



JULY 2016 NEWSLETTER



The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Zimbabwe (WEZ) held their ninth running of the "Pumping Legs for Water" cycle ride at Hwange Main Camp. They had 140 social riders, and it was a great event, with a lot of sponsorship, especially considering the difficult times. Monies raised from the event are all channelled back into Hwange, mainly into game water. The riders rode to Ngweshla on the first day, and to Guvalala and back on the second day - they are closely escorted, with National Parks rangers in attendance. This certainly is a unique event (especially considering the number of elephant on the routes) and congratulations to WEZ on this great effort - it was a wonderful social occasion for a good cause!

The 30th July is World Ranger Day, dedicated to all those serving wildlife and natural reserves around the world. Area Manager Edmore Ngosi organised a program in Victoria Falls to commemorate this day, and was supported by Main Camp, Sinamatella and Robins. The rangers paraded through Victoria Falls, and then adjourned to a riverside venue for speeches, and drinks and snacks donated by the community. The guest of Honour was the Mayor of Victoria Falls, Mr S Mpofu, plus the Area Managers Midwell Kapesa (Main Camp) and Kwashirai Dzoro (Robins) with Edmore as MC. This is a first to commemorate this day in Zimbabwe, but I am sure will be a feature on the calendar in future. It was an excellent event, which I can only feel was good for ranger morale, to honour those fallen in the line of duty and for community/Parks relationships. Well done to Edmore for organising this event - the event was shown on CNN!





Hon Mayor S Mpofu reading speech to assembled rangers, with Edmore Ngosi and Midwell Kapesa at the top table.

ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK

Not a lot to report in the Zambezi National Park this month. All the pumps in the Chamabonda working well (we changed the pump in Timots Borehole to a better producer), and the game viewing has been reasonable to good. The bush has dried out very quickly, so visibility is much improved.

KAZUMA PAN

We donated diesel to Parks so they could finish grading all the roads (they had previously only managed to do half the roads).

We have drawn up a draft management plan for Kazuma on the sections on management only where Bhejane Trust would get involved. it is not a full plan but a basis from which parks can develop into a full plan. There is an urgent need to relocate the allocated public camp sites to more suitable sites.

SINAMATELLA

Report from Stephen Long

Game water.

Once again this has been a month of ups and downs but luckily there was only one major 'down' so let's start with that. Our biggest problem of the month was at Tshompani. The solar pump was stuck in the borehole when we tried to remove it for maintenance some weeks ago so early in July we made a concerted effort to move it. First Mr Mafa and I went there alone thinking perhaps that age and experience would compensate for lack of muscle. We had a real struggle getting the shear legs up (experience was no help and age was a positive disadvantage) but we were eventually successful though that turned out to be the only success we had – try as we might, we couldn't move the pump. A few days later we returned with more help and basically made ourselves a pile-driver with which we rammed the stuck pump over and again without moving it a centimetre. In the end we had to give up and while we were packing up the pile-driver did its greatest damage of the day, falling on us and causing some loss of blood but no

permanent damage. For now the Tshompani wind pump is doing well but when the windy days come to an end in October we will need the solar as well so we'll have to return for another try.

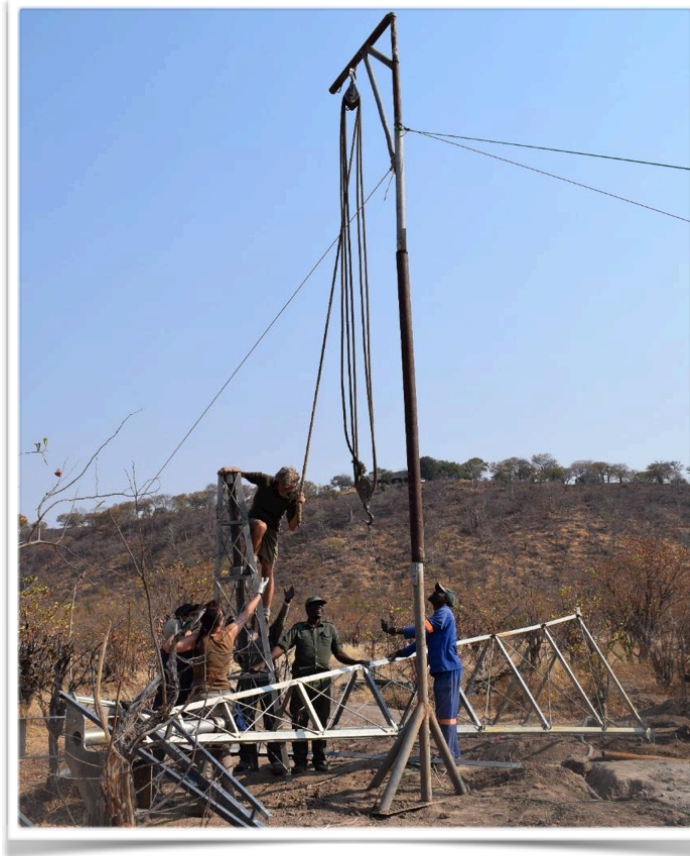
The only other downside to game water management in July was relatively minor – elephant damage, at Mbala – something that has happened so regularly we could almost call it routine and which we quickly repaired.

The two biggest game water stories for July were at Masuma and at Sinamatella flood plain. At Masuma, Kapula Camp donated and installed a hybrid solar/diesel pump to take over from the mono which has run almost non-stop since last year. The set-up is interesting, using the old Lister-type standing engine to run the generator at night. This works very well but can't be started automatically so staff from Kapula have to go down and start and stop it every day. During the few days it took to install the pump and solve the teething troubles, it was amazing how quickly the level of the dam fell but once everything was in order, the new pump kept the level steady and it has remained that way since. Thanks to Camp Hwange, who have been running the mono pump non-stop for months and now to Kapula with the new installation, Masuma is looking as well as I've known it for this time of year and with free energy from the solar by day, that looks to be sustainable.

We also now have free energy to pump water at Sinamatella, having finally installed the wind pump, ex Shapi. It wasn't easy. Thanks to Gary Cattle who had carefully and neatly dismantled the pump at Shapi, it wasn't too hard to work out which pieces belonged where, the difficulty was working out how to get it standing – and not just standing but also standing straight, directly above the borehole without anything or anyone getting damaged in the process.

First we did the relatively easy stuff, carefully yield-testing the borehole, getting the holes dug for the bases, sorting out all the pieces and sourcing missing bits. Next we planned how to build and raise the whole thing. We had several eyewitness accounts of the raising or lowering of other wind pumps to help us but they included using a helicopter or a crane, two men and a Land Cruiser supposedly building a pump horizontally and raising it in the course of a single day, two men (possibly the same men but without the Cruiser) apparently building a pump, section by section straight up from the ground and finally, a whole gang of men reducing a pump to scrap metal while attempting to lower it to the ground with a tractor. With all that to go on we decided to do it our own way and I handed the building phase over to Nick and Tshuma. In spite of some unwanted and probably unnecessary advice from me, they did a fantastic job on that, working long hours cutting, welding, measuring, concreting and eventually having the tower built on its side with the bases set correctly around the borehole and a home-made 'crane' on site. Concrete for the bases was kindly donated by

PPC and transported to Hwange by Colbro. Many thanks to Pete Kendall for organising that.



With that done, we started to build the top section, adding the tail and the vanes



.....then joining everything to the gearbox.....



Now the next stage, raising the whole thing, looked pretty daunting.....



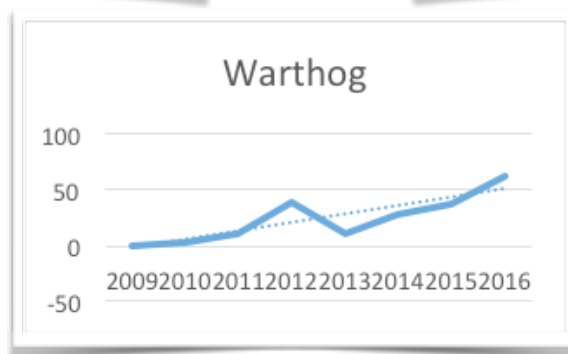
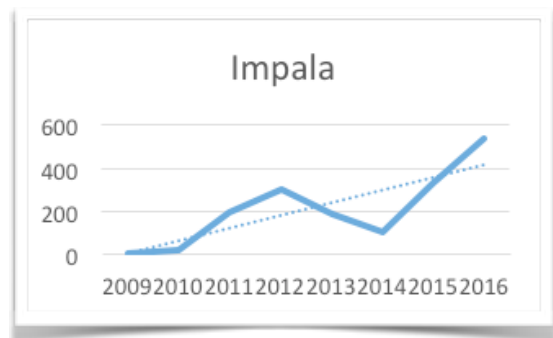
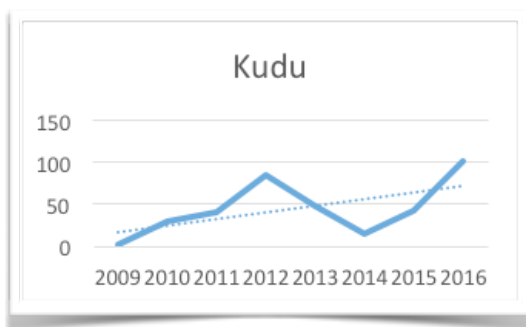
But in fact, with manpower on the rope-block and the Land Rover winch pulling from a distance, it all went smoothly and the third leg of the tower slipped perfectly into place, correct down to the last millimetre thanks to Nick and Tshuma's meticulous planning. We hurried to connect the pipes and with the light fading, Sinamatella flood plain once again had a working wind pump.....

The borehole is yielding around 1200 litres per hour but the pump's first full day of operation was frustratingly almost wind-free. The second day made up for that with a steady breeze throughout the day and the trough filled then overflowed down to the Sinamatella Pan. It won't make much of a pool this year as the pan is totally dry but warthogs, elephant and impala are already using the trough and next year I hope the pan will stay wet for a good part of the year.

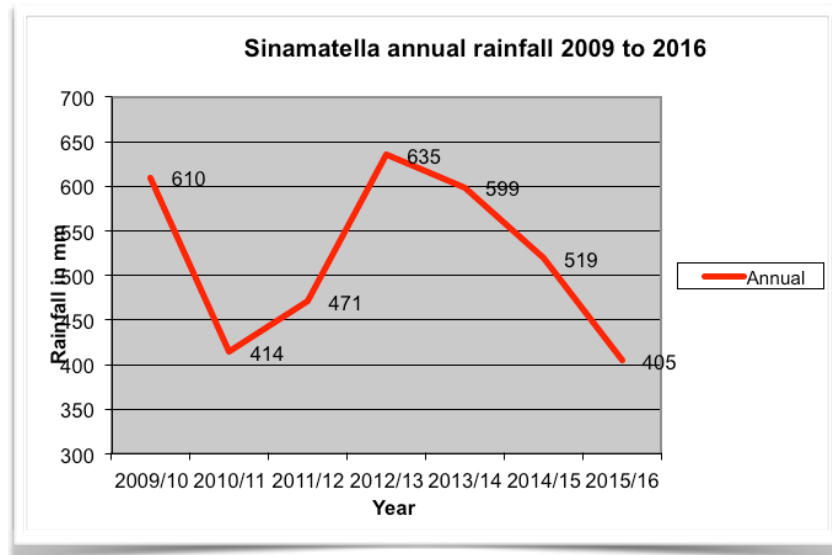


Wildlife

On the 26th of the month, our latest group of field assistants carried out a full-day count of mammals at Masuma Dam. The results were interesting. They recorded 538 Impala, 101 Kudu and 63 Warthogs (amongst others). Comparing these numbers with similar dates in previous years, I found that in all three cases they were the highest recorded and all three show an increasing trend.....



These graphs correlate interestingly with the rainfall graphs with perhaps a general trend that animal numbers go up when rainfall is down and vice versa.....



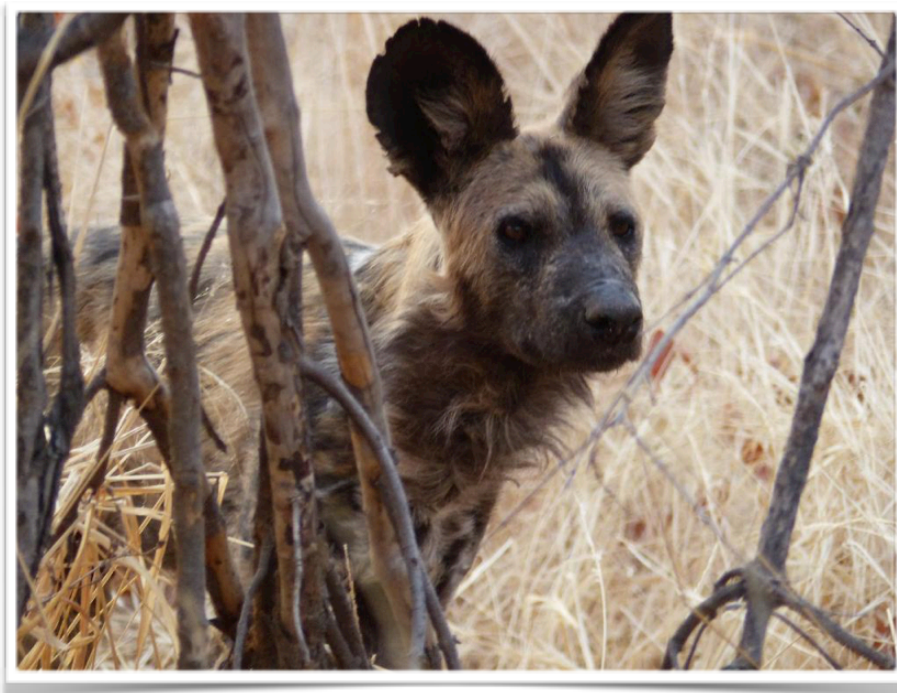
Comparing with the WEZ data for 2015, I found that the number of Impala in July 2016 was slightly lower than in September 2015 but the Kudu and Warthog numbers were higher. In fact the number of Impala we recorded is approximately 15% of the total recorded in last year's WEZ count for the whole Park and the figures for Kudu are 7% and Warthogs 9%. Clearly these are significant numbers and the importance of Masuma can't be overstated – especially in the dry season following poor rains.



Scenes at Masuma, July 2016

The Masuma crocodiles also provided us with some good sightings during the count, repeatedly trying to catch some of the hundreds of Cape Turtle Doves that came in to drink but also displaying and mating, giving us the hope that there may be baby crocodiles in the Dam next year. Everyone with a camera tried to get a photo of the crocs catching doves but the attacks were far too sudden and random and as far as I know no-one was lucky.

We continue to co-operate with the Painted Dog Conservation team and were delighted to finally locate the den of the Gurangwenya pack, beautifully sighted, high in the Smiths Mine Hills. It is highly unlikely that they will be disturbed there, either by predators or by people and having such excellent den sites in their range must contribute a lot to the success of this pack. We did not spend time at the den for fear of disturbing the dogs but we caught up with them one evening as they went out to hunt.....



Miscellaneous

I wrote last month that Sinamatella's domestic water system had broken down and we were relying on water collected in containers. I'm happy to report that the problem was fixed in the first week of July and since then we have had water with good pressure 24 hours per day. Long may that continue!

With the possibility of fire always a worry at this time of year, we were lucky to have the help of Makomo Mine who sent a grader to grade the road/fireguard

from Inyantue to Shumba. That completes the external fire-guards for Sinamatella and also makes travelling to and from Tshompani a great deal easier.

Finally, diesel supply has continued to be a problem for us but Wilderness Safaris have eased the problem somewhat by kindly donating a drum of diesel. Added to the long-term weekly donation from Makomo that makes our transport situation a lot better. A generous donation from Mark Unwin of Clarkson Jersey Charitable Trust has allowed us to get more diesel, plus all the spares and servicing oils, filters, etc needed for the vehicles. Many thanks.

ROBINS



Deteema Dam (photo Ricky Forster) .

I took a trip around Robins to check on all the installed pumps, and generally they are doing well, but some adjustments needed on some, which will be done in August.



Jed Robinson checking a controller at Tsamhole - found the pumps has jammed - a common problem with new pumps in boreholes not used for a while, until the borehole has been pumped clean.



Little Toms - pleasantly surprised at the water after 6 weeks - pumping from 98m down!



Big Toms - a very active waterhole!!



Manzimbomvu - a beautiful pan but water struggling. Pumping from 85m but to lower pump another 8m to try and improve flow.



Dolilo - pan filling up after 6 weeks of pumping - will be a spectacular pan in the near future!

Other pans visited were:

Dandari - not much water, which we knew when we installed the pump that it had a poor flow rate, doing better than anticipated

Deteema - struggling - pump doing well but under severe pressure of game drinking there - up to 2000 buffalo and several hundred elephant a day!! We are pumping solar by day and hybrid diesel by night, but still cannot keep up. We desperately need a second borehole and pump, with a new pipeline!

POACHING

Generally has been a quiet month, with no reported Zambian incursions, or elephant poaching incidents. With the effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Parks patrolling, it appears the Zambians have largely switched to Botswana - I have just read a report of an estimated 50 elephant poached in a 10km strip along the Linyanti. With the end of hunting there are now vast areas of Botswana effectively abandoned with no ground coverage - a poachers paradise!

However, we still have a Zambian problem - they have taken to shooting animals (elephant and hippo) on the islands along the Zambezi River - once the animals cross onto the islands, be they Zimbabwean or Zambian islands, it seems word goes out and the poachers will come and shoot them, while the locals recover the meat

A pangolin was recovered from the Binga area in a sting operation run by Parks Investigations. The pangolin was released into the Zambezi National Park. Through the SAVE the African Rhino Foundation, Bhejane Trust paid a reward to the informer who

had led to the recovery. The two poachers are still on remand in custody, but are facing nine years!

GRATEFUL THANKS

A grateful thanks to those who have supported us and who continue to support us. This month, we have had support from:

Conservation & Wildlife Fund Trust - for the funding got the borehole pumps in the Robins area - apologies to them - I had the name slightly wrong in the June newsletter

Nicholas Duncan and the SAVE The African Rhino Foundation – a staunch supporter.

Mark Unwin and the Clarkson Jersey Charitable Trust - Mark responded to our appeal for urgent assistance this month, and came through with a very generous donation, which has greatly helped our transport situation. Many thanks and much appreciated, Mark.

RAM Petroleum

Read Petroleum

Patrick Jacquemin – for continued, invaluable support. Patrick has now again come to the fore with rangers rations funding, water point maintenance funds, and vehicle maintenance costs. Thanks Patrick - much appreciated.

Bud and Guy Cockcroft – donation of a solar unit in memory of their beloved Jane (RIP)

Chris Lampard – continuing invaluable support in the field

Piet and Anthea Erasmus - for their generous donation towards water in the Chamabonda

Makomo Mine – donation of diesel

Ian & Sue Thomson – more assistance forthcoming, with upgraded pumps, and financial help.

Michel Buenerd and Le Pic Vert for four donated solar pump units for Sinamatella, and the newly installed hybrid solar unit at Deteema

Thor Thorsson– an intrepid traveller

Stewart Cranswick and Gerald Snyman for a generous donation.

Dave Carson and Camp Hwange for helping fund our Sinamatella Rhino Monitoring Unit and game water supplies.

Wilderness Safaris for assistance at Sinamatella

The Area Managers and staff of Zambezi, Kazuma, Sinamatella and Robins, for all their support and assistance.

To all those who support and assist in many varied ways – thanks and appreciated. My apologies if I have inadvertently left anyone out!!!

And a big thanks to the Minister of Environment, Climate and Water and to Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and staff for their continuing support and the spirit of co- operation!

DONATIONS

Bhejane Trust relies on donations to continue it's operations, which includes our daily operating costs, as well as specific projects. However, at the moment our financial concerns are related to our operating costs - these have grown as we take on more and more, especially in the running of game waterpoints and the expansion into the Robins area.

DONATE

Donate to help us save our wildlife heritage - any donations would be gratefully accepted . Donations can be through our “PayNow” button on our website “bhejanetrust.org” or direct to our bank account: (please note that Zimbabwe is experiencing a financial crisis again but volunteer organisations and NGO's will not be penalised with any donations made - the monies will be attributed to the relevant account in full))

Bank details :

Bhejane Trust,
FBC Bank,
Galleria Building, Parkway Victoria Falls
Zimbabwe
Branch Code : 8512
Swift Code : FBCPZWHA
Account No : 6145093780178

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