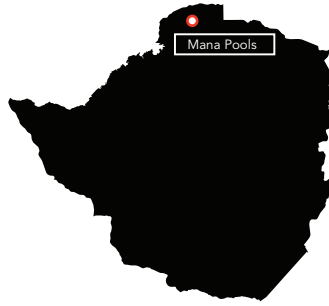


NZiRA

Travel Zimbabwe





In this Issue

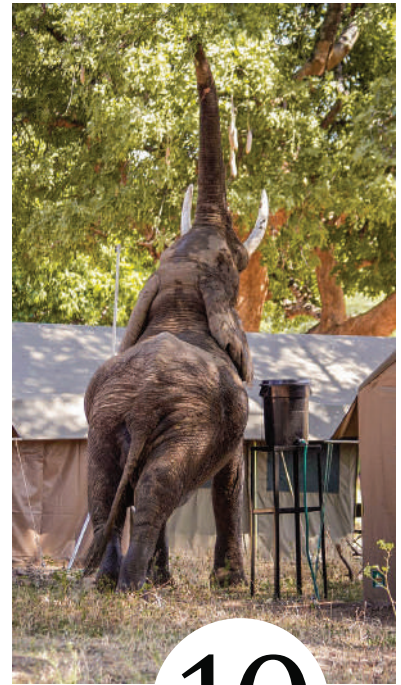
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4. CHITAKE SPRINGS

9. WILDLIFE RANGER CHALLENGE

7. CAMPING AT CHESSA

10. TRADING A HOUSE FOR A TENT

The Sky Smiles

the sky smiles as the world spins inside her
in smokeless silence
her eyes from the edge of space can see
the sea
the snow
the white rabbits celebrate the freezing

place your hand lightly on the earth
feel her breathing
the trees can hear each other again
the veins of the cities rest without a
pulse
the weeds are left to grow

only the crows are bleak

Richard Maarsdorp

Status



Restaurants



Domestic
travel



Domestic
Flights



International
Travel

"Domestic and International flights will resume on 10 September and 1 October respectively. All travellers will be required to have a PCR COVID-19 Clearance Certificate issued by a recognized facility within 48 hours from the date of departure"

- **Post Cabinet Briefing**

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Nzira Cover Photo

Lucy Broderick



Matopos by: Rudo Nhamoinesu

"All the parks are now open for overnight stay and the rates start from as little as US\$35 per facility per night and conservation fees from US\$3 per day."

Chitake Springs

Article and Images **Lucy Broderick**

You always feel that you have arrived in the Zambezi Valley when you go through the first boom gate at the bottom of the Escarpment and reach the big baobab in the middle of the road.



Chitake 2 Camp Star Trail

Our home for a few days camping among the lions under a multitude of stars. Chitake Springs, Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe

Chitake Buffaloes in the Dust

Buffaloes turn and watch us through the dust as they make their way back up the bank after having a drink in the spring. Chitake Springs, Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe.



We stopped for a small celebration and cracked open the first beer as COVID began to recede into the background. Our Land Rover nearly rolled past Camp One, over the sandy river and up towards our home for the three days- Old Chitake Two, which is situated under a large fig tree not far from the main fig that overlooks the spring.

We did a quick camp setup and some of the members went back to ZIVARU anti-poaching camp to collect firewood and water in lidded buckets. Our tents were close together because of the lions and we had a shower tent nearby for midday solar showers. Chitake is the lion's home and you must never forget that!

After a light lunch and heat-of-the-day rest, we set off for the spring around 4 pm. Another party was at the fig tree viewpoint above the steep bank, where the spring was clearly visible below. The group of people called us and kindly shared with us a sight of some lions sleeping under a bush far on the opposite bank with at least two cubs. The lions had a successful kill earlier in the day before we arrived. We watched them for a while and then three old Dagga Boys came down to drink in the dusk.

The night full of bush sounds, nightjars, angry squealing elephants being hassled by very close and loudly roaring lions; calling in a symphony of groans to each other across the riverbed and the thundering hooves of buffalo.

Then much later when all was quiet, the crunching teeth of a hyena shuffling around camp, so close to your tent you can hear it softly breathing. I recall the night I spotted a Civet in camp before it slunk off back into the bush. The multitude of stars incredibly bright in the unpolluted sky.

We were up early in the mornings with a cup of tea and packed snacks, either to the spring or to the sacred Baobab Forest on the hill to watch the sunrise, trying to find the lions while they were saying good morning before the dawn.



Scar-Faced Lion

A lion rests about 30 metres from our camp on an early August morning in Chitake, Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe. He is blind in one eye and looks like he has been through the wars.



Worried Buffaloes

Buffaloes wait around a fallen injured calf who was caught by a horn in a stampede. The buffaloes stopped for a while and then went up the bank. Sometime later the calf got up and staggered to re-join the herd.

We'd been wanting to see one close up, but this didn't happen until the last morning. Three of us went for an early drive to search for lions. About thirty metres from camp, as I was scanning the bush, I turned my head to look back and came face to face with a male lion resting under a bush right next to the road. He had a scarred face and one blackened blind eye. I softly tapped on the roof of the car (I was in the back on a sturdy safari bench).

My friends stopped and started reversing! I had to tap again urgently and hiss at them, "lion, don't reverse, just look behind you!".

Luckily the lion just looked at us and didn't seem too alarmed. We then found another male and female lying under another bush on the opposite side of the road. The same pair we had seen the day before walking along the other side of the riverbank near our camp. After taking some photos we drove back to camp and collected the others. The lions hadn't moved and didn't seem to mind us or the vehicle. Eventually, when the sun was properly up, they stretched and moved on into the bush, walking stiffly. It seems they had a rough night as they were all limping.

Sitting near the fig tree in the spring, 400-500 buffalo came down to the watering hole from the opposite bank. The noise of their hooves as they drummed the earth, sending up clouds of orange glowing dust, the visibility so low and all you could hear was bellowing, the cracking of branches and foliage, splashing, sloshing sounds as herds of buffalo galloped into the shallow water from downstream while another group came straight down the opposite bank. Suddenly the entire riverbed was full of seething bodies, all trying to drink but clearly wary and on guard.

Anything could frighten them into a stampede back up the bank, because this was the lion's "meals-on-wheels".

A poor calf got caught up and stabbed by a passing horn. He fell staggering and bellowing to the ground. The buffaloes stopped and surrounded him to see what was wrong. They then dropped their heads and turned away, going up to the top of the bank where they waited huddled in a group. Each time a buffalo passed it lowered its head, sniffed at the calf, turned and went up the slope. Sometime later after the calf seemed to have given up. He floundered his legs and bellowed pitifully all by himself. Suddenly he was lurching to his feet with a bloody gouge in the side of his flank. He slowly made his painful way up to the top and was eventually reunited with the herd. The herd then brought him down again to make sure he had a drink and then left. We hope he made it.

Suddenly the trip was over, so many once-in-a-life-time moments packed into three magical days. Your head full and in a dream-like state for days afterward.

Chitake is certainly one of the wildest and most special places on Earth. The lions, the antics of the baboons, the incredible birdlife (we counted 99 species), the elephants with their young, the sounds of the night, the insane number of stars, the ancient baobabs on top of their sacred hill. Too much to describe and too much to take in and put into words here. Perhaps you should make a plan to visit.

DIRECTIONS

To reach Chitake Springs, you go through the Nyakasikana gate and turn right instead of going left to Mana Pools. It's been ten years for me, but I recall each turn and crossing etched in my memory as if it was yesterday.

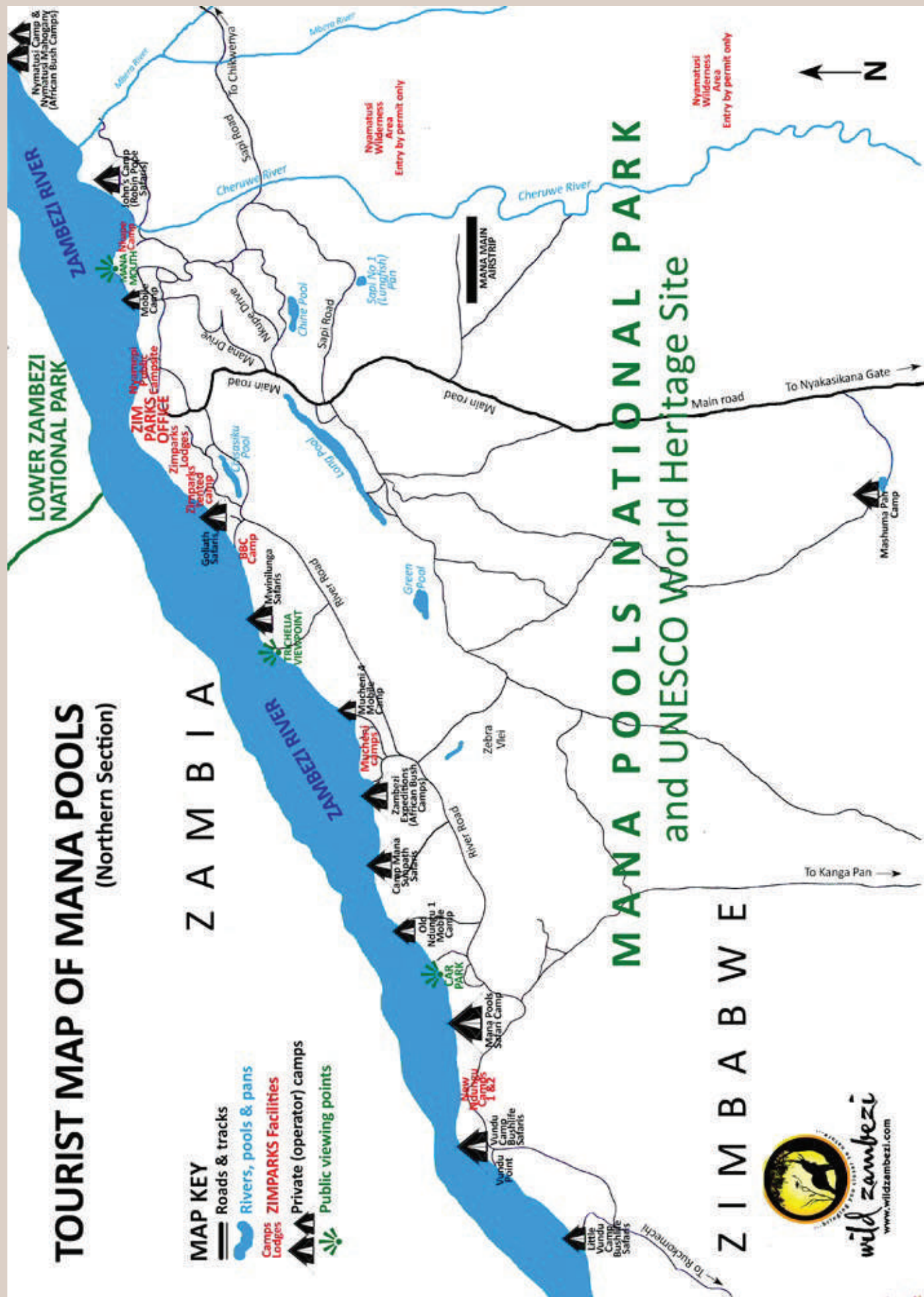
About Lucy

Lucy Broderick is a professional photographer based in Harare. She focuses mainly on corporate, event, portrait, school and sport photography. She loves adventures and being out in the bush photographing nature and wildlife. She attained a four-year Bachelor of Fine Art Degree, majoring in photography at Rhodes University from 2005-2008 and has been working professionally ever since. She is the official photographer for St. John's College and Prep schools and also photographs the Zimbabwe Sables and the National Polo teams for the Sponsor, Titan Law. She annually photographs the Ironwill Charity Eco Challenge and is a member of the ZAFP - Zimbabwe Association of Female Photographers.

To find out more and purchase Fine Art Prints of these and other photos please visit: www.lucybroderickphotography.com and follow her on Facebook @lucybroderickphotography and Instagram @lucybroderickzw.

TOURIST MAP OF MANA POOLS (Northern Section)

- MAP KEY**
- Roads & tracks
 - Rivers, pools & pans
 - Camps, Lodges, ZIMPARKS Facilities
 - Private (operator) camps
 - Public viewing points



Camping at Chessa

Article and Images **Mike Garden**



The Heroes weekend has, for me, always marked the end of Winter, as we know it, here in Zimbabwe. I try to make a point of spending that weekend somewhere close to the Zambezi River – fishing in Chirundu or running the 21km half marathon across the Kariba Dam Wall. This year I secured a last-minute booking at an exclusive campsite in the Mana Pools National Park.

The private campsite that was to be our base for the next few days was a large open space in the bush alongside the fast-flowing Zambezi River. I always opt for a spot under one of the Acacia Albida Trees that has plenty of shade allowing for the ever-present possibility of a hungry Elephant seeking out very tasty seed pods that are very ripe at this time of the year.

We arrived late afternoon and the westerly winds were howling straight through the place where I wanted to assemble the tent – quite a challenge – so there were several short stops to sip a cold beer and figure out a sensible way around the issue.

One of the great things about camping in Mana is the night sounds that start soon after the sun goes down: the long repetitive moaning of lion followed by the “Hooooooo, Hooooo” of the laughing hyena.

I flashed the bright torchlight and checked out the surroundings looking for wild eyes – I got to see a lone side backed jackal on the first inspection whilst the second showed a hyena circling. This always prompts a further check of the camp to see that there are no easy targets for any daring forage into the camp by an unwanted nocturnal animal.

It is a well-known fact that Hippos venture out of the water at night in search of verdant pastures so I made sure the tent was far away from any potential eating spots.

On a game drive on day 2, we were witness to the display of antelope: - Eland, Kudu, Impala and Waterbuck as well as Zebra. We stopped the car to photograph an Elephant walking hip-high in a big waterhole and whilst watching we saw three warthogs walk out of their “home” – they were living inside a large fallen tree trunk – something I’ve never seen before.

After supper, I like to just sit with a beer taking in the true African night sounds. On the one night, a small family of elephants crossed the 15m stretch of water between the mainland and an island. I shone my torch on the spectacle and was privileged to see the two elephants guide their baby across the water – they were both shoulder-deep in water whilst the offspring was completely submerged with a small little trunk sucking precious air in between. There has been so much interesting literature written about the unusual creatures and I would urge any potential camper to read some of it before their next trip to the bush.

TIPS

If you have never experienced camping, then I recommend you contact National Parks and book a camping trip before the onset of the rainy season. There are a few initial costs involved with setting yourself up for camping but thereafter all you need is to buy your food, drinks and petrol. In my opinion, the Big Sky shop in Pomona Shopping centre has most of the kit you need for a comfortable camping trip.

DIRECTIONS

After a 4-hour drive from Harare you turn off the main highway onto a 30 km stretch of corrugated dirt road, and on the final 47km stretch, you pass-through magnificent Mopani trees reaching high into the sky displaying stunning sets of ochre coloured leaves. A short while later you turn the corner to see a very bare looking open plain before stopping at Long Pool to view the ominous sight of a multitude of Crocodiles lazing on the far bank keeping their beady eyes open for a stray impala or baboon.





Wildlife Ranger Challenge



The Savé Valley Conservancy is proud to be part of this initiative and has been granted US\$50,000 emergency relief funding as Phase 1 of the Challenge and we now have the opportunity to raise more funds through the marathon.



The Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC) is one of the largest wildlife areas in Africa and is home to an IUCN-listed 'Key 1' population of black rhinos and an 'Important 1' population of white rhinos which are under the protection of the SVC's Special Species Protection Unit (SSPU) due to the ongoing poaching threat.

The SSPU is expertly managed by a private contractor Anti-Poaching Tracking Specialists (ATS) and comprises 40 highly trained men, all of whom are expert trackers who are supremely fit and equipped with semi-automatic rifles and radios. The unit works in tandem with Belgian Malinois dogs, an Italian German Shepherd tracking dog, a secure radio network, 4x4 vehicles, motorbikes and the recent introduction of drones. The SSPU covers 2,800 km² of bush terrain with minimum resources on a skeleton budget considering the size of the area to be protected. The private ranches that make up the Conservancy provide back-up in the form of ranch scouts who conduct daily patrols, snare sweeps and surveillance patrols which offer daily coverage of each ranch.

Rangers across Africa have had their salaries significantly cut and in some cases lost their jobs due to the devastating economic impact of Covid-19.

A global public fundraising and awareness campaign was launched by Tusk on 31st July World Ranger Day in conjunction with a Wildlife Ranger Challenge. Tusk has partnered with Natural State and the Scheinberg Relief Fund for the campaign which has an initial goal of raising US\$10 million in total for a Ranger Fund. These funds will be distributed to protected areas in the greatest need of support. The Scheinberg Relief Fund has already generously committed up to a US\$5 million match to any monies provided by the public.

Ranger teams are now uniting through the Wildlife Ranger Challenge to raise funds to support thousands of their colleagues in the field. Ranger teams from across Africa will compete in a 21km half marathon race on October 3rd, 2020 to raise awareness and funds. The public can participate in the race virtually and donate to the cause.

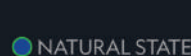
On October 3rd, 2020, up to 50 ranger teams spanning the African continent will unite to compete in a half-marathon, raising awareness about the hardship Wildlife Rangers currently face.



YOU TOO, CAN EFFECT CHANGE!

The public can donate and join the race by running, walking or cycling the 5, 10, or 21 km, and take the Ranger Quiz!

Assemble your running partners. Join the race to save Africa's wildlife.
REGISTER AT www.WildlifeRangerChallenge.org
Do you know what mammal has the longest tail? Find out by taking the Beginner Wildlife Ranger Challenge Quiz at:
www.WildlifeRangerChallenge.org/knowledge
JOIN US IN THE SAVÉ VALLEY CONSERVANCY!
Email: admin@savevalleyconservancy.org



*“Fill your life with experiences, not things.
Have stories to tell, not stuff to show”*



Trading a House for a Tent

.....Continued

Article and Images **Cindy Tyrrell**

The seven, beyond remarkable months that I was privileged to work at Mana are encapsulated in the quote above. As when living in such a magnificent, wilderness area, you can let go of all other worlds and truly live, experience a life without the extraneous ‘stuff’ and appreciate the very simplest of things in life, which are sometimes difficult to do in suburban existence.

On looking back over the diaries that I wrote whilst there, I smiled widely at recalling the many occurrences I had recorded and the people I met.

A stand out recollection was the continual challenge to provide excellent and varied menus for our guests each day, several of whom had specific dietary requirements. The fortnight shopping which was usually done in Chirundu or Kariba; not knowing if various vegetables, specific meat cuts or even the basics such as flour would be available, not to mention the various alcoholic beverages.

This culinary challenge led to some creative menus when certain items were in short supply and having various members of other camps popping in to ask if we had any of a specific vegetable, or other items to loan them when they had run out. Needless to say, we had to do the same at times ourselves.

I recall one particularly challenging dietary requirement for a guest from the States; a lactose free diet. After organizing lactose free milk, yoghurt etc. to be sent up from Harare, she astounded us all one evening, when the cook had made a delicious cheesecake dessert for the other guests and a delightful fruit salad for her.

However, when she saw this beautifully presented dessert being served to the other guests, she declined her fruit salad and said she would prefer the cheesecake instead, made with ordinary crème cheese and normal milk!

Another potential problem about living out in the bush, is the replacement of items if they break, and this does lead to some creative thinking and having to ‘make a plan’. I had to do this when our feather duster was down to its last stumps of balding feathers. However, as I took a walk beyond the perimeters of the camp in search of suitable replacements, I came across a plethora of scattered hornbill feathers, the body of which had been the supper for some raptor or another. I then used the feathers I had collected to replace the old stumps and a beautiful, efficient duster saw us through for the season.



Our camp was situated on the Zambezi flood plain, with a flat access to the river for all animals to get down to drink easily. Each day presented a marvellous variety of game to watch, the antics of the baboons as they frolicked, playing on the termite mounds and swinging from the branches of the Acacia Albida trees. The herds of impala, zebra, waterbuck, and regular visitations from elephants, sometimes singly, yet more often we saw small herds of a mum and her calf, together with others.

These remarkable mammals soon became used to us being around and there were many occasions where the small calves took a short cut from drinking at the river. When their mum walked around the periphery of the gazebo, they would simply walk through the tent, much to the guests and our delight at seeing them in such proximity.

I had an up-close and personal experience of these magnificent creatures one afternoon, when the guests were out on a game drive. I sat on the patio of a vacant tent, right on the periphery of the camp, sewing some tablecloths, when I drifted off to sleep in the heat. I awoke with a start, hearing a noise to my right. Looking up, my coke can had been knocked over by a large, grey trunk which was sniffing a couple of meters away from me. A large, female elephant had walked along the side of the tent I was sitting in front of, now so close that I could easily count her eyelashes as we eyeballed each other. After what seemed like an age, - I think I was holding my breath during this time - she slowly carried on down to the Zambezi, followed by a tiny calf and several other youngsters behind her.

One large male elephant popularly known as 'Spike', became very accustomed to being around us, especially when we were cleaning the gazebo tent, or laying the table for a meal. Spike often trundled around the tent picking up the various seed pods to eat with his trunk and sometimes even knocked over the water container used for guests to wash their hands which was at the entrance to the gazebo, seemingly unperturbed by our presence.

A lasting memory on my penultimate day at the camp, while relaxing with the owner's partner, was the sight of a pack of wild dogs charging onto the flood plain right in front of us, in hot pursuit of a few impalas that were trying to make their escape. The dogs made a swift kill and after the remarkably few minutes it took to devour the carcass, one female wild dog moved closer to us, calling for her pup that appeared from the undergrowth, where it then enjoyed the regurgitated meal its mother presented it with, not more than 50 metres away from where we were sitting.

Being a secret pyromaniac, my love for fire making dated way back to when I was still a child. Camping in the wilds of a rain soaked Scotland, I delighted in sometimes being the first to rise in the camp at Mana, where I then came into my own! Gathering small sticks and leaves from around the periphery of the camp, some elephant dung, well dried by the heat of the African sun. I enjoyed indulging in my never lost, childhood pleasure in fire making; the delight in seeing those first wisps of smoke emerge, then turn into flame. This morning ritual was augmented by having a time-dented kettle which could tell many a story of what it had been witness to in the years of slowly simmering throughout the day.

All those that have spent time in the bush after a rain will certainly identify with the extraordinary smell of wet earth after a rain, taking one to a primeval place that exists within all of us - often unrecognized until this special smell assails one's olfactory organs.

Despite all these beyond remarkable sights and encounters with the various species that augmented the enjoyment of both ourselves and our guests time at Mana, the stand out aspects of my time there can be broken down into the basic, yet intrinsic aspects of smells, sounds, colours and textures.





Manapools Activities

1. Chitake spring
2. Kasawe spring
3. The 4 pools (Chisasiko, Long Pool, Green Pool, Chine Pool)
4. Sundowners at Mana Mouth
5. Nyamatusi wilderness
6. Chitake Gorge
7. Nyamepi Acacia Woodland
8. Canoeing
9. Fishing
10. Unguided walks