



A guide to the:

*Lilongwe Wildlife Centre*





# The Lilongwe Wildlife Centre

**Focus:** African Wildlife  
**Location:** Malawi

**Start Date:** Every Tuesday  
**Arrival & Starting Point:** Lilongwe

Established in 2008, the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is the sole accredited wildlife sanctuary in all of Malawi, serving as a beacon of hope for the country's most in-need animals. Whilst Malawi is blessed with a phenomenal array of wildlife species, there are a number of pressures which put the animals here at serious risk: deforestation and the illegal wildlife trade are two of the leading issues faced by Malawi's wildlife, and as a result hundreds of animals become injured or orphaned each year, with many more being left without a safe place to go.

The tragedy of what Malawi's wildlife species go through as a result of (largely) human interference means that many surviving animals are in desperate need of care and rehabilitation, and thus the team behind the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre were inspired to open their doors. The sanctuary's mission is to 'protect Malawi's wildlife by helping wild animals in need, combatting wildlife crime, and empowering the guardians of the wild', and with the help of volunteers, they have made great headway in doing just that. Currently, the sanctuary is home to around 200 rescued animals; amongst them are marvellous species such as monkeys, antelope and crocodiles, each of which have their own stories and unique needs. The Lilongwe Wildlife Centre works tirelessly to rehabilitate and (where possible) release these animals, but due to an ever-increasing influx of individuals requiring help, the sanctuary does rely on the help of volunteers to make its aims a reality.

While rescue and release are two of the project's main focuses, they also work tirelessly to promote wildlife conservation in other areas. In 2019, an impressive 44,837 students were engaged in conservation-based programmes at the centre, and a further 3,300 trees were planted as part of the project's community outreach initiative. By working with local people, the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre may well be helping to raise the next generation of conservationists, offering hope to the future of Malawi's environment and its animals. As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to support these amazing initiatives, though you will also spend time aiding Lilongwe's animal residents, helping the centre to fulfil their admirable goals. The rehabilitation and release of animals has so far been a success, with 136 rescues

and 83 releases taking place in 2020 and an additional 179 clinical procedures undertaken - an astounding effort for the country's only wildlife centre!

By joining this project, you will have the option to aid one of two areas. The first is around the centre itself, where you will support the team in their daily tasks such as orphan care and community initiatives. This option is fantastic for conservation enthusiasts, though should you be a veterinary student, you may instead choose to assist at the centre's wildlife clinic. Here you will work under the guidance of Dr Amanda Salb, the country's lead veterinarian, as you aid in areas such as examinations, health checks and routine diagnostics. No matter how you choose to help, your desire to help shape the future of Malawi's conservation efforts is sure to make a difference, leaving you with memories to last a lifetime.





## Orphaned Animal Care

You will work with the local animal carers at the project site, taking part in important activities such as cleaning, feeding and taking care of baby orphaned animals. Please note that animal welfare is at the forefront of the project's work, therefore there is a strict no-contact policy in place which is only lifted when hand-rearing is required or when working with the vets.

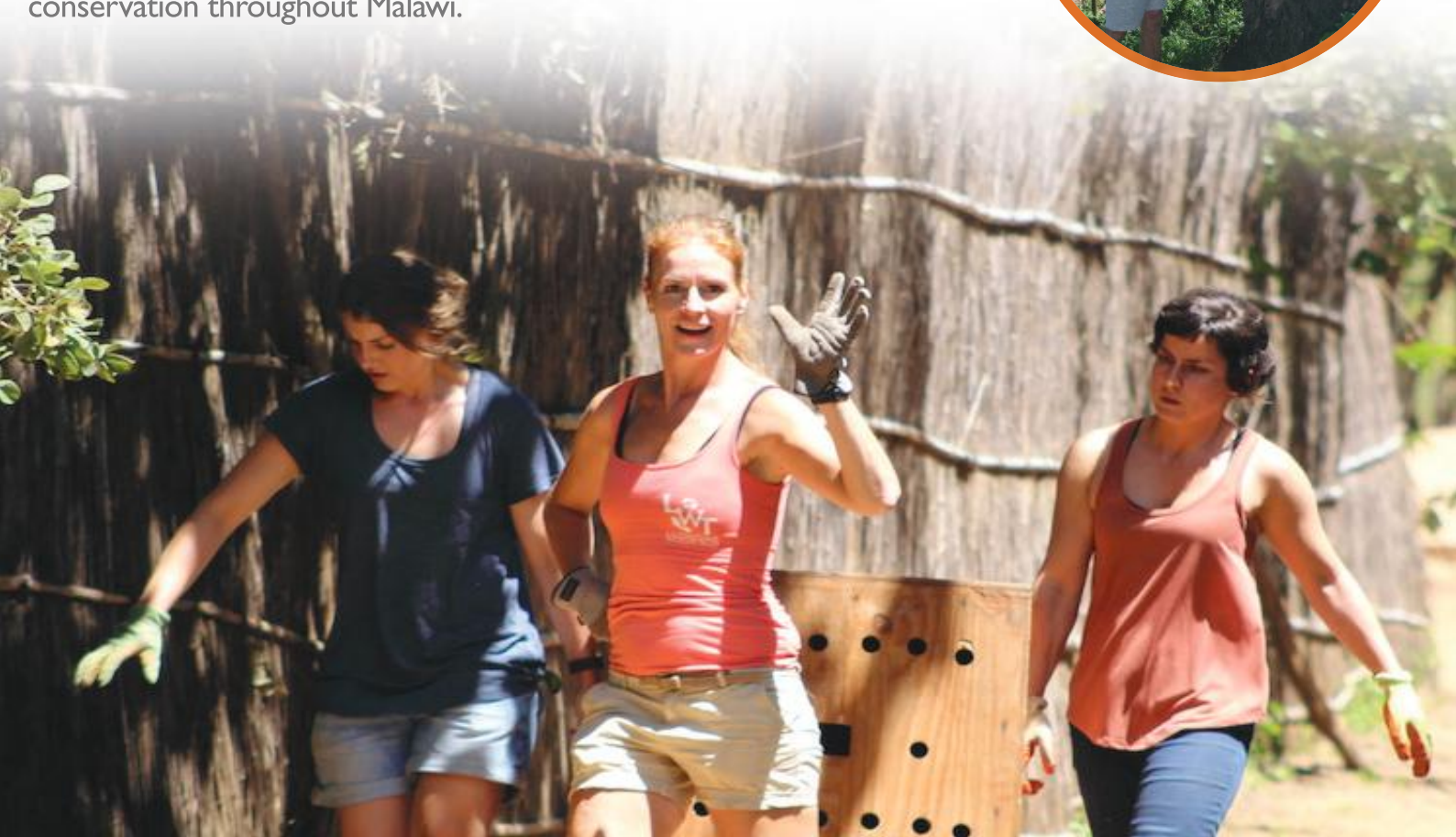


## Rehabilitation & Release

You may have the chance to join the dedicated animal care manager to rehabilitate animals and release them back into the wild. The animals need to be fed, cared for, and provided with enrichment activities. Data also needs to be collected to ensure their safe release. Please note that we cannot guarantee that a release will take place during your time on the project.

## Environmental Work

For those interested in conservation management, there are a number of surveys and projects which require the help of volunteers. You may help to reforest areas and collect information on the health of the environment, and overall offer support to wider wildlife conservation throughout Malawi.



# Vet Externship Programme

If you are a vet student, you may wish to take part in the project's veterinary externship programme. The programme takes place over durations of 2-12 weeks and is lead by Dr Amanda Salb, the only in-country veterinarian licensed for game capture in Malawi. During your time on the programme, you will take part in a range of activities designed to best support the vital work done by Dr Salb and her team. An example of these activities can be found below.



## Rescue & Rehabilitation

Externs on the programme will be expected to prioritise the demands of the veterinary department and wildlife centre, with work ranging from emergency operations to health checks and routine diagnostics. Depending on the number of staff available, you may be able to take part in theoretical or practical training. Clinical sanctuary work is, of course, far different to that undertaken at a domestic animal clinic, so this programme is a perfect way for you to gain a broad, real-world experience that spans all aspects of rehabilitation.

## Clinical Projects in One Health

Significant knowledge gaps exist in the body of research on wildlife health in Malawi, and the collection and analysis of baseline data is beneficial for informing conservation strategies locally, regionally, and nationally. The 'Clinical Projects in One Health' programme leads clinical interventions and targeted research projects around Malawi, serving to gather information on the proximity of humans and animals in Malawi and the impact that this may have towards the risk of disease for both parties.

As a volunteer, you will split your time between the sanctuary and the field (at the nearby National Park), learning new techniques such as wildlife health surveillance and veterinary outreach. You will assist in all aspects of data collection and analysis, field work, laboratory procedures and clinical interventions, and will take part in an array of non-invasive wildlife sample collections around the reserve.



In addition to working on the above, you may also take part in a number of the activities from the standard volunteer programme (listed on the previous page). Whilst at the centre, you will also live alongside volunteers from the standard programme in the volunteer house.

**If you are interested in joining the vet programme, please speak to a member of our team.**





# Itinerary

The following itinerary applies to all those joining the regular volunteer project. If you join the Veterinary Externship Programme, your itinerary will differ as it will be affected by any veterinary work which needs to be completed.

## Day 1

After arriving into Malawi, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the project site. After settling in you'll be taken to explore the local town, and as well as shopping, you will have the chance to meet your fellow volunteers! After dinner it is time to rest up in preparation for the project's activities starting the next day.

## Day 2 - 14

You will normally be able to work on the activities of your choosing, but please be ready to be flexible if an urgent task arises! Animals in need of help can come into the centre at any time, so you may need to help if this is the case. Working hours are typically 8am to 5pm, (with some occasional night shifts or extra hours) and you'll work 6 days a week.

## Day 15

Unfortunately today will be your final day, and after some fond farewells to the staff, volunteers and animals, you will return to Lilongwe Airport for your return flight or your onward travel plans.

## A Typical Day At The Lilongwe Wildlife Centre

Activities will vary on this project from day to day depending on the needs of the animals at the centre, but you should be able to partake in your preferred activity. The following is only an example of a day at the centre, so please be aware that the below is subject to change.

**7:00am**

You'll begin your morning with breakfast and a quick cup of coffee before taking part in your first activity of the day. You may help to prepare food for the animals, feed them, or clean their enclosures.

**11:00am**

It's time to get creative, as you'll be tasked with coming up with enrichment ideas for the many different animals resident at the centre. The only limitation here is your own creativity, so feel free to put your ideas forward!

**1:00pm**

It is now time to break for lunch. Take an hour to replenish and relax with a tasty meal before continuing on with the day's activities.

**2:00pm**

This afternoon sees you taking time to get involved in community outreach work, and along with the rest of the volunteers, you will head out to meet the local community and spread the benefits of animal conservation.

**6:00pm**

Enjoy dinner with your fellow volunteers before spending the rest of the evening at leisure.

**Weekends**

During this project you will get one day off each week, and if you are staying for 4 weeks or longer then you will get a long weekend at some point during your stay. There is lots to do in the area near to the project site, so speak to the project staff if you'd like any suggestions!

## Accommodation

During the project, you will stay in a specially-built volunteer house within the heart of the wildlife centre. The house features a same-gender split, 6-bedroom dorm, which can host up to 18 people. Elsewhere, a kitchen and lounge area can be found. There is also a bathroom with western style toilets and hot showers. Outside, you will find a pleasant garden area where you are welcome to spend your evenings enjoying the setting African sun!

While there is no Wi-Fi available at the volunteer house, you will be provided a local SIM card on arrival.



## Food & Drink

Vegetarian meals and drinking water are included in the project fee, but while meals are prepared for you most days of the week, the chef does take a day off each Sunday. Why not take this opportunity to cook up a storm with your fellow volunteers? If you'd prefer to eat off-site, there are local restaurants nearby.

Malawian food is somewhat basic, and the project chef has to work with the seasons and the availability of certain foods. That said, the project is happy to cater for any specific dietary requirements - all we ask is that you let us know in advance! Finally, for those who prefer to have meat with their meals, there is a fridge onsite should you wish to purchase your own. You are also welcome to use the fridge for any other personal luxuries.





## What's Included

- Accommodation
- Transfers to and from the airport
- Three meals per day
- English speaking project coordinator
- A donation to the project
- A SIM card & t-shirt

## Not Included

- Flights
- Vaccinations
- Visas
- Travel insurance

## Volunteer Reviews

### Olivia

"There was such a range of different things to do at the centre that it never got remotely boring."



### Sean

"It was the best experience of my life! The staff were extremely helpful and friendly!"



### Vanessa

"It opened up a world I would never have experienced if not for this project!"







## What Next?

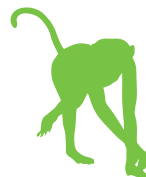
Becoming a volunteer at the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is simple, and you can help make a difference to wildlife conservation efforts in just a few simple steps...



Visit the website to select your start date and how long you would like to volunteer for.



Secure your place online by paying a deposit of £195. You'll have up to 60 days before your start date to pay your remaining balance.



Prepare for your trip and ask your dedicated travel expert any questions before packing your bags and heading off to Malawi!



Finally, have an incredible time and don't forget to send in or tag us in your photos!

**#thegreatprojects**



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