

FORESTRY & WILDLIFE FACTSHEET

Forests and wildlife need each other and the two should not be far separated in debate. Ecosystems depend on varied flora and fauna and losing one species can have far reaching impacts. According to WWF, half of the world's species have been lost in the last 40 years, and if losses at this rate continue then the world could face what scientists call 'the 6th great extinction'. What's more, forest and wildlife crime, and the associated governance issues, are closely linked.

FORESTRY

- A forest is a large area of land covered with trees or other woody vegetation. Hundreds of more precise definitions of forest are used throughout the world, incorporating factors such as tree density, tree height, land use, legal standing and ecological function;
- Forestry is the science, art and practice of understanding, managing and using wisely the natural resources associated with, and derived from forest lands. These resources include timber, water, fish, wildlife, soil, plants, and recreation;
- The importance of forests and trees in improving socio-economic and environmental benefits is increasingly being recognized worldwide. In Malawi, both natural and man-made forests play an important role in providing basic human needs (fuel wood, food, fodder, fibre and pharmaceuticals poles, timber,);
- More than 90% of the Malawians use biomass energy (firewood or charcoal) to meet their basic household energy needs, almost 97% of the population rely on firewood (87.7%) or charcoal (8.9%) for cooking (IHS 2011);
- Nearly 45% of urban dwellers rely on charcoal for cooking (IHS 2011)
- Forests contribute to the country's economy by providing employment, income, foreign exchange and raw materials for some construction industries, hence contributing to socio-economic development of the country;
- However, forest resources continue to degrade rapidly between 50 and 75,000 hectares destroyed annually. Malawi has the highest rate of deforestation estimated at an average of 2.3% per year in the SADC region (CURE 2010). The total forest resource is declining such that demand for wood far exceeds supply. Malawi forest cover now stands at less than 20.4% and is further declining;
- Dzalanyama forest reserve and Viphya plantations are among the highly encroached forest areas;
- The main drivers of forest loss are population growth, agricultural expansion High dependence on fuel wood as a source of energy for cooking and heating; and institutional weaknesses combined with poor compliance of the law;
- Malawi developed and adopted the forestry policy in 1996, followed by a Community Based Forest Management – A Supplement to the National Forestry Policy in 2003. The forestry policy of 1996 is currently under review; and
- In 1997 a law on forestry was passed which is also in use up to date. There are also Forestry (Community Participation) Rules, 2001 and Forestry (Amendment) Rules 2003; and Forestry Department also developed the National Forestry Programme in 2000 as a means to put the 1996 National Forestry Policy and Forestry Act (1997) into practice.



WILDLIFE

- The term 'wildlife' is used to refer to living things and especially mammals, birds, and fish that are neither human nor domesticated. It is also sometimes used to refer to both fauna and flora.
- Malawi has rich biodiversity including what is known as 'The Big Five' – lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and buffalo.
- Malawi's designated National Parks are: Liwonde, Lengwe, Lake Malawi, Kasungu, Nyika. Designated wildlife reserves are Majete, Mwabvi, Nkhotakhota and Vwaza. Important wildlife populations are also found in forest reserves like Thuma and Namizimu.
- Malawi's wildlife represents a significant opportunity for tourism development. Tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa has grown by 300% since 1990 and is worth \$36 billion/year. Tourism is one of Malawi's 5 pillars of economic development.
- However African tourism relies on wildlife (and well protected habitats). Unfortunately Malawi's wildlife is declining rapidly.
 - e.g. Africa's lion decline: 400,000 (1950) -> 16,000 (present day). Only 30 lions left in the wild in Malawi (that's roughly half a million people per lion)
 - e.g. Malawi's elephant decline: 12,000 (1970) -> 4,000 (1980s) -> 1600 (present day). In Kasungu, 2000 (1980s) -> 50 (present day). Populations crossed the 'threshold of sustainability in 2010. Approx.20,000 African elephants are currently poached for their ivory tusks each year. The ivory trade could lead to the extinction of elephants.
- Habitat loss is the number one cause for the current decline in wildlife. Wildlife crime is the second biggest contributor, and the biggest contributor for the decline in endangered species such as elephants, rhinos, and tigers.
- The most common forms of wildlife crime in Malawi are the pet trade, bushmeat trade and trade of wildlife parts. In Malawi it is illegal to kill, keep captive, buy or sell any wild animal (or its parts) without a license from Government.
- Combatting the ivory trade is being prioritized by Government given the urgency and gravity of the situation.
- The current National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1994, was amended in 2004. A revision is currently underway and is hoped to be passed in February 2016. Malawi's wildlife policy was developed and adopted in 2000 and is currently under review.
- The Illegal Wildlife Trade Assessment was published in May 2015 and is available at <http://www.lilongwewildlife.org/programmes/advocacy/illegal-wildlife-trade-assessment/>. It showed that Malawi is being used as a soft target by ivory traffickers, influencing not only Malawi's vulnerable elephants populations but also those of Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania.
- Malawi has been a signatory to CITES (the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species) since 1982. CITES is the principal international instrument to regulate international trade in protected species, and to ensure that as a result their survival is not threatened. The international ivory trade is banned under CITES. In 2014 Malawi also applied a domestic moratorium on the ivory trade.
- Malawi has also recently signed the London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade, the Arusha Declaration on Wildlife Crime, the Clinton Global Initiative and the Elephant Protection Initiative, which all commit Malawi to combatting wildlife crime.

