



DAMBARI WILDLIFE TRUST'S MATOPOS BIODIVERSITY MONITORING PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER



Dear Conservation Partner

I am pleased to publish and introduce you to the first of Dambari Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Monitoring Project newsletters. These will be produced quarterly. This issue will focus on the background to the project and our progress so far. I hope you enjoy it!

Faraimunashe Mavhiya (Education Field Officer)

Introduction

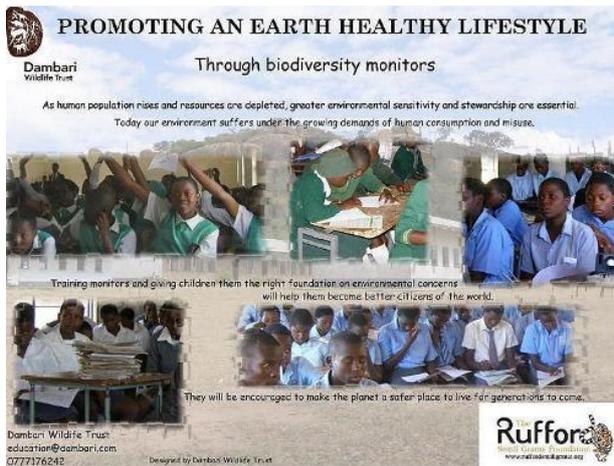
Our biodiversity monitoring education programme, which commenced in February this year, educates school pupils about environmental issues, encourages them to practice environmental stewardship in their community and to assist in formulating solutions for these issues, and introduces them to career opportunities in the environmental field. We hope it will assist the community in becoming knowledgeable about environmental issues and solutions that may effectively solve resource depletion problems.

At present, we are working with five schools within a 10km radius of Matopos National Park, namely Bazha Secondary School, Matopo Mission, Silozwe Secondary School, Tohwe Secondary School and Whitewaters Secondary School. We are training Form 3 students (average age 16 years) at each school and equipping them with environmental data collection and monitoring skills.

Achievements

So far we have produced and distributed a training manual that gives guidance to the school monitors during and after the training phase. Teaching pupils how to collect data commenced in the second school term; I visit each school twice a month to achieve this. Lessons make use of PowerPoint presentations to increase the visual impact of what we're teaching and to keep the children engaged. The lessons contain pre-site, on-site, and post-site learning experiences that teach a progression of skills designed to prepare students for field activities. The training phase should be complete by the end of the second term (early August), and monitors will continue to collect data using various appropriate methods. During the data collection phase we will continuously give them support to ensure that viable data are produced.

The monitors have been given data sheets so that they can collect data on a daily basis. We focus on simple and convenient methods of data collection, such as terrestrial visual encounters and point counts that will bring about minimal disturbances to pupils' normal studies and activities. We also provide additional materials that feed into the school curricula, so that the school authorities can see the benefits of this and other biodiversity programmes that may be instituted in future. For example, we recently showed the children a DVD on seed dispersal, which forms part of their Science syllabus.



Awareness campaign

The programme is based on environmental themes each term. Our second term theme is “PROMOTING AN EARTH HEALTHY LIFESTYLE through BIODIVERSITY MONITORS”. Two posters have been produced to promote this theme, and distributed to each school. There has been great interest in the programme as a result of the campaign, and even children who initially showed little enthusiasm have become interested. We also give the pupils incentives like stationery to keep them motivated and excited.

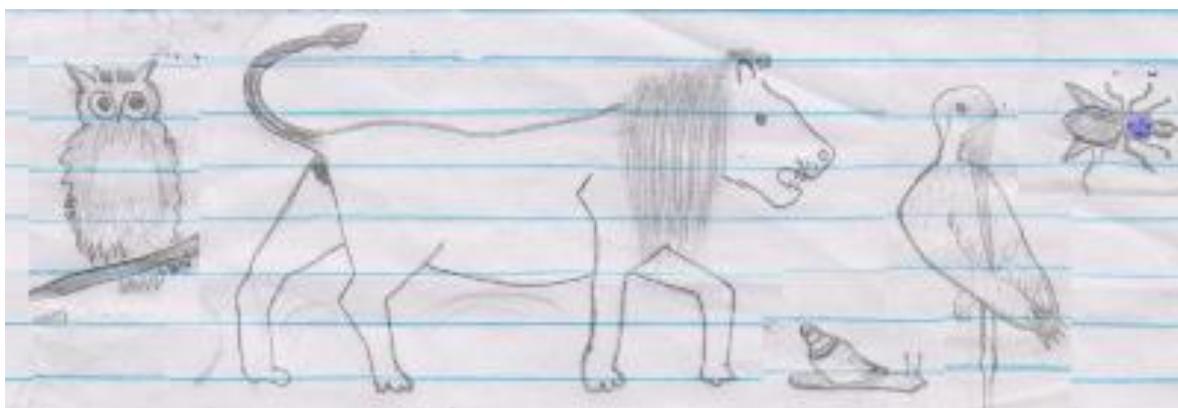
Schools’ responses to the programme.

The school teachers and the headmasters are remarkable, and continue to give us overwhelming support and assistance for this programme. They arrange everything, from ensuring that the children are available to making sure that there is a power supply for our digital presentations. To you all, thank you for your support because without you this project would have failed before it started. Below are some photos of the school staff that help us run this programme. Unfortunately I didn’t manage to get a picture of Mrs Ncube from Matopo mission.



Monitors’ views of the environment

As a term activity, we asked our monitors from the five schools to produce materials on what they understand about the environment and biodiversity. We had an overwhelming response to this, in the form of poems and drawings. In this newsletter, I’ve featured a few children per school, although it was difficult to restrict it to so few! The material is unedited so that you can enjoy the unpolished thoughts of our monitors. I hope that you enjoy what they have to say.



Biodiversity by Sisasenkosi Dube (Tohwe Secondary)



Biodiversity Club Members at White waters (top), Silozwe (middle) and Matopo Mission (bottom)

Use your resources wisely

By Providence Proxy Moyo (Matopo mission)

Around us are more than a million species grasses flowers, animals, trees, etc

Noticing the populations we see that as the human population increases, our biodiversity decreases, this leads to the extinction of species.

As most people use those resources without care, when we look at water there is more wastage of it, poachers have also been a hazard to our animal species. Elephants and white rhinos decreased greatly due to these poachers.

Deforestation destroys our forest ecosystems resulting in habitat loss and the extinction of most species.

By all means let us prevent making our biodiversity extinct

The snare

By Alpha Ncube (Bazha Secondary)

I hear a sudden cry of pain
There is a rabbit in a snare
Now I hear the cry again
But I cannot tell from where

I cannot tell from where
He is crying out for aid
Crying on the frightened air
Making everything afraid

Wrinkling up his little face
As he cries again for aid
Making everything afraid
I cannot find the place

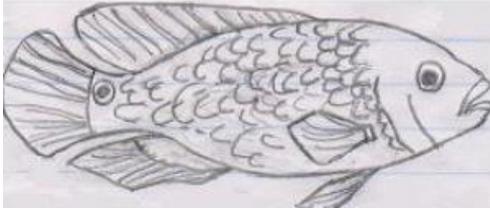
I cannot even find the place
Its paw is in the snare
Little one, oh little one
I am searching everywhere

Stop snaring



Drawings by Alvin Masiya (Matopo Mission)





Drawing by Benhildah Moyo (Tohwe Secondary)

Fish

By Benhildah Moyo (Tohwe Secondary)

Fish are vertebrate animals living in fresh or sea water. They are poikilothermic (A poikilotherm is an organism whose internal temperature varies considerably. It is the opposite of a homeotherm, an organism which maintains thermal homeostasis) and reproduce by laying eggs. Fish are streamlined in their shape and their bodies are covered in scales, they possess fins and breathe through gills.

The beauty of nature

By Sezile Mloyi (Matopo Mission)

The sun rises with the beauty of nature.
The wind blows shaking the trees,
as the bird introduces a new day

The ants leave their holes ready to set off on an adventure
The king of the jungle roars
So as to be feared by the jungle

The water flows from the river to the dams,
so as to be desired by nature
The impala jumps up high full of joy
As the sun is about to set
Then everything goes back to its habitat,
the day is over

Then the stars and moon take over the sky
The bat gains its sense to see beauty of the night.
As the owl tells the night story



Biodiversity Club Members at Tohwe (top) and Bazha (bottom)

Poem Environment

By Sithembinkosi Nkomo, (White waters Secondary)

Environment, environment, environment
What a wonderful nature
You are one but big and spread to many directions.
Environment you are one but carry million things at the same time
Environment, environment what a wonderful nature

You provide habitat for small animals
So do the big ones you hide them in your mountains and trees.
People settle and build their shelter on you, on the surface and mountains
But you never complained about it environment you are such an amazement to us

You never get tired, you never go on leave, always present for us
trees provide us with fruits for human survival so do the animals
Moreover you became the habitat for other animals monkeys, snakes and birds glorify your presence

Your bushes provide a hiding place for us
When playing hard and seek
You mountains are our tourist's attraction
It is where foreign currency comes from
Environment you are such a wonderful nature

We are there to look after you
Conserve and use you wisely
Is you are lost no life for us
Environment, we humans also glorify your presence.

Who shall put a stop?

By Mercy Bhebhe (Silozwe Secondary)

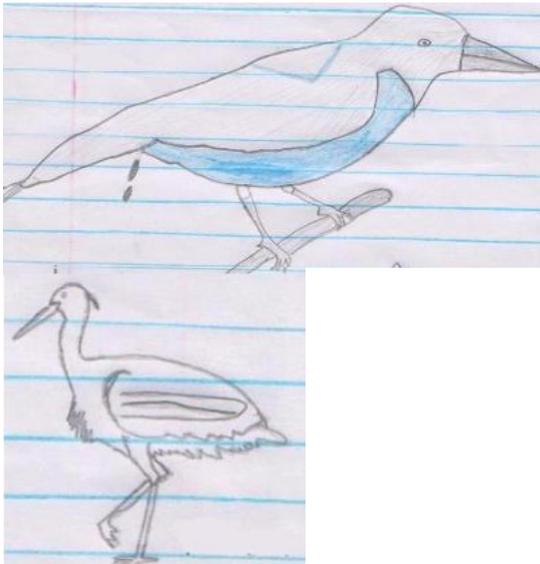
Behold behold the seraphim watch from the celestial Heights of glory yet from a distance sky the world looks blue and green the snow capped mountains white. Behold, behold again.

The pestilence of life rages, consumes, debits and debilitates. Yes death upon nature. Sentencing animals to extinction habitats to oblivion. Sizzling eyes of her innocence are perpetrated with tears yes in face of a veld fire.

Michael Jackson said heal the world and make it a better place. When you and I heard it we said woooo. The loquacious Albert Nyathi said I will not speak, but Barack Obama says yes we can.

The vanishing forest weeps upon the song uzongi thola ngiblome amlangeni. The vanishing forest weeps upon the songs tichasangana kurwizi. The vanishing forest weeps upon the song take me to the river.

Where is the river now? Where is our heritage? Who shall put a stop to this massive haemorrhage? I pause for a response.



Birds by Lethibuhle "Sibbs" Sibanda (Tohwe Secondary)

My Visit to Matopos National Park

By Nkosini Ndlovu (White waters Secondary)

The day I went into the Matopo national park I saw different kinds of rocks, different kinds of erosion, I saw animals such as cheetah, Giraffes, Baboons, Crocodiles, monkeys, hippopotamus, Black rhino, and impalas.

I enjoyed my time in the park, tortoises were moving slowly while ducks were enjoying playing in the water. It's interesting to see our nature.

I saw many dangers, people are destroying The parks by deforestation and they kill wild animals, people kill animals for their skins, especially zebra, while rhinos are killed for their horns.

People are destroying the vegetation by burning the bush, animals die, erosion washes away the bare ground. I wish people could stop burning the bush. And we should stop deforestation.



Tiger by Ashley Ndimande (Matopo Mission)

Come to Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe

By Trinity Khumalo (White waters Secondary)

I went to Victoria falls on a school trip.

What amazing features I saw. What beautiful creatures I saw. I came home with many stories to tell my friends. From there I started studying creatures, where are they from? What amazing characteristics they have! It pointed me to a skilful creator – God.

From Hwange onwards shock came after shock. I saw elephants live and direct with the naked eye. Huge serpents, wide enough to swallow a man, but nobody of my age had ever seen a crocodile. Big donkey-like animals long and high enough to reach tall roofs, but of my age, nobody had ever seen giraffes.

Cat like animals, climbing trees, beautiful and tiny – but not even one person of my age had ever seen a leopard. Down in the valley of wonder there is the ever-flowing water, ever-rising steam and an ever present rainbow but nobody of my age had ever visited Victoria Falls.

I thought I'm greater than all the birds, more powerful than any, but nobody of my size had ever known of hazardous and cruel-some eagles and ostriches. I thought all snakes are smaller than my arm but I was shocked when I saw pythons, and nevertheless nobody of my age ever saw a cobra.



Animals by Mondliwethu Ncube & Liyonga Sibanda (Matopo Mission)

Save the rhino

By Lilian Jack (Silozwe Secondary)

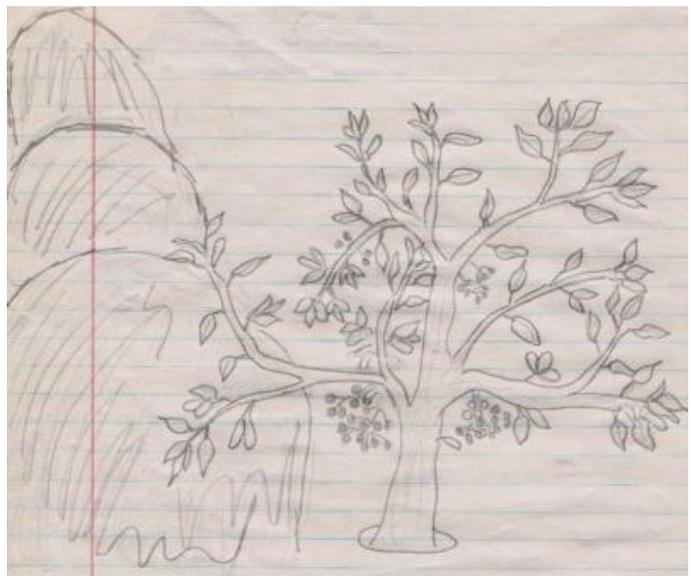
The rhino is a funny chap, he comes from from very long ago, his grandpa was the giant giraffe rhinoceros which lived fore Adam's time

When he first appeared God said I will make a change and put two horns on the rhinos nose instead of the head. God made the chaps' hide very thick and made him very fierce. The rhino was a champion when fighting other beasts

The mammoth and other ancient beasts, he beat them all easily, hot summers and the great ice age came but he survived okay.

But then came the ruthless "modern man" with running craft and greed, killing him for their own stupid reasons, old rhino's stay on earth is done unless we save his breed

LET'S SAVE THE RHINO



Tree by Mayibongwe Ncube (White waters Secondary)

Appeal

I hope you enjoyed what the monitors had to share! This is a multi-year programme, and we value any support that you can offer. If you wish to support the monitors or the programme in general, in cash or in kind, please contact us via post (PO Box 3863, Bulawayo), email (director@dambari.com), telephone (power dependent) +263(0)9 280029/30 / 280418 or mobile +263 (0)772 255998.

Special thanks to our sponsors and supporters

The Biodiversity Monitoring Project is sponsored by:



Dambari Wildlife Trust's primary supporters are:

