

# Newsletter

## VFWT Update

The second half of 2013 saw VFWT working hard to finish our field work before the summer heat set in, making it difficult to work with wildlife due to the high temperatures. From rhinos to lions we worked tirelessly to assist local stakeholders in conserving these species. The team has also been working hard to try and get the wildlife disease and diagnostics laboratory ready for its first annual inspection. Whilst we have been facilitating the aforementioned projects, the Trust has also continued its rescue and rehabilitation efforts with the release of the young aardwolf that was rescued in March 2013, and a number of other creatures that have come through the door. In addition, we have kept up the children's weekly conservation interaction and expanded its reach.



### Lion Conservation

In 2013 VFWT in collaboration with Oxford WildCRU Hwange Lion Research project, initiated a survey of the lion population in Zambezi and Kazuma National Parks and the surrounding safari areas. VFWT conducted spoor transects of different land use types, to gain a better idea of prey and predator population numbers. In addition two satellite collars were fitted onto adult female lions to monitor their spatial movements. Both females were part of a larger pride of lions which we will continue to monitor.



### Children's Conservation Program

Our children's conservation program saw more than 800 children visit the property this last year, interacting with our wildlife ambassadors and discussing the benefit wildlife plays in their lives. VFWT selected the top twenty senior school children from the rural communal areas to participate in a week long course, which emphasized a career in conservation. Included in the children selected for this were five children of current National Parks staff from various areas in North West Zimbabwe. Out of this group of children we have found some amazing trackers, artists, singers, future scientists, and we hope to be able to continue fostering their interest in wildlife. Thank you to our donors who supported this effort and to Sables Foundation and Mzuri Wildlife Foundation for funding the weekly conservation program.



Immobilized lioness

### VFWT Motorbike Enduro

At the end of September VFWT held the Victoria Falls Fun Motorbike Enduro fundraising event. The event was well received with FIM and supported by Dakar rally riders such as Daryl Curtis, David Reeve and Riaan van Niekerk. This event helped raise almost \$10,000 needed to support VFWT projects, local communities and anti poaching initiatives.

**Save the dates** of May 2nd and 3rd, 2014 to participate in this years event

### Litter Collection

In 2013 the VFWT litter collection team continued with its efforts to assist with the management of litter collection in Victoria Falls, and in a little over one year since its inception, over 6000 bags of litter have been collected and transported to the local refuse facility. A very big thank you to Wilderness Safaris, Wild Horizons, Rotary International (Victoria Falls) and Shearwater Adventure company for supporting this project.

**Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust**  
Registered Non-profit in Zimbabwe  
US Charity # 98-6061293  
[www.vicfallswildlifetrust.org](http://www.vicfallswildlifetrust.org)

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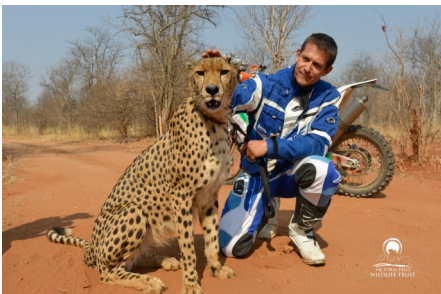


Photo © Olwen Evans

## Rhino Conservation

In September, VFWT was able to work together with the Dambari Wildlife Trust to assist Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority in their efforts to conserve the rhino population remaining in Matopos National Park. VFWT wildlife veterinarian Dr. Chris Foggin, and Wildlife Manager Roger Parry, immobilized black and white rhino to ear notch new individuals. Ear notching helps anti-poaching patrols identify individual animals in their work on the ground tracking each animal. The team also dehorned each animal that was immobilized as per the National Parks strategy to curb poaching in the area. Dehorning rhino can help deter poachers who would potentially get a lower payout for the low amount of rhino horn if it were sold illegally on the black market.



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## Disease surveillance

VFWT have been collecting samples of tissue, blood and hair from a range of different species. In the last six months VFWT has expanded its efforts to test cattle for a range of diseases, including bovine tuberculosis, in different areas throughout Zimbabwe. This disease can be carried by wildlife such as buffalo, and when cattle and buffalo come into close proximity the disease can be transferred. During recent vaccination campaigns of cats and dogs, VFWT has also collected samples from dogs to test for diseases such as ehrlichia and distemper which also have spillover effects into wildlife species. VFWT continues to run disease research on crocodile diseases to determine how the diseases are circulating.



## Laboratory

Over the last few years VFWT have been working hard to build and equip our wildlife laboratory. This year we are very happy to announce that we had our first annual inspection and registration of the lab by the Zimbabwe Veterinary Council. The lab is now officially open! The plans are to provide services in veterinary histology, pathology, basic serological testing, and our work with DNA technology in PCR disease diagnostics. We would also like to thank International Wildlife Health Institute and their supporters from Jorgensen Labs and Rocky Mountain Microscope, for kindly donating our new isoflurane anesthesia machine and dissecting microscope and flying the equipment all the way to our facilities!

## Plans for 2014

As we forge forward into a new year, VFWT has already made plans on how we are going to make a difference in conserving wildlife and natural resources. In 2014 VFWT aims to continue our conservation efforts in assessing the regional lion and large carnivore population. We believe conserving the rhino in Zimbabwe is paramount to conservation and we hope to achieve this by continuing to support National Parks Authorities and expand our work into genetic relatedness. With the support of our donors we will continue to run the litter collection team and hope to begin working with other stakeholders to implement a recycling program. Our children's conservation program will also continue to run in 2014 and we hope to be able to also host our week long conservation program to the children most interested in wildlife conservation. VFWT will also work with local communities to find solutions to human wildlife conflict and monitor conflict incidents through the hotline number. Finally, in 2014 VFWT will expand its disease surveillance projects and hopes to undertake new disease testing procedures. We will of course always open our doors to any animal that is injured or orphaned due to human interference. Thank you all for your support, we would not be here without all of you! We wish you a happy and prosperous 2014!