

THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY'S HISTORICAL SERIES.

EPISODE 12: This is what it's all about

December 2022

In 2022, The Zambezi Society (Zamsoc) has celebrated 40 years of conserving the precious wilderness and wildlife resources of the Zambezi River.

To mark this important milestone in our history, our series of historical features has highlighted significant events and conservation achievements that we're proud of, spanning the four decades since the Society's formation in 1982. We have shared these on our Social Media Instagram and Facebook platforms, with videos on You Tube, on our website and in a special Historical Series of Bulletin mailouts.

EPISODE 12: THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

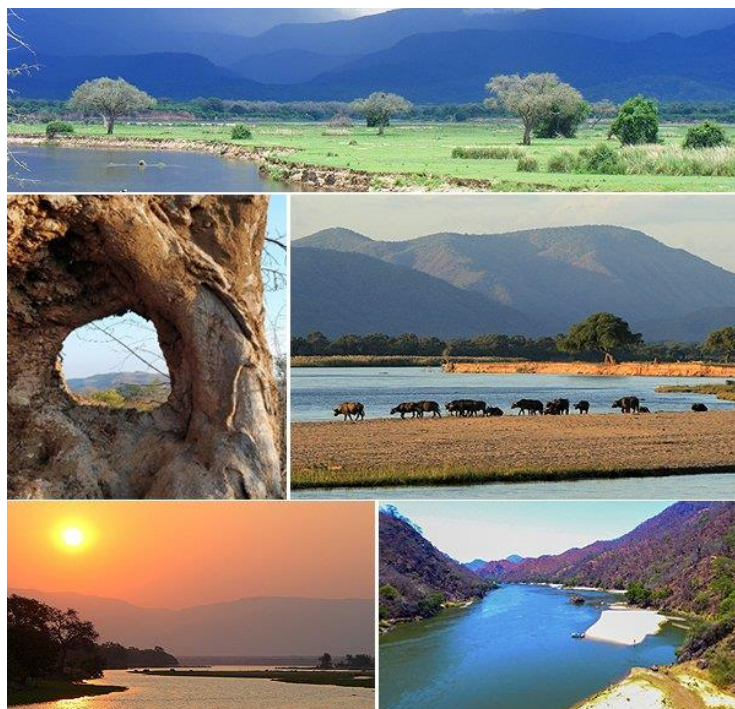
In this, the final Episode in our series outlining the history of The Zambezi Society's work over the past 40 years, we highlight the magnificence of the Zambezi Valley's biodiversity and wilderness in a portfolio of images gathered over the years.

THIS IS WHY WE ARE MOTIVATED TO DO WHAT WE DO TO PROTECT THIS WONDERFUL PLACE

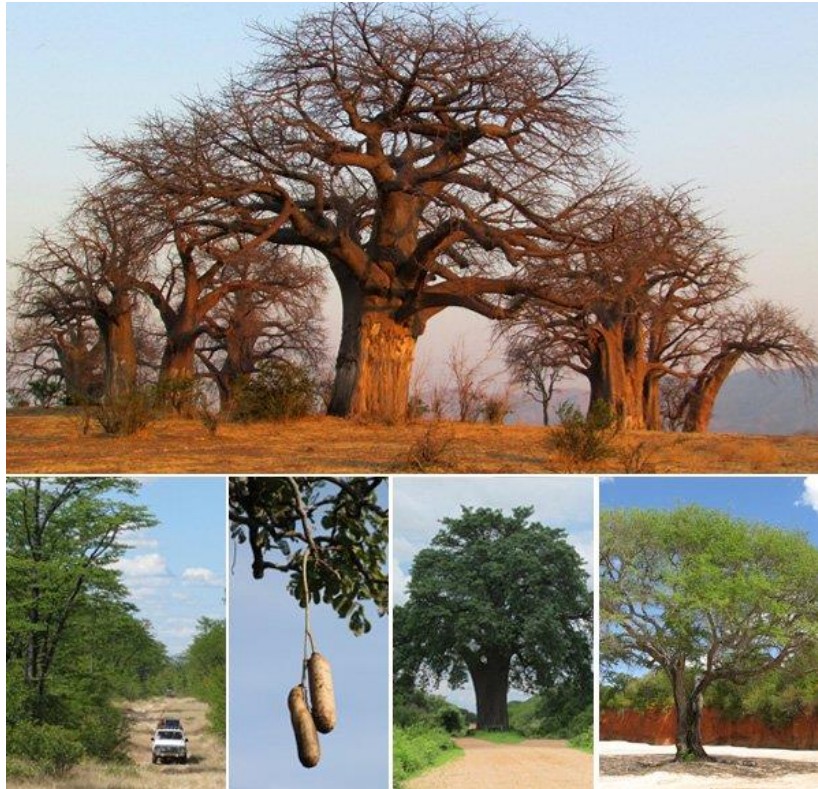
After browsing through these inspiring images, please also take time to read through our list of the major **THREATS & CHALLENGES** that this area continues to face, and hear what The Zambezi Society is doing about them, now and into the future.

THE ZAMBEZI'S WILDERNESS LANDSCAPES

One of Africa's largest contiguous stretches of land protected for wildlife conservation



WILD WOODLAND HABITAT



WILD ANIMALS ROAMING FREE



DIVERSE BIRDLIFE



WATER & LAND-BASED REPTILES



FRESHWATER FISH



ABUNDANT INSECT LIFE



MAGNIFICENT FLOWERS & FUNGI



MAJOR THREATS & CHALLENGES faced in the Zambezi's wild places - and what we are doing about them

POVERTY and the impacts of human encroachment, including illegal bushmeat hunting; human-wildlife conflict; deforestation of protected area buffer zones leading to siltation and changes in water availability downstream (mis-diagnosed as climate change)

Zamsoc continues to help protect the Zambezi's wild areas with ranger deployments, equipment and anti-poaching logistics. We are assisting rural communities adjacent to protected areas in establishing alternative livelihoods which are less damaging to wildlife or forests. We are also encouraging human-wildlife co-existence by offering the training and tools (predator-proof bomas, chilli bricks, chilli hedges etc) required to help people fend off the specific species which threaten their crops and livestock, without resorting to destroying wildlife.

FUNDING CONSTRAINTS For decades, Zimbabwe's National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) has struggled to raise sufficient funding to protect the country's wild areas, including the Zambezi Valley. This has led to a situation where they have become over-dependent on revenues from tourism and hunting to pay the bills. This situation is not sustainable and is beginning to have detrimental impacts on wilderness values.

Zamsoc is urging ZimParks, government and the private sector to try to work collectively to create alternative funding models and an enabling environment for meaningful investment in natural resource and wilderness protection.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURE. The lack of funds for conservation (as described above) leaves protected areas vulnerable to exploitation from high income-generating developments (e.g. mining or insensitive tourism), which provide short term economic benefit, but are potentially highly detrimental to the environment in the long term. Well managed biodiversity and wilderness values are forever!

Zamsoc continues (as it always has done) to advocate for holistic planning for the Zambezi Valley and to stand firmly against any developments with potentially damaging impacts.

ILLEGAL WILDLIFE CRIME continues to threaten many endangered species. We need to be cautious that donor vigilance does not relax as a result of the recent drop in elephant poaching. We cannot afford to be complacent. The situation could escalate at any time.

Zamsoc remains vigilant in gathering intelligence related to illegal wildlife crime and working collaboratively with ZimParks and others to combat it.

DIMINISHING WILDLIFE POPULATIONS There is a lack of full understanding of what exactly is driving a drop in the population of some wildlife species in the Zambezi Valley. This will have to be fully interrogated before considering the introduction of more wild animals, or the re-introduction of species like the black rhinoceros into the Zambezi Valley.

Zamsoc is strengthening its research support to encourage better understanding of and planning for the Zambezi's wildlife population dynamics, so as to provide informed assistance for any future species re-introductions. The intention is to support ZimParks rhino specialists to develop a medium-term introduction plan.

CLIMATE CHANGE International funding is becoming readily-available to combat the effects of climate change in the Southern African region, and this has become a convenient label under which to categorise all the conservation challenges facing our wild areas. However, the reality is more complex. Urgent research into the real impacts of climate change in our region is needed before action is taken.

Zamsoc continues to take a pragmatic and realistic approach to finding practical solutions to the conservation challenges of wild areas, while at the same time encouraging more in-depth research on the effects of climate change.

PEOPLE AND PROTECTED AREAS



THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY REMAINS DEDICATED TO ENSURING THAT THE MAGNIFICENT WILD PLACES OF THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY REMAIN INTACT FOR THE BENEFIT AND ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IN AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.

IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED READING OUR ZAMBEZI SOCIETY HISTORICAL SERIES, AND WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO HELP US ACHIEVE MORE IN OUR NEXT 40 YEARS, PLEASE MAKE A DONATION VIA THIS LINK:-

[HELP US DO MORE! MAKE A DONATION HERE](#)