

2024

Impact Report



MISSION

Leading conservation & community efforts to ensure an ecologically sustainable Lower Zambezi.

“The future of the Lower Zambezi depends on what we protect today.”



ABOUT US

Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) is a dedicated non-profit committed to safeguarding Zambia’s precious wildlife and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources in the Lower Zambezi. Since its founding in 1994, CLZ has anchored its work around three powerful pillars: Wildlife Protection, Environmental Education, and Community Empowerment. At the heart of this mission is a strong partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), working together to protect the Lower Zambezi ecosystem for generations to come.

Protected Area

+20,000 km²

Area managed made up of Lower Zambezi National Park + adjacent Game Management Areas

Image cover: François d’Elbée

Dear CLZ Partners, Friends, Members, and Donors

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I present to you Conservation Lower Zambezi’s 2024 Impact Report. This past year has been a testament to the power of resilience, collaboration, and the unwavering commitment of our team, partners, and communities in safeguarding one of Zambia’s most vital ecosystems.

In the face of unprecedented challenges—drought, rising human-wildlife conflict, and mounting pressure on natural resources—our collective efforts have not wavered. From expanding inclusive environmental education and championing sustainable livelihoods, to strengthening anti-poaching patrols and pioneering community-led fisheries management, CLZ has continued to build a holistic conservation model grounded in partnership and respect for nature and people alike.

Our impact this year is not just measured in hectares protected or snares removed, but in the lives touched—the students inspired, the farmers empowered, the communities united by the common purpose of conservation. We have deepened relationships with key government stakeholders, expanded the reach of our education and livelihood programmes, and celebrated ten years of Rubatano, a powerful symbol of unity through sport and environmental stewardship.

None of this would be possible without your continued belief in our mission. As we look ahead, we are more committed than ever to fostering a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Lower Zambezi. Thank you for standing with us.

With gratitude and hope,

Jill Morse

Chairperson, Conservation Lower Zambezi



Image: Michael Hensman

FACTS 2024

Wildlife protection

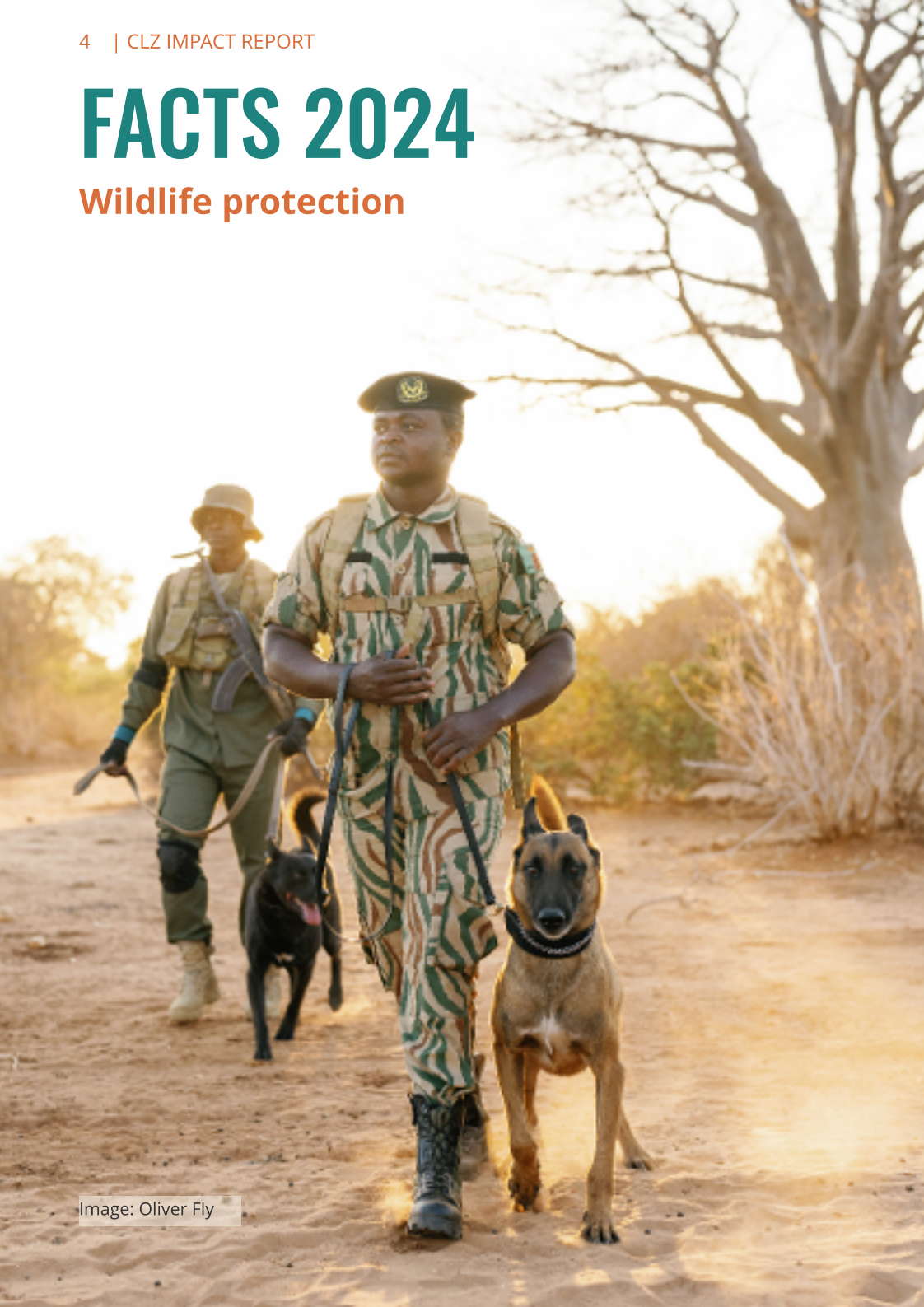


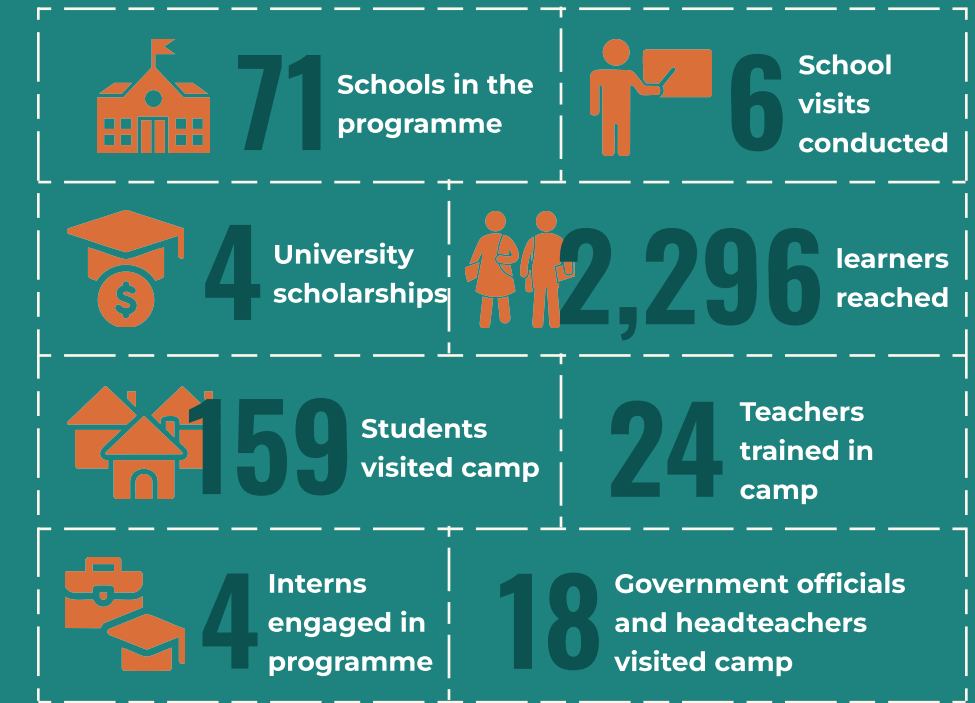
Image: Oliver Fly



Image: Rachel Rebibo

FACTS 2024

Environmental Education



FACTS 2024

Community Empowerment



Image: François d'Elbée



Image: Majd Saf

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

For over three decades, CLZ has worked in close partnership with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), united by a shared commitment to protecting the Lower Zambezi. Over the years, CLZ’s law enforcement efforts have evolved significantly, now featuring advanced technologies that enable round-the-clock monitoring and a proactive stance against poaching.

At the heart of these operations is a fully equipped Operations Centre, continuously staffed by a dedicated team from both CLZ and DNPW. This team ensures real-time data collection and safeguards the wellbeing of all field teams working on the frontlines of conservation.

Our comprehensive Law Enforcement Programme is made up of multiple teams;

On the ground:

- DNPW Patrols
- Community Scout Patrols
- Dog Unit
- Rapid Deployment Team
- Investigations and Intelligence Units
- Forward Operating bases in Lower Zambezi National Park

In the air:

- Aerial Patrols
- Helicopter Operations

Image: Luke Katemba

On the River:

- Marine Unit
- River Patrols
- Community Fishing Monitoring Unit
- Cross-border collaboration

In the Courts:

- Court case monitoring
- Engaging Magistrates in conservation efforts
- Supporting the National Prosecutions Authority
- Cross-border collaboration

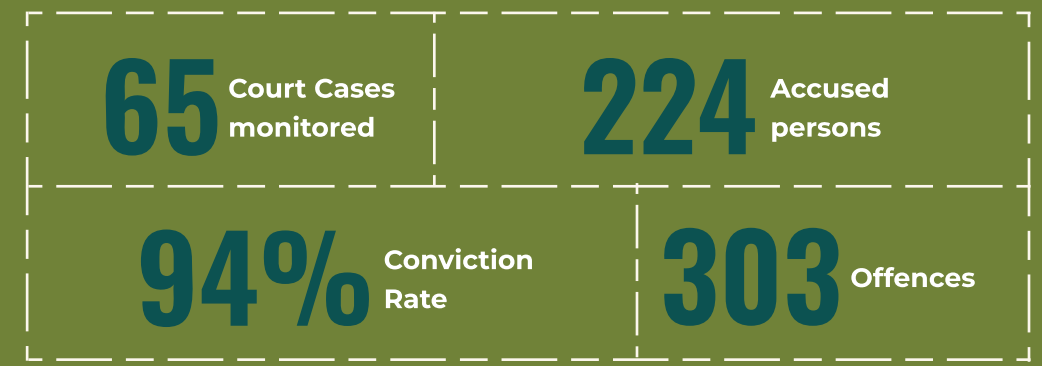


WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Legal Assistance

In 2018, Conservation Lower Zambezi (CLZ) launched the Legal Assistance Project, and over the past seven years, it has achieved significant progress. In 2024, CLZ’s legal assistant—guided and supported by Wildlife Crime Prevention—made notable strides in combating environmental crime in the Lower Zambezi region. Key accomplishments included training law enforcement officers, facilitating environmental exposure visits for magistrates to better understand the conditions faced by officers in the field, and closely monitoring high-profile criminal cases.

High-profile cases involving illegal timber trafficking, wildlife poaching, and corruption within enforcement agencies highlighted the seriousness of environmental crimes. The successful prosecutions and asset forfeitures sent a clear message of zero tolerance, reinforcing the importance of continued collaboration, capacity building, and anti-corruption efforts to protect Zambia’s natural resources.



Images: Chilufya Chongo

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Community Scouts

CLZ works with 147 Wildlife Police Officers (WPO) from DNPW, alongside 50 Community Scouts (CS) who are proudly recruited from surrounding local communities.

This year, we were able to expand our impact by training seven more female Community Scouts—each joining our all-female scout unit, Kufadza—a name that means Inspire in the local language. These brave women are not only protecting wildlife, but also blazing a trail for future generations.

*“We Protect, We Conserve, We Inspire”
- Kufadza Scouts*

55% Of all patrols	35% Of CS are women	52 CS employed
51 Suspects	52 Drying racks	33 Poacher's camps
322 Snares	3 Firearms	5 Ammo



Images: Harry Vlachos for The Guardian

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Dog Unit

Now in its 8th year, the DNPW–CLZ Detection and Tracking Dog Unit remains a key player in combating wildlife crime. Our two Belgian Malinois and their 8-(wo)man handler team received further training this year, strengthening their field performance.

In 2022, we launched a pilot with two local village dogs. Skye, though capable, lacked long-term drive and has since found a loving home in Lusaka, where she enjoys a well-earned, joyful life. Smoke, the second dog, continues with the unit and is steadily improving with ongoing support.

18 Poachers	343 Kg of bushmeat
5 Firearms	8 Ammo
	77 Snares

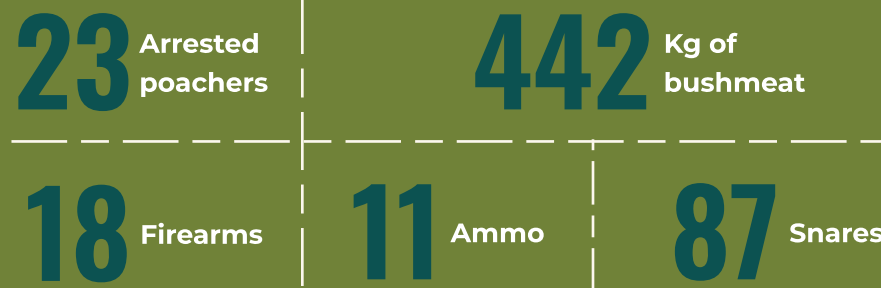


Image: Oliver Fly

WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Rapid Deployment Team

Established in 2018, the Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) was created to proactively address illegal activities around the Lower Zambezi National Park before they escalate. Their mission is to swiftly intervene and respond to any threats across the Lower Zambezi landscape. In 2024, the RDT once again demonstrated its effectiveness. The team was directly involved in the arrest of 23 poachers and played a critical role in apprehending 170 out of 175 illegal miners — a testament to their rapid response and operational precision.



Images: Jeroen van Rooijen



WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Marine Unit

Launched in 2022, the Marine Unit was established to strengthen protection along the Zambezi River, targeting illegal fishing and cross-border activities. Although primarily focused on marine environments, the unit has proven its versatility by contributing to broader conservation efforts.

In 2024, the Marine Unit apprehended 150 out of 175 illegal miners, and detained 17 illegal fishermen. Their work in recovering 4.6 kilometers of illegal fishing nets — nearly the entire 4.9 kilometers recorded — significantly curbed destructive fishing practices. Additionally, the team confiscated 213 kilograms of bushmeat and removed 96 deadly snares, making a vital contribution to the protection of both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

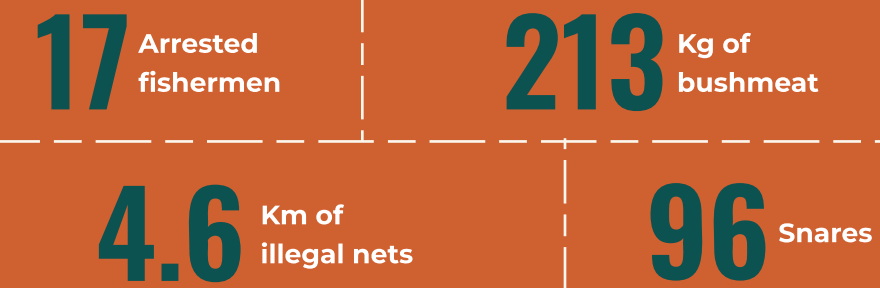


Image: Culture Collective



WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Aerial support

Aerial support has been a game-changer in strengthening our conservation and law enforcement efforts. In 2024, with 107 hours of fixed-wing patrols and 15 hours of helicopter operations, our aerial assets delivered critical surveillance and rapid response across vast and challenging terrains.

The aerial team played a key role in identifying and reporting 8 drying racks and 5 poacher camps, disrupting illegal activities before they could escalate. They were also instrumental in locating 22% of all poached elephants discovered — allowing for swift investigations into potential poaching incidents. These results highlight the indispensable role of aerial support in monitoring, deterring, and combating threats to wildlife and ecosystems from above.

Over 100
illegal miners arrested in the park



107
*hours of fixed wing
aerial patrols*

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

School Visits

Since 2004, CLZ hosts school visits from all the Game Management Areas surrounding the Lower Zambezi National Park, providing students with immersive conservation experiences. This year marked an important milestone as, for the first time, two students with disabilities and their sign language teacher were invited to participate at the CLZ Basecamp.

This step towards greater inclusivity ensures that children with disabilities are equally engaged in conservation education alongside their peers.

Highlights of the school visits included debates and poetry competitions, which nurtured students' creativity, presentation skills, and confidence. Winners received prizes recognising both their individual achievements and contributions to their schools.

In addition, the programme's HIV/AIDS awareness component emphasized the importance of abstinence, informed decision-making, and healthy lifestyle choices, helping students understand the risks associated with unsafe behaviours and empowering them to safeguard their futures.

159 students in camp

Images: Dominica Spivey



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Scholarships & Interns

The scholarship programme has empowered students from the Environmental Education Programme (EEP) to pursue higher education in wildlife and environmental studies. By supporting young conservationists, the programme is inspiring a shift in mindset and creating future leaders who value the Lower Zambezi's natural heritage. Currently, three former EEP participants are studying conservation-related fields at universities in Zambia.

Our internship programme connects university students with real-world conservation experience. Last year, four interns gained practical skills at CLZ, contributing to their career growth. Since its launch, the programme has supported 24 students, many of whom have secured jobs in conservation — including one who now manages our Basecamp.

"I owe a great debt of gratitude to CLZ for the profound impact they have had on my life. They are the reason I can pursue my dreams and achieve success."

- Linety Habasimbi, scholarship student CLZ

24 interns supported



Images: Oliver Fly

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Conservation Quiz and Debate Competition

The Chiawa Schools Debate Competition engaged Grade 6 and 7 students at the primary level and Grade 9 and 10 students at the secondary level, promoting environmental awareness and critical thinking among young learners.

Throughout the year, we conducted Outreach Programmes in 71 schools across five project areas: Luangwa, Rufunsa, Chongwe, Chiawa, and Chinyunyu. The goal was to foster environmental stewardship and find solutions to threats facing wildlife and ecosystems in the Lower Zambezi region. Our Outreach Programme also integrates HIV/AIDS awareness as a cross-cutting theme, empowering students with vital knowledge to make informed, healthy choices while nurturing a more holistic understanding of conservation and wellbeing.

71 schools in the programme



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Empowering Educators

Teacher training is an essential component of the Environmental Education Programme (EEP). This year, we collaborated with teachers from Rufunsa and Chongwe to review and enhance the conservation club curriculum, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful. As key implementers, CLZ mentors now anchor the programme in 71 schools across five areas, fostering greater ownership and success within the schools.

A visit from the Provincial Education Officer and the District Education Board Secretary marked a crucial step in strengthening the EEP. Together, we reviewed challenges at the school level and secured stronger support for integrating environmental education into the curriculum, deepening our partnership with the Ministry of Education and laying the foundation for long-term impact.

2,296 pupils reached



COMMUNITY

Community-led Conservation

CLZ is advancing community-led conservation to safeguard the Lower Zambezi fish population. By establishing the Chiawa and Namoomba Fishery Management Areas, local communities have taken ownership of their natural resources in alignment with Zambia's decentralisation policy.

A 30-kilometre stretch of river has been designated as a Fishery Reserve Area, representing a significant step toward long-term ecological protection. Regular patrols, licensing efforts, and conservation agreements have helped replace destructive fishing practices with more sustainable alternatives. Through a net exchange programme, four conservation agreements were signed, leading to the confiscation of over 118 monofilament nets—many of which are now reused as nursery beds and seedling covers, while excess nets are safely destroyed



252 legal fishing nets distributed

55 river patrols conducted

168 fishing licenses registered

Images: Majd Saf + Nzala Hikapulwe

COMMUNITY

Alternative Livelihoods

CLZ has continued to support alternative livelihoods by promoting horticulture enterprises, strengthening both community resilience and economic opportunity. In Chiawa, five horticulture groups were supported, directly benefiting 71 individuals and indirectly supporting 355 household members. A learning exchange visit to Nsumbu offered valuable insights that helped shift community perceptions—encouraging the acceptance of Fisheries Management Areas, which were initially resisted in Chiawa.

Despite challenges, including increased elephant incursions linked to the 2024 drought, the demonstration farms have shown remarkable resilience. Several gardens were damaged, yet communities remain committed to improving their lives through sustainable enterprises.

252 farmers trained

5 horticulture enterprises



Image: Johnson Tembo - Impulse Africa



Image: Rachel Rebibo

HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

Living with Elephants

To promote human-wildlife coexistence and reduce conflict, CLZ, in collaboration with the Community Resource Boards (CRB) and DNPW, conducted anti-snare campaigns and living with elephants workshops across four villages.

Infrastructure developments also played a critical role in enhancing community safety and resilience. In Mafungautsi village, a solar-powered water system and borehole were installed, significantly improving access to clean water. This reduced the need for residents to travel long distances to the Kafue River—lowering the risk of dangerous encounters with hippos and crocodiles.

Similarly, in Kashiki village, a solar-powered water system has not only improved access to clean water but also supported sustainable livelihoods and enhanced overall community well-being. These efforts are helping communities thrive while coexisting with local wildlife.

279 people in workshops



HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE

Rapid Response

Through the Pro-Nature Enterprises: Sustainable Fisheries Co-Management Project, CLZ provided vital support to DNPW in managing over 222 cases of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) within the Chiawa Game Management Area.

This rapid response initiative has strengthened collaboration between DNPW and local communities, addressing pressing issues such as livestock predation by crocodiles and crop damage by elephants, hippos, buffaloes, and baboons.

A motorbike stationed in Chiawa significantly enhanced response times. Tragically, in June, the long-serving officer based in Chiawa was severely injured in a road accident, resulting in the loss of his leg and the destruction of the motorbike—marking a somber moment in an otherwise impactful programme.

222 HWC cases supported



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Rubatano

CLZ hosted the 10th annual Rubatano Community Sports Day - (Rubatano means Unity in the local language), uniting over 390 football and netball players and more than 1,000 spectators. Themed “Water Is Life”, the event celebrated unity and promoted coexistence between people and wildlife through sport and cultural expression.

Teams competed with passion under the sun, community cooks served over 600 meals, and Conservation Club students helped keep the grounds clean. A local dance group entertained the crowd, adding to the lively atmosphere.

For the third consecutive year, a UK-based company supported the event through fundraising and hands-on involvement. Trophies went to Sharpshooters (football) and Chakanaka (netball), with additional prizes awarded to top performers and dedicated students. Rubatano remains a powerful celebration of conservation and community spirit in the Lower Zambezi.

Images: Rachel Rebibo



RESEARCH

Pangolins

In partnership with Wildlife Crime Prevention, CLZ participated in a post-release monitoring programme focused on pangolins—one of the world’s most trafficked mammals. The initiative aimed to assess the survival and movement of rehabilitated pangolins in the wild. Early findings from the pilot study are promising, with an 82% survival rate one month after release among 11 monitored individuals. Data is now being compiled into a manuscript that will inform future pangolin conservation strategies.

Developing CLZ's Research Pillar

CLZ is establishing a dedicated Research Pillar to strengthen its foundation in evidence-based conservation. This applied research arm will generate actionable insights to guide and enhance CLZ’s strategic initiatives across wildlife protection, community empowerment, and environmental education.

By building baseline data and studying the complex interactions within the Lower Zambezi’s ecosystems and communities, this pillar will ensure that conservation strategies are not only effective and adaptive but also grounded in robust scientific understanding.

Image: Frances Hannah



NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

Over the past decade, CLZ has significantly expanded its conservation footprint in the Lower Zambezi, growing from an expenditure of \$500,000 in 2014 to \$2 million in 2024. This remarkable progress has come with a natural increase in staff, programmes, and operations.

Our original management office, built in 2004, could no longer keep up with the pace of our growth. With most of our management team living at Basecamp in the heart of the Lower Zambezi Valley, the need for more space became critical. In response, construction of a new office began in November 2023, and by December 2024, we proudly moved in.

This new space is more than just bricks and mortar—it's a reflection of how far we've come and a foundation for all that's ahead.

CLZ also enhanced connectivity by installing internet communications at Chongwe Gate, Chongwe Confluence, and Kulefu Forward Operating Base, located in the heart of the National Park. In addition, we reinstated water reticulation systems at both Chongwe Gate and Jeki Airstrip. As part of our continued infrastructure improvements, we also upgraded the solar power system at the DNPW Headquarters in Chilanga, in partnership with IFAW.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, CLZ proudly marked a major milestone—its 30th anniversary. Over the past three decades, we have remained deeply committed to nurturing local talent, building capacity, and empowering individuals within our community. Today, we are proud to employ nearly 100 dedicated staff members—an impressive 99% of whom are Zambian nationals—reflecting our long-standing investment in local leadership and sustainability.

In celebration of this landmark year, we established a dedicated Skills Training Committee to further professional development across the organisation. Through this initiative, we hosted essential training sessions in First Aid and Snake Handling, equipping our team with practical, life-saving skills.

We also supported the continued growth of several colleagues in their professional journeys:

- Our Legal Assistant commenced studies for a Legal Practitioner’s Degree,
- Our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Manager pursued an advanced MEL qualification,
- One of our drivers achieved his Transfer Guide Licence, and
- Two DNPW officers received educational support to pursue their university degrees.

Further strengthening our commitment to knowledge exchange, we facilitated a transformative learning visit to Botswana, where our Education Manager and Basecamp Manager connected with Coaching Conservation. This immersive experience offered valuable insights into cutting-edge approaches to human-wildlife conflict mitigation and conservation education, which will help shape and enrich our own programs moving forward.



First Aid Training



Snake Handling Training



Learning Exchange trip



Solomon Chidunuka Run



Tonse Day



Conservations Careers Fair

STAFF WELFARE

CLZ is proud to call the stunning Lower Zambezi home. While our Basecamp’s remote, wildlife-rich location is a privilege, it also presents challenges—particularly when it comes to regular exercise and travel for our staff. To support their well-being, we organise activities that keep everyone motivated, active, and connected.

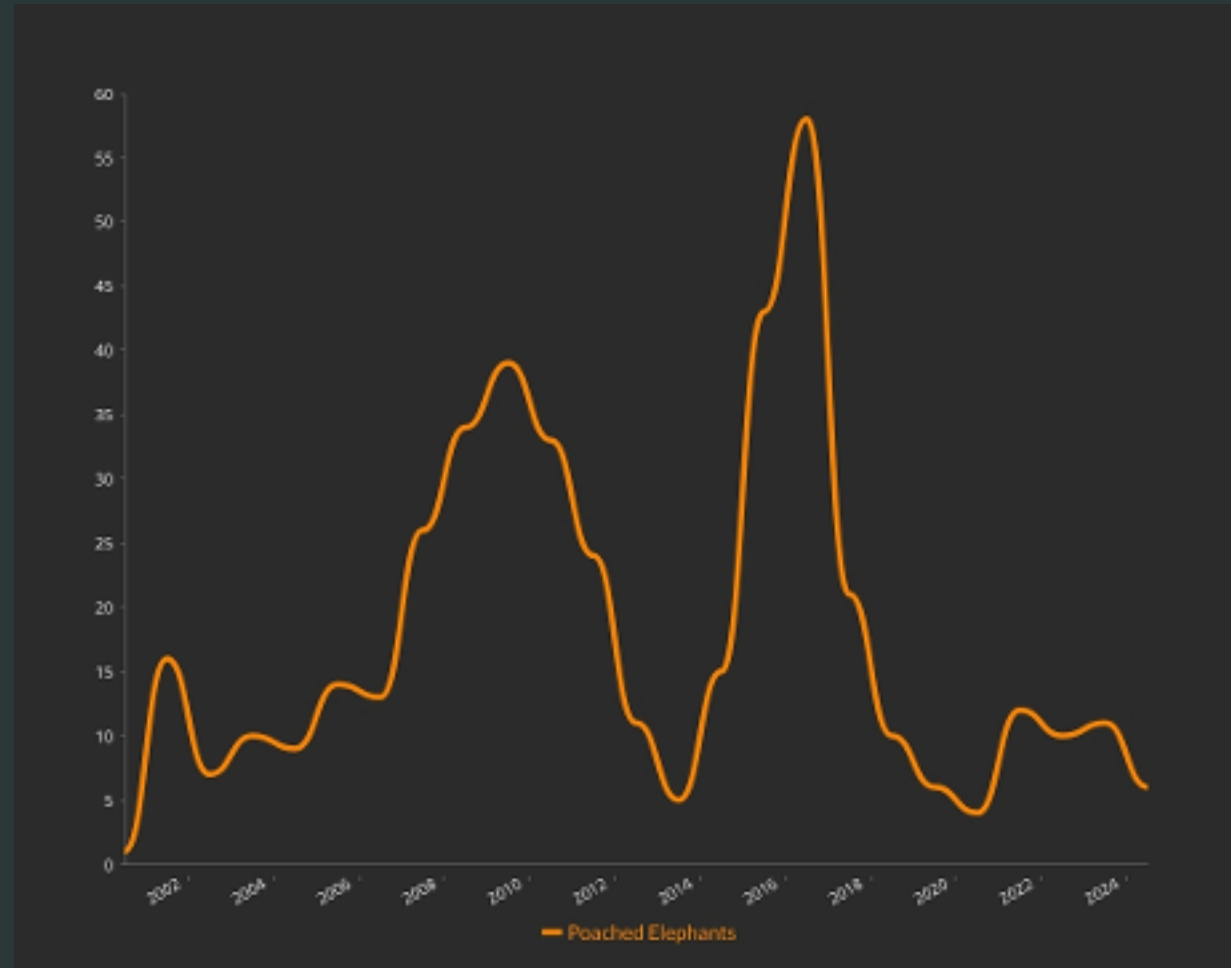
This year, a group took part in the Solomon Chidunuka Run, and our male and female Rangers proudly represented CLZ in the Wildlife Ranger Challenge. We also participated in the Conservation Careers Fair and national events such as World Environment Day, Labour Day, and Independence Day.

To wrap up the year, we come together for Tonse Day—a joyful celebration where staff and management unite to reflect, reconnect, and celebrate our shared successes.



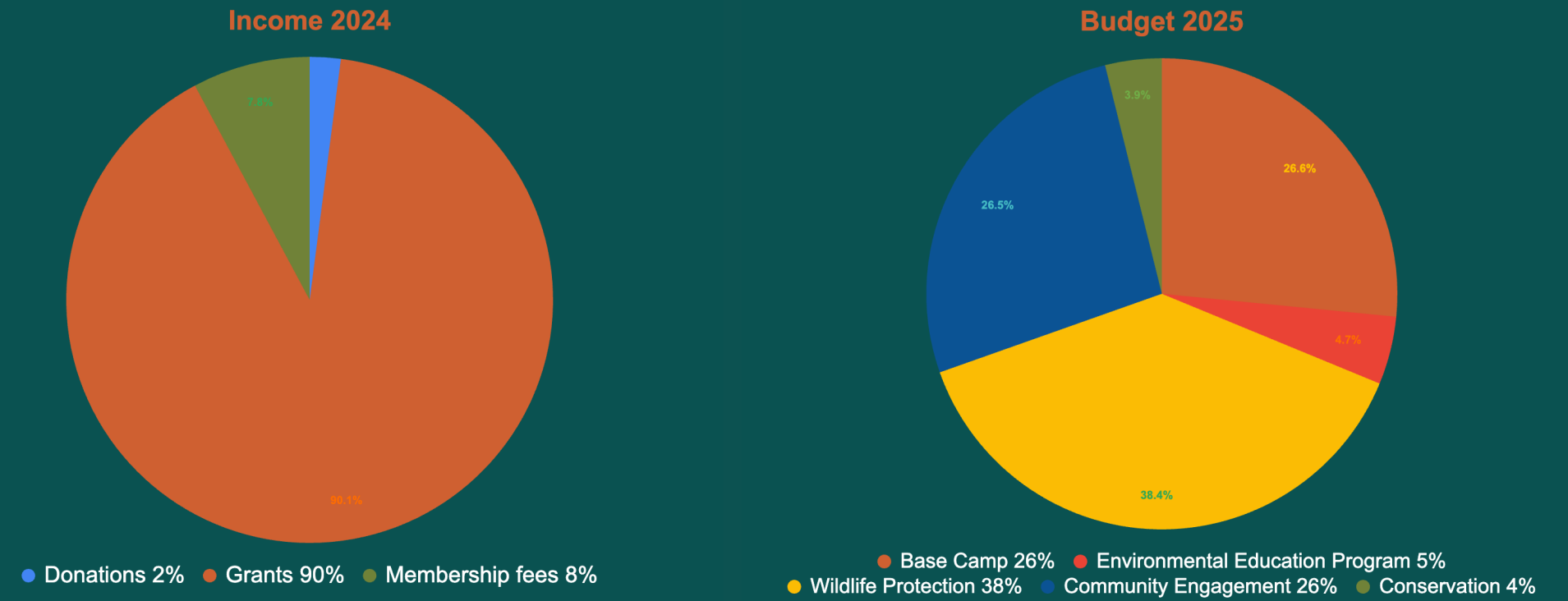
Wildlife Ranger Challenge

ANNUAL POACHED ELEPHANTS IN THE LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK 2001 - 2024



FINANCES

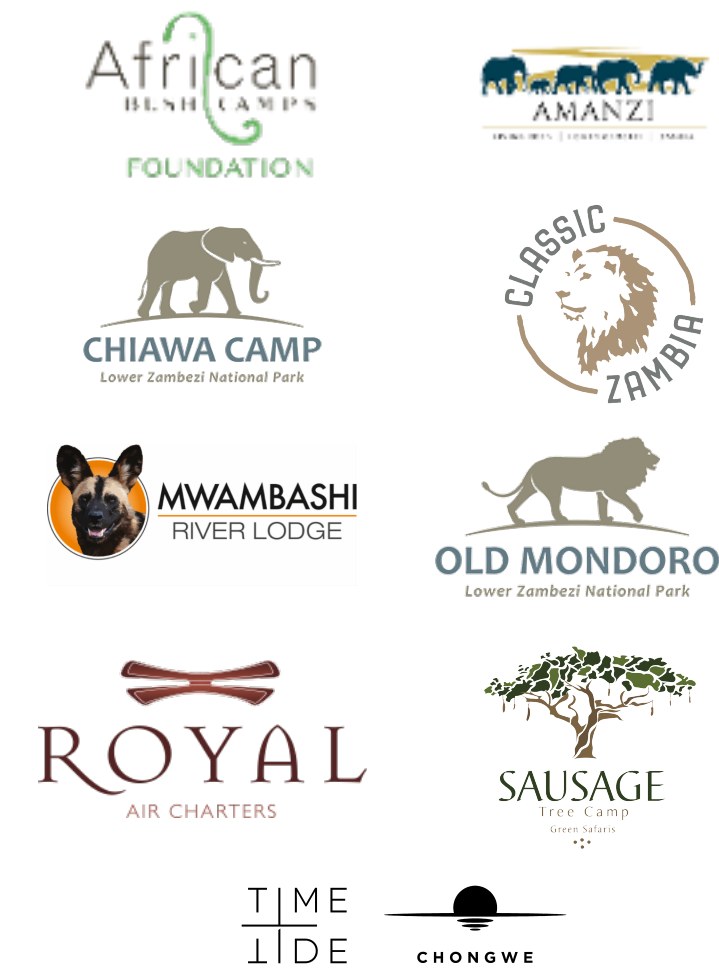
CLZ's accounts are managed in-house and audited annually by an independent professional auditing firm. In 2024, CLZ recorded an income of \$2,028,315 and an expenditure of \$1,735,434. Funding was secured through a combination of grants, donations, memberships, and fundraising efforts. The majority of these funds were designated for CLZ's core pillars: wildlife protection, environmental education, and community empowerment.



MEMBERS

In 2024, CLZ's administration and operational costs were significantly supported through its membership programme. Four operators in the Lower Zambezi, along with corporate members, families, and individual supporters, contributed approximately **US\$158,773**. This membership support is essential to sustaining the core functions of CLZ, ensuring the continuity of our conservation, education, and community empowerment efforts.

Platinum



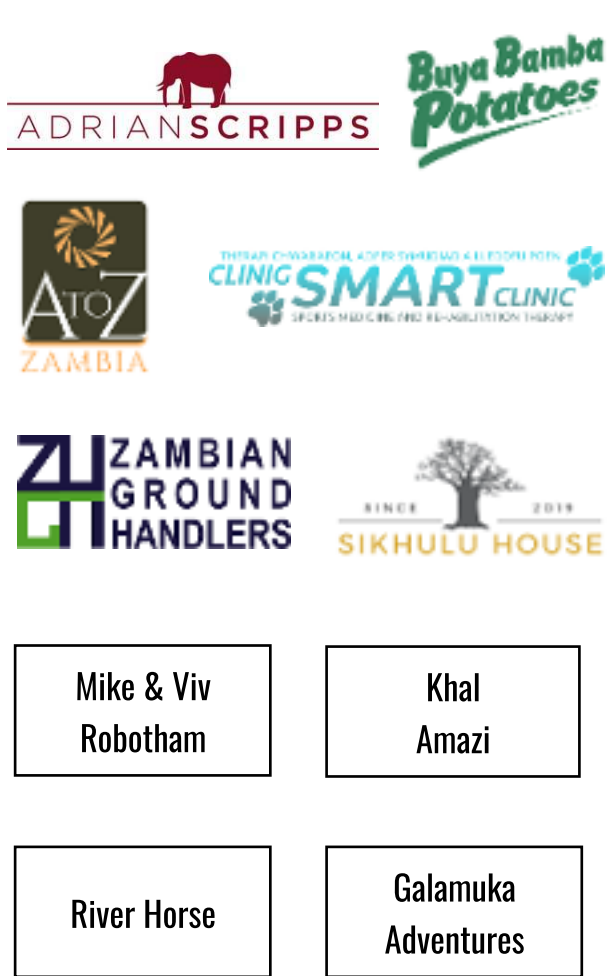
Gold



Silver



Corporate



PROGRAMME DONORS

CLZ's conservation impact in 2024 was made possible through the generous support of government institutions, wildlife NGOs, philanthropic foundations, companies, and individual donors. These contributions directly enabled the implementation of our core programmes in wildlife protection, environmental education, and community empowerment. **We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our 2024 programme donors for their vital partnership.**



GOVERNANCE

Board

As a society, CLZ is governed by a Board of annually elected members. In May 2024, the following board members were elected:

Chairperson: Jill Morse

Vice-Chairperson: Francesca Cooke and Riccardo Garbaccio

Treasurer: Peter Malao

Secretary: Carrol Fleming

Chief Executive Officer: Ian Stevenson

Other Board Members: Grant Cumings, Mehluli Malisa, Stephen Mwansa, Suzyo Kumwenda Mwanza, Jelous “Chops” Nyandowo, Kristina Kesch, Juri Van Zyl.

Management

CEO: Ian Stevenson

CFAO: John Chituwo

Operations Manager: Rabson Tembo

Finance and Projects Manager: Hanneke Hogerheijde

Environmental Education Manager: Besa Kaoma

Grants Manager: Donovan Rule

PR & Fundraising Manager: Frances Hannah

Legal Assistant: Chilufya Chongo

Lower Zambezi Fisheries Management Project Manager: Davy Mwanamambo

Enterprise Development Specialist: Nosiku Njekwa

Fisheries Officer: Nzala Hikapulwe

Community Liaison Officer: Masauso Lipah

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer: Peter Longwe

Basecamp Manager: Monica Kalo

Stores and Logistics Officer: Moses Chabala

Data Management Officer: Chama Chanda

Data Management Assistant: Treaser Nyirenda

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS, DONORS AND PARTNERS

Ad-dicts

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AfricaPride Insurance

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Andrew Macdonald

APAM

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Beyond Me

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Community Resource Boards

Conservation South Luangwa

Department of National Parks & Wildlife

Digiprint

Dominica Spivey

Empowered By Light

Frankfurt Zoological Society

François d'Elbée

Game Rangers International

Harry Vlachos

Jeroen van Rooijen

John Taylor

Kiambi Safaris

Luke Katemba

Mulberry Mongoose

Mvuu

National Milling

Niner Juliet Logistics

Oliver Fly

Pack for a Purpose

Page Sorcerer

Panthera

Pie Aerts

Proflight Zambia

Rachel Rebibo

Resolve Wildlife

Royal Air Charters

Royal Zambezi Lodge

Scott Ramsay

Sikhulu House

Sky Trails Zambia

Strategic Agenda

Sunny Money

Southern Sun Ridgeway

Trade Kings / Musangu

Victoria Falls Aviation Services

Wildlife Crime Prevention

World Wildlife Fund Zambia

Zambeef

Zamleather

Zambian Carnivore Programme





WELCOME LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK

CHONGWE CONFLUENCE CHECKPOINT

Conservation funded by:



conservationlowerzambezi.org