

## THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY – Nov-Dec 2023

As 2023 draws to a close The Zambezi Society eagerly waits to hear more about the operational details of the newly-signed Peace Parks/ZimParks co-management agreement for the Mana Pools area. We are standing by to collaborate. Meantime, we've had a busy year working on Human Wildlife Co-Existence with communities in the Charara-Kariba areas, helping with carnivore research in the Zambezi Valley. Zamsoc also provides logistical and ranger patrol deployment assistance to ZimParks rangers in the Valley who are on the frontline against illegal wildlife activities.

We could do none of this without the wonderful support of our donors and the fund-raising efforts of organisations and individuals all over the world.

We wish you all happy holidays and all the very best for 2024. And .... if you have festive season spirit to spare, then please consider paying tribute to the dedication of Park rangers, who work under challenging circumstances in the very harsh conditions of the Zambezi Valley. Many of them will be in the field during the holiday period, instead of with their families. Please make a donation via the link below to help The Zambezi Society to continue to provide them with material and moral support.

**- The Zambezi Society Team**

WE WELCOME ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR EFFORTS - BIG OR SMALL

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## NEWS UPDATES



## PEACE PARKS & ZIMPARKS AGREE TO CO-MANAGE GREATER MANA POOLS ECOSYSTEM

The Zambezi Society would like to congratulate **Peace Parks Foundation** and **The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks)**, who recently signed a historic 20-year agreement to co-manage the Greater Mana Pools Ecosystem in Zimbabwe.

The Greater Mana Pools Ecosystem area covers 9,636 km<sup>2</sup> - a significant component of the Zambezi River catchment area, covering about half of the 18,515 km<sup>2</sup> greater Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools Transfrontier Conservation Area (see map) which was formally established when the governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2023.

*Under the management and jurisdiction of ZimParks, the Greater Mana Pools ecosystem is vitally important to conserve, as it allows for the unimpeded movement of wildlife and cross-border tourism, stimulating high economic value to the countries and the region, says a statement on the Peace Park Foundation website. The area includes a World Heritage Site, a core area of the Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve, a Ramsar wetland site and an Important Bird Area. Mana Pools National Park, together with the Victoria Falls, is one of the main income generators for the country.*

*The new partnership promises to protect unique ecosystems, enable community development, and cultivate a sustainable wildlife economy within Mana Pools and surrounds. A Trust is to be established for management, capacity building and business development that is grounded in good governance, transparency, accountability and collaborative decision-making. A dedicated Board of Trustees will take the lead in managing the natural resources within the Greater Mana Pools Ecosystem. This brings a diverse approach, allowing the area to be managed in a business-like manner that attracts investment, creates employment, drives development and ultimately sustainability.*

As a long-term local stakeholder in the future of this part of the Zambezi Valley, **The Zambezi Society** looks forward to continued collaboration in conserving the wildlife and wilderness values of this magnificent area for the benefit of future generations.

## FIELD OPERATIONS



## DEATH OF A GIANT

This image is a very sorry sight. The Zambezi Society's vehicle which assists **ZimParks** in deploying anti-poaching rangers in the southern section of Mana Pools National Park recently came across this giant baobab, probably over 1000 years old, which had finally succumbed to many years of damage by elephants.

Southern Mana Pools contains remote springs and riverine and montaine ecosystems with many thriving baobab trees, some of them of enormous girth and age.

**The Zambezi Society** continues to support Zimparks' extended anti-poaching patrols in this area which has a high risk of illegal activity as it lies along the park boundary shared with communities. In total, during 2023, The Zambezi Society has helped by deploying 41 extended patrols, totalling 776 ranger nights spent in the field. We are pleased to report that there have been very few signs of illegal wildlife activity in the area this year

In the Charara Safari Area at the eastern end of Lake Kariba, Zamsoc this year helped to deploy more than 460 patrols totalling 2230+ ranger days spent in the field (all carried out in full partnership and support of Zimparks, and in part partnership with the Kariba Animal Welfare Fund Trust). The teams of Park rangers succeeded in removing wire snares set for bushmeat poaching, destroying poacher camps, and recovering weapons.



## 2023 MID-ZAMBEZI CARNIVORE SURVEY

The Zambezi Society continues to assist **WildCRU** and **Zimparks** with gathering and analysing research data for the Mid-Zambezi Large Carnivore camera trap survey. In the 2023 winter months we joined the teams in completing 2.5 months of survey fieldwork for the second and final phase of the project, covering Chewore North, Chewore South and Dande.

We are currently working with WildCRU to process the data from last year's (2022) survey, and will then assist in processing the lion, leopard, hyena, wild dog, and cheetah data from the 2023 survey.

This research is being undertaken to gain a more intricate understanding of the movements and demographics of large carnivores in the Middle Zambezi Valley. A couple of fine images captured this year, are shown above (note the camera trap between the two lionesses).

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# HUMAN WILDLIFE CO-EXISTENCE



## COMMUNITY LIVESTOCK & CROP PROTECTION

Hats off to The Zambezi Society's new Project Manager Collin Tapi (pictured above left) who, since he joined us 6 months ago, has done an awesome job supervising a number of our Human Wildlife Co-Existence projects in the Charara-Kariba area. Here's what the team has been doing:-

- **Chilli bricks** - 3500 of these have been moulded, which, when burnt, will protect most vulnerable households along the community boundary of the Charara Safari Area against crop raiding by elephants and other wildlife throughout next year's growing season (January – April)
- **Predator-proof bomas** (pictured above centre) - in addition to the 20 predator-proof bomas successfully erected in rural areas surrounding Charara Safari Area to protect 700+ cattle, belonging to 99 households, we have now ordered seven more for community members living in the most vulnerable human-predator conflict hotspots. These should be established in mid December.
- **Elephant-proof storage units** (pictured above right) - Three of these storage units have been built as demonstrations to community members on how to keep their grain safe from elephants. These were also used as trials as we are hoping to put them into Kariba next year where raiding of households for grain is high.
- **Crop protection demonstrations sites** - two of these sites have been established, using metal strip fences, chilli fences, and white rocks to showcase the various methods community members can use to keep elephants from raiding their crops.

In implementing the above, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the **Elephant Crisis Fund** who have many years of experience with HWC work and have produced an extremely useful workbook on the subject. Their detailed guidelines have been immeasurably helpful for our team.



- **Rabies vaccination** – after an outbreak of rabies in some of the communities along the Charara-community boundary, The Zambezi Society partnered with Zimbabwe's Veterinary Department to roll out a rabies vaccination campaign. A total of 285 domestic dogs were vaccinated against rabies (see

above left). There have been no reports of rabies in the area since.

- **Tick-borne disease education** – in an effort to dispel the concerns that kraaling cattle is what leads to cattle being infected by tick borne diseases, Zamsoc partnered with Zimbabwe's Veterinary Department to roll out a series of community tick education workshops, in the lead up to the rainy season (see below right). Cattle owners were educated about the various tick borne diseases, the ways that diseases are spread, and the ways to prevent cattle from contracting these diseases.



## COMMUNITY TRAINING & AWARENESS

This year we welcomed **Forgiveness Gonera** (pictured above left) to The Zambezi Society's Human Wildlife Co-existence (HWC) team. She began helping out our HWC Officer, **Rumbi Bukuta**, with the Virtual Reality programme in schools, and she is now dedicated full-time to all aspects of HWC in Kariba.

Here's what we've been doing on the community training and awareness front:-

**Team training:** This year, our entire HWC team underwent two week-long training courses to help deepen their understanding of HWC in general, as well as in our project area, and to plan for effective implementation of methods to mitigate wildlife conflict and engage communities going forward.

**HWC Workshops** – this year we undertook a total of 67 human-wildlife coexistence workshops in all villages along the southern boundary of the Charara Safari Area, with an average attendance of 55 adults per workshop. We also carried out workshops within the 24 schools in Kariba Town (high school and primary), totalling roughly 7,500 students – covering each school three times this year. These workshops focus on understanding wildlife behaviour, living safely with wildlife, and how to protect crops, livestock and property from wildlife.

**Virtual Reality awareness videos** - Having first introduced Virtual Reality videos to create wildlife awareness in rural schools along the boundary of Charara Safari Area, we then began showcasing a Human-Lion coexistence VR video to Grade 6 students across all 13 primary schools in Kariba Town. This has been followed by our latest VR video on Human-Elephant conflict. These VR experiences are paired with several exercises given to the students aimed at capturing existing attitudes towards lions and elephants and measuring any immediate change in feelings as a result of watching the videos.

You can read more detail about our human wildlife co-existence community work on our website [HERE](#).

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## CREATING OUR OWN VR

Up to now, The Zambezi Society has had to rely on externally-shot camera footage for the creation of our Virtual Reality videos to create awareness in communities and schools. This is not ideal as much of the footage available is taken elsewhere in Africa. Now, with funding from the Elephant Crisis Fund and the Zambezi Elephant Fund, we have purchased our own 360 degree camera (pictured here) which will allow us to film our own VR video footage in situ. Our team is busy field trialling the camera, and editing will begin shortly. Watch this space!

## RANGER SUPPORT



## MARONGORA SCHOOL INVITES US

The Zambezi Society continues to provide support to the school for ZimParks rangers' children at Marongora station at the gateway to the Zambezi Valley, with funding provided by the **Pisec family** from Austria. This includes contributions to teacher salaries, food provisions for teachers and students, stationary and textbooks, as well as structural and aesthetic renovations to the school buildings.

In November, we were very honoured to be invited to attend the school's awards ceremony as honorary guests on behalf of the Pisecs. Our Project Co-Ordinator, Simba Kandiero attended along with our Kariba HWC Officers, Rumbi and Forgiveness. In his speech, the school's headmaster expressed huge appreciation for the support that has been provided over the years by this family, through Zamsoc. Our involvement on the day also gave Rumbi and Forgiveness the opportunity to showcase our Virtual Reality videos to the Grade 5, 6 and 7 students, which they loved!



## FOOD FOR RANGERS & ORPHANS

During 2023, The Zambezi Society provided supplementary food supplies for ZimParks rangers in the Valley (1000kg of mahewu and 31,200kg of maize meal in total (90kg / month and 2600kg / month). This Christmas, we also, once again, provided gift food packs to the charity for orphaned children run by the wife of Chief Chundu in the community of Hurungwe District which borders on Mana Pools.

## FUND-RAISING



## WELL DONE CHISIPITE JUNIOR GRADE 6s!

Huge congratulations to this year's Grade 6 students and their teachers from Harare's **Chisipite Junior School** (pictured above) who have had another fantastic year of fundraising for conservation! At their special school assembly in November, they presented The Zambezi Society with the proceeds of their fundraising efforts and put on an entertaining, well thought out and very impressive performance focused on wildlife and anti-poaching! Check it out on our You Tube channel [HERE](#).

After the show, Amy Landman, Zamsoc Project Director, showed the girls some images of carnivore species taken by research cameras set by **WildCRU**, **ZimParks** and Zamsoc in the Zambezi Valley during the past year, and tested their knowledge on the different animals seen. Meanwhile, our Human Wildlife Co-Existence Officers, Rumbi and Forgiveness, ran a session of wildlife Virtual Reality videos for the girls at the same time (pictured below).



We continue to be amazed at the effort that this dynamic and innovative school makes every year to create awareness of the value of wildlife and the threats facing it. We salute them for nearly four decades of incredible support. Thank you so much Chisipite Junior School!



## FUND-RAISING TO SECURE A FUTURE FOR ELEPHANTS

For the past six years, the **Zambezi Elephant Fund** (ZEF) has been the sole beneficiary of funds raised by the **Saving The Elephants Run** (STER) held annually in New York's Central Park.

Every November, STER invites participants to run or walk 5 or 10km around a designated route in beautiful Central Park in close to freezing temperatures and far from where the funds are implemented – in the heat and dust of Zimbabwe's Zambezi Valley. Families and friends gather with babies, children and dogs and set off in the crisp morning air to do their bit for the elephants of Zimbabwe.

This year, Bruce McKinlay, ZEF's Executive Committee Chairman attended the event on 11 November along with over 400 registered participants and a few others around the world, who joined in the excitement virtually. He was delighted to thank STER founder, Laura Robertson (pictured with Bruce above left), in person at a pre-STER event with a special silver gift from Patrick Mavros, and in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the run/walk.

ZEF distributes the proceeds to strategic projects that align with its ambition, which is to secure a long-lasting future for elephants and their rangelands through law enforcement, community resilience,



habitat protection and more. The Zambezi Society is one of the proud beneficiaries of funds raised at this event.

## TUSK CONSERVATION AWARD WINNER



### CONGRATULATIONS!

The winner of this year's prestigious Tusk Wildlife Ranger Award, is Zimbabwe's Jealous Mpofo, who is Chief Tracker at **Painted Dog Conservation**. Here he is pictured receiving his award from Prince William at the Tusk Conservation Awards Ceremony on 27th November at the Savoy, London. The annual Tusk Awards recognise the dedication and commitment of an individual working in the field on a daily basis to protect Africa's wildlife.

## THANK YOU

### WE ARE SO VERY GRATEFUL TO OUR MAJOR DONORS

As 2023 draws to an end, The Zambezi Society would like to express our most grateful thanks to the following donors, who have underpinned our work in the Zambezi Valley this year:-

[Lion Recovery Fund](#)

[Re-Wild](#) (Donald Slavik Family Foundation)

[Zambezi Elephant Fund](#)

[Elephant Crisis Fund](#)

The Pisek Family

[Tides Foundation](#)

[Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas](#)

[Chisipite Junior School](#)

[Save Foundation \(Australia\)](#)

[Camp Mana](#)

[Idea Wild](#)

[CarTrack](#)

[Compusign](#)

[Cutty Sark, Kariba](#)

[WebDev](#)

[Nolands Zimbabwe](#) (for auditing our accounts annually)

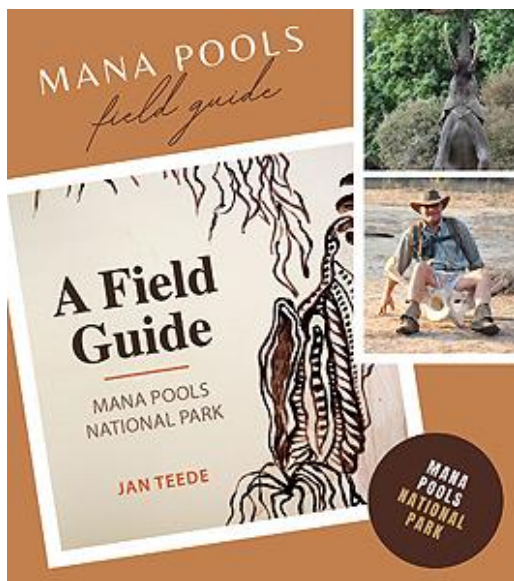
And to the individual Zambezi Society supporters who make generous donations during the year.  
WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT.

If you'd like to celebrate the festive season, give a special conservation gift to someone who cares, or simply show your support for our Zambezi Valley work

PLEASE CLICK THIS BOX

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## GIFT IDEAS



### A FIELD GUIDE TO MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK

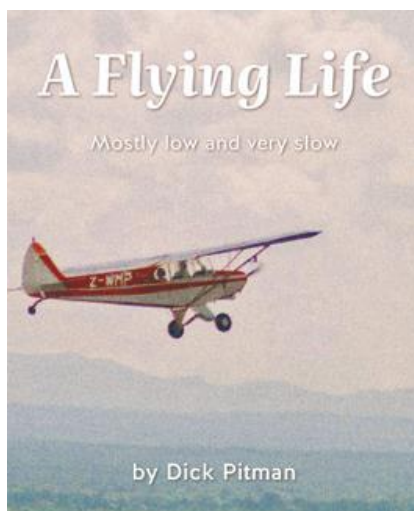
Here's a great gift for lovers of Mana Pools National Park. Author Jan Teede has created a meticulous and amusingly written Field Guide of more than 600 pages, covering all the flora and fauna found in Mana Pools, with delightful illustrations and colour photographs.

Cost is US\$20 for a copy signed by the author. If sold through The Zambezi Society, US\$8 per copy will be donated to us!

Order via [Jumping Frog Books](#) or email [jan@jumpingfrogbooks.net](mailto:jan@jumpingfrogbooks.net).

**Quote The Zambezi Society.**

Delivery can be arranged.



### A FLYING LIFE - mostly low and very slow

Written by The Zambezi Society's Co-founder and former Director, Dick Pitman, this is a light-hearted description of his 65 years of adventures (and misadventures) in the aviation world in more than 40 types of glider and light aircraft, none of them larger than a SuperCub. A great deal of this was "bush-flying" - mostly low and slow - for wildlife conservation in the Zambezi Valley.

Hard copies are available in Zimbabwe for US\$20. Order via e-mail through [The Zambezi Society](#).

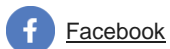
If you live outside Zimbabwe, contact us anyway and we can send you a soft copy in exchange for a donation to Zamsoc!

NOW 41 YEARS OF ZAMBEZI CONSERVATION!



In case you missed our Historical Series of articles celebrating The Zambezi Society's 40th anniversary of in-field conservation work in the Zambezi Valley, you can read the series on our website by clicking on the link below:-

[ZAMBEZI SOCIETY HISTORICAL SERIES](#)



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