WELCOME TO
LILONGWE WILDLIFE CENTRE!
GET CLOSER TO NATURE
LILONGWE WILDLIFE CENTRE

Set in the heart of Malawi’s capital city, Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is a sprawling green oasis and a unique haven for wildlife. Leave the city behind, take a walk through the forest and see what you can spot!

Did you know?

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre…

covers over **70 hectares** of beautiful forest – that’s equivalent to more than 136 football fields!

forms part of **Lilongwe Nature Sanctuary**, an area protected by the Government and one of the most important green spaces in Lilongwe.

hosts one of the last remaining, **untouched forested areas** in Lilongwe City.

provides **a home to a huge array of wildlife**, from antelopes, otters and bushpigs to over 200 bird species.

is home to Malawi’s **only wildlife sanctuary**, a place where injured and orphaned wild animals are rescued and cared for before being returned to the wild.
Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is run by Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT), one of Malawi’s leading conservation organisations. LWT works with the Government, international partners, communities and schools to save wild animals, promote conservation justice and inspire people to value and protect nature in Malawi.
WHAT TO DISCOVER

The indigenous forest is home to a rich variety of wildlife including:

- **mammals** such as spotted hyenas, cape porcupines, greater bushbabies and serval cats;
- **reptiles** like Nile crocodiles, monitor lizards and Schlegel’s blind snakes;
- **species of trees and plants**, such as bloodwood (*mlombwa*), buffalo thorn (*kankhande*) and the golden bean tree (*mwanambewe*);
- **the Lingadzi River**, which flows through the site and connects with the Lilongwe River – one of the main sources of water for the capital. Keep your eyes peeled: the riverbank is a great place for watching water birds such as kingfishers and herons!

Finding your way around

There are two main trails on the north side near the Education Centre. Take a walk along these paths and look out for some special points of interest!
This booklet is for walking trails on the north side of Lilongwe Wildlife Centre, near the Education Centre.
NSUNGWI TRAIL

0.9 km  Easy  20-30 minutes

1 Gully

Sometimes the ground beneath your feet suddenly opens up into a large cavern. These trenches are called gullies and are formed when soil is washed away by fast-flowing water - for example in a storm - or when tree roots that normally hold the earth together are removed by people or fires. Gullies can be prevented by planting more vegetation.

2 Duiker habitat

You’ll have to be quick to spot a duiker as these small antelopes love hiding in the undergrowth! Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is the perfect habitat for duikers as it has lots of thickets for them to disappear into when they sense danger. They are normally very quiet creatures, but when alarmed will make a loud noise and can run up to 96km/hour.

3 Octopus tree (mbwabwa)

The twisted branches on this bizarre looking tree could certainly be octopus legs, but the tree was actually given its name for having eight leaves per stalk. The bark is very rough and light like cork so it’s sometimes used as floats for fishing. In the past, the wood was used to make xylophone keys.
4 Carrot tree (*mporoni*)

You won’t find carrots growing on this tree - it gets its name because it smells like carrots! Take a sniff and see. Try feeling the bark too. When it’s young, the bark peels off like paper, but as it gets older it becomes rough. Some people believe carrying the leaves around with you gives you protection and good luck.

5 Rivers and birdlife

Many animals, birds and plants depend on the Lingadzi River for food, water and shelter. You will see different species at different times of year. Aquatic birds include hamerkops, kingfishers, egrets and herons, which eat small fish, insects and crayfish. Did you know that kingfishers close their eyes as they dive into the water, so they are fishing blind!
6 Termite mounds

Termite mounds are generally about 2-3 metres high, but can get as tall as 9 metres! Malawi’s termites take dead plants, wood and roots underground where it grows into a fungus which they eat. By recycling dead things on the forest floor into new soil these hungry insects are vital to the health of our forests. Termites and ants are also the main food source for pangolins, which are one of the most endangered species on earth.

7 Bamboo grove (nsungwi)

Bamboo is a giant grass which has over 2,000 uses. It can be made into baskets, toilet paper and fabric. The majority of Malawian households use firewood or unlicensed charcoal from protected forest reserves for cooking which leaves forests bare. Bamboo grows much faster than trees so can be replaced quicker, so it is a good alternative fuel.

8 Fallen trees

As trees grow they get heavier on top and sometimes get uprooted or fall down when there are strong winds or lots of rain loosening the soil. Dead trees offer shelter and food to insects, fungi, birds and other organisms. As the tree decomposes, nutrients are recycled into the soil. So when you see a fallen tree, take a closer look at what is growing on it.
KADALE TRAIL

0.8 km  Easy  20-30 minutes

1 Tree stump

Trees are chopped down so that people can use the land for agriculture or burn the wood for cooking. This is called deforestation and it is a major problem. It is estimated that Malawi loses the equivalent of 452 Lilongwe Wildlife Centres worth of trees each year! When trees disappear, animals lose their homes, the soil is washed away when it rains and fewer crops can grow. Deforestation can be addressed by protecting existing forests, replanting trees, stopping bushfires and using alternative fuels for cooking.

2 Star-chestnut tree (mgoza)

The star-chestnut tree is easy to spot, with its large trunk and huge seed pods. Its seeds and leaves can be pounded and cooked or used to make jewellery and the ash of burnt fruits is used as a cooking soda for cooking vegetables.

3 Fallen trees

When you come across a fallen tree, look closely. You'll probably see plants, insects and fungi living on the tree. By falling on the ground, it has given new life to the creatures around it, offering them food and shelter and nutrients for the soil. So it's much better to leave a fallen tree where it is instead of cutting it up and removing it.
4 Termite mound

Termite colonies contain kings, queens, soldiers and workers. The queen is the head of the family, laying eggs, deciding how big the colony grows and even controlling what a baby termite becomes. She can live up to 45 years! The king is the second most important termite, followed by the soldiers and workers who source most of the food for the colony. Without them many other species would not survive as they help manage the build-up of dead things on the forest floor, eating them and putting nutrients back into the soil to keep the forest healthy.

5 Bushwillow trees (kadale)

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is one of the few areas of woodland that includes the bushwillow (Combretum) tree species next to grassland and acacia trees. You’ll easily recognise it for its four winged pods, with a seed in the middle, which are said to cause hiccups if eaten! They are important trees that provide food for bushbucks, birds and insects.
6 Guinea fowl habitat

If you hear and see monkeys in the trees, it’s likely you’ll also see guinea fowl on the ground - they walk beneath monkey troops, foraging for food that has fallen from the canopy. Although these birds prefer being on the ground - even building nests there - they are strong flyers and use this skill to escape from bushfires or other threats.

7 Human impact on rivers

Rivers provide drinking water, support livelihoods and give homes to countless species of wildlife. Without rivers, people and nature would not survive. Every year the Lingadzi River is polluted with litter which flows down from larger rivers. This is dangerous for the health of both people and wildlife that depend on the river.
8 Boardwalk

Some of the boardwalk was made from recycled plastic. Climb to the top to get a new perspective! The walkway is 30m long and 4m high, giving you the chance to get closer to the tree canopy. This is the part of a forest where the tops of trees come together to provide shade and habitats for animals, birds and insects. Did you know that one large tree can provide a day's supply of oxygen for up to four people? What else can you see and hear from the top?

9 Gully

A tree's roots are said to grow three times wider than its branches. The root network stops soil washing away in heavy rain, but sometimes when the rain falls very fast and there aren't enough trees and roots to hold the soil together, it washes away, leaving behind a trench called a gully. Planting more trees and plants helps prevent flooding and keep the soil strong.
USEFUL INFORMATION

Opening hours
Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm
Saturday 9am -12pm

Please follow the rules for your own safety:

- No swimming
- No smoking
- No fire or cooking
- No littering
- No feeding the animals
- No dogs
- No alcohol
- No fishing or hunting

Questions? Get in touch!
www.lilongwewildlife.org
+265 88 1788 999
centre@lilongwewildlife.org
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Whether you give a donation or adopt one of the animals who call our sanctuary home, your support will make a huge difference. With your help, we can:

• Rescue animals in need
• Release animals back into the wild
• Tackle wildlife crime
• Educate the next generation of conservationists
• Put Malawi’s conservation needs on the national and international agenda

Visit our website – or speak to a member of staff – for more details:

www.lilongwewildlife.org

Thank you for your support!
Thank you for visiting!
We hope to see you again soon.

@lilongwewildlifetrust
@lilongewildlife
@malawiwildlife
www.lilongewildlife.org