

40 YEARS OF CONSERVING ZAMBEZI WILDLIFE & WILDERNESS!
and proud of it!

Sept-Oct 2022

There's lots to report in our 3rd quarterly collection of news and updates for 2022!

We've been out in the Zambezi Valley helping with predator research, providing more training for our operations team, and setting up a reliable electricity supply for the ZimParks school at Marongora. Our Human-Wildlife Co-Existence teams in the field in Charara and Gache Gache have been busy teaching villagers to make chilli bricks to deter crop-raiding elephants during the growing season, and conducting the first trials of our exciting new Virtual Reality programme with children from two rural schools in the area. Our regular help to ZimParks with deploying ranger patrols in Mana Pools and Charara Safari Area continues.

Meantime, we've been raising flags and calling for dialogue about tourism impacts in Mana Pools and the translocation of wildlife from the Save Valley into Sapi.

It's that time of the year when Chisipite Junior School's Grade 6 girls do their annual fund-raising for wildlife conservation, and the Save the Elephants Run in New York raises funds for elephant conservation. So we are excited to see how well they have done this year without the encumbrance of COVID-19 restrictions! We're also excited to be moving back into our office at the Mukuvisi Woodlands in Harare! Drop in anytime if you are in the area! And, if you feel like making a donation to support our work - we'd be delighted!

- The Zambezi Society Team

WE WELCOME ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR EFFORTS - BIG OR
SMALL

[PLEASE DONATE HERE](#)

IN REMEMBRANCE



DIANE SKINNER - CONSERVATION GENIUS

On 10th August 2022, Zamsoc lost a special friend and inspiring mentor. We extend our belated condolences to Diane's family, her husband, Nick Dyer, and all who had the fleeting privilege of knowing her.

On her return to Zimbabwe from Kenya some years ago, she gave The Zambezi Society guidance and caution as we adapted our operational approach in the light of increased poaching and the challenges faced by Park rangers.

Diane became a conservation consultant with a difference. She applied heart, intellect and experience in equal measure to her work. She stamped her unique mark when facilitating workshops, always leaving her ego and cell phone at the door. She had a refreshingly low tolerance for waffle and repetition, yet was an incisive listener with the ability to always winnow proceedings arriving at the strategic areas of focus. Humour and wit were an essential part of the proceedings, as was her infectious smile. Diane gave firm advice to those of us who intended to engage communities: leave your prescription pad behind, - bring only a listening ear and your capacity for empathy.

"Diane, you will be sorely missed by the team at Zamsoc, and by the wildlife in the wilderness of the Zambezi Valley."

DON'T FORGET TO NOTE OUR CHANGE OF EMAIL

info@zamsoc.org

We've had problems with our previous e-mail addresses which were zambezi@iwayafrica.co.zw or zambezi@mweb.co.zw

IF YOU HAVE SENT US AN E-MAIL RECENTLY TO EITHER OF THE OLD ADDRESSES, PLEASE RE-SEND TO info@zamsoc.org

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CO-EXISTENCE PROGRESS

There has been considerable progress in the heavily-populated border areas surrounding the Charara Safari Area, where the Zambezi Society's new project to assist rural communities with human-wildlife conflict is getting underway.

Our Assistant Conservation Project Manager, Daniella Skinner reports that a new Human Wildlife Co-Existence Officer (HWCO), was employed in August 2022. **Bright Mugumba** (pictured below left) has taken on the Vuti and Nyamakate sections of the southern boundary of the Charara Safari Area. He has previous wildlife survey experience and is proving to be a great addition to the team.



In early October, Zamsoc hosted a Human Wildlife Co-Existence workshop for all our HWCOs run by the HWC team of **WildCRU** - Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit - which has an established human-wildlife conflict programme operational around Hwange, focused on predator conflict. The team is pictured above right. The workshop focused on predator-proof kraals, interaction with the community and response to conflict incidents.

Meanwhile, Chrispen and his team of HWCOs have been hard at work on the ground. Here's what's been happening:-



- **ELEPHANT CONFLICT:** During the last last three months - July-Sept 2022), we have seen a drop off in elephant conflicts throughout our operational area due to the cropping season being over.

- **CHILLI BRICK-MAKING:** We have started rolling out chilli brick moulding demonstrations whereby one household in the community is chosen and others are invited to take part in a practical demonstration on how to make chilli bricks. Chilli Bricks are made using three parts elephant dung and one part used engine oil and chillies. These are then mixed and pressed into a brick shape and left to dry in the sun. Once dry, they can be placed into a field and lit. One brick can protect a 1ha field for one night. 200Kgs of chillies were purchased to continue with our chilli brick demonstrations through October this year (thank you to Padenga in Kariba for facilitating delivery of this) and five demonstrations have been held so far (see images below). We are making the chilli bricks now as they take some months to cure and we need them ready for the upcoming rainy season when elephant conflict is at its highest.
- **PREDATORS:** Predator conflict is prevalent at the moment (dry season), because people let their livestock roam freely in their fallow fields. Most conflicts are with Hyena.
- **PREDATOR-PROOF KRAALS:** Once we have completed the chilli brick moulding workshops in all affected areas, we will be moving to implementing predator proof kraals in the areas affected by predator conflict. We look forward to benefitting from the experience of WildCRU's HWC team at the October workshop mentioned above.



VIRTUAL REALITY TO HELP CHANGE PERCEPTIONS

In our last (July-Aug) Bulletin, we reported on the start of an exciting new Zambezi Society project to introduce interesting, emotive, wildlife-positive Virtual Reality (VR) videos to school children who are currently only experiencing negative wildlife interactions.

This project is an addition to our Human-Wildlife Co-existence programme, and targets a different age-group, with the same ultimate aim of creating long-term behavioural changes that will benefit rural communities living adjacent to wildlife areas.

Since the arrival of state-of-the-art VR goggles and a 360° video camera in July, we have been hard at work developing a few trial VR videos and testing them out on primary and secondary schoolchildren in the Gache Gache communal land adjacent to the Charara Safari Area, where Zamsoc field operations are currently focused. The feedback that we received from this baseline experiment has been vital in guiding us forward on this very exciting and innovative journey. [READ MORE HERE](#)

RESEARCH



ZAMBEZI VALLEY PREDATOR SURVEYS

In May this year Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit ([WildCRU](#)) assisted by The Zambezi Society, began an intensive predator survey across the middle Zambezi Valley. A total of 312 cameras are being used with two cameras constituting a 'trap' and the 'traps' placed in grids roughly 4kms apart from each other, more or less covering each survey area. Fifteen predator 'call ups', using the sounds of distressed prey species played over loudspeakers, are carried out in each of the survey areas.

To date surveys have been completed in Sapi and Mana Pools, and are currently underway in Nyakasanga, Rifa and Charara. The programme for this year will end in the first week of November leaving the Chewore surveys which will be done in 2023.

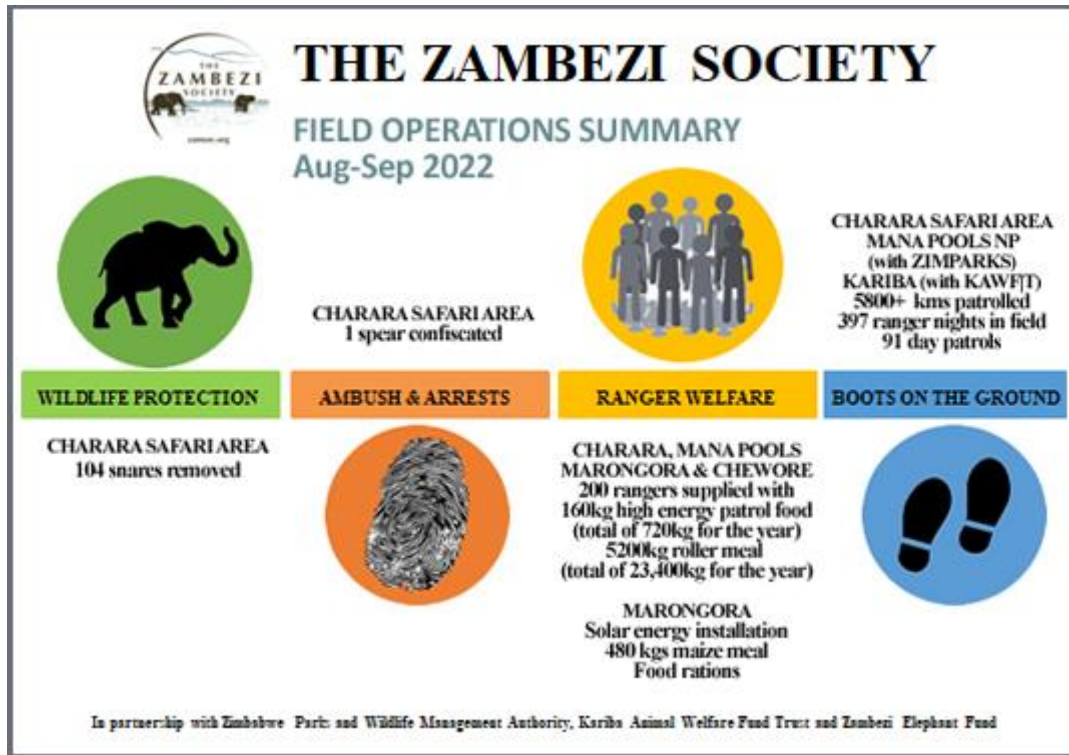
Pictured above left is the predator survey team, from left to right: Andrea Sibanda (WildCRU), Pete Musto (Zamsoc), Norman Munkuli (ZimParks ecologist), Justin Seymour-Smith (WildCRU), Andy Loveridge (WildCRU) and Augustine Malunga (ZimParks ecologist).

Zamsoc provided assistance to the team in Sapi, Mana Pools, Nyakasanga and Charara. Pete Musto (centre) and Daniella Skinner (right) are pictured here helping to set up the cameras.

Once the data analysis has been completed, the findings will give a good insight into the current status of large predators in each of the survey areas across the middle Zambezi Valley. We hope that the current wildlife translocation programme taking place in Sapi (see the link to our Discussion Paper below) will take the results of this research work into consideration before introducing predators from elsewhere into the Zambezi Valley.

FIELD OPERATIONS

SUMMARY OF OUR FIELD OPERATIONS AUG-SEPT 2022



TRAINING



MORE SMART TRAINING FOR TEAM LEADERS

The Zambezi Society's Project Co-ordinator for the Charara Wildlife Recovery Project, Simba Kandiero, and our Human-Wildlife Coexistence Project Co-ordinator,

Chrispen Chakanaka are the point people on the ground for collecting project data, evaluating the success of project activities and assisting with data-driven action plans. All data is collected through the SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) system which has been implemented by the Zambezi Society in partnership with and guidance from [Panthera](#).

Both Project Co-ordinators attended a three day workshop in Hwange in September, at the invitation of **Panthera**. The workshop trained all participants in the upgraded SMART system, to ensure that all users are getting the most from the system. The participants are pictured above, with Chrispen centre left in an orange checked shirt, and Simba centre right in a Zambezi Society khaki T-shirt.

RANGER WELFARE



SOLAR POWER FOR MARONGORA SCHOOL

Thanks to generous funding from the Pisec family, channelled through The Zambezi Society, a brand new solar energy system has just been installed at the ZimParks Marangora Primary School. Pictured here, showing off the installation, are two of the school teachers, Alec Mwanaza and Chipso Chanyandura. This reliable source of power to the school will allow the students (who are the children of Park rangers) to use their recently-donated computers and printer and learn computer skills. It will also enable Zamsoc to implement future projects that need a power supply.

We are extremely grateful, not only to the Pisec family, but also to Heath Norton of [Infobase Solar](#) in Harare who agreed to do the solar installation for free on his trips into the Zambezi Valley! This generosity is much appreciated.

ADVOCACY



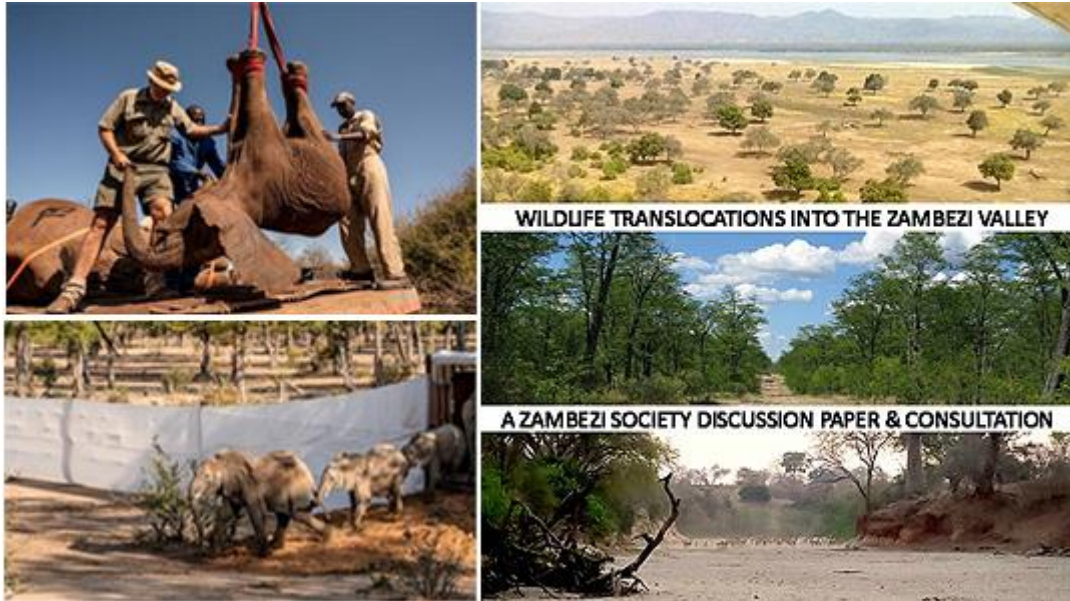
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO 'RESPECT THE WILD' IN MANA POOLS?

This year's tourism season in Mana Pools has produced a flurry of confirmed reports to The Zambezi Society of incidents where certain visitors, tour operators and even professional guides have been flouting the Park rules in blatant disrespect of the wildlife and wilderness values that gave this beautiful National Park its World Heritage Site status. Concerned Mana-lovers have reported a maze of newly-opened unofficial "roads" in the Park. There are photographs of vehicles driving off-road and huge crowds gathered at wildlife sightings. There are also worrying reports of wild dog hunts and dens being disturbed by a constant stream of human followers either on foot or by vehicle. It seems that the quest for a daily "big thrill" for visitors on safari (lions, wild dogs or elephants standing on their hind legs) is over-riding all concern for the welfare of the environment of Mana Pools and its wild inhabitants.

Irresponsible, insensitive and disrespectful behaviour on the part of visitors to Mana Pools or certain tour operators who host them does not bode well for the long term future of tourism in this area, nor for the long term wellbeing of the precious wildlife and wilderness values that make Mana Pools unique.

Zamsoc has appealed to the ZimParks Area Manager, who has called an urgent meeting of tour operators and other stakeholders in the area before the end of October 2022, to address these concerns which have also been widely aired on Social Media platforms. The Zambezi Society will be there. We eagerly await the outcome of this meeting and urge, once again, that ALL members of the visiting public and ALL tourism operators and learner or professional guides download and abide by existing **Codes of Conduct** and the **ZPGA Zimbabwe Professional Guides Association's Code of Ethics** at the links below.

- [MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK - Code of Conduct for visitor behaviour](#)
- [CHITAKE SPRING - Code of Conduct for visitor behaviour](#)
- [ZIMBABWE PROFESSIONAL GUIDES ASSOCIATION - Guiding Code of Ethics](#) (applicable to all ZPGA members operating in a Photographic Area).



WILDLIFE TRANSLOCATIONS - A CALL FOR DIALOGUE

Prompted by a wildlife translocation exercise taking place in the Sapi area east of Mana Pools National Park, and within the Middle Zambezi World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve, The Zambezi Society has written a Discussion & Consultation Paper about the wider implications of translocating wildlife species from other areas into the Zambezi Valley. We hope this will generate respectful and meaningful dialogue with the object of improving our collective understanding of the Zambezi Valley's wildlife resource for its long-term and sustainable future. We welcome informed inputs, comments and opinions from our readers and from experts in the field. [READ THE DISCUSSION PAPER HERE](#)

FUND-RAISING



CHISIPITE JUNIOR SCHOOL GRADE 6s -DOING IT AGAIN!

Hats off to the 11-12-year-old girls of Chisipite Junior School Grade 6 classes (and their dedicated teachers), who have once again pulled out all the stops to fund-raise for wildlife conservation and assist The Zambezi Society's work in the Zambezi Valley. They've been doing this for more than 3 decades - that's a whole generation of budding conservationists-in-the-making! We are honoured and delighted beyond measure with their enthusiasm and commitment! THANK YOU, CHISIPITE JUNIOR SCHOOL!

Pictured here with Zambezi Society Strategic Director, Richard Maasdorp, is one of the Grade 6 fund-raising groups. From left to right - Sorcha Buckler, Fatma Al-Ubedani and Lauren Beamish spent the morning of Saturday 17 September hard at work selling cakes, succulent plants and raffle tickets at Borrowdale Village in Harare. Well done you girls, and to all the other Grade 6 groups that invented creative ways to raise funds for a good cause while at the same time learning important life skills!



RAISE \$10,000 FOR ELEPHANTS AND WIN A SAFARI PRIZE!

The [Saving the Elephants Run](#) is happening once again this year on Saturday 12th November in New York. Walk or run 10k around Central Park (or do it virtually wherever you are in the world), raise funds for some sponsorship and, once again, Zimbabwe's [Zambezi Elephant Fund](#) will receive the proceeds to help fund the on-the-ground activities of a handful of its implementing partners, which include **The Zambezi Society**.

But..... here's something to get even more excited about! If you manage to raise US\$10,000-worth of sponsorship as a result of your participation, a magnificent 8-night "Meet the Elephants" Zimbabwe safari prize awaits you!

As a gift of thanks to the Fund-raiser who achieves US\$10,000 or more, [John Stevens Safaris Guided Safaris Africa](#) (owned by Nicci and John Stevens who co-founded the Zambezi Elephant Fund in 2015) have put together an incredible 8-night prize package. It includes 2 nights at four separate safari camps, taking in three of Zimbabwe's iconic locations - Victoria Falls, Hwange and Mana Pools National Parks. In all three destinations, the prizewinner will have the opportunity to meet the elephants we all love and help to protect.

Here's the itinerary (with grateful thanks to Africa Albida Tourism, Machaba Safaris and Altair Charters for their support):-

- 2 nights Victoria Falls Safari Club
- 2 nights Deteema Springs, Hwange
- 2 nights Ingwe Pan, Mana Pools
- 2 nights Mana River Camp, Mana Pools

For more information about this amazing trip of a lifetime, check out [THIS LINK](#).

Run or walk, in person (or virtually) at the [Saving the Elephants Run](#). Fund-raise like mad! Then come and meet the elephants in Zimbabwe!

WE'VE MOVED BACK!



MUKUVISI WELCOMES US BACK TO OUR OFFICE!

The Zambezi Society is delighted to report that we have moved back full-time into our office at the Mukuvisi Woodlands Nature Reserve and Environment Education Centre in Harare. Pictured here are Arthur Kumbula (centre left) and Leonard Mugoni (centre right) who, having worked for the Mukuvisi Woodlands for many many years and know The Zambezi Society very well. They were there to give a warm welcome back to Zamsoc Conservation Projects Director, Amy Wolton (left) and Strategic Director, Richard Maasdorp (right).

40 YEARS OF CONSERVATION HISTORY



JOIN US AS WE LOOK BACK ON OUR JOURNEY


In 2022, Zamsoc celebrates 40 years of in-field conservation work in the Zambezi Valley. To mark the occasion, our Historical Series articles highlight significant moments and conservation achievements that we're proud of over the past four decades.

Click on the link below to read our Historical Episodes:-


[ZAMBEZI SOCIETY HISTORICAL SERIES](#)

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