reaching a point on the southern end of Sotcha where they enjoyed the sunset and drinks. Then a ride back in the dark to Camp Dwala for dinner. Despite an early start on Saturday the riders still had to endure very hot conditions at midday as they climbed up and out of the Mazhowe valley. Then on Sunday, the riders awoke to a cold drizzly day, with a strong wind and the hills covered in mist – from one extreme to the other! The ride took them to Sandy Spruit where a water point had been established to coincide with the World Rhino events, and then back through the Gulati Communal Lands to finish at Camp Dwala. Once again an interesting route taking riders over three days through some interesting and beautiful areas. Despite the dry conditions, there were a surprising number of seeps, streams and wet areas, whilst the trees were bursting into fresh foliage.

### 6 – SUBSCRIPTIONS

You are reminded that subscriptions for the year 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2014 are now overdue, and must be paid before the AGM. There has been no change from the current year.

US\$ 20	Individual/Family
US\$ 5	Special Member (Pensioner/Student)
US\$100	Corporate

## 7 – CALENDAR 2013 and 2014

Proposed dates for the 2014 field trips are being debated. Please let us know if you have any particular interest and we'll do our best to fit it in!

Sat 23/11/2013	MCS 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner
Sun 24/11/2013	MCS AGM
TBA	Sabafu Hill Ruins

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

Duncan is working on an upgraded web site. We hope you have been online to see the information on hand, check pictures from our last outing, and to see what is happening in the Matopos. We can also be found on Facebook.

## 9 – MCS APPAREL

The Society has a limited stock of fleece sleeveless jackets, in olive green with orange MCS logo. These are available at \$20 each and have proven to be popular – even if they have been made available in the height of summer! We still have stocks of hats and caps (at \$10 each). CD's are also available. With Christmas not too far off, these would all make ideal gifts.

## 10 – CLIMATE CHANGE

Information summarised from three Zimbabwe Observatories (Beitbridge, Harare Belvedere, and Bulawayo Goertz) show some alarming statistics in regard to global warming in Zimbabwe over the past 100 years.

- Rise in daily minimum (highest daily minimum temperature) temperatures of around 2.6 degrees Celsius in a century.
- Rise in daily maximum temperature (highest daily maximum temperature) of about 2 degrees Celsius per century.
- Number of cold days is decreasing at the rate of about 15 days per 100years.

## 11 – RHINO INITIATIVE

*(With acknowledgement to the BBC)*

Most 10-year-old boys like to spend their summer holidays outdoors having fun.

William Borlase has been doing just that — but with a difference. Since May, he has spent every night but two sleeping in a tent in the garden of his home at Swiss Farm in Henley.

William is raising money for the Lowveld Rhino Trust in Zimbabwe, a game reserve run by family friends who organise the annual World Rhino Day.

Due to unrest in the country, it is Zimbabwe's only conservation project so after visiting it last summer, William decided to help.

He chose to camp because he didn't like the idea of staying in his tree house. "It's too small," he says. "I prefer the tent."

He is following in the footsteps of his great grandmother who slept in a tent in her garden for almost a year when she was 12 or 13.

"She felt a lot healthier after it," says William. "Then one day she decided she'd had enough and came back in again."

His mother Tamsin admits his ancestor was an eccentric, adding: "She was seriously into girl guiding and it would have been a canvas tent in those days." William, who started in year 6 at Nettlebed Primary School this week, has raised £70 so far thanks to donations from family friends and at school, where he gave a presentation about saving the black rhino.

He says: "I spoke to my mum about ways I could raise money," he said. "I had a look online and thought this would be a great thing to do.

"I've made some sponsorship forms and I'd like to put some posters around Henley and in my school. I'm also thinking of setting up a Twitter feed to raise awareness."

The only two days that William has not slept in the tent overnight were when he was unwell and he plans to continue fund-raising for at least another two years.

Mrs Borlase, who runs a market garden, is impressed by her son's drive and enthusiasm. "What he is doing is super and it was all his own idea," she says. "When he went into school with his sponsorship forms, nobody quite believed him to be honest. I really admire his enterprise."

She added: "The black rhino project is actually the only conservation project that the Lowveld Trust is still running because it has recognised how rare thriving black rhino are."

The trust works to increase both black and white rhino numbers. In the past five years, more than 300 rhinos have been poached.

The trust moves rhinos from high-risk areas to safer locations, treats wounded animals and helps to prosecute poachers.

If you would like to make a donation, call Mrs Borlase on 07584 080663.

(William is descendant of Sir William Borlase, the Cornish geologist and naturalist who gave his name to the Marlow grammar school)

## **12 – WORLD RHINO DAY EVENTS – SEPTEMBER 2013**

MATOPOS WORLD RHINO DAY CELEBRATIONS! SEPTEMBER 22, 2013

*(With acknowledgement to PAUL HUBBARD, Project Manager, Matobo Rhino Initiative Trust)*

World Rhino Day, September 22, dawned grey, cold and with a smattering of rain. The clouds matched our mood as we worried about what this meant for people being tempted to come out to the Matopos and take part in our activities aimed at raising money to continue our fence building project. After all who would want to get out of bed early in the morning in such bad weather? As it turned out, we needn't have worried. Bulawayo loves the Matopos and people came out by the score to support the Matobo Rhino Initiative Trust and the Rhodes Matopos National Park on the day. By the end of the day, over 350 people had come to Sandy Spruit Dam and shared the day with us, living this years' National Rhino Day motto, "Rhino Leading the Charge Against Extinction".

Scores of riders took to their bikes, following an easy but scenic course laid out by Vaughan Elkington and the Lounge Lizards social biking club. Some people rode the course more than once! The majority of people opted for the fun 5km walk, some in awesome costumes that raised a few eyebrows and helped create a relaxed, fun atmosphere enjoyed by all.

Good entertainment was provided by Fence Africa and National Fencing who each agreed to install 300 metres of fence along the road, actually building the fence on the day in front of the visitors. Their excellent work will now be seen by every visitor to the park and hopefully increase awareness of the work being done and the type of fence being built by the MRIT. People from the Badja area, to the south-west of the park came to provide assistance with building this section of the fence on the day and celebrate the existence of rhino in the area. Chief Nathisa, a trustee of the MRIT, sent his representative, Mr Sikosana to address the crowds and discuss the positive impact the construction of the fence has had in the western section of the park. Mr Oscar Nyathi gave an impassioned speech highlighting the positive aura of cooperation between the National Parks Authorities, the Matobo Rhino Initiative Trust and the local communities and other stakeholders.

A highlight was the presence of Twalumba, the rhino made from recycled tin cans who was brought to the site by Swift by kind assistance from Environment Africa. Drums of Peace played at the close of the day for free, launching their "Rhino Song" a fine piece of music that will hopefully be heard around Zimbabwe.

Alison and Sarah Burton had created three delightful paintings of rhinos in the Matopos which were auctioned and raised enough money to pay for a kilometre of bonnox wire! The team of Andre van Rooyen, Violette Kee-Tui and John Eppel sponsored the printing of several canvasses showing off Andre's amazing photographs of the Matopos landscape. These were auctioned on the day by the ever-exuberant Mike Burns, and raised enough money to help install a kilometre of fence.

By all measures, the event was a real success and has raised enough money to build and install at least another two kilometres of fence in the park.

More importantly the fun day had other benefits:

Increased awareness and promotion of the Rhino situation in the park.

Demonstration to foreign donors and potential donors that the local community are making an effort to help.

Increased the joint community spirit.

Upgraded the Sandy Spruit site due to the repair of the ablution facilities, bush clearing and general clean-up of the site.

Fulfilling the request by the Rhodes Matobo Committee to put up a “shop window” fence at the entrance to raise awareness for the general public.

Recognition of major donors with new signage at the gate.

These are real positives that sometimes get overlooked.

The event was held with the full support and appreciation of the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and I would like to publicly thank them for their assistance and guidance during the day. The Area Managers, Dr Norman Monks and Mr Oscar Nyathi have provided effective leadership and stewardship of the park for the past few years and we look forward to more of the same as the project and National Park enters its next phase.

For more information and pictures about the fun day and the fence project, please visit [www.rhodesmatopos.com](http://www.rhodesmatopos.com) or like us on Facebook.

### WORLD RHINO DAY GOLF COMPETITION

*(With appreciation to Adele Edwards)*

For the second year running Dambari Wildlife Trust organized a golf competition to celebrate World Rhino Day. The competition was held on Saturday 21 September and was kindly hosted by Bulawayo Golf Club. Fifty players entered - nearly double the number of people who enter a regular Saturday competition and including teams from several other clubs. To remind players of the reason behind the competition the foyer, where players registered, was decorated with rhino posters and displays, while each player received a registration pack including a special World Rhino Day T shirt and a flyer giving some info about rhino. Despite the scorching heat the players reportedly enjoyed themselves. A number of companies generously sponsored holes around the course, while others donated prizes as a result of which the six top-scoring pairs received prizes as well as the four players to get ‘nearest the pin’ and the alleluia putt (the longest holed putt on the 9<sup>th</sup> green). In addition, thanks to the generosity of SAVE the African Rhino Foundation of Australia, this competition now has a magnificent floating trophy which was awarded for the first time this year, to Ben Shoko and Brian Nyakataka. Prize giving was followed by an auction. Items on auction included six framed autographed photographs of top ranking golfers as well as a photo and autographed glove belonging to Ernie Els and a photo and autographed legend of The Black Knight – Gary Player (all donated by SAVE Australia), and also stays at Matobo Hills Lodge and The Farmhouse and a rhino walk in the Matopos with African Wanderer. Thanks to the generosity of many the event raised over \$6,000 which will all go towards funding Dambari’s on-going projects in the Matopos.

Dambari would like to thank the following for their support: the players, everyone at Bulawayo Golf Club, our reluctant auctioneer Nigel Fawcett, and the sponsors – Acacia Insurance, ACOL Chemicals, African Wanderer, BT Tanks, Canvas & Tarpaulin Products, Colletts Wildlife Artistry, Eridene, Forster Irrigation, GC Tyres, Greens Security, Ingrid Geoghegan, Kango Products, Lobels Biscuits, Matobo Hills Lodge, National Foods, Portland Holdings Ltd (PPC Zimbabwe), Safari Leather, SATIB, SAVE Australia, Tendele Crafts, The Art Grove, The Cattleman, The Farmhouse – Matopos, Timberland and Trust Insurance Brokers.

### WORLD RHINO DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN BULAWAYO

*(With acknowledgement to Adele Edwards)*

Zimbabwe first commemorated World Rhino Day in 2011. Following two years of celebrations in Harare, this year’s official commemorations took place in Bulawayo. The activities were ably organized by the Regional Manager – Western Region, Parks & Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA), Mr Arthur Musakwa, and staff from the local PWMA offices, together with some input and assistance from stakeholders such as Matobo Conservation Society.

The celebrations began with a procession through the streets of Bulawayo. Twalumba, the larger-than-life rhino statue made from tin cans, lead the procession, escorted by PWMA rangers. Drum majorettes from two schools, Nketa Primary and Sobukazi Secondary, together with the Army band, with their

goat mascot, added colour and rhythm to the procession which attracted a lot of attention from bystanders in the city centre.

The procession ended in Centenary Park where a stage had been set up and a variety of performers entertained the crowd with song, dance, drama and poetry. These performances continued throughout the programme which also featured a keynote address by new Minister of Environment, Water & Climate, Saviour Kasukuwere, introduction of Zimbabwe's new Rhino Ambassador, Charlene Hewatt (remembered by many as one of the original Rhino Girls, who together with Julie Edwards in 1987/88 cycled from the UK to Zimbabwe to raise awareness about the plight of rhino, and who is currently CEO of Environment Africa), and remarks on behalf of the stakeholders by Paul Hubbard (who amongst other things is a committee member of MCS and project manager for the Matobo Rhino Initiative Trust's Whovi game fence project).

MCS was pleased to be able to contribute towards this event by donating 200 bottles of water and pockets of oranges for the children who took part in the activities. PWMA are to be congratulated for their efforts. These commemorations, together with other activities that took place over that weekend and the following week, have certainly done a lot to bring to the attention of the Bulawayo public the fact that we have a population of these unique animals on our doorstep – in the Matopos – and that there is something each one of us can do to help 'lead the charge against extinction'.

### ROCKY RHINOS – Talk given at the Natural History Museum by Dr Nicky Pegg

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September Dr Nicky Pegg, Senior Researcher at Dambari Wildlife Trust (DWT), gave a talk at the Natural History Museum entitled Rocky Rhinos – The History & Future of Rhinos in the Matobo Hills. Nicky began by giving a brief outline of the activities of DWT, its current Conservation Across Boundaries (CAB) programme and its partnering with PWMA in rhino conservation since 1999. She explained that globally there are five species of rhino, with two of these – the black or hook-lipped and white or square-lipped - occurring in Africa. Worldwide rhino numbers have declined by 90% since 1970. Of the remaining populations there are about 20,000 white rhino and 4,800 black rhino but only 200 Sumatran and 55 Javan rhino. Zimbabwe has the fourth largest rhino population in the world following South Africa, Namibia and Kenya. Note: If rhinos were people, every rhino on earth would not even half fill Zimbabwe's National Sports Stadium!

Discussing the history of white rhino Nicky said that rhino had become locally extinct in Zimbabwe by the late 1800s. However following hugely successful conservation efforts in South Africa by 1968 404 white rhinos had been exported from Kwazulu Natal with 82 animals coming to Zimbabwe. While current populations are fairly stable if poaching continues at current levels a population decrease can be expected within the next decade. Turning to black rhino Nicky explained that while these had been wide spread in Africa until the 1970s this was followed by a massive decline as a result of poaching, culminating in the rhino wars in the Zambezi Valley in the 1990s after which many animals were moved to safer havens. Currently numbers are showing a small increase as a result of range expansion, with many rhino now being found in small reserves throughout South Africa. Poaching is the main cause of declining rhino numbers. This is very difficult to control and many different approaches are being attempted to halt the problem.

Looking specifically at the Matopos Nicky pointed out that this year is the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the introduction of white rhino into Matopos National Park (NP). These animals thrived and up to 10% net growth per annum was achieved. Further introductions took place in 1966/67 and 1987, with one of the animals from this last introduction still being the dominant male in the area. Information about the black rhino populations in the Matopos is more scanty but animals were introduced into the area from the Zambezi Valley in 1986/87.

Nicky then spoke about rhino related activities that take place in Matopos NP, many of which DWT takes part in, including: management operations – the main aim of which is to ensure that all animals are marked to aid individual identification; monitoring and data management; a camera trapping project, which is intended to augment records especially for the more elusive black rhino, and has proved very productive over the two years it has been running; the fence project, which is intended to keep rhino in the park and livestock out; counter-insurgency training for PWMA rangers; and implementation of the national 5-year plan for rhino conservation which has recently been updated.

In conclusion Nicky reminded people that rhino have been present in the Matopos for half a century. Their continued presence is due to the dedicated and coordinated activities of PWMA and its partners. She stressed that support from all Zimbabweans is critical, if these rhino are to continue to survive. She appealed to people to raise awareness about the status of Zimbabwe's rhinos and to give assistance to

on-going projects, and also to visit Matopos NP as the park depends on entry fees from visitors to sustain its operations. Nicky's talk was illustrated with numerous photos, many of which showed unusual views of rhinos having been taken with the camera traps.

### **13 – RHINO NEWS**

Pioneering research reveals new insights into the consumers behind rhino poaching

*Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at 15:12, TRAFFIC in Mammals - rhinos*

The use of rhino horn as a symbol of status among wealthy urban Vietnamese has been identified as a major driver of the current rhino poaching crisis. Findings from consumer research – concluded earlier this year in Viet Nam – has added significantly to our understanding of why a growing economy and emergence of a middle class with disposable incomes, is pressuring African rhino populations.

Funded by WWF South Africa (WWF-SA) and co-ordinated by TRAFFIC's Greater Mekong Programme Office – this research surveyed 720 people in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. It found that the buyers and users of rhino horn primarily consider it a status symbol – often used to gift to family members, business colleagues or people in positions of authority. They also associate it with a feeling of 'peace of mind'.

"Rhino horn consumers are wealthy and powerful and as such are seen as influential people within Vietnamese society," says Dr Jo Shaw, WWF-SA's Rhino Co-ordinator. She adds, "While their reasons for purchasing and consuming rhino horn are linked to an underlying belief in its medicinal properties there is a current trend of use to enhance social standing. "Shaw further explains, "Research reveals that typical users of rhino horn are successful, well-educated men, over the age of 40 who live in Viet Nam's main urban centres. They value their luxury lifestyle, which is often based around meeting peer group pressures and tend to view animals as commodities to serve functional and income-generating purposes rather than feeling an emotional connection".

Perhaps the most significant finding is the fact that beyond current consumer groups lies a large "intender" group: people who are not currently buying or using rhino horn, but who expressed their intent to do so in future. Dr Naomi Doak of TRAFFIC's Greater Mekong Programme says, "Intenders want to become buyers and users of rhino horn as it is favoured and valued by those they want to impress. They have already made a conscious decision to purchase rhino horn even though they know it is illegal."

Doak adds, "We need a combination of enhanced law enforcement and demand reduction campaigns to shift attitudes and behaviour against the trend in rhino horn use within the growing middle-class in Viet Nam – without changing the situation in the end user market the pressure on rhinos will continue to inflate. Our new insights on what is driving demand will allow the most targeted and influential response to dissuade consumption".

Dr Morné du Plessis, WWF-SA's CEO concludes, "Understanding and influencing the drivers of rhino horn demand in end-user markets - such as Viet Nam – forms a fundamental part of WWF-SA's five point strategic framework to address the dramatic increase in rhino poaching and combat the threat to rhinos. This pioneering consumer research will help us achieve these goals, as the fight against rhino poaching will ultimately be won in Asia, not Africa."

Ahead of World Rhino Day on 22nd September, WWF-South Africa is calling on global citizens to use their voice to spread the word and help involve famous social influencers by posting messages, including #iam4rhinos or #sátcánhcùngtêgiác in Vietnamese, on Facebook and Twitter as part of a Twitterstorm to show their support for rhinos. Follow the storm as it unfolds on Twitter: @WWFSouthAfrica.

"Giving rhinos a voice through social media is a simple and effective way for people to show that consumption of rhino horn is unacceptable. Unless action is taken by both the public and governments to reduce demand and stop poaching, these prehistoric creatures will be lost forever," said Mr Think Van Ngoc, WWF-Viet Nam's Country Director.

### **14 – PLANT IDENTIFICATION / MAPPING HUNT**

Your Society has been in touch with the developers of the website [www.zimbabweflora.co.zw](http://www.zimbabweflora.co.zw), and offered to obtain records of plants found in the Matobo area.

This website keeps records of plants by geographical location, and then maps the distribution using Google maps. Each record includes high quality digital photographs and the following data:

<b>Species Record</b>	<b>Example</b>
Species Name	<i>Rhus longipes</i>
Date	2012-07-15
Name of Photographer	Meg Coates-Palgrave
Habitat	Open woodland
Location	Lanark Game Park
Altitude (metres)	1530
Notes about the specimen	Small tree; flowers present
Latitude (decimal degrees)	-17.906230
Longitude (decimal degrees)	31.223120
Names of Recorders	Mark Hyde, Meg Coates Palgrave

Mark Hyde has given us a list of 44 species for which no previous records/photographs have been posted. Where these are trees, Mark has asked for photographs of the whole tree, the bark, the leaves, the flowers, the fruit and the seeds, depending on what characteristics are available. Mark has also asked that we provide records of already-recorded species (perhaps with a single photograph showing leaves, to confirm the identification) for mapping purposes.

We will start this project on our outing of 6<sup>th</sup> October 2013 (see above). Our Secretary will provide blank recording sheets and copies of the Matobo Hills trees, aloes and orchids checklist with the 44 required species (37 are trees and 7 are orchids) highlighted. We hope that members will come armed with digital cameras, clip boards, GPS's and tree books to help with this hunt.

Those members who have experience in identifying trees will be asked to do the "scouting" role to find suitable specimens. We hope that other members will be willing to work in groups to fill the roles of "photographer", "provider of altitude & GPS co-ordinates" and "recorder". The Secretary has offered to co-ordinate the collection of all material to send to Mark Hyde.

If you have Internet access, please spend a little time looking at [www.zimbabweflora.co.zw](http://www.zimbabweflora.co.zw), to get some idea of the value of the information we will be collecting. You will be thoroughly impressed by the amazing variety of plants in Zimbabwe. When you click on the thumbnail image, and get a full scale image, the quality is fantastic, and you can zoom in to great detail.

We hope that this outing will be beneficial in adding to this body of knowledge, and will be fun!

### **15 – NEW SIGNS**

The MCS has sponsored the production of new signage for both National Parks and National Museums, and this includes a new large map for visitors at the Sandy Spruit entrance. These signs incorporate the requirements of UNESCO in the promotion of World Heritage Sites, and have been located at Sandy Spruit and World's View, with smaller signs at Effi, Lower Outspan and Maleme picnic sites. It is planned to install new maps at the Whitewaters Gate and the Game Park Gate.

The Ministry of Transport has agreed to the re-erection of the World Heritage boundary notice on the Maleme Bridge opposite REPS. It is hoped that other boundary signs will also be erected in due course. Smaller brochures produced by the MCS with a comprehensive colour map will shortly be made available for tourists, along with the information brochures already produced.

### **16 – REMINDER**

Don't forget the Annual General Meeting at Pomongwe cave on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, preceded by a dinner at Maleme Rest Camp on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> November!