

# AFRICAN ECHOES

*A quarterly e-newsletter for our supporters!*



Sundeval's leaf-nosed bat (*Hipposideros caffer*)  
Photo credit: Daniel Whitby

## THIS ISSUE'S NEWS AND UPDATES:

**2023 Bats without  
Borders Highlights**

**'Meet' our Capacity  
Development Officer**

**Success at the Namibia  
Learning Event**

**Ways to support  
Bats without Borders**

## GREETING FROM BATS WITHOUT BORDERS!

We're delighted to share our last African Echoes issue of 2023 with you, full of news and updates.

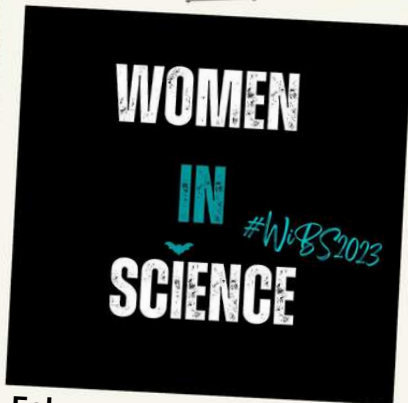
We'd like to thank you all for your support throughout the year. 2024 is bursting with potential as we continue to focus on our Conservation Internship programme, capacity strengthening activities to support bat conservation and research across southern Africa, and educational events to share the importance and wonder of bats with all!

Everyone at **Bats** without  
Borders would like to wish  
you a very happy holiday  
and a wonderful new year  
when it comes!



## 2023 Bats without Borders Highlights

Thanks to our amazing team of volunteers, board members, staff, and interns we've had a bat-tastic 2023. including celebrating Bats without Borders' 10 year anniversary back in August! Here are just some of the highlights from the past year...



February

Ran our first Women in Bat Science Indaba



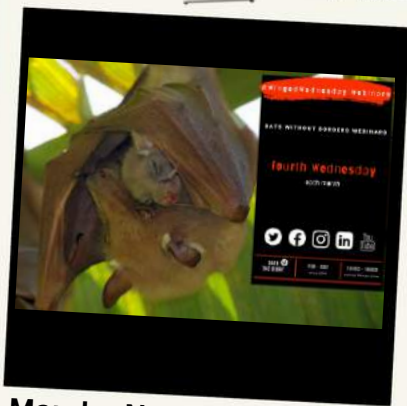
March - August

Delivered bat group training



June

Volunteer Anne's ultra-marathon for BwB



March - November

8 more Winged Wednesday webinars



September

The Rufford Foundation Learning Event



September

Our Capacity Development Officer joined the team

Here's to lots more exciting plans for **2024**, including our second Women in Bat Science event, an AfriPopo student symposium, and more bat group training. Watch this space!





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## Meet our new Capacity Development Officer

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In this issue, we chat with **Dr Christopher Imakando**, **Bats** without Borders' new Capacity Development Officer. Christopher was a volunteer in **Bats** without Borders' research team and recently accepted the part-time position of **Capacity Development Officer**, a role that supports the capacity strengthening of early career ecologists, researchers and bat conservationists, and bat group members.

### What got you interested in bats?

In 2012, while studying for my master's degree in Thailand (on a project focusing on rodents), I had experience trapping bats with the group from the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Natural History Museum. Since then, I have always been interested in bats. I am always fascinated by the ecosystem services provided by bats – pollination, seed dispersal and pest control.



### What is your favourite thing about working for **Bats** without Borders?

Contributing to the capacity strengthening of early career ecologist and bat enthusiasts in southern Africa is my favourite thing about working for **Bats** without Borders. This will lead to a group of ecologists and a community that is knowledgeable and interested in bats, thereby contributing to the conservation of bats in southern Africa.

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

Buckingham Palace, London! While studying for my PhD at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich (UK), I had an opportunity to go inside Buckingham Palace. This was during the Queen's Anniversary Prize award ceremony – the Natural Resources Institute (NRI) at the University of Greenwich was been awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education for tackling pests that cause plague, famine, and disease.



### What is your favourite bat fact?

Insectivorous bats have evolved the ability to use echolocation for navigation and locating their food. This is an exceptional advancement.

### Which is the bat species you would most like to see and why?

Sakeji horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus sakejiensis*). Not only is this bat cute, it is endemic to Zambia (Northwestern Province). However, it is only known from very few individuals. Therefore, I would be interested to see this bat and help to contribute to the knowledge on its ecology and conservation status.

### What is your favourite hobby?

Watching and playing football.

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## Conservation Intern Update – Wongani Sibande

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This year has been amazing. I have been continuously learning and discovering more about bats, while also interacting with the **Bats** without Borders team. **Here are a few things that have happened this year:**

- I completed an online Grant Writing for Wildlife Conservation course offered by WildTeam. This course has helped me gain skills in writing grant applications and raising funds to support planned conservation work.
- I am now part of **Bats** without Borders' Education team and together with the team, we are developing educational resources aimed at spreading awareness of the importance of bats in southern Africa.
- I wrote grant applications to support bat conservation work in Malawi. Fortunately, the Rufford Foundation Trust accepted my application and offered to support my project titled "Fruit Bat Conservation through Monitoring and Community Science in Mangochi District" in collaboration with **Bats** without Borders.
- **Bats** without Borders has sponsored me to further my studies and acquire a Master's Degree. This is an amazing opportunity for me to further my education and build my career. I plan to apply to the University of Malawi for a Master of Science in Biological Sciences by Research.



### My plans for next year are:

- To work on the fruit bat monitoring project. I am eager to see how the project will unfold and its results.
- To begin pursuing my master's degree. I plan to conduct research on fruit bats in the Mangochi district.

## New Bats without Borders Colony Members

We're delighted to have recently welcomed new volunteers to the team. **Marisa** joined our research and education teams, and **Jane** started as a volunteer bookkeeper providing support to our Treasurer Helen. Thank you both, and the rest of our amazing team, for the dedication, time, and effort you give to **Bats** without Borders.





# The Rufford Foundation Namibian Learning Event



Reflecting on an Incredible Learning Event in Namibia!

The Rufford Foundation Learning Event took place in September and brought together The Rufford Foundation grantees from across southern Africa to network, exchange knowledge, and strengthen capacity through workshops.

The event included keynote speaker Mr Marthin Kasaona (Deputy Director for Central Region of Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Forestry) launching the event, the chance for delegates to meet two of the Rufford Foundation team (Stuart Parsons, CEO and Mariam Weston, Grants Officer), Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) assessment training from Simmy Bezeng, BirdLife South Africa, human-wildlife coexistence discussions, workshops including 'Measuring Your Impact' run by **Bats without Borders** Rachael Cooper-Bohannon and Helen Taylor-Boyd, Bats without Borders, and a bat walk and cheetah run., all held at the amazing Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) centre, a world-renowned international field research and education facility (and one of Rufford Foundation's supported projects).



The sense of community that emerged was heart-warming, demonstrating that we are stronger when we learn together.



## #WINGEDWEDNESDAY WEBINARS



Our **#WingedWednesday** webinar series runs on the last Wednesday of the month until November. Each webinar is 1 hour long starting at 3pm southern African time (currently 1pm UK time).

Sign up here: [www.batswithoutborders.org/webinars](http://www.batswithoutborders.org/webinars)

Don't forget that all 42 of our previous **#WingedWednesday** webinars are available on our **YouTube channel**.



**SUBSCRIBE**

Subscribe to receive notifications when we add new videos.



In 2023, we heard inspiring webinars from the following speakers. They are available on our YouTube channel if you missed any of them:

**Isabella Mandl**

**Szilárd-Lehel Bücs**

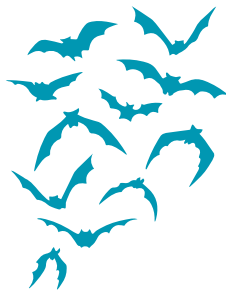
**Sheherazade**

**Ryszard Oleksy**

**Gregory Mutumi**

**Ahana Aurora Fernandez**

**Helen Taylor-Boyd**



**Daniel Hargreaves**

Bat Conservation - my journey

DATE **4**  
THE DIARY

22 • NOV • 2023  
Wednesday

15H00 - 16H00  
central African time

PRE-REGISTER @ [BATSWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG](http://BATSWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG)

**#WingedWednesday** webinars will be making a return next year. the first one taking place in March 2024. Details to follow.

**Thank you to our speakers for making this series possible!**



## Could you be a bat hero?

We're on the lookout for a team of people to help support bat conservation in southern Africa.

- **Do you love bats?**
- **Do you love to share your passion for bats and the reasons why they are important with others?**
- **Would you like to help a charity dedicated to protecting bats across southern Africa?**
- **Would you like to join a team of passionate change makers?**

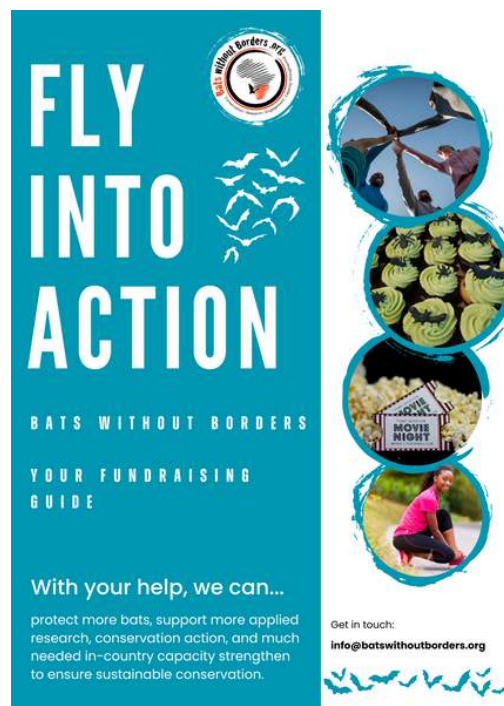
If you've answered yes to any of the questions above, we are looking for you!

We're bringing together a team of people keen to raise much-needed funds for bat conservation but also to raise awareness about the threats facing these incredible animals and the urgent need for action to protect them.

Our community fundraising guide **'Fly into Action'** is full of ideas for activities and events, top fundraising tips, and help on how to spread the word to your family and friends. We're looking for a team to try it out by running community fundraising events, anything from a batty bake sale to a sponsored run dressed as a bat.

With your help, we can increase our work to conserve bats and strengthen bat conservation capacity across southern Africa.

Why not download our 'Fly into Action pack' to find out more, and join the team helping bats secure a future in southern Africa.



#changemakers

## Bats without Borders Merchandise

**NEW** bat merchandise is available from our [online shop](https://www.batswithoutborders.org/shop)!

Help support bat conservation by treating yourself to an ethical, sustainable t-shirt, hoodie or jumper, or a gift such as a tote bag, mug or jigsaw puzzle. We have lots of batty designs to choose from for adults, kids and babies. Perfect gifts or treats for yourself! Browse the range and help support our work. Look out for our **Christmas range** too!



[www.batswithoutborders.org/shop](https://www.batswithoutborders.org/shop)

## Species in the spotlight

Woermann's fruit bat (*Megaloglossus woermanni*)

- is a fairly small **pteropodid** with head and body length ranging from 60 - 82mm
- it is a **tropical** species ranging from Guinea to northern Angola and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo
- its habitat is highly dependent on the **flowers** available for food
- its skull and tongue are highly modified for obtaining nectar. It's **tongue** of up to 30mm in length ends in a brush tip of papillae (bumps)
- a female pregnant with two young has been recorded but normally they have **one young**
- little is known about their **behaviour**
- the species is threatened by **habitat loss**



Photo credit: Laura Torrent

## Ways to support Bats without Borders

### Raise funds while you shop with Give as You Live

Over 6,000 stores will donate to us when you shop, including:

M&S	JOHN LEWIS	Sainsbury's	Entertainer	Boots	asos
Argos	Debenhams	moonpig	ebay	Booking.com	6,000+ more

### Join the colony as a Friends of BwB

and receive...

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

for just  
**£25 | €29 | \$31 |**  
**ZAR576**  
a year!

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

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PUBLISHING

[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

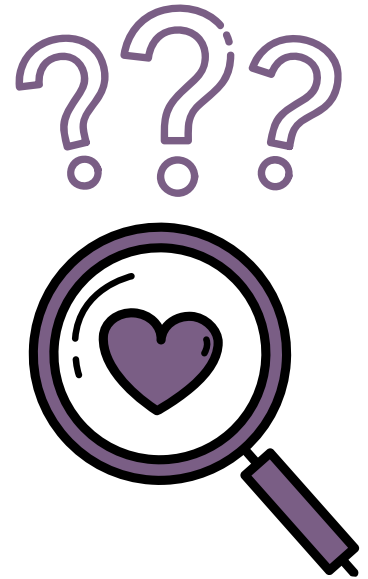
We'd like to thank you all for your continued support throughout the year.







Can you spot the difference?  
There are 5 differences between the two pictures  
below, can you find them?



5

Visit the Kids Zone on the BwB website to find free, fun resources all about bats!