



Ifa lemvelo

The Newsletter of the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe

Vol 4, issue 1

2023



The Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe is one of the best museums in Southern Africa, ranked fourth in size. It is home to valuable research collections and has stunning displays.

Opening Hours

Open **EVERYDAY** from **9am to 5pm**
even on Public holidays

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www.naturalhistorymuseumzimbabwe.com



Entrance fees

Locals	SADC Countries
Adults \$3	Adults \$7
Children (5-14 years)\$1	Children \$5
International Visitors	
Adults \$10	
Children \$5	

All prices in US\$, local currency accepted,
calculated at prevailing official rate.

1 Celebrating
women's month
with our Customer
Service Champions

2 Join our 60 panels
for 60 years
campaign

3 Save these dates
*The Friends' AGM
on the 23rd of April as
we officially open the
Butterfly Garden*

Ifa Lemvelo is published by the
Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe
Box 240 Bulawayo
Edited by Dr M. J Fitzpatrick & P. N Tshabangu
Design & layout by P. N Tshabangu

Message from the Regional Director

Welcome to this issue of our newsletter where we take you on yet another journey through the museum. It has been a rough time for the museum with the continuous power outages leaving visitors stranded in many dark galleries.

Next year we celebrate the museum building's 60th year and the "Friends of the museum" are launching "60 years 60 panels" to improve our solar system so we can all enjoy their visit to the museum.

We hope you will support this effort. Friends membership is also due and join us for the AGM when we celebrate the life of Mike Gardiner as we open the butterfly garden in his honour

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VALID UNTIL 31.03.2024

Celebrating the month of women: Kudos to our Service Champions

By Phineas Chauke Regional Marketing Officer

National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) has grown over the years in strength, stature and impact to become a major brand in the preservation and promotion of national heritage. A brand is a set of tangible and intangible attributes, designed to create awareness and identity to build a reputation of a product, service, person, place or organisation. All big corporate brands attain their status owing to dedicated efforts of personal brands who apply their skills, competencies and talents that are concerted into productive teams.

In the Western Region of NMMZ we are celebrating the International Women's Month by appreciating our female Customer Service Champions who, over the years have been on the frontline in delivering top-drawer service to our diverse clientele. Their commendable service has constituted a part of the organisation's unique selling proposition that has seen us win awards over the years. The most recent award won by NMMZ is the Tsalumba National Travel and Tourism award in the Contribution from the public sector category.

The roles played by these Customer Service Champions range from welcoming visitors, giving information, sales of literature and souvenirs, booking visits for schools and groups, ticketing visitors, ensuring a clean, safe environment for the visitors and conducting guided tours in the museum and sites in the region. Below we profile the ladies who are part of the team that is responsible for delivering the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe, Khami World Heritage Site, World's View and Pomongwe Rock Art Site.

Nosizo C. Ngwenya



Aged 31, affectionately known as *Ngwee*, Nosizo is married and blessed with three handsome boys. She joined NMMZ as a Tour Guide at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe in January 2019. Her work with the organisation has seen her manning the front office and conducting guided tours at the museum, Khami World Heritage Site and World's View in the Matobo World Heritage Site. Nosizo's deep sense of courtesy and a affectionate smile has helped her quickly create rapport with customers and ease any tensions with workmates. Her willingness to learn has seen her doing stints in the Accounting department whenever assistance is needed. Nosizo communicates fluently in English, Ndebele, Shona and Sotho. Her qualifications include a Certificate in Nurse Aide and a Certificate in Service Excellence.

and Matobo World Heritage site. Otilia is conversant in English, Shona and Ndebele. Her qualifications include a certificate in Secretarial Studies, Certificate in Service Optimization, Certificate in Service Excellence and a Diploma in Development Studies.

Sihle Dube



Affectionately known as *namaDue*, Sihle is a married lady aged 53. She has rendered her services as a Tour Guide for NMMZ since 2009. Through her dedicated service with the organisation spanning more than a decade she has been stationed at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe, Khami World Heritage site and

Matobo Hills World Heritage Site. Sihle is a combination of self-motivation, passion and maturity and this has seen her earning the affection of customers and the respect of colleagues. She communicates effectively in English, Ndebele and Shona. Her qualifications include a Certificate in Secretarial Studies, Certificate in Service Quality Optimisation and a Certificate in Service Excellence

Pepetual Muzama



Pepetual is aged 43 and is a fit and flourishing single mother of three. She is affectionately known as *Pepe* and has a genuine love for people and travel. She is bound by the strict rules and morals of her Christian upbringing. Having joined the organisation in 2019, she has tremendously grown to appreciate

Otilia Mucheni



Otilia affectionately known as *Mai Mbirimi* is a 43 year old mother of 3 who is happily married. She joined the organisation as a Tour Guide in February 2008. Her passion for tour-guiding has seen her amassing an incredible wealth of knowledge in history, cultural and natural heritage and becoming one of the best tour guides in the region.

Through her work experience she has grown to enjoy interacting with people of different ages, cultures and races. Otilia is a great team worker who is always on the look-out for an opportunity to learn something new and become a more accomplished tour-guide. She has worked her magic at the Natural History Museum, Khami World Heritage Site

and become an ambassador for national heritage at work and outside. Her passion for tourism has enabled her to embrace her tour-guiding role with enthusiasm and vigor. Pepe has been deployed to Khami World Heritage Site, Matobo Hills World Heritage Site and the Natural History Museum. At all the stations she has proven to be a resourceful person and a great team player. She believes there is potential in the organisation and the individuals within to accomplish way more than the current achievements and she is willing to do more. Pepetual communicates with her clients in English, Shona, Ndebele, French and Sign language. Her qualifications include a Diploma in Tourism and Travel and Certificate in Service Excellence,

Nomalanga Sibanda



Affectionately known as *Noma*, Nomalanga is a 49 year old married mother of 2. She joined the tourism industry in 2006 and right then, she knew this was what she was born to do. Her journey with NMMZ then commenced in 2009 when she joined as a Tour Guide for Khami World Heritage Site, Matobo World Heritage Site and the Natural History Museum. She has a deep-rooted love for Khami World Heritage Site and she has gained immense knowledge about its history and culture. Nomalanga enjoys working with all kinds of visitors although her favourites are school children coming for educational tours since she is passionate about raising a heritage-conscious future generation of leaders. Her calm disposition and warm personality has enabled her to win the affection and respect of her clients. She communicates in English, Ndebele, Kalanga and Shona. Her Qualifications include National Certificate in Tourism and hospitality Management, Certificate in Service Quality Optimisation and a Certificate in Service Excellence

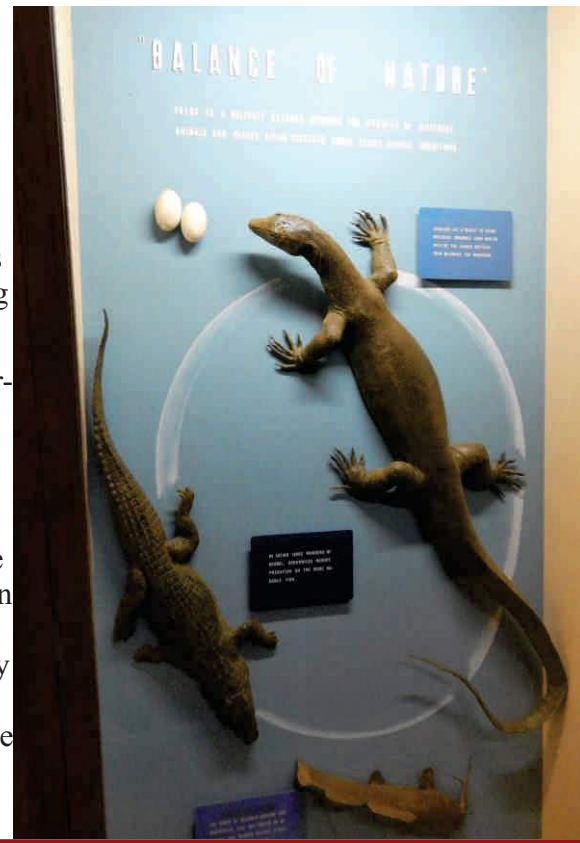
Captivating display of animal interactions at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe

By Viola Makuvaza
Curator of Galleries

A visit to the museum will award one to encounter wildlife in the urban setup. The stunning displays depicts various animals interacting with each other in nature in the ecosystem mainly as they find food to survive. An ecosystem is a stable balanced community in which matter and energy from the non-living part of the environment is being recycled which is necessary for life. Plants are the producers of food in an ecosystem and without plants ecosystem cannot exist as there is no source of organic materials. I ecosystems food chains and food webs exist of the various feeding relations of animals. Animals are all consumers in the food chain and herbivores are termed primary consumers because they feed directly on green plants. A large number of herbivores are exhibited in the Museum Galleries. Herbivores are divided into i) grazers- those that feed entirely or predominantly on grasses. These are the buffalos, wildebeest, hippopotamus, white rhnoceros, ii)browsers- those that feed largely or exclusively on more commonly upper strata of vegetation, shrubs and trees. Examples are giraffe, black rhinoceros, iii) mixed feeders- they derive various proportions of their diet from grasses, shrubs and trees. Examples are impala. In the face of limited resources there is usually competitions for food, water, mates and space among herbivores of the same species and also intolerance from other species in watering holes.

In an ecosystem many factors keep the animal populations stable. There is a viable ecological carrying capacity for each species in a particular habitat. If a zebra population increases beyond the carrying capacity, there may not be enough food for them and enough water to drink which may result in their mortality. Large populations may cause some animals to be weak from malnutrition and resulting in weakened immune systems which are less able to fend off invasion from disease causing bacteria and viruses. When animals stay together in a crowded habitat it increases the chances of diseases striking and spreading.

The primary consumers are at the mercy of the secondary, tertiary and higher-order consumers who depend on them for survival. Carnivorous animals are commonly called predators, generally feed on herbivores but can eat omnivores and occasionally other carnivores. Cats and dogs are carnivorous mammals which can attack prey larger than themselves, antelopes, monkeys, baboons, guinea fowls, francolins, rodents and small birds. Cats and dogs are exhibited feeding on birds and a leopard preying on a baboon. Omnivores can eat both animal and plant material. Some omnivores are scavengers and will eat dead animals. Carnivorous birds include birds of prey called raptors, they eat mammals, other birds, insects, amphibians, fish or reptiles. They hunt for living animals or scavenge for dead animals as their primary food source. The owls hunt for rodents at night by using sound. An owl is displayed with 20



mice skulls it can hunt in one night and a display of vultures eating a dead sable is shown in the Museum galleries



All snakes are carnivores and they swallow their food whole. Some snakes eat warm-blooded prey eg rodents, birds, while others eat insects, amphibians, eggs, other reptiles, fish or earth-worms. Snakes have the ability to swallow very large prey because they have very flexible jaws capable of unhinging so they can have their mouths wide open. Venomous snakes will strike and sink their fangs into the prey injecting venom to paralyse or kill before swallowing it. Most non-venomous snakes are constrictors that wrap their bodies around the prey and slowly tighten their coils to squeeze the prey until it dies. A spectacular display of a snake swallowing a giant rat is found on the walls in the Museum galleries.

Some animal interactions can be parasitic where one party benefits (parasite) whilst the other is harmed (host). It usually does not kill the host- the parasite is usually very much smaller than its host. An example is the giraffe and the ticks, which are then eaten by the oxpecker in a symbiotic relationship with the giraffe.

Predators exhibit traits such as sharp teeth, claws and venom that enhance their ability to catch food. Predation has shaped the behaviour of herbivores in the course of evolution allowing them to both feed and avoid being eaten to survive and reproduce. At the same time the herbivores developed genetically-determined traits that improve an organism's ability to survive and reproduce which will be passed on to its offspring. Traits associated with improved predation for predators and escaping predation for prey tend to be positively selected by natural selection. A single zebra will stand out in the savannah when stationary, but when moving rapidly in a group, their stripe create a confusing, flickering mass in the eye of a predator. Social carnivores such as lions, hyenas and wolves have a strategy of group predation and lions through their co-operative hunting strategies allow them to kill prey far larger than themselves.

The museum galleries can take you to the wilderness to experience these animal interactions.



The Livingstone Sango-Moyo Gallery at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe

By Kith Mkhwananzi
Curatorial Assistant-Mammalogy

Once upon a time there lived an old elephant bull at Doddieburn Ranch in the Filabusi District, Matabeleland South Province of Zimbabwe. The ranch is situated on a mixed vegetation dominated by mopane and acacia woodland on basalt soils. The old elephant bull survived for longer than living memory and it was esteemed by everyone in the ranch and around the communal land. It really enjoyed roaming around its preferred habitat. Conversely, elephant bull developed a taste for green crops and began to search farther afield. His trips into the neighbouring communal lands was prompted by its appetite rather than vicious intent, his behaviour frightened the community whilst affecting their crop yields which the bull damaged with its heavy feet. Continual efforts were made to drive him farther back into the ranch but he was too stubborn to change his ways. In 1960, the old elephant bull was gunshot, though sad it was, this steered to countless activities which led to the opening of the Livingstone Sango-Moyo Gallery (formerly Lowveld Hall) at the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe in 1977.



Doddieburn Ranch was unwilling to see their old elephant bull wane forever, so they decided to donate his remains to the Natural History Museum where his remembrance will be well-preserved. When he was gunned down in 1960, the museum team of taxidermists, technical staff and volunteers were on site to deal with his remains and, in spite of the unfriendly weather and primitive operational conditions, the difficult task of skinning and field groundwork was carried out quickly and professionally. At that time when the Doddieburn elephant was shot, funds were not available to mount the animal so the skin, parts of the skeleton and the measurement charts were stored away for eight years and almost forgotten.



In 1968 Bulawayo was to celebrate its 75th anniversary, the City Council whose emblem depicts the elephant, donated funds towards the costs of mounting the animal on condition that the work was to be completed within the anniversary year. While it was an impossible task, this was an encounter that had to be completed. The Doddieburn elephant was completed within nine months, a remarkable achievement that was carried out successfully. The large mammal hall as it was referred to was drawn up when the museum was first built, however for many years it remained embarrassingly empty, or it was a home for occasional temporary exhibits. Livingstone Sango-Moyo gallery was designed to showcase some of the big game animals in their natural habitat. Hot, dry and strangely beautiful, Livingstone Sango-Moyo gallery was made up of habitats that covers some parts of the south-east of Zimbabwe.



The exercise started off slowly in 1969 when the mounting of the elephant was completed and it continued to gain popularity amongst researchers, scientist, farmers and the general public as it is reflected by how the collection has gained its status. Finally, in 1977 Livingstone Sango-Moyo gallery was officially open thus leading to a chain of events in the mammalogy department with an addition of other mammals big and small, this led to the expansion of the collection in terms of conservation, research and interpretation of the information to all museum enthusiasts. The Livingstone Sango-Moyo gallery was renamed after the late Mr L.T Sango-Moyo as an honor of his 41 years of service and dedication towards his work in the exhibition department.

The late Mr L.T. Sango-Moyo joined the NMMZ in 1949 after his secondary education at Cyrene Mission. His immensely effort in artistic work did not go unnoticed at the school where he and J. Sambo displayed their skills of art when they painted the school chapel mural depicting Biblical stories. His excellent work helped him to be noticed and get employed at the museum when the need arose for an artist, he later became a qualified taxidermist. The late Mr L.T Sango-Moyo was awarded Western School of Taxidermy Diploma in 1960. He had to retire from NMMZ in 1990.

Zimbabwe is one of the very few countries in the world that is fortunate enough to have a priceless national asset- its sustainable wildlife. The mammalian fauna of Zimbabwe was little known and a great number of specimens found their way to the collection where they were brought in for identification accessioning and preservation. Many specimens are still in the collection at the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo. Quite apart from the tremendous economic benefit that wildlife can bring to our country, it is a moral responsibility on the part for all Zimbabweans to save wildlife for future generations the Livingstone Sango-Moyo open habitat rewards visitors to wander in contact with wildlife without the restrictions of traditional glass-fronted cases. The walk through Livingstone-Sango Moyo gallery is one of the highlights of the museum that must not be missed by any museum devotee. The mammal exhibition showcases a variety of eye-catching displays depicting the Zimbabwean rich mammal heritage that is stored in various storages at this beautiful museum.



Museums' long held aura as authoritative temples of information and heritage rests upon the socially widespread belief that they hold in timelessness for the benefit of society and humanity. The museum visitor may have come away informed, provoked, moved and inspired by the exhibition in the Livingstone Sango-Moyo gallery. The information and the way it is attached with objects immediately takes the museum visitor one step beyond the material and physical thing they see displayed before them. Our exhibitions can successfully and inclusively empower visitors to reflect innovatively sometimes transformative on themselves and others whilst experiencing beauty awareness as ends themselves.

The Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe's mammal collection by far is the largest single collection in the Southern Hemisphere. The demands from the various users of the mammalogy collection has prompted the department to create a collection that is well geared for and amenable to the dynamic demands of contemporary research. The advantages of this to our own country's research endeavour cannot be over emphasised. The Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe mammal collection can only be fully understood through the continuous application of scientific methods in the study of mammalian distribution, ecology, taxonomy, systematic and development. The interest and dedication that was put towards the collection by mammalogy staff, researchers from across the globe, scholars and the public thus, led to publications such as journals, Arnoldia papers, Checklists and Atlas of Mammals of Zimbabwe, Aticles and books such as Mammals of Southern Africa among others. It is on premise that all the other functions of the mammal department in society is based.



Our cultural heritage as a nation is rested within the bowels of our forests in the form of animals, plants soils and water bodies thus we must not rest on our efforts to unravel the mystery of our sustainable heritage until we can make the nation fully appreciative of what we have and how important it is to all of us. This brings up the question of education, especially education directed at making the population aware of its obligations towards conservation. This can best be accomplished if people can be taught about our responsibility towards wildlife and their effects in the natural cycle such as food sources, or as scavengers, as predators and as environmental indicators, as vermin or even for their aesthetic value. Members of the public from all walks of life, interested in Zimbabwean natural history collection can fulfil their desires of knowledge from the lectures, seminars and more often tours as this is part of the department's obligation to them. The museum through its various vital departments has the primary function of carrying our taxonomic research on the fauna of this country and the globe. Other responsibilities such as conservation, scientific research, cultural identity, displays and wildlife awareness campaigns are part and parcel of the holistic approach of the organisation. Therefore, the global village has to support the role that is put in place for museums in order for them to carry out their activities and function as a social tool.



Commemorating the 60TH ANNIVERSARY of
the current museum building (March 1964 - March 2024)

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National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

3PM, SUNDAY 23rd APRIL

Butterfly Talk BY DR. ALAN GARDINER

AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
BUTTERFLY GARDEN



MUSEUM GROUNDS
Cnr L. Takawira Ave
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All invited



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