

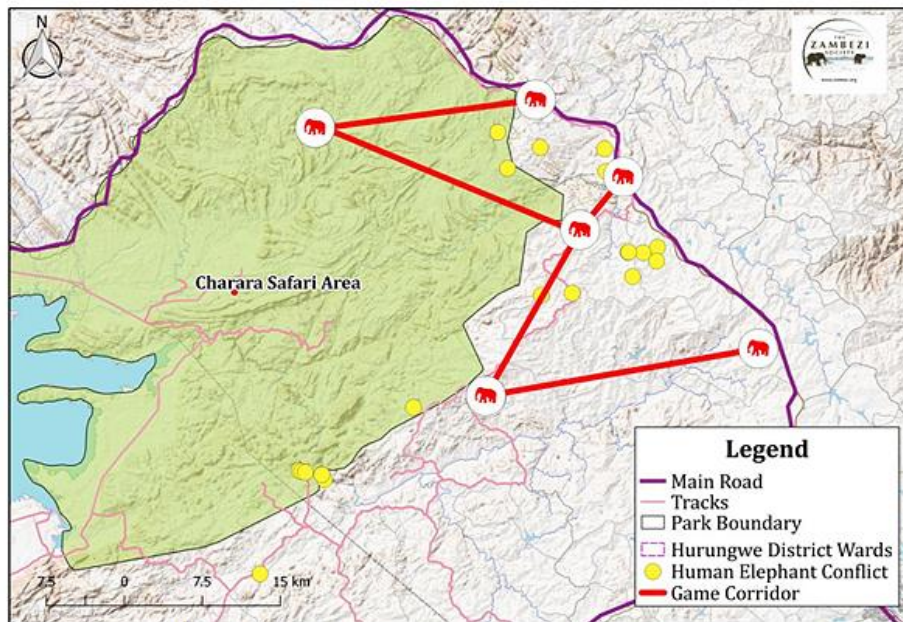
AN UPDATE ON OUR HUMAN-WILDLIFE CO-EXISTENCE WORK WITH COMMUNITIES IN CHARARA & KARIBA

THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY – July 2023

People and elephants

The Zambezi Society’s Human-Wildlife Co-existence (HWC) team working with communities living on the boundaries of the Charara Safari Area, continues to respond to human-elephant conflict situations, allowing us to collect vital information, and to then map conflict over the project area.

The months since our last report have marked some of the busiest months for the team, with crop raiding at its peak. Over this period, vuvuzelas were distributed as a quick response to elephants raiding the crops of those who were not yet equipped with mitigation methods. May 2023 marked the end of crop raiding season with community members finishing their maize harvesting.



Charara: Reports of elephants in southern boundary communities 01 April – 30 June 2023

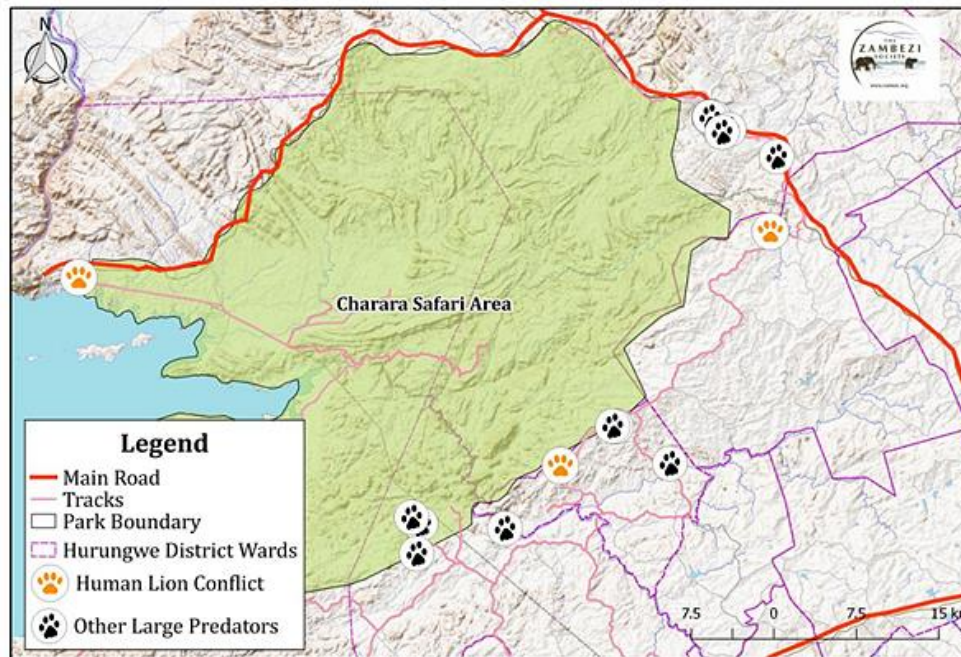
The reduction in human-elephant conflict at the start of May gave our team the time needed to begin assisting community members with making chilli bricks to use as an elephant deterrent during the next crop raiding season. Demonstrations and provision of material has been concentrated on those human-elephant conflict hotspots identified through our data collection and mapping.



The recent expansion of our project into Kariba Town (mentioned below) will add to the human-elephant coexistence work being carried out under this project, as Kariba is a hotspot area for elephant movement and human-elephant conflict.

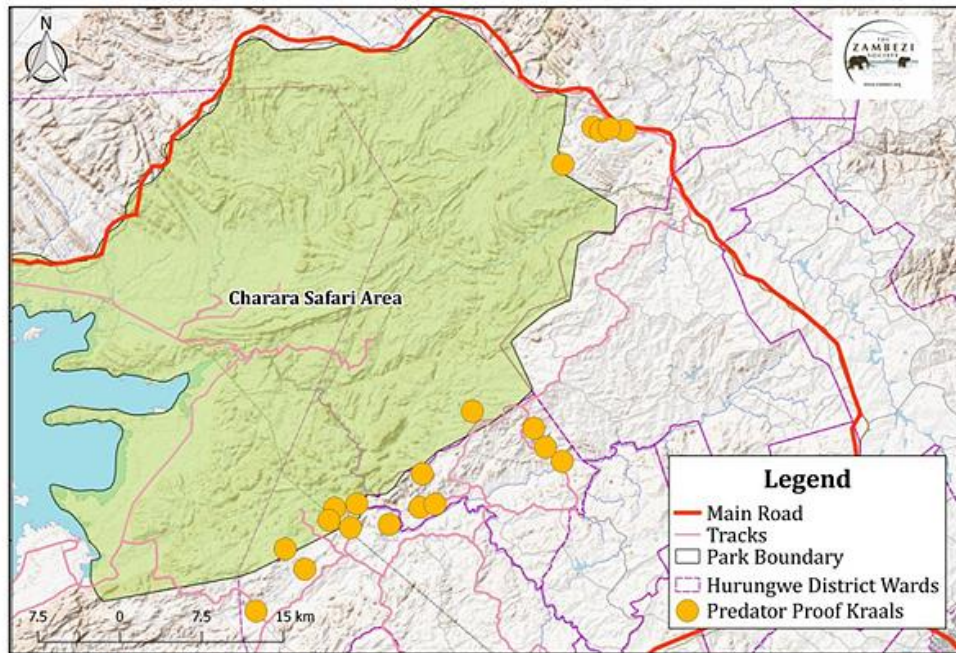
People and carnivores

Our data collection and mapping also continues to focus on human-carnivore conflict. This data shows that nearly all cases of human-carnivore conflict, - namely livestock predation - within the communities surrounding Charara Safari Area have involved hyenas with only the occasional incident involving lions, leopards, or jackals (see map).



Charara: Human-Carnivore conflict mitigation/incidents 01 April – 30 June 2023

The Zamsoc HWC team has been responding to these conflict reports by advising community members on how to build predator-proof kraals (and helping with these adjustments), to safely protect livestock at night, and to use lights and domestic dogs to deter carnivores. Since our last report, we have also invested in, distributed, and established another 8 predator-proof kraals with a focus on protecting cattle – which have a high value as a livestock species – from large carnivores. This brings our total to 20 kraals - safely protecting 700+ cattle, belonging to 99 households. We are also looking at ways to assist communities with access to education and resources to prevent loss of cattle to tick-borne diseases, and to find cost-effective ways to improve the kraaling of goats which are also at risk of predation by carnivores.

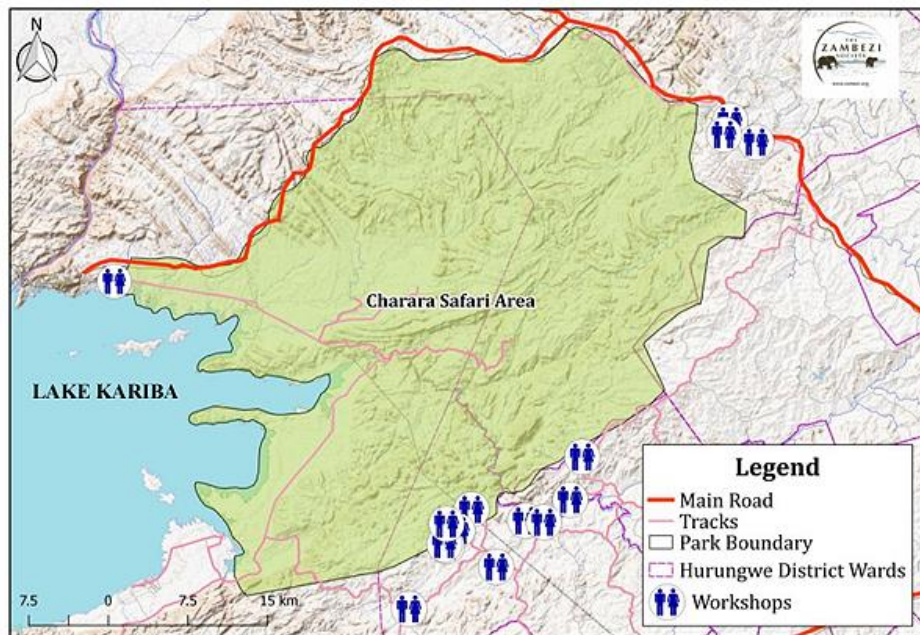


Charara: Predator-Proof kraal locations



Human-Wildlife Co-Existence Awareness workshops

This year The Zambezi Society began the roll out of human-wildlife co-existence awareness workshops along the southern boundary of Charara at a village level. There are 55 villages, and so far, we have held awareness workshops in 19 of these villages (see map). We initially anticipated an attendance of 40-50 people per workshop however the response has been extraordinary, with some workshops attracting more than 100 villagers.

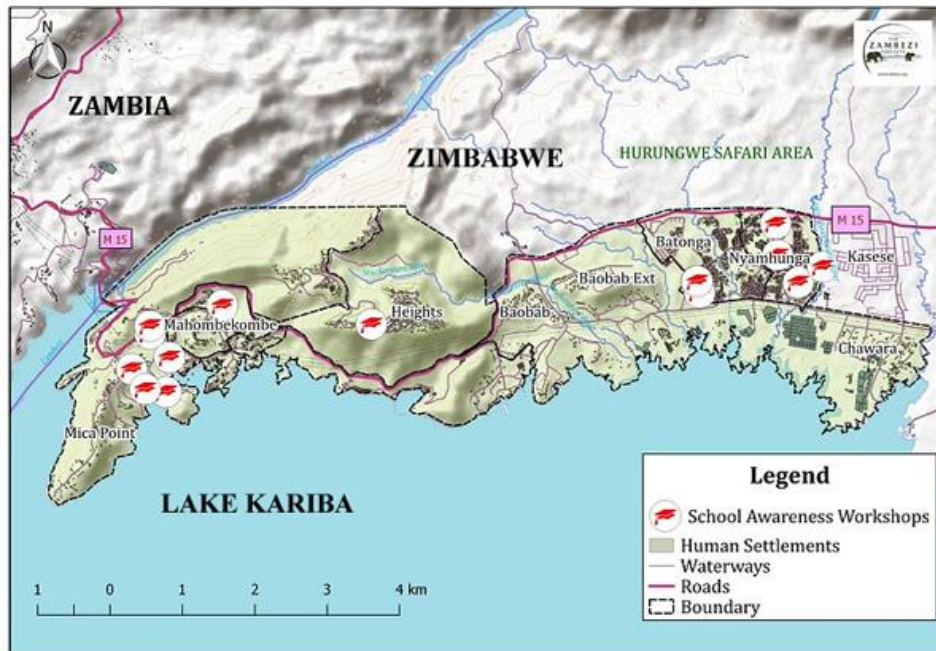


Community awareness workshop locations 01 April – 30 June 2023



In May this year, we partnered with Zimparks and Kariba Animal Welfare Fund Trust to expand our Human-Wildlife Coexistence Project into Kariba Town. Kariba is surrounded by designated wildlife areas, and as a result, plenty of wild animals move through the residential areas daily. Keeping residents and wildlife safe, in a harmonious way is our primary goal. Historical information received through our long-resident Kariba partners highlighted the antagonistic and risky behaviour by residents towards wildlife, and so we decided collectively to move straight into raising awareness and education and rolling out conflict mitigation methods across the whole of Kariba Town.

We began our human-wildlife conflict awareness workshops in the town’s high-density residential areas, which are most affected by human-wildlife conflict. The aim of the workshops is to address specific human-wildlife conflict issues, encouraging residents to raise concerns and ask questions, and educating people with self-help information and advice. We also began running awareness workshops in the 26 schools in Kariba Town (see map below). Antagonistic and risky behaviour specifically towards elephants in Kariba is particularly concerning in the school-aged group of the community, with children chasing elephants, throwing stones at elephants, and encouraging packs of domestic dogs to chase elephants. The awareness workshops held at school assemblies are focused on educating children on wildlife behaviour, safety around wildlife, and the risks of provoking wildlife.



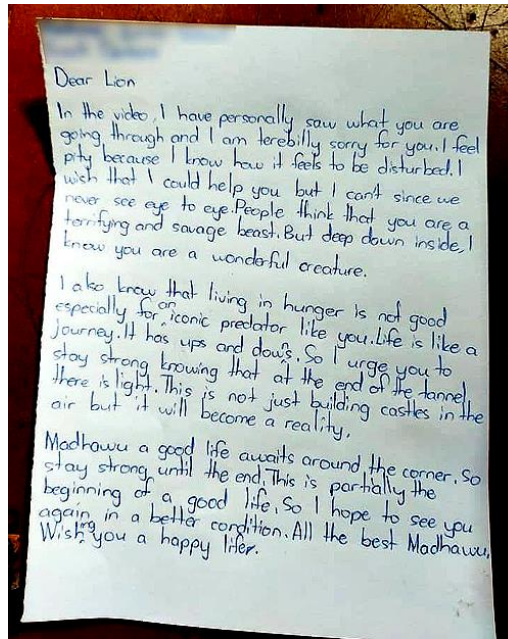
Kariba School awareness workshop locations 01 April – 30 June 2023

Virtual Reality Project in schools

As a part of our Human-Wildlife Coexistence Project, and in addition to the school awareness workshops described above, the Zamsoc HWC team have been using Virtual Reality to engage with Kariba Town’s school children in an educational, memorable, and fun way on topics around human-wildlife coexistence and conservation. We are very proud of this educative awareness Project, launched this year, with support from the Zambezi Elephant Fund. Our Virtual Reality Project works with 16 primary schools in Kariba Town and targets Grade 6 students specifically (roughly 800 students) to improve education about and safety around wildlife in the school-aged group of the community.



Given the level of human-wildlife conflict in Kariba, this has been an incredibly positive and much needed change in the project focus. Our first custom-made Virtual Reality video used in the schools is focused on lions. Students are initially asked to write three words that come to mind when they hear the word lion. They then watch the video and are tasked with completing a fun wildlife-based activity sheet in groups. After watching the video, they are asked to write a letter to the lions (see the wonderful example below!).



This process is a creative way to capture existing attitudes towards lions and measure any immediate change in feelings caused by the video – by comparing key words in the initial exercise to key words in the letters. These engagements immediately follow the awareness workshops at primary school assemblies (described above).

We are now working on a new VR video which is focused on elephants, and will be watching with great interest to see the results of this innovative awareness programme.

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