

THE ZAMSOC BULLETIN, July, 2021

As COVID-19 lockdowns continue to challenge everyday life (and individual livelihoods) in Southern Africa, the Zambezi Society's work has become even more important than ever. Our field operations in Charara and Mana Pools continue to provide valuable assistance to ZimParks. But how to tackle unsustainable mining activities threatening the valley's protected areas is a growing challenge - the latest victim being the beautiful Mavuradonha Wilderness Area, where Zamsoc did a great deal of conservation support work for a decade in the 1990s. We rely, as always, on the help of our supporters as we approach our 4th decade of operation in the Zambezi Valley. We are mindful of our past achievements and successes, but determined to contribute even more purposefully and positively into the future. Join us on our journey. Together we can make a difference.

- The Zambezi Society Team

Read more overleaf:-

FIELD OPERATIONS



SMART TRAINING IN PLACE

Last year we introduced the SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) system for Park ranger patrol use in the **Charara Safari Area**. During the 2020 Covid lockdown, the SMART training team from **Panthera** were unable to travel to Zimbabwe, and so a Zamsoc team took up the challenge. Working with Panthera on Zoom, they ran the initial training sessions for management and rangers in Kariba last August. With the system in place for nearly a year, the Panthera team were finally able to visit Charara in early June 2021 to check up on the usage and maintenance of the SMART system, and to conduct further training with data managers. The site visit highlighted good use of SMART on Zamsoc focal patrols, and the need for improved management on all other patrols (including human-wildlife conflict responses). Zamsoc hopes to strengthen its assistance in future, and has trained up one operational team member as a SMART data manager. We are extremely grateful to **Panthera** for their support and efforts. The SMART system is already proving to be extremely beneficial at all levels.



CHARARA AERIAL SURVEY

Flying For Wildlife assisted Zamsoc with three days of aerial surveillance over the **Charara Safari Area** in June 2021. This gave us a good overview of what's happening across the landscape: poaching activity, fires, illegal gold mining and the general health and status of the area and its wildlife populations. Water is still abundant in the area at this time of year, but we saw good numbers of impala and buffalo on the Kariba shoreline, and a few elephant herds in thick riverine vegetation. It also gave Simba, our operations team leader, (pictured at top) his first chance to fly in an aircraft! The survey identified increased human settlements (more than 20) along the southern boundary of the Charara area and many paths encroaching into the protected area for logging, thatch collection and maize farming. Fishing villages are growing in size, with one particular camp appearing to be a hub of illegal activity. A few gold panners were seen upstream in the Nyaodza and Gache-Gache Rivers. No new elephant carcasses were seen. We thank Flying for Wildlife and ZimParks for making this possible, and hope to fly again in the dry season - October 2021.



MANA POOLS CLINIC SUPPORT

The Zambezi Society is grateful to Val Maasdorp, Head of Counselling and Support Services at [Island Hospice](#) in Harare, who volunteered in early July 2021, to spend some time with Sister Mavis Mavika at the Clinic at Mana Pools. Val's extensive experience in the training and counselling fields mean that she is well placed to provide valuable and timely guidance and support as the COVID-19 third wave sweeps through Zimbabwe. She also delivered medical supplies donated by the [Zambezi Elephant Fund](#) (ZEF), for general use in the clinic as well as specifically for the treatment of COVID-19 symptoms. Thank you, Val and ZEF!

ADVOCACY



MAVURADONHA MINING THREAT

The **Mavuradonha Wilderness Area** in northern Zimbabwe is under threat from a controversial Chinese-owned chrome mining project which was given an EIA approval certificate early this year . These images show recent road clearance by the mining company which has caused devastating damage to a section of habitat within the Wilderness Area, which contains a listed Botanical Reserve. Mavuradonha was given protected status as a community game reserve and Wilderness Area in 1987 with help from The Zambezi Society, (which subsequently, between 1997 and 2000, carried out important [Elephant Management Research](#) in the area). Because of its historical and cultural importance, the Wilderness was gazetted as a National Monument in 2017 It is also an Important Bird Area (IBA), and is under consideration for inclusion as a Core Area of the Mid-Zambezi Biosphere Reserve and for World Heritage Status. A local community-based tourism concession within the area will also be severely impacted upon by the mine. **The Zambezi Society has invested considerable effort to protect the Mavuradonha in the past. With your help, we can continue to do so. Please consider donating below.**

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO OUR EFFORTS

[DONATE HERE](#)



LOWER ZAMBEZI MINING THREAT

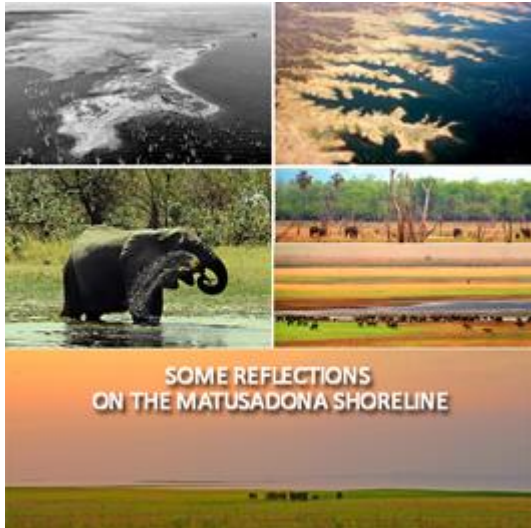
For years, dedicated conservation activists have been fighting against a proposed open-cast copper mining project in the upper reaches of Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park opposite Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore. Even Zambia's former President, the late Dr Kenneth Kaunda, in 2019, spoke out strongly against it, emphasising this Park's economic and ecological importance. But extraordinarily the project was given a green light this year, causing a resurgence of outraged opposition. A campaign called **SAVE Zambezi, SAFE Zambezi** has been launched. Find out more, join the fight and sign the petition [AT THIS LINK](#)



ELEPHANT RESPONSIBILITY

In March 2021, **IUCN** decided to move the African Savanna Elephant from "vulnerable" to "endangered" on its Red List of Threatened Species, recognising that some African countries are taking care of their elephants and that they need support. In this [short video](#), Zamsoc's Richard Maasdorp reflects on this and urges Zimbabweans to take on a collective accountable role as custodians of these animals (we have the 2nd highest elephant population in the world - as many as in the whole of East Africa), and build a deeper trust with the global conservation community. "*We need to call for their reciprocity and their responsibility to support us as a nation*" he urges.

FEATURE BLOG



MATUSADONA SHORELINE

The 60-year-old “man-made” ecosystem of Lake Kariba and its grassy shoreline lined with lowveld woodland is an ecological conundrum. The Zambezi Society’s Co-Founder and former Director for 25 years, Dick Pitman, has spent decades exploring in the creeks and bays of its Matusadona National Park, and pondering on the unique scenario that the lake has given rise to. In a Long-Read Blog featured on our website, he reflects on changing water levels, evolving grass species, wildlife fluctuations and what this all means for future management of the Park. [READ THE BLOG HERE](#)

FUND-RAISING

Check out these two exciting fund-raising events taking place in New York City within a week of each other! Both will benefit The Zambezi Elephant Fund which supports Zamsoc's conservation activities in the Zambezi Valley.



50TH NEW YORK MARATHON

Zambezi Elephant Fund has been granted official charity partner status for the 50th TCS New York City Marathon taking place on Sunday 7th November 2021, and has three places up for grabs for keen runners wanting to take part in this prestigious event. As well as spreading awareness on a global stage, the Marathon will help to raise critical funds for ZEF, which will benefit Zamsoc as one of its major implementing partners. Please share this fantastic opportunity to any keen runners within your network! [FIND OUT MORE HERE!](#)



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS RUN 2021 IN NEW YORK (OR ANYWHERE)

Last year, the 10km New York **Saving the Elephants Run**, (or walk) which has raised money for the **Zambezi Elephant Fund** for three years in a row, wasn't able to be held in-person. Instead, it was undertaken as a virtual event. But this year, the exciting news is that it is happening on BOTH counts! Where? Central Park, New York, Saturday 13th November 2021. Or from ANYWHERE you are in the world! As a key implementing partner of ZEF, Zamsoc stands to benefit from the funds raised. So, get a team together, challenge your pals, let's do this! **[REGISTER HERE!](#)**

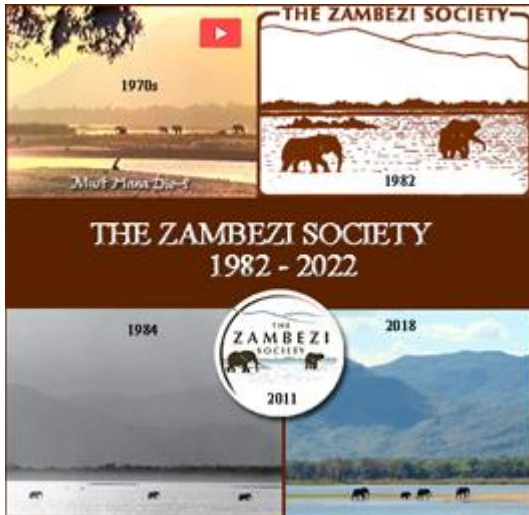
THANK YOU



THANK YOU, CHISIPITE JUNIOR!

Zamsoc is proud of its very long association with **Chisipite Junior School** in Harare. Every year, for nearly 35 years, the school's Grade 6 pupils (11-12 year olds), encouraged by their teachers, passionately raise funds to help protect wildlife in the Zambezi Valley. In this **short video**, shot in Mana Pools, Zamsoc's Richard Maasdorp thanks the 2020 Grade 6 girls for their amazing efforts, despite the challenges of COVID-19, and urges this year's class to even greater heights!

NEARLY 40 YEARS OF CONSERVATION HISTORY
Join us as we look back on our journey



ZAMSOC HISTORICAL SERIES

In 2022, The Zambezi Society (Zamsoc) will celebrate 40 years of conserving the precious wilderness and wildlife resources of the Zambezi River. As a lead-up to this important milestone in our history, we have started a series of historical features highlighting significant events and conservation achievements that we're proud of, spanning the four decades since the Society's formation in 1982. We are sharing these on Social Media, You Tube, our website and in special Bulletin mailouts. Episode One features historic ciné-film footage of Mana Pools in the 1970s! [READ MORE HERE](#)

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