



VICTORIA FALLS COMMUNITY ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE CENTRE ACTIVITY REPORT 2024

Prepared by Dr Isaac Moyo and Sue Chenaux-Repond

Our clinic

CARE's Victoria Falls Community Animal Health & Welfare Centre is situated in the rural village of Ntabayengwe, 15 km from the tourist town of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Opened in late 2016, the Centre serves the rural community as a facility to treat their domestic animals and livestock for illness and injury, vaccinate, sterilise and educate. This is done at low to no cost.

The clinic was established in 2016, built with funds from Australian Aid, and was initially under VAWZ, an animal welfare organisation in Harare, though it ran independently and raised its own funds. VAWZ withdrew in April 2023, citing logistical and financial reasons. So that the vulnerable community would not be left without treatment for their animals, CARE was formed, with the same experienced and dedicated operational team, and a new, committed and local - Board.

The centre is staffed by Veterinarian, Dr Isaac Moyo, and Assistant, Themba Moyo. Drs Chris Foggin and Harley Peacocke, Wildlife Veterinarians at the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust (VFWT), also provide valuable input.



The Victoria Falls – one of the Natural Wonders of the World and a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The community's need

The rural community is made up mainly of subsistence farmers. The land is not suitable for dryland cropping (which is attempted every year, nevertheless), and only suitable for livestock production at low stocking densities. The resulting lack of food results in poor nutrition, and even death for animals. Water is also very short in this dry area, despite being near the large, perennial Zambezi river, and the rains came very late this year, so crops failed and animals starved.

Poverty and lack of education in animal health and welfare create further challenges in their being able to take proper care of their animals, especially dogs and donkeys. These animals are considered of lesser value than cattle and goats and, therefore, often neglected.



Conditions commonly affecting rural dogs are loss of condition, due to a combination of worms and malnutrition, external parasite infestation and sexually transmissible venereal granuloma (TVT). Uncontrolled breeding is another issue of concern, with many dogs then having to search for their own food.

Goats commonly suffer from mange, loss of condition due to parasitism, pink eye and respiratory infections. Pigs are treated for diarrhoea, mange and wounds.

Donkeys often suffer from wounds due to ill-fitting harnesses, being overworked, loss of condition due to poor - no - food, and injuries from attacks by lions and hyenas. Tragic road accidents also occur. Fences are few and far between and animals are sometimes 'punished' when they stray onto others' fields to feed.



Our veterinary clinic in Ntabayengwe village

Our guiding Board

From left to right:
Themba Moyo & Dr Isaac Moyo - Ops
Douglas Musiringofa
Dr Chris Foggin (Vice Chairperson)
Lisa Rossiter
Elisabeth Curiger
Sue Chenaux-Repond (Chairperson)
Sthabile Daka (Secretary)
Matt Hofmeyer (Vice Secretary)
Blessed Mpofo
Annah Nyayaramba (Treasurer) (not in the photo)



Our operational team



Themba Moyo – Clinic Assistant – and Vet Dr Isaac Moyo – with the clinic since it opened Chenaux-Repond - Volunteer Manager



Some of our achievements since opening in 2016

- 8 778 animals have been treated at the Centre and out in the field
- 12 272 rabies vaccinations have been administered to dogs; and
- 7 387 canine distemper vaccinations
- 1 250 dogs and 462 cats have been sterilised.
- 6 335 dogs and 903 donkeys have been dewormed
- 18 sterilise and vaccinate field campaigns - on average - per year



Dr Moyo and Themba examine a puppy

Resource challenges

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we were without a vehicle for six months. Though cases continued to be brought to the clinic, we cover a large area (see map on page 13), and this greatly restricted our ability to get out into the field. Thanks to Dr Mike Thorne (UK), Stumme Brueder Stiftung (Liechtenstein) and Doris Duft (Switzerland), we were able to raise the funds to purchase one in December. We were able to go out and vaccinate 300 dogs the very next week. We have pleasure in providing our activity report for 2024.

On behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves - we thank all our donors and supporters.

Without your assistance the Centre could not have operated.

Animals would have suffered, more unwanted animals would have been born, and people's health endangered.

Our cases

We treated **1164** animals of different species at the clinic this year. This excludes routine vaccinations, sterilisations and dog dipping.

Dogs	Goats	Cattle	Donkeys	Cats
840	118	80	109	35

Treatments and surgeries included:

- **10** dogs treated for Transmissible Venereal Tumour (TVT), a sexually transmitted but curable cancer in dogs.
- **13** animals – 5 dogs, 4 cattle and 4 donkeys - treated for injuries from bites from baboons, lions and hyenas.
- **245** dogs sterilised - 153 spays and 92 castrations – reducing unwanted dogs and TVTs.
- **38** cats sterilised – 24 spays and 14 castrations - reducing unwanted cats and potential negative impact on wildlife.
- **7** donkeys castrated – intact animals fight fiercely and can cause serious injuries.

Major conditions affecting dogs again this year were mange, injuries from road traffic accidents, wounds and loss of condition due to a high worm burden, combined with malnutrition. The major diseases affecting cattle in our area are still the tick-borne diseases, including heartwater. We continue to educate cattle owners on the importance of strategic dipping, as well as early reporting of cases. Goats were treated for mange, respiratory disease, pink eye and loss of condition, usually due to parasitism. Donkeys struggled with loss of condition due to hunger, mange, harness wounds, and injuries from attacks by wild animals.



Dogs brought to the clinic on a scotch cart



A little goat with dog bites



A day-old orphaned calf



Dog with severely injured leg - it had to be amputated – he found a wonderful home with Debbie Bacon, who also took a rescue kitten – is named 'Pogo' and is very active



Pups being brought for vaccination – in a box on a bike



Puppy in hit and run – happily healed and rehomed

Dipping and Deworming

Rural dogs often suffer from loss of condition due to a combination of poor nutrition (too little protein) and a heavy worm burden.

We facilitated **6535** dog **dewormings** this year at the clinic and during our annual vaccination and neuter campaign in rural Victoria Falls. This significantly improves the lives of these animals. It also protects their owners – particularly children - as some species of canine roundworms can infect humans.

Our dog **dipping** facility at the clinic to control external parasites caters for an average of **18** dogs per week. Tick bites cause biliary (often fatal). Humans are also affected by tick borne illnesses, such as tick-bite fever.



Dog being dipped at the Centre

Vaccinations

Rabies is a significant zoonotic disease in Southern Africa. (Zoonotic diseases refer to infectious diseases transmitted between humans and animals.) It is a priority to control rabies and we do this through free mass dog vaccination campaigns in rural communities. This is also an important contribution to safety in Victoria Falls. It being a major tourist attract tourists (and residents) walk around on foot and visit rural areas on rural visits arranged for tourists. They could be exposed to dog bites. **54** cats were also vaccinated against rabies in the urban area. We thank the **VFWT** for donating the vaccines for canine outreach.

We vaccinated **508** dogs against **rabies** at the centre, and another **1896** dogs on 20 outreach campaigns = **2404**. See Appendix.

There were no cases of rabies in either domestic animals or wildlife in our area, though occurring in other parts of Zimbabwe.

Canine distemper is a viral disease that is often fatal or results in serious nerve damage, should the animal survive. It is highly contagious and can be transmitted between dogs and wildlife.

We vaccinated 266 dogs against **distemper** at the centre, and another 1684 dogs on 20 outreach campaigns = **1950**. See Appendix.



Themba administering rabies vaccine on an outreach



Dog being brought for vaccination and deworming on an outreach

Co-existing with wildlife

There are no fences separating rural agriculture and wildlife zones in our area. Co-existing with wildlife is therefore an ongoing challenge for the rural community. Domestic animals are prone to attack by lions, leopards, hyaenas, baboons and jackals. Our veterinarian is called on to provide treatment for what are often serious injuries. This mitigates retaliation.

13 animals – 5 dogs, 4 cattle and 4 donkeys - treated for injuries from bites from baboons, lions and hyenas.



A dog brought to the clinic with a baboon bite

Assisting injured wildlife

Injured wildlife requiring surgery are brought to our operating theatre. **Injured mongoose**

Sterilisations

Dog sterilisation is important for preventing unwanted - and therefore uncared for – puppies. It also prevents the spread of TVT - a sexually transmitted cancer - and significantly contributes to the overall welfare of rural dogs. The Centre is open for sterilisations throughout the year. We also go out to carry out sterilisation campaigns in communities within a radius of 100km of the Centre. A combined total of **245** dogs were sterilised this year (153 spays, 92 castrations) in rural Victoria Falls. See Appendix. **38** cats were also sterilised (24 spays, 14 castrations).



The week after we got our vehicle we vaccinated 300 dogs



Dogs coming around from anesthetic in the field



Result of botched attempt at sterilisation at home



Youngster waits patiently for his dog to wake up to go home

Trap-Neuter-Return Programme (TNR)

Our TNR programme was severely curtailed due to the lack of a vehicle. There is a burgeoning community cat population in the urban area. TNR is a humane approach to addressing this. Feral cats, from hotels, residential and shopping areas, are live-trapped, neutered, ear-tipped (for future recognition) and vaccinated against rabies, before being released back into their territories. The aim is to reduce the population over time, though more resources are needed. There is some resistance to this, with some shops and hotels not wanting the cats back near their premises. However, research has shown that returning cats to their home area stops others coming in. A total of **22** stray cats were trapped in urban Victoria Falls throughout the year.



Feral cat awaiting sterilization at the clinic - we are badly in need of a small cattery to keep injured and ill cats pre and post sterilisation - and more traps



Friendly adults, and kittens young enough to be socialised, are retained and placed for adoption.

Rescue and rehoming

We fostered and found 'Furever Homes' for 10 kittens and 4 dogs. We thank you all and also Liz Read, for assisting Sue with fostering.



Two kittens going to Harper and the Henderson family



Unclaimed stray – Gerri - going to his new home with Sue and Ginny Goatley



Emma and Vigo came for Latte - and took Cappuccino too!



Lexi Sanderson with Oreo



Theresa Paisley with her two rescues – she took pup Rex too!



Tabi with Bella



Alex Johnson with Charlie – the Johnsons have taken 3 rescues



Little Max who went on to live with Kirsty Reeves and Bradley Murray



Hannah brought up orphaned Rex from birth



Also a very special thank you to **Steph Gurney** of 'Rescue Dogs for Wildlife' and her team who kept the burnt donkey at her stables and gave it round-the-clock care.

Jess Olivey and friends raised money to buy essential supplies.



Steph Gurney – Rescue Dogs for Wildlife – with burnt 'Foxy'

Donkey welfare

Donkeys play a critical role in providing draught power and transport to rural communities, yet their welfare is often poor. We work towards improving their welfare through providing access to veterinary care, and educating donkey owners in health and proper harnessing. The major conditions affecting donkeys in our area are wounds from improper harnessing, bites (and even death) from hyenas and lions, and territorial fights among male donkeys. Lameness and mange are also issues seen here. Under aged, heavily pregnant and nursing donkeys are often used in work, and donkeys carts overloaded. Road accidents also take their toll.

We ran several donkey clinics where **393** donkeys were dewormed, had their health checked, treatment given. **7** stallions were castrated.



Donkey receiving more donkey friendly harnessing equipment.



Donkeys left to wander in the traffic



Malnourished donkey with harness wounds – owner prosecuted



Donkeys on R&R at the centre, healing from harness wounds and eating well



Donkeys are used to transport water, firewood, building materials, take ill people to the clinic – and other animals



Donkey inexplicably burnt by human hands



Badly injured donkey after dog attack

Welfare education

Animal welfare education is a huge part of what we do in our everyday work. We educate animal owners on animal welfare and husbandry both at the Centre and during case visits and outreach activities. Our initial approach is to impart knowledge to animal owners with the goal of changing attitudes on how animals are treated so communities can proactively take better decisions to improve the life and welfare of their animals. During our outreach programs in more than 20 rural centres throughout the year, we held discussions on animal welfare and husbandry, handed out pamphlets in local languages, and did practical demonstrations on humane animal handling and care.

Students from various universities overseas visited the centre to learn how a rural welfare clinic is run. In January, we welcomed 25 students from several American universities through Edu Africa, in May 7 students and a veterinarian visited from Purdue University, and, in June, 11 vet tech students and 2 lecturers from Appalachian State University came to visit.

In June and July, a group of 12 veterinary students, and 1 veterinarian, from Colorado State University, USA, visited the Centre. They were being hosted by the VFWT. Together with Dr Harley Peacock, and Bongani Dlodlo, who leads the VFWT Community Guardians, their programme included herd health visits for cattle under the VFWT Predator-Proof Boma Programme at various bomas (Chidobe, Mvuthu and Jambezi), and a tour of our Centre. They also participated in neuter and vaccination outreach.



Students enjoyed a demo at the Centre from Keith Sparks' anti-poaching team – the anti-poaching dogs were with us for while

Herd Health

We continue to provide assistance to the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust (VFWT), in providing veterinary care for cattle, in support of the VFWT Predator-Proof Boma Project. This project plays an important role in mitigating human-wildlife conflict in rural Victoria Falls. Cattle owners are encouraged to keep their cattle in movable bomas to protect them from predators. The bomas are moved from time to time, leaving behind manure to fertilise the soil.

A total of **1289** cattle were vaccinated on boma days against Black Water, Botulism, Anthrax, Burcellosis and Lumpy-skin disease.

63 cattle were treated for conditions such as Heartwater, Pink eye, lameness, Bovine ephemeral fever, and injuries sustained from attacks by wildlife (lions and hyenas) throughout the year.



Working with cattle in a boma for 'Herding for Health'

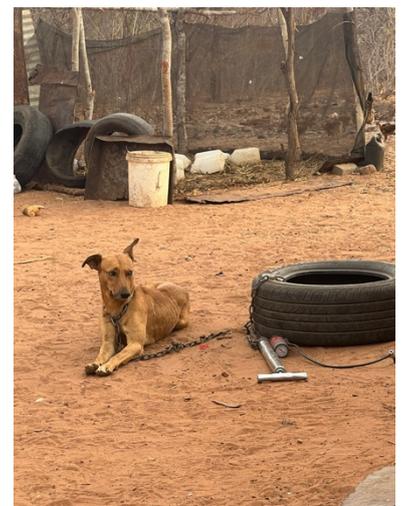
Welfare investigations

We received and responded to several cases of cruelty and neglect in urban Victoria Falls. Dogs were chained, beaten and neglected. Security dogs were kept in inadequate housing – there are no regulations for security kennels in this country. A donkey owner, after receiving education and practical assistance over a period of time, was prosecuted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA). He was using donkeys that were malnourished, and injured due to poor harnessing.

Thank you to the members of our urban community who reported these cases, and to the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) for their assistance. The ZRP have powers, under the PCA, to remove animals in need of urgent veterinary treatment.

Inspector Alert!

An Inspector, licenced under the PCA, is sorely needed to step up investigations and investigations. An Inspector is authorised to go onto properties to investigate and inspect, and has the power to remove animals from cruel conditions. Veterinarians do not have this power. There is a shortage of Inspectors in Zimbabwe as training has not been taking place. We would need funds and a vehicle for an Inspector.



Chained dog

Some of our welfare cases



Dog who 'belonged to no one' found thin, dirty and with a matted coat in the street



After he was groomed – Wulfi I snow comfortable and has a loving home



Dogs left to fend for themselves for weeks while owner away – thank you Charles & Hannah Brightman for reporting and assisting



Hard working security dogs kept in unsatisfactory conditions



Rabbits kept in tiny hutches in the heat – more and more chickens and rabbits are being kept at residential homes for consumption



Puppies in less-than-ideal conditions

Disaster relief

This year the rains came late and many animals starved. This is also due to overstocking. Board member, Lisa Rossiter of **Wild Bhiza Stables**, rendered assistance, often going onto areas that could not be reached by vehicle – on horseback. She delivered salt licks and hay provided by CARE and raised additional funds. She uplifted and kept several animals at her stables so they could receive round the clock care. Thank you Lisa! Here are just a few of the success stories:



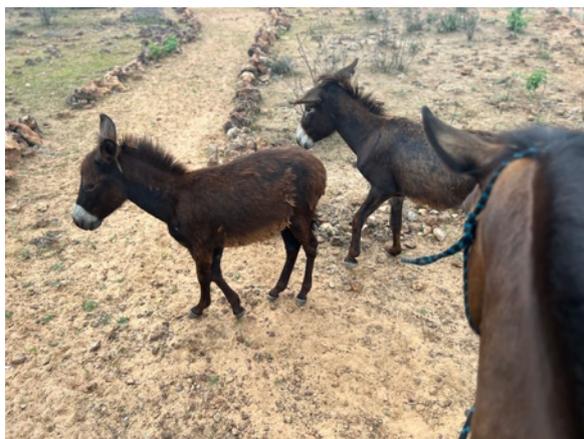
'Holly' found seriously ill with Heartwater



'Holly' having recovered



'Brownie' found injured from a cart, and covered in ticks



Orphaned foal 'Chocolate', now companion to healthy 'Brownie'



Two of five orphaned puppies – all were found loving homes



Welfare on horseback – riding out from Wild Bhiza Stables

Fund Raising

The clinic had been a beneficiary of the annual motorbike **Enduro**, run by Victoria Falls Roundtable, in conjunction with the Zambezi Offroad Motorcycle Club, for the past few years. We were happy to be able to assist again by acting as marshals at this exciting event. The Enduro runs through the area we serve. The local community assists and can see the benefit of their participation. Thank you to the organisers, helpers, riders and spectators – and we look forward to the 2025 event at the end of April!



Sue with Andrea & Tamara - from Stumme Brueder Stiftung at Enduro



An Enduro rider speeds off

Visitors to the Centre

We were delighted to welcome Andrea Lippenur and Tamara Moser, from donor Stummer Brueder Stiftung, to the Centre in April. Apart from visiting the Clinic, they accompanied us into the field to provide donkey harnesses, assisted with marshalling at the Enduro fund Raising event. We were also able to take them into the Zambezi park to show them some of our wonderful wildlife.

Elke Lehnherr, a long time donor and supporter, visited and so did Nora Zindel, both from Liechtenstein. As equestrians, they were taken with the donkeys recuperating with us after suffering injuries from poor harnessing.



Elke Lehnherr and donkeys under our care



Nora Zindel with our mother donkey



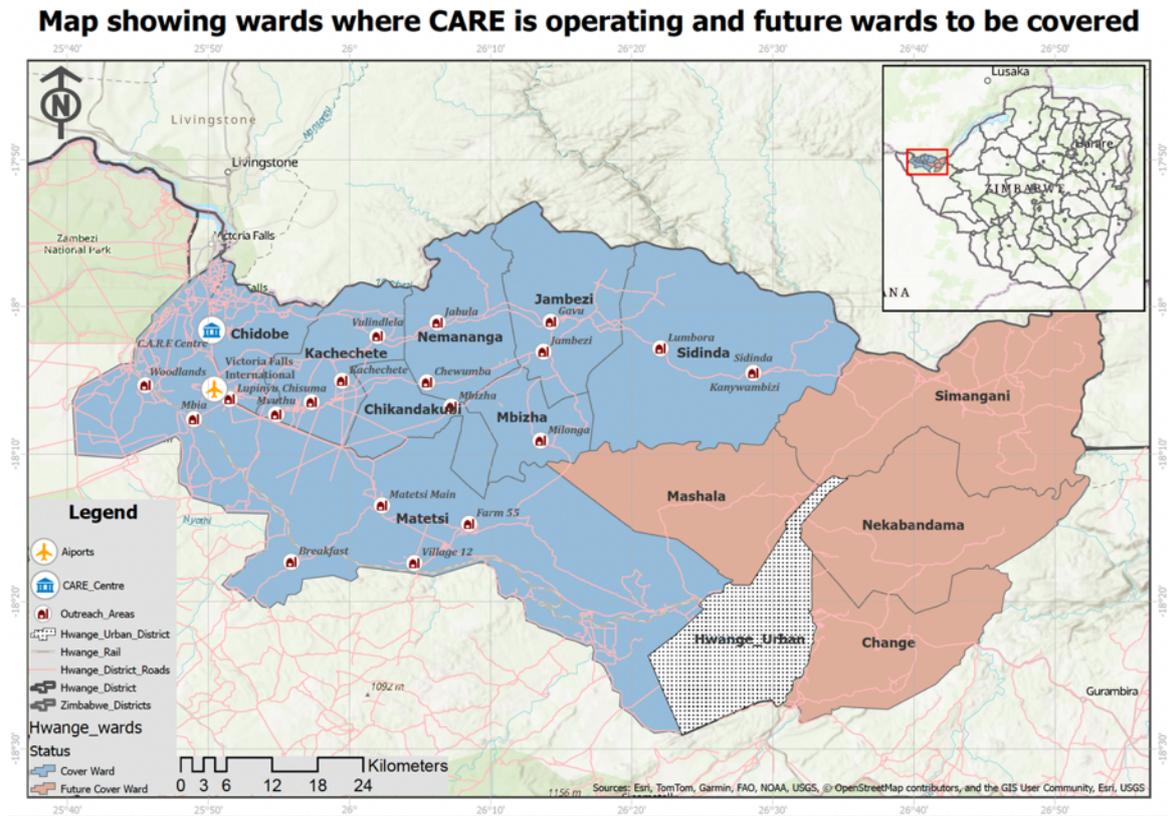
Trish Turner, from the Roy Turner Trust, visited from Harare



Gerhard & Daniel Meyer-Rodenbeck, from Australia, assisted us with maintenance

Expanding our range

We hope to be able to expand our area of operation, work more in the field this year, and step up our education programme – funds and resources permitting.



Our wish list

- **Anaesthetic machine** - the current one is very old one needs replacing. Use of gas is better and essential for wildlife. USD6 000.
- **Xray machine** – portable - USD6 000..
- **Laptop** USD300
- **Equipment** - orthopaedic surgical kit USD900, spay kits USD300, suction tubes USD50, drill guides USD500, bone files & rasps USD200, calf puller USD200, circlage wire passer USD120.
- **Surgical light for operating room**
- **Canopy for vehicle** – so we can store equipment and transport animals safely USD1 800.
- **Projector & TV monitor** for educational purposes. We would run this during clinic hours for people to learn from while they wait, and use for training sessions at the clinic. USD600
- **Cattery** – a small one to house cats – we have nowhere to safely keep cats and kittens for longer than two or three days. The slab is already down. USD1 000.
- **Welfare Inspector**, licenced under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, to carry out inspections and investigations and educate. USD1 200 per month. Vehicle also needed.
- **Borehole** - we get municipal water once in three weeks, if we are lucky. We store this in two tanks – if we can fill them and this just lasts for basic needs. This could be shared with the nearby community so they can use it for their animals too. USD15 000.
- **Rainwater collection system** – for the reasons above.
- **Dog dipping station** that is plumbed in and environmentally friendly – at the moment we use an old bath and need to dispose of the old dip safely and responsibly.
- **Vehicle** to transport large animals and for an Inspector to use for his/her work. USD15 000.



Flame lilies – *Gloriosa superba* - our national flower - blooming

Appendix

Outreach Summary 2024

AREA	LOCSTAT	RABIES	CANINE DISTERPER	SPAYS	CASTRATIONS
Lupinyu	S18.10437E025.85832	69	69		
Mbia	S18.12712E025.81620	70	70	4	5
Woodlands	S18.08874E025.75893	98	98		
Chidobe		148	148		
Chisuma	S18.01779 E02595523	124	124	12	7
Mvuthu	S18.12174 E025.91339	178	178	21	17
Kachechete	S18.08367 E025.9913	97	97	10	4
Mbizha	S18.11301 E026.12043	157	157	4	8
Jambezi	S18.05075 E026.22919	108	108	7	7
Gavu	S18.01692 E026.23781	200	200	14	4
Milonga	S18.15141 E026.22582)	122	122		
Sidinda	S18.07384 E026.47690	33	33		
Lumbora	S18.04706 E026.36735	37	37		
Kanywambizi	S18.07491 E026.47697	67	67		
Vulindlela	S18.03307 E026.03307	85	85	14	5
Farm 55	S18.24567 E026.14120	147	31		
Breakfast	S18.28872 E025.93128	79	30		
Matetsi Main	S18.22483 E026.03833	77	30		
Total		1896	1684	86	57

