



NVT Event, 7 November 2017

Save the evening of Tuesday 7 November for this year's NVT event at the Royal Overseas League, London.

We are fortunate to have Simon Tonge, director of the Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust, to speak on *"Conservation in East and Central Africa: The Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust's Highland and East Africa Regional Programme"*. The WWCT is a registered education, scientific and conservation charity established in 1957 and based in Devon. They own two local nature reserves, a national nature reserve and three zoos in south west England. Simon's experience is very relevant to NVT because his charity is active in conservation, often working alongside partner organisations to conserve species and their habitats. He was brought up in Malawi and he claims he has "the best job in the world".



Simon Tonge
© Simon Tonge

At the start of the evening there will be a short panel discussion about the new 'Guide to Nyika National Park' by Sigrid Johnson. Sigrid, and her husband Don McMaster, will be over from Canada for the event. Copies of the guide will be on sale during the evening. Do come. As always, the event will be an opportunity for you to network with old and new friends who share an interest in Malawi.

Details of the event can be found at www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/ROSL-2017.html. Tickets for the evening (£16, students £8) are available from Peter Lawrance: e-mail: sec.nvt@gmail.com. Address: The Malt House, 50 Brewery Road, Horsell, Woking, GU21 4NA. Alternatively, please complete the application form included with this newsletter.

News Update

Conservation education programme

The Lilongwe Wildlife Trust have worked hard to repair the damage to their wildlife centre, caused by flooding of the Lingadzi River in February this year. To their credit, they do not seem to have missed a beat on their Conservation Education Programme for NVT, now well into its second year. The programme includes schools' education, engagement with communities in the area and working with local magistrates to reinforce prosecution of poachers.

Over the period April-June 2017, LWT organised lessons for 453 children and the number would have been greater had it not been for the teachers' strike. 4,370 tree seedlings were planted last year. This year the project team monitored the planting sites and reckoned the survival rate as an impressive 61%.



Refresher training © LWT

Programme facilitators from 11 schools attended a refresher training course held at Katowo Community

Development Centre in Rumphi district. They reported notable achievements from the programme so far, and also problem-solved some of the challenges. Facilitators from seven Mzimba and Phoka area schools, new to the initiative, attended a week's facilitator training. Participants were trained to develop lesson plans from the three modules – wildlife conservation and welfare, human wildlife conflict, and wildlife crime.

In order to spread the word, it is proposed that trained facilitators form a task force. The function of this task force is to increase communication within the group, to share information on how acquired knowledge can best be used and to create an action plan for learning from each other.

Patricia Phiri joins the LWT team as environmental education officer, replacing Jayne Kumwenda who left LWT to take up another job. Patricia is from Mzimba district and has a Bachelor's degree in forestry from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. She impressed the interview panel with her wide knowledge of, and passion for, conservation education and has already been trained up for her new role.



Patricia Phiri
© LWT

Good work gets better when it is rewarded and the LWT education team presented three awards to community level National Resource Committees (NRCs) whose wildlife conservation performance was exceptional. Their law and

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News Update continued

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advocacy programme was implemented following the 2016 workshop and included confiscation of muzzle-loading guns, removal of snares, aiding DNPW to arrest poachers and conducting patrols around the boundaries of protected areas. The awards event was chaired by the Paramount Chief Chikulamayembe and Inkosi Mpherembe, in the presence of the DNPW divisional manager for the north and the Vwaza team.

DNPW and LWT turned around a difficult situation in the poaching hot-spot of Mbweziwe (Chakuda NRC) and achieved an improved relationship. They did this by holding a meeting which attracted 45 participants from local leaders, government officials, Nyika Vwaza Association representative (NVA represents all the communities surrounding Nyika and Vwaza), some transformed poachers and members from surrounding NRCs. Since the meeting, a new committee has been formed with promised support from local leaders.

The Conservation Education Programme is building on what has been learned so far and current work includes:

- Continuing school visits and lessons in new schools
- Monitoring and evaluation of the schools programme with school action plans being collected
- Wildlife club management
- Community workshops
- Area development committee consultation meetings
- Provision of teaching materials to new schools
- Distribution of the new Nyika Guide Book
- Development of relationships with the media. Awareness campaigns
- Bicycle-powered conservation films shown to the communities.

Results are being achieved in terms of conservation education, awareness and increased prosecution of poachers, all within the planned budget.



School visit
© LWT

Jonny Hanson joins as trustee

Jonny grew up in Malawi and Ireland, where his interest in the environment came from being encouraged, as a youngster, to adventure and explore. His interest lies in the relationship between people, other animals and the rest of nature which he has studied to PhD level and out in the field, which is where he really likes to be.

Conservation of the endangered Snow Leopard is the subject of his soon-to-be-completed doctorate at Cambridge University, focusing on conflict with poor farming communities in the Himalayas of Nepal. Efforts must be



Jonny Hanson
© Jonny Hanson

concentrated on mitigating conflict and developing alternative livelihoods for locals. This subject is highly relevant to our work with Nyika and Vwaza.

Jonny's understanding of Malawi and his studies of wildlife conservation in the context of poverty alleviation and sustainable development will be of great benefit to NVT UK and add a further dimension to our knowledge.

"Having spent my toddler and teenage years amidst the landscapes and mountains of Malawi, I'm looking forward to giving something back as a trustee of NVT UK" Jonny tells us. "I hope that we can all work together towards a flourishing future for the people, places and wildlife of Malawi."

Two long-serving trustees have decided not to re-stand for election due to other commitments. **Paul Langton** joined as a trustee in 2008, having first visited the Nyika Plateau in May 2005 on a riding safari with his wife, Isobel. They were both bowled over by its natural beauty and uniqueness. **Richard Kettlewell** was elected as a trustee in 2011. His work in the Fairtrade oilseeds and nut trade often took him to Malawi. He was subsequently based in Lilongwe to help develop Fairtrade peanut production on behalf of UK Fairtrade organisation Twin and the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi. Many thanks to both Paul and Richard for their years of support to NVT.

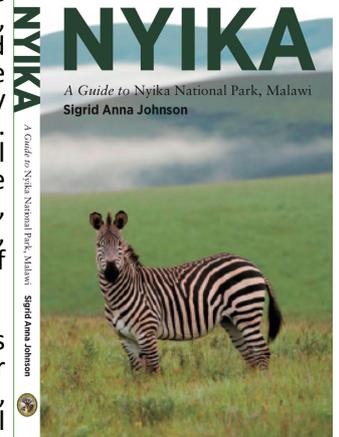
Nyika – a Guide to Nyika National Park, Malawi - now available!

This much-anticipated, 232-page guide, published by the Trust, gives an informative and fascinating explanation of the ecology, geology, climate, history and communities of The Nyika. Exquisite photos and helpful descriptions show the vegetation, wildflowers, wildlife, mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and butterflies of the park, with full species lists.

Author, Sigrid Johnson, has written this guide to be useful for students, researchers, visitors, wildlife tour guides, and all manner of flora and fauna enthusiasts. It also makes an enjoyable read for those with less specific interests. We hope it will be used in Malawi, by Malawians.

She produced the original edition of the guide after living on the Nyika from 1986-8 and, when she recently retired from the Canadian Diplomatic Service, she undertook to produce this new guide. She and her husband, Don McMaster, renewed their acquaintance with the Nyika Plateau during a month-long visit in 2014.

Due to Sigi's skill, and no little determination, we think the guide looks terrific and reactions to it have certainly been very positive. We could not have produced such a professional guide without the help of all of you who made contributions in different ways, for which we offer a big 'thank you'.



Guide to Nyika cover
© Sigrid Johnson

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The guide is a convenient 13.5 x 21.5 cms and has fold-out covers for easy reference to maps and animal identification silhouettes.

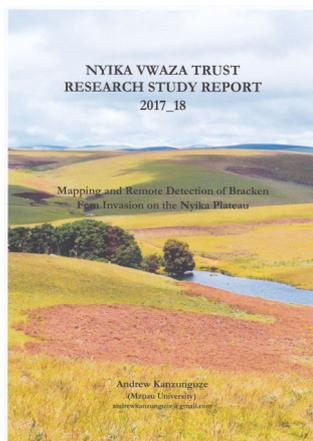
To buy the guide, see the order form at the end of this newsletter for prices and ways to buy. For further information visit www.Nyika-Vwaza-trust.org, or contact Peter Lawrance on sec.nvt@gmail.com, or Tel: +44 (0) 1483 714130.

Update on Research Grants

Our first call for applications for research grants was in 2015. Since then we have progressed with a number of applications in response to our twice-yearly calls, and have accepted those applications we felt to be robust and that would increase our knowledge about the main conservation and environmental issues facing the Nyika and Vwaza areas:

- Fire management, especially in the Nyika National Park.
- Exotic species control in both Nyika and the Vwaza Marsh
- Bird population and endangered bird species
- Orchid poaching on the Nyika Plateau.

You can read the reports of four completed studies on our website and we have described three of them in past newsletters. The latest to be accepted is Andrew Kanzunguze's "Mapping and Remote Detection of Bracken Fern Invasion on the Nyika Plateau". The main aim of the project was to map the current extent of bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) on the plateau and to determine its rate of spread. Satellite imagery was used to detect and monitor the species on the grassland plateau from the year 1986 to 2016. The results confirm the increase in coverage over this period, though it has started to decline since 2010. Total coverage was found to be approximately 15.7% of the whole grassland plateau, but bracken was detected in both open areas and in the forest understorey. Andrew's proposal for stage 2 of this project has now been accepted.



Bracken study
© Andrew Kanzunguze

Maganizo Namoto's interim report on his study from Round 2 ("Distribution and abundance of the edible orchids, Nyika") informs us that 55 terrestrial orchids were found, of which 43 species were identified as edible, belonging to five genera; *Disa* (31%), *Satyrium* (26%), *Habenaria* (13%), *Brachycorythis* (5%) and *Neobolusia* (2%). The study reveals an increase in edible orchid species targeted by communities in comparison with previous studies and it maps the distribution by habitat type and species. Edible orchids are collected for food, medicine and traded internationally as a valued ingredient, usually in powder form. Interviews within local communities provided information on collection habits. Once the final report is received and accepted it will be posted on the NVT website.

Three further grants have been awarded:

- Andrew Kanzunguze for Part 2 of his bracken study.
- Emma Stone for "Long-term orchid monitoring and conservation, Nyika"
- A further grant to Sopani Sichinga. This time for a plant survey of the Vwaza Marsh.

Sopani Sichinga has shared his experiences of Nyika National Park in an article in this newsletter.

We look forward to posting more of the completed studies on our website.

An international research organisation has received a grant to look at invasive species right across Malawi and we wait to hear if Nyika will be one of the study sites. It is gratifying to note our research grant projects might be linked into what is becoming a focus subject that will eventually feed into action plans.

It is pleasing to see that we are attracting relevant and practical proposals and we want to spread the word to other universities and institutions where there is an interest in conservation. A call for the fifth round of applications will be on the NVT website shortly, with a deadline of 31 December 2017. Details are available from Peter Lawrance, Tel: +44 (0)1483 714130, Email: sec.nvt@gmail.com

Pine Study at Chelinda Camp

By Sopani Sichinga

It was August 2016, when the Nyika Vwaza Trust (UK) awarded me a research grant alongside other awardees. It was my first time to have such an experience. Honestly, I felt much honoured and my face was all smiles. In spite of the excitement, I was a bit nervous. The thought of bringing shame to many (including my supervisor, the trustees, and even to Mzuzu University where I was drilled), if I performed poorly, was quite intimidating. However, with the vast experience I gained when I was research assistant under the Nyika Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) project in the previous four years, I became confident and determined to produce quality work to the best of my ability.



Sopani Sichinga
© Sopani Sichinga

My study focused on investigating the effects of pine removal on grassland regeneration. Pines were planted on the Nyika plateau around the 1950's, and began to be cleared due to their invasiveness. Recently, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) cleared much of the original plantation at Chelinda with the aim of returning the land to its natural grassland state. I was interested in establishing exactly what is growing on the areas where pines have been removed, whether grassland recovery is really taking place or other species are beginning to colonize the space (see report on NVT website).

I planned my fieldwork to commence in the rainy season to match the blooming period of plants, since the study demanded thorough plant identification. With my team of four, we set off for Nyika in December. The people at Chelinda Camp welcomed us warmly, and made our stay very comfortable. One really needs a good sense of humour and keen eye to notice that Chelinda is one city on a hill. We spent a good number of days there doing fieldwork, whilst enjoying and appreciating the stunning beauty of the plateau. Soon after completion of the field work we returned to Mzuzu sometime in January, 2017.

Besides good moments spent in the field during the study, I also learnt a lot with respect to conservation research. I received a good lot of constructive criticisms from my study supervisor and NVT reviewer, Mr George. Z. Nxumayo and Mr. Jonathan Timberlake respectively. We all like nothing more than recognition for a job well done, especially if we have worked particularly hard to achieve it. I was very happy and felt relieved on the day Jonathan Timberlake commended my work and congratulated me for a good

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work done.

Let me commend the NVT(UK) for initiating the research grants programme. While such a move is helping to find solutions as far as management and conservation of Nyika and Vwaza is concerned, it is also promoting young researchers to become real, reliable and trustworthy through the experience and knowledge gained in the field. As a young researcher, I would urge well-wishers to continue supporting the NVT, materially and financially in its drive to address issues of conservation in Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve through research. Viva NVT!!!

Elephant Translocation to Nyika

A total of 34 elephants were recently translocated 700km from Liwonde National Park to the highlands of Nyika National Park.

This news comes from NGO, Peace Parks Foundation, which spearheaded the project along with Malawi's Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining; the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, and African Parks.

Having recognized that Liwonde had long exceeded its carrying capacity for elephant, the Government of Malawi, supported by Peace Parks Foundation and all project partners, initiated the translocation of these elephants from Liwonde to Nyika, which offers ample space for them to thrive. Nyika National Park, which was once home to over 300 elephants suffered an estimated decline of 67% in its elephant population, due to extreme poaching. Thus, the translocation stands to benefit both Nyika National Park and its resident elephant population, as it will be instrumental in improving their viability and the rapid recovery of their numbers.

The remarkable skill and dedication of the game capture and veterinarian teams enabled a seamless translocation, ensuring that the elephants remained safe throughout their 700km journey from Liwonde to Nyika.

During the translocation, Central African Wilderness Safaris hosted several dignitaries and donors, who were part of the initiative, at Chelinda.

A large portion of the project's funding is being utilized to ensure the safe and seamless acclimatisation of the elephants to their new environment and habitat. For the next 12 months, the elephants will remain in a specially constructed sanctuary that provides ample space and vegetation for them to move and feed freely. Aerial support and VHF satellite collar systems have been implemented to monitor the animals daily, to ensure their safety and well-being.



Elephant release—Nyika National Park
© Peace Parks Foundation

Lion rescue at Vwaza

Regular sightings of lion were reported at Vwaza in early August, followed by news that a lion had been caught in a snare on a farm outside the reserve. A rare visitor to Vwaza, this animal provided a real example of wildlife-human conflict. Rangers were posted to protect both the communities and the lion until a team from Carnivore Research Malawi could get to the site to remove the snare. We have no further information on what eventually happened to this lion. If any reader knows, please email jenniekettlewell@aol.com and we will publish the result in our next newsletter.

News from Chelinda

The Central African Wilderness Safaris (CAWS) team report that Chelinda Camp and Chelinda Lodge recently won two coveted Tusker Awards, against stiff competition. The Tusker Awards programme is conducted by Safari Index to acknowledge and celebrate the finest, most enriching and authentic safari experiences across Africa. Chelinda Lodge won the 2017 award in the 'Ultimate Unique Safaris' category, whilst Chelinda Camp won the award in the 'Ultimate Self-Catering Safaris' category.



Having remained elusive for quite some time, Nyika's leopards have once again come out into the open. Over the past months, several guests and staff at Chelinda enjoyed plentiful sightings of the predators, with as many as ten separate sightings recorded in a single week. The campsite airstrip and the nearby TNM telephone mast continue to be hotspots for these evasive wildcats, and their indifference to passing vehicles has yielded fantastic photographic opportunities for guides and guests on game drives.

CAWS report that the weather on the plateau has been variable, with some days yielding early morning and night temperatures as low as 3 degrees Celsius, rising to around 11-12 degrees Celsius during the day. Other days produce crystal clear skies and temperatures as warm as 22 degrees Celsius. In no way is this notoriously unpredictable weather dampening the spirits of Chelinda guests and it is just one of the many elements that add to the plateau's mystique. With plenty of warm woollies and a crackling log fire on their return from the great outdoors, the plateau weather is seen as a delight and welcomed by many in preference to the warmer weather at lower altitudes.

Sad news - Ian Gordon

We are sad to tell you that Ian Gordon, who was a consultant to the NVT trustees, died peacefully on 7 May 2017, in his 90th year. Major Ian Adam Drumearn Gordon MBE (The Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Royal Highland Fusiliers), served in Nyika National Park as warden for the six years, 1971-77. He was one of NVT's three founding trustees, retiring as a trustee in 2008, but continued to provide the benefit of his knowledge and experience as a consultant. Our sympathies to his wife, Avril and to his family.

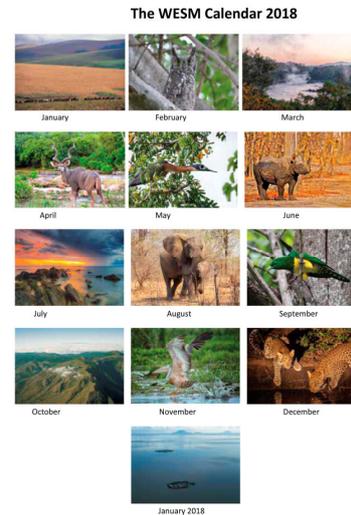
We can't do it without you!

I hope this newsletter shows that much is being achieved. That takes money and we are most grateful to all of you who have donated towards our programmes. There is still a great deal to do to ensure we make a lasting positive impact on the conservation of the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh. This will need significant regular investment, estimated at some £125,000 for the first three years of education and around £20,000 a year for research grants.

Please use the donation form at the end of this newsletter, or donate online at www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org. Thank you for your support.

2018 Calendar

The Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) 2018 calendar is ready. The stunning photos will remind you of the wildlife wonders of Malawi and buying a calendar will contribute to our environmental programme funds. The cost is £10 + postage and you can order your copy from NVT Secretary, Peter Lawrance on sec.nvt@gmail.com or +44 (0) 1483 714130. If the calendars are delivered in time, it may be possible to pick up your copy at the event on 2 November.



Some of the stunning photos from "Nyika - A Guide to Nyika National Park, Malawi."



Editor: Jennie Kettlewell
Designer: Mike Budgen

Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

Promotional Evening with a talk by Simon Tonge
at the Royal Overseas League,

Over-Seas House, Park Place, London SW1A 1LR on Tuesday 7th November 2017.

“Conservation in East and Central Africa: The Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust’s Highland and East Africa Regional Programme”

Application Form for Tickets

Admission tickets are £16 per person or £8 per student. They will be issued from end-September 2017.

I would like to apply for ___ tickets to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust fundraising event on 7th November 2017 for the people named below.

I enclose my cheque for £ _____ made payable to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust.

Alternatively you may email your request for tickets to sec.nvt@gmail.com and make payment direct to the Trust account at TSB Bank, sort code 30-90-15, account number 01192885, quoting last name as a reference.

(Please complete in block letters)

Name of Applicant:		Ticket No:
Organisation Name: (if applicable)		
Address:		Date Issued:
Contact Tel. No:		
Email Address:		

Names of other people for whom tickets are requested:

Name:		Ticket No:

Please return this form, with your remittance, a.s.a.p.to Peter Lawrance, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, NV(UK)T, The Malt House, 50 Brewery Road, Horsell, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4NA.

Order Form for Guide to Nyika National Park

To order "Nyika – A Guide to the Nyika National Park, Malawi", payment can be made by £sterling cheque (made out to Nyika-Vwaza Trust), via Paypal, or direct to NVT's UK bank – see details below.

Prices:

UK: £20, incl. p&p, or £21 via Paypal

Overseas: (direct to TSB account or by bankers draft) £28, including p&p, or £30 via Paypal.

We rely on donations to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust to fund our programmes, so please consider adding a donation to the amount you are paying for the guide.

Please complete the following:

I would like copies of the book, "Nyika – A Guide to the Nyika National Park, Malawi."

I would like to add a donation of £.....

I enclose my cheque for £.....

Or, I confirm that I have paid £.... direct to the

Trust account at TSB, sort code 30-90-15, account number 01192885,

Or that I have paid £....sterling by bankers draft,

Or that I have paid £....by Paypal.

Please use your last name as the reference.

Cheques must be in £sterling and drawn on a UK bank.

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other.....

Forename:.....

Surname:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

..... Postcode:.....

Email address:.....

Please return this completed form to:

Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

50 Brewery Road

Woking, Surrey, GU21 4NA, UK



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

The Hon. Treasurer/Secretary
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GU21 4NA
Tel: +44 (0)1483 714130
Email: sec.nvt@gmail.com

Working for environmental and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi.

Email: info@nyika-vwaza-trust.org
Website: www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org

BANKER'S ORDER

(for UK residents only)

To: Bank plc.
.....
.....
.....

(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 (UK) Trust Donation Form

PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other: _____

Forenames: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Email: _____

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.

I undertake to inform the charity if I wish to cancel this declaration, change my name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on my income and/or capital gains.

Signature:

Date:

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

