

THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY

CONSERVING WILDLIFE AND WILDERNESS

<http://www.zamsoc.org>



“NO MINING IN MANA POOLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE”

August 2012

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1. THE ZAMBEZI SOCIETY



For more information about The Zambezi Society, see www.zamsoc.org

The Zambezi River: http://www.zamsoc.org/?page_id=636
Development Impacts: http://www.zamsoc.org/?page_id=89

2. WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Mana Pools/Sapi/Chewore World Heritage Site (see below) is one of four internationally-recognised World Heritage Sites within Zimbabwe, the others being Great Zimbabwe, Khami Ruins, Matobo Hills and Victoria Falls/Mosi-oa-Tunya.



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The Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas World Heritage Site is an area of dramatic landscape and ecological processes. Physically protected by the Zambezi River to the north and the steep escarpment (which rises to over 1,000 m from the valley floor) to the south, this substantial property of 676,600 ha provides shelter for immense congregations of Africa's large mammal populations which concentrate in its flood plains. The Mana Pools are former channels of the Zambezi River, and ongoing geological processes present a good example of erosion and deposition by a large seasonal river including a clear pattern of plant succession on its alluvial deposits. While black rhino has disappeared since the property's inscription, huge herds of elephant and buffalo, followed by zebra, waterbuck and many other antelope species and their associated predators including lion and hyena migrate to the area each year during the dry winter months. The river is also famous for its sizeable numbers of hippopotamus and Nile crocodile. Resident and migratory birdlife, with over 450 species recorded, is also abundant. Controlled hunting on quota is permitted in the safari areas.

The inscription of a property as a World Heritage Site means that the area is "of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) because of its cultural and natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance, (not only to Zimbabweans) but to the international community as a whole". To be inscribed on the World Heritage List, sites must meet at least ONE of ten selection criteria. The Mana/Sapi/Chewore area was selected for meeting THREE of these criteria as follows:-

Criterion vii. *"superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance"*. (The annual congregation of animals in riparian parkland alongside the broad Zambezi constitutes one Africa's outstanding wildlife spectacles.)

Criterion ix. *"outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals"*. (The 'sand-bank' environment constitutes a good example of erosion and deposition by a large seasonal river (despite changes in river flow due to the Kariba Dam). There is a clear pattern of vegetation succession on the alluvial deposits. Seasonal movements of large mammals within the valley are of great ecological interest both because of interspecies and intraspecies differences.)

Criterion x. *"the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation"*. (At time of inscription the justification for this criterion was that the area was one of the most important refuges for black rhino in Africa as well as a number of other species considered threatened at that time. Today, the black rhino has now disappeared from the reserve, although the property still contains important populations of threatened species including elephant and hippopotamus, as well as other threatened species such as lion, cheetah and wild dog. Leopard and brown hyena, classified as near threatened, and a large population of Nile crocodile, are also protected within the property. The area is also considered an important refuge for a number of plants and birds.)

For more information see this weblink: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/302>).

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3. BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Within UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB), Biosphere Reserves are a concept and a tool to achieve a sustainable balance between conservation of biological diversity, promoting human development and maintaining associated cultural values.

Nominated by governments, BR are internationally recognised terrestrial, coastal or marine areas, intended to fulfil three complementary functions:

- The Conservation function

Protect threatened genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes

- The Development function

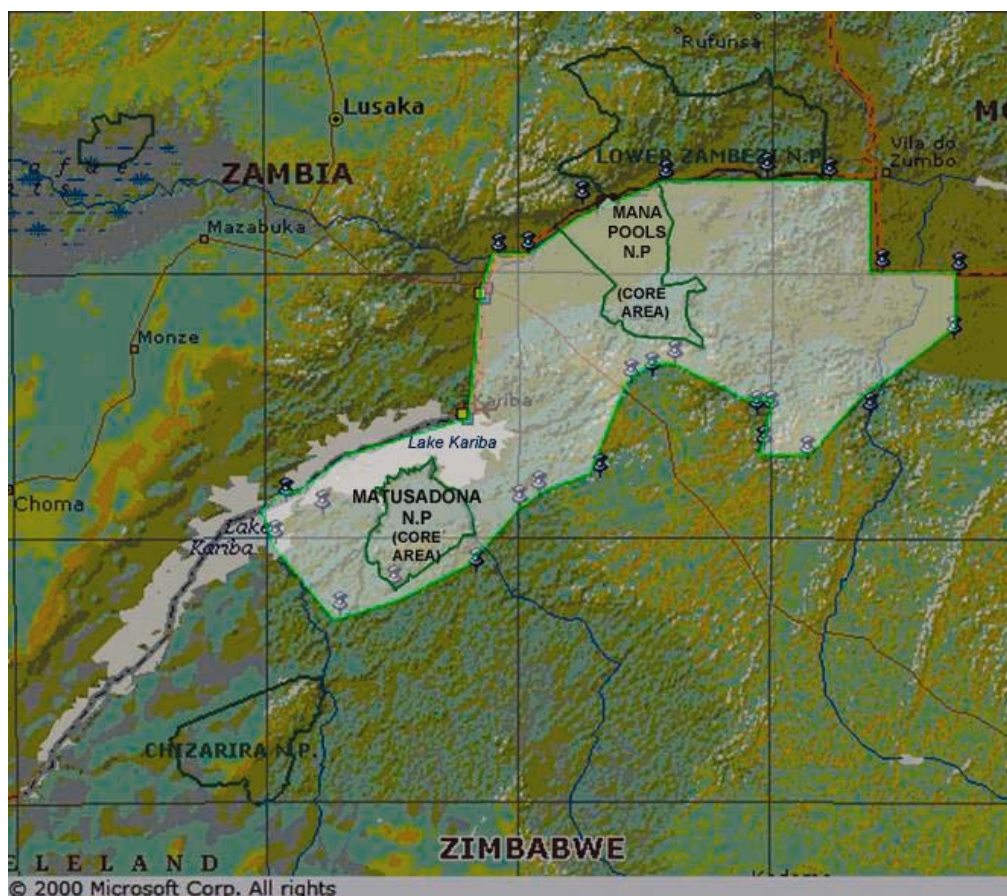
Foster sustainable economic and human development compatible with conservation

- The Logistic function

Facilitate demonstration projects; environmental education/training; research and monitoring in support of the conservation and development functions.

Ideally, a BR has three elements allowing it to fulfil these functions:

- One or more protected areas to conserve biodiversity; monitor ecosystems and undertake non-destructive research and non consumptive recreation
- A clearly identified buffer zone, surrounding or adjoining the core areas to provide a phased change from non consumptive activity to mixed use
- A transition area with more flexible sustainable socioeconomic use



Location and extent of Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve

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The Middle Zambezi Biosphere Reserve in Zimbabwe was inscribed on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) by the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) for the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) on 2 June 2010 during the 22nd session of the ICC held in Paris.

Stretching over approximately 40,000 km² in the Zambezi valley, the site features riverine and terrestrial ecosystems, unique to the subcontinent, including part of Lake Kariba, the world's largest man-made lake.

The Mana Pools National Park, part of the core area, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Controlled safari sport hunting in parts of the buffer zone provides employment for hundreds of people, while the lake caters for an important fishery industry.

The area also comprises human settlements, notably the town of Kariba, which depends largely on fishing in Lake Kariba for protein and income. The total human population is approx. 40000. The fishery of the pelagic fish, *Limnothrissa miodon*, with an annual output of about 30,000 tonnes estimated at a value of US\$40 million, rivals major lake fisheries in the region.

For more information , see this weblink:

<http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?mode=all&code=ZIM+01>

4. IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

From: *Zimbabwe's Important Bird Areas: National Status Report 2008* (Birdlife Zimbabwe)

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites of international significance in terms of birds that they support, chosen using BirdLife International criteria based on vulnerability and irreplaceability.

Sites are designated as IBAs if they hold globally threatened bird species, restricted-range bird species, biome-restricted bird species and congregations of a significant number of terrestrial or water birds. The areas also have to be large enough to support self-sustaining bird populations for which they are important. IBAs also shelter a wide range of other taxa and they form part of Key Biodiversity Areas.

Important Bird Areas are practical tools for long term biodiversity conservation, as birds are good indicators of biodiversity. According to Bibby (1999) birds are the most reliable indicators of terrestrial biological richness and environmental conditions in the world. IBA monitoring promotes the long term conservation of birds, sites, habitats and improves the livelihood status of people. People derive benefits from IBAs through employment opportunities and the ecological services provided by these unique habitats.

Important Bird Areas the world over are however constantly under pressure from a wide range of anthropogenic and natural threats. These threats or pressures are assessed according to their timing, scope and severity. Biodiversity continues to decline in Zimbabwe and other African countries. This is primarily due to limitations in resources, which is a common phenomenon in most developing countries.

Zimbabwe has identified a total of 20 IBAs distributed throughout the country. The sites are in both protected and non protected areas and they offer unique breeding, wintering or migrating habitats

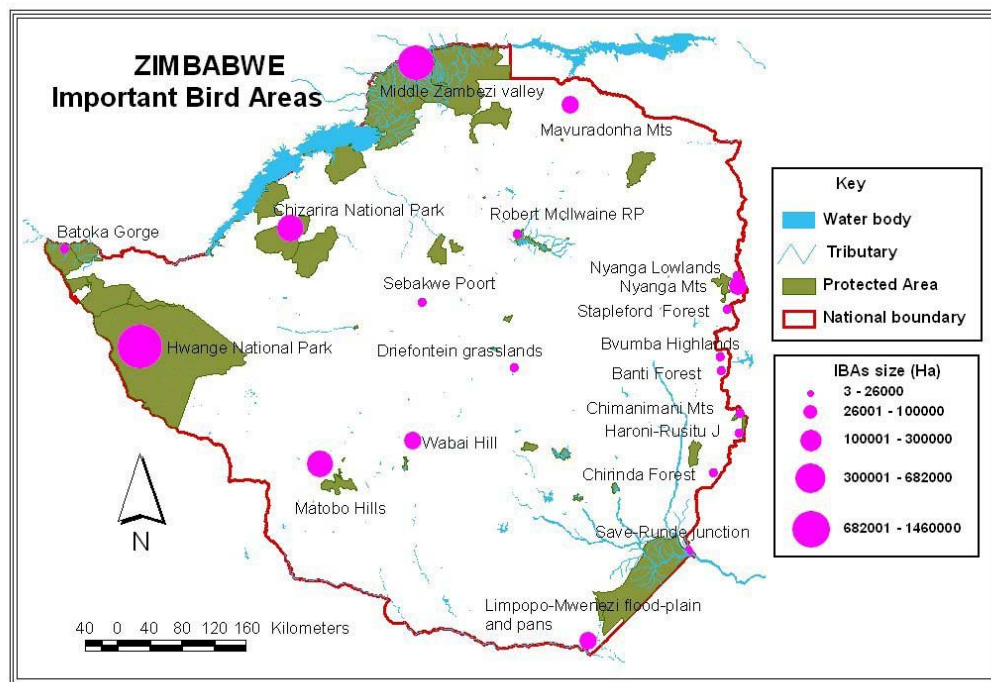
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to the world's birds. Some of Zimbabwe's IBAs in Protected Areas have been monitored over a number of years by the responsible management authorities. However there have been some inconsistencies in the levels and methods of monitoring over the years. The monitoring is not continuous and also not centrally coordinated. There is therefore a need to continuously monitor the sites in order to detect and act upon the threats in good time.

The IBA programme requires working in partnership with other organizations, especially site management authorities. BirdLife Zimbabwe is collaborating with key Protected Areas management authorities in Zimbabwe to monitor eleven IBAs in Protected Areas. The institutions are the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission and Allied Timber Holdings Pvt Ltd. The capacity in those areas has been developed for long-term site monitoring and conservation. The eleven IBAs in Protected Areas being monitored are Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Chirinda Forest, Hwange National Park, Chizarira National Park, Batoka Gorge, **Middle Zambezi Valley**, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park, Matobo Hills and Save-Runde junction. Driefontein Grasslands is a non-Protected Area being monitored by BLZ and community conservation groups. The main focus on Protected Areas is for the long-term conservation of biodiversity.



The selected IBAs are being monitored using the global monitoring framework developed by BirdLife International. The framework ensures that adaptive management and research frameworks are developed and implemented. Data and information are gathered chiefly by site monitoring teams from Protected Areas management staff, bird watchers and to some extent community-based groups known as Site Support Groups (SSGs). However, in most cases the SSGs have limited access to Protected Areas. Their monitoring work is restricted to parts of the IBA that are outside Protected Areas. BirdLife Zimbabwe is coordinating the monitoring of IBAs in Zimbabwe and is the current repository of data and information.

For more information on Important Bird Areas, see [Birdlife International](http://www.birdlife.org)

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5. PROSPECTING LICENCE FOR RUKOMECHI RIVER



Licensed Holder:	Habbard Investments (Pvt) Ltd (Mr Paul Chimbodza of Geoassociates)
SG Name:	Rukomechi River
SG No:	5553
Target Area:	450 ha (Covering 45km of Rukomechi River length).
Geographical Area	This area is within the Mana Pools national Parks.
Minerals:	Heavy Mineral Sands
Date of Issue:	9 September 2011
Validity:	12 months Renewal date 9 th September 2012
Prospecting for	copper, lead, zinc, manganese, tungsten, magnetite tantalum, titanium group minerals
Source of elements	The heavy minerals have been eroded from the higher grounds & deposited within the river basin. If mining has to take place it will involve excavating the river basin to depth of over 5m to 16m to recover the sands bearing the heavy minerals.

6. WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER

Articles 1 and 2 of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, state that a World Heritage property can be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger by the World Heritage Committee when it finds that the condition of the property corresponds to at least one of the criteria described below (from UNESCO, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, 2011

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>):-

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- a) ASCERTAINED DANGER - The property is faced with specific and proven imminent danger, such as:
- i) A serious decline in the population of the endangered species or the other species of Outstanding Universal Value for which the property was legally established to protect, either by natural factors such as disease or by man-made factors such as poaching.
 - ii) Severe deterioration of the natural beauty or scientific value of the property, as by human settlement, construction of reservoirs which flood important parts of the property, industrial and agricultural development including use of pesticides and fertilizers, major public works, **mining**, pollution, logging, firewood collection, etc.
 - iii) Human encroachment on boundaries or in upstream areas which threaten the integrity of the property.
- b) POTENTIAL DANGER - The property is faced with major threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics. Such threats are, for example:
- i) a modification of the legal protective status of the area;
 - ii) planned resettlement or development projects within the property or so situated that the impacts threaten the property;
 - iii) outbreak or threat of armed conflict;
 - iv) **the management plan or management system is lacking or inadequate, or not fully implemented.**
 - v) threatening impacts of climatic, geological or other environmental factors.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Media Statement, *Mining threats on the rise in World Heritage sites*, 2011), Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas as a World Heritage site is considered to be one of the sites in sub-Saharan Africa that are increasingly threatened by commercial mining and oil/gas projects.