Imire was founded in the 1950s by Norman Travers, initially as a cattle, maize and tobacco farm. He longed for the presence of game and in the late 1970s branched out into game farming. He pioneered the integration of cattle ranching, farming and long term sustainable wildlife management. Like Noah, the animals came in two by two and within 10 years Imire had become a 10,000 acre conservancy, stocked with impala, waterbuck, kudu, eland and the rare sable antelope.

BLACK RHINO BREEDING AND RELEASE

Imire is internationally renowned for its black rhino breeding and release programme. In the 1980s, during a period of Zimbabwe’s worst poaching, rhino numbers crashed from 10,000 to less than 1,000 in just a few years. The Department of National Parks & Wildlife moved the remaining wild rhino into the custodianship of private conservancies, called Intensive Protection Zones. Norman believed that Imire could successfully care for rhino, but was derided as a dreamer - how could rhino from the dry heat of the Zambezi Valley survive the bitter Wedza winters? However, he convinced sceptics by showing them proof of the rhinos depicted in the 700 year old bushman paintings on the conservancy. Imire’s adopted rhino and their offspring have since thrived.

THE IMIRE RHINO

Imire were given seven orphaned baby black rhino in 1985. Noddy, Sprinter, Fumbi, Cuckoo, DJ, Amber and Mvu were aged between four and six months. Their parents had been poached in the Matusadona National Park in Northern Zimbabwe. Each of the seven calves were hand-reared on formula milk for eight years and raised as a semi-domesticated herd. Several in-depth studies were carried out by ecologists to ensure the rhino suffered no ill-effects from the new vegetation, climate and herding, since black rhinos are naturally solitary animals.

The seven original rhino bred very successfully at Imire, with 15 births in less than 20 years - a record given the rhino’s notoriously slow speed of reproduction. Over the next 15 years, 11 rhino were successfully returned to the Matusadona National Park where they were monitored by National Parks and a team of volunteer student vets. The Matusadona release programme was stopped in 2000 due to a lack of funds and today this ancient animal once again faces extinction in the wild.
IMIRE’S TRAGEDY

On November 7th 2007 Imire suffered the worst poaching incident in its history when three rhino were shot and killed. Two females, DJ and Amber and a male, Sprinter were killed, along with Amber’s almost full term unborn calf. The incident left DJ’s 6 week old calf, Tatenda, a confused and terrified orphan. On that night, Imire lost a generation of rhino.

Tatenda became an international star in the Animal Planet documentary, “There’s a Rhino in My House” which tells the chaotic story of his first year, hand-raised by Judy Travers in her home with a warthog named Pog and a hyena named Tsotsi. He was released into the conservancy, to be a partner for Shanu, our youngest female rhino, in 2008. In November 2016 Imire was struck by another tragedy when Tatenda suddenly fell ill and passed away at the age of just 9 years old. He taught us all so much about hope and survival, and so many people world-wide joined us in mourning our loss. Our work to protect the rhino and secure its future in Zimbabwe continues.

Since the poaching incident in 2007, we have had two baby black rhino, Tafika and Tafara and one baby White Rhino, Masimba.  We are grateful and proud that our breeding and release programme can begin again. We are now home to five black and three white rhino.

HELP CREATE A POSITIVE FUTURE

Volunteers get very involved with our rhino at Imire, learning about their behaviour and monitoring their activities, feeding and socialisation. You will play a role in their continued protection and security as you enjoy getting to know their eccentricities!
THE IMIRE ELEPHANTS

Imire is home to four elephants. Mac, Toto and Mandebvu form our small family herd, and then there is Nzou, who happily lives with a herd of buffalo! The elephants living at Imire were orphaned in the wild at a very young age. Imire rescued them and has since provided them with an environment that is as close to their natural habitat as possible, whilst maintaining both animal and human safety. Had the elephants not been saved and given a forever home at Imire, they would certainly have perished in the wild.

Ivory and rhino horn poaching is rife throughout Africa and to protect our elephants and rhinos they sleep in secure bomas at night. In this way we can ensure that there are armed guards, proper lighting and communication systems in place in the event of any incident threatening their safety.

Elephants are extremely intelligent and sensitive creatures. They need constant stimulation in order to remain content. This stimulation occurs in the wild by being part of a large, hierarchical herd, and through the constant challenge of finding food and water, while avoiding predators. Our elephants do not face these challenges which can lead to boredom, stagnation and seeking excitement in other, often very destructive, ways. In order to prevent this from occurring, we set them challenges of our own, developed by elephant behaviour experts. Our training keeps their minds and bodies occupied and helps keep them stimulated. All the training and handling done at Imire is on a reward basis and we do not condone cruelty of physical punishment of any description.

CARNIVORES AT IMIRE

Imire is home to Mambo the lion and two hyenas. We are lucky enough to be able to provide these carnivores with comfortable, spacious enclosures. Imire is a retirement home for these animals, who have faced difficulties elsewhere, been abandoned or abused. We are happy to rescue these animals from any unfortunate circumstances and create a better quality of life for them in their golden years. None of the carnivores are bred from or handled.

OTHER WILDLIFE AT IMIRE

In addition to our eight rhino, four elephants and lion, we are also home to a herd of buffalo (with Nzou the elephant matriarch!) and a wide variety of antelopes: sable, eland, kudu, nyala, waterbuck and blesbok, as well as zebra, giraffe, wildebeest, warthog and crocodile. With over 48 bird species and numerous snakes and lizards, Imire is an animal lovers paradise.
HANDS-ON RHINO & ELEPHANT CONSERVATION

Our volunteer programme is a unique opportunity to live in the heart of Zimbabwe and share the experiences of a 10,000 acre family-run African game reserve. You will live in close proximity to black and white rhino, elephants, buffalo, giraffe and many other animals and birds. You will hear incredible stories, learn our history, witness amazing animal relationships and help with research projects to further our knowledge of the wildlife which surrounds you.

This is a wonderful experience for volunteers of all ages. Come and experience Africa in a safe environment, work hard and become part of a very special family. Our volunteer programme is a life-changing experience both for volunteers and for our staff and local community. It is a wonderful way to get involved and give something back.

WHAT MAKES OUR PROJECT UNIQUE?

It’s all about intimacy and connections. We take just 12 volunteers so you will have plenty of time and space to form bonds with other people, animals and the spell-binding African bush. You will be part of our family in no time, with three generations of the Travers family living at Imire - from granny to babies! We also pride ourselves on our programme’s diversity; you will work with animals, help with community projects and in the local school, carry out work around the conservancy, and undertake research projects. Learn about the animals, birds and trees which surround you and take a moment to savour the peace and serenity which is so unique to Africa. Every activity our volunteers get involved with, no matter how small it seems, makes a difference. You will see first-hand the impact that your volunteer experience has to the conservancy, and the community.
No two days on Imire are ever the same and there is always something unexpected around the corner! You will get involved with most of the following activities, depending on the time of year, the weather and what other projects are going on at the time.

**RHINO CONSERVATION**

- Learn all about these amazing animals from experienced handlers
- Observe and record rhino behaviour for research projects
- Feed and walk with the rhino - interact with iconic animals close up
- Clean out rhino beds and repair enclosures

Volunteers monitor our rhinos’ behaviour to identify patterns between individual rhinos and establish their relationships with different handlers and each other. Our observations are used to identify the personalities of the different rhinos, gauge their moods and try and predict behaviour or responses to different stimuli. This is especially important for monitoring the development of Tafika, our youngest rhino. Volunteers also monitor feeding patterns to help prevent over-grazing, to plan rhino movements through the conservancy, and to determine if any supplements are needed to ensure they have a balanced diet.

You will walk with the rhino on their way back to their bomas in the evenings and help the handlers ensure the animals are secure for the night with sufficient food and water.

Volunteers will also spend time with our white rhino scouts on morning patrol. The white rhino do not stay in bomas or have overnight guards because they are nocturnal feeders and can move large distances at night. One rhino is collared and volunteers learn to use the telemetry set, identify tracks and signs of rhino movement and identify spoor.

**WORK WITH ELEPHANTS**

- Monitor elephant movements and behaviour
- Feed and walk with the elephants and their handlers
- Clean out elephant beds and repair enclosures

Volunteers monitor the elephants’ behaviour to identify patterns and relationships between each elephant and learn about their personalities and responses to different stimuli. You will also monitor their feeding patterns and repair elephant damage in the conservancy. Walk with the elephants in the mornings or evenings, learn about these iconic animals from their knowledgeable handlers and understand the threats they face and what’s being done to protect them.
ANTI-POACHING AND SECURITY
- Undertake snare patrols and critical anti-poaching monitoring
- Fish netting patrols on our many dams
- Fence and boundary monitoring on horseback and on foot
- Camp-outs
- Weapons training

Volunteers undertake bi-monthly snare sweeps around the conservancy, looking for evidence of poaching and collecting snares and traps. This minimises small animal poaching and helps the dedicated Anti-Poaching Unit in their daily work to ensure that the large animals are protected. You will horse ride once a week and carry out herd monitoring off the beaten track and boundary patrols. Horse riding gives increased protection in different areas of the conservancy, and enables coverage of less accessible areas. (Please note that there is a weight limit of 85kg for horse riding).

Volunteers will experience at least one camp-out during their stay (depending on the weather), where you will cook over an open fire and sleep out in the game park under the stars. You will also have the opportunity to do weapons training with our Anti-Poaching Unit and scouts. You will use paintball guns to simulate the scouts FN rifles to gain familiarity with a “weapon”. You will also join the APU as they do their drills and training.

CONSERVANCY MANAGEMENT
- Help maintain fences, roads, fireguards and conservancy equipment
- Feed nutritional supplements to antelopes, elephants, plains game and lion
- Tree planting, bush clearance and removal of alien species
- Cleaning and maintenance of animal beds
- Cattle dipping: help the cattle section on dip days - hilarious and dirty fun!
- Animal and plant monitoring
- Game counts by foot, vehicle and on horseback
COMMUNITY AND TEACHING PROJECTS

There are approximately 500 people living or working at Imire, including conservancy, lodge, volunteer programme and farm staff plus their families. There is a primary and secondary school just outside the conservancy which we support through sponsorship of building projects, teaching assistance, sports, gardening and conservation education. We also support the local Idube Clinic through the provision of medicines and financial donations.

- Assist with English lessons in primary and secondary schools
- Work with the local Conservation Club - educate children in the conservancy on animals, birds and the environment
- Playing sports and games with the younger children
- Cultural evenings - learn to cook and dance from the experts!

We have introduced a teaching programme in the local primary school where volunteers use a Ministry of Education approved English literacy scheme aimed at rural African schoolchildren. The materials address conservation issues in a way which is relevant to their learning. You will also work at the local school's Conservation Club, helping to teach secondary school students practical and theoretical lessons about nature and conservation. These lessons are based in the conservancy.

Please remember that our school children also have holidays, when there will be no teaching at the school. The 2019 term dates (when there will be teaching) are:

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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>First term</td>
<td>8th January - 11th April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second term</td>
<td>6th May - 8th August</td>
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<td>Third term</td>
<td>9th September - 5th December</td>
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VOLUNTEER RESEARCH PROJECTS

We are creating a database of our flora and fauna, animal behaviours, movements and challenges. This helps us to create a bigger picture of Imire as an eco-system and we use this information to learn about successes, measure growth and predict potential problems. If you are studying for a Zoology, Biology or Conservation degree, doing post-graduate research or would like to simply enhance your own knowledge of a specific scientific area, Imire is an ideal environment. In addition to animal behaviour, you can also study many aspects of Ecology and Environmental Science, including bush and veldt management, grassland research, tick and pest control, water and fish conservation, geology and cattle management. If you have a specific research project in mind and would like to carry out research or data collection during your volunteer programme, please let us know!

LEISURE TIME

In your free time you can go fishing and canoeing, enjoy camp-outs in the bush or relax by the pool at the volunteer house with a beer after a hard day's work! You may also have the opportunity to go horse riding in the bush (extra cost). If you enjoy hiking we can arrange trips to Wedza Mountain and trips to see the Bushman paintings at Markwe Caves (about 5km outside the reserve).

If you would like to arrange a driver to take you into Harare to visit the markets and shops, we can arrange a private taxi for $100 per car each way (costs shared between volunteers). Speak to Vera to organise this. There is no reliable public transport from the reserve to Harare.

ACCOMMODATION

Your home is a thatched two-storey house with a family atmosphere. Situated in the heart of the conservancy on our largest dam, Numwa House is in an idyllic spot with a pool, bar, braai area and plenty of opportunities for fishing. There are two bathrooms inside the house, one with a bath and the other a shower, one toilet, plus three outside solar showers and two outside toilets with amazing views over the dam! There is hot and cold running water for showers, baths and cooking.

Rooms are shared, but a twin or double room can be requested. The house has three twin/double rooms and two same-sex dormitories. Private rooms can be requested but are not guaranteed.

We are lucky enough to have a borehole at Imire with fresh spring water for drinking. You will receive three home-cooked meals a day during your stay, made by our expert cooks, Stocks and Tafadzwa, served buffet style. Dietary requirements can be catered for; please let us know before you arrive!

On a Sunday our staff are off so volunteers are responsible for preparing food for themselves or the group. Food is provided. Alternatively you may book to have a delicious 3-course meal at Imire Lodge. The cost of this is $20 per person.
PROJECT PRICING 2019

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>$3605</td>
<td>$7210</td>
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Prices are in US Dollars. All bookings are subject to an additional $40 administration fee. Please note that items on your final bill e.g. drinks from the bar, t-shirts, additional transfers etc are subject to VAT charged at 15%. VAT will be added to your bill at the end of your stay.

The price includes:
- Return transfers to and from Harare International Airport (EVERY MONDAY)
- All meals and accommodation while you are on the project
- Drinks (tea, coffee, juice, water) excluding fizzy and alcoholic drinks
- All activities while you are at Imire
- Laundry and housekeeping
- 24 hour support from our on-site volunteer managers
- Full orientation upon arrival

The price excludes:
- Any excursions outside the volunteer programme
- Fizzy and alcoholic drinks (over 18s only) from our bar
- 3-course Sunday dinner at Imire Lodge ($20 per head - optional)
- Any extra travel e.g. to Harare or to Victoria Falls

HOW DO I BOOK?

Email us your dates and we’ll check availability. Once your dates are confirmed we will send you a booking form and medical form to complete and send back once you have organised your flights and travel insurance. In addition you will receive an invoice for your payment.

Unless otherwise agreed, a 50% deposit is required to secure your place. Once this is received into our bank account, your place is confirmed. Full payment is due 60 days before your programme start date. If a booking is made less than 60 days before your start date, 100% of the fee must be made immediately.

Should you wish to cancel, then your initial deposit is refundable up to 60 days prior to your project start date. We will make any refunds back into your bank account, less any bank charges applied by our bank.

If you cancel within 60 days of your start date and have paid the full amount for the programme, then the refund is as follows:

- 31-60 days prior to programme start date - refund of your initial deposit. You may transfer the remaining balance paid onto a new booking with a start date within 1 calendar year of the original or first project start date. If you have only paid a deposit, then no refund is available.
- Less than 30 days prior to programme start date - no refund of any monies paid. You may transfer your money to a new booking with a start date within 1 calendar year of the original or first project start date.
I have experienced many volunteer programmes in Africa, but none come close to my time spent at Imire. With a maximum of 12 volunteers you are treated as part of the family, and you are included in many activities working with enthusiastic and friendly staff. Everyone knows your name and friendships have formed. This is my second visit and it has been even better this time with new experiences gained. There is so much variety working with animals and the local community, and there is never a dull moment. It is a little piece of paradise you will fall in love with and want to return again and again. Thank-you to the family and the wonderful staff!

- Louise Carter, October 2017

"As I sit here to write this I'm looking at a beautiful black spider (not freaky in the least), my window wide open with humming nature in the background, softly overlit with a generator powered light and a quiet room to reflect in all that I've done in 7 full days of living life at Imire. I am full of love and hope. I see improvement in our future, a repair, a re-birth. I feel blessed and grateful beyond measures, as my hair is still wet from a swim alone in the dam in the pouring rain. I hope it never dries, just so I can remember exactly what I am feeling in this moment — an undying THANK-YOU to the Shona people, to the animals and their will, the staff, the nature, JUDY -> OMG you are...... I'm only leaving because I know I WILL return. Thank-you for all that every one of you do".

- Kristin Sargent, April 2018

"I can't begin to express the admiration I have come to possess for Imire. It is such a beautiful place with such special people. The people at the heart of this programme are what makes it so wonderful. Everyone you encounter has such a common passion for the animals, the community and Zimbabwe as a whole - that it is contagious and inspiring. Obviously, that's why I have volunteered three times. I used to work for a man that would constantly remind me that our company was special because we focused on the details and that it is the "sum of all the details" that makes an experience so special and indescribable. This is how I feel about Imire. It is the sum of every little thing they do here that makes it so special. What a phenomenal team of people working towards inspiring goals."

- Yesenia Munia, US, August 2018

"Having spent the last six weeks volunteering at Imire I have nothing but good things to say about the place I now call home! Within minutes of being here, I have felt welcomed, loved and at home. The great thing about this place is the fact that the Travers live by the saying "Without the community by your side you won't succeed." Therefore, they are not only concerned with the conservation of their wildlife but rather understand the need to be united with their neighbors and the children of their community.

One has to mention the purity of the Travers's hearts and their passion towards what they do. Meeting Judy Travers is like meeting an idol! She is devoted to the wellbeing of the women, the children, and all those around her. It comes as no surprise meeting her children and seeing their own compassion and dedication to their field of expertise!

It is without doubt a place I will keep returning to, for everyone here including the handlers, children, teachers, and staff are a part of my family now."

- Haya, UK, February 2018
OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

Victoria Falls - Adrenaline and Adventure

No trip to Zimbabwe would be complete without a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Victoria Falls. At 1,708m wide, it is the largest sheet of falling water in the world and one of the most spectacular natural wonders. In Ndebele, the Victoria Falls are called Mosi-au-Tunya - “the smoke that thunders’ and the spray and noise are visible and audible around the town. The Falls drop between 90m-170m from the Zambezi River into the Zambezi gorge, with an average of 550,000 cubic metres of water plummeting over the edge every minute!

The Falls inspire and impress visitors today as much as they did David Livingstone, who was the first European to discover them back in the 1860’s. Today you can do all manner of exciting activities, from bungee jumps and zip lines from the 19th Century Victoria Falls bridge, to game drives, high tea at the Victoria Falls hotel and take part in some of the best white water rafting in the world!

Flights to Victoria Falls cost around $200 return and there are a variety of accommodation options from $20 per night, depending on your budget. You will also need to budget $100 each way for a taxi transfer from Imire to Harare Airport should you choose to visit the Falls during your middle weekend. A taxi from Victoria Falls airport to town is around $30 each way.