WILDLIFE RESEARCH
Volunteering in Malawi

Bats
Carnivores
Primates
Vet Externships
Dear volunteer...

Thanks for your enquiry! We’ve written this pack to give you a little more information about the research programmes we have to offer and what you can expect if you decide to come out to Malawi and become part of the team.

Volunteers are crucial to our projects. We recognise that everyone has different motivations for coming out - whether it's for work experience, to take a break from work or to make a difference and give something back. So, wherever possible we match people’s skills and passions to the work at hand and in return for all your hard work we do our utmost to give you the best possible experience out here in the Warm Heart of Africa. We hope that after reading this pack that you feel our research projects are for you.

If you have any further questions we’re at the end of the phone (00265993 800289) or on email (lilongwewildlife@gmail.com) and you are most welcome to get in touch with any questions at all. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

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WHY MALAWI? WHY US?

Malawi for wildlife research because...

Malawi is a unique country with remnant populations of primates, carnivores and bats in each national park with very little conservation research. There is a wealth of knowledge to be learnt from this small country and with very few projects available here, you’ll be working on ground-breaking developments in the research world.

Malawi is recognised of international importance supporting a rich array of endemic species, including some that are restricted to single mountains. However, this rich biodiversity base is being threatened by an unsustainable rate of exploitation. Conversion to agriculture, firewood collection, wild fires, and invasion by alien species are all real threats. Deforestation is a considerable threat with Malawi losing 2.8% per year, with less than 5% of original forest area remaining (Mickleburgh, Hutson & Racey 2002; Chikuni & Sambo 2006).

Why us...?

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust and Conservation Research Africa are working together to offer a bespoke range of volunteer research projects working with the wildlife of Malawi. With a wealth of knowledge in behavioural ecology and animal husbandry, our experts in the field can offer you a unique volunteer experience learning from the best.

Conservation Research Africa encompasses African Bat Conservation and Carnivore Research Malawi. Running several nationwide conservation research projects relating to bats and carnivores including a wild dog research project, an urban hyaena research project, a hyaena translocation project, and continuing applied research into bat populations, CRA are paving the way for wildlife research in Malawi.

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust has been running since 2007. Starting as Malawi’s only wildlife rescue centre, work has progressed over the past five years to cover much more than just rescue and rehabilitation to tackle the wider issues threatening wildlife and wild places. Thanks to partnerships with some of the world’s leading wildlife and environmental charities, local NGO’s and key government departments, we now have a national presence helping each other to achieve our joint goal of protecting Malawi’s natural heritage for the benefit of both people and wildlife.
**BAT RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

**About the project...**

This project is led and founded by expert bat scientists from the University of Bristol, UK. Project leader, Dr Emma Stone has been conducting applied conservation research for over 16 years, particularly in Africa.

We provide a unique opportunity to work with bats and biodiversity research in Africa. Not much is known about African bats, and Malawi is estimated to have over 64 species! This makes your experience even more exciting as we are in unchartered territory in bat research, waiting to discover weird and wonderful new things about bats in Malawi. We have already discovered a new bat species for Malawi previously never recorded here, and have also recorded two other species that have only been found in a handful of locations in southern Africa.

We are unlike many of the other volunteer opportunities in Africa in that we provide a unique opportunity to work alongside qualified scientists as they conduct novel research in many cases on previously unstudied species. If you are specifically developing a career in bat research or consultancy we can also assist you by developing many of specific skills which can take many years to obtain in Europe or the USA.

**What you’ll be doing...**

We conduct a variety of research, community education and awareness activities, not just involving bats. This gives volunteers the opportunity to get involved and gain skills in a diversity of activities including:

- **Field research:** bat trapping and acoustic surveys, GIS mapping, insect and small mammal surveys, vegetation and habitat sampling.

- **Community education and awareness, marketing and fundraising.**

We conduct surveys throughout Liwonde National Park, so we travel to field sites to sample the biodiversity most days. This involves setting bat and insect traps, acoustic detectors and conducting vegetation surveys. Once completed we have to store and process all insect samples and log all data and acoustic records.

We also work in the local communities to conduct questionnaire surveys to establish community understanding of bats and biodiversity. This involves working in the rural villages surrounding the park.

[www.africanbatconservation.org](http://www.africanbatconservation.org)
CARNIVORE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

About the project...

Carnivore Research Malawi is led by Dr Emma Stone and conducts three core activities:

- **Applied research for wildlife conservation management** by conducting long-term carnivore monitoring and ecology projects to assess species status, threats and provide conservation recommendations; and a number of smaller student projects to facilitate and inform long-term conservation management of carnivore populations and their habitats. Project results are used to update IUCN species status reports and assist DNPW in long-term population monitoring and protected area management.

- **Education and awareness** of the ecological role of carnivores, human wildlife conflict mitigation, biodiversity and related issues through comprehensive community based education programmes and training workshops in collaboration with Lilongwe Wildlife Trust.

- **Capacity building** to increase project effectiveness and long-term success by building capacity in ecological research, biodiversity monitoring and management for DNPW through training courses, attachment programmes and postgraduate research projects at MSc and PhD level.

What you’ll be doing...

- Radio tracking carnivores at night
- Camera trapping for carnivores
- Acoustic callin surveys to census carnivores
- Spoor tracking surveys for carnivores
- Large mammal transect surveys
- Spotlighting surveys (for carnivores)
- Vegetation surveys and habitat mapping
- Community questionnaire surveys
- Various lab based activities including: GIS mapping, data entry.

We conduct a variety of research projects in both Kasungu and Liwonde National Parks giving you the opportunity to gain a diverse range of skills. We conduct research on all carnivores and their prey and have ongoing projects including a spotted hyaena behavioural ecology project and the urban hyaena research project.

We hope to give everyone a fun and rewarding experience. Whatever your background, there is plenty you can contribute with a range of activities to match your interests and abilities.

www.carnivoreresearchmalawi.org
What you’ll be doing...

- Radio telemetry & GPS tracking
- Behavioural observations
- Lab based work such as data collection and data entry
- Learning about the surrounding plant and animal ecology
- Gaining field experience with an expert team
- Troop identification
- Habitat assessments
- Field transects

The team have been following the released baboons since January, making reports and collecting data. You will be with them every step of the way assisting in all aspects of the field work.

There will be many technical aspects to learn as you monitor the troop through the park from dawn till dusk and assess their behaviour.

We hope to give everyone a great, worthwhile experience. Whatever your background, there is plenty you can contribute to a range of activities.

www.lilongwewildlife.org
LILONGWE WILDLIFE CENTRE

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust also runs an award winning wildlife rescue centre in the heart of the capital city. A further volunteer experience to consider; you can assist with a variety of work including caring for orphaned animals, rehabilitation, integrations and observations.

About the project...

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre was set up in 2007 as Malawi’s only wildlife sanctuary. Accredited by PASA and the Born Free Foundation we pride ourselves on having the highest standards of animal care and have won awards for our work. There are just under 200 animals currently in residence, including birds, reptiles, carnivores, primates and antelope. Many were rescued as orphans and victims of the illegal pet and bushmeat trade which is still prevalent in Malawi. Others have sustained injuries ranging from being caught in snares, hit by cars or stoned after wandering into the local village.

Thanks to our state-of-the-art vet clinic, orphan care centre and experienced animal care team supported by volunteers we can handle the majority of intakes on site.

What you’ll be doing...

- Orphan care including feeding and hand rearing orphans.
- Veterinary assistance.
- Rehabilitation including integrations and observations.
- Volunteers can also contribute to the community initiatives run by LWT, from our education programme to tree planting and fuel briquette projects.

By volunteering your time, you’ll be able to get stuck in with a range of tasks. Work will be very much dependent on what projects are going on at the time but the programme will be mixed up so you get variation in your work. If there’s anything you’re particularly interested in doing it’s worth mentioning on application and the volunteer manager can try to accommodate it. It’s all hard but very rewarding work! You will be able to see for yourself not just the impact the project has on the lives of individual animals but also the bigger picture of conservation in Malawi itself.

www.lilongwewildlife.org/volunteer
VET EXTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

About the project...

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre’s volunteer programme also offers two placements at any one time for vet externs. Our vet externs will be able to get involved in all aspects of animal health at LWC.

LWC receives a diverse range of animals including monkeys, duikers and serval cats. Vet externs will assist the on-site veterinarian in all aspects of veterinary care including incoming exams, minor trauma, health checks and routine diagnostics. Vet externs may also have the opportunity to accompany our Wildlife Emergency Response Unit (WERU) on any field operations that might occur. These can range from de-snaring elephants to collaring hyenas.

Vet externs are based at Lilongwe Wildlife Centre in the heart of the capital city and will be under the supervision of an experienced LWC or WERU veterinarian. In between veterinary work, externs will participate in the Centre’s other on-site work in animal care and orphan care.

What you’ll be doing...

- Assisting the on-site veterinarian in all aspects of veterinary care including incoming exams, minor trauma, health checks and routine diagnostics.
- Learning from experts in wildlife veterinary science.
- Orphan care including feeding and hand rearing orphans.
- Rehabilitation including integrations and observations.

This is a fantastic opportunity for vet students and qualified vets to get to grips with the wild side of veterinary science at one of Africa’s leading wildlife sanctuaries.

Please note that WERU works as and when wildlife emergencies occur, so there is no guarantee to make any excursions. However, if they do arise it may be possible to accompany the team.

Who can apply...

The vet extern placements are aimed at vet students that have completed at least one year of veterinary school. Qualified vets and vet nurses are also a major asset to the project as a whole and may be considered outside of the externship programme.

www.lilongwewildlife.org/vetexternships
CAMP LIFE

Kasungu National Park...

Kasungu National Park is home to the Primate & Carnivore Research Programmes.

Kasungu National Park is a stunning setting home to elephants, antelope, monkeys, zebra, buffalo and carnivores such as leopards and hyaenas. The camp is located at Lifupa Campsite, on the banks of the Lifupa Dam. It is rustic but very comfortable with canvas safari tents, equipped with beds, mattresses, linen, and solar power. Showers and toilets are located nearby. Volunteers share a large tent which can sleep up to four people, or smaller private tents may be available on request. Elephants regularly stop into camp to say hello and they can often be seen taking a dip in the dam.

Liwonde National Park...

Liwonde National Park is home to the Bat & Carnivore Research Programmes.

Our base in Liwonde National Park is located at Mvuu Camp, a Central African Wilderness Safaris Lodge on the banks of the mighty Shire river. The park has abundant wildlife including elephant, waterbuck and sable, hippo, buffalo, zebra, roan, eland and black rhino. Camp is basic but comfortable with canvas safari tents on wooden platforms, equipped with beds, mattresses and linen. Hot solar showers and flushing toilets are located nearby. Volunteers share a large tent which can sleep up to six people, or smaller private tents can be provided on request. You have access to the chill out area on days off to cool down in the swimming pool or hang out in a hammock. We can arrange optional extras including safari boat trips on the Shire river for excellent game viewing at sunset, walking safaris at dawn or rhino walks with the black rhino research team based in Mvuu.

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre...

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is the base for LWC volunteers and vet externs.

Despite being in the heart of the city, the Wildlife Centre is located within a reserve that feels a world away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Volunteers stay together at the volunteer house which is within the heart of the sanctuary and so surrounded by our animals. The house has mixed dorm-style accommodation sleeping ten with electricity, a kitchen, lounge area, bathroom and hot showers. We also have an attractive garden area for relaxing in the evenings and on your day off. You can also upgrade to the chalet if you want a bit more of your own space. A mix of Western and Malawian vegetarian meals are prepared from Monday to Saturday by the Centre chef, Joseph, with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables on offer.
MALAWI & BEYOND

Malawi culture, wildlife & scenery...

If you wish to venture further afield we can advise you on plenty of holiday destinations in Malawi worth a visit. Malawi is an amazing country; known as the "Warm heart of Africa" for it's friendly people and laid back atmosphere it is culturally and ecologically diverse with plenty to see from mountain rainforests to the lake of stars; you won't be disappointed.

A visit to Nyika plateau when the orchids are in bloom or down to Mount Mulanje at 3000m high with its endemic upland rainforests are also a must. We have a good relationship with a local travel company and can book on your behalf.

The Lake of Stars...

A trip to Malawi would not be complete without snorkelling in the crystal clear waters of lake Malawi, infamous for hundreds of endemic cichlid species. Go horse-riding at Kandy Beach or diving at Nkhata Bay or Cape Maclear.

Spend your days relaxing on the beach, try your hand at the various watersports available or kayak out for a stay on one of the remote islands in Lake Malawi National Park.

Zambia safari...

We can also organise discounted safari trips for you to hop over the border into Zambia's stunning South Luangwa National Park, which is known as one of the best wildlife-spotting locations in Africa including lions, leopards, monkeys and antelope!

Just let us know if you’re interested on application and we’ll arrange it all for you.
STILL INTERESTED?

Volunteers play a vital role in helping us to achieve our aims. We need as much help as possible to make a difference for wildlife in Malawi and in return it is our hope that you have a fun and rewarding experience, meet like-minded people and develop new skills.

Criteria...

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<th>Bat Research Programme</th>
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<td>A minimum of an undergraduate degree and no serious allergies or illnesses.</td>
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<td>Minimum of 18 years old, a keen interest in wildlife and a hard work ethic.</td>
<td>Enrolled in veterinary school having completed at least one year/qualified vet/qualified vet nurse.</td>
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Availability...

A minimum stay of 2 weeks is required. You can stay up to 10 weeks, with longer placements available subject to availability. Extensions can be made once in country, also subject to availability. The cost of volunteering varies according to the length of your stay.

Applying...

If you’re interested in joining us please contact lilongwewildlife@gmail.com for a full list of prices for each programme and application form. Once we have received your completed application form we will contact you to confirm dates, costs, and send you a detailed volunteer information pack with all the information you’ll need before you arrive. To confirm your placement we will need a £200 holding deposit, once received you can get started organising your trip!

We look forward to hearing from you!