

# ZIMBABWE – A GREAT PLACE FOR THE NEXT TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

By Francis Podmore - Department of Physics, University of Zimbabwe, P.O. Box MP167, Harare.

Email : [podmore@compcentre.uz.ac.zw](mailto:podmore@compcentre.uz.ac.zw)

This document should be read as an update of the report “Zimbabwe – the place for astronomy and the next total solar eclipse” which was distributed at the XXIV General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union, meeting in Manchester, England in August 2000. It contains corrections and additions which I have found out since July.

**THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE** has not changed or improved appreciably: there are still fuel shortages, the occupation of many commercial farms by so-called war veterans continues, so that agricultural production has been severely affected and the Government plan to acquire much of the farm land for resettlement is proceeding. Our economy is often described as “on the brink of collapse” with current exchange rates being US1\$ = about Z\$45 and one UK pound = Z\$75. How long this situation will continue is impossible to tell, but you can read daily reports about Zimbabwe on [www.rhodesia.com](http://www.rhodesia.com) - by clicking the down arrow at the right-hand end of the box labelled *Latest Zimbabwe News* which appears immediately below the Rhodesian flag on the home page. Then select the fourth of the options *The ZIMBABWE situation...* or any of the others. We continue to prepare for the Total Solar Eclipse on 21 June 2001 and trust that conditions will not deter many visitors from coming. Updates will be posted on the Solar Eclipse Mailing List from time to time.

The website <http://www.bigbadwolfdesign.co.uk> has a very extensive list of links to sources of online information about Zimbabwe, e.g. newspapers, etc. On the eclipse page click on “Zimbabwe”

**BOOKS** Top of the list must be AFRICA & MADAGASCAR : Total Eclipse 2001 & 2002 edited by Aisling Irwin, published by Bradt Publications ([www.bradt-travelguides.com](http://www.bradt-travelguides.com)) in August 2000, 164 pages price in UK 10.95 or \$15.95 in the US) (ISBN 1-84162-015-7) Bradt are also maintaining a website (....) for updates from all the countries of southern Africa crossed by the two eclipses.

The eclipse book UK SOLAR ECLIPSES from Year 1 to 3000 by Sheridan Williams ([www.clock-tower.com](http://www.clock-tower.com) or [www.clocktower.demon.co.uk](http://www.clocktower.demon.co.uk)) has been extensively updated for 2001 and 2002, price UK 11.95 ISBN 1-85142 093 2.

Another excellent handbook is OBSERVE ECLIPSES by Michael Reynolds & Richard A. Sweetsir, published by The Astronomical League (<http://www.astroleague.org>) new edition 1995, price US\$15.00 92 pages

Other travel guides covering Zimbabwe are: Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia by Rupert Isaacson (1998) Publ by Cadogan ([guides@cadogan.co.uk](mailto:guides@cadogan.co.uk)) ISBN 1-86011-057-6 for UK 14.99 or US\$21.95 522 pages

The Rough Guide to Zimbabwe by Barbara McCrea & Tony Pinchuck ([www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)) 4<sup>th</sup> edition May 2000 for UK11.99 or US\$18.95 432 pages (ISBN .....

Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia by Deanna Swaney publ by Lonely Planet ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) 3<sup>rd</sup> edition January 1999 for UK13.99 or US\$24.95 817 pages (ISBN .....

If you know of other guides to Zimbabwe for the visitor, please let me know.

**TOURS – ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS** to the list of those planning tours to Zimbabwe, with website, email and contact person if known.

A1 SPECIALITY TOURS (‘one’ not ‘eye’) change email to [gs@a1specialitytours.com](mailto:gs@a1specialitytours.com)

AFRICAN TOURS AND EXPEDITIONS (<http://www.africantours.co.zw>) are linked to Albatros Travel

CAREW SAFARIS (<http://www.carewsafaris.com>) have relocated their tented village into Zambia. This affects all tour groups who are booked with Geoffrey Carew (e.g. Eric Brown, etc)

METARESEARCH <http://63.249.243.9/expeditions/coming/2001/africa-eclipse.asp>  
See also ECLIPSE EDGE EXPEDITIONS with Tom van Flandern

MIGRATOURS <http://www.migratours.co.zw> are arranging an eclipse tour in Zimbabwe

REISEBURO in der SUEDSTADT GmbH (<http://www.reiseburo-suedstadt.de/SoFi-Seite.htm#Reisen>)  
List 11 different tours by different companies, the last two coming to Zimbabwe –  
African Special Tours and Kiwi Tours.

RICO TOURS (<http://ricotours.com/eclipse2001.htm>) will take visitors to a private camp near Guruve north of Harare.

SUNVIL (<http://www.sunvil.co.zw/africa/eclipse/eclipse.htm>) list 16 camping trips, mostly to eclipse destinations in Zambia, but the falcontrip is aiming for Mana Pools National Park south of the Zambezi river. Email: [africa@sunvil.co.uk](mailto:africa@sunvil.co.uk)

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSES . <http://www.syz.com/rasc/eclipses.htm> is an alternative website for the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada tours to Zambia and Zimbabwe.  
Contact Alan Dyer at [alandyer@telusplanet.net](mailto:alandyer@telusplanet.net)

The ZIMBABWE HUNTERS ASSOCIATION ([zha@pci.co.zw](http://zha@pci.co.zw), contact Charl Grobbelaar) have arranged a 3-day eclipse safari to their Rifa campsite near Chirundu in the Zambezi valley for 30 people with dormitory accommodation or camping. They have a telescope available (size ??).

There is a ZIMBABWE TRAVEL WEBRING - see <http://www.riverhorse.co.zw>

**ASSA 2001 SYMPOSIUM** The Astronomical Society of Southern Africa has invited the ASSA Harare Centre to organize and host their annual symposium next year – dates 18 – 20 June. Contact Simon Walsh ([sciman@stjohns.co.zw](mailto:sciman@stjohns.co.zw)) or see <http://www.geocities.com/zimastro/symposium.htm> for details.

**ECLIPSE VIEWERS** My appeal launched in UK in August 1999 for any unwanted or unused eclipse viewers has resulted in about 100 000 being donated and flown to Harare. The ASSA are producing eclipse information packs (which will include some viewers and instructions for pinhole projection) for free distribution to all 6000 schools in Zimbabwe so that pupils and teachers will understand eclipses and enjoy a wonderful and rare spectacle.

I am aware of two other similar projects. Oxfam Solidarity in Belgium has collected over 200 000 viewers: they have been screened for damage and will be distributed throughout Mocambique. Shortly after the 1999 eclipse I saw a report that a French charity called “Glasses for Africa” were appealing for donations of viewers and had received substantial support from donors in Germany. However to date I cannot find any further information about that project – can anyone supply details?? I have heard that two astronomers at the South African Astronomical Observatory have appealed to UNESCO for funding to mass-produce low cost viewers for widespread distribution throughout southern Africa where millions of local eyes will be at risk.

The International Astronomical Union Working Group on Eclipses, which Patrick Kalebwe from Zambia and myself have been invited to join, has much information about eclipses, including eye safety – see <http://www.williams.edu/astronomy/eclipse.....>

**ADDITIONAL ECLIPSE WEBSITES** (see also the eclipse webring of sites)

Olivier Staiger (known as ‘Klipisi’ to his friends ☺) has added a tremendous set of eclipse animations to his 2001 website, showing what he expects people to see on 21 June 2001 from various cities – have a look at <http://eclipse.span.ch/210601pse.htm>.

ECLIPSE CAFÉ

ECLIPSE ONLINE

ICSTARS <http://www.icstars.com>

SKY & TELESCOPE <http://www.skypub.com/>

WWWSITES - look at Sheridan Williams compilation: <http://www.clocktower.com/wwwsites/>

ZAMBIAN ECLIPSE WEBSITE – see <http://homepages.go.com/homepages/e/l/a/elampi/index.html>

**FINALLY** The other day when I entered “Zimbabwe” as the search word for my favourite (and fantastically fast) search engine <http://www.google.com> I got 1.3 million hits!! Winnowing that by “eclipse” and “2001” and “tours” still produced a Lot of sites. So there must be lots more valuable eclipse information ‘out there’. If you see any errors or omissions in this document, please contact me... I gave the same invitation in the earlier paper and have had precisely no reactions. Thank you very much for your interest in reading this far.