

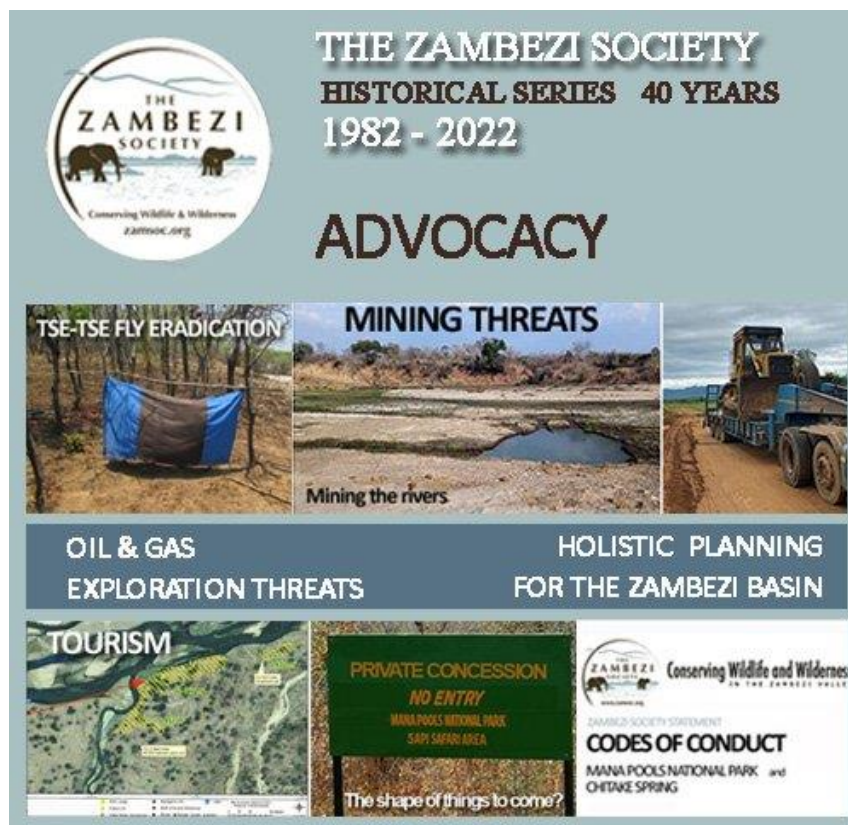
THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY'S HISTORICAL SERIES. EPISODE 5: FOUR DECADES OF ADVOCACY

NOVEMBER 2021

In 2022, The Zambezi Society (Zamsoc) celebrates 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, our series of historical features highlights 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 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 5: FOUR DECADES OF ADVOCACY



Advocacy against potential threats to the wildlife and wilderness values of the Zambezi River and for holistic planning for the river basin as a whole underpins the Zambezi Society's conservation work.

After successful action in the 1980s against the [Mupata Gorge Dam](#), and the launching of the [Rhino Survival Campaign](#), the Society launched a campaign against potential damage to habitat from a preliminary search for **oil and gas** in the Zambezi Valley in the early 1990s by the international oil company, Mobil. After many months of negotiation, the company finally agreed to the use of less environmentally damaging ways of undertaking the explorations (which fortunately were unsuccessful).

The next advocacy challenge was to persuade Zimbabwe's Tse-tse fly Department to refrain from the use of DDT in the **eradication of the tse-tse fly**. Researchers had discovered that widespread spraying of DDT in rural areas had detrimental effects on wildlife, including affecting the breeding success of fish-eagles. The Zambezi Society's engagement with the authorities over this issue took many years. But in the end, the use of DDT was phased out and less environmentally damaging methods were introduced, including tse-tse traps and targets impregnated with biodegradable insecticides, which kill any flies that alight on them.



During the 1990s, The Zambezi Society widened its advocacy role to encompass the entire Zambezi River Basin, calling for a **holistic planning** approach to the river system - the argument being that any upstream impacts inevitably have implications for areas downstream. While Zamsoc's operational activities may have a narrower focus, our wider vision remains the Zambezi eco-system in its entirety.

For the past three decades, Zamsoc has played a useful "guardianship" role, lobbying strongly against environmentally-damaging **mining activities** in the Zambezi Valley. These include sand-mining for minerals in the rivers within the Mana-Sapi-Chewore World Heritage Site, a proposed copper mine in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park and a proliferation of large and small-scale gold-mining activities in major riverbeds and on hillsides throughout the Zambezi Valley between Lake Kariba and the Dande Communal Lands (in some cases within the protected areas of the Parks Estate itself).



Similarly, The Society maintains this "guardianship" role with regard to **tourism** within the wild areas of the Zambezi region, accepting that tourism can be a valuable asset to conservation as long as it is carefully managed. In addition to advocating for properly formulated **Park Management Plans** which allow tourism development only under strict guidelines, Zamsoc

seeks to ensure that meaningful and environmentally-sensitive **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** are undertaken for all proposed tourism developments taking place within the Zambezi's National Parks or protected areas. In several instances, The Society has lobbied strongly against tourism developments where the EIA is found wanting in this regard. Zamsoc also consults the public on issues of concern and opposes any tourism developments which are considered to impact detrimentally on wildlife or wilderness values, or limit the **rights of public access** in National Heritage areas.



Together with ZimParks and other stakeholders, The Zambezi Society seeks to influence the **behaviour of visitors** within the Zambezi's National Parks and other wild areas to ensure that disturbances to wildlife and wilderness values are minimised. We have produced [Codes of Conduct for Visitor Behaviour in Mana Pools National Park and Chitake Spring](#) (downloadable from our website) and have assisted in developing new **Guidelines for the viewing of wildlife by tour operators, researchers and film crews**.



The Zambezi Society's advocacy work is ongoing.

IF YOU ARE ENJOYING 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](#)