



PROSPECTUS FOR PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT AND ECOTOURISM INVESTMENT FOR MALAWI



**DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS
AND WILDLIFE**

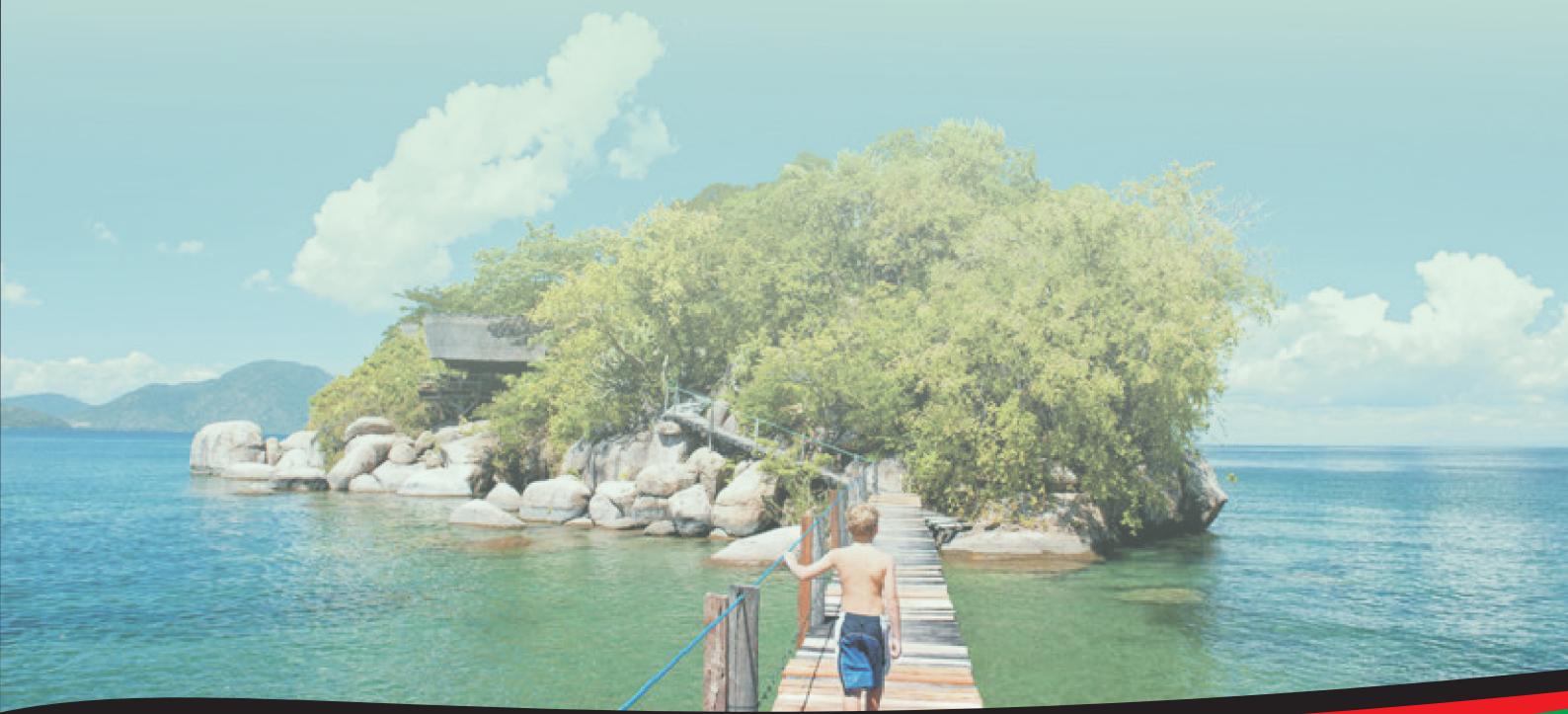
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND WILDLIFE

JUNE 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES	3
2.1 Lake Malawi National Park	5
2.2 Kasungu National Park	11
3. PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	17
3.1 Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve	19





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Malawi the Warm Heart of Africa is endowed with a rich biodiversity characterized by diverse wildlife species, habitats with spectacular landscapes and the third largest fresh water Lake in Africa with the greatest diversity of fish in the world and exceptional natural beauty. The unique rich cultural heritage and community life provide a different taste of attractions as an exclusive destination that is genuinely friendly.

The management of Malawi's wildlife estates requires a significant cost in terms of infrastructure development and maintenance for protected area management and ecotourism to improve service delivery, law enforcement including anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflicts, surrounding communities' collaborative management as well as research and monitoring programs.

This investment prospectus seeks to introduce the ecotourism and protected area management opportunities available for development in collaboration with private investors, tourism operators and conservation organizations in order to unlock the untapped potential and secure the long-term viability and financial sustainability of nature-based tourism and protected areas management. There are different types of investment opportunities in ecotourism in protected areas that offer diversity of natural and cultural experiences. Similarly; there are different types of protected area management models that can be offered. (Table 1).

Table 1: Ecotourism and Protected Area Management Investment Opportunities

Ecotourism Opportunities		Protected Area Management Opportunities	Other Opportunities
Protected Area	Sites	Management Model	
Lake Malawi National Park	Mfula Beach	Technical and Financial support	Community ecotourism programs in Chembe village
	Illala Gap Beach		
	Golden Sands		
	Domwe Island		
Kasungu National Park	Lifupa Lodge	Technical and Financial support	Community ecotourism at Linyangwa area
	Kangwa Area		
	Wang'ombe Rumen		
Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve	Old Mwabvi camp	Delegated management (PPP Model)	
	Migudu		



INTRODUCTION

The Government of Malawi identifies the tourism sector as a key driver for sustainable economic growth and development in the country (Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III and Malawi 2063). The Policy and legal frameworks provide an enabling environment for the involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders in the conservation and management of wildlife. However, the management of country's wildlife estates requires a significant cost in terms of infrastructure development and maintenance for protected area management and ecotourism to improve service delivery, law enforcement including anti-poaching, human-wildlife conflicts, surrounding communities' collaborative management as well as research and monitoring programs. In addition, with continued limited traditional government funding, there is need to identify other innovative ventures such as ecotourism and protected area management concessions, research centers among others in order to secure the long-term viability and financial sustainability of protected areas.

Considering that the communities bear the cost of living with wildlife, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) also encourages participation of communities in the development of proposed ventures so that they also benefit economically.

Malawi is located in Southeastern Africa (Latitude 13° 30" S; Longitude 34° 00" E) bordered by Zambia to the west, Tanzania to the northeast, Mozambique to the east, south and southwest with a size of 118,484 km² (Figure 1). The country is endowed with a rich biodiversity characterized by spectacular landscapes, and the third largest fresh water Lake in Africa with exceptional natural beauty, diverse wildlife species, habitats and unique cultural heritage. Its tourism brand essence rests on three major attributes of being rich in contrast (diverse lake experience, variety of landscapes, habitats, climate and cultural assets); compact in size (short distances between attractions, comparatively little crowded); and big in hospitality (peaceful environment, neighborly social interaction, tolerant and authentic relationship with visitors and other cultures (Department of Tourism, 2020).



Figure 1 : Map showing location of Malawi in Africa

The DNPW in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife is mandated to conserve, manage and regulate the use of wildlife resources in the country. The protected areas under DNPW constitute 11.1% of Malawi's total area. These PAs include: Five National Parks: Nyika, Kasungu, Liwonde, Lengwe and Lake Malawi, four Wildlife Reserves: Vwaza Marsh, Nkhotakota, Majete and Mwabvi, (figure 2) and three Nature Sanctuaries: Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Michiru.



Figure 2: Map of Malawi showing Protected Areas

Currently, there are some private sector investments in ecotourism and protected areas management through concessions with the Government. The existing ecotourism concessions have improved service delivery and revenue generation for protected areas. In addition, collaboration with partners has stepped up the efforts in the fight against wildlife crime that is bearing positive results for wildlife conservation and management with increasing animal populations in some protected areas.

Therefore, this investment prospectus seeks to introduce the ecotourism, protected area management, research collaboration and community-based tourism opportunities available for development in partnership with private investors, tourism operators and conservation organizations in order to unlock the untapped potential and secure long-term viability and financial sustainability of protected areas.

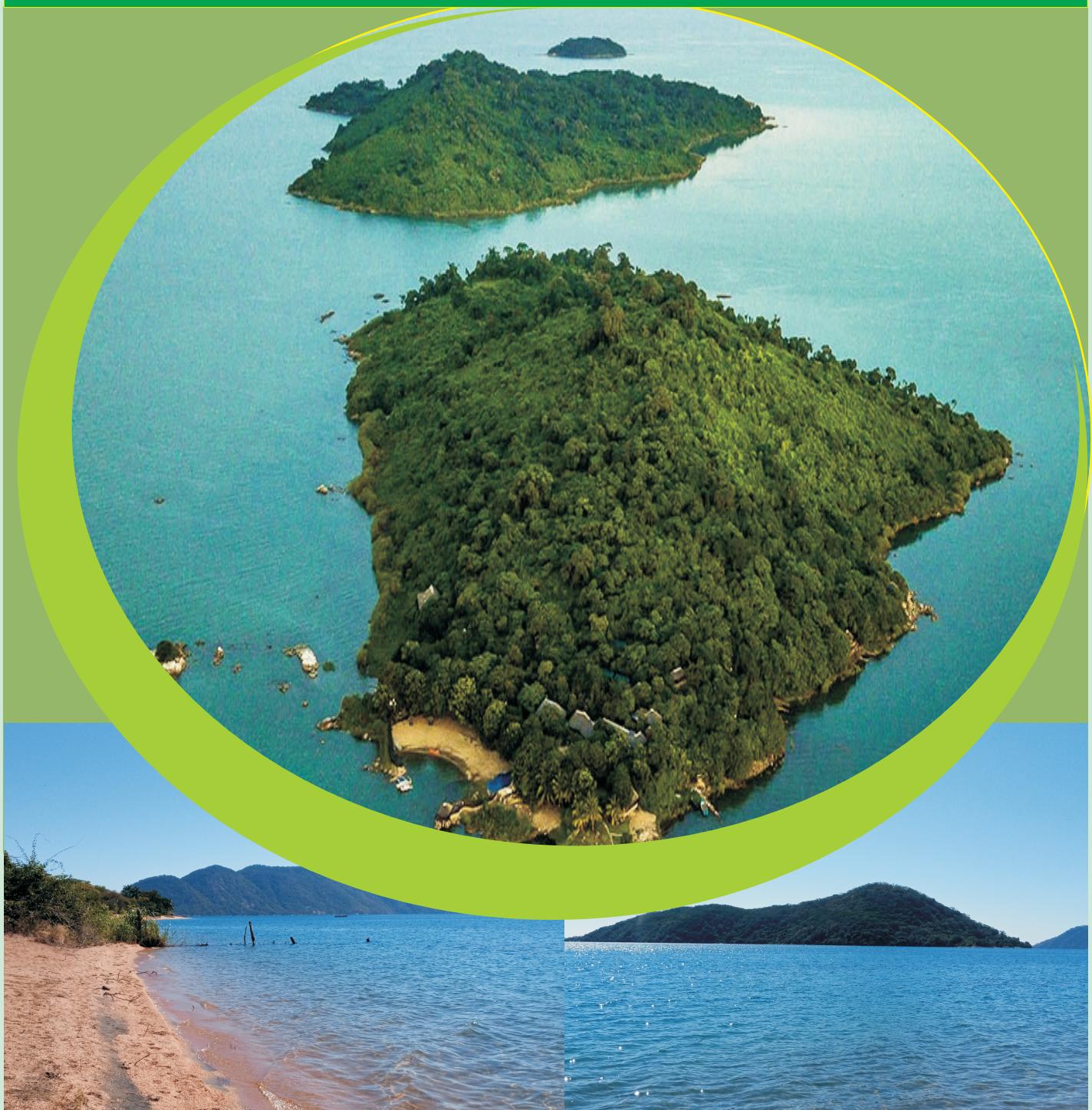
2. ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Lake Malawi National Park**
- 2.2 Kasungu National Park**





LAKE MALAWI NATIONAL PARK



Very few places in the world can equal the beauty and significance of Lake Malawi National Park, one of the only two UNESCO World Heritage sites in Malawi, recognized for such outstanding universal values as its unique natural beauty and the beautiful cichlid fish, 345 species are endemic to the Park. The Lake contains 30 percent of all known cichlid fish in the world.

Unique appeal

Historical relevance, Island hopping, unrivalled freshwater life, diving, rare birds and wildlife





Figure 3: Map showing part of Lake Malawi National Park

Background

Lake Malawi National Park was established in 1980 to protect special cichlid fishes locally known as MBUNA.

In 1984 the Park was accorded the World Heritage Site status by UNESCO for its outstanding universal values which are: the cichlid fish species that are endemic to Lake Malawi and its outstanding natural beauty.

It is also the first fresh water National Park in the world, a feature that makes it unique, among the many National Parks of the region.

Size: 94Km² (7Km² consist of water and 87Km² land area).

Location and Access

Lake Malawi National Park lies at the Southern end of Lake Malawi between the two arms in Mangochi District. Some of the Islands that form the Park are in the Senga Bay area in Salima District.

Due to the nature of the Park, the only roads are those to Cape Maclear, Msaka area and Pumulani Lodge, enclaved within the park. Otherwise, access to the beautiful islands is by boat.

Landscape and habitat

The Park consists of the Nankumba Peninsula, islands and hills. The highest point in the Park is 1,140 metres above mean sea level at Nkhunguni Hill on the peninsula.

The Park is mainly covered by Brachystegia woodland and granite rocks. The hilltops are covered by the outstanding view of the lake and Domwe Islands.

Wildlife

The Park has over 350 cichlid species. On mainland, mammal and reptile life is present and these include klipspringer, bushbuck, bush pig, hyrax, otter, blue monkey, vervet monkey, baboon, hyena, duiker, civet and leopard. Hippopotamus also occurs along major rivers that feed the lake within the Park. Birdlife is also a significant feature for the park, especially on Boadzulu (also known as Bird Island).



A picture showing birdlife on Boadzulu

Infrastructure

The only road the park has is the one from Monkey Bay to Cape Maclear.

The Park's administration head office is in Monkey Bay, while a staff camp and an environmental education centre is located inside the Park.

Ecotourism

The Park provides a major ecotourism attraction destination. Major attractions include: cichlids, birds, missionary graves, the lake, the golden sands and the beautiful islands.

Activities

These include swimming, surfing, kayaking, snorkeling, sun bathing, boat riding, bird watching and hiking among others.

The enclave villages, such as Chembe offer the visitor a chance to sample the Malawian lakeshore way of life which includes traditional dances, acoustic music, local cuisines and even a village homestay.

Management

The Park is managed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The Golden Sands

Home to the first Lodge in the Cape Maclear Area, Golden Sands provides the most ideal and picturesque location on the Southern part of the lake. Named after the most beautiful sands to grace the lake, this place provides an array of amazing beaches and rocks. Otter point, lying a few meters from this Lodge site, is an outstanding location for viewing of cichlids and swimming.

- A mid to upper market boutique hotel with a capacity of 100 beds;
- Conference facility with a capacity of 100 people.

Activities would include: Scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, swimming, hiking, sport fishing, zipline and glass bottom boat and cultural activities.

Mfula Beach

A couple of kilometres from Golden Sands, lies a newly discovered beach, awaiting development. The place boasts of a nice sandy beach, some rock outcrops and a beautiful view from the escarpment lying directly above the beaches.

- An Ecolodge with a capacity of 10 beds.

Illala Gap Beach

Illala gap is a small strip of waters that lies in between Domwe Island and mainland Nankumba peninsula. Just beyond this corner lies another undeveloped beach which offers an outstanding view of the lake and Domwe Island. It also provides a view of the Illala the main life line vessel on the lake, as it travels on its way up north and back.

- A medium resort with a capacity of 5 beds.

Domwe Island

- Picnic site.

Activities would include: boat cruises, kayaking, swimming, scuba diving and , bird watching.



In addition to the above ecotourism sites, the park also has other activity areas which include: Mwenye hills, Nkhudzi Hill; Nkhudzi Spit, Boadzulu and Mpande Island.

Activities include: Scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, swimming, mountain hiking, horse riding, motorcycle/pushbike riding, zipline, abseiling, glass bottom boat cruise, sunset viewing and cultural activities.

Activity Operators

- Boat rides
- Yacht hires
- Scuba diving trainers
- Village guides
- Curios makers and sellers

Community - Based Tourism Opportunities at Chembe Village include:

- Home stay Visitors
- Cultural Performances
- Community Eco-lodge
- Traditional food





KASUNGU NATIONAL PARK



The second largest park in the country and one of the truly wilderness areas of Malawi, representative of a true Southern African Savannah, Kasungu National Park is a place to visit. The park is part of Malawi-Zambia Transfrontier Conservation Areas.

The park is one of the easiest to reach from Lilongwe the capital city. Lying only 60 km from the M1 road, that runs from Southern to Northern parts of Malawi.

Unique appeal

Outstanding beauty from the mixture of beautiful miombo woodlands that change colour with seasons and the amazing fauna, ranging from four of the big five, to the smallest antelopes!





Figure 4: Map of Kasungu National Park

Background

Kasungu National Park is named after the administrative district in which it lies. The name “Kasungu” is originally the name of the hill that stands to the southwest of the District Headquarters.

In 1922 much of the existing park area was proclaimed as Fort Alston Forest Reserve. In 1930, it was declared a Game Reserve and eventually became Kasungu National Park in 1970.

In 2015, the Governments of Malawi and Zambia signed a Transfrontier Conservation Areas Treaty (TFCA) through which the two countries are collaboratively managing wildlife and habitats that straddle the international border.

This provides for easy access to tourists to wildlife areas in Zambia and Malawi.

Size: 2,316 km².

Location and Access

The Park is approximately 165 km Northwest of Lilongwe and 60 km west of Kasungu Boma. There is one access point for motor vehicles at Lisitu gate on the southeastern boundary, which can be reached through the earth surfaced road (D187) from Kasungu Boma.

Visitors can also access the park by air through an airfield at Lifupa usable by light aircraft.

Landscape and Habitat

Lying on the Central African Plateau, Kasungu National Park protects fine examples of the “miombo” or Brachystegia woodland with open grassy dambo drainage systems. The dambos and woodland have interesting wildflowers, including orchids during the rains. The dambos in the west of the park are some of the best areas for wild flowers.

During the late dry season, the Brachystegia woodlands have some spectacular colours as the new leaves develop.

Wildlife

Visitors to the park can see elephant, hippopotamus, buffalo, greater kudu, hartebeest, sable, impala, puku, bushbuck, duiker, zebra and roan.

Other animal species that can be seen include lion, leopard, civet, serval cat, genet, and bush baby.



The Park has over 300 species of birds. This makes it a good destination for bird watchers. A few fish species such as eastern happy, straight fin barb, line sported barb, sharp tooth catfish, redeye labeo, shire-stekelpaling, shire-kurper churchil and redbreast tilapia occur in the dam and streams of the park.



Infrastructure

The Park possess key infrastructure for both management and tourism activities, although some is at a stage where it requires maintenance.

Key infrastructure includes Office buildings at Lifupa main camp, staff housing spread across the park in patrol camps, a lodge, a dam for water supply, a network of roads, a telecommunications tower, a solar powered electric fence and a communication radio system.

There is also a functioning airfield which is available for park management and tourist who want to fly in.

The Park has been connected to the national electricity grid, which will be providing sustainable and eco-friendly source of power for lodge operations.

ECOTOURISM

Main attractions include the wildlife, natural beauty, rich cultural and historical heritage sites as well the cultural diversity of the surrounding communities.

Places and features

Visitors can hire a guide to walk to historical sites such as the famous Solonje rock paintings, Matungulu rock shelter and the iron smelting furnace at Miondwe.

Mountain climbers may climb Black Rock and Wang'ombe Rumen for panoramic views of the park.

ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The population of various wildlife species is now on a path to recovery and recent surveys have indicated that there is fair distribution of these across the park.

This makes it more attractive to more investments in form of resorts and lodges which could be constructed in places like:

⦿ **Lifupa Lodge** – Eco lodge with a capacity of 30 beds and a tented camp with capacity of 6 beds located in the central part of the park along the Lifupa dam.

Activities

- Game viewing
- Mountain Hikes
- Trail Walks
- Bird watching
- Photography
- Sport fishing (angling).
- Historical and archaeological site visits
- Site seeing and others.

⦿ **Kangwa Area**

Upmarket lodge with a capacity of 35 beds located in the northern part of the park.

- Adam
- Air strip

This is home to elephants, buffalo and large antelopes such as roan and sable, making it convenient for game viewing.

Activities

- Game viewing drives
- Mountain Hikes
- Trail Walks
- Overnight Trails Hikes
- Historical and archaeological site visits
- Cultural experiences in the surrounding villages
- Bird watching
- Photography
- Sport fishing (angling)
- Boat riding

⌚ Wang'ombe Rumen area

Tented Camp with a capacity of 25 beds located in the western side of the park, near the rock art and iron smelting sites of Solonje.

Activities

- Game viewing drives
 - Mountain Hikes
 - Trail Walks
 - Overnight Trails Hikes
 - Historical and archaeological site visits
 - Cultural experiences in the surrounding villages
 - Bird watching
 - Photography
 - Sport fishing (angling).
- ⌚ Community-Based Tourism Opportunities at Linyangwa Village include:
- Traditional dances
 - Chewa heritage Centre
 - Story Telling
 - Traditional Food
 - Community Cultural lodge



3. PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITES

3.1 Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve





MWABVI WILDLIFE RESERVE



Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve is in the Southern Region of Malawi lying entirely within the Lower Shire valley district of Nsanje. It's an important bird area.

Unique Appeal

Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve has a number of special areas, such as:

- ⇒ Mwabvi tree known as forest ordeal tree one of the rare species from which the Reserve derives its name.
- ⇒ Mwabvi Gorge on the Mwabvi River. The gorge is known as Ndipitakuti - literally "where do I go from here?".
- ⇒ Mwalawankhunda (literally 'Stone of Doves')

Nkhangane rock protrusion - a steep-sided rock with numerous caves, recesses and overhangs





Figure 5: Map showing Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve

Background

Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve was established in 1953 and was extended in 1975. It is the smallest wildlife reserve in the country. The reserve was originally established to protect a small population of black rhinos which is extinct.

Size : 135 km²

Location and Access

The reserve can be accessed through an earth road that branches from Chikwawa - Nsanje road (M8), at Bangula.

There are access tracks from both Dande and Nanthana (at the Thangadzi River crossing) on this road with the distance to the park entrance at Migudu camp being about 6 km from either point.



Landscape and Habitat

The major part of Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve is a low-lying area. The topography within the reserve is generally broken with steep sided outcrops of rock set between gullies. Thangadzi River enters the reserve at an altitude of about 120m a.s.l in the south and leaves the park at about 100m a.s.l. in the north. The highest altitude in this hilly terrain within the park is slightly over 400m a.s.l. The vegetation of Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve falls into the category of "Broad leaved relatively dry woodlands and intergrades to savanna.



Wildlife

Mammals available at the park are kudu, buffalo, impala, suni and common duiker. The reserve also harbours the most northerly populations of bird species such as Rudd's apalis, Woodward batis and Grey sunbird, as well as the only protected populations in Malawi of double-banded Sandgrouse.

Infrastructure

There is currently one ranger camp at Migudu which is the reserve headquarters. The present road network in the reserve would be improved by having a track which connects Matope and Mwabvi Rangers Camps and a track which enables Madziabango Camp to be reached without travelling outside the reserve. The proposed roads would be an asset for both tourism and management purposes.

Ecotourism

The reserve is stunning all through the year and can be toured only using a 4 wheel drive vehicles, or through walking safaris.

Activities

The main tourist activities include:

- game drives
- bird watching
- Walking safari

Management

The Reserve is managed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

1. Old Mwabvi camp:

An eco-lodge with a capacity of 15 beds.

Attractions include: Mwabvi Gorge and Mwalawankhunda.

2. Migudu:

A tented camp with a capacity of 20 beds. The site is good for game drives and walking safaris along Thangazi River.

Activity Operators

- Game drives
- Walking safari
- Bird Watching
- Picnic









The Director
Department of National parks and Wildlife
Matamando House, Opposite Civic Offices
P.O. Box 30131
Lilongwe
Malawi

Mobile: +265 999 915 411 / +265 888 915 411
Email: dpw@wildlifemw.net
bright.kumchedwa@gmail.com

