



**NATURE
ENCOUNTERS**
TOURS & TRAVEL LTD.

The Magic of Zambia and Mana Pools Canoe Safari

September 2005

By Garth Irvine, Zookeeper/Tour Leader

It was my second night in Mfuwe camp when I awoke in my cabin at 3:30



am. I could hear rustling sounds and thought something was sharing my accommodations. After listening for a few minutes I concluded that the sounds were actually coming from the other side of my window screen. I reached for my flashlight and peeked outside. Not five meters away a hippo was calmly grazing on the lodge lawn. I watched for twenty minutes or so until he slipped further into the darkness and I returned to my slumber.

Just two hours later a much larger raucous had me sitting upright instantly. Just twenty meters out the same window three elephants were dismembering and consuming a tree. What a wonderful way to lose sleep!

Never have I stayed anywhere where there was so much wildlife to see just in the lodge. Easily from the pool deck we could see elephants, bushbuck, hippo, baboon, cape buffalo, zebra, mongoose, vervet monkeys and a host of birds. This very lodge was recently in National Geographic with stories of elephants entering their reception area. It



It actually happened while we were staying there! The elephants travel through

Reception to check out the status of a wild mango tree. The matriarch knows its there and brings the herd to check for fruit periodically.

This camp like so many others does a great deal of work in the community. We visited one of the schools that the lodge is helping. Our group brought reams of school supplies which we were only too happy to unload to the very grateful headmaster. The school of over 500 students was receiving 4 teachers' salaries from the lodge. The lodge was also working on constructing two additional classrooms. It created huge throat lumps for the entire group meeting the children and having them sing for us. They, the group and the children, immensely enjoyed passing out stickers and pencils for everyone. The rest of the supplies were left to the discretion of the teachers. A really wonderful experience. So many people who travel on these trips are so focused on the wildlife that they are really pleasantly surprised by the wonderful local people who sneak into their hearts and become one of their highlights of the trip to Africa.

Mana Pools Canoe Trip Extension... by Carol Petersen

Some hardy souls carried on to Mana Pools in Zimbabwe for an amazing



canoe trip down the Zambezi. The stage was set - the lights were on - we just needed the "actors" and they didn't let us down. It was hot hot hot - yes - 41C in the shade at 0700 hrs - did I say hot? The Zambezi was a welcome relief as we stopped for lunch and had a swim. We were treated to ele's, buffalo, antelope and amazing birds but the show stopper had to be the pack

of 23 Wild Dog hunting and killing an impala not far from our breakfast table. We caught up with them and watched as the 9 pups tore away at the flesh then proceeded to play amongst the adrenaline grass. Yes there was adrenaline - our group shot more film and

memory than you can imagine - what an absolute treat! After the dogs and a day of canoeing - a nice hot shower, a scrumptious meal, a glass of wine and the sounds of the African bush.

