

THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY

INTERNATIONAL

BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2002

MATUSADONA BLACK RHINOS

The Zimbabwean Parks & Wild Life Management Authority is now implementing the Matusadona black rhino monitoring programme referred to in our last Bulletin, with assistance from the Society. Suitable monitors have been selected, trained and deployed into the Park, and are now generating information for inclusion in the black rhino database held at Tashinga and managed by the station's ecologist. Fuel is being purchased and supplied (under strict supervision) by the Society to help the Authority deploy trackers and field scouts into remote areas of the Park. The project is running very well. The warden at Tashinga has recently been replaced with Alec Ndhlovu, an old friend of the Society, whose promotion is good news for the future of our support programme in this Park. He and his immediate boss, Provincial Warden Ken Ngwarai have welcomed our initiative and discussions with the Society on expansion of the existing programme are set to take place shortly. Duncan Purchase, who is responsible for liaison between the Society and the PWLMA, is to be congratulated on the swift and efficient manner in which he is handling both this liaison, and the often difficult logistics involved in data collection and monitoring.

EXPANSION OF FIELD SUPPORT TO MOZAMBIQUE

Members who have supported our "Adopt-a-Scout" programme over the years will be interested to know that we recently held a meeting with Roberto Zolho, the Park Administrator for the Marromeu Buffalo Reserve in the Zambezi Delta. Roberto has indicated that our support for the scouts working in his reserve will be most welcome, as his own budgets are extremely slender and cannot meet the requirements of policing and managing this exceptionally important area.

Both we and The Zambezi Society (UK) have for some time been interested in the idea of supporting Marromeu. We have a well-established presence in Mozambique's Tete province, and we became interested in Marromeu while implementing the wetland biodiversity evaluation in 1997-2000 on behalf of IUCN – The World Conservation Union.

Roberto has promised to let us have a list of his requirements for support to field staff in Marromeu. Once we have this, we will be able to work out how best to allocate any funds that we have, and what is still required. Progress on this will be reported in future Bulletins.

ADOPT-A-SCOUT WEB PAGE COMING

We are in the process of updating our website to include an information page dedicated to the Adopt-a-Scout Field Support Programme. International supporters of the Programme may find this of specific interest to them.

The page will provide an overview of what the Zambezi Society is doing to help field scouts and other personnel who are placed at remote Zambezi Valley locations and are required to risk their lives defending the wildlife and natural resources of their areas with very little support from government authorities. It will show photographs

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of some of the scouts we have assisted and some of the equipment that the Zambezi Society has purchased with money raised by the Adopt-a-Scout programme over the years. The page will describe the areas in which we are providing support and will outline any new developments.

Please bear with us as the new design may take a little time, but we will let members know as soon as it is up and running.

“FOUR CORNERS” TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECT

We are delighted to say that one of the project proposals noted in our last bulletin - for involvement in the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) Four Corners project - has now been approved.

The Four Corners project was basically structured by the United States Aid Organisation USAID, in accordance with their strategic objective of promoting transboundary approaches to natural resource management in the region. The project area is loosely defined, but in broad terms centres on the Victoria Falls and includes protected areas as far apart as Hwange and the Kafue National Park and, of course, the settled lands in between.

USAID then invited tenders for its implementation exclusively from United States-based conservation agencies. This precluded the Zambezi Society and other local agencies from tendering for the overall project, which was eventually awarded to the African Wildlife Foundation.

However, the USAID funding includes a significant component for the involvement of regional NGO partners. The Zambezi Society and the Biodiversity Foundation for Africa were invited to submit a joint proposal to AWF for components of the Four Corners project.

The ZAMSOC/BFA component involves the evaluation of biological diversity within the project area, and the interpretation and dissemination of biodiversity information to appropriate audiences. It therefore conforms with our own goals and objectives, and is somewhat similar to the work undertaken by the partnership as part of the IUCN Zambezi Basin Wetland Project. However, the Four Corners project involves much more information work, and therefore a much expanded implementational role for the Zambezi Society, including the preparation and publication of several biodiversity information packages and the production of a regular project bulletin.

The project has an eighteen-month timescale, commencing on 1 October 2002.

TRANSBOUNDARY ELEPHANTS

We are also increasingly confident of sourcing approximately US\$60 000 to implement the elephant management activities identified at our transboundary Zimbabwe/Mozambique Kanyemba workshop last year. This has taken a long time - its well over a year since the workshop - but we are currently waiting for final confirmation from a major international donor.

VICTORIA FALLS

Our expressions of concern to the authorities on the withdrawal of Canadian funding for the Victoria Falls Combination Master Plan produced a welcome response from the Zimbabwean Acting Director of the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWLMA), which included the following:-

“ I would like to assure you that National Parks, as a major stakeholder in the Victoria Falls region shares your concerns regarding the suspension of the Canadian-funded Combination Master Plan. To that effect, my department shall do all it can in conserving the biodiversity of this precious environment. We shall also take this

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opportunity to liaise with our counterparts in the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing who were leading the Victoria Falls Combination Master Plan Preparation process, in a bid to ensure that work done so far is not wasted.”

The PWLMA also suggested that the Society should make similar representations to the Zambian authorities. We will endeavour to do this through our involvement in the above-mentioned “Four Corners” project which is centred on Victoria Falls.

The Society is constantly having to draw the attention of the authorities to instances of environmental abuse taking place in Victoria Falls, particularly those which we consider reduce the biodiversity or wilderness value of this World Heritage Site. But damage limitation is no substitute for proper forward planning.

We welcome the official assurances by the Department, and look forward to seeing concrete examples of some of the recommendations made in the Environmental Specialist Report (into which The Society made inputs) being urgently applied.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Two Zambezi Valley communities in Northern Zimbabwe, the people of Mupedzapasi in Guruve and the people of Sikalenga in Binga have accepted to take on the responsibility of managing the forest resources in their respective areas. They are doing this by developing income-generating projects the proceeds from which will be channelled into forest management and conservation. In Guruve, the Zambezi Society has provided Z\$100 000 for the community to start a shop, and in Binga, the community have initiated a bee-keeping project for which the Society has assisted with Z\$150 000. A series of meetings is now scheduled in other project areas to discuss similar income-generating ideas aimed at forest conservation.

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Visit our website at: www.zamsoc.org

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