

MANA PPOLS NP WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY

Mana Pools National Park lies at the heart of the Zambezi Valley, where the Zambezi River meanders for 300 km (186 miles) to the Mozambican border. It is a remote, beautiful place with spectacular views of the broad river, floodplains, a shady tree canopy and the mountains of the Rift Valley escarpment on the other side of the border in Zambia..

CAMPS

- Chikwenya
- Little Ruckomechi
- Ruckomechi



This stretch of the river is named for its four main pools ('mana' means 'four' in Shona) – Main, Chine, Long and Chisambuk – remnants of channels of the river that stopped flowing years ago. These and smaller seasonal pools further inland hold water year round, drawing all manner of wildlife and waterfowl during the dry season. The ana trees that characterise the floodplain shed their protein-rich pods during this time, providing vital sustenance for many species, particularly elephant. Wildlife viewing is excellent and birdlife is superb, particularly woodland and riverine species.

Large concentrations of buffalo and elephant can be found along the river's edges, while predators such as lion, wild dog, leopard and cheetah are often sighted. Greater kudu, Burchell's zebra, impala, warthog and common waterbuck can be seen on the surrounding plains, eland move amongst the trees, and the grunting of hippo can be heard all day from the river.

Mana Pools offers fantastic birding, with the river and seasonal pans attracting large numbers of waterbirds and an excellent mix of species in the riverine vegetation and mopane woodlands. Local specials include three-banded courser, western banded snake-eagle, Arnot's chat, green-capped eremomela, African golden oriole, Lilian's lovebird, Böhm's spinetail, red-necked falcon and Meve's starling. Unusual waterbirds include rufous-bellied heron, long-toed lapwing, greater painted snipe, African finfoot, and colourful clouds of southern carmine bee-eaters arrive in the summer to breed. Even the sought-after Pel's fishing-owl is occasionally seen!

Camp residents include woodpeckers, eastern nicator, black-throated wattle-eye, yellow-breasted apalis and white-browed robin-chats that enliven the area with their beautiful dawn-and-dusk song.