

# AFRICAN ECHOES

*A quarterly e-newsletter for our supporters!*



*Photo credit: Daniel Whitby*

## THIS ISSUE'S NEWS AND UPDATES:

Updates from the  
BwB colony

'Meet' Helen Grumble  
- Chair of BwB

Women in Bat  
Science and Bat  
group training

Ways to support  
BwB

## HAPPY 2023 FROM BATS WITHOUT BORDERS

**Welcome to the first African Echoes issue of 2023! We wish all our supporters a happy, safe and successful year.**

It's been a busy start to the year with running our first-ever Women in Bat Science event, setting up our new 'How to set up a bat group' training course, and growing our BwB team.

Read all the latest **Bats without Borders** news in this issue.

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who bought our 2023 calendars. Enjoy!



## BwB updates

### NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

We are delighted to introduce our new volunteer **Jo Harper**. Jo is joining the team as our Volunteer Coordinator and is looking forward to getting to know the BwB colony.

Jo has a passion for bats and belongs to the Warwickshire Bat Group. She has an education background, enjoys travelling and has a keen interest in wildlife and conservation.



### Our 2023 events

We have some very exciting new events planned for 2023, including a community event everyone can get involved with, which launch on International Bat Appreciation day (April 17th). To keep up-to-date, follow us on social media or visit:

[www.batswithoutborders.org/events](http://www.batswithoutborders.org/events)

### #WINGEDWEDNESDAY WEBINARS

Our **#WingedWednesday** webinar series returns on Wednesday 22 March with Dr Isabella Mandl! The series runs on the last Wednesday of the month from March until November. Each webinar is 1 hour long starting at 3pm southern African time (currently 1pm UK time).

#### Dr Isabella Mandl

Following the fruit bats - research and conservation on Comoros

#WingedWednesday  
webinar



Don't forget that all 35 of our previous **#WingedWednesday** webinars are available on our [YouTube channel](#).



Subscribe to receive notifications when we add new videos.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPEAKERS FOR MAKING THIS SERIES POSSIBLE.

## OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN OUR COLONY

### CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

#### We're recruiting for an exciting new position in the BwB team!

This role will support the capacity strengthening of early career ecologists, bat researchers and conservationists, and bat group members.

To find out more visit:

[www.batswithoutborders.org](http://www.batswithoutborders.org)

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 19 March 2023**



## The 14th African Small Mammal Symposium (ASMS)

The ASMS conferences are held once every four years, providing the opportunity for local and international scientists, students and others interested in studying African small mammals to meet and exchange ideas. Small mammals mainly: rodents, bats, shrews, sengis, tenrecs, golden moles, rabbits, hares, otters, mongooses, ground squirrels etc. are covered within these meetings.

### Conference Fees

Standard – \$350 USD (late registration \$400 USD)

Full-time student – \$200 USD

Find out more and register here:

<https://www.unam.edu.na/asms14>



Registration fee includes conference pack, access to complete scientific program, welcome function, mid-conference excursion, lunches and coffee breaks during the whole conference. It does not cover travel to Swakopmund (Namibia), accommodation (incl. breakfasts and dinners) and post-conference trips.

### Key Dates

Abstracts Due Date:	31 May 2023 at 23h59 CAT
Registration Due Date:	31 May 2023 at 23h59 CAT
Notification of Acceptance:	31 July 2023 at 23h59 CAT
Registration Fee Due Date:	30 June 2023 at 23h59 CAT
Conference Dates:	17 to 22 September 2023

---

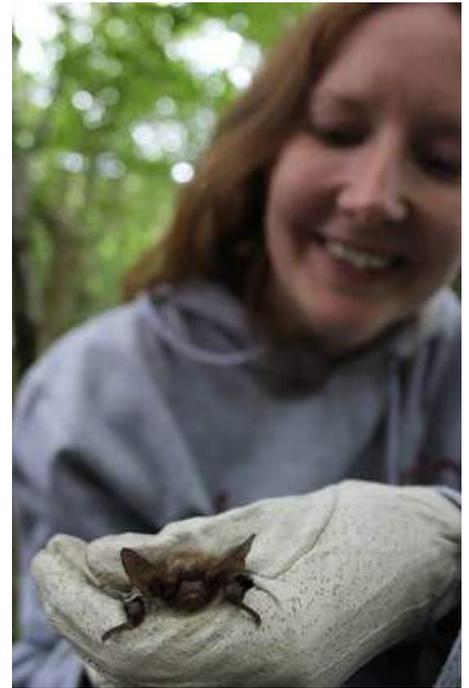
## Meet the Chair of the BwB Board of Trustees

---

In this issue, we chat to **Helen Grumble**, Chair of the Board of Trustees for **Bats** without Borders.

### **What got you interested in bats?**

I was doing my degree (in Zoology) and at a stage when I was trying to decide what to do once I'd finished. Uni was great and it was amazing meeting all these people with similar dreams to me. But it also meant there were lots of people...with similar dreams to me (oh the competition!!) - it was all a bit overwhelming. And then I went along to a bat talk organised by the biology club. I'd never really thought about bats before. Not only did I get super excited about how amazing bat detectors are, to allow you to peak into this night-time world, but it opened up a world of possibilities for me. I joined my local bat group, I bought a bat detector and I honestly haven't looked back since!



### **What is your favourite thing about being the Chair of the BwB Board?**

It allows me to feel like I'm really making a difference for bat conservation. BwB is an amazing charity that has already done so much but has the potential to do so many more amazing things. I'm just really proud to be a part of BwB's journey and work with some brilliant people.

### **What is your favourite bat fact?**

That the biggest species of bats in the world (such as the Kalonga) have a wingspan the size of a surfboard! I love that fact because it really makes peoples' eyes light up when you are giving a bat talk, and watching little kids (and sometimes adults) stretching their arms as wide as possible to see how big that is, is always fun to watch.

### **Which is the rarest bat species you have ever encountered?**

In the UK, there is one species of bat (the greater mouse-eared bat) that was declared extinct, but a single individual was found in a hibernation site in southern England. The bat has been found at the site every year since and until 2023 (when a second individual appeared) it was the only known individual of its species in the UK. The local group is (quite rightly) very protective of him, but I have been privileged to see him on two occasions and I can confirm he is beautiful!

### **Where is the best place you have ever visited and why?**

As part of my masters, I spent a summer studying at a game reserve in South Africa. Living on a game reserve with rhinos, giraffes, antelope, and baboons on my doorstep was a dream come true. There were even bats living in the window pockets of our tents. Pretty handy given I was there to study bats for my dissertation project! I studied the winter activity of the cape serotine bat by night, and helped out on my fellow students' surveys during the day. It not only continued my fascination with bats but started my love for southern Africa, which is why I'm so pleased to be part of BwB today.

# WOWEN IN (BAT) SCIENCE INDABA

Thank you to our speakers, sponsors and everyone who joined us online for our first **Women in Bat Science** event!



On Friday 10 February, we were delighted to celebrate the great work being carried out by Women in (bat) Science working on African bats, as part of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

The presentations are available on our website: [www.batswithoutborders.org/women-in-science](http://www.batswithoutborders.org/women-in-science)

In partnership with



Thank you to our wonderful keynote and line up of speakers who shared their passion and knowledge on bats:

Dr Dina Dechmann - Max Planck Institute (Germany) - Dina's work is global and includes bat research working across Africa

Dr Leigh Richards - Durban Natural Science Museum (South Africa)

Dr Marike Geldenhys - University of Pretoria (South Africa)

Ms Alexandra Howard - University of Free State (South Africa)

Ms Siphesihle Magagula - University of Eswatini

Ms Ana Gledis da Conceição - Gorongosa National Park / Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação-ANAC= National Administration of Conservation Areas (Mozambique)

Ms Damilare Ayokunle - Bowen University (Nigeria)

**Bats** without Borders is committed to supporting and promoting women in (bat) science working on African bats, particularly those working in southern Africa. Women are globally underrepresented in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), and given the gender inequality in science, we are excited to be working with an early career committee to develop opportunities to network and support women working on African bat research and conservation.

To sign up to our Women in Bat Science mailing list for information on events and networking opportunities, please complete this [form](#).



## HOW TO SET UP A BAT GROUP

We were overwhelmed with the response when we opened the application process for our **'How to set up bat group'** training. Nearly 60 people applied from 14 countries!

Thank you to our funder:



It wasn't an easy decision but we have selected the 30 applicants for this year's course, which will begin shortly. Over the course of two months, we will deliver eight online training sessions (one and a half hours per session) which will cover a range of topics including; how to lead a bat walk, bat care, bat detectors, community engagement and how to set up a bat group.

We are looking forward to welcoming the attendees to the course. Watch this space to find out what the class of 2023 get up to: [www.batswithoutborders.org/bat-group-trainees](http://www.batswithoutborders.org/bat-group-trainees)



This series of talks are designed to help you get started with bat conservation and community engagement and hopefully inspire you to start a bat group in southern Africa.

## HOW TO SET UP A BAT GROUP

## BwB Merchandise

Did you know we have a new #Lovebats clothing range in our Teemill store?

Browse the range of ethical, sustainable clothing and help support our work:

[bats-without-borders.teemill.com](http://bats-without-borders.teemill.com)



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

IWD has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people. Today, IWD belongs to all groups collectively everywhere. IWD is not country, group or organization specific.

**Bats** without Borders will be celebrating **#IWD2023** this month. Look out for social media posts celebrating women in bat conservation. **#EmbraceEquity**



## Species in the spotlight

Dent's horseshoe bat  
(*Rhinolophus denti*)

- In **southern Africa**, Dent's horseshoe bats are found primarily in Namibia, Botswana, and northwestern South Africa
- They are one of the **smallest** species in the Rhinolophidae family, with a weight of 6 grams
- They have the ability to enter **torpor**; an energy saving state by cooling their body temperatures
- The large fleshy pad around their nose helps to amplify the **ultrasonic** calls it emits for echolocation
- Their predation on flying insects can impact agricultural pest populations, providing a **benefit** to farmers



Photo credit: Brett Lewis

## Follow us on Social Media



[@batswithoutborders](#)



[Visit our website](#)



[@bats\\_w\\_borders](#)



[@batswithoutborders](#)



[We're on LinkedIn too](#)



[Visit our YouTube Channel](#)



✉ [info@batswithoutborders.org](mailto:info@batswithoutborders.org)

## Ways to support Bats without Borders



Donate through  
Give as you Live

Join the colony as a  
Friends of BwB

for just  
£20 | €23 | \$26 |  
ZAR420  
a year!

Friends of Bats  
without Borders  
save 30% on  
Pelagic Publishing  
books\*!



and receive...

- a subscription to 'African Echoes'
- eco-friendly stickers & postcards
- a digital certificate
- a downloadable bat-themed ringtone

[www.batswithoutborders.org/friends-of-bwb](http://www.batswithoutborders.org/friends-of-bwb)

\*Discount can only be used via the Pelagic website and not in combination with other discounts, nor on books in the sale

## Could you help fundraise for southern African bats?

We are currently developing a **Bats** without Borders Community Fundraising pack which is going to be full of fun ideas for how you can get involved and help raise much needed funds for bat conservation.

Please send any ideas you might have for raising money, anything from sponsored runs, walks and talks, to batty bake sales and craft stalls, and we can add it to the pack. Thank you!

[info@batswithoutborders.org](mailto:info@batswithoutborders.org)



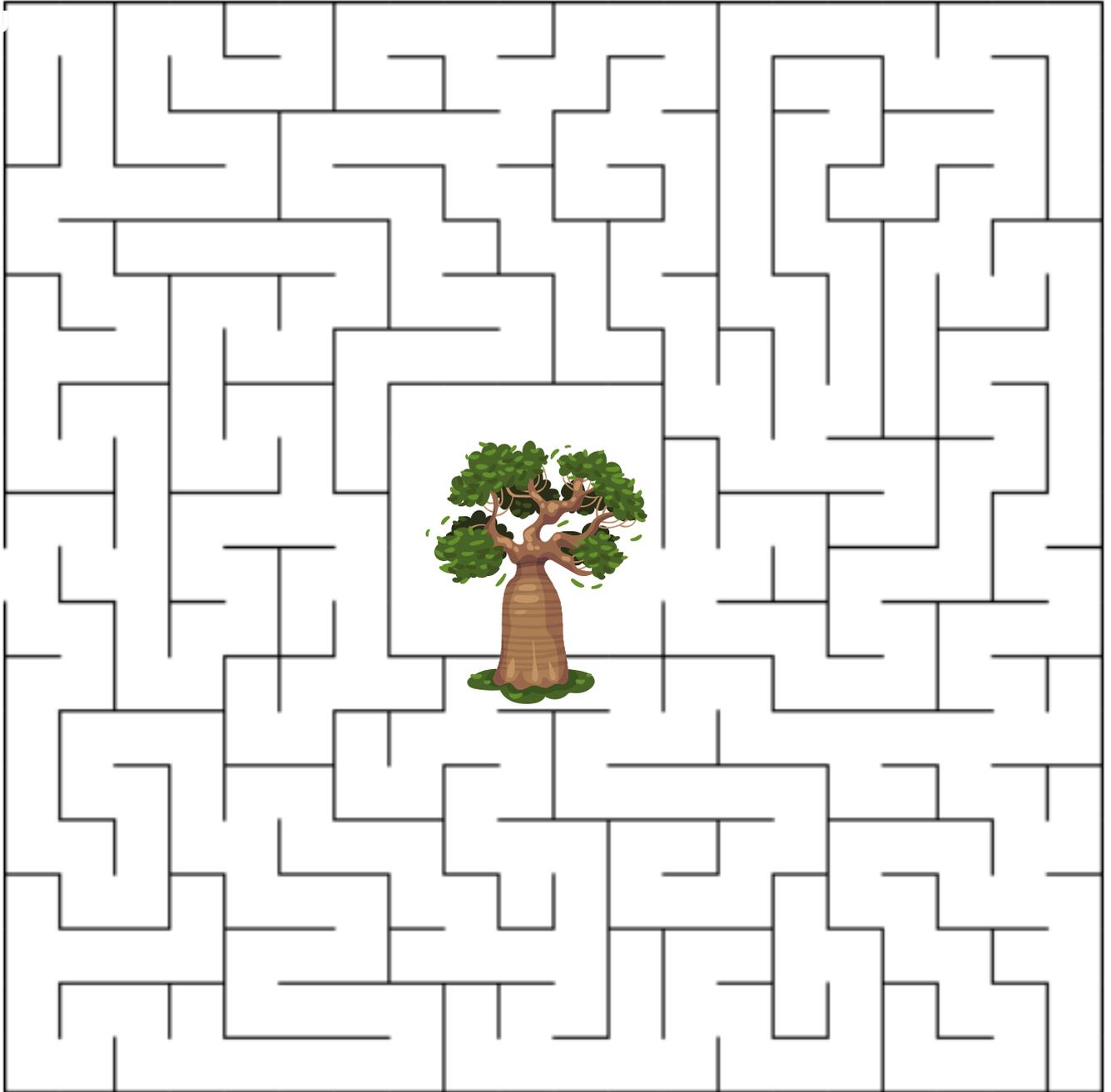
## Thank you from BwB

We'd like to thank you for your continued support throughout the year, It's going to be another exciting year for **Bats** without Borders!



Can you complete this maze and help the bat find its roost?

start here !



Help me get home !



**Classrooms without Walls**

EXPLORE - DISCOVER - LEARN - LOVE