

## CATS Newsletter – March 2026 Update

This past month has marked a shift, both in the field and in how we are positioning our work going forward. Elephants have returned in significant numbers, with reports of up to 300 individuals on the Zambian side of the river. This appears linked to the unusually heavy rains and flooding this season. For now, movement into Livingstone’s main conflict areas has remained limited, although there has been impact in more rural zones such as Mukuni and Simonga. While CERT remains on standby, this period has allowed us to focus more deliberately on preparedness.



A key development this month has been the preparation of the mobile coexistence and animal welfare outreach vehicle, developed in partnership with Zambezi Animal Welfare Services. The vehicle will begin rolling out conservation education activities in high risk areas in the coming weeks as well as animal welfare and sentience education with ZAWS and CATS working in close co-operation. Rather than waiting for conflict to occur, the truck provides a platform to engage communities directly, offering practical mitigation guidance, household level knowledge-sharing , and youth engagement linked to our wider Con Ed and livelihoods work. Future plans include the provision of mobile veterinary services in areas which are currently isolated and under-served.



Alongside this, the Taonga training programme continues to develop as a key part of the CATS approach. Based at Taonga Safaris, the programme provides practical exposure to conservation, tourism, and workplace skills within a real operating environment. All trainees are identified through the Community Business Units (CBUs), ensuring that opportunities are directed towards individuals from high conflict areas. This creates a clear link between conservation and opportunity, while strengthening the role of CBUs in shaping participation.



Support from WWF is enabling a more structured preparedness approach. This includes targeted household engagement, improved coordination through CBU representatives, and better positioning ahead of the peak conflict season. The focus is on being ready, rather than reacting late.



Our partnerships continue to strengthen. We are pleased to welcome Cath Hoy as Chair of the CATS Board, alongside Andrew Simpson of Taonga Safaris. Engagement with the Livingstone Tourism Association and Honorary Wildlife Police Officers is also improving coordination around human wildlife conflict response.

We would also like to acknowledge the continued support of our partners and sponsors, including Zambezi Animal Welfare Services (ZAWS), the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF), WWF, Bushcat Safaris, the Oak Foundation, the Alinea Network, Zambezi Hospitality Services, Maramba River Lodge, Elephant Charge, and African Pride Insurance and Taonga Safaris. Their combined support is helping to strengthen both our field delivery and community engagement, including initiatives such as the mobile outreach, training programmes, and coexistence cruises.

