

What should we focus on now?

BY JOHN LAING

Tourism around the world, and Zimbabwe is no exception, continues to be one of the hardest hit sectors by COVID and the outlook remains highly uncertain.

Zimbabwe has relied heavily on international tourism in the past. Domestic tourism has quite literally been a lifeline during COVID and whilst many operators are struggling, our local market has assisted in mitigating the impact on jobs and livelihoods. However, real recovery will only be possible when international tourism returns. This requires global co-operation and evidence-based solutions, so travel restrictions can be lifted safely.

Encouraging news on vaccines has boosted hopes for recovery, but challenges remain with the sector expected to remain in survival mode until well into 2021.

The survival of Zimbabwe is of course a concern to all of us. The risk is that without continued funding and support, key and influential players in the industry may have to leave to seek employment in other sectors. Whilst many “plans” have been made and there are many impressive examples of this, our industry still needs to find further solutions to cushion the blow to tourism, to minimise job losses and to build recovery in 2021 and beyond. More needs to be done, and in a more coordinated way.

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Key policy priorities should include:

- Restoring traveller confidence
- Supporting all matter of tourism businesses to adapt and survive
- Promoting domestic tourism and supporting safe return of international tourism
- Providing clear information to travellers, limiting uncertainty
- Strengthening operator co-operation within Zimbabwe
- Building more resilient, sustainable tourism

Flexible policy solutions have been implemented already and we are living alongside COVID, hopefully this will be in the short to medium term. However it is vitally important to look beyond this and take steps to learn from the crisis, which has revealed gaps in our operations and the industry preparedness, as well as response capacity.

The downturn has provided us with an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future. Tourism is at a crossroads and the measures that we are able to put in now will shape how we do business tomorrow. We all need to consider the longer-term implications of the crisis and capitalize on time we have available to us and promote the structural transformation needed to build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient Tourism Industry going forward.

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

— Pablo Picasso —





How safe is Air Travel?

Risk while flying is low - During air travel, the risk of COVID-19 is lower than from an office building, classroom, supermarket or commuter train, says the JAMA Patient Page, “Risk of COVID-19 During Air Travel,” co-written by Dr. Pombal.

“To date, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 transmission to airline passengers around the world is small,” said Dr. Pombal, adding that there have been only about “60 cases over a period in 2020 during which a total of over 1.2 billion passengers have travelled by air.”

“The odds of being on a plane with a person with actively transmissible COVID—both positive and in the window where they are significantly shedding as identified by the research—are quite low,” said Drs. Shoor and Ortega. However, “the best portion of the discussions and agreements revolve around the flexibility of response because one size doesn’t fit all.”

“To match that, discussions have set forth a pattern of communication to express and share those similarities and differences as each flight has a take-off and a landing location with different authorities,” they said.

“As this progresses, we will see areas ramp up and others go away, so you have to re-evaluate the way you think about how you travel,” said Dr. Shoor.

Airplanes have proper airflow - “In general, air enters the cabin from overhead inlets and flows downwards towards floor-level outlets,” said Dr. Pombal. “Air enters and leaves the cabin at approximately the same seat row or immediately adjacent rows.”

“The airflow in today's aircrafts have been measured at three times the amount mandated for infection control rooms in hospitals,” said Drs. Shoor and Ortega. “It takes the ventilation system of a plane about six minutes to reduce the number of viral particulates in the air by 99.9%.”

“This fact alone reduces risk significantly compared to office buildings, restaurants or homes,” they added.

Airlines and airports are taking all precautions - “The approach that airports and airlines are taking to protect passengers and their staff is like the multiple layers that you wear to protect you from the cold,” said Dr. Pombal. “On the plane, air flow, recycling and filtering, as well as masks or face coverings, will help to reduce the likelihood of transmission.”

Additionally, the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) “brings together international, regional, national and local organizations to work together to improve preparedness planning and response to public health events, such as COVID, that affect the aviation sector,” said Drs. Shoor and Ortega. “From CAPSCA’s meetings, a variety of interventions were created to be used by airlines, airports, and other control agencies.”

VICTORIA FALLS ENDURO

The Zambezi Off-Road Club

BY IAN GLOSS

The Zambezi Off-Road Club was established in 2014 shortly after the success of the first Fun Enduro held in September 2013. Now the host of this "Victoria Falls Enduro" fundraiser, where all proceeds are donated to four significant nonprofit organizations based in Victoria Falls. These organizations support wildlife and domestic animals throughout the region.

Now in our 9th year we believe that this event can grow regionally and internationally.

This event has multiple benefits to the Victoria Falls Community, which include the Hwange Communal Land where this event takes place. Funds raised at the event are donated to the various nonprofit organizations in Victoria Falls. Funds are channelled to the areas of need with minimal resources being spent on administration. Prior to the event and again on the event days, 10 – 15 members of the local community are employed to assist with route clearing, marking and marshalling the participants. Needless to say, that this event also brings great entertainment to the many spectators that line the course cheering on the competitors.

Event Beneficiaries:

Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit, Bhejane Trust, Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust and Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Zimbabwe.

Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit (VFAPU)

An organization of 17 game scouts that patrol Victoria Falls and surrounding areas for illegal hunting, tree cutting and any other Parks and Wildlife violations.

Bhejane Trust

This nonprofit organization is responsible for supporting Zimparks in an effort to pump water to wildlife. To date they have over 45 Solar Units pumping over 1 000 000 litres a day for wildlife

Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust (VFWT)

This is a broad-based nonprofit organization, with the primary mandate to conservation. This Trust has a forensic laboratory as well as an education officer that moves within the local communities teaching the young about the advantages of conservation for the future.

Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Zimbabwe (VAWZ)

This nonprofit organization has a small veterinary clinic with operating theatre in the area we ride. They play a crucial role giving veterinary education and assistance to the people in the Hwange Communal Lands.

"The only way to save a rhinoceros is to save the environment in which it lives. Because there's a mutual dependency between it and millions of other species."

-Sir David Attenborough -





Why are tracker dogs not only useful but necessary in wildlife areas?

BY KEITH SPARKS

Canines have been used in conflicts around the world for centuries. Even Atilla the Hun used dogs in his conquests. The war on poaching is no different. The value of canines is recognised by both sides - the poachers and anti-poaching units. Poachers use dogs to track and bay animals and anti-poaching units use them to track and apprehend poachers. With their keen sense of smell the poachers also use the dogs as early warning systems for ambushes laid by A.P.U.'s. With a sense of smell up to 100,000 times more acute than that of a human. A dog's nose is an exceptional tool. Trained to track and detect the canine can work where sight tracking by humans cannot and are an excellent addition to any anti-poaching unit.

Take Action Trust is based in southern Zimbabwe and adds value to existing anti-poaching efforts by supplying canines and train handlers. They have had many successes in conservancies in southern Zimbabwe helping protect rhino as well as animals from meat poaching. They also train detection dogs for use at roadblocks and points of entry into wildlife areas. In a recent incident a suspicious vehicle was stopped by rangers in the middle of the night. One suspect fled into the bush and upon searching the vehicle a heavy calibre weapon was found. The canine unit reacted and tracked the suspect in the dark where sight tracking was not possible. After a short track of about a km the suspect was apprehended. An extremely positive outcome.

It is often difficult to quantify success in this line of work. Arrests are hugely important but it is also well known that the deterrent factor that the canines have is huge with a noticeable drop in poaching incidents being recognised when the canines are visible in the area. They are not the goose that lays the golden egg however and need to be part of a well-managed, dedicated and active anti-poaching unit.



Birder - Falconer

BY PIERRE HEYMANS

I was chatting to a bunch of kids about falconry and one little girl put up her hand and asked me how it is that I claim to love birds if I hunt them with my hawks! It is a good question and no doubt one asked by plenty of adults, especially these days now that the hunting debate is so sharply in focus. The fact is, I was interested in birds, way before I even knew about the existence of falconry.

In 1982 I was fortunate enough, through circumstance, to come across the late Ron Hartley – the famed raptor biologist and falconer. Sceptical about falconry at first, I soon became witness to the incredibly strict set of self-imposed ethics this group adheres to.

Ron was no exception and he was fastidious in his insistence that the birds come first – be it the hawks OR the quarry. There is a whole story to be told about the efforts of falconers who have been instrumental in what is arguably the greatest conservation success story of our time – the recovery, world-wide, of the Peregrine Falcon.

Numbers had dwindled to perhaps unsustainable levels because of the use of DDT, but were restored through captive breeding and hacking of young birds using falconry techniques which were age-old. The effort was almost exclusively maintained by falconers giving freely of their time and often at the expense of careers and even families, simply because they cared enough that the Peregrine could not be allowed to disappear.

This attitude persists to this day. A current example is the captive breeding and release of the Houbara Bustard in the Middle East. This is an important quarry species for Arab falconers and the effort has been significantly funded and assisted by various falconry groups.

Falconry is most certainly not for everyone because it IS hunting. However, it is a kind of turbo-charged form of birding because there are the most incredible natural behaviours witnessed, which would seldom be seen outside our world.

Who would know that each member of a covey of Coqui Francolin knows precisely the location of every single ant-bear hole in their territory and the fact that their escape path always takes them directly to the closest one for safety? Or that an arrow marked babbler will always come to the assistance of his comrade who has been taken by an avian predator.

Guinea Fowl do the same thing for their chums. Broken wing acts are well documented in waterfowl. Francolin perform these also, except that these mothers fly weakly and drop into cover once the predator has been drawn away from chicks.

In the early season, the number of cock birds taken with a hawk, far outweighs what would be accepted as conforming to usual numbers and behaviour. Be it deliberate or not, cock birds very often are sacrificed when they flush early and draw the predator away from their covey of hens and youngsters.

No bird books comment on Lanner Falcons utilising the head-on strike whilst Peregrines avoid them. Many of the most spectacular flights I have been privileged to enjoy, have not resulted in a success for the predator, my falcon.

Falconers always have a strong sense of admiration for the myriad of escape techniques employed by all quarry species. The bottom line is that there is not an awful lot that is more spectacular than a falcon passing within a few feet of you, travelling at terminal velocity. However, there has to be a healthy population of equally cunning and skilful quarry out there to ensure that this kind of thing will keep on happening.

The dynamic between the two groups of birds is nothing short of breath-taking!



Z.P.G.A. Diary

MARCH

- Mon 8th - 12th - BLZ Summer Waterfowl Count (Duration or March)
- Sat 13th - Mushandike Course
- Sun 14th - UME ACE First Aid Training
- Sun 21st - Kariba Ace First Aid Training
- Mon 22nd - Shooting Proficiency (Cleveland)
- Tue 23rd & Wed 24th - Oral Interviews (Bolton Atlantic)
- Learners Written Exams

APRIL 2021

- Fri 12th - B.V.C. ACE First Aid Training
- Fri 30th - Victoria Falls Enduro

MAY 2021

- Sat 1st - Sun 2nd - Victoria Falls Enduro
- Mon 3th - Wed 5th - Lower Zambezi Canoe Proficiency
- Wed 5th - Sun 9th - Safari Rally
- Sat 8th - eBird Global Count
- Sun 30th - Shooting Proficiency (#2 Harare)

JULY

- BLZ Winter Waterfowl Count (Duration or July)

SEPTEMBER 2021

- Fri 10th - Last date for Learners Registration
- Sun 19th - Shooting Proficiency (#3 Harare)
- Mon 20th - Bulawayo Oral Interviews
- Tues 21st - Bulawayo Learners Exams
- Wed 22nd - Bulawayo Learners Exams
- Thurs 23rd - Marking of Papers

NOVEMBER 2021

- Mon 1st - Sun 7th - Proficiency Exam
- Mon 15th - Fri 19th - Pan African Ornithological Congress Victoria Falls
- Sat 27th - BLZ Big Birding Day

DECEMBER 2021

- Sat 11th - AGM & Safari Dinner (Bulawayo) Provisional

Members will receive discounted rates on production of valid Z.P.G.A. member's card

Participating companies include:

- Autoworld 4x4
- Barons Motor Spares
- Courteney Boot Company
- Four Wheels Auto
- Pro 4x4
- SAF Bar
- The Orange Elephant
- Tiger Wheel & Tyre
- Toyota Zimbabwe Pvt Ltd
- Trophy Consultants International (TCI)
- Widency Upholstery

If you would like to see your company name listed here please contact secretary@zpga.org

Ethics Are Everything!



The African Wildcat

BY DHARMESH DAYA

In the Middle East, there is a crescent shaped area of land known as the Fertile Crescent. This region encompasses modern day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and the southern parts of Turkey.

The Fertile Crescent is considered to be one of the cradles of civilization because it is one of the places where settled farming first came about. In order to do this type of farming, people would have had to alter nature by clearing vegetation to allow them to grow recently domesticated plants as crops.

It is here that the domestication of the African Wildcat (*Felis silvestris*) is believed to have happened, some 10,000 years ago. What we now know to be modern house cats (*Felis silvestris catus*) owe their existence to the people of this region, all that time ago.

The African wildcat and the domestic cat readily interbreed, which today is probably the biggest threat to the purity of the African wildcat gene. So how do we tell the two species or their crosses apart?

A distinguishing feature of *Felis silvestris* is the rich red colour at the back of the ears.

The upright sitting posture of the African wildcat is probably the easiest way to tell the two species or their progeny apart. The African wildcat has much longer, slender legs, hence when they sit upright the front legs push the body into a near vertical position. This is something that is just not achievable by the domestic cats or their crosses.

The African wildcat is a solitary nocturnal hunter, typically killing things like birds and small mammals. They can have between 2 to 5 kittens in a litter, born about 2 months after mating.

Seeing these cats in the wild is always great fun, often they pay very little attention to the presence of a vehicle and continue their hunting unperturbed, which inevitably leads to some sort of action.

It's well worth spending some time with them.

**“Courage doesn’t
always roar.
Sometimes courage is
the little voice at the
end of the day that
says I’ll try again
tomorrow.”**



Cleaning your firearm by John Laing

One of the first things my dad taught me was the importance of meticulously maintaining his rifle, not mine I was too young and not old enough to carry a gun license. If I was going to be allowed to shoot, I was taught to have a clean weapon. Cleaning is important regardless of your rifle's age, cost or action type. Since bolt-action rifles are the most common in the field today, here's how to properly clean yours;

First, you need the right stuff. This should include:

- Cleaning rod & proper calibre copper bore brushes for the bore.
- Cleaning patches, these usually come in long strips and have red lines running at intervals of about 2 inches
- Solvent for cleaning barrel fouling
- Rust protector, basically gun oil or another similar product to use as a finishing touch
- Tools, it is important to always check the tightness of screws and especially things like scope mounts, so the proper Allen keys and screwdrivers are important
- A place to work, I like to work outdoors so I often use the tailgate of my cruiser

Okay, so now with all that you require in order, lets start:

Safety first, PLEASE make sure your weapon is UNLOADED! - nothing about firearms is more important than safety, I cannot emphasize this enough, so before we start cleaning make sure it's unloaded. Keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction, open the action and visually inspect it before moving on.

Partially disassemble - Unless you're completely taking the rifle apart (removing the trigger assembly, etc.), place the rifle on a firm surface ensuring you will not scratch your barrel or stock, remove the bolt and set it aside. I would normally completely disassemble only at the end of season, or after being out in a downpour or other extreme wet weather experience, but not normally in season.

Check and wipe - First thing I do is closely inspect the rifle to see if anything is amiss - loose screws, something broken, whatever. Nothing wrong? I use a clean paper towel and wipe everything down to remove loose dust, grit, etc.

Barrel cleaning - Always clean the barrel from the rear. First, attach a clean patch to the end of the jib on the tip of the cleaning rod, soak it with bore cleaner, push it through the barrel, and remove the patch before withdrawing the cleaning rod. Next, attach your proper calibre copper bore brush to the rod, put a few drops of cleaning solvent on it and run it in and out of the barrel several times. Finally, replace the brush with your job and start running clean patches through the barrel until they come out white. Don't be surprised if it takes several to get the job done.

"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

-George Bernard Shaw-



Note: During this entire process, take care to keep the solvent off your wood stock, as it can mar the finish.

Clean metal parts - Soak a clean rag or paper towels with solvent and use them to wipe down the inside of the magazine box, bolt face and bolt, trigger guard - any and all metal parts. I like to use a toothbrush or similar brush to whisk over these parts, which helps loosen gunk. Then wipe them down to get all the solvent off. After a heavy shooting session at the range, I might spray some solvent down into the firing pin and use a can of compressed air to help blow it out.

Note: you'd be amazed at the many uses of compressed air when cleaning firearms.

Stock - Wood or synthetic, your stock won't need much attention except to make sure all solvents and oils are wiped off. I always check to see that my sling swivel studs aren't loose.

Rust prevention/lubrication - All metal parts should be wiped down with a rust protector/lubricant. Don't spray the oil directly onto the metal, but instead spray it onto a paper towel and then wipe the parts down. This helps prevent the lubricant from getting into places it doesn't need to go.

Reassemble - Put your rifle back together, cycle it and dry-fire it a time or two to make sure all is well, then head for the gun safe. But first, make sure you clean up after yourself. I have a medium-sized fishing tackle box where I store enough cleaning stuff for a day at the range, which makes it easy to just to grab the box when I head out, knowing I'm not forgetting anything.

We would like to thank
Corneli CLAASSEN for
proof reading this
months newsletter!




There was great
excitement in and around
Victoria Falls this last
weekend (26th Feb '21)
with a sighting of Ross's
Turaco

Photo Credit to Charles Brightman



Membership Status

It's a collaborative effort

Z.P.G.A. Members Breakdown by Qualification		
Number of Members	Qualification	
27	ASSOCIATE	
19	CUBS	
46	FULL PG	
131	FULL PH	
58	LPH LICENSE	
4	RESTRICTION	
Monday, 01 March 2021		Page 1 of 1



The Z.P.G.A. is about to launch its new web page, which is part of our Membership Marketing Strategy. We aim to list all of our members and also their specialties. All members will soon be sent an email outlining this initiative.

Our members will also have an additional option of being showcased for a nominal administration fee per membership year.

In order to achieve both, we have come up with some fun easy to follow logos that we will use for each guiding activity.

"CAN YOU REALLY AFFORD NOT TO BE A MEMBER?"

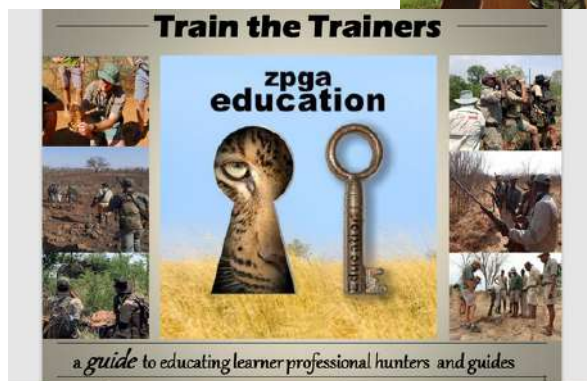


A focus on Training

THE Z.P.G.A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Z.P.G.A. Education Sub-Committee under the leadership of Dave CARSON during February launched its inaugural "Train the Trainer" campaign. This is a program not designed to tell any Pros what to do, but to direct them as to how their "apprentices" will be examined through the various examination stages - the shooting test, oral interview and their proficiency exams.

If you have agreed to tutor or mentor any LPH's this two-hour online Zoom session is definitely for you. Please get in touch with Dave on education@zpga.org for further information.



The Zimbabwe Professional Guides Association would like to inform all travel agents and potential visitors to Zimbabwe, that as it stands right now, there are no quarantine measures necessary for any visitor to Zimbabwe, unless visitors arrive with an invalid COVID certificate and subsequently test positive on entry into Zimbabwe, or if you test positive before exiting Zimbabwe.



RUSTY LABUSCHAGNE BEATING CHAINS



Thank you - James VARDEN

THE Z.P.G.A. MARKETING COMMITTEE - WRITTEN BY JOHN LAING

Some of you may, or may not know that behind the scenes there are a number of Z.P.G.A. sub-committees that have been set up to ensure we, as an Association, can achieve what we have set out to accomplish.

During the first part of January, I challenged the Committee members to bring on five new members each. I am thrilled to see the drive and challenge was taken seriously, but one person did stand out from the crowd and he went over and above and brought on more new members than the rest.

Congratulations James VARDEN!!!

As a token of our gratitude, James has been presented with a book written by one of our members - Rusty LABUSCHAGNE and is titled "Beating Chains".

Well done and thank you for your support!

If anyone wants a copy of Rusty's book please get in touch with him direct, Rusty is on the members chat group.

**"EVERYONE IS FACED WITH CHALLENGES,
BUT IT IS WHO YOU ARE,
AND THE DEPTH OF YOUR DETERMINATION,
THAT WILL GET YOU THROUGH
LIFE'S DARKEST MOMENTS."**



Sweetcorn, Chilli & Red Pepper Muffins

Contributed by: Rosy Shearing

BRILLIANT FOR PACKED
LUNCHES AND PICNICS...

Ingredients

1 CUP CAKE/PLAIN FLOUR
1/4 TEASPOON SALT
1 CUP ROLLER MEAL
1 TABLESPOON BROWN SUGAR
1 EGG
1/4 CUP OIL
1 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER
2/3 CUP LACTO OR MILK
1 RED CHILLI, FINELY CHOPPED
2 TABLESPOONS FRESH BASIL/MIXED
HERBS
1 X 420G CAN SWEETCORN

Method

- GREASE MUFFIN PAN AND PRE-HEAT THE OVEN TO 180 DEGREEES
- SIFT FLOUR, SALT AND BAKING POWDER AND ADD ROLLER MEAL
- BEAT TOGETHER OIL, LACTO/MILK, EGG
- STIR INTO THE DRY INGREDIENTS., UNTIL MOISTENED BUT DO NOT OVER-MIX
- ADD THE CHILLI, RED PEPPERS AND HERBS - MIX BRIEFLY
- SPOON EQUALLY INTO THE MUFFIN PAN
- BAKE FOR 20 TO 25 MINUTES

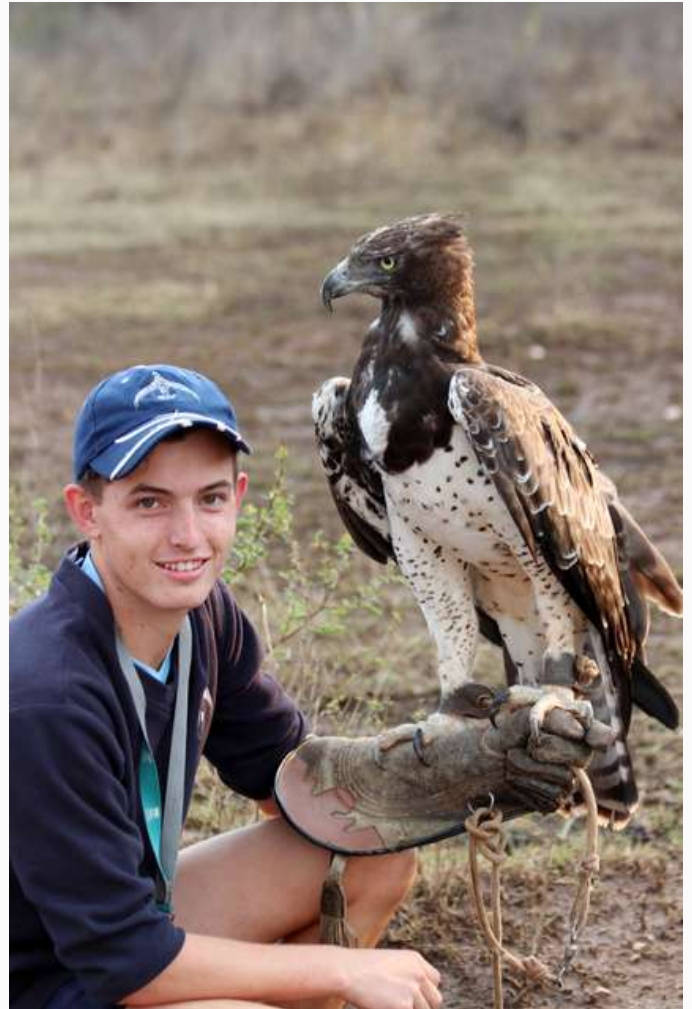
Enjoy!



Members Photo Gallery

A PICTURE CAN TELL A THOUSAND STORIES

Special thanks goes to Barbara HEYMANS whom sent in these pictures taken of the Falcon College Falconry Club



ACE First Aid Refresher Course Held in Bulawayo

A PICTURE CAN TELL A THOUSAND STORIES

Special thanks goes to Paul HUBBARD, Graham JONES and Sara CRONJE whom sent in these pictures taken during the ACE First Aid refresher training done in Bulawayo during February. Being fully versed and up to date with our first aid training is vital if we are going to save lives!



Thank you ACE Air & Ambulance for your skill and desire to teach!!



Contact Us

SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE

The Z.P.G.A. committee is here to assist you. To enable us to answer your questions in a timely manner, please would you firstly contact Jenny VAN DEN BERGH on secretary@zpga.org and request to be put in touch with one of the following sub-committees and the relevant committee member will gladly assist you.

Below you will find the various sub-committees, a short description of what their role and function is and a contact email address should you want to get in touch.

- Z.P.G.A. – Chairman Rob LURIE - chairman@zpga.org
- Z.P.G.A. – Vice Chairman John LAING
- Z.P.G.A. – Legal & Ethics - Pete FICK - legal@zpga.org
 - Guiding Code of Conduct
- Z.P.G.A. – Finance - Rob LURIE - finance@zpga.org
 - All payment issues
- Z.P.G.A. – Marketing & Advertising - John LAING - marketing@zpga.org
 - All branding Membership Cards
 - Membership Discounted Rates Initiative
 - Fundraising
- Z.P.G.A. – Education Training - David CARSON - education@zpga.com
 - Study Packs
 - RIFA & SAVE Valley Conservancy initiatives
 - Devil's Gorge Conservancy training program
- Z.P.G.A. – Research - Wayne Van Den BERGH - research@zpga.org
 - Ensure compliance with trophy off-take in terms of ethics as well as sustainability
 - Cat ageing & research
 - Attendance to & at quota setting workshops
 - Assistance with any NDF requirements that may come up from time to time
- Z.P.G.A. – Awards - Duncan WATSON - awards@zpga.org
 - To discuss and agree what awards shall be current or pertinent to the industry
 - To look at and agree end of year award nominees
- Z.P.G.A. – A.G.M. & Dinner - Tan BLAKE (2021)

" We would also like to advise our members that we understand mistakes do happen from time to time. If you find yourself in an impossible situation please call your Executive Committee and ask for advice.

Several stories have recently emerged regarding members where "had they raised the issue" a completely different result may have been the order of the day."



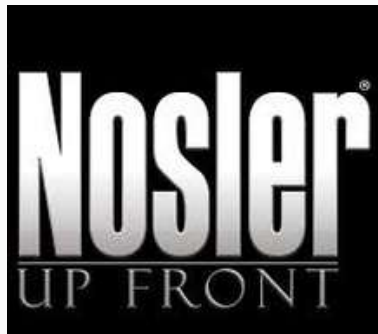
Z.P.G.A. Sponsors and Supporters Page

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IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE SEEN ON OUR PAGE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN ASSIST



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