



# ANIMALS OF MALAWI IN THE MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE



## DEAR EARTHWATCHER,

We are delighted that you will be joining us on our *Animals of Malawi in the Majete Wildlife Reserve* research expedition. Majete is an incredibly special place, and if it were not for African Parks Ltd, the reserve would certainly not be the wonder it is today. Majete Wildlife Reserve, with its successful reintroduction and rehabilitation program, is now moving into the next phase of its existence – that of scientific research, so that correct management decisions can be made.

Come and join us on a great adventure and experience Africa's incredible wildlife. Join us as we gather vital data about various populations of wildlife in the reserve: elephants, rhinos, buffalo, antelopes, and the larger predators such as lions, leopards, and hyenas. Share the excitement as we download camera trap photos, conduct game counts in vehicles or on foot, carry out vegetation surveys, visit schools and communities in the nearby areas to spread the conservation word and to hear the locals thoughts and ideas about conservation in general—and much more.

After a wonderful day in the reserve, our cozy camp awaits, where you will enjoy a cold drink and hearty, traditional meals cooked on an open fire. You will fall asleep to the hundreds of nocturnal sounds of the bush. Your morning alarm clock may be the majestic fish eagle.

Come and have some fun with us while contributing to a very worthy cause. This essential project cannot be undertaken without your support.

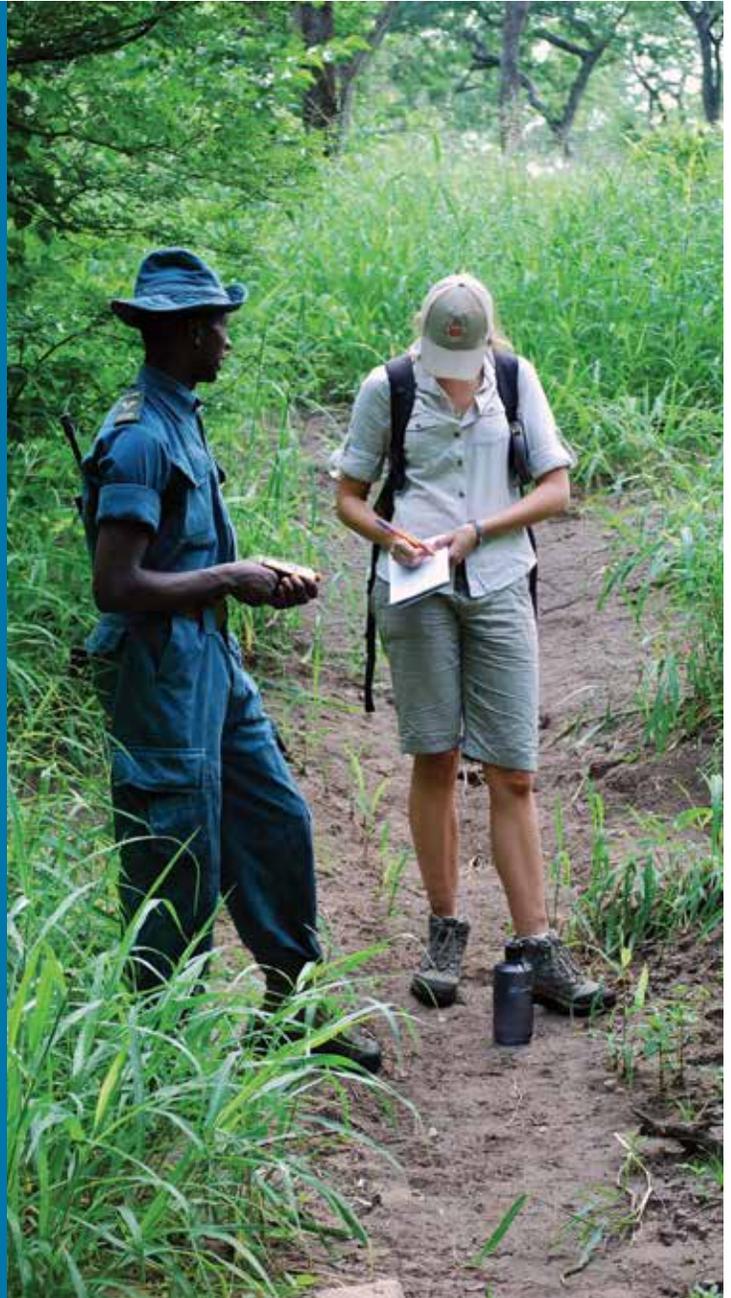
We look forward to sharing the pure magic of Majete.

Alison J. Leslie (and the entire research team)



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# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ANIMALS OF MALAWI IN THE MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE



**EARTHWATCH SCIENTISTS:** Dr. Alison J. Leslie,  
Mr. Craig Hay,  
Mr. Patricio Ndadzela

**RESEARCH SITE:** Majete Wildlife Reserve, Lower Shire Valley,  
Chikwawa District, Malawi

**Complete travel information is not  
available in this version of the briefing.**

**Please contact Earthwatch  
with any questions.**

### **EXPEDITION DATES:**

**Team 1:** June 14 – June 25, 2014

**Team 2:** July 5 – July 16, 2014

**Team 3:** July 26 – Aug. 6, 2014

**Team 4:** Aug. 16 – Aug. 27, 2014

**Team 5:** Sept. 13 – Sept. 24, 2014

**Team 6:** Oct. 11 – Oct. 22, 2014

**Team 7:** Nov. 8 – Nov. 19, 2014

**Team 8:** Dec. 6 – Dec. 17, 2014



## TRIP PLANNER

### TO DO IMMEDIATELY

- Make sure you understand and agree to Earthwatch policies and participant responsibilities.

### 90 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

Complete and return your volunteer forms. Below are the specific forms required for this expedition:

- Earthwatch Participation Form for Adults
- Travel Form

To complete forms, login at [earthwatch.org](http://earthwatch.org).

**Note:** If you have signed up for an expedition within 90 days of the start date, you must return your fully completed volunteer forms as soon as possible.

- Pay any outstanding balance on your expedition.
- Book travel arrangements.
- If you plan to purchase additional travel insurance, note that some policies require purchase when your expedition is booked (see the Insurance section, pg. 21, for more information).

- If traveling internationally, make sure your passport is current and obtain a visa for your destination country, if necessary (see the Passports and Visas section, pg. 15, for more details).

- Make sure you have all the necessary vaccinations for your project site (see the Health Information section, pg. 20).

- Bring your level of fitness up to the standards required (see the Project Conditions section, pg. 16).

### 60 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- Review the packing list (pg. 4) to make sure you have all the clothing, personal supplies, and equipment needed.

### 30 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- Leave the Earthwatch 24-hour helpline number with a friend or relative (see pg. 28).
- Leave copies of your passport, visa, and airline tickets with a friend or relative.
- Confirm your travel arrangements.

**Read this expedition briefing thoroughly.** It provides the most accurate information available at the time of your Earthwatch scientist's project planning, and will likely answer any questions you have about the project. However, please also keep in mind that research requires improvisation, and you may need to be flexible. Research plans evolve in response to new findings, as well as to unpredictable factors such as weather, equipment failure, and travel challenges. To enjoy your expedition to the fullest, remember to expect the unexpected, be tolerant of repetitive tasks, and try to find humor in difficult situations. If there are any major changes in the research plan or field logistics, Earthwatch will make every effort to keep you well informed before you go into the field.



# EXPEDITION PACKING CHECKLIST

## REQUIRED ITEMS

### GENERAL

- This expedition briefing
- Photocopies of your passport, flight itinerary, and credit cards in case the originals are lost or stolen; the copies should be packed separately from the original documents
- Passport and/or visa (if necessary)
- Certification of vaccination (if necessary)
- Documentation for travel by minors (if necessary) (see Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age in the Travel Tips section, pg. 18)

### CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR FOR FIELDWORK

**NOTE:** Khaki or earth-toned colors are necessary when working with animals. White or bright-colored clothing can scare off the animals and should not be worn during fieldwork.

- Earthwatch T-shirt
- Lightweight, quick-drying, long-sleeved shirts and pants (zip-off pants are the best)
- Well worn-in, comfortable walking shoes with ankle support or boots
- Gaiters or mini-gaiters are very useful for bush walking; they keep grass seeds, sticks, stones, gravel, and sand out of shoes.
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Plenty of socks
- A fleece or windbreaker (June through August can be very cool at night and early morning, so come prepared with warm layers)
- Thermal nightwear/pajamas (June through August teams)
- Wide-brimmed hat for sun protection
- Those joining the wet season teams (November through March) must bring good-quality rain gear

### CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR FOR LEISURE

- At least one set of clothing to keep clean for end of expedition
- Women: a long skirt (i.e. serong or wrap) to wear on village visits
- Casual clothing for recreational days and nights (loose-fitting, lightweight shorts and T-shirts are recommended for the warmer months, and lightweight long pants for winter evenings)
- Sandals or other lightweight shoes for wearing in camp

### FIELD SUPPLIES

- Small daypack
- An ample supply of insect repellent spray (minimum 30% DEET)
- Two one-liter water bottles
- Sunglasses
- Binoculars
- Camera, film/memory card(s), extra camera battery

### BEDDING AND BATHING

**NOTE:** Sheets, blankets, and pillows will be provided.

- Bath towel(s)

### PERSONAL SUPPLIES

- Flashlight headlamp with extra batteries (the camp is not lit at night)
- Personal toiletries (biodegradable soaps and shampoos are encouraged)
- Antibacterial wipes or lotion (good for cleaning hands while in the field)
- Personal first-aid kit (e.g., anti-diarrhea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.) and personal medications
- Alarm clock



## MISCELLANEOUS

- ❑ Spending money (U.S. dollars in denominations of \$5, 10, 20 and 50 are best. Malawian kwacha can be obtained at the airport or if need be from the research team).
- ❑ A mosquito net that you can hang over your bed (the central hanging style net is recommended). This is recommended for the wet season: November through March, but optional for other months.

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ❑ A GPS unit, if you have one
- ❑ Your favorite snacks if you like to nibble between meals
- ❑ Hardware for sharing digital photographs at the end of the expedition
- ❑ Laundry detergent if you wish to wash clothes (preferably biodegradable; note that clothes can be washed but may take a long time to dry in the rainy season from November to March)
- ❑ Medicated talcum powder is great for heat rashes and to sprinkle on sheets on a hot night.
- ❑ Travel guide
- ❑ Books, games, journal, art supplies, etc. for free time
- ❑ Drybag or plastic sealable bags (good for protecting equipment like cameras from dust, humidity, and water)
- ❑ Malawi schools are chronically short of supplies; if you can and have the space, these are a few items which would be valuable to the local schools: books for children and teens, alphabet flash cards, biology textbooks, chalk, colored construction paper, colored pencils, compasses, craft scissors, crayons, dictionaries in English, encyclopedias, erasers, exercise books, general science text books, glue sticks, hand-held pencil sharpeners, health text books, human body educational wall charts, language educational wall charts, math educational wall charts, math flash cards, math textbooks, markers, notebooks, pencils, pens, protractors, rulers, science educational wall charts, solar calculators, watercolor paints, watercolor paint brushes, word flash cards, world maps. All written materials should be in English.
- ❑ Optional Items to support the research staff (if you have room to spare in your baggage): good-quality D-cell batteries (our camera traps require four each, and stock is not always reliable in Malawi), AA and AAA batteries, M & M's, and duct tape Bathing suit for possible recreational swimming
- ❑ Swimming towel

**NOTE:** Required and optional items lists are accurate to the best of Earthwatch's knowledge at the time of publication.



# THE RESEARCH

## ANIMALS OF MALAWI IN THE MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE



Hippos in the Shire River

### THE STORY

The 70,000-hectare (170,000-acre) Majete Wildlife Reserve provides a home for many of Africa's iconic species: leopards, elephants, water buffalo, black rhinos, sable antelopes, elands, lions, leopards, and hyenas. But it hasn't always been a hospitable place for wildlife. It was established as a game reserve in the southern section of the Great Rift Valley in 1955, and poaching became rampant during the late 1980s and 1990s. Most of these species were nearly or totally extinct in the reserve by 2000. In addition, nearby communities pushed the reserve's natural resources to their limits through illegal logging, unsustainable fishing, and uncontrolled agriculture. The reserve brought in no tourists, and local communities had little economic incentive to not exploit it.

Things started to change in 2003, when African Parks Ltd. took over management of the reserve. Since then, millions of dollars have gone into developing the reserve's infrastructure and building up its staff. A 142-kilometer (88-mile) electric fence now surrounds the reserve, protecting the original 2,554 animals of 13 different species that were reintroduced to the reserve, along with their offspring. A recent conference funded by the World Bank named Majete the best-managed park in Malawi.

This expedition gives you a chance to help Majete's management bring the reserve to its full potential. As a research team, we're working to develop an ecological monitoring program. The reintroduced species are free to roam the entire park, which leads to a number of questions: How far will they range? What effect will they have on the vegetation? Will they reproduce successfully? How will they interact with each other? Our research will give park management the scientific information needed to make informed decisions on the effective management of the fauna and flora.

These decisions can also have benefits beyond the reserve's boundary. In the future, we hope that excess game from Majete can stock other national parks and wildlife reserves in Malawi that were also devastated by poaching. Malawi needs tourism revenue, and Majete is becoming an attraction for tourists. Humankind benefits from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by ecosystems (scientists call these "ecosystem goods and services"). Majete, therefore, also has great potential to benefit the communities around it—if it is managed sustainably—by providing clean drinking water and food and by fostering processes such as the decomposition of wastes, nutrient cycling, carbon cycling, and other critical ecosystem services.



## RESEARCH AIMS

So far little research has happened on the reserve, and the research that has been done has focused mostly on sociological issues in the surrounding communities. This area (and many other parts of the world) has a dire need for long-term ecological monitoring programs, which we plan to initiate here. The aim of such programs is to document changes in important properties of biological communities. At the least, a monitoring system should be designed to detect long-term trends; in Majete's case, these trends include population changes and fluctuations among various wildlife species.

Our research focuses on the ecology and management of a number of different species. By ecology, we mean the science of the relationships between organisms and their environment. Some, like elephant and buffalo, are easier to observe than others, like the elusive rhino and leopard. Our specific projects include the following:

- Assessing and modeling the short-term and long-term changes in the size and age composition of populations, and the biological and environmental processes influencing those changes (known as population dynamics) of some of the reintroduced herbivore species.
- Monitoring the success of reintroduced predators (lion and leopard) and their impact on prey species.
- Determining the impact of large herbivores (elephant, buffalo, and rhino) on the habitat.
- Studying the population dynamics and distribution of the spotted hyena.
- Studying the population performance and habitat use of the black rhinoceros—in other words, how the reintroduced population is faring with regard to birth rates and survival versus death rates.
- Implementation of a best-practice fire-management strategy.
- Building the capacity and implementing measures to lessen human-wildlife conflict.

This work is part of the larger project making Majete a model for how a reserve can successfully conserve biodiversity and manage natural resources sustainably for the benefit of the economy, the people of Malawi, and neighboring communities, while also being financially viable.

## HOW YOU WILL HELP

As an Earthwatch volunteer, you'll help with a number of exciting projects on different species, spending most of the day in the field collecting data. All the necessary training will be provided on site, which may include the use of camera traps, radio and

satellite tracking techniques, making a GPS system work for you, identifying and following animal tracks, identifying trees and plants, and computer skills and possibly game capture techniques. You will learn how to meticulously record information to ensure scientifically valid and reproducible results, and we'll teach you to what to do (or not to do) if you encounter a dangerous animal—such as an elephant, buffalo, or snake—while in the field.

**NOTE:** The type and variety of species each team focuses on will vary depending on the season and research staff present. Some species may not be studied on every team.

You may have a chance to assist with the following:

- Downloading photographs of animals from camera traps (cameras that take pictures of passing animals automatically) and other cameras (every few days), sorting them according to species, and identifying individual animals. This task will help create a photographic library for the reserve.
- Tracking elephants, rhinos, lions, leopards and hyenas via VHF receivers or satellite (again, each team will not necessarily focus on every species), either from a vehicle or on foot. If you are on foot, you will be accompanied by an armed game scout from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.
- Conducting transects to monitor the effects of herbivores, such as rhino, buffalo, and various species of antelope, on vegetation.
- Monitoring vegetation by means of fixed-point photography (an effective and robust method of monitoring vegetation change where photographs are compared between seasons and over years).
- Monitoring vegetation in enclosure plots (small areas surrounded by fences to keep herbivores out). We compare the vegetation in enclosure plots to that in non-enclosed areas over time (visually and photographically) in order to monitor the grazing and browsing capacity in the reserve. We will provide plant samples and identification guides to help you in this task.
- Counting animals during the dry season. During this task you'll also observe and record animal behavior when possible.
- Helping with data entry and analysis on the computer (particularly on rainy days). Those with GIS skills can help with the satellite telemetry and remote sensing aspects of the project.
- Visiting a local school, where you might assist with PowerPoint presentations, participate in interactive games and conservation learning tools, and tell students about your home country.

# YOUR DESTINATION

## ABOUT MALAWI



The Shire River

Within its small area (118,484 square kilometers, or 45,746 square miles), Malawi offers a wealth of attractions. It boasts five national parks, four wildlife reserves, and over 70 protected forest reserves. Malawi also has stunning topography, ranging from the heights of the grassland-covered Nyika Plateau in the north to the Shire Valley in the south, where Majete Wildlife Reserve is located. For those interested in hiking and rock climbing, Malawi's premier destination is Mt. Mulanje, a spectacular 650-square-kilometer (250-square-mile) massif that rises in dramatic isolation above the Phalombe Plains, southeast of the expedition rendezvous city of Blantyre. It is topped by the 3,002-meter (9,850-foot) Sapitwa Peak, the highest point in central Africa.

Few countries are as dominated by a single geographic feature as Malawi, which is nicknamed "The Land of the Lake." Lake Malawi follows the contours of the Rift Valley for a distance of 585 kilometers (363 miles). It is up to 160 kilometers (99 miles) wide, accounts for more than 15% of Malawi's surface area, and is the third largest lake in Africa and the ninth largest freshwater lake in the world. The African continent harbors the greatest freshwater fish diversity of any continent, and Lake Malawi's 850 species, primarily the beautiful cichlids, exceeds the number of freshwater species known from Europe and North America combined.

Malawi is the seventh most densely populated country in Africa. The official language is English, and many indigenous Bantu languages are also spoken. With about ten different ethnic groups, Malawi is a mosaic of cultural norms and practices; each group has distinctive traditional dances, rituals, and arts and crafts. Malawians, about 80% of whom are Christians and 13% Islamic, are tolerant of religious diversity, which contributes to the generally peaceful state of affairs. Above all, the traditions of hospitality, friendship, and courtesy define the country's people.





## MAJETE WILDLIFE RESERVE

The Majete Wildlife Reserve is home to Africa's "big five" (lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant, and rhino), as well as many other mammal species. Majete has the greatest antelope diversity in the country, offering a good chance of seeing half a dozen species during the course of any given day, including kudu, eland, sable antelope, and Lichtenstein's hartebeest. The reintroduced elephants are easy to spot, and hippos are plentiful in the Shire River. Birdwatchers will delight in the avian abundance—over 300 species have been recorded in the reserve, including many raptors and water birds along the Mkurumadzi and Shire Rivers. As an Earthwatcher, you'll spend your days collecting data on many of these animals. During recreational time you may choose to take guided nature walks, birding walks, boat trips, and climbs up Majete Hill, the reserve's highest point, which offers majestic views of the Shire Valley, for an additional fee. The deep thickets, grassy glades, and diverse vegetation of Majete give the place a rugged and isolated feeling quite unlike that in most other parks. Guided walks are led by armed, reserve-trained scouts who work for African Parks.

As the Shire River flows through the Majete Wildlife Reserve, it forms the Kapichira Falls and the Murchison Cataracts, which interrupted Scottish explorer David Livingstone's trip up Africa's inland waters in 1859. Livingstone's arrival in 1859 served as the catalyst for the end of the slave trade in Malawi. Also in the reserve is the tomb of Cecil John Rhodes's brother, who died in a fire while camping here. The lower Shire Valley offers a number of organized activities for a small additional fee, such as a cultural tour or a traditional dance performance in one of the nearby villages, or a visit to the Nchalo Sugar Estate. The area supports Malawi's largest crocodile population, large numbers of hippos, smaller aquatic mammals such as otters, and spectacular birdlife. The surrounding area is studded with massive baobab trees and tall palms.

The largely rural population of the country depends on agriculture to make a living. The Malawian government (a multiparty democracy since 1994) depends heavily on outside aid to meet development needs, although this need (and the aid offered) has decreased since 2000. The government faces challenges in building and expanding the economy, improving education, health care, and environmental protection, and becoming financially independent. Malawi has developed several programs focusing on these issues that have brought about improvements in the past decade.

# DAILY LIFE IN THE FIELD

## PLANS AND POLICIES



From the first day, we'll include you in the research work. We're glad to have you on board; this project requires many hands, and without the help of each and every volunteer, we can't accomplish our research goals.

Although it will be beneficial to do as much reading as possible before joining your team, no specific knowledge of the research techniques is needed. It will be helpful if you become familiar with and can identify the many African ungulate species, which include the kudu, eland, nyala, waterbuck, sable antelope, buffalo, Lichtenstein's hartebeest, impala, duiker, steenbuck, reedbuck, and bushbuck (you can look these up online; also see *Pocket Guide to Mammals of East Africa* by Chris and Mathilde Stuart).

During the expedition, you'll have the chance to hear lectures on topics that may include animal behavior and ecology, the use of camera trapping as a conservation tool, fixed-point photography, wildlife tracking and spoor identification, tree and vegetation identification, and the various survey methods for both plants and animals. You'll also hear more about the country and the research area. The camp has a small library of field guides and books on Malawi and Africa in general.

**RECREATION DAY:** The team will have one day off during the expedition. You can choose to remain at the research camp for some rest and relaxation, or you can participate in one of the excellent activities offered through the Majete Wildlife Reserve's lodge, likely involving a community visit and possibly a game drive or bird walk. These activities require an additional fee of US\$25 - 50 per person.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Although there is intermittent cellphone reception in the research camp and certain parts of the reserve, you must keep your cellphone in silent or vibration mode at all times. Team members (with the exception of project staff members) may not use cellphones when conducting fieldwork; full concentration is required at all times when out in the bush.

**SMOKING AND ALCOHOL:** Smoking will be allowed in camp (away from others) but not on vehicles or boats, and never while conducting fieldwork. Cold beer is available at the nearby reserve restaurant and community campsite, but please limit alcohol consumption to post-fieldwork hours.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Please ask permission before photographing local people or their villages.



## ITINERARY AND DAILY SCHEDULE

Weather and research needs can lead to changes in the daily schedule. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding..

### ITINERARY

Day 1:	Rendezvous at Chileka International Airport and drive to Majete Wildlife Reserve. Settle in to accommodations, followed by introductions.
Day 2:	Safety briefing and training. Mid-afternoon orientation game drive.
Days 3–7:	Fieldwork
Day 8:	Recreational day (may include resting, a game drive, a bird walk and/or a community tour,
Days 9–10:	Fieldwork
Day 11:	School visit day, finalize fieldwork, recreational afternoon. Debriefing in the evening.
Day 12:	Trip back to Blantyre and Chileka International Airport

### TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

5.30 –6.00 a.m.	Wake up, eat breakfast, and pack supplies for fieldwork
6:00–7:00 a.m.	Travel to field sites
8:00–noon	Fieldwork (or longer if required, with lunch in the field)
Noon–2:00 p.m.	Back to research center, lunch, rest
2:00–5:30 p.m.	Fieldwork, data and/or document management, or rest time
5.30–8:00 p.m.	Showers, drinks, dinner
8 p.m. onwards	Campfire discussions, DVD watching, nocturnal animal counts, etc.

## EARTHWATCH RECREATIONAL TIME POLICY

Project staff will generally accompany participants from the rendezvous to the end of the expedition. For recreational days, when no research activities are scheduled, Earthwatch scientists will offer either a team activity or a range of recreational activities that comply with Earthwatch standards. Participants may also remain at project accommodations. Those who pursue other options must sign a release form.

If there is a period of time during a regular research day when no research activities are scheduled, adult participants may leave the project site on their own; they will have to sign out first. Unless contacted for help, project staff will not search for a participant unless he or she fails to appear the following morning or for the next scheduled research activity.

Earthwatch will assess the general risks of adult participants leaving the project site, but cannot guarantee participant safety or an awareness of all issues. In some cases, due to local conditions, adult participants may have to stay at the project site during recreational time, a requirement that will be clearly communicated on site.



# ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD

## ABOUT YOUR HOME IN THE FIELD



Newly built research camp lapa and lab area

### SLEEPING

Your team will stay in the small, community run campsite adjacent to the Majete Wildlife Reserve's research camp. This campground is open to the public, so you may share common spaces with other visitors. There will be an area designated for volunteers' tents. All team activities (dining, lectures, etc.) will take place at the research camp.

You'll stay in single-person canvas tents, with a groundsheet. Your tent will have a single bed, a mattress and a bedside table. Couples will have two tents and can use one for luggage and one for sleeping, or just place their tents near each other. Sheets, blankets and a pillow will be provided, but please bring a bath towel. We also strongly recommend that you bring a mosquito net that you can hang over your bed (the net style with a single, central hook attachment), especially for the wet season (November through March).

The camp is open to wildlife, so you cannot leave your tents after dark alone. A guard is on duty every night from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. for this purpose, and you can easily call this guard should you need to go to the bathroom or leave the tent for other reasons during the night.

### BATHROOMS

The camp has a communal, gender-separated bathroom block with four showers (solar-generated hot water available) and flush toilets.

### ELECTRICITY

The research camp (NOT the community camp where volunteers stay) has electricity supplied by the nearby hydropower station, which can be unreliable. The community camp has solar powered lights in the central lounging area and in the bathrooms. You can charge electronic equipment (bring necessary adaptors) at the research camp. Electrical sockets in Malawi are Type G British BS-1363. For more, see [kropla.com/electric2.htm](http://kropla.com/electric2.htm).



### INTERNET AND COMMUNICATIONS

Wireless internet is available at the research camp (for a reasonable fee), depending on the electrical supply. You may bring your own laptop computer or smart phone, but keep in mind that extreme heat and humidity can damage electronic equipment.





Majete Wildlife Reserve restaurant

## FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

The research center has a 10m x 5m tented communal lounge and recreational area with a DVD projector, a dining area and an office/laboratory. There is a separate thatched kitchen building with electricity and refrigeration. You can have your laundry hand-washed for approximately US\$5 per reasonably sized bundle or you can do your own. Either way you will need to provide the washing detergent.

## SERVICES AND RESTAURANTS IN WALKING DISTANCE

The nearby lodge has a pool, which Earthwatchers can use (there's no fee, but you must purchase something at the lodge's bar) depending on the number of guests at the lodge and the availability of our project staff to accompany volunteers. You may not leave the camp alone. There is also a small, reserve-owned restaurant and tuck shop nearby. The community campsite also sells cold beers and soft drinks whose proceeds benefit the park's community fund.

## FOOD

The project staff will plan the menus, grocery shop, and cook, although team members are more than welcome to assist with food preparation. Everyone will help with cleanup after meals. Volunteers and research staff will eat meals together.

Any additional snacks must be brought with you or purchased at a shopping center in Blantyre before the expedition, where we'll make a quick stop before the drive to the reserve so you can purchase any forgotten or additional items.

Below are examples of the foods you might expect in the field. Variety depends on availability, and although this list is intended to provide a general idea of food types, please be flexible.

**BREAKFAST:** Cereal, porridge, toast, fresh fruit and juice (when available), fresh-baked bread, pancakes, tea and coffee, eggs (meals alternate on a daily basis).

**LUNCH:** Lunches in camp will include an assortment of salads (tuna, pasta, beans, greens, and chicken) and sandwiches. Packed lunches will be provided at times when you are busy in the field.

**DINNER:** Traditional African meals cooked on an open fire as often as possible. Meals will include, beef, chicken, or beans with fresh vegetables, rice, nshima (a traditional maize dish), potatoes, and more. Frozen vegetables may occasionally be served when fresh vegetables are unavailable.

**BEVERAGES:** Tea, coffee, and drink mixes (fruit juice concentrate that can be mixed with water) will be provided.

**WATER:** Plenty of potable water is available (supplied by a borehole).

## SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

We can easily accommodate vegetarian diets with prior notice, but accommodating other special diets is not guaranteed and can be very difficult due to availability of food and location of the field site. In general, healthy, low-fat and low-sodium meals will be provided.

Please alert Earthwatch to any special dietary requirements (e.g., vegetarian, diabetes, lactose intolerance, nut or other serious food allergies) as soon as possible, and note them in the space provided on your volunteer forms.

# TRAVEL TIPS

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ROAD

### LUGGAGE

**LOST AND DELAYED LUGGAGE:** If your luggage goes astray, please have the airline send it to:

[Your name]

c/o Mr. Craig Hay  
Operations Manager  
Majete Wildlife Reserve  
Lower Shire Valley  
Chichwawa District

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:** Do not bring more luggage than you can carry and handle on your own. If traveling by air and checking your luggage, we advise you to pack an extra set of field clothing and personal essentials in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is lost or delayed. Many airlines have strict baggage policies. Please check with your airline(s) on baggage weight limits, liquid restrictions, fees for checked baggage, etc.

**TRANSFERRING LUGGAGE:** If you will be taking an international flight that has one or more connections within the country of your destination, you must collect any checked bags at the airport where you first arrive in the destination country. After proceeding through customs, you will have to recheck your luggage before flying on to your final destination.

### MONEY MATTERS

**LOCAL CURRENCY:** The local currency is Malawi kwacha (MK). U.S. dollars are also accepted as cash to exchange for kwacha.

**PERSONAL FUNDS:** Money can be exchanged at the airport and at any bank in Blantyre. ATMs are available in Blantyre. Cash is recommended (avoid traveler's checks), and major credit cards can be used in the city. When out of the city, cash will be required for recreational day trips, souvenirs, snacks, and restaurant or bar purchases. Please bring at minimum US\$200.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TAXES:** You must pay a departure tax of US\$35, but it is usually included in international airfare. If not, it can only be paid in U.S. dollars cash. Check with your travel agent or airline. A domestic departure tax of US\$7 is required (also payable only in U.S. cash) for anyone heading off elsewhere into Malawi.

**TIPPING:** It is customary to tip in Malawi. Tips in restaurants, are around 10%. Airport porters can be tipped approximately MK50-100 if you have Malawian kwacha or US\$1 at the most.

### YOUR DESTINATION

**LANGUAGE:** English is widely spoken. Chichewa is the primary local language spoken in the Lower Shire Valley. All project staff speak English, and the expedition will be conducted in English.

**CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS:** As a visitor in Malawi, please show respect for Malawian culture. Your cultural sensitivity and behavior will shape the quality of your experience here. A few guidelines:

- **Greetings:** Before any conversation, be prepared to exchange a few greetings before getting to your point. You may wish to practice some greetings in the local language, which most people will appreciate. People also often exchange handshakes, which come in many forms (you can learn as you go) before conversations.
- **Personal space:** Malawians tend to operate with a smaller area of personal space than most westerners. You will notice this especially when queuing, which can be uncomfortable when it is hot. Most Malawians also are very sociable and will want to sit and chat when they visit. For some, the need to spend time on one's own will require an explanation.
- **Giving gifts or money:** People often ask visitors for their money or belongings, and it is not rude for you to politely say no. We strongly discourage you from giving money or gifts directly to people. Handouts are not a sustainable way to live and can cause difficulties for later researchers visiting. If you feel that camp staff members have done a particularly good job and you wish to leave a tip or gift for them at the end of your stay, please consult a project staff member first. School visit gifts: We will visit a school during this expedition, and as schools in Malawi are very under-equipped, it would be much appreciated if you could bring some school supplies on the trip. See pg. 5 for a list of suggestions.
- **Taking photos:** Always ask permission before taking photos and respect people's privacy. In some tourist destinations it's normal to pay to take photos of local tribes, etc., but we discourage this practice in an everyday setting. It is illegal to photograph government buildings, airports, churches or synagogues, bridges, and military installations, so please ensure that you adhere to this.
- **Religion:** Respect all places of worship and people's religious beliefs.
- **Displays of affection:** It is unacceptable for members of the opposite sex to publicly show affection, AND it is perfectly okay for people of the same sex to hold hands in public. Malawian men commonly hold hands, so male visitors should not be surprised if another man holds their hand for a time, or make assumptions on his sexuality. Malawians do not accept homosexuality.



- **Time keeping:** Malawians are quite relaxed about time keeping; try not to get irritated if people are late.
- **Lifestyles and living conditions:** Most Malawians survive on very little money and have very basic living conditions. But do not assume they are unhappy, and try not to make direct comparisons between your home country and things here—they are incomparable on many levels. Accept people and their living conditions, and avoid conversations about how people survive on so little. You will only cause them to start feeling demoralized or raise their expectations beyond what is possible in Malawi.

**TIME ZONE:** GMT +2. For time worldwide with GMT/UTC, see [worldtimeserver.com](http://worldtimeserver.com).

**TELEPHONE DIALING CODES:** When calling Malawi from another country, dial that country's international dialing code, followed by 265 and the number. When calling within Malawi, omit the 265. When calling another country from Malawi, dial 0 followed by the other country's country code and the number. Note: check with your cell phone provider to obtain any carrier-specific dialing codes you may need; many providers have dialing procedures that may differ in whole or in part from these directions. For additional information, see [kropla.com/dialcode.htm](http://kropla.com/dialcode.htm).

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

### WILL YOU NEED A PASSPORT?

Most volunteers traveling from outside Malawi will require a passport valid for at least six months beyond the departure date of travel.

### WILL YOU NEED A VISA?

Citizens of the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, and Japan DO NOT need a tourist visa for entry to Malawi. EU citizens do not need a visa, EXCEPT for citizens of Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. Citizens of countries for whom a visa is required should check with their travel agent or a visa agency for specific visa and entry requirements.

### INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS REQUIRING VISAS ONLY

#### TYPE OF VISA TO GET: Tourist

The purpose of your visit is for vacation, holiday or travel. Immigration officials do not always understand the concept of a "working vacation" or "volunteering." Words such as "working," "volunteering," "research," or "scientific expedition" can raise questions concerning the country's foreign labor laws and about official scientific research permits and credentials, etc., to which volunteers will not be equipped to respond on their own. All required research permits for the project are in place and have been approved by the proper authorities.

**WHERE TO GET A VISA:** Contact the nearest Malawian embassy or consulate to find out how to apply. Please note that this process can take weeks or even months. We strongly recommend using a visa agency, which can both expedite and simplify the process.

### SUGGESTED AGENCIES

**IN THE U.S.:** Travaia; 212-613-2223; [travaia.com](http://travaia.com)

**IN EUROPE:** CIBT, Inc. (UK); [info@uk.cibt.com](mailto:info@uk.cibt.com); [uk.cibt.com](http://uk.cibt.com)

**IN AUSTRALIA:** Ask your travel agency if it can send your visa application on your behalf.

**REQUIRED INFORMATION:** You will need to send your passport (valid for at least six months beyond your stay), a visa application and immigration form, two to four passport-size photos, and payment to the embassy or visa agency (if applicable). Please be sure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your stay.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** You may be required to list the following contact information on your visa application and immigration form:

#### Majete Wildlife Reserve

P.O. Box 232, Chikhwawa,  
Lower Shire valley, Malawi

**COST OF A VISA:** Generally between US\$40 and \$100, but varies from country to country and can cost up to US\$180. A visa agency will charge an additional fee.

### VOLUNTEERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have procedures at entry and exit points to protect minors. Thus, if a minor will be traveling with only one guardian or alone, he or she may need a notarized letter from all legal guardians stating that the minor may travel unaccompanied or in the presence of a single guardian. If necessary, this letter must give an explanation for why only one parent or someone other than a parent is signing the letter. For example, if one parent is deceased, only one parent has legal guardianship, or someone other than the parents are legal guardians, the letter should state that. Airlines may also have documentation requirements for unaccompanied minors, e.g., a birth certificate or a notarized letter like the one described above.

**IMPORTANT:** Requirements of specific countries and airlines vary and change frequently. You must keep informed of the requirements on your own to avoid problems at immigration. If the minor is refused entry into a country or onto a flight because of lack of documentation, there is nothing Earthwatch can do to help.



# PROJECT CONDITIONS

## THE FIELD ENVIRONMENT

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

The information that follows is as accurate as possible, but please keep in mind that conditions may change.

Malawi has a tropical climate, with hot days and balmy nights. The rainy season extends from late November or early December until about March, and once it begins in earnest, it may rain (often just short downpours) almost every day. As much as 15 centimeters (5.9 inches) of rain can fall in a single day. Temperatures at this time are around 38°C (100°F) during the day, but are cooler at night. Temperatures start to fall slowly in April when days become a little cooler. The rains gradually finish and Malawi moves into its cool, dry season until September. July and August can be cold at night and early mornings in the Shire Valley and colder elsewhere in the country, particularly at higher altitudes. Game viewing improves during this time because the scrub starts to die back, and temperatures are more enjoyable at around 20°C (70°F). October to December sees the highest temperatures, sometimes up to 45°C (113°F). Because there is much less vegetation cover, animal sightings occur more often and groups of animals congregate at the waterholes. As in many African tropical and subtropical countries, insects can be irritating, even to the entomologists out there!

### CONDITIONS

**HUMIDITY:** High humidity from September to March

**TEMPERATURE RANGE:**

**May to August:** 23°–25°C (73°–77°F) daily average

**September to May:** 27°–29°C (81°–84°F) daily average but can reach 45°C (113°F) at times in October

Nighttime temperatures are slightly lower.

**ALTITUDE:** 60–90 meters (197–295 ft)

**RAINFALL:** Averages 700 millimeters (28 inches) monthly in the rainy season

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All participants must be able, independently or with the assistance of a companion, to:

- Follow verbal and/or visual instructions.
- Enjoy being outdoors all day in all types of weather in the presence of wild animals, insects, dust, and grasses.
- Cope with extremely hot and humid summer conditions. This project is not suitable for very heat-sensitive volunteers.
- Easily identify objects at a distance and close up, as well as objects moving speedily, to carry out wildlife counts and observations.
- Comfortably walk six to eight kilometers (four to five miles) per day at a slow pace over sometimes rugged, undulating terrain. This is especially important for winter-team (June–August) game counts.
- Climb a tree if necessary to escape a charging buffalo, rhino, or elephant.
- Get up into and out of a truck and ride, seated, for anything from two to eight hours with short stretching breaks in between. Seatbelts must be worn when they are present.
- Carry a light backpack with equipment including at least two liters of water.
- Climb steep, rocky terrain for one to three hours per day, depending on transects.
- Live comfortably without a constant and reliable source of electricity.





## POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Hazard Type	Associated Risks and Precautions
Transportation	<p>Roads may be dirt/gravel/corrugated and may be extremely bumpy and either dusty or muddy and slippery depending on weather conditions. Thorny brush can lead to tire punctures and/or scratches while driving past in an open vehicle. Within the park, there are many culverts that need to be traversed and conditions are extremely bumpy. Other road hazards include fast and reckless drivers (on main roads to and from the reserve), livestock and wildlife, rain, and poor or no lighting. Traffic moves on the left side of the road. Volunteers are not permitted to drive. Seatbelts must be worn when available. Vehicles will travel slowly when inside the park and whether volunteers are required to stand. Effective means of communication will always be carried in vehicles to seek assistance should this be necessary. Keep car doors locked when traveling through urban areas to avoid possible theft. We recommend that you do not use public transportation in Malawi. Use registered taxis (preferably radio taxis where possible) and always agree on the price in advance.</p>
Walking/Hiking/ Climbing	<p>The terrain can be rough and very steep. Vegetation, including areas of thorny acacia scrub, can also be quite dense. Exhaustion and injuries such as scratches, sprains, and broken bones are possible. Well worn-in (not new) hiking boots with ankle support, gaiters, and socks should be worn to avoid blisters and other injuries. Appropriate dull-colored clothing (e.g., long trousers, a hat, etc.) should be worn during fieldwork. Always walk slowly and carefully and be aware of your surroundings.</p>
Climate/Weather	<p>Dehydration, heat exhaustion, sunburn, and other heat-related illnesses can occur, so please drink sufficient water and wear high-SPF sunscreen and appropriate clothing. Exposure to rain, wind, and cold may cause chills, so bring warm clothing in the winter months (May through August). Rainfall during the rainy season can cause roads to become extremely muddy and possibly impassable. All project vehicles will have 4x4 capabilities, and travel will not occur during severe weather. Volunteers on Teams 7 and 8 must come prepared for wet conditions with waterproof clothing and boots.</p>
Animals	<p>The region has a range of large and potentially dangerous animals, including lions, leopards, elephants, hippos, rhinos, crocodiles, and buffalo. Any wild animal is potentially dangerous if provoked. Never approach, antagonize, or tease any animal. Well-trained staff and, during walking transects, armed rangers will be in the field with teams to reduce the potential risks of encountering wild animals. It is of the utmost importance that you obey the orders of the field rangers when an animal is encountered. Volunteers are not permitted to handle firearms. Volunteers will be trained on how to behave in the field and avoid incidents with wildlife. The best rule is to be aware of your surroundings at all times. A range of venomous snakes are present in the reserve; volunteers must never attempt to pick up, approach, or provoke any snake. Wear ankle-high, closed-toe hiking boots for protection while walking in the bush. Closed-toe shoes must also be worn around camp at night. Staff will give training in snakebite prevention and what to do in the event of an incident. Biting arthropods (e.g., ants, spiders, flies, mosquitoes, and African bees) and stinging arthropods (e.g., scorpions, bees, and wasps) are also present in the area. Ticks, which are very small and can transmit tick bite fever, may also be present. To minimize risk, bring and use insect repellent, check yourself daily for ticks, and wear neutral-colored field attire, including long pants tucked into socks. Also avoid wearing a lot of cologne, perfume, or any other cosmetic body spray, which can attract stinging and biting insects. Volunteers with the potential for allergic reactions should inform the research staff and bring medication (antihistamines and at least two EpiPens).</p>
Plants	<p>You can expect a few scratches on your legs and arms from vegetation when walking through the African bush. The area has a multitude of thorn trees. Wearing long trousers, gaiters, and shirts with long sleeves can help protect against scratches. You need to keep your eyes open to avoid walking into this vegetation and causing injury. Some plants may also cause allergic reactions. If you have any known allergies, inform the research staff and bring the necessary medication.</p>
Swimming	<p>There is a swimming pool at a local tourist camp near the reserve's main entrance. There may be the odd opportunity (not guaranteed) to visit the pool during recreational time (accompanied by a staff member). There will be no lifeguard on duty. Volunteers must never swim alone or after consuming alcohol. We suggest that volunteers avoid washing, bathing, paddling, or swimming in freshwater sources in Malawi due to the prevalence of disease.</p>



<p>Personal Security</p>	<p>When in public, do not flaunt money or valuables and be aware of your surroundings and belongings at all times. Leave unnecessary valuables at home and store important documents in safe locations (a lock-up box will be available at the park headquarters, which is a lockable building. Petty crime rates are high in the cities. Do not walk alone, especially at night and in urban areas. Be aware of overly friendly people who offer to be tour guides, or scams where fake taxi pick-ups could then lead to robbery. Do not accept any offers of food when traveling; there is the small possibility it may be drugged.</p>
<p>Fire</p>	<p>You will stay in a tented camp with some wooden facilities, and meals will be cooked over an open fire. All fires must be extinguished fully before being left unattended. Do not leave fires unattended. Smoke only in designated smoking areas—you may not smoke in tents, vehicles, or during fieldwork and always fully extinguish cigarettes. High-voltage electric fences surround the park to prevent the large mammals from leaving and potentially damaging property and crops. This fence runs around the back of our camp; do not touch it. You will be briefed on where you can and cannot go.</p>
<p>Cooking</p>	<p>You may wish to help with cooking at the camp, which is optional. There is a risk of burns from the fire and other cookers as well as food poisoning. Ask for help when cooking over the fire, and always wash your hands before preparing food.</p>
<p>Distance from Medical Care</p>	<p>The nearest basic clinic is at minimum a 25-minute drive from the research camp, and the nearest fully functional hospital is in Blantyre, a two to two-and-a-half-hour drive away. Life-threatening conditions may require evacuation to a facility in a neighboring country; air evacuation may be possible during the day. Transportation times vary due to road conditions, traffic, weather, etc. If you have a chronic condition that could require immediate medical care (e.g., heart conditions, kidney problems, severe asthma, etc.) or if you are pregnant, please discuss your participation on this expedition with your physician.</p>



# SAFETY

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### PROJECT VACCINATIONS

**REQUIRED:** If traveling from countries or region where yellow fever is endemic, you must have a certificate of vaccination. You will need to present this certificate when you arrive at Chileka Airport in Blantyre.

**RECOMMENDED FOR HEALTH REASONS:** Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, rabies

### ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS

All volunteers should have the following up-to-date immunizations: DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus), polio, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), and varicella (if you have not already had chicken pox). Please be sure your tetanus shot is current.

Medical decisions are the responsibility of each volunteer and his or her doctor, and the following are recommendations only. Earthwatch can only provide details regarding suggested vaccinations, and we are not a medical organization.

### ADVICE REGARDING DISEASES

Traveler's diarrhea affects many international travelers.

Schistosomiasis, also known as bilharzia, is found in Malawi. This can be prevented by avoiding wading, swimming, bathing, or washing in an unknown fresh water source or one that is known to be infected.

Other diseases may include dengue fever, typhoid, rabies, leishmaniasis, filariasis, onchocerciasis, African sleeping sickness, cholera, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and a relatively high incidence level of HIV/AIDS. The presence or risk of some of these diseases may be rare to nonexistent in the research area, though they may be present in other areas. Most diseases are preventable with basic safety precautions. Please see the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)) or the World Health Organization ([who.int/](http://who.int/)) websites for more information on these conditions and how to avoid them.

You can decrease the risk of many of the diseases above by avoiding being bitten by insects, practicing good hygiene and only drinking bottled or filtered water. Tap water in Malawi is NOT SAFE TO DRINK.

If you feel ill once you return from your trip, make sure you inform your doctor that you have recently returned from a tropical region.

A few notes on vaccinations and treatment:

- **MALARIA:** Malaria is rife in the region, so prophylactics are essential. A wide range of antimalarials are available. Check with your doctor for recommendations.
- **RABIES:** Rabies vaccination is generally recommended for this expedition, given the potential contact with wildlife and the prevalence of loose and stray dogs. The rabies pre-exposure vaccination consists of three doses over a 28-day period. Please be sure to consult your physician or travel health clinic well before your expedition to ensure that you have time for the full vaccination series. If you have previously been vaccinated, a booster shot may be required.

Whether you have been vaccinated or not, always avoid loose and stray dogs. The pre-exposure vaccination does not eliminate the need for post-exposure medical attention and treatment, but it does provide additional protection against the disease in event of a delay in treatment. In addition, bites or scratches should be immediately and thoroughly washed with soap, clean water, and a topical povidone-iodine solution or ethanol.

- **TUBERCULOSIS:** Volunteers returning from developing countries may wish to have a (PPD)-tuberculin skin-test to screen for potential infection.
- **YELLOW FEVER:** A vaccine protecting against yellow fever is available, although pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals cannot be vaccinated.

Your home country may require a certificate of vaccination for re-entry if you travel to an area where yellow fever is endemic.

### EMERGENCIES IN THE FIELD

There will always be a vehicle available on site for emergencies (both project vehicles and African Parks staff vehicles) and Majete Wildlife Reserve has its own airstrip a two-kilometer (1.2-mile) drive from camp.

Minor injuries such as cuts, bruises, abrasions, stomach ailments, etc., will be treated by trained research staff. In the case of any major or life-threatening injuries, individuals will be transported by vehicle or by airplane or helicopter to the hospital in Blantyre and may then be transported on to medical facilities outside Malawi such as in Johannesburg in South Africa. The hospital will be notified via telephone and Earthwatch medical assistance provider will be contacted for support.



Volunteers who need to depart early for emergency reasons will be driven back to Blantyre by a project staff member in one of the project vehicles.

**PHYSICIAN, NURSE, OR EMT ON STAFF:** Project staff members are not medical professionals.

**STAFF CERTIFIED IN CPR AND FIRST AID:** Alison Leslie, Kate Spies, and Colin Tucker

**NEAREST HOSPITALS AND CLINIC:**

**EJCOM Clinic**

Located adjacent to the Majete Reserve within the confines of the hydroelectric dam property. It is about 2km from the field site.

**Mwaiwathu Private Hospital**

Old Chileka Road, Blantyre

**TEL:** +265 (1) 634-989

**FAX:** +265 (1) 634-190

2-2.5 hours from project site

**Blantyre Adventist Hospital**

P.O. Box 51

**TEL:** +265 (1) 620-399

**FAX:** +265 (1) 623-293

2- 2.5 hours from project site

**Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital**

Ginney Corner

Blantyre

**TEL:** +265-883-5146

Over 2.5 hours from project site

**INSURANCE**

Travel insurance is included in the contribution you pay to Earthwatch. The insurance covers your travel medical risks, including medical expenses and emergency medical evacuation, while you are traveling. It also provides trip cancellation insurance and baggage and personal money insurance. It does not provide personal liability insurance. Earthwatch's insurance is applicable during travel to and from the expedition site and the duration of the expedition, but does not apply to detours for personal vacations made on the same trip. This insurance policy is secondary to your existing health insurance policy.

For more information, please see [earthwatch.org/expeditions/travel-insurance](http://earthwatch.org/expeditions/travel-insurance). Refer any queries regarding Earthwatch's travel policy to our insurance liaison at +1 (978) 450-1222 or [insurance@earthwatch.org](mailto:insurance@earthwatch.org).

**EARTHWATCH'S 24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE (OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA)**

Call Earthwatch's 24-hour on-call duty officer in the U.S.:

+1 (978) 461-0081

+1 (800) 776-0188 (toll-free for calls placed from within the U.S.)

**HEALIX INTERNATIONAL:**

+44-20-3667-8991 (collect calls and reverse charges accepted)

**U.S. TOLL FREE:** +1-877-759 3917

**U.K. FREE PHONE:** 0-800-19-5180

**EMAIL:** [earthwatch@healix.com](mailto:earthwatch@healix.com)

**EARTHWATCH'S 24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE (WITHIN AUSTRALIA):**

+61-0-3-8508-5537

After business hours, leave a message with our live answering service. State that you have an emergency and give the name of your expedition, your name, the location from which you are calling, and if possible, a phone number where you can be reached. An Earthwatch staff person will respond to your call within one hour.

If you booked through Earthwatch Australia, please contact them at +61 (0) 9016 7590 or [earth@earthwatch.org.au](mailto:earth@earthwatch.org.au) for any queries.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND EVACUATION ASSISTANCE**

For emergency assistance in the field, please contact Earthwatch's 24-hour emergency hotline number highlighted in the box. You may also contact our assistance provider, Healix International, at the number highlighted in the event of a medical or evacuation emergency or for routine medical and travel advice, such as advice on visas and vaccine requirements.



# PROJECT STAFF

## YOUR RESOURCES IN THE FIELD



**EARTHWATCH SCIENTIST DR. ALISON J. LESLIE**, a senior lecturer in the Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, earned her Ph.D. at Drexel University in the United States working on sea turtles and crocodiles. Dr. Leslie studies a broad range of species; a common goal of her projects is to develop management plans for governments, farmers, and wildlife organizations. Dr. Leslie has worked with many Earthwatch volunteers in South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia. She is also a well-known TV personality, having worked with National Geographic television, the BBC, and a number of other documentary producers. **Schedule: Teams 1-4 and may join other teams as her schedule allows.**



**EARTHWATCH SCIENTIST PATRICIO NDADZELA** has worked as the project coordinator for African Parks–Majete since February 2006. He earned an M.Sc. in strategic management at the University of Derby in the U.K., and has since held related positions at a number of respected organizations. He has twenty-four years of experience in wildlife conservation, natural resource management, conservation-based enterprises, conflict management and planning of protected areas, land use planning, and community mobilization and advocacy. Patricio is a permanent resident of Majete. **Schedule: All Teams.**



**KATHERINE (KATE) SPIES** is a master's student in Alison Leslie's department at Stellenbosch University. She completed her undergraduate studies in 2012, during which time she worked part time in that department helping with fieldwork, laboratory work, practical demonstrations, and administration. Kate's research interests lie with large ungulate species, and her masters thesis focuses on the diet and habitat preference of three species in Majete: the kudu, hartebeest, and waterbuck. Kate works on the research team full time. **Schedule: All Teams.**



**FRANCOIS RETIEF** is a Department of Conservation Ecology & Entomology graduate from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. Francois has broad conservation interests but is focussing specifically on certain aspects of the ecology of the three largest predators in Majete, namely: lions, leopards and spotted hyena. To gain experience during his undergraduate training, he volunteered with the Cape Leopard Trust in South Africa, joined the Shark Spotters programme as an assistant spotter and job shadowed a park section ranger in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, between South Africa and Botswana.

Francois is a great outdoors man and enjoys mountain biking, surfing and hiking in his free time.

**Schedule: He will be on all teams in 2014.**



**CRAIG HAY**, the Field Operations Manager at Majete Wildlife Reserve, holds a MTech degree in Nature Conservation obtained through the Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa. He has twenty years of experience in natural resource management, wildlife research, training of conservation staff in protected areas and ecotourism, and has worked extensively in Southern Africa including Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa. He has a particular interest in the management, development and long term sustainability of protected areas. Craig has also conducted research on the ecology of African buffalo in the Kruger National Park, where he spent a large part of his career. Craig and his family live permanently in Majete Wildlife Reserve.

**NOTE:** Staff schedules are subject to change.



# RECOMMENDED READING

## YOUR RESOURCES AT HOME

### RESOURCES

#### BOOKS

- Briggs, Philip. 2010. *Malawi*. Chalfont St. Peter, UK: Bradt Travel Guides.
- Buckley, Bea. 2003. *My Malawi Journal*. Twickenham, UK: Athena Press.
- Else, David. 2001. *Malawi*. Melbourne and London: Lonely Planet.
- Maurel, Martine. 1991. *Visitor's Guide to Malawi*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.
- Palmer, Bentley. 2011. *Rhinos—and the Return of Malawi's Wildlife*. Blantyre, Malawi: Central Africana Limited.
- White, Kelley. 2003. *Spectrum Guide to Malawi*. Nairobi: Camerapix.

#### ARTICLES

- Shaw, Joanne. 2011. "Adaptive resource use in a reintroduced black rhino population." Ph.D. thesis submitted to the faculty of science, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Seddon, Philip et al. 2007. "Developing the science of reintroduction biology." *Conservation Biology* 21(2): 303-312.
- Hayward, Matt et al. 2007. "Carrying capacity of large African predators: predictions and tests." *Biological Conservation* 139: 219-229.

#### FIELD GUIDES

- Kingdon, Jonathan. 2003. *The Kingdom Field Guide to African Mammals*. London: Helm.
- Richards, Dave. 1995. *A Photographic Guide to Birds of East Africa*. London: New Holland.
- Stevenson, Terry, and John Fanshawe. 2004. *Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi*. London: Helm.
- Stuart, Chris and Tilde. 2009. *Mammals of East Africa: Pocket Guide*. Cape Town: Struik.

#### PROJECT-RELATED WEBSITES

- [african-parks.org](http://african-parks.org)
- [cons-ent.com/](http://cons-ent.com/)
- [facebook.com/Majetewildlifereserve](https://facebook.com/Majetewildlifereserve)

#### EARTHWATCH SOCIAL MEDIA

- FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/Earthwatch](https://facebook.com/Earthwatch)
- YOUTUBE: [youtube.com/earthwatchinstitute](https://youtube.com/earthwatchinstitute)
- TWITTER: [twitter.com/earthwatch\\_org](https://twitter.com/earthwatch_org)



# PARTICIPANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



This document contains important information concerning Earthwatch Institute policies and participant rights and responsibilities for inclusion in an Earthwatch expedition. Please read this document thoroughly and sign the Liability Release section of your Earthwatch Participation Form to indicate that you understand and accept the risks inherent to your expedition and the policies, rights, and responsibilities enumerated in this document. You will not be permitted to participate in an expedition until Earthwatch has received the signed release form.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

It is permissible to share photos, videos, and stories of your expedition with family, friends, local media, and in a public forum. Sharing your new perspectives and experiences is welcomed and encouraged.

However, please recognize that all information, data, and images shared or gathered in the course of your expedition's field work become the intellectual property of the Earthwatch scientist. Co-opting or plagiarism of data, images, or information gathered during an expedition for use in a scientific thesis, master's, or PhD work, or for profit or for the academic or business use of a third party without the permission of the Earthwatch scientist is strictly prohibited. Please be aware that data gathered during the interviewing of local people become the intellectual property of the Earthwatch scientist. Earthwatch scientists have the right to place additional restrictions on your ability to share data or certain research-related images.

Conversely, an Earthwatch scientist may give written permission to use data and images for academic or profitable activity. Please be sure to ask what is acceptable to the Earthwatch scientist.

Fellows or scholarship recipients are sometimes required to submit a written report reflecting what they have learned on a project, sometimes as a step toward developing a curriculum. Earthwatch scientists have the right but not the obligation to review and edit materials involving information gathered on one of their expeditions.

## DISCRIMINATION

Earthwatch does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law and respects participants' right to privacy. However, you must be aware that local laws in countries in which Earthwatch operates may not be antidiscriminatory and that the possibility exists that local residents may not have an awareness of preferred practice regarding discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated on Earthwatch teams. Disruptive behavior or verbal, physical, or any other type of abuse or harassment will also not be tolerated. Violation of Earthwatch's nondiscrimination policy is grounds for expulsion from the program without a refund.

## INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Earthwatch scientists, their staff, their colleagues, and their associates are prohibited from becoming romantically involved with participants during the entire duration of the period that the team is in the field. Romantic relationships that may otherwise seem permissible may eventually create an unpleasant or unproductive work environment and are therefore prohibited for the duration of an Earthwatch project.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Please recognize that the relationship that exists between Earthwatch scientists and staff and participants is analogous to the student-teacher relationship. Therefore, please be aware of the following policies.





Sexual harassment of participants by the Earthwatch scientist or Earthwatch staff is prohibited. Likewise, sexual harassment of other participants, Earthwatch field staff, or local people by participants is also prohibited.

Sexual harassment infringes on an individual's right to an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones of conduct either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not mean occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature.

Sexual harassment refers to conduct which is offensive, which harms morale, or which interferes with the effectiveness of Earthwatch expedition teams; such conduct is prohibited. Lewd or vulgar remarks, suggestive comments, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings, pressure for dates or sexual favors, and unacceptable physical contact or exposure are examples of what can constitute harassment. No one should be touched in areas that would be covered by a bathing suit. It is important to realize that what may not be offensive to you may be offensive to participants, the local population, or Earthwatch field staff.

Any individual who feels subjected to sexual harassment or has any knowledge of such behavior should report it at once to the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff member. The Earthwatch scientist or Field Team Leader will notify Earthwatch when an accusation of sexual harassment or abuse is made or when such conduct is witnessed.

All reports of sexual harassment will be handled with discretion and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any participant who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment will be removed from the expedition at his or her own expense. If a minor is involved in allegations of sexual harassment, his or her parents or guardians will be contacted.

## DRUGS

Laws on drug use in most countries are severe and may impose lengthy prison terms or the death penalty. The manufacture, possession, use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs or other illegal substances while on an Earthwatch expedition is strictly prohibited. Prescription drugs may only be purchased and used by the individual indicated on the prescription in keeping with their intended use guidelines.

## ALCOHOL

Local statutes, customs, practices, ordinances, and regulations with regard to the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol are applicable to all participants and project staff on Earthwatch expeditions. Participants and project staff on Earthwatch expeditions must comply with the law of the country in which a project is located regarding the minimum age required to consume alcohol. In addition, restriction on the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol may be set by the Earthwatch scientist. Any restrictions on the consumption of alcohol should be clearly outlined by the project staff in the on-site briefing to participants at the start of the project and in the expedition briefing.





Consumption or possession of alcohol or smoking is not permitted on any Earthwatch Teen Team, regardless of local law.

Excessive consumption of alcohol by staff or participants is not acceptable on any Earthwatch project. Intoxication can jeopardize personal safety, in addition to the safety of the team. It can also cause delay and hinder response in the event of a crisis or emergency situation.

Earthwatch staff and the Earthwatch scientist have the discretion to remove individuals from the project who consume alcohol in a time and manner that endanger the safety and/or productivity of the expedition.

## MINORS

Earthwatch considers participants less than eighteen (18) years of age to be minors. Minors are not permitted to participate on any of Earthwatch's standard teams unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, in which case the minimum age is fifteen (15). Guardians accompanying minors on standard teams must be 21 years of age or over. Minors on standard teams do not receive additional guidance or supervision from Earthwatch beyond what is offered to the adult participants. The total number of minors on standard teams may be limited on a project by project basis; this will be noted in the expedition briefing. A maximum of two minors may accompany each parent or guardian on a standard or Family Team. Earthwatch has

developed teams specifically for 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds ("Teen Teams") as well as teams specifically for families ("Family Teams") with children as young as 10 years. These teams focus on the same research activities and have the same expectations as our regular teams, but with more facilitation and support. Exceptions for some projects may be made at the discretion of Earthwatch and the Earthwatch scientist. Due to a more in-depth screening process for certain programs that select candidates based on school year rather than age, there may be 18-year-olds fielding on the same team as 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds. Please be aware that some Earthwatch projects do not allow participation by minors in any circumstance.

## PARTICIPANTS AND DRIVING

Participants are not allowed to drive project vehicles (including motorcycles or all terrain vehicles) or aircraft during an expedition. In select circumstances, participants may be able to drive boats under the direct supervision by project staff. These circumstances are predetermined by project staff in collaboration with Earthwatch. Participants must respect the restrictions for boat driving in place for each project.

If a project environment is such that participants can drive their own vehicles to the rendezvous, those who have driven themselves to the project may not drive their own vehicles to, from, or for project activities, including the transport of project equipment after arriving at the site.



Participants who have driven themselves to the project may choose to utilize their own vehicles during recreational time, but project staff will brief them on any driving restrictions. All driving during recreational time is done at your own risk.

Please be advised that the only exception to the above driving restrictions is emergency situations.

Riding in other participants' vehicles is not covered under the participants' insurance policy for the expedition. Riding in another participant's vehicle is done at a participant's own risk.

### **IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY**

In the event of emergencies, judgments must be made by Earthwatch field staff and participants. While Earthwatch makes an effort to ensure that qualified people make the most informed decisions possible, occasionally first aid may be administered and other immediate steps taken by expedition participants who are not licensed medical providers.

Each Earthwatch expedition has safety protocols and emergency procedures in place. Earthwatch encourages team members (the field staff and participants) to exercise their best judgment with regard to their own safety and the safety of other team members. Other participants may perform "Good Samaritan" actions, or actions taken to assist fellow participants during emergency situations in the field. However, Earthwatch does not encourage or expect you to jeopardize your own safety or that of others in attempting to rescue or assist your fellow team members.

### **RIGHT OF REFUSAL**

Earthwatch reserves the right to refuse an applicant's participation in an Earthwatch project at any time and to terminate any work being done by a participant and require the participant to vacate the project site if the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff member in his or her absolute discretion considers it appropriate. In this event, the participant (and his or her parents or guardians, if appropriate) will be responsible for arranging and paying for any accommodation, travel, or other arrangements which may be necessary following the termination of a participant's involvement in a project, for whatever reason, and will not be eligible for a refund.

Earthwatch may not refuse an applicant's participation in a project for discriminatory reasons (race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reason prohibited by applicable law). However, an application may be denied in the interest of team compatibility or due to logistical limitations. Earthwatch will make reasonable efforts to accommodate participants with disabilities, and the organization endeavors to find appropriate expeditions for those participants who have physical limitations. Refusal of an applicant is an unusual event and is generally done either because of an applicant's failure to meet the essential eligibility requirements of a particular project or in the interest of team compatibility. In the event that an applicant is refused participation for health reasons, Earthwatch will refund in full any deposit or payment made toward the expedition.

Earthwatch scientists have the right to refuse special requests, such as visits by media (film, photography, or print), special groups, or teams (students, donors, etc.), if they conflict with Earthwatch scientist schedules, safety, research objectives, or general performance of the team.

Any participant found in violation of any of the policies described in this document ("Participant Rights and Responsibilities") is subject to removal from the team at his or her own expense. By signing the Liability Release section of your Earthwatch Participation Form, you are indicating that you have read and understand the policies in this document. Removal of a participant from a team is at the discretion of the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff. In addition, Earthwatch will support the right of the Earthwatch scientist, Field Team Leader, or other Earthwatch staff to send a participant away from a project once in the field should his or her behavior compromise the safety, research objectives, or general performance of the team, or if the participant has violated a stated policy. In the event that a minor is dismissed from a project, Earthwatch will contact the participant's parents or guardians prior to his or her dismissal. Should a participant be removed from a team, he or she is responsible for any and all costs associated with departure from the team and will receive neither refund of the minimum contribution for the expedition nor any expenses incurred by participation on the expedition.

(November 2012)



# COMMUNICATIONS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Cellphones, satellite phone, and VHF radios will be available for emergencies.

**Complete travel information is not available in this version of the briefing.**

**Please contact Earthwatch with any questions.**

### PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Intermittent cellphone reception is available in the main camp area. When out of range, staff can contact with the main office via radios. You will be requested to keep your cellphones on silent or vibrate and to make use of text messages instead of actual calls. Internet will be available in the research camp during specified hours and on a shared basis for a reasonable fee.

Personal communication with outsiders is not always possible while participating in an expedition. Earthwatch encourages volunteers to minimize outgoing calls and immerse themselves in the experience; likewise, family and friends should restrict calls to urgent messages only.

### VOLUNTEER CONTACT INFO

Mail can take up to two weeks and is not recommended.

**Complete travel information is not available in this version of the briefing.**

**Please contact Earthwatch with any questions.**

### EARTHWATCH'S 24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE (OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA):

Call Earthwatch's 24-hour on-call duty officer in the U.S.:

+1 (978) 461-0081

+1 (800) 776-0188 (toll-free for calls placed from within the U.S.)

### HEALIX INTERNATIONAL:

+44-20-3667-8991 (collect calls and reverse charges accepted)

U.S. TOLL FREE: +1-877-759 3917

U.K. FREE PHONE: 0-800-19-5180

EMAIL: [earthwatch@healix.com](mailto:earthwatch@healix.com)

### EARTHWATCH'S 24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE (WITHIN AUSTRALIA):

+61-0-3-8508-5537

After business hours, leave a message with our live answering service. State that you have an emergency and give the name of your expedition, your name, the location from which you are calling, and if possible, a phone number where you can be reached. An Earthwatch staff person will respond to your call within one hour.







# MESSAGE FROM EARTHWATCH

DEAR EARTHWATCHER,

Thank you for joining this expedition! We greatly appreciate your decision to contribute to hands-on environmental science and conservation.

As an Earthwatch volunteer, you have the opportunity to create positive change. And while you're out in the field working toward that change, we are committed to caring for your safety. Although risk is an inherent part of the environments in which we work, we've been providing volunteer field experiences with careful risk management and diligent planning for over 40 years. You're in good hands.

We hope this expedition will inspire you to get more involved in conservation and sustainable development priorities—not just out in the field, but also when you return home. We encourage you to share your experiences with others, and to transfer your skills and enthusiasm to environmental conservation efforts in your workplace, community, and home.

If you have questions as you prepare for your expedition, contact your Earthwatch office. Thank you for your support, and enjoy your expedition!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Mason", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry Mason  
President and CEO



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