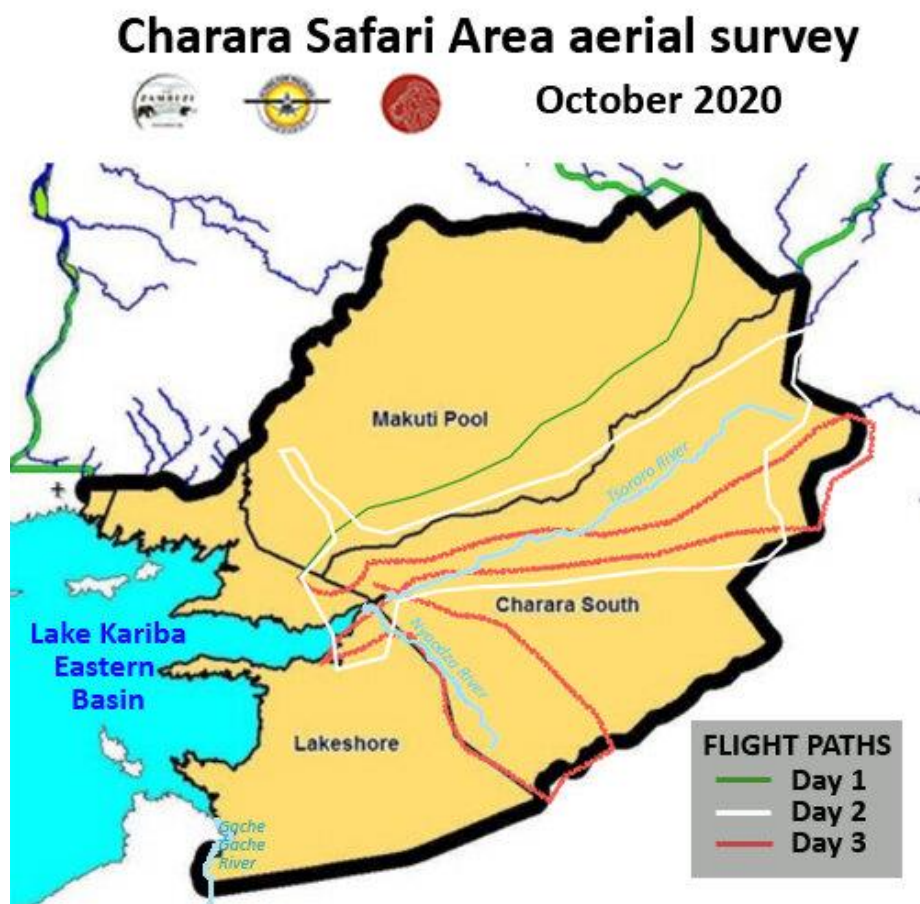


BASELINE AERIAL SURVEY FOR THE CHARARA WILDLIFE RECOVERY PROJECT: OCT 2020

THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY – October 2020

The first operational aerial survey of the Charara Safari Area to provide baseline information to inform The Zambezi Society's Charara Wildlife Recovery Project was flown between 21st and 23rd October 2020, with a volunteer pilot from [Flying for Wildlife](#) accompanied by Mitch Riley, The Zambezi Society's Operations Project Manager. Funding was provided by the [Lion Recovery Fund](#).

Three separate routes were flown across the area on three separate days and the approximate routes are illustrated on the map below:-



Mitch Riley has summarised the significance of this survey as follows:-

- The survey confirmed that the Zambezi Society team on the ground has good understanding of the entire area (there were no surprising new findings)
- This was an excellent exercise to quickly ascertain the level of poaching/mining encroachment within the area, especially along the rivers, and it should definitely be repeated on a more regular basis.



Aerial view of the Nyaodza Estuary - confluence of the Sapi, Mutoranhanga and Nyaodza Rivers
The following observations were noted during the 3 days of aerial surveillance:-

- The majority of Charara South was burnt (roughly 70%)
- Wildlife was seen only in the vicinity of the Lake Kariba shore (predictable at this dry time of the year)
- Wildlife seen from the air: approx 70 elephant , 5 buffalo, 1 bushbuck and numerous impala, waterbuck and zebra on the floodplains next to the Lake. A hyena den spotted near the Kariba-Makuti road.
- NO NEW ELEPHANT CARCASSES SPOTTED (very positive)
- Numerous fish poacher camps seen along the shoreline of the Gache Gache estuary



- Significant evidence of gold panning activity in the upper reaches of the Gache Gache River (see image above) and (to a lesser extent) of the Nyaodza River. Panners fled when the aircraft circled.
- One active poachers camp with a number of dogs was seen upstream of the Gache Gache River bridge (see image below). The poachers all fled when the aircraft circled.



- An overfly of the the fishing villages, Fothergill, Mawarvet, Nyaodza and Ndomo on the shores at the Eastern end of the lake revealed an extremely high human population and very large number of fishing boats. The trees all around the camps are noticeably disappearing.

The Zambezi Society hopes to be able to repeat these aerial surveys on a regular basis in partnership with Flying for Wildlife in order to be able to monitor changes in habitat and wildlife populations as well as the extent of human encroachment in the area, in order to inform our on-the-ground conservation activities.