



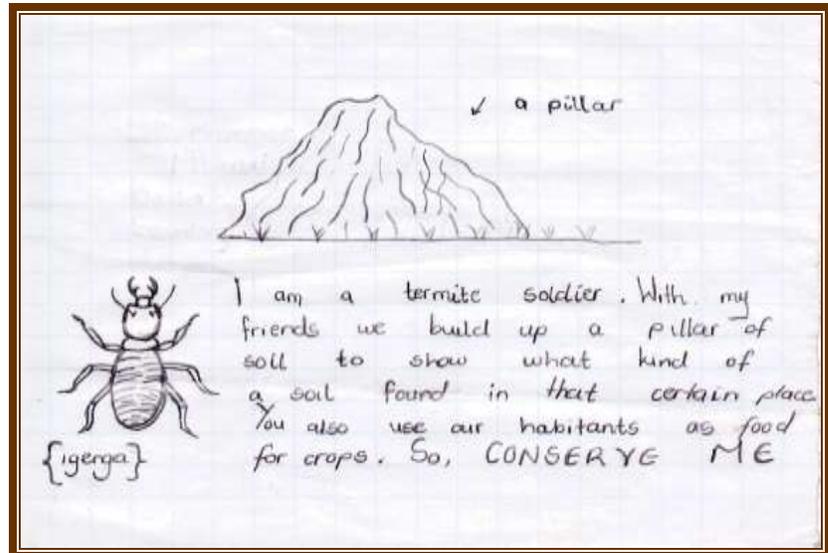
Dambari Wildlife Trust's Matobo Biodiversity Monitoring Project Newsletter

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3

December 2014

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Editorial

Dear Conservation Partner

The year 2014 is done and dusted in terms of the activities of our conservation clubs and I hereby present to you a newsletter reporting on the activities of the last term of the year. It has been an exciting year with its triumphs and challenges. We are grateful that the unanticipated change-over in the programme's project officers in April went on smoothly. The club members are closing schools now and going on holiday, thus they are likely to spend more time outdoors ploughing in the fields since the rains have begun to fall. We hope they will encourage their parents to practice environmentally friendly farming and will continue to be aware of the biodiversity around them. Christmas is around the corner. Come to think of it, even the western legend of Christmas shows the universal importance of wildlife by incorporating reindeer (which draw Father Christmas' sleigh), though they are foreign to Africa. On behalf of the Dambari Wildlife Trust team, I wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR! Enjoy reading this newsletter!

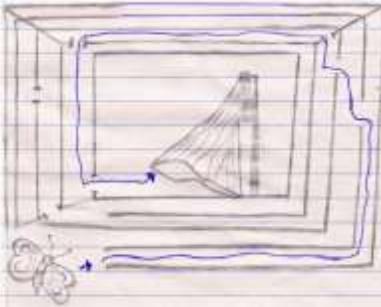
Cedric Maforimbo

Field Education Officer

The Matobo Biodiversity Monitoring Project (MBMP) has been running for three years now! We continue to work with five schools close to Matopos National Park, with the aim to encourage long-term, community-driven biodiversity monitoring through raising awareness and providing pupils with the necessary skills set to take into their communities.



The Field Education Officer makes a drawing in the soil at Whitewater High to show pupils how transects are set up.



When asked for an artistic contribution, Yolanda Ncube from Whitewater High decided to design this maze game shown above. She then wrote, in her own words, what she had learnt: "An insect finds its way into a Malaise trap because it will have smelt the alcohol. The insect passes through a net until it gets into a bottle of alcohol and it will die inside the alcohol because there will be no way of going out."



Ndumiso Mhlanga practices insect pinning at Bazha Secondary while his peers look on.

Field Data Collection Techniques

On the first trip of the term, we taught the pupils about the various methods that are used to collect ecological data. These included transects, quadrats, plots, point counts, terrestrial visual encounters and pitfall traps.

Pitfall Trapping Practical

After having taught them in theory about pitfall traps, we took the children around their school yards and showed them an example of how pitfall traps, which are used to trap insects for study, are set. They eagerly took over the task and set up the rest of the pitfall traps under our supervision in two different habitats. George Malunga, a technical assistant at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe (NHMZ) assisted us. Throughout the term, the pupils collected insects from the pitfall traps and replenished fluid levels in the traps. The insects are currently being identified by NHMZ staff and some will be lodged as specimens there. We will produce posters highlighting some of the interesting species next term.

Other Methods for Trapping Insects for Study

With the aid of demonstration equipment supplied by NHMZ, we exhibited an assortment of other traps used to catch insects for study and how they work. These included bait traps, malaise traps, sweeping nets and the beating tray and putty. Raphael Chahwanda, also a technical assistant at NHMZ assisted us with that task.

Pinning of Insects for Preservation and Display

Wallace Majaya from NHMZ then showed the pupils how they pin the insects at NHMZ for purposes of preservation and display after catching them. He explained why insects are collected and preserved in museum collections. We then provided the club members with pins and pinning boards and set them on a task to practice what they had seen being demonstrated.

Learning Aids and Awareness

With the assistance of a volunteer at Dambari, we developed a set of laminated identification cards featuring 24 species of insects, and provided each participating school with a set. The cards are double-sided, pocket-sized, and comprise a colour picture of featured insect along with key identification features and some information about the species' ecology. We also produced a poster in celebration of World Animal Day which fell on the 4th of October. It recognizes the plight of endangered animal species. Each of our club members, patrons, heads and councillors also received a Dambari branded ballpoint pen.

Open Days

Each of the participating schools kindly allowed us to fuse our open days with their prize-giving ceremonies. We were given a time slot on the event programme at each of the schools. During these slots, one of the club members reported on the activities of our club to the parents. The other club members at that school were to either perform an environmental play or do a poem. However, due to time constraints, this only materialised at one school. The pupils worked hard at coming up with these performances. Well done young conservationists!

After each event, we erected an exhibition stand for the programme where we spoke to the parents and distributed flyers to the parents which gave more details on the activities of our club as well as details on the career opportunities in the environmental field. We also donated drinks and other food-stuffs to the each school as a contribution to the celebrations.

Prize-winners

Congratulations are in order for a number of our regular conservation club members for winning prizes in environment-related subjects. At Bazha Secondary, Christine Dube was awarded the prize for Integrated Science whilst Future Chiteza, Amisha Goronga and Sijabuliso Nyoni won 1st, 2nd and 3rd place respectively for the Best Form Three Pupil (Overall) Prize at Whitewater High. Future also received the combined Science, Maths and English Prize. Gift Msebele clinched the Geography award at Silozwe High whilst the Biology award went to Proud Sibanda. The two then had a tie in the Agriculture award. The Matopo Mission Integrated Science and Geography prizes went to Prince Tshuma and Talent Nyathi respectively.

Learning and Fun going Hand-in-Hand

The above-mentioned scenario occurred on the second last trip of the term, where we got the conservation club members to play a game called “It’s a Bug’s Life” by Roberta Griffiths and Anne Westoby. It is played with a die and each player has a counter. If a player’s counter lands on a space with an action that is good for the developing butterfly written on it, the counter is moved forward. If the counter lands on a space with an action that is harmful to the developing butterfly written on it, the counter is either moved backwards or the player misses a turn to throw the die. The winner reaches the end where he/she would have completed a life-cycle. Prizes for the winners were Arenel sweets.



Handsome Phiri presents to the parents on prize-giving day at Silozwe High about the activities of our club at Silozwe.

Did you know?

Only one insect can turn its head - the praying mantis.

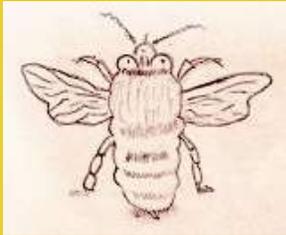


Gift Msebele received 6 subject prizes at Silozwe High.



Club members at Whitewater High enjoy themselves as they play “It’s a bug’s life.”

Art Corner



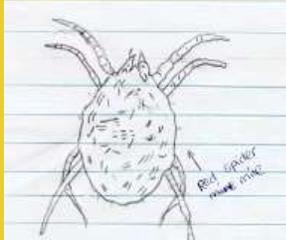
Bee by Amon Ndlovu, Bazha Secondary.



Snout beetle by Langelihle Ndlovu, Bazha Secondary.



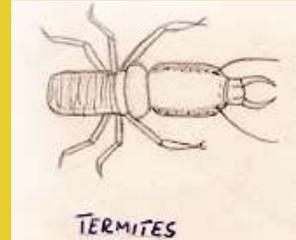
Grasshopper by Ndabenhle J Ncube, Tohwe Secondary.



Red spider mite by Sanele Sibanda, Bazha Secondary.



Honey bee by Sibhekimpilo Ncube, Tohwe Secondary.

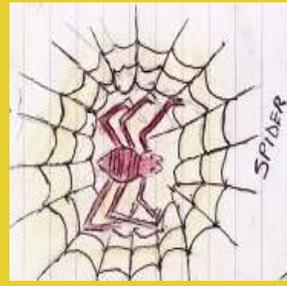


Termite by Thabelaninkosi Ncube, Bazha Secondary.

Tsetse fly
about 10 million sq km or a third of Africa is 'ruled' by this insect. Few people live in or use areas where a single bite can cause 'sleeping sickness' in people or 'nagana' in cattle



Tsetse fly by Thabelaninkosi Ncube, Bazha Secondary.



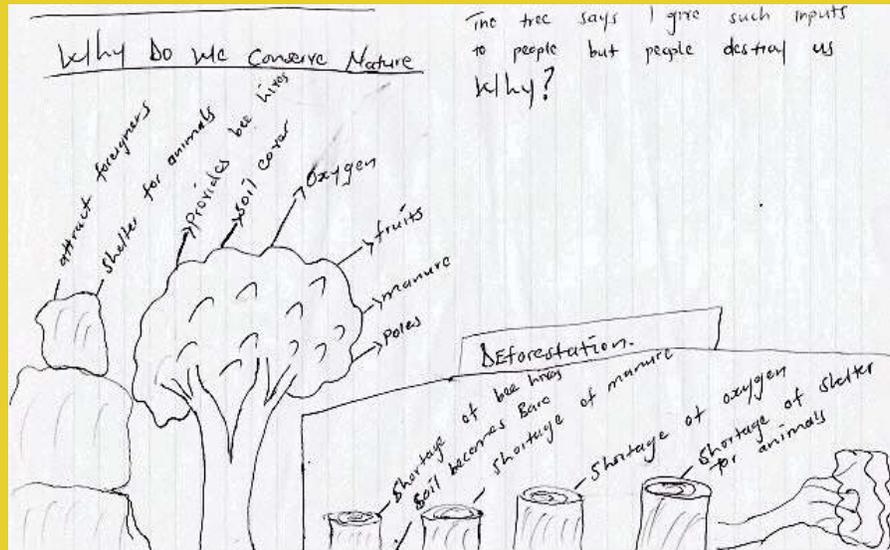
Spider by Tawanda Nkiwane, Tohwe Secondary.



Storage beetle by Ngwabiso Ncube, Bazha Secondary.



Beetle pinned by Thabelaninkosi Ncube, Bazha Secondary.



Importance of trees by Gift Msebele, Silozwe High.

Art Corner



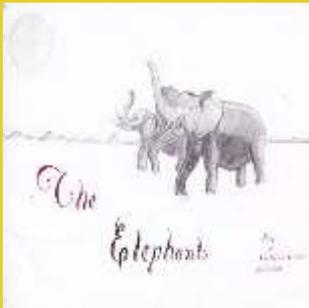
Ground hornbill by Tawanda Nkiwane, Tohwe Secondary.



Stork by Langelihle Ndlovu, Bazha Secondary.



Model of a bird made using wire by Ngwabiso Ncube, Bazha Secondary.



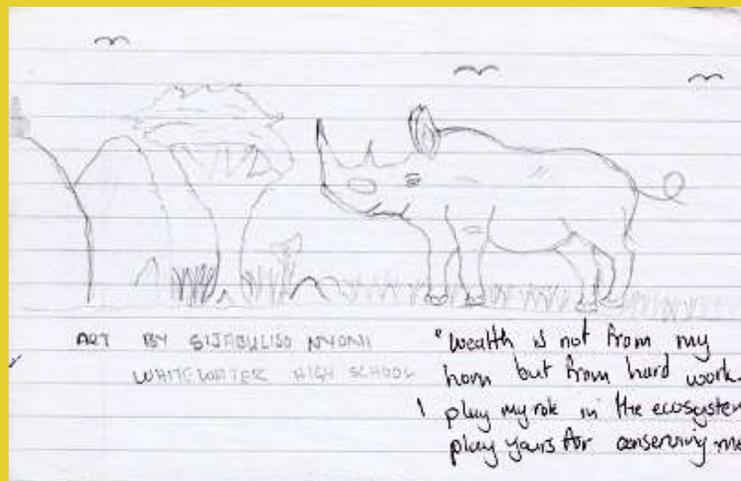
Elephants by Inhlankosi Ncube, Matopo Mission.



In imitation of our identification cards, Chrispen Mathe, Bazha Secondary made one for a hare.



Gemsbok by Inhlankosi Ncube, Matopo Mission.



Anti-poaching message by Sijabuliso Nyoni, Whitewater High.



Model of a gecko made using copper wire by Qiniso Richard Maphosa, Bazha Secondary.

Poems

My Message

Victory to all the cheetahs
Please take care of them
because they are my best predator
Let us wish them a very long life
With many lovely days each month
And glorious years each century
It is my great and immeasurable pleasure
To live with them



By Sinqobile Ndlovu, Bazha Secondary

Conserving Vegetation

Good people let us come together
And make some solutions for our vegetation
Because people are busy like bees
Chopping our trees and destroying our
beautiful vegetation

They want poles and timber and other
valuable things
So wise people, let us be creative and make
alternatives
And stand for our beautiful vegetation
May I leave this opportunity to you
To look for those who are destroying our
environment?

By Lilian Ncube, Whitewater High

A Ndebele Poem on the Beauty and Importance of Trees

Manye ngawe sihlahla
Yibuhle bokwenzani lobu?
Imiguwe ithi kwee kwee
Phezu kwakho

Inyosi ziyabuza nje
Yibuhle bamaluba akho?
Sihlahla uyamangalisa
Wena uyimpilo yakho konke okuphilayo

Uthi uMlimu uyasithanda
Ngokusidalela wena
Inkuni sizithola kuwe
Umthunzi nguwe
Konke konke nguwe

Wena obulala izihlahla
Wenzani awuboni ukuthi ubulala impilo
yethu
Kulokuthi uhlanyele zibenengi
Mahlabezulu asilondolozeni izihlahla
Ngoba ziyimpilo yethu sonke

By Nothando Khumalo, Silozwe High

Ground Hornbill

When I woke up this morning
I heard you making noise saying
“Hu-ndu-ndu! Hu-ndu-ndu”

People persuade themselves
Saying it is going to rain
Because they heard you cry
You like the rainy season

You become sorrowful
When people set their charms to kill you
When they put poisonous groundnuts
People, let us stop it
Because we will end up losing
These ground hornbills

By Yolanda Ncube, Whitewater High

Poems

Wildlife

To some, the most beautiful thing
in life is freedom
To some, it is money
But to me, it is the precious, God
given creatures: Animals

So amazing and so precious is
every animal of the wild
Big, small, colourful, you name it

We tend to be so inconsiderate
So heartless and so cruel to
animals
Yet it is us the human beings who
need them
Their existence is so much valued
like oxygen

It is my duty, your duty, our duty to
conserve wildlife
Because it gives a lot to human
life

By Lindokuhle Tshuma, Matopo
Mission

Matopo!

Wow! Matopo our beautiful
land
Our beautiful mountainous
area
Blessed with an amazing type
of ecosystem
Let's take a move to see
The eye-catching wildlife
And evergreen vegetation
Not forgetting to conserve our
wildlife

By Pretty Ncube, Whitewater
High

Strolling in the communal lands
What do I see?
Skeletons of trees
And seas of crops
Devastated by drought

I asked poor granny
How she got along
In this disaster
And sobs greeted me
Before her bony handshake

Strolling in the communal lands
What do I see
Sand-choked river beds
No grass for animals
No water in rivers
Animals whose only feed are tree leaves

Oh! How trees and grass are very important
Now the ribs of animals are uncountable
Jutting tongues everywhere
Bodies awaiting a painful death
Because of the shortage of grass and tree
leaves

By Metron Masibi, Bazha Secondary

Horn

I wonder why do these people do this
Poachers are always chasing rhinos
Please leave these rhinos alone
Don't destroy this country
Good people stop taking horns of rhinos

By Pretty Ncube, Whitewater High

Speech

Fauna and Flora Conservation

Natural resources near our homesteads need to be conserved as they contribute a lot to our daily living. They can be conserved through the control of soil erosion which can lead to siltation of dams and rivers.

Veld fires need to be prevented as they destroy both flora and fauna. They can be prevented through the use of fire guards. These veld fires cause a lot of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere leading to global warming.

Stiff penalties should be charged on illegal hunters. This will increase the population of endangered species such as rhinos and elephants as they contribute a lot to the country's economy through tourism. These animals are a tourist attraction. The conservation of flora and fauna is a benefit of the whole world.

Thank you

Patience Nyathi, Silozwe High

The picture and poem on the cover of this newsletter were produced by Primrose Mlauzi from Bazha Secondary.

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