

THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY: FEATURED BY 'TIME-OUT' FOR EARTH DAY 2021

We are delighted to report that The Zambezi Society's Strategic Director, Richard Maasdorp was interviewed about THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY by **TIME-OUT**, the global media and hospitality brand influencing how tens of millions of people go out around the world. The interview formed part of their Blog Feature for Earth Day on 22nd April 2021 entitled: **Five of the world's wildest places and the people who are working to keep them that way**. Here's what the article had to say:-



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TimeOut

Five of the world's wildest places and the people who are working to keep them that way

Meet the activists on the frontline of protecting the planet's most remote, beautiful and threatened landscapes.

By [Sarah Medina](#) Posted: Thursday April 22 2021

Additional interviews by Huw Oliver and James Manning

As the world slowly emerges from lockdown and life returns to some semblance of normal, we're reflecting on the toll that human activity takes on the natural world around us. While we might emerge from our homes with a greater appreciation for the local parks, national parks,

and general green spaces that sustained us over the last year, many of the world's most important landscapes are under threat from climate change and continued human negligence.

This Earth Day, we're handing the microphone to five conservationists who are protecting some of the last wild places in the world. Meet the people protecting some of the most underdeveloped, remote and fragile environments on the planet.

RICHARD MAASDORP, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY

The Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe is one of the world's largest, contiguous areas of protected, unsettled, wild land set aside for natural resource conservation. It is also home to the second-largest elephant population on the planet.

“What makes [the Zambezi Valley] so special is that it's about 220km of contiguous wildlife area along Lake Kariba and the Zambezi River. It's a vast, wild landscape, little known except for Mana Pools and Matusadona national parks. But the entire area is a designated wildlife area, so it's a significant piece of wilderness. I suppose 70 or 80 percent is really, really wild and is not necessarily conducive to tourism, but it is conducive to animals having a really natural life.”

“The biggest threat at the moment is deforestation, and where the habitat is most threatened is just outside the park's borders – what we call the ‘buffer zones’. Small-scale tobacco growers are encouraged by the major tobacco companies to grow the crop, and to cure the plant they use indigenous forest wood. That's having a devastating effect on some of the forests and wildlife areas outside the park. And it's much more difficult to protect, because you have this real tension between poverty and people who need to make ends meet [and the threatened wildlife].”

“Bushmeat poaching and elephant poaching are also constant threats, but the number of elephants being poached here has gone down. But as soon as we relax or we no longer have the resources to do the work, those numbers can move very, very quickly in the wrong direction. There's nothing more sustainable in our conservation work than philanthropic money, because we're not a business, we don't generate income. So by definition, the only way we can keep doing our work is to keep getting funding from someone.”

“The other challenge is that tourism is what's going to keep our wild spaces together. But tourism doesn't pay the bills. It won't cover the cost of conservation and 70 percent of the park is not amenable to tourism. What's really going to keep this park going for 20 years is if someone – either governments or other institutions or big philanthropic people – will recognise the value of this amazing landscape and say: ‘We've got to invest in it in perpetuity. Because otherwise it's got to earn its keep some other way, and that by definition will destroy the wildlife there.’”

“What we would like the average person to understand is the complexity of the situation. There are no generic solutions. Even with elephants: The generic solution is anti-poaching and no trade. But in Zimbabwe, we've got other problems. Be very careful of forming a one-size-fits-all solution. And come and visit. Even if tourists don't put anything back into the landscape, they can take the wild space energy back with them, and they will be a different person as a result. And that adds value to the planet.”

The other 4 wild places (and people) featured in this Blog for TIME-OUT were:-

- **Canada's boreal forest** - Iris Catholique, manager of Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area
- **The arctic** - Elisabeth Kruger, arctic wildlife manager with World Wildlife Fund
- **Australia's deserts** - Peter Murray, chair of the 10 Deserts Project
- **The deep ocean** - Ricardo Aguilar, senior advisor and expedition leader with Oceana

Read the full **Time-Out** article at this link: [Five of the world's wildest places and the people who are working to keep them that way.](#)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY TO CONTINUE PROTECTING THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY'S WILD PLACES, PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TOWARDS OUR WORK. CLICK THE LINK BELOW.

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