

## ENVIRONMENT

# Learners Go on Rare Expedition

By Viola Zimunya

WINDHOEK

LAST Tuesday night was reunion night for seven young expeditionists, to reminisce over a rare experience of collecting different insects for



**LADIES FIRST?** Hilma Angula was the only girl in the group. According to Bird, she started off at the back of the trail, but ended up right at the front. She would do it all over again.

the Museum. The students from Emmanuel Shifidi Secondary School were treated to dinner, and received certificates and prizes.

Tharina Bird, curator for *Arachnida* and *Myriapoda* at the National Museum of Namibia was looking for assistance with collecting insect species for the museum. She happened to talk to Nicholas Krone, teacher of physical science at Emmanuel Shifidi Secondary School, and a rare expedition for the students was in the making.

After a "frantic" search that was qualified with conditions such as owning a good pair of walking shoes, seven Grade 11 and 12 learners, all boys except one, were identified. Their brief was to pick up any insects they found up and around Brandberg Mountain. There would be a prize for the person who would pick up the first gladiator.

Preparations were made and the team, accompanied by three adults, namely Nicholas Krone, (a teacher, ARC-PPRI in short, Pretoria, South Africa) who knew the mountain very well and showed the learners where to look; Tharina Bird; and Michael Stiller, an entomologist from the Agricultural Research Council - Plant Protection Research Institute; set out. The trip lasted 10 days, from May 1 to 12.

According to the learners, the experience was not easy, and "it is very easy to fall and die there," says Hilma Angula, the only girl in the group. But now that the trip is over, "I would do it again". Hilma says that ever since she came

back from the expedition, she has missed the outdoors so much that now she has taken to visiting the mountains behind Gorengab Dam. Although they all thought it was a long 10 days and started counting down from Day 8, they would go through the experience all over again.

Asked whether they were not afraid to touch the insects, they said they were, but it was easy to collect them through the use of aspirators, which sucked the insects into plastic bags.

Bird says that she would want to go on species collection expeditions on a yearly basis, but this would all depend on sponsorship. For this trip, the equipment used by the learners was sponsored

by Rössing foundation. Apart from that, food and some medical supplies were sponsored by Namibia's National Biodiversity Programme.

"We hope to do this on a more regular basis (even twice a year), as an official museum project called "Biodiversity Edu-Ventures". BUT this would totally depend on whether we get stable sponsorship, especially for food and transport," said Bird.

On reunion night, Jeremia Shpaka got the prize for finding the first gladiator, a cool NS50. David Nangombe and Benson Muramba got pizzas. Other participants were: Gabriel Lot, Levi Mulokoshi, and Marco Aurelio Lourenco de Carvalho,



**NIGHT OF FAME:** The whole group of participants in an expedition to collect insect species for the Museum; pose for a picture with their certificates at the Brandberg reunion. The expedition was from May 1 to 12.

Photo: Mary Happona

# Bank Gives N\$500 000 to Green Projects

By Surihe Gaomas

WINDHOEK - Environmental conservation is the key to the promotion of the habitat of natural resources in the country, while at the same time providing employment to the rural poor.

Such a drive helps alleviate poverty and promote development in parts of the country where jobs are needed the most.

Yet finances to run such environment projects can prove difficult for a villager, where money is hard to come by. In an effort to help address this challenge, NedBank Namibia recently pledged close to N\$500 000 to various environmental projects in the country.

Recently and through NedBank Namibia's Go Green Fund, close to 10 environmental conservation groups received funding for their projects.

Projects that benefited from the fund are Edu-Venture, Black Mongoose, Kunene Lion, Eco Awards, a project on the behavioural ecology of the Greater Kudu, the Vulture Study Group and the Sea Atlas and Monitoring Programme.

At the award ceremony last week Wednesday, the Go Green Fund was seen as an instrument to help conserve and develop the natural resources of the country and in doing so also support the country's fragile ecology.

In the keynote address Minister of Environment and Tourism Willem Konjore said the Go Green initiative by NedBank would go a long way in addressing the high levels of poverty and unemployment in the country.

Currently Namibia ranks 12<sup>th</sup> among 50 countries of the world with the lowest life expectancy.

"But we are rising to these challenges. A fine example is the Go Green Fund as an initiative supporting individuals and organisations in Namibia that are working towards a more sustainable future,"



A group of environmentalists and conservancy agents pictured with the Minister of Environment and Tourism Willem Konjore after the award ceremony recently.

said Konjore.

By entering into a smart partnership with the Namibia Nature Foundation, the Go Green Fund is the first private sector grant for environmental conservation projects in the country.

Up till now the fund has supported over 25 projects in most regions of the country.

As a non-profit making fund it has also provided N\$50 000 in the year 2001 to various projects that has made considerable differences in the lives of many

Namibians.

Speaking at the same occasion Director of the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment Chairperson of the NedBank Go Green Fund Dr Peter Tarr stressed the importance of such an initiative.

"Last year it was decided to extend the fund and its impact through honing efforts in our field of focus, as more environmental players have come to the fore. The funded projects in the spotlight today have been highly

successful and today we recognise and appreciate the quality of their work," said Dr Tarr.

Funding requirements for such include how the project fits into the broader ecological and social setting in Namibia, value for money, the importance of the conservation problem being addressed, the extent to which the project will raise awareness of the Go Green Fund and NedBank support for the environment and opportunities for media coverage.