



## NVT Event Thursday 5 November 2026 6.30pm at the Union Jack Club, London SE1

Save the date in your diary, for the latest in our Nyika-Vwaza Trust London events. This year our speaker will be Dr Jamie McCallum, Director UK and EU for The Peace Parks Foundation (PPF).

Following a decade in sports sponsorship and marketing communications, Jamie ran a sustainability consultancy before achieving a Biological Sciences Ph.D on the US/Mexico border. He now focuses on technology and ranger training for large landscape nature conservation and ecosystem services for regenerative agriculture. Who could be more appropriate as a speaker, given NVT's commitment to funding the post of research coordinator for the Nyika-Vwaza Co-Management Trust which operates under the PPF umbrella.

His talk will focus on the status of scientific research on the Nyika-Vwaza plateau and he will take the opportunity to give us the latest information on the work of the Nyika-Vwaza Co-Management Trust, showing the value of the research model and its ability to be replicated. He is passionate about his subject and a captivating speaker, so this is an event we can truly look forward to. Do come.



Jamie McCallum  
© PPF

*Details of the event can be found at [www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/UJC-2026.html](http://www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/UJC-2026.html). Tickets for the evening (£16, students £8) are available from Tom Lupton, email: [sec.nvt@gmail.com](mailto:sec.nvt@gmail.com), or 72 North Street, Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8AS, UK. Alternatively, please complete the application form included with this newsletter. Payment for tickets and donations may be made direct to the Trust account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860, (IBAN GB94LOYD30908944504860); account name The Nyika-Vwaza UK Trust, or by a UK cheque payable to The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust.*

## Research co-ordination for the Co-Management Trust.

Andrew Kanzunguze, in his post as Research Coordinator, worked hard to establish a bank of information on what research exists and where the gaps are, so that a programme could be planned to fill those gaps and ensure appropriate information is available for management planning. He achieved his objective and, having done so, sadly decided to leave the post for personal reasons. We appreciate the valuable work he has done and have always enjoyed working with him. A new Research Coordinator is being recruited to take Andrew's plan forward and should be in place within a few months. This post will continue to be funded by NVT UK. We will bring you further news when we have it.

## Wildlife and Environmental Sourcebook for Primary Schools

By Dorothy Tembo-Nhlema, Director of programmes at the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust and its partners continue scaling up efforts to ensure greater outreach and that the Wildlife and Environmental Education Sourcebook (WEES) is integrated in the new primary curriculum. In February 2026, two members of the sourcebook core team representing LWT were invited as experts to validate/audit the drafted curriculum for grades 1-4 at Malawi Institute of Education. The draft new syllabus still lacked wildlife and environment integration on which the core team members provided guidance and recommendation. We are hopeful that the revised drafts of the syllabus will reflect the recommendation.



*A group photo during the Learning symposium  
© LWT*

We have also continued to print and disseminate the sourcebook and to train teachers to use it. A total of 3,300 copies of the sourcebook has been printed since 2024, with 300 copies printed in the recent period. LWT facilitated the training of 347 teachers from 171 schools on WEES in September 2025, a major increase compared to the 16 schools reached in 2024. The training increased teachers' knowledge and capacity to deliver the lessons. Recent monitoring showed most schools have already started putting the lessons into practice. Meanwhile, the sourcebook is being disseminated through television and community radio programmes.

## Expanding Lilongwe Wildlife Trust's Environmental Education

By Dorothy Tembo-Nhlema, Director of programmes at the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust's Environmental Education (EE) programme continues to implement activities that help expand environmental education across Malawi. Facilitated educational visits for learners were made to Liwonde National Park, Kasungu National Park and Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. These trips bring nature experiences to the learners, which they can relate to the lessons taught during classroom and wildlife clubs. It is exciting that, for the first time, we facilitated an essay writing competition for primary and secondary schools to assess learners' knowledge and understanding of nature conservation, including wildlife. A total of 14 learners out of 108 emerged winners and went away with various awards including school bags, branded LWT t-shirts, mathematical instruments, scientific calculators, pens and notebooks. Learners were excited about the essay, and we look forward to another session in 2026.



*Elephant Viewing during the Educational visits at Kasungu National Park  
© LWT*

The project also supported teacher training, stakeholder meetings and a learning symposium, which empowered environmental educators with knowledge and capacity. While the teachers' training improved teachers' capacity to deliver EE lessons, the symposium covered tools for monitoring of the impacts of environmental education.



*An essay competition winner from Nsambeta Primary School  
receiving her prize  
© LWT*

## Research Grants

For the past twelve years, NVT UK has funded research into conservation, environmental, or socio-economic issues that affect the Nyika National Park and the Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. The intention is that the results inform plans for the management of the two areas.

Four new research grants have been awarded.

**Mungeti Mulungu is investigating The Health and Regeneration Patterns of *Brachystegia boehmii* Woodlands in Nyika National Park.** Miombo woodlands, dominated by species such as *Brachystegia boehmii*, form one of the most ecologically and economically important vegetation types in southern Africa. In Nyika National Park, these woodlands provide critical habitats for large mammals, birds, and diverse understory flora, while also supporting ecosystem services such as carbon storage, soil protection, and water regulation. Mungeti will focus on understanding their resilience under ecological pressures.

He told us: "I am looking forward to completing my research work on time. This is to develop a research paper that can help the management of Nyika-Vwaza Trust in the conservation decision-making and monitoring plan." His greatest hope is to develop more strategic research projects now, and in the near future, that support adaptive management across the NVT's operational areas. When asked what challenges he felt he might face, he thought that the only challenge might be in the preparation stage, and concerned ensuring that all the logistics were in place (transportation, accommodation and food) for field work. However, he had hopes that it would all go to plan.



Mungeti Mulungu  
© Mungeti Mulungu

**Evanca Samikwa is researching the Reproductive Biology and Breeding of *Enteromius kerstenii* in Lake Kazuni, Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve.**

Lake Kazuni is the major aquatic habitat in the protected Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. It covers 4 square km and the lake has a diverse fish fauna. *E. kerstenii* is a dominant fish species in the lake and supports the livelihoods of most communities surrounding the reserve and beyond. The overall objective of this study is to contribute data that will enable effective management and sustainable use of the local fishery on the lake. Evanca plans to establish the size of *E. kerstenii* at maturity so that the appropriate mesh size for catching fish sustainably can be established. This will allow the species to breed at least once before being caught. By producing a map of preferred spawning sites in the lake, plans can ensure these habitats are protected from fishing. A closed/open season for fishing means the species will be given a chance to breed without disturbance. In addition, Evanca will record an inventory of fish species in Lake Kazuni to update information on fish biodiversity. His hope is that he will produce trustworthy scientific data that will aid conservation, result in a sustainable fishery industry and be a sound base for future research. His challenge is likely to be accessibility of the lake during the rainy season, with access to some parts of the lake difficult due to flooding and muddy roads. Lake Kazuni being part of the Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve means he may encounter animal inhabitants such as hippos, crocodiles and elephants.



Evanca Samikwa © Evanca Samikwa

A second researcher has chosen Lake Kazuni for her project but will have a broader focus. **Sullamithe Manduwa will evaluate the fish biodiversity in the lake, using environmental DNA (eDNA) and supplementary observational techniques.** She intends to establish a standardised eDNA-based monitoring system that can be used in subsequent surveys. The data will inform conservation and management decisions based on species of conservation concern,

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invasive species, and ecologically important taxa. Sulla says she is excited about having the opportunity to conduct this research, using an innovative method. By bringing different communities together, from local fishers to intellectual bodies, she hopes that doors will open for collaboration to build on her research. She looks forward to acquiring an invaluable understanding of Lake Kazuni fisheries, such that it will aid conservation of the lake. She says: “For me, this is what science should look like: people with different expertise and backgrounds coming together, building lasting professional relationships, and inspiring one another, collaborating and uniting around a shared (conservation) purpose.”



Sullamithe Manduwa © Sullamithe Manduwa

that will inform management strategies. “For any researcher, it is a pity to see one’s hard work gathering dust on some shelf. I hope to see my findings used, not only in Nyika, but in the miombo region, to improve management and conservation of elephants and their habitats.” The challenges he sees are a prolonged time for data collection due to frequent elephant encounters and persistent rain during the rainy season. Both factors are outside his control but he says he chooses to stay positive.



Michael Siska

© Michael Siska

**Michael Siska**, has chosen **Analysis of vegetation changes in the Nyika Elephant Sanctuary since 2017** as his research project. An employee of DNPW and based in Chelinda, he says: “This project is timely, as it comes when there is a lot of visible tree damage in the enclosure containing elephants that were translocated from Liwonde Game Reserve to Nyika National Park in 2017. There have been ongoing discussions around the release of these elephants from the enclosure but caution around potential human-elephant conflict remains, as do concerns over other ecological impacts. This research, while focused on evaluating the extent of damage caused by elephants on woody vegetation in the elephant sanctuary, will also contribute to the need for management to understand the potential extent of elephant-mediated change within the Nyika ecosystem.” He looks forward to conducting an intensive field survey that assesses elephant damage on woody vegetation systematically and to immersing himself in data so that he can draw out meaningful conclusions for management and the scientific community. In particular, he would like to see if any specific tree species within the miombo woodland of the Nyika ecosystem are especially susceptible to elephant damage. Michael’s greatest hope is to deliver robust, field-verified data

In our autumn 2025 newsletter, we wrote about **Gracious Lokoma’s research, ‘Avian-flora interactions: investigating the role of fruiting plants in shaping the distribution and diversity of significant ecotourism bird species in Nyika National Park’**. His work continues and he is due to report on it in summer 2026.

## Nyika-Vwaza UK Trust Ignites Research Momentum in Malawi’s Vital Landscapes

By Jessica Faircliff, PPF Communications Officer

Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, jewels within the Malawi–Zambia Transfrontier Conservation Area, are stepping into a future shaped by science and discovery. Since 2024, the Nyika-Vwaza UK Trust has backed the Conservation Science Research Coordinator role within the Nyika-Vwaza Co-Management Trust, a partnership extending through 2026. Two years on, the building blocks are in place, turning foundational

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efforts into real momentum that is transforming how this extraordinary region is understood and protected.

At the heart of this shift is a sharper focus on evidence and collaboration, supported closely by Peace Parks Foundation's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and Geospatial teams. Their expertise has eased pressure on the Park Management Unit, creating space for deeper, more effective work across operations, research and community engagement.

### **Building systems that prove change**

This is not about collecting data for its own sake. It is about building architecture to demonstrate tangible results on the ground.

A September 2025 MEL Review Workshop marked a turning point, bringing teams together to refine how information is captured, stored and shared. The outcome is a clear roadmap for integrated monitoring, strengthening confidence among partners, donors and communities that investments are translating into measurable impact.

Alongside this structural work, a two-month trial of the Survey123 application is transforming how human-wildlife conflict is tracked. For the first time, incidents across this vast and complex landscape can be systematically mapped and analysed, shifting from anecdotal reporting to credible, decision-ready data. This transition enables managers to identify hotspots, understand seasonal trends and respond with targeted mitigation measures.



*MEL Workshop © PPF*

Structured engagement with universities is also underway, opening the door to external expertise and injecting fresh scientific rigour into the landscape. Workshops with research staff at Nyika and Vwaza surfaced long-standing capacity gaps in data handling and analysis among field teams. Addressing these challenges directly has laid the groundwork for meaningful skills development.

Momentum accelerated once the first Park Management Unit hire came on board and the Trust's CEO, George Nxumayo, provided decisive leadership to activate the plan. The lesson is clear: targeted leadership, aligned with strong partnerships, can unlock lasting institutional change.

### **A clear path to collaborative discovery**

Looking ahead, interest from academics, postgraduate students and research institutions is steadily growing, positioning Nyika-Vwaza as a prime destination for grounded, high-impact research.



*Attendees of the MEL Workshop © PPF*

### **NVT 2025 event – speaker Dr Jonny Hanson**

Chairman Tom Lupton introduced the event by describing the Nyika Plateau and Vwaza Marsh and showing wonderfully evocative photos. He described the extensive grasslands, miombo and brachystegia forests, and showed some of the impressive flora and fauna. Nyika is large – the size of the land inside the M25 +25%.

NVT had initially focused on an education communication programme to interest young people in the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, the flora and fauna that existed there and why it is important to conserve it for future generations. Working with the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, we had funded a source book for education of primary school pupils and organised visits so they could see for themselves. The next stage was to train teachers in how to use the source books. Alongside this work, we funded research grants in order to create a body of knowledge that could be used by Malawians in managing these spaces and also to create a core group of people who are knowledgeable about the subject.

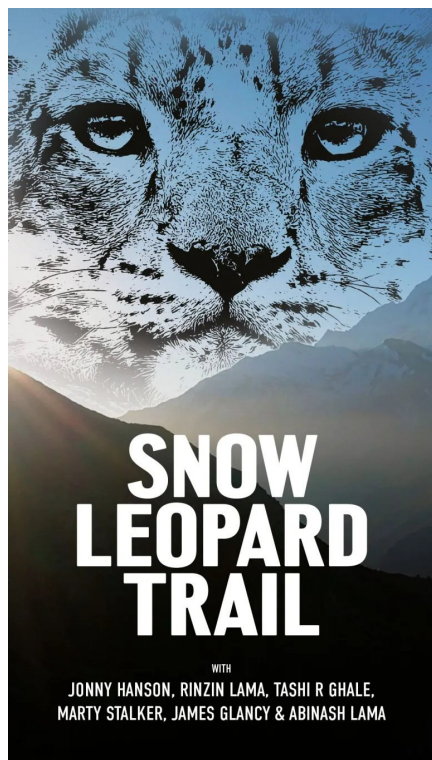
We are immensely proud of our recent partnership with PPF who signed an agreement with the Malawi government based on a 20-year funded trust. This provides funding from the income of the trust but not from the capital itself. The vehicle is the Nyika-Vwaza Co-Management Trust and what PPF offer is sound financial management and deep expertise in conservation. What NVT can offer is 10 years of research on aspects of the Nyika and Vwaza and an extensive bibliography. One of the first PPF initiatives was the clean drinking water project, providing clean water to 18,000 people. With what we have in place we can afford to be very optimistic about the future.

The speaker for the evening, Dr Jonny Hanson, introduced

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himself as having spent his very early years in Malawi, then home to Ireland and back to Malawi aged 11. He spent this time wandering the hills around Blantyre and becoming ever more fascinated by what he saw. Later he started and ran a community farm in Larne, N Ireland. He had been an avid watcher of wildlife documentaries, which he said was where the majority of people get their information about wildlife. What he began to notice was the very different perspectives on the subject of wildlife. The documentaries showed wildlife in its natural habitat, but rarely in the context of human habitation. A Malawian farmer might have a very different view. He might respect an elephant but would be quite prepared to kill this magnificent beast if it trashed his crops. A Malawian view of crocodiles might be coloured differently if a relative had been killed by one. The wildlife itself doesn't change over time, but human views of it vary according to personal experience. He wondered what lessons we should learn from this.

Jonny next showed a 20-minute film of his time researching snow leopards in Nepal for his doctorate. He wanted to understand how Nepali communities can live alongside these magnificent beasts and how farming and apex predators can coexist. The film was shot against a backdrop of the Anapurna Masif and showed camera trap footage of the elusive snow leopards as well as their main food source, the farmed blue sheep. It will be publicly available on YouTube from snow leopard day 2026 - 23 October.



*Snow Leopard Trail by Jonny Hanson*  
© Jonny Hanson

He concluded that coexistence is a journey. It is complex and there is no simple answer. Having studied it in Nepal, he next studied what it might look like in Great Britain or Ireland. He proposed that a coexistence toolkit might consist of:

- Deterrents, as in Switzerland, with fencing and very large guard dogs.
- Compensation, as in The Netherlands, with a long-term plan for wolves.
- Force, as in Wyoming, USA, where a team of scientists can use force if they need to.
- Enterprise, as in Colorado, Montana, where grizzly bears attract wildlife tourism.
- Governance, to facilitate coexistence, may be the most important tool.

Jonny said that the ecological case for introducing apex predators is strong, for example to control the deer population, especially 'pest species'. However, opinions are divided, some being based on information and others on perception.

## WESM Calendars

A big thank you to Jane and Clare Lawrance for organising the distribution of the 2026 WESM calendars. The calendars serve as a daily reminder of Malawi's wonderful scenery and wildlife at the same time as raising funds for both WESM and NVT.

Jane and Clare have kindly agreed to arrange the distribution of WESM 2027 calendars. We will circulate details of how to purchase the calendars, once the arrangements have been finalised, in the Autumn Newsletter.

## Donations appreciated

We strongly believe that the work we are funding in Malawi will make a positive difference to the communities in and around the Nyika Plateau and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. You will see in this newsletter that research grant-funded by us will help Malawians to develop effective conservation management plans. We continue to support LWT's Education Centre and to fund the research coordination as part of the Peace Parks Foundation's Co-Management Agreement with the Malawi Government. Our funds continue to be well used and donations are very much appreciated.

We are most grateful to all of you who have already made donations 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 you can make a direct donation to the Nyika Vwaza (UK) Trust account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 309089, account number 44504860, IBAN GB94LOYD30908944504860

A very big 'thank you' for your support.

**Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust**  
**Promotional Evening with a discussion led by Dr Jamie McCullum**  
**at the Union Jack Club,**  
**Sandell Street, London SE1 8UJ on Thursday 5th November 2026.**

**“The status of scientific research on the Nyika-Vwaza plateau”**

**Application Form for Tickets**

Admission tickets are £20 per person or £8 per student.

I would like to apply for..... tickets to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust evening 5th November 2026 for the persons named below.

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

Alternatively you may email your application to the Hon Secretary, NVT UK Trust, [sec.nvt@gmail.com](mailto:sec.nvt@gmail.com), quoting your name and email and phone contact, and listing your guests, and make payment direct to the Trust’s account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860.

**(Please complete in block letters)**

<b>Name of applicant:</b>		Ticket number
<b>Organisation name (if applicable):</b>		
<b>Address:</b>		Date issued
<b>Contact Tel. number:</b>		
<b>Email address:</b>		

**Names of other people for whom tickets are requested**

<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>		
<b>Name:</b>		

If paying by cheque please return this form, with your remittance to Tom Lupton, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Nyika Vwaza (UK) Trust, 72 North Street, Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8AS.

## 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), or direct to NVT's UK bank – see details below.

Prices:

**UK:** £20, incl. p&p, direct to the Trust's account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860

**Overseas:** direct to Lloyds Bank plc account (IBAN GB94LOYD30908944504860), account name The Nyika-Vwaza UK Trust, or by banker's draft) £28, including p&p.

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,

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:.....

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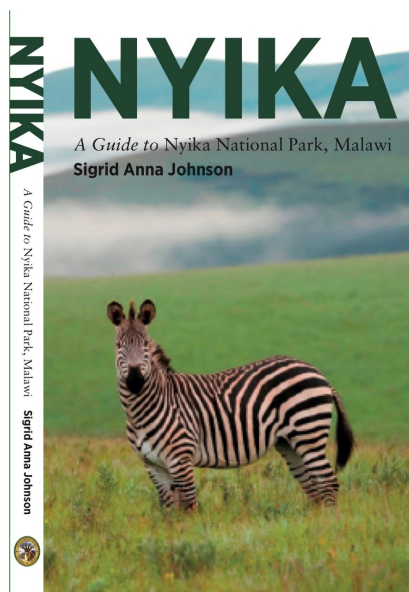
Please return this completed form to:

**Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust**

**72 North Street,**

**Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8AS, UK**

Alternatively, you can download a pdf of the book from the NVT website.



The Nyika Guide  
© Sigi Johnson



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

The Hon. Treasurer/Secretary  
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TN27 8AS  
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

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

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**TN27 8AS**

**for registration and onward transmission to your Bank.**

Alternatively you may set up a standing order direct with your bank and advise us of your arrangement by email to [sec.nvt@gmail.com](mailto:sec.nvt@gmail.com).

**Friends of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust  
Donation Form**  
PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS

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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 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: \_\_\_\_\_