



**LILONGWE WILDLIFE TRUST**

# **PLACEMENT PROGRAMME**



# LILONGWE WILDLIFE TRUST

## LWT VISION

Nature in Malawi is secure and thriving  
for current and future generations

## LWT MISSION

To save wildlife, deter nature crime, and secure healthy  
landscapes for people and wildlife



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# HELLO!

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT) was established in 2008 and, shortly afterwards, we opened the doors to what is still the only wildlife sanctuary in Malawi. Most of our first animal residents were rescued from a run-down zoo in the bustling capital city of Lilongwe. Since then we've grown into the country's leading conservation charity, running programmes that span wildlife rescue, biodiversity research, conservation justice, environmental education, and campaigning and advocacy (more on p7).

We offer placements in sanctuary work, wildlife research and veterinary medicine – but our approach is flexible. This means that, where possible, we're happy to tailor what we offer to your skills and passions. So don't worry if you don't see exactly what you want – just put as much information in your application form as possible and we'll get in touch to explore how we can create something special for you!

Please let us know if you have any questions. We hope that you choose to join us in Malawi – the Warm Heart of Africa!

**[placements@lilongwewildlife.org](mailto:placements@lilongwewildlife.org)**



# WHY JOIN LILONGWE WILDLIFE TRUST?

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Malawi has an incredible diversity of wild animals and habitats but is facing huge threats, from deforestation and pollution to poaching and climate change. LWT works at the forefront of many of these challenges, so if you volunteer with us you'll be part of a much bigger picture. Whether you're working with our rescued animals or contributing to wildlife research, volunteering with LWT is a chance to make a real difference to conservation in a critical context.

## LEARN FROM THE BEST



We are the only NGO sanctioned by the Government of Malawi to conduct wildlife rescues nationwide and Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is the only sanctuary in the world to hold accreditations from the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and the Born Free Foundation PAW scheme. In 2023 Lilongwe Wildlife Centre won the GFAS 'Outstanding International Sanctuary' Award. Working with us will give you the chance to learn from a team of Malawian and international experts dedicated to the very best of practice.

## BE PART OF A CONSERVATION REVOLUTION



Malawi is in the grip of a conservation revolution. In recent years, the Government has clamped down on wildlife criminals by passing tough laws and disrupting organised crime syndicates. Greater investment in protected areas has led to a boom in wildlife populations and the return to some areas of the 'Big Five'. This means that Malawi is fast earning a name for itself as an emerging leader in African conservation. Volunteering with us is a chance to be part of this fascinating story.

## EXPERIENCE 'THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA'



From the vast expanse of Lake Malawi – with its white-sand beaches and colourful cichlid fish – to the rolling grasslands of Nyika Plateau and the stunning peaks of Mount Mulanje, Malawi is one of Africa's best-kept travel secrets. Although it may not be as well known as some of its Southern African neighbours, Malawi offers the chance to experience nature in unspoilt areas of true wilderness. It is also renowned as one of the safest countries to travel in Africa.

# OUR WIDER WORK

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust runs five core programmes (although we only offer placement opportunities in the first two).

## WILDLIFE RESCUE & WELFARE

We're Malawi's first response for wild animals that are injured, orphaned, or rescued from the illegal wildlife trade.



## BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH

We conduct monitoring and research to fill critical knowledge gaps and inform national and regional conservation strategies.



## CONSERVATION JUSTICE

We support the Government of Malawi to take progressive action on wildlife and forest crime.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We provide immersive education experiences on a range of environmental issues for youth of all ages.



## CAMPAIGNING & ADVOCACY

We work closely with policy-makers, community leaders, and the media to mobilise public and political support for environmental issues.





## OUR 'HANDS-OFF' ETHOS

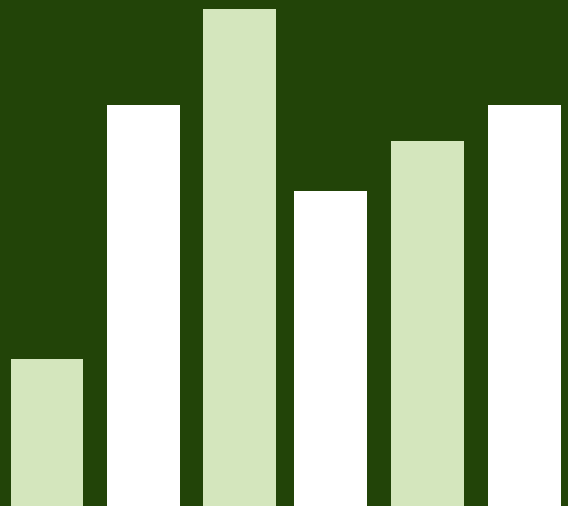
We do everything possible to give the animals that come into our care a fighting chance of being returned to the wild – where they belong. This means that we operate a hands-off policy with regards to our rehabilitation work, which means no direct contact with animals unless it's required for veterinary or rehabilitation purposes.

If you volunteer with us, you'll be asked to get involved in real conservation tasks – in other words, work that actually makes a difference to the animals we protect. This might not always be glamorous (be prepared to get dirty!) but it's work that needs to be done. This could involve anything from preparing food and enrichment activities to observing animal behaviours and gathering data. All of our projects tend to be small, which means that your involvement will have more of a direct impact.



## WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

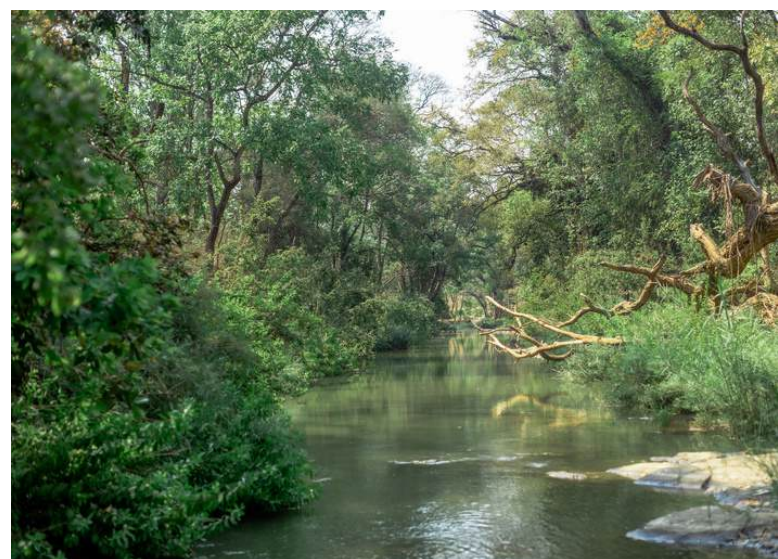
It's no exaggeration to say that volunteering with us will help to save and change lives. Although many of our overheads are funded through grants from international governments and foundations, almost all of our animal welfare and biodiversity monitoring work is made possible thanks to the donations that are included in our placement fees. That means that your support is helping to fund our various conservation projects, including the sanctuary that keeps our animal residents alive and safe.



# SUSTAINABILITY

We aim to be as environmentally sustainable as possible. We take the following measures to reduce our carbon footprint and minimise our impact on the environment:

- Using solar power for key energy needs
- Providing only vegan/vegetarian meals
- Sourcing all food locally
- Using borehole water
- Cooking on gas rather than firewood
- Providing a recycling station on site at Lilongwe Wildlife Centre
- Hosting river clean up days with the public and local communities
- Using local and/or sustainable materials as much as possible in construction





**OUR**

**PLACEMENTS**



# SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre (LWC) is Malawi's only wildlife sanctuary – widely reputed as one of the best facilities in Africa for its high standards of animal welfare. LWC is accredited by the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance, the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and the Born Free Foundation PAW scheme. In 2023 it was named GFAS 'Outstanding International Sanctuary'.

We care for around 200 animals on any given day, the majority of which are primates. Every animal that comes into our care – whether as a result of abuse, illegal activity or human-wildlife conflict – receives a carefully tailored programme of support from our team of experts. We aim to release as many animals as possible back into the wild. Those that cannot be released are cared for in the safety of the sanctuary. Volunteering at the Centre will give you a powerful insight into the life-changing and life-saving work of wildlife rehabilitation. *Please note that our busiest period is during October to January each year, when we typically receive more orphaned animals.*



**DURATION** 2-12 weeks



**LOCATION** Lilongwe Wildlife Centre



**QUALIFICATION REQUIRED** None

## THE WORK

You will spend the majority of your time with our dedicated animal care team, where work covers the whole spectrum of work to rehabilitate injured, orphaned and abused wild animals. Expect to get your hands dirty, work hard and sleep well!

Animal rehabilitation is not always glamorous – think chopping food, cleaning enclosures and waking up at 3am to feed orphaned monkeys – but it's work that makes a real difference. Duties include animal husbandry (cleaning, sanitation, feeding and enrichment), orphan care, observations and integrations. You'll also get the chance to learn more about specialist areas of work such as enrichment, observation and rehabilitation techniques.



# RESEARCH VOLUNTEER

Malawi's incredible wildlife is facing a number of threats, from deforestation and biodiversity loss to human-wildlife conflict and the illegal trade in products such as ivory and bushmeat. Our research placement focuses on monitoring species of 'special concern' in beautiful Liwonde National Park. You'll work with iconic species such as lions, cheetahs, hyenas and vultures, collecting data that will directly inform conservation strategies (we do not monitor elephants or rhinos – although you will likely see them on drives!). *Please note, during rainy season (Nov-April), we conduct fewer monitoring drives, generally see fewer animals and spend more time in camp!*



**DURATION** 2-12 weeks



**LOCATION** Liwonde National Park



**QUALIFICATION REQUIRED** None

## THE WORK

Field work is intensive and requires early starts, long days and plenty of patience! Activities include radio tracking of targeted animals, checking camera traps and recording opportunistic sightings. Working as part of a small team, you'll learn how to conduct VHF radio tracking, animal identification, camera trapping and data entry.

You'll also experience some truly unique moments as you learn more about the dynamics of groups and individual wild animals. This may include moments such as witnessing the take-over of a lion pride by a new male, watching a cheetah teaching her cubs to hunt or observing dynamics between vultures and predators at a carcass.

All monitoring activities are conducted by vehicle (we do two drives per day, roughly five hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon). Tracking animals requires us to be constantly on the move, so we do not stop the vehicle often, unless the team needs to check one of our camera trap stations. We also drive on unpaved dirt roads, which can be very rough most of the year, and muddy during wet season.

Our field work generally runs for five and a half days a week. Participants will occasionally have down time between morning and afternoon monitoring sessions, although our work is unpredictable and may result in full days in the field (less in wet season). In the evenings, there will be a chance to sit around the fire, listen to the sounds of the bush and chat about the day's events.



# VET EXTERNSHIP

This placement will give you a real insight into sanctuary-based vet work. The specific tasks will vary according to the types of animals we are caring for at any particular time, but you can expect to get involved in a mix of clinical work and wider welfare activities, including enrichment, integrations, observations and animal husbandry.



**DURATION** 2-12 weeks



**LOCATION** Lilongwe Wildlife Centre



## QUALIFICATION REQUIRED

Must be studying for a vet-related qualification. If you are an undergraduate student looking to carry out a veterinary research project, see our Student Research placement (p20).

## THE WORK

This placement is ideal for those looking to gain broad, real-world experience of sanctuary-based vet work. It is important to note that we are a wildlife sanctuary, rather than solely a vet clinic, which means that veterinary / clinical work is unlikely to take place every day. On the days when we don't have procedures, externs will participate in our animal care, orphan care, integrations, observations, and enrichment activities.

The veterinary component of the externship runs in the mornings, Tuesday to Friday (in addition to any emergencies that might arise). During these times externs will work under a veterinarian on a mix of activities including diagnostics, preventative health checks under sedation, parasite management and other treatment plans. The specific work will depend on the different animals we have in care at that time.

In the afternoons externs learn vital skills in the rehabilitation and care of wildlife. This is important for wildlife vets to ensure that they can identify baseline health parameters for a range of species, identify behavioural change and pick up on sick and injured animals quickly. Tasks undertaken in the afternoons include basic husbandry, enrichment and integrations.



# WILDLIFE VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE

This intensive five-day course is designed to give you a hands-on introduction to wildlife veterinary medicine. Course participants can stay on after the course for a longer veterinary externship, but please note that an externship cannot be started prior to the course.



## DURATION

Email [placements@lilongwewildlife.org](mailto:placements@lilongwewildlife.org) for forthcoming dates



## LOCATION

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre



## QUALIFICATION REQUIRED

Must be studying for a vet-related qualification

## COURSE CONTENT

Under the instruction of our veterinary team, you'll be taught through both lectures and wet labs.

You'll have a chance to learn about parasitology, haematology, primate infectious and non-infectious diseases, emergency management, rehabilitation, pharmacology, medication, suture patterns in wildlife, remote capture systems, and key conservation issues.

You'll assist with our annual health monitoring programme for primates, which includes physical exams, patient monitoring, and sample collection and analysis.



# WILDLIFE & SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE

This unique, two-week course has a focus on both wildlife and small animals. You will be taught by veterinarians from two of Malawi's leading animal welfare organisations, Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT) and the Lilongwe Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (LSPCA).



## DURATION

Email [placements@lilongwewildlife.org](mailto:placements@lilongwewildlife.org) for forthcoming dates



## LOCATION

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre and Lilongwe Society for the Protection and Care of Animals



## QUALIFICATION REQUIRED

Must be studying for a vet-related qualification

## COURSE CONTENT

**Five days at Lilongwe Wildlife Centre:** Under the instruction of our veterinary team, you'll be taught through both lectures and wet labs. You'll have a chance to learn about parasitology, haematology, primate infectious and non-infectious diseases, emergency management, rehabilitation, pharmacology, medication, suture patterns in wildlife, remote capture systems, and key conservation issues. You'll assist with our annual health monitoring programme for primates, which includes physical exams, patient monitoring, and sample collection and analysis.

**Five days at the LSPCA:** the LSPCA field clinics are a dynamic and hands-on opportunity for you to gain practical experience in companion animal surgery and anesthesia. You will actively participate in the anesthesia and surgical procedures, under the close supervision of our experienced veterinarians and nursing team. This hands-on experience will allow you to learn proper surgical techniques, through observation, assisting, and performing the surgeries yourself as you gain confidence and proficiency as well as learning how to administer and monitor anesthesia in a field setting. In addition to spaying and neuter surgeries, our field clinics are a great opportunity to provide primary care to sick animals presented. Cases are varied and you may have the opportunity to encounter a variety of cases, such as transmissible venereal tumors, babesiosis, and distemper to name a few.



WELCOME TO MVUUI

RECEPTION



PLEASE ENJOY YOUR SAFARI!

BEWARE OF  
WILD ANIMALS

# STUDENT RESEARCH

We accept a limited number of student research projects each year, where the student's research topic aligns with our expertise and goals. We generally only accept undergraduate students. Masters students may be considered if their research project addresses a previously identified topic of interest to our work, and the required support can be provided by LWT and the student's supervisor(s).



**DURATION** 1-6 months



**LOCATION** Various sites



**QUALIFICATION REQUIRED** Undergraduate students

## MORE INFORMATION

Students can either apply to conduct research on one of our identified topics of interest, or they can apply to conduct research on a topic of their own interest (providing it aligns with our expertise and goals). We have a list of potential research topics (veterinary and non-veterinary) which are updated on an ongoing basis – please contact our team to find out more. Research on some of the topics may be able to be done remotely.

If you are applying to do a research project of your own (i.e. not on one of our research topics), you must formulate a specific research question, methodology, data analysis, and equipment needs prior to application.

For all student researchers, we can provide logistical / general support for data collection as well as the standard provisions offered to volunteers (accommodation, meals, airport transfers etc). We can also provide advice during the writing process.

However, you must confirm your own academic supervisor – we cannot provide one for you. You are also responsible for funding and bringing equipment. Where possible we can provide access to some supplies but this will be subject to availability and there may be an additional charge.

A photograph of a building with a large tree and a potted plant in the foreground. The building has a brick wall and a covered walkway. The sky is blue with some clouds. The word "LOCATIONS" is written in large, bold, orange letters across the center of the image.

# LOCATIONS

# LILONGWE WILDLIFE CENTRE

*Location for: sanctuary volunteers, vet externs, vet course participants, student researchers (depending on the nature of the research topic).*

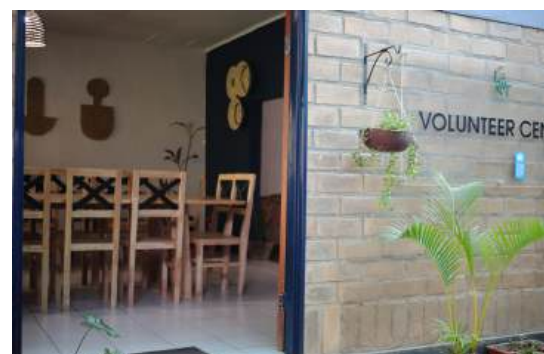
Our wildlife sanctuary is located within a 70-hectare nature reserve located in the middle of the capital city, Lilongwe. The nature reserve itself is home to wild animals such as antelopes, crocodiles, small carnivores and hyenas and over 100 bird species. There are 5km of walking trails running through the forest and along the Lingadzi River, and an on-site café which is a perfect space for a quiet moment of reading or studying. The Centre is just 10 minutes to town with its restaurants, shops and markets if you feel like a change of scene. The team are happy to organise movie nights and nights out.

## ACCOMMODATION

Our volunteer house can host up to 17 people at a time across six bedrooms (a single supplement may be charged to secure a private room). The house also includes a lounge, kitchen, inside and outside dining spaces, two bathrooms, laundry space, an outdoor deck and garden. WiFi and cleaning / laundry is provided. The building is located in the middle of the sanctuary, which means that you'll experience the magic of bush life after a hard day of work – spending evenings by the fire listening to the sounds of the forest.

## MEALS

Meals are cooked by our on-site chef every day except on Sunday, when volunteers are asked to cook for themselves (or enjoy leftovers!). The menu is vegetarian / vegan with a mix of international and local dishes. Let us know if you have other special dietary requirements. Volunteers are also welcome to buy other luxuries or meat if they wish.



# LIWONDE NATIONAL PARK

*Location for: research volunteers and student researchers (depending on the nature of the research topic).*

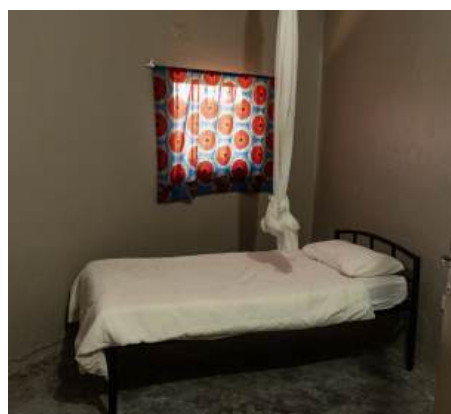
Liwonde is situated in Malawi's Southern Region, a four-hour drive from Lilongwe. One of Malawi's premiere game viewing sites, Liwonde is home to some of the country's largest elephant and black rhino populations. Situated on the famous Shire River, habitats are varied, from vast floodplains to cathedral mopane woodlands. In recent years Liwonde has been the host of wildlife translocations and reintroductions. It is one of the top parks in Malawi for carnivore sightings, most notably cheetahs and lions.

## ACCOMMODATION

Our research camp is "bush basic" and planned around communal living, with participants staying in shared rooms. It can accommodate up to five volunteers at a time. There is a large kitchen and outdoor fire area. Ablutions include flush toilets and hot showers. Power at the research camp is intermittent and often powered by a backup power source, therefore we recommend limiting the number of devices that require charging. Whilst there is no WiFi available, there is network coverage at camp, and our staff will help you to get data for your cellular device so you can contact home.

## MEALS

Meals are self-catered, with cooking and cleaning duties shared communally by all participants. We can accommodate most dietary requirements (please let us know at the time of booking if you have specific needs) but since our Liwonde location is fairly remote, the variety of foods can be more limited than at Lilongwe Wildlife Centre.



# PRICES

## SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER / RESEARCH VOLUNTEER / VET EXTERNSHIP

**2 weeks** £1,500 **3 weeks** £1,942 **4 weeks** £2,445 **5 weeks** £2,817  
**6 weeks** £3,155 **7 weeks** £3,477 **8 weeks** £3,769 **9 weeks** £4,044  
**10 weeks** £4,287 **11 weeks** £4,527 **12 weeks** £4,744

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## STUDENT RESEARCH

*those working on their own projects must self-fund costs that fall outside of our existing operations (e.g. you must cover the cost of any equipment, fuel or supplies needed to conduct your research)*

**1 month** £1,500 **2 months** £2,062 **3 months** £2,623 **4 months** £3,184  
**5 months** £3,745 **6 months** £4,307

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## WILDLIFE VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE

£1,200

## WILDLIFE & SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE

*Prices available on request*

### Prices include

- Accommodation
- Food, tea and coffee (*note: meals in Liwonde are self-catered*)
- Airport transfers and all work-related transport
- Orientation and full support during your stay
- Local SIM card and t-shirt

### Prices exclude

- Flights
- Visas
- Vaccinations and TB scans
- Excursions, souvenirs, nights out, personal expenses, snacks, etc.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW DO I GET TO YOU?



It's best to fly into Lilongwe (Kamuzu International Airport) and we will pick you up from there. Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is about a 30-minute drive from the airport. Research volunteers will most likely stay a night there before travelling to Liwonde National Park. Book your flight online through websites like Flight Centre, or directly with an airline (e.g. Ethiopian Airways). If you are travelling overland get in touch and we can let you know the best way to get here.



## WHAT ABOUT VISAS?

Please check visa requirements online. It is your responsibility to secure a visa, if needed.



## VACCINATIONS?

Go to [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/malawi.aspx](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/malawi.aspx) for the latest travel advice. We require all volunteers to have a negative TB test and rabies vaccination prior to travel. Malaria prophylaxis (e.g. Doxycycline or Malarone) is also compulsory for all volunteers.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE



You must take out travel insurance that covers your placement activities, as well as emergency treatment, airlift evacuation and repatriation. You will need to send us proof of this insurance before arriving in Malawi.

## WORKING HOURS & FREE TIME



Working hours are dependent on the animals we are looking after at the time and on the level of care they need. Wildlife Centre volunteers generally work from 8am – 5pm, but during orphan season feeds may be scheduled during less sociable hours, so occasionally there can be long days and night shifts. However if this is unsuitable for you the team can re-arrange your schedule. Research volunteers in Liwonde National Park are likely to start their days earlier with a break in the middle of the day. Volunteers in Lilongwe get two days off each week, while Liwonde volunteers get 1.5 days off a week – although you can request full weekends off for trips (within reason)!

# READY TO APPLY?

1

Go to [www.lilongwewildlife.org/volunteer](http://www.lilongwewildlife.org/volunteer) to submit an application form. When completing the application form, please include as much information as possible about your specific interests, goals, and motivations so that we can make sure you get the most out of the experience!

2

We will be in touch to let you know if we have availability and, if so, how to pay your deposit.

3

Once you've confirmed your placement by paying a holding deposit, we will send you a full pack with all the forms and information you'll need to get ready for your stay with us.



[WWW.LILONGWEWILDLIFE.ORG/VOLUNTEER](http://WWW.LILONGWEWILDLIFE.ORG/VOLUNTEER)