**Park Protection**

We are a strong force of dedicated men and women that have taken up arms to wage a war against poaching. As custodians, our efforts speak out on behalf of the voiceless wildlife under our watch: that all animals should be provided the fair opportunity to live freely in their natural habitat.

Our rangers undergo intensive military training in the toughest of conditions to prepare them physically and mentally to defend Zimbabwe’s wildlife heritage. Ours is an undeclared war, requiring our forces to be up to the task at all times. Since independence, our country applies a shoot to kill policy to protect vulnerable species from poaching. This policy has directly contributed to the phenomenal recovery of elephant populations among other species.

We also wage a war against climate change. The adverse shifts in temperatures and weather patterns are evident, and the direct impact on animals is there for all to see. Diminishing water sources, loss of habitat and veld fires are some of the elements we fight against, a massive feat which requires immediate and collective action. In addition to setting fireguards and identifying water solutions, our rangers are instrumental in the collection of scientific data for the management of invasive species, mapping of habitats and home ranges; fire management and siting of specially protected and endangered species using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART).

However, our efforts are not in isolation. Zimbabwe collaborates with her neighbours, especially for shared species such as the African Elephant to undertake joint antipoaching efforts. These are guided at international cooperation bodies such as the Southern African Development Community with initiatives such as the Law Enforcement and Antipoaching (LEAP) Strategy.

Pictures: Rangers in Training, Rangers Standing with Elephant in Background, Rangers being deployed by Landcruiser, A firewood poacher exhibit, Snares, Rangers capturing Data for Smart System. Picture of Invasive Lantana Camara