The Mana Pools National Park and World Heritage Site is one of many important areas of special interest and attraction in the Zambezi River basin. Others include the Barotseland Floodplains, the Victoria Falls and Batoka Gorge, Lake Kariba, the Matusadona National Park, the Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve, the Zambezi Escarpment, Lake Cahora Bassa and the Zambezi Delta.

The Zambezi Society’s mission is to promote the conservation and environmentally sound management of the Zambezi River and its catchment area for the benefit of wilderness, wildlife and people.

WE SUPPORT PARKS: We provide financial, logistical and material support for Protected Areas and National Parks along the Zambezi River, focusing on research, monitoring and anti-poaching programmes.

WE HELP CONSERVE WILDLIFE: We manage a number of wildlife conservation projects focused on important Zambezi species, with a long-standing “flagship” project monitoring the black rhinoceros population in the Matusadona National Park.

WE EDUCATE ABOUT WILDERNESS: We develop information and materials designed to make schoolchildren and adults more aware of the value of wildlife and wild areas and the need to conserve them. We established the first training courses in wilderness awareness and management for custodians of Zambezi wild areas.

WE PROVIDE INFORMATION: We increase public awareness about issues affecting the Zambezi river, by disseminating news and information through research, publications, the media and the internet.

WE LOBBY FOR SENSIBLE PLANNING: We lobby or advocate against development initiatives that are unsuitable or damaging to the biodiversity or wilderness values of the Zambezi environment; and we promote good river basin planning based on sound scientific information.

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WILD MANA

Mana is wild and so are the animals, but it is safe so long as you use your common sense. As in all of Zimbabwe’s National Parks, it is the interests of the animals that take precedence here.

Enjoy the animals for what they are and for the pleasure of their natural behaviour. Do not try to “make them do something”, and always remember that wild animals can be dangerous – treat them with respect.

Walking or photographing in the wilderness, you should be aware that visitors take a puncture repair kit (including rubber solution) with them in case they need punctures repaired.

TAKE A WALK

Mana Pools is unique, being the only Zimbabwean National Park with species such as elephant, lion and buffalo, in which you may walk unaccompanied. You may do this on the flat “floodplain” area, where visibility is good, but not in the thick “jess” forest inland. It is emphasised that you walk at your own risk, but a few suggestions may help you to enjoy your walks without incident.

Firstly, remember that almost any animal can be dangerous if it is irritated, scared or surprised, so keep a good look out and avoid thick bush.

Secondly, please remember that the campsites and office area at Mana are unprotected and animals do frequent these areas. The freshwater crocodile, even if it is larger than a domestic cat, is not dangerous unless it feels threatened or if you have approached it too closely, especially to large animals such as elephant or buffalo.

Please remember that the campsites and office area at Mana are unprotected and animals do frequent these areas. Always be alert, even in apparently “safe” areas.

Stay well clear of ELEPHANT COW HERDS WITH CALVES. Detour round them on the downwind side, or get well clear downstream and let them pass.

Do not approach species such as LION or HYENA on kills as they may defend their kill.

An animal’s usual instinct is to escape, but if it feels threatened or if you have approached too closely, it may decide to itself.

Do not cut off an animal’s line of retreat. Hippos on land will usually make for the river; land mammals for dense bush or woodland. If you are in the way, you may be attacked.

Finally, remember that when you are downwind of one animal, you may be upwind of another. Keep a good all-round lookout when walking or photographing. And if in doubt – stay clear!

Bathing and Canoeing

Motor boats are not permitted on the river at Mana Pools. If you have brought a canoe with you, remember that the Zambezi current is strong, especially in the main channel and that the Zambian border runs down the centre of the main channel. Your canoe will probably be impounded if you try to portage it, and you could well be detained. Stay in Zimbabwe!

When on the river, stay well clear of hippo and crocodile and observe the rules.

Remember: all wild animals are potentially dangerous.

Fishing

A Parks Authority permit is required for fishing in the Zambezi, where you will find tigerfish, bream and several other local species. The tigerfish is, weight for weight, the best fighting fish in Africa. Though weights tend to be lower than on Lake Kariba, the Zambezi tigerfish are often given a fight and are particularly wary in tight tackle. A bag limit for fish is in force and anglers should familiarise themselves with the current limit.

Camping

Please make sure that your campsite is kept clean. Baboons and monkeys can be a problem during the day, and observe the rules.

WILDERNESS PARADISE

The Mana Pools National Park covers a representative section of the Middle Zambezi Valley, extending from the Zambezi River in the north to the escarpment in the south, together with the Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas which lie to its east, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984, and forms a Core Area of the Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve designated by UNESCO in 2011. As you drove into the Park, you probably noticed how the driving margin to any type of wildlife is subject to real estate suddenly to woodlands of acacia, mahogany and other large trees nearer the river. This change in vegetation marks the southern edge of the rich river terraces, the area over which the Zambezi has meandered and shifted its course over thousands of years. The terraces are covered with fertile alluvial soils deposited by the river during its wanderings.

The Pools of Mana are lakes which mark former courses of the Zambezi. They are refilled during the rains and are the home of large numbers of crocodile and hippo as well as a magnificent bird population.

WILDLIFE AT MANA

The number and variety of animals that can be seen at Mana are breathtaking at all times of the year. In the rains, most large mammals such as elephant, buffalo, and eland leave the river area to seek grazing and browsing closer to the areas where they can comfortably spend the non-rainy dry season. The shortages of food and water inland force them back towards the Zambezi, where the river terraces, with their extensive grasslands and meadows of the Natal acacia pods, support them through the worst of the dry season. As soon as the first rains fall, the animals disperse from the river once again.

Each year, the Natal acacias (Faidherbia albida) – winter thorn, or apple-ring acacia – bears thousands of seed pods each year. These pods are popular favourites of elephants and buffalo, who eat the pods whole, sometimes taking them to the ground. They also provide a substantial part of the diet of buffalo and several other animal species.

Note the even browse lines on the Natal Mahoganies (Trichelia emetica). This is because species such as kudu eat the leaves and twigs from these trees as high as they can reach.

You may be lucky enough to see the shy nyala antelope. The Mana Pools and Gonarezhou National Parks are the only areas in Zimbabwe where this antelope is found. Large numbers of elephant and buffalo are also seen on the water’s edge, feeding on the rich grasses and aquatic vegetation. To find out about current wildlife research projects, contact the Area Manager or Ecologist.

You are free to use this leaflet in your leaflet production. The Society is happy to share the moment with you.

E-mail: zambezi@iwayafrica.co.zw
Website: www.zamsoc.org

Wildlife rules and regulations apply.

HELP US KEEP IT THAT WAY!

Please familiarise yourself with the following Park regulations, which are for your benefit. We hope they will help you to enjoy your stay and avoid the unpalappiness of a fine.

1. All visitors enter the National Park and use its facilities entirely at their own risk. The Zimbabwe Parks & Wildlife Management Authority cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to personal property, or personal injury.
2. Drive on roads only. Driving off-road is strictly prohibited, especially up to lion kills. Any vehicle caught driving off-road will be impounded and only released on payment of US$100 fine.
3. Leaving your vehicle and walking is permitted.
4. Roving night excursions is strictly prohibited under section 7.1(b)(ii) General Regulations.
5. Please be in your camp or lodge during prescribed hours. From May to July these are 6.00pm to 6.00am, from August to 6.00am to 6.00pm.
6. Fires are permitted only at designated braai-stands.
7. Keep from littering in the Park. Please carry your waste non-combustible litter (cans, bottles & plastic) and declare it at Nyakasikana Gate. Failure to do so will attract a US$100 fine.
8. The lodges, Vundu Camp, Goliath Camp, Kangwa Pan, Mucheni Camps, Nduku Camps, Gwaya Camp, BBC Camp, Vine Camp, Nkupu Camp and Chitake are all closed except to residents of those camps. Please respect their privacy.
9. All plants, animals, and animal remains and soils are protected and cannot be collected. This includes firewood and insects (including butterflies).
10. Please avoid behaviour likely to disturb wildlife or fellow campers.
11. Feeding of animals is strictly prohibited.
12. Powerboats may not be used in the Park. Canoes are permitted.
13. Generators/lighting plants are not permitted.
14. No firearm, arm, or any other weapon is permitted in the Park unless declared and sealed at Marongora.
15. A maximum of 6 persons per day may be killed and 6 fish per person may be removed from the Park.
16. A vehicle with a carrying capacity of more than 20 persons or more than 3 tonnes in weight is permitted into the Park without the prior authority and a levy being paid.
17. Persons disobeying the Parks and Wildlife Regulations will be prosecuted and banned from the Park.
18. This is only a section of the rules. All other Parks & Wildlife rules and regulations apply.

This leaflet is produced by THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY in the interests of conserving the Zambezi’s valuable wildlife and wilderness resources.