ZIMBABWE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

ZNPSCA UPDATE 30 AUGUST 2006

This has been a truly challenging year for the Society but our valiant band remain undaunted and continue the brave fight to protect the animals of Zimbabwe.

We have many areas of concern that we are currently investigating such as canned lion hunting and the 'domestication' of elephants, due to the growing popularity in elephant-back rides and safaris.

Some private game parks are offering the 'walk with the lions' experience or being able to hand feed lion cubs. To fuel this activity, lions need to be hand reared but when the lions reach 18 months, current regulations prohibit the use of lions over this age for close encounters. The big question is where do all these adult lions that do not know how to hunt and that have bonded with humans end up?

We are working with National Parks for the introduction of regulations for the identification and monitoring of all wild animals in captivity as well as more comprehensive legislation to ensure that these animals do not end up as victims of canned hunts.

We are also deeply concerned about the impact the current economic meltdown, continuing food shortages and high cost of any available food is going to have on both companion animals and their owners. Many have already surrendered their animals in the cities and towns that have an SPCA centre but there are increasing numbers of stray and abandoned animals and a burgeoning road side trade in young animals which the urban and national Inspectors are struggling to contain.

We wholeheartedly commend them for their untiring efforts and remain committed to ensuring that the Society not only survives but grows. To this end, there are currently 10 trainee Inspectors who should be ready for certification before the end of the year. The Regional Inspectors held an intensive training course for them in August and there are a few real gems in the group who will be joining the national team.

We are very sad to report that one of our Regional Inspectors, Jimmy Zuze, passed away yesterday. Some of you may recall that he was the dog handler who risked his life when all the Tredar guards went on strike in 2002 and abandoned their dogs whilst he remained on duty to care for the animals. He then went out with ZNSPCA and the volunteer vets to find all the dogs which had been abandoned whilst on duty and were left tied to trees and fences for several days, some in the blazing sun. Jimmy was then recruited by the ZNSPCA and was the Regional Inspector for Midlands at the time of his untimely death. In his memory, you will find his photo attached to this update.

Despite the economic decline and the many logistical challenges, we wholeheartedly commend all the participants of the grueling Blue Cross 2006. The sponsorship raised from this event will help to ensure that our SPCA centres will stay open and our Inspectors on the road for another year. We thank all the organisers and the support crews who worked so hard to ensure the success of the event and that all the participants came home safely, and of course all the sponsors who still found it in their hearts in these difficult times to support those who have no voice.

As part of the Bird Blue Task Force in Zimbabwe, the ZNSPCA team are now gearing up for an educational tour in preparation for the imminent change in season and the increased risk of an outbreak. It is fortunate that in Africa there are large spaces between urban areas, rural communities and poultry farming activities which does make it somewhat easier for containment, but there is also a huge migratory bird population

and many surface lakes and dams, so it is important that the public are well informed about the disease and that they know that we are here to help and if necessary to ensure the humane handling and culling of any infected birds.

All of which is part of our advancement from not only being a reactive team but a pro-active team. Should anyone locally wish to assist, we would be happy to e-mail a list of items the team needs for the Bird Flu Tour.

Below this e-mail I am attaching one of the recent Donkey Reports compiled by the ZNSPCA Inspectorate Co-ordinator, Glynis Vaughan, which you may find interesting and also a little amusing.

Thank you all
Jimmy, inzirayedo tose - zorora murugare.
Bernice

ZNSPCA DONKEY REPORT

Following numerous enquiries regarding the welfare of the donkeys in Zimbabwe, I thought I should write a short report on how our National Inspectorate Team are getting on in the 'rurals'. This report covers the period of May, June and early part of July.

Team Nissan (teams are named by the trucks we drive) went on a trip to Hwange / Victoria Falls / Binga. 252 donkeys were treated - the majority being in the Lupane area along with many dogs and a few cattle. All donkeys had serious wounds due to poor harnesses and carts being overloaded with firewood, thatching grass and water. All donkey owners were issued with wound oil and our Inspectors released most of the donkeys after treatment. The owners were very receptive to our team and eager to learn about the correct way to care for their donkeys.

Team Nissan again travelled to Hwange / Vic Falls and treated another 177 donkeys. Some donkey owners recognised the truck and waved the team down before the brake lights were showing! (A ZNSPCA truck never drives past a donkey cart!) One pair of operators jumped off their cart and hid in the bush when they spotted the truck as they knew there was trouble afoot – they had been whipping their animals. In this area there were no yokes found being used, but the harnesses were again of bad quality - so our harness project must be speeded up to enable us to make a bigger improvement in this area.

Team Nissan then went off to Kezi / Mupisa and Tuli Makwe on a two day trip in which time they treated 129 donkeys, 20 cattle, 17 dogs, 9 pigs, 2 goats and one lonely sheep. The public want the team back asap as they were very keen to learn and wanted to bring all their other donkeys, dogs, etc. from their houses to a meeting point. The team are organising this meeting.

Team Isuzu did a return trip to Masvingo, Chiredzi and diverted down to Chivi to euthanaise a donkey infested with cancer. On this trip the team treated 279 donkeys. Of this figure, 119 donkeys were yoked and team Isuzu were kept warm every night by the big bonfire they had burning all the confiscated yokes! Temperatures were so low that there was ice on the tents every morning. The public in this area were not very receptive to the team as they were left stranded with their donkeys happily grazing next to them. Two carts were left yoked as they were carrying sick people and the Isuzu was so packed that they did not have the room to ferry the passengers to the nearest clinic. On returning to Bulawayo, team Isuzu struggled to find a donkey cart on the route, except for one happy man that waved them down and proudly showed off the new harnesses he had made. Because of the lack of donkeys on the road, team Isuzu decided to call it a

Mashava donkey holiday!!! On the trip the team realised that trainee Insp Watson was an accident waiting to happen. By this time, they were ill equipped for the work they were doing as their bolt cutters broke on the way down and the pliers went missing. Undaunted, they used rocks, hands, and wire to break all the chains. Trainee Watson managed to always get her feet and hands stuck in the wire and the other two team members found this quite amusing as they managed to remain uninjured. The crunch came when two members were undoing a yoke and trainee Watson was holding the disselboom between her legs. Once the two team members let go of their sides of the yoke, Watson was raised up in the air by the load of the cart. To her dilemma, she found that the other team members were laughing so hard they could not immediately help her down. She was 'rescued' and with only her dignity slightly dented, saw the funny side of things and also enjoyed a laugh. It is these little incidents that help to release some of the daily stresses whilst on the road.

Team Isuzu then carried out a local trip (involving abattoirs) to Esigodini and back through Matopos. They treated 77 donkeys on that trip (all harnessed). People in the area were keen to hold a workshop on the care of their animals, so this will be arranged in the near future.

With all these figures, it puts the total number of donkeys treated since the beginning of May at 914. For two months work we are proud of that figure as it adds up to about 15 donkeys a day (including weekends). We hope to keep up this work, especially in the areas where the public are requesting workshops.

We still have many areas that we have not yet visited but know that we will get there in time, as since the start of this year, many roads have been travelled for the first time and we intend to carry on with this trend.