MATOBO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

'Gcina Imvelo'

matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com www.matobo.org Welfare No: W/0 30/94

**NEWSLETTER 133 / MAY 2026**

## 1 – MATOBO NATIONAL PARK CONTROL CENTRE COMMISSIONED

The Hon Minister of the Environment, Climate and Wildlife, under which National Parks is situated, officiated at the opening of the new Control Centre at White Waters Base, Matobo National Park, with Greg Murphy from Chengeta Wildlife in attendance. Chengeta Wildlife funded, installed and trained staff for the Control Centre, which will greatly enhance rhino security in the Matobo National Park.

Dr Ndlovu then went on to commission the Three Sisters Base Camp and the northern boundary fencing. The ongoing fence project and the Three Sisters Base Camp were funded by the Bright Life Foundation. Currently a project to install fencing and repair grids on the southern boundary, near Silozwane, is underway.

Whilst these projects have been initiated through the Matobo Conservation Society they would not be possible without the generous support of our overseas donors to whom we are most grateful.

L-R Hon Minister Dr E Ndlovu, Dr Chifamba, Greg Murphy (Chengeta), Neil Rix (MCS)

Greg Murphy with a happy team of Parks staff trained to operate the Control Centre.

Control centre demonstration for Dr Ndlovu

Verity Bowman and Nicky Pegg (Dambari)

## 2 - NEXT EVENT

| | |
|---|---|
| Date | Sunday 14 June 2026 |
| Venue | Tshogono Wetland, Tshangula Cave, Silozwane |
| Meet | 08:15 for 08:30 departure, Cresta Churchill |
| Travel | High ride vehicles preferred |

The next Field Trip is to the area south of Silozwane, so we will be passing through the National Park as we head south. Once we leave the tar road, the dirt road is passable but not great in places. En route we will be stopping to inspect the new fence and grid installed along the southern boundary of the Park and hopefully meet with our fence monitors. We will then travel on to Tshogono wetland a major wetland in the Silozwe area. After lunch we have the options of climbing Mt Silozwe or visiting Tshangula Cave before returning via the Park once more. Park fees are not payable as we will not be stopping in the Park.

## 3 – REPORT BACK – MSHASHASHA FALLS

The visit to Mshashasha Falls was spectacular. The Falls, at over 70m are the largest in the Matopos, and the above average rains meant that the river was flowing strongly. A mere 50mm the night before our visit pushed the river to near flood conditions. Crossing over had to be done carefully but there were no mishaps. The sun came out, the walk through the forest was magnificent and the roar of the Falls heralded a spectacular sight. Whilst most members stayed at the top, a few hardy souls crossed over and went down to the bottom of the falls, where they enjoyed some rock slides and turbulent pools to swim in.

A picnic lunch was enjoyed by all back under the Brachystegia gloucescens. Departure was a little sticky with a few cars being pulled out of the mud! But all in all a memorable outing making the most of the wet season.

.

Crossing the Mshashasha

Mshashasha river

Upper Falls

Upper Falls

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Main Falls | Lower Falls |

## 4 – RHODES MATOPOS NATIONAL PARK CENTENARY

Our beloved Matopos National Park officially turns 100 years old in November this year. To this end National Parks are planning a number of celebratory events from 19th to 21st November to mark the founding of the country's oldest National Park, and your Society will be involved. More details will be shared with you in due course.

Whilst the Park has it origin in Rhodes 1902 will that bequeathed the Hazelside and World's View Farms to the "People of Bulawayo" it was not until 1926 that a Park was formally promulgated. The original Park was much larger than the current park, but we'll cover that in a future article.

## 5 – PVO

As resolved at the AGM, the Constitution of the MCS will be amended to comply with the Private Voluntary Organisations Act, and the Society will endeavour to be registered. It's a bewildering process with many contradictory moves, and a Constitutional Court challenge on the table.

Despite our misgivings of the whole process, we must comply and are proceeding accordingly.

## 6 - RAINFALL

Summer is over and with that the rains have come to an end, but it was a great season, the likes of which occur only once in a decade, but unusually there were no cyclones to push the rainfall up. Year to date rainfall (20 May 2026):

Western Matopos 772mm, Central Matopos 743mm, Eastern Matopos 1,311mm and Bulawayo 824mm

## 7 – KILLER CROCODILE SHOT, REMAINS FOUND

*With acknowledgement to Daily News, May 26*.

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) has confirmed the recovery of human remains believed to belong to a man who was fatally attacked by a crocodile at Mpopoma Dam earlier this month. In a public notice issued yesterday, ZimParks said the remains were discovered during the dissection of a crocodile suspected to have attacked the victim while he was fishing at the dam on May 1, 2026. According to the authority, an extensive search operation involving ZimParks officers, police, and other stakeholders had been conducted following the incident

## 8 – ZIM TO REHABILITATE DAMAGED WETLANDS

*With acknowledgement to NewsDay, March 7th*

Zimbabwe is set to rehabilitate some of its damaged wetlands under the Ramsar Legacy Project and has applied for US$1.7 mln from the Global Biodiversity Framework to initiate the set up phase. Environment, Climate and Wildlife ministry communication and advocacy deputy director Joyce Chapungu said the International Union for Conservation of Nature was also facilitating additional resource mobilisation through its channels. “The WWF has independently applied for support from international development partners, further diversifying funding,” Chapungu said.

## 9 – NEW WILDLIFE LAW TO IMPROVE CONSERVATION, BENEFIT COMMUNITIES

*With acknowledgement to Sunday Mail, March 15th*.

The Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act is expected to strengthen conservation, enhance community participation and attract investment into the wildlife sector. Speaking at a stakeholders’ meeting on the Act in Harare last week, Environment, Climate and Wildlife Minister Evelyn Ndlovu said the recent amendment was a major milestone achieved through collective efforts from the Government, conservation partners and stakeholders in the wildlife industry – *Sunday Mail*, March 15.

## 10 – ZIMPARKS NEEDS US$9m TO REVIVE TOURSIM

*With appreciation to Daily News, Tuesday June 2*,

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) require US$9 mln to overhaul crumbling infrastructure across its national parks and recreational areas to modernise the visitor experience and fortify wildlife conservation. This critical funding is earmarked for the total rehabilitation of lodges, road networks, and essential utilities across the country's vast protected zones. Speaking on the sidelines of a visit by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Tourism and Hospitality Industry to Zimparks headquarters in Harare yesterday, board chairperson Aggrippa Sora revealed that a comprehensive assessment has already pinpointed high-priority targets.

## 11 – FOREIGN TOURISTS TO PAY EXTRA FEE TO VISIT USA NATIONAL PARKS

*With acknowledgement to the BBC, Wednesday November 26, 2025*

Foreign tourists visiting popular US national parks like the Grand Canyon and Yosemite will need to pay an extra fee, the Trump administration said on Tuesday.

The Department of the Interior, which runs the country's national parks, said each international visitor will need to pay $100 (£76) on top of existing fees to access 11 of the most popular sites.

From 2026, non-residents will also need to pay more than $250 for an annual pass to the parks, while US citizens and permanent residents will continue to pay $80.

The fee hike aims to "put American families first" and reflects President Donald Trump's goal to make the parks more accessible and affordable for US citizens, said the department.

"These policies ensure that U.S. taxpayers, who already support the National Park System, continue to enjoy affordable access, while international visitors contribute their fair share to maintaining and improving our parks for future generations," said Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum.

The increase will take effect at the start of 2026, alongside the launch of an upgraded online booking system and better access for motorcyclists across the parks.

In its announcement, the department also noted eight resident-only, "patriotic fee-free" days for 2026, including Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veteran's Day.

The fee hike follows an executive order, signed by Trump in July, to raise entrance fees at national parks for overseas visitors. The extra revenue would raise funds for conservation and maintenance at the sites,

the White House said at the time - even as the Trump administration planned deep cuts to the Park Service budget.
US national parks have seen record numbers of tourists in recent years, with upwards of 331 million visitors in 2024 - an increase of at least 6 million compared to the year before.
The country's most visited parks include the Everglades in Florida, Yosemite in California and Colorado's Rocky Mountains.

## 12 – SOUTH AFRICAS WETLANDS ARE DISSAPEARING FASTER THAN THEY CAN RESTORE THEM

South Africa's vital wetlands are degrading faster than investment in their rehabilitation. As a result, they are facing catastrophic decline. This follows a global trend of wetland decline, a key finding in the new Global Wetland Outlook. With acknowledgement to Kristin Engel

*The Isimangaliso Wetland Park. (Photo credit)*

'South Africa's wetlands are in critical decline," Dr Farai Terrerai, director of biodiversity assessments at the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), told Daily Maverick upon the release of the 2025 Global Wetland Outlook on Tuesday, 15 July.
This follows a global trend of declining wetlands, with severe impacts for people and the environment.
The 2025 Global Wetland Outlook (GWO), published by the Convention on Wetlands and produced by its Scientific and Technical Review Panel, warns that without urgent action, one-fifth of the world's remaining wetlands could vanish by 2050.
The estimated cost of that loss, according to the report, is up to $39-trillion in benefits that support people, economies and nature.
The report ultimately synthesises recent scientific and economic evidence to examine the extent of wetland loss and degradation, the ecosystem services that wetlands provide, and the actions required to achieve international restoration and conservation targets.

**Wetlands in crisis and a call to action**

Wetlands, encompassing a diverse range of ecosystems, from marshes and swamps to coastal mangroves and coral reefs, are indispensable for human wellbeing and the planet's ecological balance.
They provide myriad ecosystem services, including water purification, flood control, carbon sequestration and support for an astonishing 40% of known plant and animal species.
Despite their immense value, the GWO 2025 paints a grim picture of widespread degradation across all regions, with millions of hectares lost and countless freshwater species pushed to the brink.

Alarmingly, the GWO 2025 found that since 1970, an estimated 411 million hectares of wetlands (about 22% of the global total) have been lost, with an ongoing annual decline of 0.52%.
The lead authors, including lead of the Freshwater Biodiversity Programme at SANBI, Nancy Job, said that these losses significantly affect water availability, biodiversity, climate stability and human wellbeing.

The Outlook also found that degradation of wetlands globally now rivals outright loss, with about 25% of the remaining wetlands in poor ecological condition – this proportion is increasing in all regions.
It estimates that the world's remaining wetlands contribute up to $39-trillion in benefits each year, yet conservation funding remains far below what is required.
There are a number of interacting pressures leading to this, including agricultural expansion, pollution, infrastructure development, hydrological disruption and the impacts of climate change.
In the opening remarks of the Outlook, secretary-general of the Convention on Wetlands Dr Musonda Mumba and chair of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel at the Convention on Wetlands Dr Hugh Robertson, state: "The data presented in this Outlook are sobering."
advertisement
Don't want to see this? Remove ads
They revealed that the economic value of wetlands lost over the past 50 years exceeds $5.1-trillion. But this figure fails to capture the full intrinsic worth and profound cultural significance of these vital ecosystems.
Reduced access to clean water, increased vulnerability to natural disasters and rising greenhouse gas emissions are just some of the mounting costs associated with the decline of wetlands globally.
The Outlook was launched in the lead-up to the Convention on Wetlands COP15 in Zimbabwe next week, when 172 countries will gather at Victoria Falls to strengthen international commitments for wetland conservation.
Dr Evelyn Ndhlovu, the minister of the environment, climate and wildlife in Zimbabwe, said during the launch: "Wetlands are among the most important ecosystems for water and biodiversity. Yet in many countries, including my own, they face growing pressure from land use changes, population growth and the impacts of climate change."
Ndhlovu called for better data, better coordination in response, and to effectively come up with the programmes that will change this status quo.

**The critical decline of South Africa's wetlands**

The GWO 2025 highlights that South African wetlands are degrading faster than they can be restored. Terrerai said the rate of degradation in the country continues to outpace investment in rehabilitation efforts.
Terrerai said the main drivers of wetland degradation in South Africa align with regional trends in Africa, and include urban, agricultural and industrial pollution; urban expansion; agricultural intensification; infrastructure development; and invasion by alien species.

## 13– GOVERNMENT RAMPS UP RANGELAND RESTORATION TO PROTECT CATTLE, FOOD SECURITY:

*With acknowledgment to Newsday, May 20th*

Zimbabwe is stepping up efforts to halt the degradation of grazing lands, with government and research experts rolling out programmes to restore rangelands that support over half of the country's cattle herd. The push comes as overgrazing, soil erosion and erratic rainfall continue to threaten livestock productivity, especially in the drier southern provinces where communal farmers depend almost entirely on natural pastures. According to authorities, protecting these ecosystems is central to both rural incomes and national food security. Speaking on the initiative, Zimbabwe International Livestock Research Institute country representative Sikhalazo Dube said matching the right grass species to local conditions was key.

## 14 – FOUR BENEFITS OF GOING OUT IN THE RAIN

*With acknowledgement from Ally Hirschlag*

From its distinctive smell to the negative ions it releases, rain has some fascinating benefits for our bodies – especially when it comes to our mood.
It was the sixth straight day of the heat index topping 100F (38C) in New Milford, Connecticut, when the sky turned a sickening shade of puce. I was leading an outdoor theatre workshop, and noticed campers gawking at an ominous, miles-long shelf cloud advancing overhead. Then a thunderclap shook the ground, and lightning stretched across the sky like a jagged web.
We heard the rain before we felt it, then suddenly we were drenched in a torrent of heavy raindrops. No one could hear each other, so I motioned to a nearby covered platform for laundry bags, and my students and I made a run for it. Soaked and laughing, we fell into the laundry pile and watched the storm rage on. After 30 minutes or so, the sky cleared, and the air felt astonishingly clean and cold. The strong, distinctive smell of rain was overwhelming.

As we walked back to rehearsal, the grass and trees looked greener and healthier somehow. Everyone seemed lighter, smiled more easily, and I felt as if a brain fog had finally lifted. Was it due to the heat wave breaking or the adrenaline of the dash to shelter, or did the rain have some hand in our collective better mood?

*Humans are more sensitive to the smell of rain than sharks are to blood*

It turns out that after decades of studying the elements of rain's potential mood-boosting abilities, scientists have found some decent evidence to support it. And it's not the only benefit of rain: research shows rain also removes harmful substances from the air, while its unmistakable smell may even enhance our memories.

The serotonin boost

The predominant reason may be that rain releases negative air ions – oxygen molecules with an extra electron, which form as raindrops collide or hit a surface and split apart. In high levels, these are known to boost serotonin and alpha waves in the brain, leading to a happier, more relaxed state.

When raindrops hit the ground, they can splatter and release negative ions into the air – a process called the Lenard effect. So if you're hoping to get a sizeable dose of serotonin-boosting negative ions, try taking a walk in a rainstorm. Just make sure to get inside if you see lightning – safety's sake.

Some scientists believe these positive effects may be due to negative air ions increasing oxygen levels in the blood, resulting in a mood boost akin to what you experience from intense exercise.

However, there still isn't conclusive evidence to explain exactly what mechanism is going on to produce these effects. Pam Dalton, a cognitive scientist at the Monell Chemical Senses Centre in Pennsylvania in the US, notes it is still not well understood why negative ions have effects such as changes in mood as well as fatigue, cardiovascular status and blood pressure. "While intriguing, there just isn't much consensus on the physiological benefits, and there is even less understood about possible mechanisms by which negative ions would elicit these effects," she says.

Studies into the effects of negative ions on mood began in the 1950s, though results were inconclusive until more advanced, high-voltage ionisers that more efficiently produced negative ions became available in the 1990s. In one notable 1995 study, researchers found that participants with seasonal affective disorder (Sad) who were given daily sessions with high-voltage ionisers were far more likely to see a large reduction in their symptoms than those given a low-output treatment.

According to Columbia University professor Michael Tehan, who led the study, heavy rain produces similar levels of negative air ions to the high-voltage ionisers used by his team. He notes, though, that so far, no study has directly demonstrated this, nor directly correlated time in the rain with mood changes.

The cleaner air

Rain's negative ions also appear to clear the air of particulate matter such as pollution and allergens, making it easier to breathe. This could have an impact on mood and health as well: since poor air quality is associated with increased anxiety and risk of developing more severe mental health disorders, it stands to reason that cleaner air would promote the opposite.

"There is reasonably good evidence that the negative ions can clear dust, bacteria, allergens, and other particles from air, which for many can have a positive effect on respiratory health," says Dalton.

*Water sounds have been associated with activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, the branch of the nervous system involved in relaxation and recovery – Amy Sarow*

Just how adept negative ions are at cleaning was less clear until about a decade ago. In a 2015 study, researchers replicated this ability in miniature by pumping different kinds of particulate matter into a raindrop-generating glass chamber. After the raindrops had evaporated, researchers collected the remaining particles, noting their position to determine whether the raindrops had, in fact, attracted them. They found that smaller raindrops were particularly adept at attracting these airborne particles.

When raindrops fall to the ground, they're essentially "sweeping up" tiny airborne particles in their path, says Dan Cziczo, co-author of the study and a professor of earth, atmospheric and planetary sciences at Purdue University in Indiana in the US. The electrical charge (the ions) within a raindrop acts like a magnet for these particles, resulting in a sweeping-up process known as coagulation.

Cziczo likens it to what happens when a construction crew sprays a dusty site with water; the suspended dust is pushed back down to the ground, leaving the air cleaner.

The intensity of the rain also matters. "The heavier the rain, the more of a cleaning effect you're going to get on the atmosphere," says Cziczo. This includes reducing the amount of positive air ions, which have been associated with irritability and heightened anxiety.

So next time there's a heavy rainfall, consider opening your windows right after it stops. You'll likely notice the air seems clearer, and if it came on the heels of a cold front (as heavy rains often do), the accompanying wind may blow some of that clean air into your home, improving the air quality.

## The memory-enhancing smell

Rain's distinct smell can also have a psychological impact. Known as petrichor, this odour rises out of the ground after a storm and is often described as pungent and earthy, yet somehow clean.

"Petrichor arises when rain releases aerosols from the ground," says Phil Stevenson, a professor of plant chemistry at the University of Greenwich who leads work on plant and fungal traits at Kew Gardens in the UK. "During dry weather, organic molecules from plants, animals and soil accumulate on surfaces. When raindrops strike, these molecules – including volatile plant oils – are shattered into airborne particles."

The "clean" smell is thought to be due to ozone, which rainstorm downdrafts can pull down to earth. Another part of the smell comes from geosmin, a chemical compound that actinomycete bacteria produce as they form spores in soil.

"Rain liberates the spores and geosmin, creating the familiar 'first-rain-after-drought' smell, most noticeable in warm seasons," says Stevenson. This might explain why humans are so sensitive to it – more sensitive than sharks are to blood. Scientists hypothesise that we evolved to understand that petrichor signifies the renewed abundance of fresh water, which likely helped our ancestors feel safe and calm.

These smells have been shown to yield distinct changes in alpha and beta wave activity in the brain that are linked to a calmer, more relaxed state.

And thanks to its unique fragrance and how dramatically it changes the environment, rain can also be a powerful nostalgia trigger. My camp thunderstorm experience happened over 20 years ago, yet every time it rains, my mind paints the picture of that day with remarkable clarity.

"A sensory experience like the smell of approaching rain or the aftermath can become the backdrop or context that becomes attached to our memories of many different places or emotions," says Dalton, who has extensively studied the psychological significance of smell.

Any smell, she says, can activate the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for processing emotions and emotionally significant memories. That tie to our emotional epicentre is why memories associated with smells tend to stick in the brain and remain vivid. So whether you perceive a smell like rain as good or bad doesn't matter; the context within which you experience that smell is what makes it evocative.

So take a whiff the next time it rains from an open window or during a post-rain stroll and see what details of long-past moments surface.

## The relaxing sound

It's not just smelling and breathing in rain that can make us feel good, though; it's hearing it too, which is why you often find rain tracks on sound machines. A steady rain can reduce cortisol levels, inducing a sense of calm, as well as drowning out disruptive noises.

"Water sounds have been associated with activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the branch of the nervous system involved in relaxation and recovery," says Amy Sarow, a clinical audiologist who works in outpatient care in Southfield, Michigan in the US. "When this system is activated, we may see physiological effects such as lower heart rate [and] reduced stress responses."

A recent study found the sound of rain was most effective within the 40 to 50 decibel range (equivalent to a soft, gentle rainfall), lowering stress levels up to 65%. Heavy rain, which falls into the even lower brown noise frequency, can feel more grounding and immersive, Sarow says, and drown out disruptive sounds to help promote sleep.

Both levels can be calming; Sarow says it often comes down to personal preference. "If someone intentionally listens to these sounds as part of a relaxation routine, the experience can begin to resemble mindfulness or meditation practices, where the sound serves as an anchor for attention and relaxation."

While my rainstorm didn't exactly put me in a zen state, it did leave me feeling better and more connected to the present moment. Now, every time there's a downpour, I try to spend a little more time immersed in it. When you next see rain in the forecast, consider tuning into the experience too. You might be pleasantly surprised.

## 15 - SAB HIGHLIGHTS SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN RESTORING WESTERN CAPE WATER SYSTEMS BY CLEARING INVASIVE PLANTS

In the Western Cape, where the threat of "Day Zero" once brought the province to the brink, communities are working on the ground to restore natural water systems by removing invasive plants that consume significantly more water than indigenous species.

This work is led by local teams, many of them women, who are actively clearing invasive species from critical catchment areas. These teams are often employed by small, Black women-owned enterprises that are creating jobs and driving inclusive economic participation in their communities. By removing invasive vegetation, they are enabling water to flow back into rivers, dams, and underground systems, directly supporting surrounding communities, agriculture, and ecosystems.

Invasive alien plants absorb far more water than native vegetation, placing additional strain on already limited resources. Clearing these species is therefore not just an environmental intervention, but a practical, high-impact solution to improving water availability in water-stressed regions.

Since 2015, through partnerships with organisations such as The Nature Conservancy and WWF South Africa, this work has helped clear thousands of hectares of invasive vegetation in the Western Cape. The impact is measurable, with more than 3.3 billion litres of water returned to local systems.

Beyond the environmental benefits, this work is creating meaningful local livelihoods by equipping communities with skills, income, and long-term opportunities, while contributing to ecosystem restoration.

For those on the ground, the impact is immediate and tangible.

"The work we do is not just about clearing land; it is about restoring balance to nature and helping water flow back into our communities," says Thandeka Mayiji-Rafu, an Invasive Species Clearing Specialist. "It is about making a difference where we live."

SAB supports these initiatives as part of its broader commitment to protecting the natural resources that sustain both communities and its business.

"Water is the most important ingredient in beer, but more importantly, it is essential to the communities we serve," says Zoleka Lisa, Vice President of Corporate Affairs at SAB. "Our role is to support work that strengthens water security in a way that is practical, local, and sustainable."

These efforts form part of SAB's global "Cheers to Nature" platform, which focuses on nature-based solutions that deliver real, measurable impact.

While the work itself happens on the ground, SAB has also launched a Watershed Film to bring greater visibility to these efforts, ensuring that the people behind the work, and the impact they are creating, are seen and understood more widely.

At a time when water security remains a growing national and global challenge, this work highlights a simple but powerful truth: restoring nature is one of the most effective ways to restore water. DM

## 16 – SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

| | |
|---|---|
| 05 June 2026 | World Environment Day |
| 21 – 23 August 2026 | Matopos Heritage Trail Run |
| 19 – 21 November 2026 | Rhodes Matopos National Park Centenary Celebrations |
| 22 November 2026 | MCS 34th Annual General Meeting (date TBC) |
| 28 – 30 November 2026 | Matobo Classic |

## 17 – MEMBERS NOTEBOOK

**Subscriptions**

Subscriptions for the year 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026 are now due. Please ensure that your subs are up to date. There has been no increase in rates.

| | |
|---|---|
| US$ 20 | Individual/Family |
| US$ 5 | Pensioner/Student |
| US$100 | Corporate |

If you need any information, please contact **matoboconservatiosociety@gmail.com**

**MCS Branded Apparel**

The Society has a small stock of sleeveless fleece jackets, in olive green with orange MCS logo, available at US$20 each. They are ideal for the cool mornings and evenings. We also have stocks of

hats and caps at $10 each. CD's and shopping bags are also available at $5 each. Please contact the Secretary via WhatsApp +263 71 240 2341 for further details

**Website – www.matobo.org**
Visit our website and make use of the RESOURCES tab for downloading maps and information.
Please email to **matoboconservationsociety@gmail.com**

**Facebook**
Don't forget to join our Facebook page, with over 1000 members now.

**The Natural History of the Matobo Hills**
This MCS publication is available at the Natural History Museum for US$25.

**Umvukela – The 1896 Anti-Colonial Rebellion in Matabeleland** by IJ Cross
This limited edition book has just been published by the Matobo Conservation Society as it records an important part of the Matopos History. Available at $50 each – as stocks last. Contact the Secretary.

## 18 – IN MEMORIUM

**JEAN WHILEY**
The MCS is profoundly saddened at the unexpected loss of our long serving and stalwart, Jean Whiley on 27th May 2026. Jean has embodied the MCS for many years and will be hugely missed. Jean held various positions on the MCS Committee, starting as Secretary in 2008 and including Treasurer, Membership and Projects. Jean got things done – and chased us all to deliver on our commitments. Over 18 years, one of our longest serving committee members, she rarely if ever missed a meeting or field trip. In every role the tasks were managed with professionalism and efficiency – with a healthy dose of humour. Jean always had valuable contributions to discussions and brought with her a wealth of information and experience. Jean also assisted with the production of this Newsletter for several years, acting as a final editor and then distributor. In later years Jean was relied upon to "hold the fort" on various MCS field trips as she stayed at "camp". She rarely missed an outing even if her mobility declined – she simply loved being out in the Matopos and enjoyed the social interaction.
In addition to direct MCS activities Jean was an essential part of the organisation of the annual Matopos Heritage MTB Challenge since its inception 17 years ago and played no small part on this event being recognised as the premier MTB event in the country – some say southern Africa. She also managed the annual Matopos Heritage Trail Run since it started 10 years ago. Whilst not a cyclist herself, Jean is a hugely respected and well known character in Zimbabwe Mountain Biking circles and will be remembered for her enthusiasm and interaction with the cyclists.
Jean was also a committed member of WEZ, attending events and game counts.
Her effervescent nature and gregarious behaviour led to many laughs and much fun.
Fly high Jean and may you Rest in Peace.
We extend our heartfelt condolences to Rob, Gordon, Craig and families.