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Reducing Human-Wildlife Conflict, Zambia



In Zambia's Luangwa Valley the rural communities in the Game Management Areas around the South Luangwa National Park live in close proximity to wildlife, especially elephants. As elephant numbers have increased over the last 20 years due to enhanced protection, this has resulted in escalating conflict between people and elephants.

Some damage can't be measured in numbers. Crop and property damage is one of the most visible and challenging aspects of human wildlife conflict. For many communities living alongside wildlife, a single

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night can mean the loss of an entire season's food harvest or damage to homes and food stores. For subsistence farmers who eat only what they can grow, this can be devastating.

The High Five Club has long supported local Zambian NGO **Conservation South Luangwa's** (CSL) Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation work in the rural chiefdoms in the Luangwa Valley. Our latest support has focused on Human-Elephant-Conflict solar fence mitigations, drama performances to raise HWC awareness and the provision of vital vehicle equipment for CSL's Rapid Response Unit (RRU), a team working 24/7 to reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods by wildlife.

High Five Club Support:

Solar Fence Mitigations - Two sets of solar electric fences were procured for 2 hotspot locations in Mnkhanya chiefdom to reduce Human-Elephant crop damage conflicts.

The first was installed at the locally-run Malambo Forest Nursery (250m of perimeter fencing provided) which grows indigenous tree saplings for reforestation projects in the Valley, along with a variety of local crops to practically demonstrate to the community sustainable, conservation farming techniques.



The second, for a nearby community vegetable garden at Kakoma (760m of perimeter fencing provided) is being currently installed

just as the subsistence farmers start planting their vegetables after the recent flooding in the valley has receded.

As a result of this Human-Elephant Conflict mitigation fencing, farmers at Kakoma community vegetable garden have increased from 15 to 34. The community's contribution to the fence was to gather fallen timber for fence poles, and the farmers will be trained in how to install and maintain all the fence

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equipment. This community ownership and technical knowledge about the mitigation is an important part of this work.



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Community Awareness. Five local SEKA theatre group drama performances were conducted as a result of H5C support in 2025. One was held at a community meeting with farmers together at Kakoma in Mnkhanya Chiefdom. The topic was the importance of good solar fence maintenance to keep it functioning well and hence deterring elephants. 4 performances were conducted in Mwanja Chiefdom, delivering vital information and reminders to prevent injuries and loss of life in HWC hotspot areas. 37% of human injury/death across all 7 chiefdoms in the Valley in 2025 was in Mwanja Chiefdom; 4 people were killed and 15 injured by wildlife. The species responsible were elephant, crocodile, buffalo, snake and hippo.

The drama performance at Chasera Village Action Group in Mwanja Chiefdom (photo below) was about using canoes to avoid crocodiles when crossing rivers and when fishing, rather than wading across.



Rapid Response Unit Equipment. CSL's Rapid Response Unit (RRU) is going from strength to strength in helping people coexist with wildlife. It was recently been increased in size to a team of 20. Three teams still work on a rotation basis, with 2 of these on call 24/7 at any point in time to respond to serious threats to

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lives and livelihoods. CSL now have 6 female scouts, meaning each team has 2 women attached at all times. Both RRU vehicles needed durable mobile vehicle compressors, and one also a hi-lift jack. This equipment was supplied by H5C and is already helping the teams stay active across wildlife conflict hotspot areas around South Luangwa National Park.

High Five Club members provided £2,025 to support CSL's HWC work in 2025 and into 2026, one again showing how a relatively modest amount of funding can have big impact when it is deployed directly on the ground in Africa.

For more information contact cheryl@highfiveclub.co.uk

