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THE AFRICAN ROCK PYTHON:

By John Laing

The African rock python (*Python sebae*) is a species of large constrictor snake in the family Pythonidae and is native to sub-Saharan Africa. Of the eleven species found around the world one subspecies is found in Central and Western Africa, and one is found in Southern Africa.

This is Africa's largest snake and one of the six largest snake species in the world, specimens may approach or exceed six meters or twenty feet. In Southern Africa our subspecies is generally smaller than its northern relative. Pythons are found in a variety of habitats, from forests to near deserts, although usually near sources of water. During our winter (dry) months the snake becomes dormant. The python has teeth not fangs, and kills its prey by constriction. Larger pythons can eat animals up to the size of an impala. Interestingly pythons reproduce by egg-laying, but unlike most snakes, the female protects her nest and sometimes even her hatchlings.

The snake is widely feared, though it very rarely kills humans. Although the snake is not endangered, it does face threats from habitat reduction and hunting. Some cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa consider it a delicacy believing that if the meat is eaten then that person will be immortal. Some believe that if bitten the victim will enjoy immunity to all other snake bites which may pose a threat to its population.

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"Key Marketing for tourism activities Post-COVID"

By John Laing

Travel and tourism have been hit harder than just about any other sector by the coronavirus pandemic, which means Zimbabwe will need to market itself in very creative and powerful ways to recover as the crisis eases. Of all the sectors affected by COVID, there is little doubt that travel and tourism has been the worst affected.

Travel was this very factor that effectively 'seeded' the virus around the world, as it found its ways out of China and eventually into the rest of the globe.

Borders are slowly reopening, however, and as they do, tourism will be important to Africa as a whole. Our countries are all linked and therefore standing alone is not an option. Reviving and supporting tourism will take ongoing collaboration and strategic thinking from both the private and public sectors. Policymakers and industry stakeholders must think strategically to improve the region's competitiveness, while maintaining its authenticity, in a post COVID world.

Here are a couple ideas that may just assist us as we consider how best to revive our own Zimbabwean tourism sector.

Target Millennial travellers:

Last year, Millennials outnumbered Baby Boomers. Because of this, the next big wave of travellers is expected to be from the Millennial generation. According to recent research, many Millennial-focused travel trends today focus around personalization and technology.



Borders are slowly reopening, however, and as they do, tourism will be important to Africa as a whole. Our countries are all linked and therefore standing alone is not an option.



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With this group having the ability to work from home and bring their technologies virtually anywhere, incorporating highly personalized experiences and incorporating enhanced technology will be key in attracting this large group of travellers.

Additionally, Millennials seek authenticity and unique travel experience, making Africa and Zimbabwe a perfect fit. Millennials are adventure-seekers, so promoting the experiences that Zimbabwe has to offer will be a major selling point, such as our outdoor activities, game activities and cultural tours.

We need to look at strengthening small businesses:

Smaller hotels and small shops, road side stalls even, deliver unmatched authenticity to travellers and are critical economic engines for our region. New thinking on small business financial support in the future will be vital to tourism stability. A trend to keep an eye out for is the affiliation of smaller, independent hotels to soft brands, in which an independent hotel joins a chain or franchise-type of hospitality group, in order to get into larger hotel chain distribution systems. This allows opportunity for the smallest of hotels to have access to larger distribution and the tools to help manage day-to-day operations and investing where needed to make sure hotels follow the brand standards.

Zimbabwe needs to stay competitive:

Prior to COVID, tourism growth in Africa was increasing in competitiveness. The region's prominent adventure travel scene, beautiful landscape and rich culture have been important in generating international travel in the last few years. Additionally, the region benefited from a plethora of natural resources, increasing international openness and offered a competitive price for travellers.

To rebuild, Zimbabwe must devise creative ways to improve competitiveness and for Zimbabwe to differentiate themselves. A way in which this could be achieved is by creating touristic routes based on different natural resources. MAC Air's announcement to fly tourism and business routes will certainly go a long way to achieving this as Zimbabwean activities become more accessible.

Promoting the tourism destination is vitally important, especially during a time when every traveller is considered critical. Tourists must be aware of the various activity opportunities, even if it means we are not advertising our own activities, but that on offer in our country.

It is critical that we highlight health and hygiene efforts:

Health and hygiene will be at the forefront of traveller concern, so continuing to implement the latest suggestions provided by healthcare leaders, such as the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO), is critical in earning back guest confidence.

Health and hygiene will continue to be a focal point across the globe. Increased awareness related to health presents an opportunity to go beyond standard implementations and focus on the visitor's overall experience and greater well-being on a broader platform.

Additionally, Zimbabwe activity providers will need to partner with their cities' policy makers and local governments to help rebuild and form conversations around an economic, health and tourism flow management policy to help ensure infrastructure is prepared for travellers.

Highlighting quality guidelines and certifications can also show travellers how businesses hotels and lodges are taking their safety into account.



Tourists must be aware of the various activity opportunities, even if it means we are not advertising our own activities, but that on offer in our country.

We need to think digitalization:

To drive tourism's recovery, investments in digitalization will be critical. Online travel aggregators, meta-search engines, travel service platforms and sharing economy players will have a distinct advantage in the months ahead.

Given lockdown restrictions and consumer anxiety surrounding person-to-person proximity, the need to go digital has become the norm as travellers now do most things online. While addressing safety concerns, online and contactless access to amenities and booking will also allow for better convenience and personalization for the traveller. These digital experiences will start the moment guests leave their homes and continue throughout every step taken to their final destination.

Digitalization will play a role in delivering classic amenities that guest will still expect. Restaurants, and spas may introduce digital menus and mobile capabilities, for instance. Ordering room service and talking to the concierge will need to become mobile-friendly and is a must for hotels to maintain their amenities. These changes, while key for the immediate term, can also strengthen the resilience of travel businesses in the longer-term, as systems adapt to more nimble and modern technologies. Such investments for enhancing technology in Zimbabwe will become a key focus for a range of sectors, but also tourism.

Focus on conversions is a must:

There's opportunity for conversion in the independent and private sector of hospitality. The high proportion of products from our tourism Industry sector will be the fuel that powers our countries selling power. An improved support structure for smaller local and regional owners may translate into an improved unique experience for travellers in the future. That said, a key opportunity for independent hotels is creating incentives to lower the customer acquisition cost and create less dependency on higher-cost, third-party channels. Conversions may also pick up speed due to cost-effective distribution and enhanced brand awareness.

Regardless of the business, one thing will not change: locally-driven and unique experiences will continue to be of interest and appeal to our guests. New strategies for safety and digitalization will only fuel the delivery of those unique experiences.

The day-to-day efforts of all industry professionals, from hotels, airlines, tour operators, the government and more, need to work towards that common goal. Being aligned and working together is key, given tourism's immense impact across Africa. The only way is forward together.

On the road to recovery, industry leaders must strengthen their commitments to safety, authenticity and hygiene to retain traveller trust. With these elements in place, tourism can continue being an engine for Africa and ensure that Zimbabwe has the resilience we need to weather the current crisis and the ones to come.

A person in a blue suit is holding a tablet. Overlaid on the image is a world map with a blue-to-orange gradient. The text "Let's grow our Tourism Business, together" is written in a large, bold, orange font across the middle of the image.

Let's grow our Tourism Business, together

2022
START

Z.P.G.A. Diary

www.zpga.org/zpga-events

MAY 2022

- Fri 6th to Sun 8th - Lower Zambezi Canoeing proficiency
- Wed 18th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Victoria Falls)
- Fri 20th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Harare & Bulawayo)
- Sun 29th - Shooting Proficiency Harare

JULY 2022

- Wed 13th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Victoria Falls)
- Fri 15th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Harare & Bulawayo)

SEPTEMBER 2022

- Wed 14th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Victoria Falls)
- Fri 16th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Harare & Bulawayo)
- Sun 18th - Shooting Proficiency Harare
- Mon 19th - Oral Interviews
- Tue 20th - LPH written exam
- Wed 21st - LPH written exam

OCTOBER 2022

- Fri 7th to Sun 9th - Upper Zambezi Canoeing proficiency

NOVEMBER 2022

- Tue 1st to Mon 7th - Proficiency Exam
- Wed 9th - Z.P.G.A. Talks (Victoria Falls)
- Fri 11th - Z.P.G.A. Talks
- Wed 30th - Z.P.G.A. VIP Event

DECEMBER 2022

- Thurs 1st - Z.P.G.A. VIP Event
- Fri 2nd - Z.P.G.A. AGM (Harare)
- Sat 3rd - Z.P.G.A. Safari Dinner (Harare)
- Thurs 22nd - National Unity Day
- Sun 25th - Christmas Day
- Mon 26th - Boxing Day
- Tue 27th - Christmas Holiday

We celebrate National Tourism Week in the first week of May and this year it takes place from May 1 to 7.

It is a week where we remind ourselves of the importance of traveling and seeking some kind of escape from our normal lives. There is some truth to the saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and traveling is an opportunity to make our lives more fun.

During this week we also celebrate the travel and tourism industry that strives to create memorable experiences for tourists.

It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on how tourism helps boost the economy and highlights local cultures



Ethics Are Everything!

Zimbabwe Tourism – A Crossroads

By John Laing

Like me, many of our members have been involved in tourism for many years and they will agree that this industry has changed drastically in the last two decades. More recently COVID was a game changer that none of us could have predicted and it has certainly re-shaped our industry. What changed so drastically and how is this affecting us?

The first observation is how many new camp and lodge properties there are compared to pre-COVID times. The second observation is how many CV applications there are for jobs in the tourism industry. Many companies are inundated with all kinds of CV applications from desperate, hungry to learn hopefuls looking for any kind of position available. The Tourism Industry was the hardest hit by COVID, however it seems to have shown the most remarkable recovery in a short space of time. One would think that with all the unemployed tourism job seekers and all the new properties opening, it would be a win/win situation. However, this is not the case.

There is a definite obvious void in the ever-growing pool of hopeful applicants. Very few have suitable qualifications and most have no experience or solid references. The Zimbabwe Tourism industry has always been world famous for its incredible workforce and impeccable work ethic. It has kept us a front runner in a very competitive industry. From guides to managers, to chefs, barmen and housekeeping. All are highly trained, knowledgeable, well-read, well-spoken and professional. They stand out anywhere. Where have they gone and why have these qualities not been passed on down? This empty pool scenario results in properties taking on the best of the worst and just hoping for a good result. The ramifications of this are huge and a negative snowball effect is caused further down the line.

Why is this happening?

There are several obvious reasons for this, here are some of them:

1. Staff training seems to be lacking or inadequate in many cases be it inhouse or within external tertiary establishments which sadly are not what they used to be.
2. It is not always the best policy to promote from within the organisation. Promotions should be on merit and ability not on time spent with the company. If there is no road for growth because of the long-time staff, those with real potential will not stick around.
3. Remuneration is a point that constantly raises its ugly head. Nobody likes to talk money. But it is a very real challenge that needs to be addressed. Why are our younger generation looking beyond our borders and not investing in a career here at home? The reason is that the “money is terrible!” A keen enthusiastic youngster with O' Level education and most likely a diploma of some sort, will earn more money working illegally in a pub overseas. It is unforgivable that we are losing a vibrant generation that would so happily pick up the reins here at home.

It also must be said that remuneration and promotion for those in existing positions is often overlooked. The parallel here is that if camps want top quality staff, then there is going to have to a serious review of the salaries being paid. Of course, implementing increases are never easy but considerations are going to have to be made across the board. However, if top dollar is being paid for some of these properties, then it should all balance out....in theory!



The prime motivator for employee training is to improve productivity and performance. And when executed well, it does just that. It provides your employees with the expertise they need to fulfil their role and make a positive impact on your business. The skills they learn empower them to deliver a better quality of work with a fast turnaround rate.

It also gives your hires a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within your organization. They know their targets and they're equipped with the tools to effectively meet them.

"If you look after your staff, they will look after your customers – it's that simple!"

Richard Branson.

The industry needs a positive re-invention. The movers, shakers and decision makers need to take a step back and ask themselves the question...

- Where will this company be in 10 years' time?
- Where is the young blood, the enthusiastic energetic young people that are willing to take the baton?
- Should we be creating internships within the industry with sound financial and growth initiatives?
- Should facilitators be brought in once a month to mentor and teach in all facets of the industry?
- Surely a training program should be front and centre of our annual budget.
- And with all internships and apprenticeships, it should be contracted that a bonding time to that company is required thereafter. Thus, creating loyalty, growth and confidence and the company is not being used as a "steppingstone."

"Train people well enough so that they can leave. Treat them well enough so that they don't want to."

Richard Branson.

In Nature – A fish rots from the head down. Positive change needs to start at the very top.

I do believe that this is possible – it's just a matter of changing old habits and creating new mindsets.



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Membership Statistics - 2022

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Z.P.G.A. Members Breakdown by Qualification



Number of Members

Qualification

60	ASSOCIATE
4	CONSERVATION PARTNER
34	CUBS
55	FULL PG
135	FULL PH
5	LIFE MEMBER
62	LPH LICENSE
6	RESTRICTION
4	SERVICE PROVIDER

Sunday, 01 May 2022

Page 1 of 1



Innovation grows out of membership and a sure sense of responsibility people feel for their work and the organizations that employ and / or support them.

"Z.P.G.A. Membership is a Privilege NOT a right"



Hummus Dip

BY MARTHA STEWART

Hummus is a Middle Eastern dip, spread, or savory dish made from cooked, mashed chickpeas blended with tahini, lemon juice, and garlic. The standard garnish in the Middle East includes olive oil, a few whole chickpeas, parsley, and paprika.

In Middle Eastern cuisine, it is usually eaten as a dip, with pita bread. In the West, it is now produced industrially, and is often served as a snack or appetizer with crackers.

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 1/2 ounces) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 large or 2 small garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- Pinch of ground cumin
- Pinch of ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons of tahini (sesame-seed paste)
- 1 tablespoon water, plus more as needed
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3/4 teaspoon coarse salt

Directions

Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor; pulse until smooth and creamy, adding more water if needed. Transfer to a serving dish or airtight container, and place in the refrigerator, covered, until ready to serve. Will last up to 5 days. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



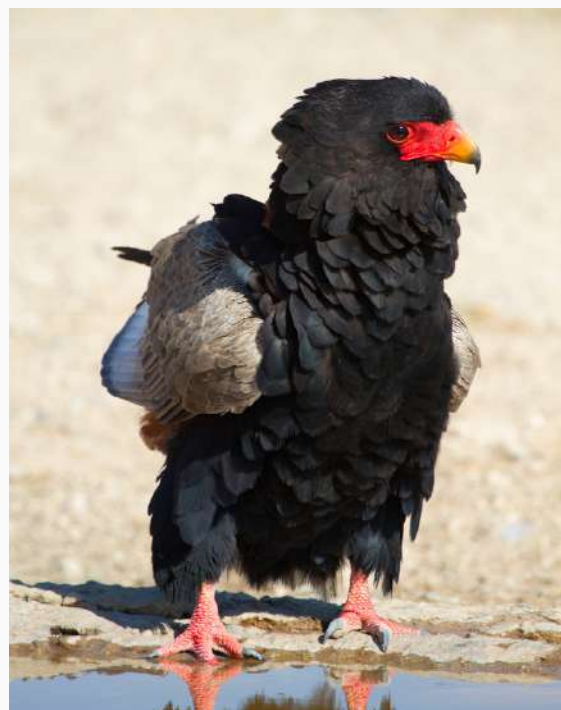
There is no need to have boring old snacks ever again, hummus can be served with bread, bread sticks, potato chips or fresh cut vegetables...lets challenge those camp chefs!



Members Photo Gallery - Bateleur Eagle



The Z.P.G.A.'s commitment to sharing information and knowledge.





Z.P.G.A. Talks 2022

The Z.P.G.A. is proud to bring you a series of talks designed to bring our community together under the umbrella of growth through shared knowledge. Presentations will be informative, entertaining and offer a springboard for discussion, engagement and sharing of ideas that can help jumpstart our COVID-decimated industry and further our conservation causes for a more productive future.

We will be facilitating an evenings talk by three guest speakers, to be run simultaneously, every two months in:

- Harare - Armadale Lodge
- Bulawayo - Hillside Dams Conservancy
- Victoria Falls - Shearwater Village

Dates for your diaries are as follows:

- Wednesday 18th May (Victoria Falls)
- Friday 20th May (Hre, Byo, Mutare)
- Friday 15th July
- Friday 16th September
- Friday 11th November
- Time: 17:00 for 17:30 start
- Cash bar and restaurant
- Free admission

An event put on by the Z.P.G.A open to the Community

Z.P.G.A. Talks - Harare
Talk Topic: Matusadona - Hope Rekindled

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Guest Speaker:	Rob Reid
Date:	Friday 20th May 2022
Venue:	Armadale Lodge
Time:	17:00 for start 17:30
Bring:	Facemask, notepad & pen
Bar:	Cash bar & restaurant
Cover Charge:	Free Admission

**OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY
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Z.P.G.A. Talks - Victoria Falls
Talk Topic: Early visitors to the Falls Region 1870 to 1900

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Guest Speaker:	Paul Hubbard
Date:	Wednesday 18th May 2022
Venue:	Shearwater Village
Time:	17:00 for start 17:30
Bring:	Facemask, notepad & pen
Bar:	Cash bar & restaurant
Cover Charge:	Free Admission

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Z.P.G.A. Talks - Bulawayo
Talk Topic: Hwange National Park

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Guest Speaker:	Colin Gillies
Date:	Friday 20th May 2022
Venue:	Hillside Dams Conservancy
Time:	17:00 for start 17:30
Bring:	Facemask, notepad & pen
Bar:	Cash bar & restaurant
Cover Charge:	Free Admission

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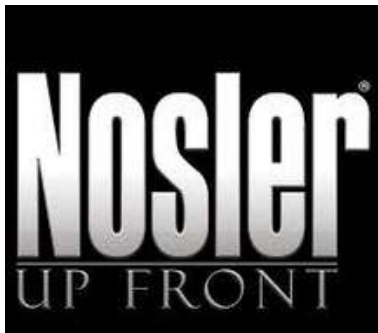
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ISSUES ABOUT MEDICAL AID & FIRST AID

Health is something that we take for granted and tend not to think about until something goes wrong. That's why you need to be with a good medical aid provider who can help you protect both your health and your wallet.

The reality is that your health, and that of your family, holds immeasurable value to you. It's also the least predictable factor in your life. This unpredictability is precisely what makes medical aid so important, because you can't tell for certain when you'll need it. Sports injuries, road accidents, stress-related illnesses, and terminal illnesses are not examples of things that afflict the elderly. Rather, they're representative of what can go wrong in anyone's health at any time.

Having a good, reputable medical aid is an essential part of alleviating the stress of worrying what's behind every proverbial corner. More importantly, it provides you with the necessary financial cover when you need it.

Fortunately, there are a wide variety of plans for you to choose from within each medical scheme, making it easy to buy the level of cover that you need and can afford. These range from basic and relatively inexpensive hospital plans to the more all-inclusive, comprehensive plans.

When it comes to choosing your ideal plan, it's best to assess your life and understand what the implications would be if you needed medical treatment. For instance, if you're single and have no dependents, then at the very least a good hospital plan is a practical option as the most expensive comprehensive plan might not be necessary.

Of course, if you're the sole breadwinner with a few dependents then it goes to reason that you will need more cover to protect your family's financial safety while you are treated.

At the end of the day you can't know when or if something will happen, and unless you have considerable financial funds to help you pay for medical costs, you might have a problem if you don't have medical aid.

Mednet Zimbabwe is here to help! Mednet's team of professional healthcare consultants are on hand to provide information and support with international health insurance, local medical aids and travel insurance. Mednet is an agent for the leading healthcare providers.

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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 and training - David CARSON - education@zpga.com
 - Study Packs
 - RIFA & SAVE Valley Conservancy initiatives
 - Devil's Gorge Conservancy training program
- Z.P.G.A. – Recruitment - Justine McGREGOR - cv@vicfallsrecruitment.com
 - A Tourism Industry employment resource for both employers and employees
 - To verify candidates authenticity as far as possible
 - Assess candidate suitability for position placement
 - Make recommendations to potential employers
- Z.P.G.A. – Research - Spike CLAASSEN - 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 - Michelle LURIE (2022)

"If you want to support others you have to stay upright yourself."

Peter Hoeg



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