



Animals of Malawi in the Majete Wildlife Reserve 2013





A young breeding herd of elephants in the Majete Wildlife Reserve

DEAR VOLUNTEERS, FAR AND WIDE—

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)



Expedition Update



Animals of Malawi in the Majete Wildlife Reserve All Teams

June 6, 2013

Dear Earthwatcher,

To make your experience the best it can be, we'd like to provide you with some updated information we've received about your expedition experience.

Most importantly, the research staff has provided us with the project cell phone number:

+265-998-542-223

Please call this number in case of emergency, and if you have travel delays and will be late to the rendezvous. See pg. 17 of your briefing or www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm for information on dialing codes.

Packing:

- Women must bring a sarong or long skirt to be worn during village visits.
- Although your tent will have mosquito gauze over the entrance, research staff strongly recommends that you bring your own mosquito net to hang over your bed (hooks are provided for this purpose).
- The camp is not lit at night, so it is essential that you bring a head lamp/torch with you.

Accommodations:

- Your team will stay in the community camp adjacent to the Majete Wildlife Reserve's research camp, which has a communal, gender-separated bathroom block with four showers (solar-generated hot water is available) and flush toilets. This campground is open to the public, so you could be camping alongside visitors not associated with your expedition. All team activities (dining, lectures, etc.) will take place at the research camp.

- The camp is open to wildlife, so cannot leave your tents after dark without being accompanied by the guard on duty. A guard is on duty every night from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., 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.
- The research camp (but NOT the community camp) has electricity supplied by the nearby hydropower station, which can be unreliable. Internet is available at the research camp (with a reasonable fee for use), depending on the electrical supply.
- The tents are fabric tents on the ground. One person to a tent. Couples can have two tents – one for luggage and one for sleeping or just have their tents close to each other.
- The photograph on page 12 of the pdf briefing should read: “The common area at the community campsite.”
- There are no cheetahs in Majete (as suggested by the picture on pg. 14). But two leopards have just been introduced!

Travel planning:

Things to note about Johannesburg’s OR Tambo Airport:

- Allow sufficient time to walk to gate your gate when transferring there: they may be at least a 15- to 20-minute walk apart.
- Do not bring excess hand luggage—it may get checked, or be difficult to manage in transport.
- All typical services are available at the airport, including food, restrooms, currency exchange, ATMS, etc.

Things to note about Chileka Airport in Blantyre:

- If traveling from a country where yellow fever is present, you’ll need to show a yellow fever vaccination card for entry.
- There is a currency exchange, but no ATM. The ATM is located outside on the road, and we advise that you don’t use it.

Rendezvous location:

- If you are planning to meet the rest of the team at the Chichiri Shopping Centre in Blantyre instead of at Chileka Airport, go to the Shoprite (under the huge red and white Shoprite sign). Under the sign, there are two entrances. Walk to the right, and you’ll find a book store by the second entrance, which is where you’ll be met. This shopping center is large, and every taxi will know it.

Early arrival:

- The staff members at the expedition site recommend Villa 33 for accommodations if you arrive early. The other accommodations listed in the briefing are also acceptable depending on your budget, but the staff no longer recommends Doogles Lodge or the Fishermans Rest due to their locations.
- If you need a taxi when you are staying in Blantyre, staff recommends Bill’s Taxi at phone numbers 0-888-870-180 or 0-999-870-180.

Late arrival:

- We can now provide you with information on the recommended shuttle service to use if you arrive late: Kwacha Dawn Safaris and Car Hire. Contact the project staff (Colin, Kate, or Alison at **+265-998-542-223**) if you are due to be late, and they will then contact the company to arrange transportation if needed.

Transportation:

- The road from Blantyre to Majete is quite potholed and can be a bumpy ride. Also, within the park, there are many culverts that need to be traversed and conditions are extremely bumpy. Those with back conditions or that do not have good balance should think seriously about their participation.

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\$1.00 at max.

Recreational day:

- There are some excellent recreation options offered through the Majete Wildlife Reserve's lodge. The staff will work with them to pull together a planned itinerary. This will likely involve a community visit and possibly a game drive or "behind the scenes" tour. We do not recommend that any boat trips are undertaken due to safety concerns.

Staff:

- Mr. Dorian Tilbury no longer works at Majete.

We hope you enjoy your expedition!

If you have questions as you prepare for your expedition, contact the appropriate Earthwatch office:

Earthwatch Australia

+61 (0)3-9682-6828

earth@earthwatch.org

Earthwatch Japan

+81 (0)3-3511-3360

info@earthwatch.jp

Earthwatch U.K.

+44 (0)1865-318-831

info@earthwatch.org.uk

Earthwatch U.S.

+1 800-776-0188

info@earthwatch.org

Expedition Update



Animals of Malawi in the Majete Wildlife Reserve Team 8

May 8, 2013

Dear Earthwatcher,

We've learned that South African Airlines has reduced their flights between Johannesburg and Blantyre in December, 2013. This change would make it very difficult for volunteers to arrive and depart on the dates for which this team is currently scheduled (Sunday, December 1st through Thursday, December 12th, 2013).

To resolve this issue, we are changing the dates of Team 8 to Saturday, November 30th through Wednesday, December 11th, 2013. This change better aligns the team's start and end times with the South African Airlines flight schedule to Blantyre.

Please contact us if you have any questions about this date change.

Thank you,
Earthwatch staff

If you have questions as you prepare for your expedition, contact the appropriate Earthwatch office:

Earthwatch Australia

+61 (0)3-9682-6828
earth@earthwatch.org

Earthwatch Japan

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Table of Contents

General Information	2
The Research	6
Your Destination	8
Daily Life in the Field	10
Accommodations and Food	12
Travel Planning	14
Travel Tips	15
Project Conditions	19
Safety	23
Project Staff	25
Recommended Reading	26
Participant Rights and Responsibilities	27
Communications	31
Message from Earthwatch	32



A student monitoring vegetation and elephant pathways



General Information

Animals of Malawi in the Majete Wildlife Reserve



A hippo family

Earthwatch Scientists: Dr. Alison J. Leslie, Mr. Dorian Tilbury, Mr. Patricio Ndadzela

Research Site: Majete Wildlife Reserve, Lower Shire Valley, Chikwawa District, Malawi

Rendezvous and departure information is available in the print version of the briefing only.

EXPEDITION DATES:

Team 1: June 15 – June 26, 2013

Team 2: July 6 – July 17, 2013

Team 3: July 27 – Aug. 7, 2013

Team 4: Aug. 17 – Aug. 28, 2013

Team 5: Sept. 14 – Sept. 25, 2013

Team 6: Oct. 12 – Oct. 23, 2013

Team 7: Nov. 9 – Nov. 20, 2013

Team 8: Dec. 1 – Dec. 12, 2013



TRIP PLANNER

TO DO IMMEDIATELY

- ☐ Book an appointment with a doctor; you'll need him or her to sign the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form.
- ☐ Make sure you understand and agree to Earthwatch policies and participant responsibilities (see pg. 28).

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](#)

European volunteers can download forms on: www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerforms

U.S./North American volunteers can download forms at: www.earthwatch.org/volunteerforms

Australian volunteers can download forms on: www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/volunteer_forms/

Japanese volunteers can download forms on: www.earthwatch.jp/getinvolved/condition/formdownload-i.html

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 for your expedition.

- ☐ Book travel arrangements (see the Travel Planning section, pg. 14, for details).
- ☐ If you plan to purchase additional travel insurance, note that some policies require purchase when your expedition is booked (see the Insurance section, pg. 25, 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. 18, for more details).
- ☐ Make sure you have all the necessary vaccinations for your project site (see the Health Information section, pg. 24).
- ☐ Bring your level of fitness up to the standards required (see the Project Conditions section, pg. 20).

60 DAYS PRIOR TO EXPEDITION

- ☐ Review the packing list 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 the inside back cover).
- ☐ 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.





A female impala

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 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 (May through August can be cool, so come prepared with warm layers)
- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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

- ☐ Your favorite snacks if you like to nibble between meals
- ☐ Headlamp with extra batteries
- ☐ 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

MISCELLANEOUS

- ☐ Spending money (U.S. dollars in denominations of no larger than \$50 are best)

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ☐ A GPS unit, if you have one.
- ☐ 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 are able to 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.
- ☐ 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, duct tape, good insect repellent
- ☐ 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 not to 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 long-term monitoring system should be designed to detect long-term trends; in Majete's case, these trends include population changes and fluctuations among the 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 in 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 radio and satellite tracking techniques, making a GPS system work for you, identifying and following animal tracks, identifying trees and plants, computer skills, basic bush survival, first-aid techniques, and possibly even 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, and leopards via VHF receivers or satellite (again, each team will not necessarily focus on every species), either from a vehicle or on foot, together with a 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 in exclosure plots (small areas surrounded by fences to keep herbivores out). We compare the vegetation in exclosure 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.

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.

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 Shire River offers excellent fishing; visitors can rent fishing equipment at Ngono Lodge. South of the research site is the Elephant Marsh, a vast maze of perennial and seasonal ponds, swamps, and channels that is open for boat trips. 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.

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 a number of other activities (which may vary per team and season). Some of the activities may require an additional fee of \$20 to \$50 per person. These activities may include: a fishing and boat trip on Kapichira Falls

dam, a cultural tour of a nearby village, a guided climb up Majete Hill, additional game walks with a field guide, or a visit to a nearby sugar estate.

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, but please limit alcohol consumption to post-fieldwork hours.

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



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.



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 – 5:	Fieldwork
Day 6:	Recreational day (may include resting, fishing, sugar estate visit, community tours, Majete Hill climb)
Days 7 – 9:	Fieldwork
Day 10:	Community and school visit day
Day 11:	Finalize fieldwork, recreational afternoon. Debriefing in the evening.
Day 12:	Trip back to Blantyre and Chileka International Airport

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

6:00 – 7:00 a.m.	Wake up, eat breakfast, and pack supplies for fieldwork
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.	Travel to field sites
8:00 – noon	Fieldwork (or longer if required, with lunch in the field)
Noon – 3:00 p.m.	Back to research center, lunch, rest
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Fieldwork, data and/or document management, or rest time
6:00–8:00 p.m.	Showers, drinks, dinner
8:00–10:00 p.m.	Nocturnal animal counts, campfire discussions, DVD watching, etc.



Accommodations and Food

About Your Home in the Field



The kitchen and dining lapa

SLEEPING

You'll stay in the Majete Wildlife Reserve's research camp, near the entrance to the park, in single or two-bed weather- and mosquito-proof tents with built-in ground sheets. You will have your own tent unless you request to stay with a partner, friend, family member, etc. Sheets and a pillow will be provided, but please bring a bath towel. Your tent will have a small wardrobe and a bedside table.

BATHROOMS

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

ELECTRICITY

The research camp has electricity supplied by the nearby hydropower station, but it can be unreliable. You can charge electronic equipment (bring necessary adaptors). Electrical sockets in Malawi are Type G British BS-1363.

For more, see www.kropia.com/electric2.htm.



INTERNET AND COMMUNICATIONS

Internet is available at the camp (with a reasonable fee for use), depending on the electrical supply. One computer will be available for shared use. You may also bring your own, but keep in mind that extreme heat and humidity can damage electronic equipment.

FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

The research center has an open-air communal lounge and recreational area with a DVD projector, a dining area and kitchen, and an office. It also has refrigeration. You can have your laundry hand-washed for approximately \$5 per reasonably sized bundle.

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.





Majete Wildlife Reserve restaurant

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 fresh fish (when available), 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 or vegan diets, 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 Planning

Rendezvous and Departure Information

The rendezvous and departure information for this project has been removed from this web version of the expedition briefing. It is only available in the printed version of the briefing. Please do not make any travel arrangements to join an expedition without having full and up-to-date travel information from Earthwatch. Full rendezvous details, including places and times are available from Earthwatch upon request prior to registration for an expedition. Please use the "Contact Us" button on the top right-hand corner of the website to get in touch with an Earthwatch representative, who will be very happy to help you.



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. Patricio Ndadzela
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.

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 a few hundred U.S. dollars.

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.

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. It's not customary to tip in Malawi, except for safari drivers, tour guides, and similar. Tips are not necessary in restaurants, although if you wish to tip, you do not necessarily need to tip as much as you would in your home country.

School visit gifts: We will visit a school during this expedition, and as schools in Malawi are very underequipped, it is appropriate to bring some school supplies to offer if you wish. [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,





A hartebeest with calf

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 acceptable for members of the opposite sex to publicly show affection, AND it is perfectly ok 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 his hand for a time, or assume that the man is gay. 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 www.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 www.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.: Travisa; 212-613-2223; www.travisa.com

In Europe: CIBT, Inc. (UK); info@uk.cibt.com; www.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.





Waterholes



Project Conditions

The Field Environment

Please show this section to a doctor when he or she is completing the Health section of your Earthwatch Participation Form. Be sure to discuss vaccination requirements with the doctor well in advance of your departure date. See the Health Information section (pg. 22) for vaccination information.

To the doctor:

This patient has volunteered to join a field research team that has specific physical demands of which you and the patient should be aware. We need your accurate evaluation of this patient's ability to meet the conditions detailed below in order to care for his or her health and safety, and to assess that he or she can participate fully and effectively.

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 a little chilly at night 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.



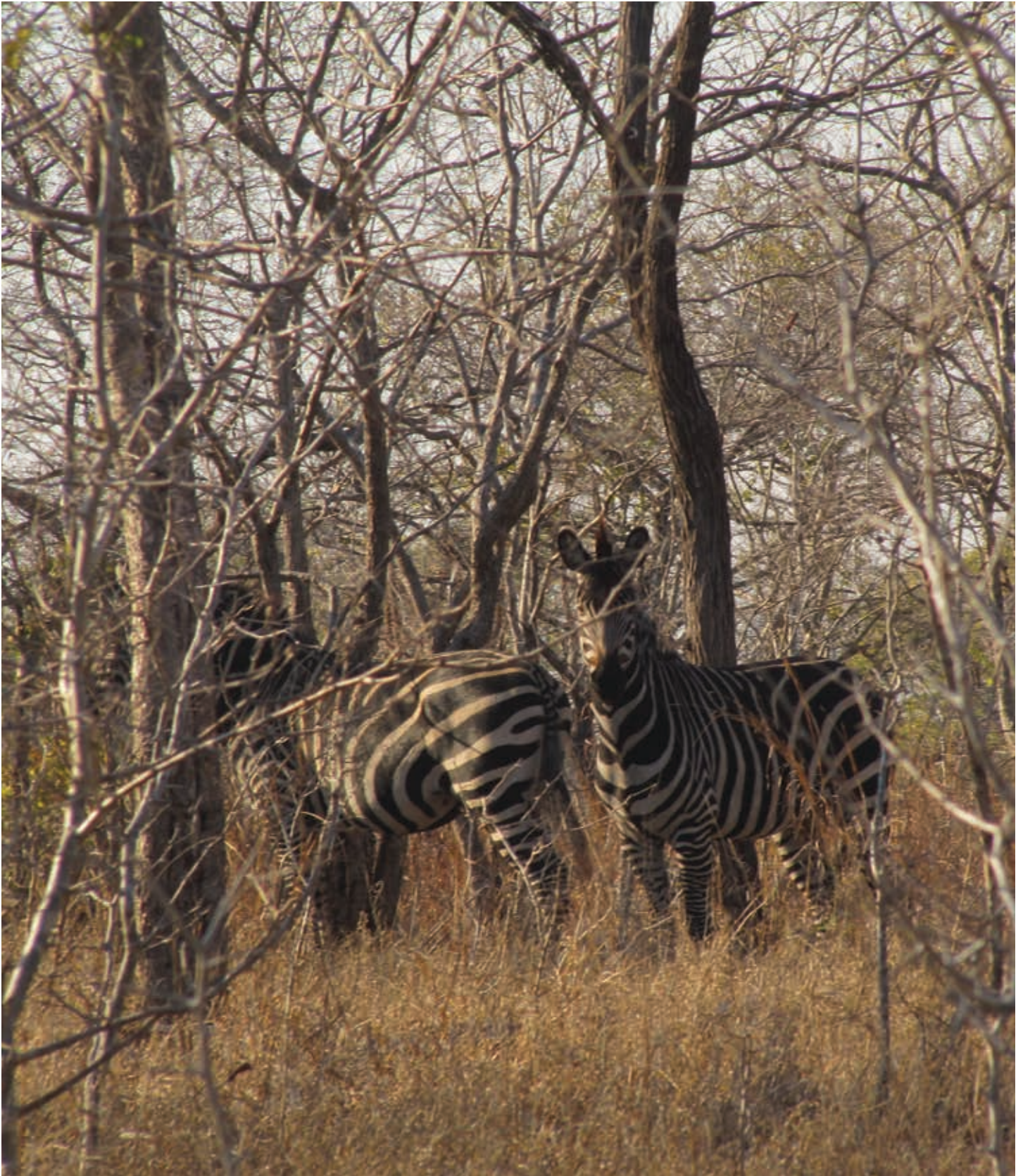
POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Hazard	Associated Risks and Precautions
Transportation	Roads may be dirt/gravel/corrugated and may be very 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. 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.
Walking/Hiking/ Climbing	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.
Climate/Weather	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.
Animals	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).



Plants	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.
Swimming	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.
Personal Security	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.
Fire	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.
Cooking	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.
Distance from Medical Care	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.





Safety

Health Information

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.

PROJECT VACCINATIONS

REQUIRED: If traveling from countries or region where yellow fever is endemic, you must have a certificate of vaccination.

RECOMMENDED FOR HEALTH REASONS: Typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies

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 (www.cdc.gov) or the World Health Organization (www.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:

Chichwawa Clinic

Chichwawa Village
25 to 30 minutes from project site

Blantyre Adventist Hospital

P.O. Box 51
Tel: +265-(1)-620399
Fax: +265-(1)-623293
Two to 2.5 hours from project site

Mwaiwathu Private Hospital

Old Chileka Road, Blantyre
Tel: +265-(1)-634-989
Fax: +265-(1)-634-190
Two to 2.5 hours from project site

Medical Rescue Services Clinic

Area 43, Ufulu Road, Blantyre
Tel: +265-(1)-731-807
Two to 2.5 hours from project site

INSURANCE

MedEvac assistance, advice, and insurance are 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 doesn't provide personal liability insurance. This coverage is

valid in the country of your Earthwatch expedition and during travel to and from your expedition. **Note:** For U.S. volunteers, the coverage is valid only when the expedition is over 100 miles from your place of residence. For Australia volunteers, the coverage is limited if the expedition is less than 50 kilometers from your place of residence.

This insurance policy is secondary to your existing health insurance policy (e.g., NHS in the U.K., Medicare in Australia).

Because of different laws governing each country, policies are specific to each regional Earthwatch office. Please check with your sign up office about your insurance coverage.

If you signed up through [Earthwatch U.K.](#) or [Earthwatch Japan](#), visit: www.earthwatch.org/europe/insuranceinfo.

If you signed up through [Earthwatch U.S.](#), visit: www.earthwatch.org/insurance.

If you signed up through the [U.K.](#), [U.S.](#), or [Japan](#): If you have additional vacation time before and/or after your Earthwatch expedition that forms part of your overall time away from your place of residence, this additional vacation time is not covered under this policy.

If you signed up through [Earthwatch Australia](#), visit: www.earthwatch.org/australia/expeditions/insurance/ or contact Earthwatch Australia.

Please refer any queries regarding Earthwatch's policy to Earthwatch's Operations Department at 978-450-1222 or insurance@earthwatch.org.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND EVACUATION ASSISTANCE

Emergency medical and evacuation assistance from CEGA Medical, a 24-hour international service, is also included in your contribution. Please see the contact information in the Medical and Security Assistance Helpline Numbers section on the inside back cover.

You can also call CEGA for non-emergency information before your trip, 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. **She will join teams 1-4 in the field 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. **He will be present for all teams.**



Earthwatch scientist Dorian Tilbury, a conservation project manager with an M.Sc. in biodiversity, conservation, and management from Imperial College in London, has over twelve years of experience managing protected areas throughout Zambia and Malawi. He has worked extensively with management strategies for wildlife in depleted areas. Dorian has a broad base of knowledge about the environmental pressures that face rural African communities and about the diversity of human and animal conflicts that occur in marginal and remote habitats. Dorian is currently the field operations manager for African Parks–Majete and lives in the reserve. **He will be present for all teams.**



Colin Tucker, a Ph.D. student in Alison Leslie's department at Stellenbosch University, is primarily interested in "action" research, in which stakeholders directly benefit from the outcomes of the research. For his Ph.D. work he is focusing on how Majete's African buffalo population is faring since its reintroduction. In the past, he has conducted a preliminary investigation into the carbon sequestration potential of woodlands in northern Botswana, and he developed sustainability indicators for two reserves in the Western Cape of South Africa through a collaborative process with local stakeholders and specialists. **Colin works on the research team full time and will be present for 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 and will be present for all teams.**

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 Kingdon 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

www.african-parks.org

www.cons-ent.com/

www.facebook.com/Majetewildlifereserve

EARTHWATCH'S VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Please see Earthwatch's Volunteer Resources pages for additional information on:

- Travel agencies with whom Earthwatch volunteers can get preferential rates
- Recommended kit and clothing providers
- Recommended travel booksellers

Volunteers who sign up through our U.S. office, visit:

www.earthwatch.org/volunteerresources

Volunteers who sign up through our U.K. office, visit:

www.earthwatch.org/europe/volunteerresources

Social media: Find Earthwatch on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Earthwatch, follow us on Twitter at @earthwatch_org, and see videos of many Earthwatch expeditions on YouTube at www.youtube.com/earthwatchinstitute. If you're on Twitter, use the hashtag "#globaltweet" when in the field with Earthwatch to help literally put your work on the map of worldwide volunteering efforts. We also invite you to use the Facebook and TurnTo plug-in features right on our website's expedition pages to connect with other volunteers and staff.



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





A waterhole in the dry season

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





An African buffalo

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



Rare sable antelopes

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Cellphones, satellite phone, and VHF radios will be available for emergencies. The last two options are for staff use only, except in an emergency.

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

**This information is available in the print version of the briefing only.
Contact Earthwatch for assistance.**

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,



Larry Mason
President and CEO



Connect with other
Earthwatchers at
[www.facebook.com/
Earthwatch](http://www.facebook.com/Earthwatch)



or find us on
Twitter at
[@earthwatch_org](https://twitter.com/earthwatch_org)

Earthwatch's 24-Hour Helpline

If you need help at any time, call Earthwatch's 24-hour on-call duty officer in the U.S.:

+1 (978) 461-0081

+1 (800) 776-0188

Note: The 800-number works as a toll free call only for calls placed within the U.S.

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

Medical and Security Assistance Helpline Numbers

(For assistance while in the field)

When calling any of the helplines, please mention Earthwatch and policy reference number 560020011200.

CEGA Emergency Medical & Travel Assistance:

+44 (0)20 3059 8770

You may call this number collect or reverse charges if necessary in a medical emergency.

Henderson Risk Security Assistance and Advice:

+44 (0)20 3059 8772

axisenquiries@hendersonrisk.com





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