



Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust

The Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust was established in 2007 by a group of conservationists in the Victoria Falls area, who believed more need to be done to conserve the wildlife and natural resources in the region.

VFWT's mission is to advance and promote environmental conservation in Southern Africa through hands-on wildlife research; management of a wildlife veterinary diagnostic laboratory and rehabilitation facility; the education and empowerment of local peoples in the sustainable utilization of indigenous resources through active involvement in conservation training and community outreach programs

The main objectives that the Trust strives to uphold are:

- To find sustainable solutions for communities and wildlife to co-exist
- To determine veterinary disease prevalence and assist in disease management and prevention
- To facilitate the conservation education of local communities
- To work with stakeholders to understand wildlife conservation drivers and form regional natural resource management strategies

VFWT is comprised of a Board of Trustees all of which volunteer their time and services to advance the mission of the Trust. At the present time there are 10 Trustees from a range of backgrounds that assist in guiding the Trust. The Trust is a registered Non-Profit Organization in Zimbabwe as well as the United States (501 (c) 3 organization) which aims to conserve wildlife and natural resources and assist projects with in situ research and conservation efforts. VFWT offices and facilities are located in Victoria Falls National Park, Wild Horizons Concession. The facilities include three offices, a general working area, a meeting area, the disease diagnostics laboratory, post mortem area and cold room, storage rooms, and ablutions areas.

The VFWT Zimbabwe Board of Trustees is made up of the following individuals:

Director of the Board: Mr. Alberto DeLeo

Treasurer: Mrs. Barbara Murasiranwa

Legal Counsel: Mr. Paul Connolly

Trustee: Mr. Craig White

Trustee: Mr. Adrian Gardiner

Trustee: Mr. Leon Varley

Trustee: Mr. Shane White

Trustee: Mr. Mike Davis

Trustee: Mr. Simon Rowlands

Trustee: Mr. Brian Courtenay

Short Bio's on each Trustee can be found on our website www.vicfallswildlifetrust.org under the "About Us" section

Zimbabwe Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust	US Victoria Falls Wildlife Fund	UK Victoria Falls Wildlife Fund
Registered Trust Board of Trustees- 10 independent conservationists- volunteer 7 staff members-paid Annual accounts are independently audited by Deloitte and Touche Zimbabwe Office: PO Box 159 Victoria Falls Zimbabwe	Registered 501 (c) 3 Charity (98-6061293) State Registration is in California Board of Directors- 4 members- volunteer No paid staff- all voluntary Accounts are independently reviewed/audited by Sonnenburg & Co. CPA's US Office: PO Box 23183 San Diego, CA 92123 USA	In the process of being a registered charity with UK Charities Commission Board of Directors- 6 members- volunteer No paid staff- all voluntary Accounts will be independently audited UK Office: 390 London Road Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 6YX

Some of the main projects of VFWT are as follows:

- **Wildlife Research:** According to recent reports from WWF, more than half of the wildlife in the world today have been lost in the last 40 years. If we are to conserve the wildlife that remains, good research needs to be conducted to find ways of improving the management of different species and the factors that are causing the decline of wildlife.
 - Carnivore Research- Working together with the Oxford WildCru Hwange Lion Research Project, we assess the populations of carnivores in the region. The African lion population is currently in decline. Thus, ensuring the long-term sustainability of lion and other carnivores is the main goal for this project. Evaluating densities of predators and prey across different land use types, and monitoring their spatial movements is key to understanding their behaviour and conserving the population.
 - Vulture Assessment- With the recent increase of poisoning in the region, vultures have been suspected to be decreasing in their population numbers due to the number of birds being affected after feeding on poisoned carcasses. VFWT has begun a vulture population survey in the wildlife area surrounding Victoria Falls and extending to the Botswana border. An initial database with nest sites by species has been established and local tourism operators and wildlife authorities are collaborating to provide nest site information. This information will help establish baseline information by species and can be monitored to assess population trends.
 - Rhino Conservation- The rhino population of Zimbabwe is of great concern given the numbers of animals currently being poached throughout Africa. One of the research goals of VFWT is to assess the genetic relatedness of sampled animals to assist PWMA in making management decisions to enhance population variability and the long-term sustainability of the population. In May and June 2015 VFWT assisted Malilangwe Trust and PWMA in the move of 8 black rhino to Botswana. In 2015 VFWT wildlife veterinarian worked immobilized

more than 80 rhino to enhance anti-poaching efforts in Zimbabwe. With approximately 700 rhino left in Zimbabwe, and a majority of these being the critically endangered black rhino, anti-poaching is paramount. VFWT assist both public (PWMA) and private estate with their rhino management by individually ear-notching (for identification by rangers to determine each animal), microchipping every animal and various other requirements depending on the estate management. Dr. Foggin has immobilized more than 1500 rhino and has a wealth of experience that we draw on to assist other conservation organizations.

- **Wildlife Disease Diagnostic and Research Laboratory:** In late 2012, VFWT opened its doors to a wildlife disease laboratory. The laboratory is a field laboratory designed to provide diagnostic and research of zoonotic and trans-boundary animal diseases. The main aim of the laboratory is to screen for disease prevalence and researching diseases that are present in wildlife. Many diseases which are present in wildlife are transferrable to domestic animals and livestock, and in some cases humans. The laboratory is registered with the Zimbabwe Council of Veterinary Surgeons and maintains strict quality control standards. Many of the projects are in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Services, Wildlife Unit.
 - Disease Surveillance- In an effort to understand what is happening at these various interfaces, VFWT assists both local communities, and wildlife authorities to screen for diseases and try and put preventative measures in place. VFWT works throughout all of Zimbabwe in the major conservation areas, testing wildlife and domestic animals for disease. In addition, VFWT trains wildlife rangers in the field on basic disease surveillance and understanding the major diseases affecting wildlife.

One aspect of disease and laboratory work which is on the rise for VFWT is responding to wildlife poisoning incidents. Recent trends in poaching have made poisoning a major problem for wildlife authorities. VFWT are in the process of training Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) staff on recognizing disease and poisoning incidents and how to respond to each situation. VFWT offer a field test for some poisons to make a rapid assessment in treatment of affected animals, as well as decontamination of source areas. This project has not yet been quantified, and we are seeing more rescue cases due to the increase in poisoning.

- Elephant Tuberculosis (TB)- Within the Victoria Falls/Livingstone area there are more than 50 captive elephant that are consistently interacting with humans. Given the high rates of human TB in the region, and the potential for passing this disease onto wildlife, VFWT has undertaken a project to screen all of the captive elephant and their handlers for TB. This is to establish a program for annual screening and treatment to improve the health of humans and wildlife. As many of these elephant are located in areas that interfaces with wild elephant, it is an aim of this project to prevent the transmission of TB into the wild elephant population.
- Mongoose Tuberculosis (TB)- Victoria Falls is a prime tourist destination in Africa. It has the benefit of being located in a national park and the residents and tourists are also fortunate enough to reside in the national park. Therefore the interface of humans and wildlife is very close. Recently VFWT has discovered a new strain of TB circulating in the mongoose population of Victoria Falls. There is very little known about this new strain of TB, including its potential to cross species. As these animals are located at most of the lodges, hotels, and

residential areas around Victoria Falls, it is important for VFWT to learn more about this type of TB and try to prevent its transmission.

- **Rescue and Rehabilitation of Wildlife:** When VFWT was initially established, hyperinflation and high rates of unemployment led to a surge in subsistence poaching in the Victoria Falls area. While the economy of Zimbabwe has stabilized, snare poaching is an ongoing battle. Working together with local partners and wildlife authorities VFWT assists with the immobilization of snared or injured wildlife and treatment for those animals before releasing them back into the wild.
 - Anti-Poaching- A key part to protecting wildlife and the habitat they live in, is providing support through anti-poaching. VFWT manages a private sector unit which works in Victoria Falls National Park. The team is a 20 member unit which oversees the protection of the area and the wildlife in it.
 - Rehabilitation Program- Occasionally the animals that are found injured due to poaching, or other human inflicted injuries, need additional veterinary care. VFWT has therefore established a rescue and rehabilitation facility to provide the necessary ongoing care to these cases. The ultimate goal is always to release these animals back into the wild. In the rare case of an animal that cannot be released back into the wild VFWT will continue to care for that animal for the duration of its life. If possible, the animal may become a wildlife ambassador and will assist with the conservation education program. In 2015, VFWT aims to initiate a vulture rehabilitation program to try and assist with rehabilitating vultures and raptors which are in rapid decline.
- **Community Outreach:** Many of the key factors affecting conservation are driven by humans. VFWT recognizes that in order to be successful in our conservation initiatives we have to work together with local communities. Therefore, VFWT work with both the two rural communities bordering the Victoria Falls area through the Hwange Rural District Council, as well as the urban community of Victoria Falls.
 - Conservation Education- Once a week we bring a group of school children from the area to interact with wildlife ambassadors and discuss the importance of conservation and natural resources. As many people who live with wildlife do not see the benefit of having it around, this program tries to show the importance of wildlife and natural resources through this program. Throughout the course of the year VFWT hosts between 800-1000 children in this weekly activity.
 - Conservation Scholarship Course- Out of the all the children that participate in the weekly conservation education activity that VFWT hosts, the top 20 primary school and the top 20 senior school children are selected for a one week long scholarship course. The course explores wildlife conservation issues and highlights careers and the dependence of wildlife and natural resource conservation for all occupations. The course is held over a week and all costs of transport, catering, accommodation, etc are covered. Two courses are held annually (one for the senior school children and one for the primary school).
 - Human Wildlife Conflict- VFWT works with the local rural communities to assist with Human Wildlife Conflict. VFWT maintains a conflict hotline, and works together with PWMA to assist the rural communities. An in depth questionnaire was conducted in 2012 and more

than 10% of the bordering rural villages were surveyed to gain a better idea of the conflict situation. VFWT continues to work together with the rural communities to look at ways to mitigate some of the conflict. VFWT hopes to implement a wildlife guardian program here to help improve conservation of elephant and large carnivores and decrease conflict.

- Litter Team- Victoria Falls is a major tourism destination in Africa. Therefore in 2012 VFWT established a litter removal team as town was overrun with rubbish. VFWT collects litter from designated routes six days a week. Over the last year more than 6200 large bin bags of litter have been collected and removed. It is a goal of this program to work with local stakeholders to try and initiate a recycling program in the area.
- Disease Prevention- Working together with Vets for Animal Welfare Zimbabwe (VAWZ), VFWT helps organize free rabies and distemper vaccination to all dogs and cats in the bordering rural and urban areas surrounding Victoria Falls. In 2015, over 1200 animals were vaccinated. This helps prevent rabies and distemper in domestic animals as well as an outbreak that could affect wildlife and humans. Additional vaccination campaigns are planned for 2016.
- Community Animal Health and Welfare Centre-The local communities around Victoria Falls lack any facilities for being able to address animal health and veterinary care. VFWT has begun to build the CAHWC in the rural community of Monde just outside of Victoria Falls urban town. The facility is set to open its doors in July 2016 and be a site for providing basic vaccinations, health checks, sterilization, veterinary care and clinical facilities for local people and wildlife cases that the trust takes in.

It is the long-term goal of VFWT to work to conserve natural resources and wildlife. By improving health and livelihoods of the local people residing with wildlife many of the challenges facing conservation can be overcome. Therefore projects such as disease surveillance and prevention, conservation education and human wildlife conflict are paramount to improving livelihoods. While we will always take in wildlife that has been injured due to poaching or human interference, the incidence rates decline significantly when we are able to help people benefit from the wildlife around them. Our plans for the future include:

- Expanding the Conservation Education program to offer a scholarship for training or additional education for the top students interested in tourism and conservation
- Building an additional facility onto the laboratory to do bacteriology work on site as well as provide a facility to enhance current work using DNA technology for forensics and wildlife trafficking
- Enhancing wildlife research efforts with the lion and vulture conservation projects including providing PWMA with scientific data for making valid management decisions to improve the conservation of these iconic species
- Extending the disease surveillance and prevention program