



Greetings from Malawi

Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions mean we have had to cancel our annual event, originally scheduled for 27 October. Our speaker was to have been Kondwani Munthali, the award-winning Malawian journalist and press officer for the Malawi Government in the UK.

His visit to Malawi at the start of the year was prolonged and he is only now able to plan his return to London this autumn. Kondwani has however been in touch with the Trust, is sorry not to have the chance to give his talk and wishes us all well.

Maybe next year!



Kondwani Munthali
© Kondwani Munthali

Fit for the Future

The word 'strategy' is often seen as off-putting, and associated with a dry subject. It isn't. It just means how to focus your resources on what will help to achieve your defined aspiration. So first you have to define your aspiration, or 'vision'.

In early February 2020, the NVT UK trustees met at the Malawi High Commission to discuss our programme, resources and what vision we felt we should aspire to.

We identified that all our activities involved developing and sharing knowledge relating to the ecology and conservation of the Nyika and Vwaza Marsh; and to promoting and protecting the areas for future generations.

We considered the current programmes to be running well through increasing environmental awareness in the communities around the Nyika and Vwaza; the knowledge levels in the organisations responsible for their protection; and highlighting the need for additional funding from the international donor community.

The financial contribution from NVT forms only a small part of the overall funding for conservation in and around the Nyika and Vwaza, the majority being funds coming through the Malawi Government, International Aid Agencies, and large NGOs.

NVT is still drawing down funds from the Ian Hay Legacy, and this, together with ongoing support, will allow our Environmental Education and Research Grant programmes to continue at current levels until 2022. Thereafter, our funding expenditure will need to be reduced in line with our income of approximately £15,000 a year. This will be considerably less than the current spend of £50,000 a year.

Our strategy review concluded that NVT should continue to focus its activities on Environmental Education, Research Grants and Advocacy programmes, and agreed our vision as:

To be recognised for developing and sharing a body of knowledge related to the ecology and conservation of the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve in northern Malawi to promote and protect these areas for future generations.

The following points were agreed:

- We are committed to funding the Protected Environmental Education Programme (PEEP) provided by the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust up to March 2022, and will work with LWT to secure funding for continuation of the programme.

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- We will continue to offer research grants, focusing on MSc-Level base line surveys and encouraging PhD level studies that incubate follow-on projects and conservation livelihood initiatives. The grant programme will recognise the need to develop both local and international expertise, while ensuring that all research projects are relevant to NVT's goals. We offer expert support to applicants and will publish their reports on the website.
- We will continue our role as advocates, through consolidation and dissemination of information relating to the Nyika and Vwaza through our website, newsletter and personal contacts. We will develop our network of individuals and institutions, and work with them to promote NVT's vision.

NVT has no direct presence in Malawi. The role of the Trust is to work with, and fund, third parties to achieve its vision. To ensure we are fit for the future, we will keep under review how this is best achieved.

It was an energetic discussion, not dry at all!



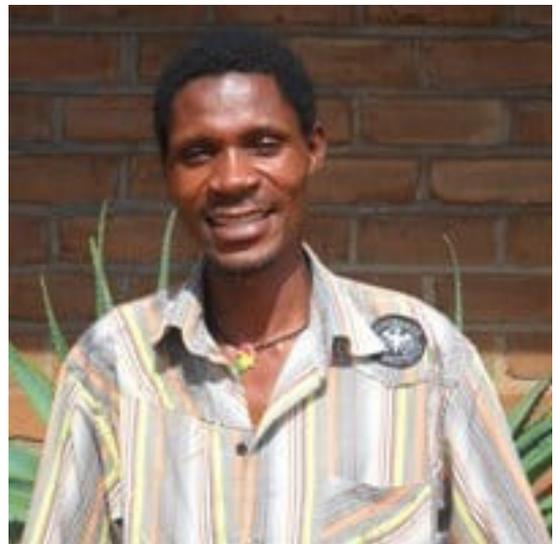
Work in progress © NVT

Environmental Education Programme

Like so many other organisations, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust found its programmes affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and had to develop a business continuity plan to allow work to continue where possible. The PEEP programme has suffered through school closures, but new modules have been introduced and plans made to catch up on lost time.

A Centre for Excellence in Conservation and Sustainable Development is still very much on the agenda at the Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve (VMWR). The feasibility study has been completed and LWT has commenced design work. The next stage is to find funding, from sources other than NVT, as it is outside our core programme. A further challenge has been the outbreak of tsetse fly in the area and resulting cases of Trypanosomiasis.

Human-wildlife conflict is a significant issue, especially with the elephants around Vwaza. Before the pandemic, LWT held conflict resolution meetings with 234 people in four communities from Rumphu and Mzimba. The Vwaza fence has been vandalised, creating open spaces for the elephants to move out of the park and cause damage to the property and crops and injuring people. During the conflict resolution meetings, a decision was made that Vwaza Wildlife Reserve management, or VMWR, would deploy Game Rangers from the community to help control the problem animals. This appears to be working well.



Clement Manjaalera @ LWT

LWT's Education and Outreach Manager, Clement Manjaalera, reports that, following the introduction of the environmental education programme at Rumphu prison in 2019, inmates were given a chance to join an educational Wildlife Club, hosted by the prison warden, in order to learn about the importance of conservation. A year on, LWT officers have delivered education sessions to members of the Wildlife Club, 50% of whom were serving sentences for wildlife offences.

Modules cover a wide range of environmental issues, from human-wildlife conflict, biodiversity and deforestation to waste management and wildlife crime. LWT recently caught up with some former members, now released, to find out how participating in the club had impacted them. One participant, who had served as the club secretary and chair, had completed his 30-month custodial sentence and then gone on to set up a small-scale nursery, growing flowers, fruits and pine trees in Mzuzu. During his time at Rumphu Prison, he had learned vital skills from gardening and tree management programmes

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delivered by the prison warden. His goal is to scale-up his business and reach a larger market further afield. He has become a true conservation ambassador - in addition to embarking on a sustainable green enterprise, he also requested copies of our educational materials so that he can share his knowledge and engage others in his community on conservation issues. Two other former inmates have also supported LWT's wider outreach work by sharing their personal stories with the media and warning communities of the legal penalties for engaging in wildlife crime.



Rumphi prison tree planting © LWT

The Wildlife Club at Rumphi Prison continues to educate and inspire its members to recognise the value of protecting natural resources. Among other activities, the club plans to raise 10,000 seedlings for the forthcoming tree planting season. LWT is also exploring opportunities to develop programmes that will equip prisoners with skills to gain employment after being released from prison and avoid falling back into illegal activities

We were fortunate to have Jonny Vaughan, CEO of the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, join our July NVT UK trustee meeting via Zoom. It was great to hear a first-hand update on activities at LWT over the past few months.

NVT trustee, Jonny Hanson and his family had hoped to visit Malawi in 2020 but Covid-19 travel restrictions meant this has had to be postponed. He is looking forward to his visit when travel becomes possible.

Grants for research studies

By Jonathan Timberlake

Two further research proposals have now been accepted for NVT funding. These are a study on the conservation status of *Juniperus procera* (Juniper) in Nyika National Park by Andrew Kanzunguze and a study on the status and condition of stands of *Colophospermum mopane* (mopane) in Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve by Sopani Sickinga. Both recipients have already started with fieldwork. Kanzunguze's study will help the

Park authorities manage the Juniper plot, which is showing good evidence of regeneration. Sickinga's study particularly focuses on any damage made by elephants, especially as pressures on surrounding farming communities will probably increase over the next few years now that over 40 translocated elephants, which had been held in a specially-made enclosure, are now being released into the lower levels of the Nyika park. Research being undertaken by the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust is also looking at this issue of potential human-wildlife conflict.

The other study under our research grants scheme is being undertaken by Paston Simkoko on the population structure and seed behaviour of the tree *Prunus africana* on the Nyika Plateau in both Malawi and Zambia. A progress report has been submitted which shows that flowering and seeding were not found in all Nyika populations at that time.



Paston Simkoko © Paston Simkoko

We can't do it without you!

In spite of Covid-19, the Educational Conservation and Research Grant Programmes continue to make a lasting positive impact on the conservation of the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh. This can only happen with significant regular investment. We are most grateful to all of you who have already donated towards our programmes and hope that this newsletter will encourage others of you to support this important work. You can find a donation form at the end of this newsletter. Or donate online at www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org.

A very big 'thank you' for your support.

A reflection of the Nyika village days

By Heejoo Lee

Being carried by a 4x4 pickup truck from the village below to the top of the plateau, I felt uneasy at the impassive and effortless gliding on the road. Just a few days ago, Kawa, Mercy, baby Jawa on Mercy's back and myself had treaded this 10km dirt road. Although not many words were exchanged, our giggles and amusements had speckled this road with precious memory.

For Mercy and the family, this was a regular trip to the weekly market. The 20km roundtrip made small cash from selling their farmed goods and was an important occasion to socialize outside their village. We had started off in the misty cool morning. Reaching the main road, we had the grandiose Nyika on our left and were soon under the blazing sun. I spotted a chameleon, amazed. Mercy saw my excitement, amused. With her cool charm, she tells me its name in Chitumbuka, *Lwi--vi*.

I was in Mercy's village for the research about an activity that is banned: harvesting and trading of protected plants, orchids. The village, during my very first visit, was quite determined to deny any knowledge or relevance. But at one point in that first meeting, a lady in neon green chitenge stood up and said, *let's not lie, let's talk so that we can be proper*. Soon there were storytelling and demonstrations, taking me up the village hills to show me where orchids are found, and sitting around the home grounds talking and listening, thinking and reacting to one another.

Any discussions we had were nearly always pitched against the background of "life near the Park". The accompanying shade of bitter sentiments is not new: many people desire the lifting of what feels like a heavy weight and watchful eyes on them. Despite having the rights and the means to use certain resources from the park under specified conditions, many people just would not bother in order to avoid potential "trouble". From my little tent, pitched for me by the villagers on a spot with a view of the plateau, I gazed at it for its beauty but also found a sense of intimidation.



Heejoo's tent © Heejoo Lee

Leaving the village behind and being driven up to the top of the plateau in a pretty run-down truck, I sensed a peculiar irony: the grandiose and intimidating Nyika that I saw from the village was being conquered so effortlessly.



Spot the wildlife ! © Heejoo Lee

It's been one year since I left Malawi, and today I am in a very different world, Korea. I recently began a task for a county government to initiate community engagement towards designation as a biosphere reserve. I am constantly struck by the small and big similarities between Korea and Malawi: the intricacies of rural life, internal village politics, and tension among stakeholder groups. But there is a distinction that I perceive. In Malawi, people's daily lives were closely in touch with nature. In Korea, the interaction and dependency are quite removed: machinery, hired labour from afar, and multiple complex administrative systems. Furthermore, the characters of leadership and collectiveness may be harder to come by in a society like Korea that has become much more individualized. Although difficult to generalize, the path to a community to open up and get to the stage of *let's talk, let's listen, let's think and let's change* seems quite nebulous. Experience in Korea makes me reflect about my Nyika experience that there are so many valuable dimensions of the rural village life that are also worth protecting from disintegration.

Heejoo Lee's study on edible orchid activity is now available on the Nyika Vwaza Trust website:

www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/Chinaka.pdf

Accounts for 2019-20

Main headings of income and expenditure 2019-20	Unrestricted projects or activities		Restricted (Education Programme & Research)	
	£	No	£	No
Donation Income (Including gift aid relief where applicable)				
>£1,000			5,500	1
£500-999	625	1	1,375	2
£250-499	250	1	400	1
£1-249	3,037	35	483	4
Other income (merchandise, promotions, investments)	4,632			
Transfers from Investments	36,500			
	45,044		7,758	
Expenditure				
In Malawi Education programme run by LWT	39,253		7,758	
Research grants	2,580		2,000	
In UK – newsletter, events, merchandise, activity review, expenses	5,377			
	49,775		10,258	

Bibliography

Trustee, Jonathan Timberlake, reports that we have recently updated and revised our bibliography covering the Nyika and Vwaza areas. This is now available on the Trust's webpages www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/wp-content/uploads/bibrev5.pdf. There are 277 references with a series of keywords shown to indicate coverage. A number of these publications and reports we hold as pdf files in our Trust library, and copies can be made available to those interested. Please send any requests to the Secretary.



Wild flowers of Malawi
© Audrey Moriarty

Students on assignment

By Sonia Hensley

Note from the Editor: Although these students were not part of the programme supported by the Nyika Vwaza Trust, this does show that there are many agencies working to improve conservation of the area and all are needed if a real difference is to be achieved.

Last summer, Nyika and Vwaza welcomed two MBA students from INSEAD, the “business school for the world” based in France, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi.

Interns Sonia Hensley and Rohin Bakshi spent five weeks in Malawi on assignment from Peace Parks Foundation. As NVT supporters will know, Peace Parks oversees the administration of the Malawi-Zambia TransFrontier Conservation Area (MAZA-TFCA) that joins Nyika, Vwaza, and other areas in a cross-border wildlife protection zone managed cooperatively by the two countries. INSEAD and Peace Parks acknowledged the funding and revenue shortage faced by Nyika and Vwaza specifically, and combined efforts to investigate new business models for the parks.

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The two interns, Sonia and Rohin, spent weeks in the parks and surrounding areas. They interviewed stakeholders in the local communities and private enterprises, visited government offices in Mzuzu and Lilongwe, and benchmarked other tourism and wildlife destinations in the area. They even met with NVT grantee Heejoo Lee as she conducted her study on the chikanda (orchid) market.



Sonia Hensley with DNPW Ranger Timothy Chirwa near Chisanga Falls
© Sonia Hensley

Armed with the information collected, Sonia and Rohin wrote an extensive case study for use in INSEAD's curriculum. In February this year, 520 MBA students responded to the Nyika and Vwaza case in a competitive event called Master Strategist Day, with results judged by Peace Parks' senior management and other business leaders. The event was sponsored by the Hugo van Berkel Award. Go to www.insead.edu and click on "Hoffman, Global Institute for Business & Societies and impact. Discuss our newest institute." for more information. To advance business as a force for good.



Rohin Bakshi with Timothy near Fingira Rock
© Rohin Bakshi

Says Sonia: "From a business perspective, the most important thing I learned was the significance of the stakeholder ecosystem in designing successful interventions. I arrived with so many wrong assumptions about the parks' situation--for example, I thought that the local communities wouldn't be supportive of the parks or that poaching was driven by commercial interests. I couldn't have been more wrong. The people and wildlife of Nyika and Vwaza face such complex challenges. It's important to map that complexity correctly before designing solutions to make more revenue or reduce costs."

While COVID-19 has brought the inevitable career changes and delays, both Sonia and Rohin are eager to begin work and implement the lessons learned from their time at Nyika and Vwaza. Both can be found on LinkedIn, and Rohin can also be found at his new wildlife photography blog, Jungle Babbler (www.junglebabbler.com/).

NVT represented in 2021 London Marathon

Juliet Cornelius-Rumsey has bravely agreed to represent NVT in the London Marathon on 3 October 2021. I say 'bravely' because she successfully ran for us in 2016, competes in triathlons and marathons and knows very well that it is no easy task. She is a hard-working mother of three, so all this is in her 'spare' time.



Juliet relaxing with her dog
© Juliet Cornelius-Rumsey

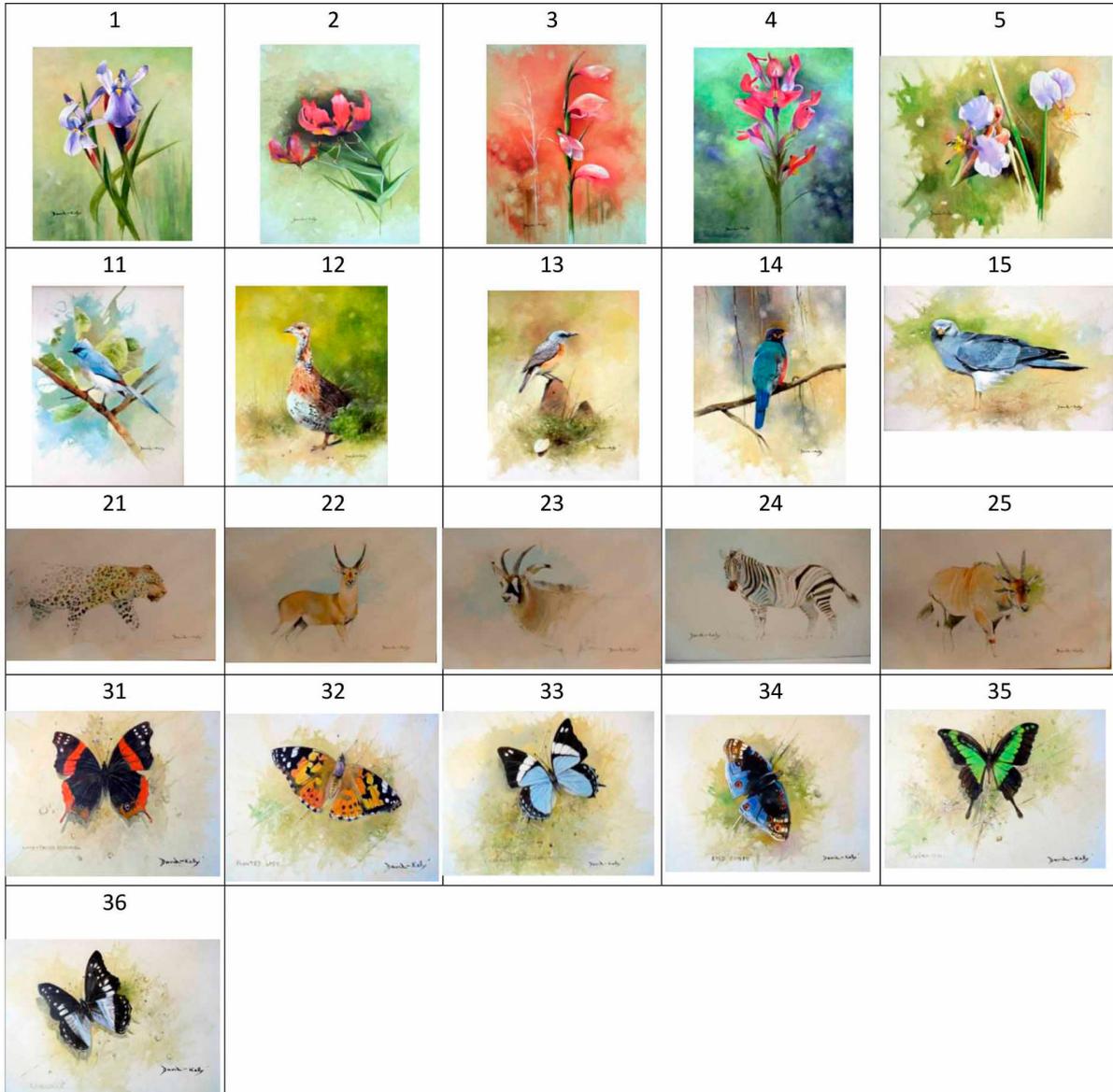
We are particularly fortunate that she will represent us once again because she is no stranger to Malawi. She was born in Mzuzu and spent most of her early life on the Viphya Plateau with her family. Her parents lived in the country for over 40 years.

Let's hope by October 2021, the pandemic will be under control everywhere in the world and there will be no restrictions to prevent the event taking place.

In the March newsletter, we will give you the link to Juliet's Just-Giving page so that you can support her and help the trust to raise funds. Thank You Juliet!

Special cards offer

Cards can be ordered in any quantity of any card. They do not need to be in themed packs. To order please send your list, showing the card number and quantity required to the Secretary, NVT at email secretary@nyika-vwazatrust.org, or by post at 50 Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4NA, by 20 October 2020. Cards are priced at £1.00 per card + P&P. There is a 5% discount for orders for 20 or more cards.



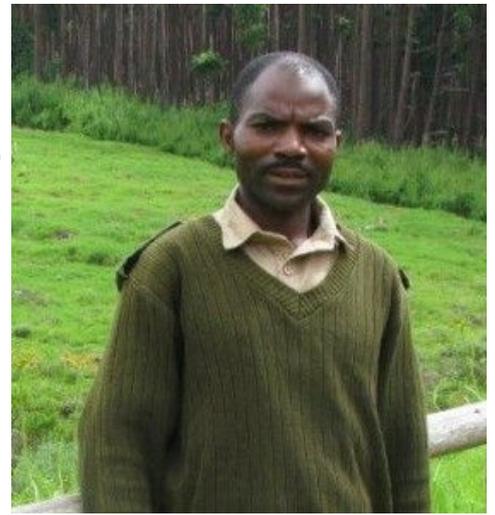
Calendar 2020

We shall be offering Malawi WESM calendars once again for 2021. To be sure of a copy please send your order by email to: secretary@nyika-vwaza-trust.org or by post to Peter Lawrance, 50 Brewery Road, Woking GU21 4NA. The price is the same as last year, at £11 + UK p&p, but please do not send any money at this stage.

January 	February 	March 	April 	May 
June 	July 	August 	September 	October 
November 	December 	January 2022 	 <p>The Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) protected Malawi's huge diversity of animals and habitats for over 70 years. It was founded in 1947 as the Nyika and Nkhotakota Nature Society with the aim of protecting wildlife, especially larger mammals. To this end WESM proposed and helped to establish Malawi's first Parks and Reserves in Lengwe, Muziti, Muziti and Nyika.</p> <p>WESM is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It has nine branches throughout Malawi, and a National Secretariat. Each branch is self-governing and holds its own events and projects.</p>	
 <p>COVER PHOTOGRAPH by Eric Mugwiza</p> <p>Elephant group by the Shire river in Liwonde National Park. The vast majority of her species have by choice taken refuge in successful forest refuges. Some have been made from there to Muziti and Muziti Wildlife Reserves.</p>		<p>Central Africa Limited is Malawi's largest general publisher with retail book and map shops and galleries in both Blantyre, Uta Walea Centre, Kidney Crescent, 305 (0) 0999 6000 and Lilongwe, Old Town Mall, off Paul Kagame, 0176317</p> <p>The company specialises in publishing and retailing books, posters and maps on Malawi's multiple wildlife and general tourism appeals. Hundreds of titles, both in print and digital, are available on these and Southern African subjects.</p>		
<p>PRODUCED BY</p> <p>Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM)</p> <p>wesm@wesafrica-online.net</p> <p>www.wesm-malawi.org</p>		<p>Central Africans Ltd</p> <p>centralafricans@wesafrica-online.net</p> <p>fmjohnston@gmail.com</p> <p>© Central Africans Limited and individual WESM members/photographers as noted</p>		

A selection of photographs from Central African Wilderness Safaris

Whyte Mhone, CAWS Head Guide at Chelinda Camp and Lodge, is well placed to observe all the spectacular flora and fauna on the Nyika plateau. He sent us some great photos. Many of you who have visited Chelinda will have benefited from Whyte's deep knowledge of the area. His parents were born and raised locally, before Nyika was a National Park. He has grown up with stories about traditional ways and likes to share these with guests.



Whyte Mhone © CAWS



African Stonechat © Luke Demas



Lion on The Nyika plateau © CAWS



Strangler fig © CAWS



African Yellow White-Eye © Luke Demas

Editor: Jennie Kettlewell
Designer: Mike Budgen

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 Lloyds Bank plc 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 Lloyds Bank plc, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860,

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:.....

.....

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

Email address:.....

Please return this completed form to:

Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

50 Brewery Road

Woking, Surrey, GU21 4NA, UK



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BANKER'S ORDER (for UK residents only)	Friends of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust Donation Form PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS
<p>To:- Bank plc, (Please insert the name and address of your Bank in the space above)</p> <p>Please pay to Lloyds Bank plc, (Sort Code 30-90-89), for the credit of The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust's account No. 44504860, the sum of:</p> <p>£on (Please insert date above)</p> <p>and thereafter every month/quarter/six months/year <i>(delete as appropriate)</i> until cancelled by me in writing.</p> <p>Name of Account to be debited</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Account Number</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Please return this completed form to.- Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, 50 Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey. GU214NA for registration and onward transmission to your Bank.</p> <p>Alternatively you may set up a standing order direct with your bank and advise us of your arrangement by email to: secretary@nyika-vwaza-trust.org.</p>	<p>Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other:</p> <p>Forenames:</p> <p>Surname:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Postcode:</p> <p>Telephone No.:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>I enclose a donation of: <input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Or: I have completed the Banker's Order Form. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made.</p> <p>In the past four years <input type="checkbox"/> Today <input type="checkbox"/> In future <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Please tick boxes you wish to apply)</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>