



NVT Event 5 November 2015

Save the evening of Thursday 5th November in your diary for this year's NVT event. It will be an opportunity for us to update you on NVT developments and for you to network with old and new friends who share an interest in Malawi. We'll let you know more in the next newsletter.

News Update

Nyika-Vwaza Trust – The Way Forward

Over the last ten years the focus of the work of the Nyika Vwaza Trust in UK has been to provide financial support for the management and programme activities carried out in Nyika and Vwaza by NVT Malawi. They have done a tremendous job on the Nyika and in Vwaza Marsh and achieved much. However in recent years it has been challenging to manage and implement projects because NVT M has not had the necessary institutional capacity on the ground. In addition the local Trust had to expend undue resources on infrastructure which was expected to have been a shared responsibility under the Nyika Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (NTFCA) project. If the infrastructure is not in place, and there is lack of local management resource, the programmes will not get properly implemented and the effort is wasted.

After more than a year of reviewing the options on how NVT could support and work to improve the existing arrangements, including participating in the recent Mid-Term review of the NTFCA project by the World Bank, the Trustees in UK concluded that it was no longer possible to continue to provide financial support and with great reluctance NVT UK has decided to stop funding operations in the Nyika and Vwaza.

NVT UK funding, with the agreement of NVT M, ceased at the end of December 2014, and we have formally withdrawn support for the Malawi Trust as a partner in the NTFCA project. More details on how the decision has been reached are in a separate article.

We remain fully committed to the conservation of the Nyika and Vwaza but now intend to follow a different strategy in how we provide our support. We will play to our strengths in:

- Applied research,
- Education,
- Information and data collection
- Advocacy work

We intend to use our funds to commission research into specific conservation issues, using academic partners in both Malawi and internationally, with a view to finding solutions to problems such as control of invasive plant species and poaching of plant material on the Nyika. We will continue our education of children in the communities surrounding Nyika and Vwaza – see the separate report in this newsletter. Our website will remain a primary source of information on Nyika and Vwaza through publishing of the data we collect on the area.

We are also in contact with KfW who hope to fund the programme to succeed the NTFCA (see article on page 3).

As we have said, management and administration of programmes in Malawi is not something we feel we can support until we can be sure there is an effective project partner. We are seeking other organisations that are already operating in Malawi and which have the capability to manage programmes and report back on them. This sort of partnership will allow us to concentrate on our strengths and get the best return on the funds deployed.

We are disappointed in this outcome but consider it is the only realistic option if we are to ensure that our funds are used wisely and effectively. We can give an assurance to the wider world that we remain fully committed to the conservation of the Nyika and Vwaza areas in ways that allow us to use the experience that we have gained over the last ten years.

We can all be proud of the work that NVT has accomplished over the last ten years and would like to thank all the Trustees and Staff of NVTM for the work that has been carried out. We hope that our future activities will continue to support the conservation needs of the Nyika and Vwaza Marsh.

The Trustees recognise that this is a major change in how we use our funds, and very much hope that we will continue to have your support.

The Nyika orchids—under threat



Disa engleriana
© Eric la Croix

News Update continued

Foot Education Fund—Schools Project

Our work with children in schools around the Nyika borders plays an important role in helping to protect the ecology of the area for future generations.

The fourth stage of our schools project has just been completed, sponsored through NVT's Foot Educational Fund, which was set up to increase young Malawians' awareness of the value of The Nyika and Vwaza to their country's heritage.

Once again the project was led by Charity Kumwenda, the DNPW's Regional Education Officer and, this time, she worked with 11 schools including one that had no access road. Each school was visited by a team of four: Charity, Fredrick Maliwa, Harry Kapira and Medson Chione in order to evaluate how well the schools' tree planting had been done and whether the trees were being given appropriate care. Charity says: "It is really encouraging to see all the schools have done it, despite the drought the district faced". The schools were in competition to see which had been the most successful in tree planting and the children were encouraged by a prize of a trip to the Nyika.

Thawiro School was the overall winner, followed by Kasimba and Lusani. In November 2014, 20 pupils and 5 teachers from these schools travelled in a hired 30-seater Coaster bus from Karonga to Chelinda where they stayed in the youth hostel. One can only imagine the excitement of the children and we hope that it has renewed their enthusiasm for planting and maintaining the health of trees in their communities.



Thawiro School children on their way to Nyika National Park
© Charity Kumwenda

A big "Thank You" to Charity for the care and energy she is putting into this work.

We have just made a further grant to Charity Kumwenda for the fifth stage of this schools project. This will go towards work in the Karonga and Rumphi district, bringing our total for education support funding in 2014/15 to £2,400, having spent £3,340 in 2013/14.



Charity and her team

One of the difficulties for Charity is lack of appropriate teaching materials. Most of the materials one first thinks of just don't work in these areas, so NVT is in discussion with Siren, a specialist in environmental education materials where innovation is needed to help teachers engage the interest of their pupils. Nancy Gladstone from

Siren attended our ROSL event last November and displayed some of the very clever teaching resources they have created. Our aim is to support Charity Kumwenda with some of these custom-made materials.

NVT Income and Expenditure

For the year 2014 our income was £25,516, including gift aid relief where possible.

This was made up of:

	Amount £	No of donors
General Funds	9,129	46
Designated funds*		
Education Fund	6,940	17
Other	6,625	2
	£22,694	
Other income (sale of merchandise, promotional events)	2,822	
Total income	£25,516	

* Designated funds are those that the donor expressed a wish they be used for a specific purpose but without the restriction that the trustees may only use the income from the fund or capital.

To meet our expenditure we transferred £33,000 from our unrestricted investment portfolio.

In the year our expenditure totalled £52,975, made up of:

Funds remitted to Malawi to cover NVT Malawi operations:	£
General field work	23,410
Early burn conservation work	7,240
Control of invasive plant species	5,670
Road maintenance	4,220
Staff hostel renovation	980
Native species tree nursery	530
Other	170
NVT share of second staff duplex house	9,555
	51,775
Education projects	1,200
Total spent in Malawi	£52,975
UK expenditure	
NVT newsletter	238
Cost of merchandise	1,967
Promotional events	1,020
Other	262
Total UK expenditure	£3,487

Nyika-Vwaza Trust Review Process

During 2014 we carried out a review of how effective NVT Malawi was:

- In providing support to DNPW through the work carried out by the Operations Unit based at Chelinda (managed by NVT in Malawi),
- and its future role within the World Bank/Norwegian Government funded Nyika Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (NTFCA).

The review took part in two stages:

A review carried out by NVT in Malawi.

In mid 2014 NVT in Malawi carried out an operational review at the request of the UK trustees.

This exercise made it clear that although a great deal of excellent work was being carried out there were structural issues which needed to be addressed. These included the inability of NVT in Malawi to source the "International" funds earmarked for its activities within the NTFCA project. Equally clear was the NTFCA was not set up in a way which would allow NVT to access these funds!

It was also a concern that there was no mechanism in place to allow the long term integration of NVT activities into DNPW management programmes.

It was felt the cost of implementing the necessary changes would be disproportionately high to the level of activities being funded, and that NTFCA should be made aware of the situation.

It is worth noting that NVT (UK) had previously faced the same problem when fund raising within the UK – simply put the inability to meet the additional governance required for a small charity to implement large projects funded by third parties.



Members of Mid Term Review team, and Malawi Government stakeholders, inspecting a bridge within Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve © David Billing

World Bank Mid Term Review of NTFCA

In late 2014 the World Bank carried out a mid-term review of the NTFCA (the five year programme commenced in early 2012). NVT (UK) was represented on the review by David Billing as an observer.

Much to our disappointment the *aide memoire* produced at the end of the review failed to acknowledge the very real shortage of resources and made the assumption that the project could get back on track, without explaining how this could be achieved.

It barely considered the issue of management. However, it did note that the project was substantially behind target progress to date with only one component having made suitable progress and a long list of activities to be carried out.

This led to the conclusion of the UK trustees that neither NVT UK, nor NVT M was in any position to significantly contribute to any improvement in mobilising the resources to get the programme back on track nor influence the necessary improvements in the management structure.

KfW Identifying Biodiversity Conservation Project in Nyika-Vwaza

Since its foundation in 1948, KfW Development Bank has been one of the leading development banks in the world. It aims to promote sustainable economic, social and ecological development throughout the world. Since 1990 KfW has provided EUR 1 billion in support of 100 nature and resource conservation projects in more than 40 countries.

KfW is currently in discussions with the Governments of Malawi and Zambia and Peace Parks Foundation founded by Nelson Mandela in South Africa concerning support to biodiversity and conservation projects in the Nyika-Vwaza area of northern Malawi.

If current negotiations with the Malawi Government are successful, KfW will mobilise either a Pre Feasibility Study or Feasibility Study in July 2015 to properly identify the components of the project and to establish a sustainable management framework for the proposed programme or project.

NVT (UK) is closely following the progress with this project with a view to establishing what type of cooperation or coordination could emerge between the KfW project and NVT (UK) at some time in the future.

David Billing

Illegal harvesting of orchids

In our last newsletter, Paston Simkoko wrote about the plight of orchids on the Nyika. We are not alone.

Traffic, the organisation that seeks and implements solutions to problems created by unsustainable wildlife trade, carried two articles in its October 2014 Bulletin to raise awareness of the illegal orchid trade. Made from dried and ground orchid tubers, 'Chikanda' has been a delicacy for many decades. It has spread in Africa and elsewhere from household use to a thriving market and can now be found on the menu in hotels and restaurants. It earns good money for people who harvest and sell the tubers, so the plundering of wild orchids won't stop until the increasing demand is curbed or an alternative source is created. Traffic is piloting a project in Kitulu National Park, Tanzania for sustainable cultivation of orchids and we will watch this with interest to see what we can learn for the Nyika.



Disa satyriopsis
© Eric la Croix

Guide to Nyika National Park

Sigrig Johnson continues with the update of her late 1980s Visitor's Guide to Nyika National Park. The original guide was aimed primarily at park visitors. The new edition is being written for general environmental education purposes, as well as for visitors to the park and those who guide them.



Sigrig and Don

In October-November 2014, Sigrig and her husband Don McMaster, travelled from their home in Canada to Malawi for one month, the first time back for both in many years (since 1988 for Sigrig and 1992 for Don). They described it as a wonderful visit to what is still "the warm heart of Africa". While they noted numerous infrastructure improvements (e.g. good main roads throughout the country), they were sadly struck by the population explosion and related extensive deforestation, particularly in the central and southern regions.

They spent 12 days on the Nyika. In spite of being dogged by major car trouble and petrol shortages, they managed to get around much of the park by bike, walking and with the generous loans of a NTFCA vehicle and the personal vehicle of the Wilderness Safari's Manager, for one day each.

Their overall impression of the park is that it is under enormous stress. They echoed our concerns about lack of resources and in some cases, will to undertake essential management and research programmes on the plateau.

That being said, Sigrig told us that the visit had renewed her feeling that the Nyika "...is still one of the most amazing places in the world, worth continuing to make the effort to conserve".

The first draft will be ready this spring. We look forward to seeing it.

Do you have Nyika photos?

Sigrig welcomes suitable high resolution digital photos for the Guide, on the following subjects:

- Historic (plantation days, villages, missionaries, road-building etc)
- Wildlife communities and birds
- Vegetation communities
- General scenery
- Cultural interest
- Chelinda and Thazima communities and facilities
- Conservation (burn management, poaching)
- Infrastructure (roads, signs, maps)
- People

Please send photos to sigriganna@yahoo.com by the end of April 2015, with a title, when and where it was taken and the photographer to be credited.

Annual Lecture Evening - "Malawi Today" - a journey of reflection through the country

A big thank you to all of you who came to our annual lecture evening in November. We do appreciate having the opportunity to meet with our supporters and bringing them up to date with the work we support. We were also delighted that we were joined by guests; Nastya (Anastasiya) Timoshyna who is the Medicinal Plants Programme Leader for Traffic, the wildlife trade monitoring network and Nancy Galdstone from Siren, a charity that has assisted the Tusk Trust with its Pan African Conservation Education Programme (PACE).



Joanna Codrington climbing Mount Mulanje
© Mike Mathawitsa.

The 2014 talk "Malawi Today" was given by Joanna Codrington. The theme of the talk was a reflection on the Malawi of today through the eyes of someone who was brought up in Malawi. Earlier in the year Joanna and a group of friends had toured Malawi and we followed their

adventures through a series of pictures and anecdotes. It proved to be a fascinating and at times a very emotional journey. Many of the rural scenes had hardly changed (especially the Nyika), however the urban environment was very different. The trip culminated with Joanna visiting her childhood home in Zomba – and it was clear the visit had been enjoyed as much by the present occupants as Joanna.

Thank you, Joanna, for sharing your reflections with us.

After the lecture a presentation was made to Jane

Gallagher, who recently retired as a trustee, to thank her for all her hard work. Amongst other roles Jane edited the Newsletter.

We very much appreciated having the Malawi High Commissioner, HE Bernard Sande, with us. He closed the evening by thanking the Trust for all the work it supports.

Lastly, thank you to Peter and Jane Lawrance, Pippa Hayes, Carole Vardell (who arranged for delivery of the calendars) for all their hard work in arranging the evening and to the ROSL team for making us so welcome.



The High Commissioner talking to guests
© NV(UK)T

Date for your diary – this year's event is planned for 5 November 2015

Beit staff house

We announced in the last newsletter that a generous donation by The Beit Trust had enabled us to build housing for four more members of staff, required because of Chelinda's remoteness. Due to problems managing work on the ground (mentioned on page 1 of this newsletter) the building costs exceeded the grant of £13,000 and NVT UK had no option but to supplement the payment so that the house could be finished. The building was substantially completed by December, at a total cost of £22,555, by which time we made the decision to cease funding operations in Malawi. At least there is now a functioning building to show for the money.



The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust
Reg. charity no. 1105105

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*Working for environmental and wildlife conservation in
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BANKER'S ORDER

(for UK residents only)

To: Bank plc.
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(Please insert the name and address of your Bank in the space above)

Please pay to TSB Bank plc, 40 High Street, Alton, Hants, GU34 IBQ (Sort Code 30-90-15), for the credit of The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust's Account No. 01192885, the sum of :-

£ on

(Please insert date above)

and thereafter every month/quarter/six months/year (*delete as appropriate*) until cancelled by me in writing.

Name of Account to be debited

Account Number

Signature

Date

Please return this completed form to:-

Hon. Treasurer,
Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust,
50 Brewery Road,
Woking,
Surrey.
GU21 4NA

for registration and onward transmission to your Bank.

Friends of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust Donation Form

PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other: _____

Forenames: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

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Telephone No.: _____

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I enclose a donation of:

Or: I have completed the Banker's Order Form.

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made

In the past four years Today In the future

(Please tick boxes you wish to apply)

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Signature:

Date:

Please return this completed form to:- Hon. Treasurer,
Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, 50 Brewery Road, Woking,
Surrey. GU21 4NA.

Species unknown?

This pretty flower was found on The Nyika by the Kettlewell family in January 2013. We understand it is an *Eriosema* but no-one has been able to tell us the species. Does anyone know?



© Jennie Kettlewell