



**MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK, SAPI &
CHEWORE SAFARI AREAS
WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**



STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT

JANUARY 2021

PROPERTY DETAILS

State Party: Zimbabwe

Name of Property: Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Site

Property identification number: (N0. 302)

Reporting period: 2020

Reporting Date: 08 January 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage site is located in Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe. The park covers 2208 km² and is one of Zimbabwe's seven Ramsar sites and it is also an Important Bird Area (IBA). The Ramsar Convention on Wetland of 1971 provides a framework for wetland conservation. The State Party of Zimbabwe is committed to conserve, protect and sustainably manage the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Site.

This report gives a detailed analysis on the State of Conservation of the above-mentioned property and provides responses to the decisions made by the 42nd Session of the World Heritage Committee. The State Party of Zimbabwe has put efforts to engage with a number of stakeholders, donors, private partners and the community in order to sustainably manage the OUV of the World Heritage Site (WHS). Community engagement in conservation efforts in the WHS have been improved through engagement of a Community Liaison Officer in the area, with new projects being established such as Junior Ranger programmes. Stakeholders remain actively involved in supporting conservation work in the WHS, and a new specialised Zambezi river authority antipoaching Camp based at D-Camp has been established with the help of African Wildlife Fund (AWF).

The management planning process for the World Heritage Site Management Plan is underway with funding secured from Global Environmental Facility (GEF). However, activities in the year 2020 were greatly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. The GEF project is implementing a biodiversity programme to benefit the WHS and surrounding areas mainly in 4 thematic areas or (Component 1); strengthen PA and Community Wildlife Conservancy management for wildlife and woodlands(Component 2); build strong sustainable NRM capacity for local communities and districts in cooperation with private sector (Component 3); and promote effective knowledge management (Component 4) to achieve the project objective: *to promote an integrated landscape approach to managing wildlife resources, carbon and ecosystem services in the face of climate change in the protected areas and community lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe*. The specific activities covered and still ongoing under the components include and are not limited to review of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Act, review of the National wildlife Legislation, adoption and implementation of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART), the digitalization of the radio system, procurement of patrol rations and fuel for antipoaching, construction of picket posts, trainings for rangers (invasive species management and first aid) of the WHS (rangers) and other protected areas in the valley. The State Party is set to receive funding from the World Heritage Fund (WHF) towards co funding the WHS management planning process. A consultant has been engaged and work is expected to begin early this year.

The State Party of Zimbabwe and Zambia continuously engage in strategies and plans that promote trans-boundary collaboration, which has also been emphasized by the committee through the need to finalize the TFCA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as well as the establishment of a joint trans-boundary world heritage site. The State Party of Zambia has completed its internal consultation process for the signing of the MoU to establish the Lower Zambezi- Mana Pools TFCA and are ready to sign. However, the State Party of Zimbabwe is

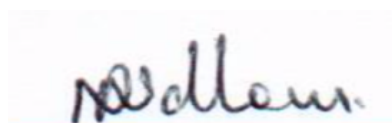
yet to complete its consultation process for the finalization of the MoU which was further delayed by Covid 19 restrictions.

Tourism activities are being monitored to ensure that they are conducted in a way that does not affect the integrity of the property as a World Heritage Site. Research and monitoring are being done to ensure species protection in the World Heritage Property. Zimbabwe and Zambia hosted their first research collaboration meeting in 2020 and opportunities for future research and collaborations were identified. Hunting has been suspended in the Sapi and the northern part of Chewore Safari Areas to allow monitoring of game populations and their recoupment. Efforts are being made with other interested stakeholders to secure the areas for Black Rhinoceroses' reintroduction in the future.

SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATES PARTY

I hereby endorse the report and submission to the World Heritage Convention in line with Zimbabwe's obligations as a State Party

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ndlovu', is shown within a light blue rectangular box.

Hon N.M. Ndlovu

Minister of Environment, Climate,
Tourism and Hospitality Industry

RESPONSE TO THE DECISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Response to the Decision: 42 COM 7B.97 of the World Heritage Committee

Paragraph 1. Having examined Document WHC/18/42.COM/7B,

Paragraph 2. Recalling Decisions 38 COM 7B.97 and 40 COM 7B.84, adopted at its 38th (Doha, 2014) and 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016) sessions respectively,

Paragraph 3. Commends the State Party for its substantial efforts to enhance the property's conservation with several initiatives underway, notably to strengthen anti-poaching efforts, and requests the State Party to continue these efforts, in particular to:

- 1. Implement the Anti-Poaching Strategy and the Elephant Management Plan, and continue to report on progress made,**
- 2. Complete the review of the General Management Plan, and submit it to the World Heritage Centre once it is available,**
- 3. Report on the outcomes of habitat surveys and the elephant collaring project, as well as provide data on poaching and other available conservation indicators**

The State Party of Zimbabwe welcomes praises from the committee for its efforts to strengthen conservation and management practices in Mana Pools National Park. Anti-poaching efforts have been strengthened through stakeholder involvement. This has facilitated the establishment of Anti-Poaching reaction - Zambezi Valley Reaction Unit (ZAVARU and Rhino Tusk Force (Rhino-Force). In addition, the organisation also works closely with their Zambian counterparts - Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) now the Department of Wildlife Management through Anti-Poaching Joint Operations, intelligence sharing and joint meetings (Joint Commissions and Joint Permanent Commissions of Defence and Security). Collaborative work is also being implemented with the States Party of Zambia in the form of joint river patrols (being carried out fortnightly). A number of Private Voluntary Organisations and Safari Operators (SO) have also been essential in providing assistance to the organisation through improving communication, assist with anti-poaching vehicles, fuels and road maintenance.

Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore also share a very strong relationship with its surrounding communities which include Chundu and Nyamakate. It can also be noted that several projects

are currently underway and these include establishing Junior Rangers at Primary and Secondary Schools level as well as Community Rangers. Efforts are also being made to establish community wildlife clubs so as to strengthen wildlife community conservation. It is this close collaboration and cooperation of the organisation and its stakeholders that has greatly strengthen the property conservation and management initiatives.

The elephant management plan was reviewed in 2020 and the reviewed plan is available and being implemented. The ManaPools Management Plan is currently underway and it will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once completed. The Management plan review progress was affected by Covid 19 pandemic. A facilitator has however been engaged and work has begun. Thanks to Global Environmental Facility (GEF) they have dedicated a budget through the GEF-6 programme for Management Plans for all the Parks estates in the Zambezi Valley. Co – funding has been availed by the World Heritage Fund (WHF) for the management planning process of Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas.

Several studies are underway to monitor the movements of elephants in the Zambezi Valley through the use of satellite elephant collars. Elephants have been collared to monitor and study their habit preferences, home ranges, corridors as well as transboundary movements. However, the observed movement patterns showed that they have not been crossing over to Zambia. Hence, investigations are being made to understand the phenomenon. Vegetation mapping has also been done to monitor impacts of herbivory and climate on the existing woody species. Enclosure plots have also been put in place to assess regeneration of woody species on the alluvial floodplain. Decline in key habitat such as the *Fidherbia albida* woodland has been noted. This has been attributed high elephant population densities within the floodplain.

Paragraph 4. Appreciates the support by an increasing number of partners to the conservation of the property, including the CITES programme on Minimizing the Illegal Killing of Elephants and other Endangered Species (MIKES) in line with Decision 41 COM 7, and support from UNDP funded by the Global Environment Facility;

The State Party of Zimbabwe appreciates the concerns of the Committee towards the funding of activities of the Anti-poaching Strategy and the Elephant Management Plan. The private sector has been engaged to assist with resourcing the effective implementation of the anti-poaching strategy and Elephant Management Plan. Quarterly meetings are being held as follow

ups to implementations of plans and strategies, with working groups continuously operating on the ground, mobilising resources and ensuring implementation of the strategy. The end of year Elephant management meeting for the year 2020 has been held and achievements of targets were significant. Other development partners such as UNDP are also onboard supporting the Zambezi Valley through funding from Global Environmental Facility (GEF) 6. This is significant in enhancing the implementation of our conservation mandate, the World Heritage Property is obviously one of the key beneficiaries to this arrangement.

Ranger trainings are being carried out and Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) has been adopted in stations that make up the World Heritage Site (WHS); and efforts are being made to extend it to the whole of the Zambezi Valley. Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Area are Monitoring Illegal Killing of Endangered Species (MIKES) “Sites”; hence they have received some support from CITES MIKE through AWF to strengthen monitoring of illegal activities and anti-poaching. Equipment such as micro-lite and helicopter have been donated to Mana Pools National Park to assist in monitoring of poaching activities.

Paragraph 5 Takes note of the decision to suspend commercial sport hunting in Sapi Safari Area, the northern part of Chewore Safari Area and the buffer zone to promote the recovery of wildlife species, and also requests the State Party to clarify the status and extent of the areas referred to by the State Party as the buffer zone, which have not yet been formally adopted by the Committee

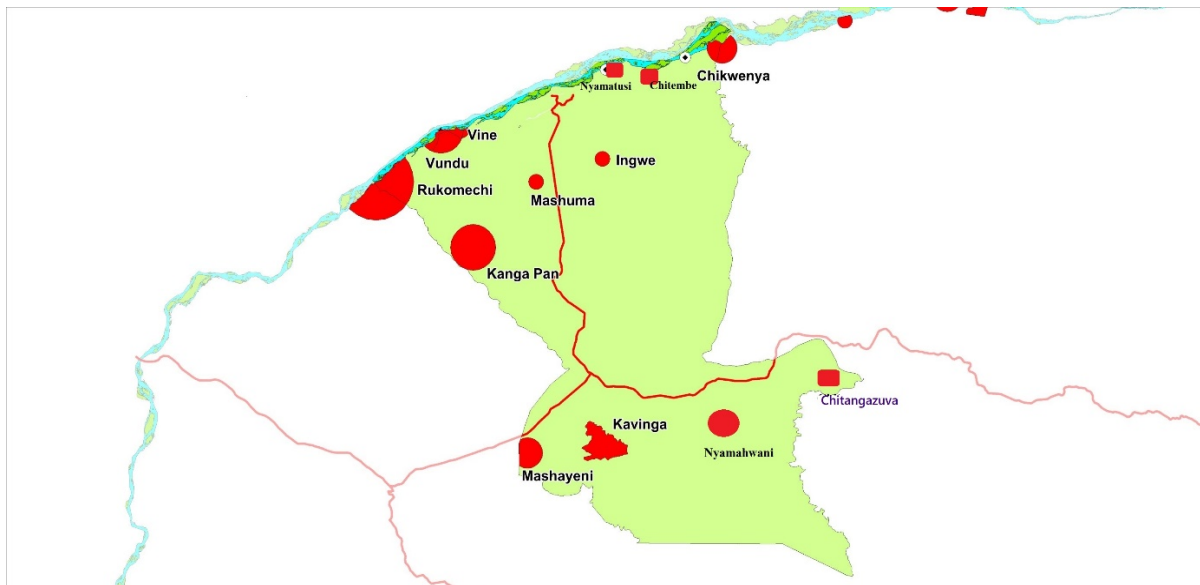
In Sapi Safari area and the Northern side of Chewore Safari area, hunting has been suspended since 2016 to allow elephant populations and other key species such as buffalo, lion, leopard to recover from the downward trends. This, coupled with intensified anti-poaching operations is expected to afford a conducive environment for the recovery of the populations.

Anti-poaching efforts have been increased through stakeholder involvement. This has facilitated the establishment of operational bases infrastructure built at stations in the Valley; anti-poaching reaction units have also been established, that is, the Zambezi Valley Reaction Unit, Rhino Tusk Force and the newly established Specialized River Authority stationed along the mighty Zambezi River. National Parks Rangers have been seconded to the fully equipped reaction units in terms of resources.

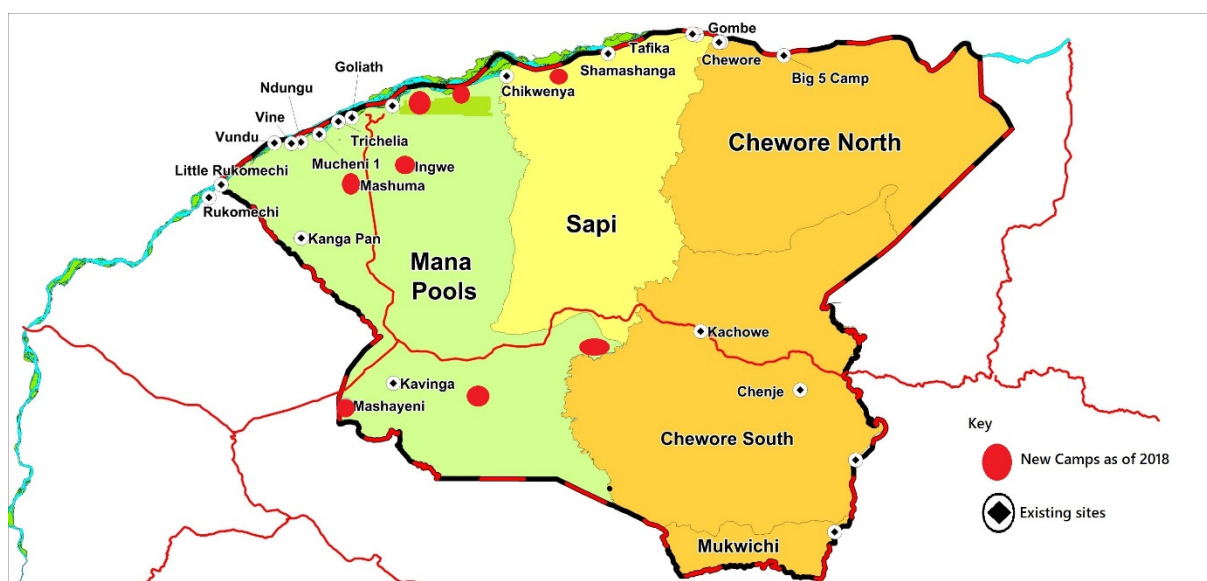
Paragraph 6. Welcomes the collaboration between the States Parties of Zimbabwe and Zambia to strengthen transboundary conservation, including through regular joint border patrols, and to consider nominating Lower Zambezi National Park as an extension of the property, with a view to creating a transboundary property, as recommended by the Committee, and encourages again the two States Parties to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding for the Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools National Parks Trans-Frontier Conservation Area, and to request technical advice from the World Heritage Centre and IUCN as needed

The establishment of the Lower-Zambezi- Mana Pools TFCA is in its final stages. The MoU finalisation process is still underway. The States Parties are committed to conserve the area and joint operations through anti-poaching, intelligence sharing and joint operation meetings are conducted regularly. Issues concerning the TFCAs in the Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools National Parks Trans-Frontier Conservation Area have been discussed and identified as opportunity to enhance joint operations to protect and manage the area. However, the signing of the MoU was delayed by Covid19.

Paragraph 8 Also appreciates the State Party's confirmation that new tourism developments will be located away from the Zambezi River and that they will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in line with its previous commitment, and further requests the State Party to provide a map indicating the exact locations of the proposed tourism developments;



Map showing tourism concessions in Mana Pools national park. New developments away from the Zambezi River include Mashayeni, Nyamahwani, Chitangazuva, Mashuma and Ingwe.



Map showing tourism sites (Concessions, Temporary Extended Camps and newly established sites in the WHS).