IMPACT REPORT 2019-2020







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A FORCE FOR NATURE

The challenges facing the world's wildlife and wild places become more pressing year on year. This feels all the more true in the current moment, as we are locked in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic - a crisis that reflects humanity's precarious relationship with nature.

And yet, in the darkest moments, hope is not just possible - it is imperative.

We have witnessed some incredible steps forward for conservation in Malawi in the last year. In August 2019, CITES¹ declared the nation's wildlife legislation as being among the strongest in the world and recognised the progress Malawi has made in tackling the illegal ivory trade. Malawian authorities also dismantled one of the region's most prolific international wildlife trafficking syndicates, members of which are currently behind bars awaiting sentencing. These are impressive feats considering that only a few years previously the nation was singled out by CITES as a country of "primary concern" thanks to its porous borders, weak legal institutions and limited enforcement of laws.

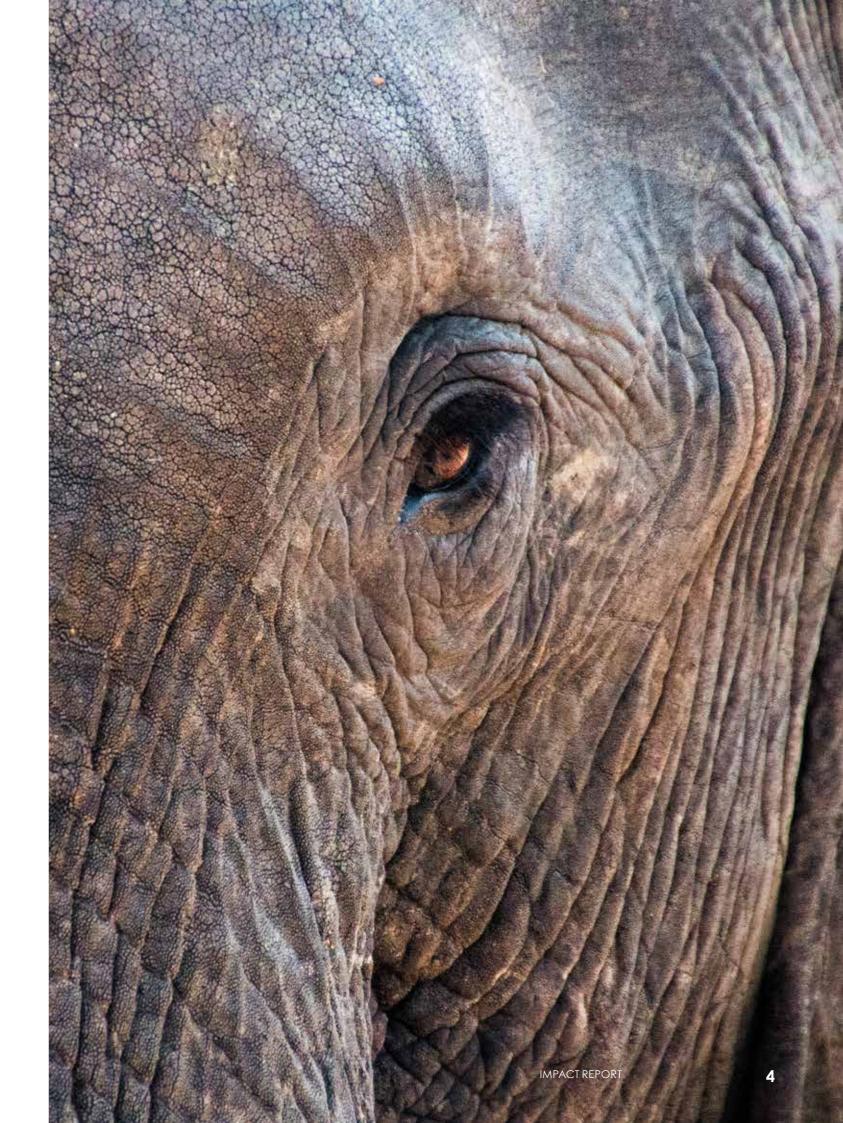
Last year our initiatives continued to protect wild animals, inspire school children, galvanise communities and drive policy change. In recognition of the fact that the challenges facing our natural world are becoming ever more complex, we also embraced work to tackle a broader range of environmental threats, such as plastic pollution and the illegal trade in charcoal.

Difficult times lie ahead as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a terrible toll on human life and economic stability across all sectors, not least in the communities where we work. But while we brace ourselves for the coming months, we remain staunchly committed to our mission: to save wildlife, campaign for wildlife justice, and inspire people to value and protect nature in Malawi. In unprecedented times like these, new ideals and principles can also take hold. We believe passionately that this global crisis has the potential to create new ways of living that better protect the environment and our own survival.

The achievements in this report are testament not only to our tenacity and dedication, but also that of our many partners: the communities, government agencies, policy-makers, NGOs, donors, volunteers and researchers - both within Malawi and beyond - with whom we have collaborated. Thank you to all of those who have supported our work. We hope you will remain part of our community on the next step of our journey. Together, we can be a real force for change - indeed, a force for nature.

Jonny Vaughan, MBE CEO

1 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

SAVING WILDLIFE



Servals are hunted for their pelts, captured and sold into the illegal pet trade and targeted by communities who see them as a threat to livestock.

We are a force for wildlife, rescuing and rehabilitating animals and releasing as many as possible back into the wild

114 animals rescued

170 animals cared for at the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre

84 animals released back into the wild

33 field procedures performed

17 site visits carried out to investigate cases of human-wildlife conflict or animal cruelty

29 veterinary students supported

We are a force for justice, campaigning for an end to illegal wildlife trade and other environmental crimes

395 kg ivory, 103 pieces of rhino horn and 24 live pangolins included in government seizures

89 wildlife trafficking convictions across 58 concluded wildlife trials

96% custodial conviction rate for elephant, rhino and panaolin crimes and a total **85%** custodial conviction rate for all endangered species

Average custodial sentence of 4.3 years, with a maximum sentence of 15 years



PROMOTING CONSERVATION JUSTICE

Ivory seized by enforcement agencies is carefully managed to ensure it does not 'leak' back onto illicit markets, thus fueling illegal wildlife trade.

EDUCATING AND ENGAGING **COMMUNITIES**



Our environmental education programme teaches modules on wildlife welfare, wildlife crime, human-wildlife conflict, biodiversity, deforestation and climate change.

We are a force for progress, campaigning across society and partnering with policy makers to make conservation a national priority

44.837 children and 290 schools engaged in our education programmes

213 teachers trained to deliver environmental education

3,300 trees planted (those planted in 2019 had a 79% survival rate), **457 people** trained in afforestation and 14,300 fuel briquettes produced

6,000 community members reached through solar-powered cinema

129 people equipped with bee-keeping skills to generate sustainable incomes

We are a force for knowledge, inspiring our next generation to value the world around us and mobilising communities to defend nature

Forestry Act Amendment Bill passed with advocacy support by the Malawi Parliament Conservation Caucus

400,000+ people engaged through campaigns

Two public awareness campaigns delivered on the issues of plastic pollution and the illegal bushmeat trade

26 countries mobilised to support Malawi's fight against wildlife crime



CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

A billboard outside Kamuzu International Airport in Lilonawe displays our latest Stop Wildlife Crime campaign.

5 LILONGWE WILDLIFE TRUST IMPACT REPORT





LWT is the only NGO mandated by the Government of Malawi to perform wildlife rescue and rehabilitation work. Our team works around the clock to care for orphaned, trafficked and injured animals at the award-winning Lilongwe Wildlife Centre, Malawi's only wildlife rescue facility. We also respond to veterinary emergencies nationwide, provide critical wildlife management support to the Government and its partners, promote wildlife welfare in communities and conduct conservation research initiatives.

Last year we rehomed this hyena to a sanctuary in Zimbabwe where he now lives with another male. Although most of our rescues are released back into the wild, it is not always possible in cases like this where animals have spent long periods in captivity.

LWT on TV

In early 2020 a six-part documentary about LWT's wildlife rescue and rehabilitation work hit television screens in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Malawi Wildlife Rescue gives viewers an insight into the dedicated work of the team at our Wildlife Centre, who work tirelessly to rehabilitate rescued animals and give them the best shot at life back in the wild. The series also follows our Wildlife Emergency Response Unit (WERU), led by head vet Dr. Amanda Salb, as it responds to emergency calls for veterinary support in the field.

Our Wildlife
Emergency
Response Unit is
regularly called out
to rescue and treat
animals caught in
poachers' snares.
This elephant
calf made a full
recovery.



Critical support for wildlife management

As well as responding to veterinary emergencies, WERU is the 'go to' team for national parks and reserves across Malawi that need hands-on support with wildlife management - whether it's assisting with an animal relocation or avoiding the potentially devastating impacts of human-wildlife conflict.

In Majete Wildlife Reserve, we responded to three calls about cheetahs that had wandered beyond the reserve, using a helicopter to locate, dart and transport the animals back to safety. The unit also helped place satellite collars on four elephants in Thuma Forest Reserve and the adjoining Dedza-Salima Forest Reserve. These collars will provide valuable data on how these elusive elephants are using the landscape - information that would otherwise be impossible to collect in this remote, rugged area.

In Liwonde National Park we helped placed satellite collars on bull elephants responsible for crop raiding, to help park management track movements and mitigate any potential conflict with local communities. We were also on hand to assist with the historic relocation of black rhinos from South Africa - an operation that will boost the population of this highly endangered species within Malawi.



△
LWT's Head Vet Dr. Amanda Salb prepares to
transport a cheetah back to the safety of Majete
Wildlife Reserve after it had wandered beyond the
reserve boundaries.

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A lifeline for victims of wildlife crime

Our team rehabilitates animals that have been rescued from the illegal wildlife trade and provides expert testimonials to support prosecutions for wildlife criminals. In the last year the Centre received an increase of over 100% in the number of animals that were confiscated from traffickers as a result of a government-led crackdown on organised crime. This included a spike in rescued pangolins following a twofold increase in the number of pangolin seizures. Caring for these endangered mammals in captivity is notoriously difficult as they are highly prone to stress. In one case involving a baby pangolin our team worked against the odds to keep her alive, including by teaching her to forage for ants, before finding a safe rehabilitation site in a national park where she continues to be closely monitored.

Pangolins are
the world's most
trafficked mammal,
accounting for as
much as 20% of all
illegal wildlife trade.





Our new Wildlife Welfare Unit works at a community level to promote peaceful coexistence between human and wildlife populations.

Promoting human-wildlife coexistence

This year also saw the launch of a new initiative dedicated to promoting wildlife welfare through direct community engagement. The Wildlife Welfare Unit responds to calls from concerned citizens, educates communities on how to co-exist safely with wildlife and - where necessary - rescues and relocates animals that are being mistreated. The unit also works with authorities to ensure prosecutions are progressed against the most serious wildlife cruelty cases. Since its launch, the unit has received dozens of calls relating to a range of wildlife that is commonly misunderstood, mistreated and illegally held captive, such as monitor lizards, vervet monkeys, baboons, pythons, owls, and hedgehogs.

Investigating 'One Health'

Based at Kuti Wildlife Reserve, our Clinical Projects in One Health (CPOH) initiative examines the health risks created by the coexistence of people, domestic animals and wildlife. Specific projects include investigating the presence of African Swine Fever in and around the reserve and recording the health status of wild ungulates. We are also identifying priority veterinary interventions for livestock in communities bordering the reserve in order to minimise the risk of diseases being transmitted from domestic animals to wildlife. Over the last year, the CPOH initiative provided research and mentorship opportunities for three Malawian veterinary students.

Vet students
from the Lilongwe
University of
Agriculture and
Natural Resources
treat a zebra with
an infected wound
from a dog bite.



Building knowledge and capacity

Our rescue, rehabilitation and research facilities provide a unique opportunity for students to work at the frontline of conservation, learn best practice from our team of experts and contribute to Malawi's growing body of wildlife science. Over the last year we provided mentorship and training for 29 Malawian and international veterinary students through our sanctuary operations and One Health research initiative, and a number of students from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources took up paid positions with LWT after being among the first cohort of locally trained veterinary doctors to graduate in Malawi.



☐ Dr. Love Kaona, one of LWT's vets, was among the first 12 graduates to ever qualify as veterinary doctors in Malawi.





Canine Max and handler Hardwell on shift at Kamuzu International Airport. The Wildlife Detection Dog Unit is a partnership between the Malawi Police Service and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, supported by LWT.

Enforcement agencies in Malawi made encouraging progress in the fight against wildlife crime last year, not least by dismantling one of Africa's most prolific organised crime syndicates. Following a complex operation in May 2019, ten Chinese and four Malawian nationals were arrested on various charges of trafficking ivory, rhino horn and pangolins and possessing illegal firearms and explosives. This case was notable not just for the scale of the operation but also because it led to the first non-African nationals being sentenced for wildlife offences in Malawi.

In July 2019, Malawi's Supreme Court also made a landmark ruling on the infamous case of the 'Kaunda brothers', who were each fined MK2.5 million (\$5,500) in 2013 for their part in the trafficking of 2.6 tonnes of ivory. Throwing out the original sentence, the Supreme Court instead sentenced the men to eight years in prison, setting a powerful legal precedent.

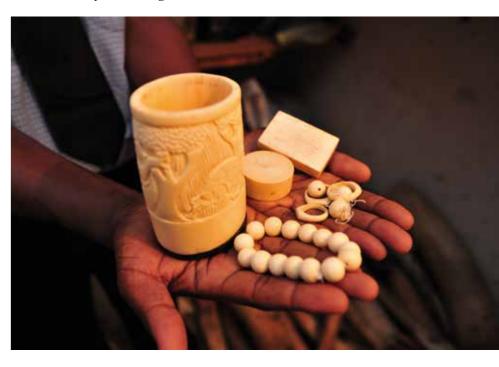
Throughout 2019-20, LWT continued to support the Government's ambitions to stamp out wildlife crime through a raft of initiatives to ensure that tough new laws passed in recent years continue to be being properly enforced, in turn resulting in more victories such as these.

Detection dogs sniff out wildlife crime

The five dogs and ten handlers that make up the LWT-supported Wildlife Detection Dog Unit (WDDU) conducted 311 operations in the field last year. In addition to routine deployments at airports, road blocks and border posts, the unit was also called in to support raids which led to the arrest of twelve members of the international trafficking syndicate referenced above, and the recovery of multiple specimens of illegal wildlife products and a number of unlicensed firearms and explosives. Other WDDU seizures included carved ivory and consignments of

bushmeat. Since the establishment of the unit, no international airport has reported a wildlife seizure from any inbound flights from Malawi - a significant development given that Malawi's airports were formerly known as notorious transit hubs for wildlife traffickers.

Although the majority of ivory seized in Malawi is in the form of raw tusks, worked pieces such as these carved ornaments are also confiscated by the authorities.





Combatting forest crime

Forestry is a critical environmental and economic issue in Malawi, with more than half of the nation's forests and woodlands vanishing over the last 40 years. Last year LWT joined a consortia of partners on an ambitious project to address the illegal trade in charcoal. LWT will support the Department of Forestry to replicate the successes of the wildlife authorities in strengthening legislation and regulatory frameworks, improving capacity to enforce these laws, securing political commitment, and increasing public awareness and support. In February 2020 we celebrated the passing of the Forestry Act Amendment Bill, a victory that was driven, in part, by advocacy undertaken by the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus.

Malawi has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the SADC region, driven largely by demand for firewood and charcoal, which 98% of the population depend on for household energy needs.















Some of the wildlife offenders apprehended this year, along with seized products. November 2019 marked the first time a non-African national received a prison sentence for wildlife offences in Malawi.

Eyes in the courtroom

Last year, LWT's legal team monitored 61 wildlife trafficking cases across the country and provided support with private prosecutions. This support has been critical for identifying gaps in knowledge or potential incitement of malpractice. The Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus, for which LWT is Secretariat, also provided a degree of political oversight to the judicial process by chairing a series of regional case review workshops, while media training and engagement helped to encourage more extensive and more responsible reporting on wildlife crime in the national press.

Building capacity to deliver justice

Working alongside the International Environmental Law Project and legal experts in the Malawian Government, we jointly published guidelines on Mutual Legal Assistance, a tool that supports transnational cooperation on the collection and exchange of information to assist in criminal investigations or court proceedings. We also delivered training on the guidelines for prosecutors in the neighbouring countries of Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia.

In an effort to consolidate the legislative progress that Malawi has made in recent years, the same team also developed a report entitled Putting the Tools to Good Use, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the laws that are available for combatting wildlife, forest and fisheries crime and outlines





recommendations for further strengthening the country's legislative framework for supporting nature conservation and regulating trade.

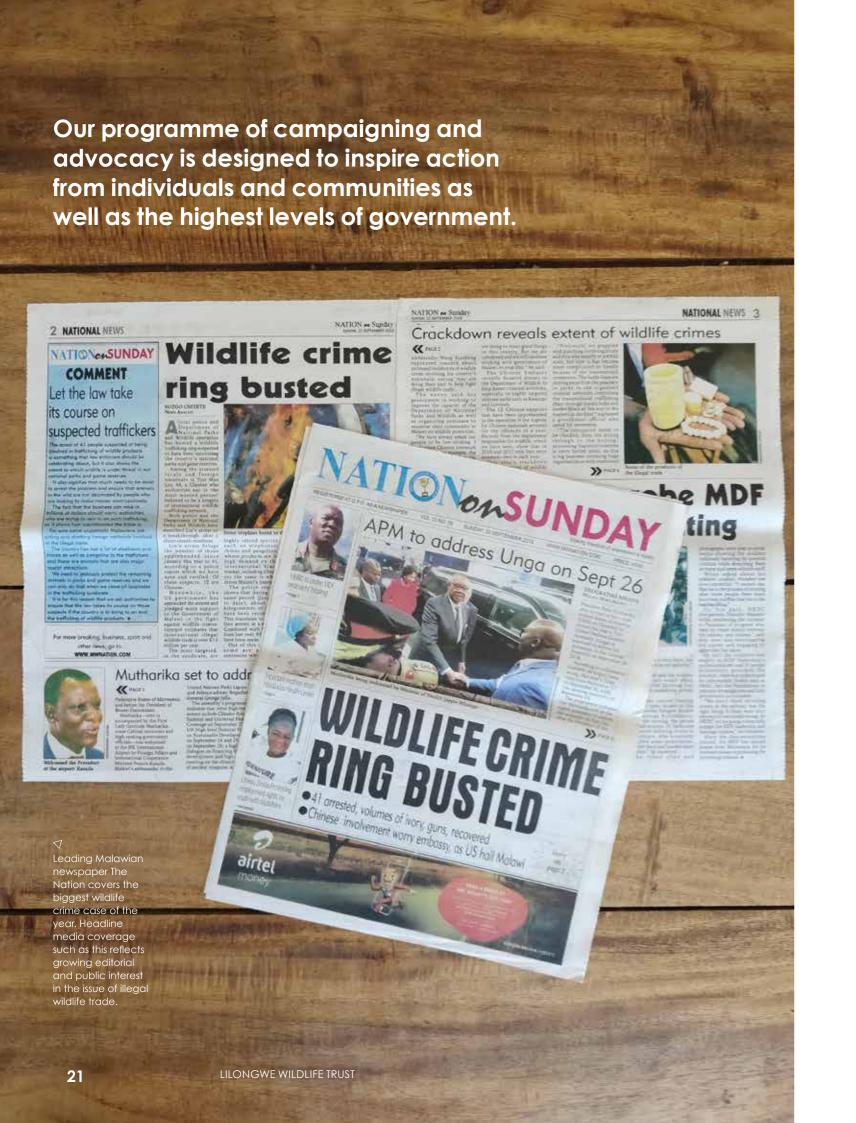
Given that legal tools are only effective if properly implemented, we delivered training to prosecutors across all four regions of Malawi on wildlife crime legislation, sentencing guidelines and evidence requirements. Bi-annual case review meetings were also held with magistrates to review case law, analyse trends in court outcomes and identify further training needs. Specialists from the UK's judicial and police services were subsequently brought in to share their expertise on issues relating to investigation techniques to support prosecutions.

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

WE ARE A FORCE FOR PROGRESS, CAMPAIGNING ACROSS SOCIETY AND PARTNERING WITH POLICY MAKERS TO MAKE CONSERVATION A NATIONAL PRIORITY >

Chinese
Ambassador H.E.
Liu Hongyang,
represented
here by Deputy
Ambassador Wang
Ziusheng, joined
25 other High
Commissioners,
Ambassadors and
Honorary Consuls
to support our
Stop Wildlife Crime
campaign.





Mobilising the international community against wildlife crime

In 2019, Ambassadors and High Commissioners representing 26 countries pledged their support to our Stop Wildlife Crime campaign. After taking part in a group photocall, they signed an open letter to the President to congratulate Malawi on its progress and resolve, and remind all foreign nationals of the country's strict laws on wildlife crime. The letter was also published in the national press and the imagery used in a series of billboards and posters.

Visiting US Congresswoman
Betty McCollum brief journalists
at a panel discussion on wildlife
trafficking organised by the US
Embassy and LWT in November
2019. The panel included the
Directors of the Department of
National Parks & Wildlife, the
Anti-Corruption Bureau, and
Financial Intelligence Agency,
the Chief Investigator for the
Malawi Police Service, and
the Chair of the Parliamentary
Natural Resources Committee.



Championing environmental policy

Last year the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus, for which LWT is the Secretariat, continued to influence environmental policy at critical moments. Members backed LWT's bushmeat and plastics campaigns, called out potential corruption in the wildlife and forestry sectors and lobbied for the long-awaited Forestry Act Amendment Bill. The latter is a crucial piece of legislation that provides a range of greater protections for Malawi's disappearing forests, increasing penalties and fines, strengthening regulation of charcoal, and creating greater support for forestry officers to carry out their enforcement duties.

The MPCC, a non-partisan group of 35 MPs, has helped to push conservation issues to the top of the political and public agenda.



IMPACT REPORT

Tackling plastic pollution

In early 2019 - following a protracted legal battle over a proposed ban on thin plastics - LWT delivered a short-burst campaign to galvanise public support for the new law. We released an independent assessment on the scale of plastic pollution in Malawi, published results of a public opinion poll, held a press briefing with a panel of experts and published an open letter with other organisations in a leading national newspaper. On 31 July 2019 - following a period of intense public pressure and media scrutiny - Malawi's Supreme Court ruled in favour of the ban. LWT has since worked with the Government to help raise awareness of the new legislation.



'Bushmeat: it's illegal, it's dangerous, it carries diseases'

Poaching to feed urban and international demand for bushmeat is widely recognised as one of the greatest threats to global biodiversity. The illegal trade and consumption of bushmeat also carries severe health risks and legal repercussions. Our latest campaign, designed to drive behavioural change in target consumer communities, features a hard-hitting PSA that was aired on TV, radio, and social media, and also reached communities around protected areas through our solar cinema and street theatre roadshow.



Launched with the Department of National Parks & Wildlife and supported by the Department of Health, our campaign warns people of the health risks and legal penalties involved in consuming and trading bushmeat.

Malawi, My Home

This year's World Wildlife Day was the perfect platform to launch our short film, Malawi, My Home. The film follows a young boy as he explains what home means to him, reflecting his pride in his country, the beauty and value of which is ultimately rooted in nature. Created to support our environmental education and community outreach work, the film celebrates the critical role that wild fauna and flora play in preserving life on earth. The video went viral online, with over 365,000 views on Facebook alone, and airings on all of Malawi's major TV stations.

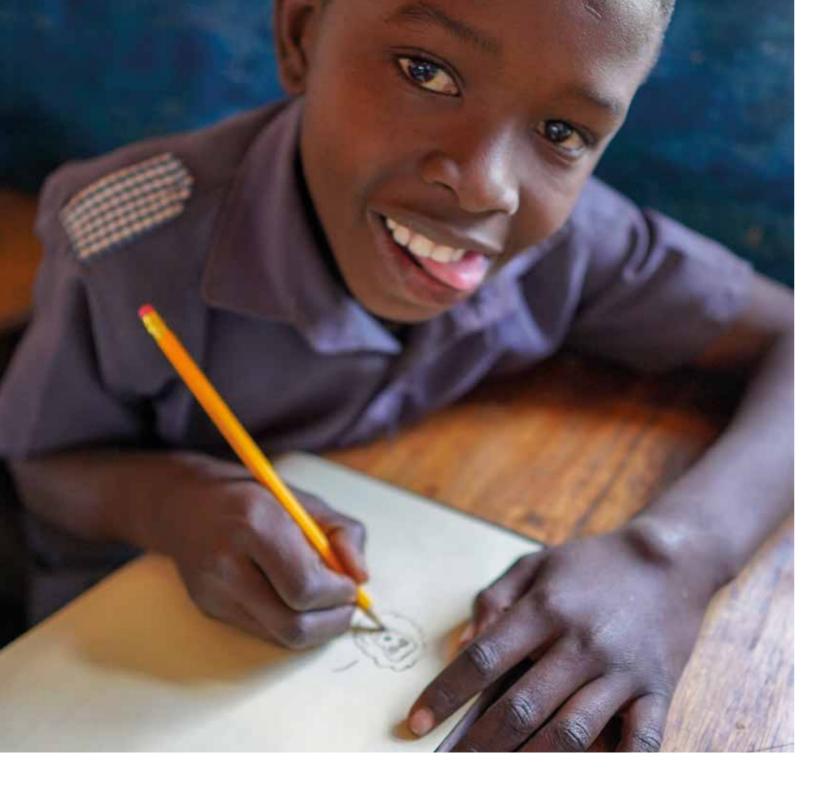
Created by film-maker Julian Braatvedt, this short film aims to encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility for our natural world, particularly in younger generations.



A new force for environmental protection

According to the World Bank, Malawi's new Environmental Management Act has the potential to be "one of the most powerful legal instruments for environmental management introduced so far in Africa". The success of the Act rests largely on the performance of a new regulator, the Malawi Environmental Protection Authority (MEPA). At the request of the Government, we carried out a scoping study to outline the actions needed for the effective establishment and operationalisation of the MEPA.





Natural resources are critical to the livelihoods of the majority of Malawians, so it's essential that people are empowered to value and protect their environment. Our education and community engagement programme seeks to inspire people to defend their natural heritage.

The World Bank's 2019 assessment of the state of the environment in Malawi identified awareness and education as priority actions to stem the cycle of environmental decline.

Building the next generation of conservationists

Our education programme continued to reach children in schools in the Northern and Central regions of Malawi, using extracurricular Wildlife Clubs to teach modules on a range of environmental issues, from human-wildlife conflict to biodiversity. Children are also encouraged to get involved with hands-on conservation activities outside of the classroom such as tree-planting, briquette making and recycling. In November 2019, for example, we ran a four-day conservation camp for children in Nyika National Park. Meanwhile, work has continued on establishing new education centres in Lilongwe and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve.





LWT's environmental education programme is delivered both in classrooms and natural settings, including through programmes at the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre.

Taking environmental education to prisons

Last year we took our environmental education programme to inmates at Rumphi Prison in Malawi's Northern Region. After joining our teacher training sessions, prison wardens delivered our curriculum to 58 inmates, 50% of whom are serving sentences for wildlife offences (the programme targets wildlife offenders but is open to anyone with an interest in conservation). We are also exploring opportunities to develop programmes that will equip prisoners with skills to gain employment after being released from prison and avoid falling back into illegal activities. Two former inmates are also supporting LWT's wider outreach work by sharing their personal stories with the media and warning communities of the legal penalties for engaging in wildlife crime.

A dancer performs Vimbuza, a traditional dance in Malawi's Northern Region, during a community rally to support local conservation efforts in and around Nyika National Park.



Empowering communities to defend wildlife

We work closely with communities to support local efforts to defend protected areas. In November 2019, for example, 750 people from communities bordering Nyika National Park attended a rally aimed at mobilising public support for wildlife protection. The area is located in a poaching hotspot and acts as a key link in the transit of wildlife contraband between protected areas and urban markets. The rally started with a march

> by students from nine local schools and was attended by representatives from district government, police, prison services and the judiciary.

> We've also maintained close links with local Natural Resources Management Committees, providing training on wildlife management and supporting committees to engage their communities in proactive conservation. As a result, one committee reported that a number of firearms were voluntarily surrendered and poaching snares collected by community members. We also supported the Department of National Parks and Wildlife to hold open dialogue sessions with communities to address ongoing issues of humanelephant conflict around Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve.



Inspiring pride for lions

Last year our education team travelled the length and breadth of the country to spread the message of our Mkango campaign which aims to build national pride for lions and reduce human-wildlife conflict. We reached tens of thousands of people living around protected areas through a community roadshow which incorporated street theatre and solar-powered cinema screenings. The roadshow was supported with radio PSAs, print and social media, a television documentary and an interactive 'lion quest' in the capital city. It was also a good test bed for our new 'ecological consciousness index', developed to help us evaluate the impact of our outreach.

Supporting 'green' livelihoods

In the last year we continued to run small-scale initiatives that support people to earn income through environmentally friendly livelihoods such as bee-keeping, permaculture and briquette making. Our upcycled snare wire jewellery project, Jalawi, was particularly successful, generating income for women's groups as well as helping to raise awareness of the devastating consequences of snaring. Now fully trained and equipped, with guaranteed routes to market, the groups are taking their enterprises forward independently and looking to upscale to meet demand.



LWT's community engagement programme includes smallscale livelihood projects which support people to produce and sell fuel briquettes, eco-stoves and artisan jewellery.





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OUR NETWORK AND TEAM

DONORS & PARTNERS

Donors: Born Free Foundation,
DEFRA, Elephant Crisis Fund, Foreign &
Commonwealth Office, GIZ Partnership,
ICCF, IFAW, INL, International Primate
Society, IWT Challenge Fund, Lion
Recovery Fund, Malawi Environmental
Endowment Trust, Nyika-Vwaza Trust,
Oak Foundation, Olsen Animal Trust,
PASA, Perivoli Trust, Stichting AAP,
Tusk Trust, UNDP, USAID, USFWS, Paul
Allen Family Foundation, Rosemarie
Nathanson Charitable Trust, World Bank
Global Environment Fund,
Wildcat Foundation.

Partners: African Parks, Biosphere Expeditions, Conservation Research Africa, Conservation South Luangwa, ESPA, Financial Intelligence Agency, International Environmental Law Project, Kuti Wildlife Reserve, Maisha, North Luangwa Conservation Programme, PAMS Foundation, RSPCA International, Tikki Hywood Foundation, Wildlife Action Group, WCP.

Government partners: Department of National Parks & Wildlife, Department of Forestry, Department of Education, Malawi Police Service, Department of Public Prosecutions, Office of President & Cabinet.

ACCREDITATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS













Lilongwe Wildlife Trust is a member of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), the Malawi representative for the Species Survival Network and the Secretariat for the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus. Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is the only sanctuary to hold accreditations from the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) and Born Free Foundation's PAW initiative.

PATRONS

HRH Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester Virginia McKenna, OBE



TRUSTEES

Mark Sprong (Chair)
Rod Hagger (Vice Chair)
Simon Cousins
Ton de Rooy
Brighton Kumchedwa
Ron Ngwira
Julie Saunders
Bev Trataris
Laurie Webb

Jonny Vaughan, MBE (CEO)

Arthur Nyirenda (Secretary)

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust is a Malawian not-for-profit trust, registered under the Trustee Incorporation Act of Malawi since 2008 (No.TR/INC4209) and has been a Council of Non-Governmental Organizations of Malawi member since 2009 (No. C466). Malawi Wildlife Trust is registered with the UK Charity Commission (No. 1176185).

Thanks to concerted efforts by the Government of Malawi and other conservation partners, populations of iconic African species such as elephants and rhinos are increasing in Malawi's national parks and wildlife reserves.

Photography credits: Blue Ant Media (p5 serval, p7-8, p9, p31-32), Chelsea Greene (p6 education, p27, p28 classroom image, p29 lion drawing) Amanda Harwood (front cover, inside front cover, p4, p11 pangolins, inside back cover), Pádraic MacOireachtaigh (p25-26), Clement Manjaalera (p29 community rally), Tom Mixer (p21), Samantha Nampuntha (p6 billboard), Maria Thundu (p12 Dr. Love Kaona, p15, p20, p30).

