

# Monthly Report

February 2018



A white bellied house-bat (*Scotophilus leucogaster*)

# ABC Staff



**Dr Emma Stone**  
Founder/Coordinator



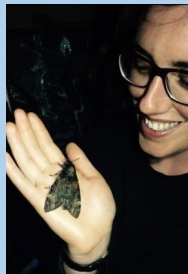
**Matt Town**  
Research Manager



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Community Engagement Officer



**Tom Kitching**  
Research Assistant, Vwaza Marsh



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Entomologist, Vwaza Marsh



**Andrew Mcvinish**  
Urban Bat Research Assistant



**Abi Robison**  
Research Assistant, Vwaza marsh



**Becky Hazlewood**  
Research Assistant, Lifuwu

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# Vwaza Marsh News

## Staff News

ABC welcomes its newest member of staff Abi Robinson (Figure 1) who will fill the position of Research Assistant at Vwaza Marsh. Abi recently graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a BSc (honours) degree in Zoology. She has worked for Ecological Consultants in the UK for the past four years primarily involving bat acoustic surveys and habitat surveying. Further afield she has worked in Indonesia and Mexico catching bats for long term biodiversity monitoring and building acoustic libraries. Other past research has included work on human-wildlife conflict in Sulawesi by monitoring behaviour of the Buton Macaque (*Macaca ochreata brunnescens*) and conflict between elephants and farmers in Sri Lanka.



**Figure 1:** Abi Robinson joins the ABC team working in Vwaza Marsh.

## ABC returns to Vwaza Marsh

**By M. Moore (Research Intern)**

The past month at Vwaza has provided us all with plenty of entertainment. Elephants have been playing in the lake and munching their way through camp every few days in groups of up to 102. There has been sightings of a lion near camp again, buffalo coming to the lake, our first horseshoe bat of the year and many majestic sunsets.

We returned to Vwaza in January to a transformed camp, the lake growing closer

every day (Figures 2 & 3) and everything now covered in green.



**Figures 2&3:** The transformation of Vwaza Marsh (photo credit M. Moore)

There's been many a rainy afternoon to fill the lake even more, and now we have hippos in the lake right on our doorstep. We have completed 15 bat surveys since being back.

One night at the office roost, 32 bats were caught, giving us some great practice for our extracting and processing skills and smoothing out our flow as a team. On another survey at the campsite nearby, we caught Hildebrandt's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hildebrandtii*) (Figure 4), the first horseshoe bat of 2018, which we were very excited about!

We have also caught three species of fruit bat. The little epauletted fruit bat

# Vwaza Marsh News

(*Epomophorus labiatus*) (Figure 5), Peter's epauleted fruit bat (*Epomophorus crypturus*) and Dobson's epauleted fruit bat (*Epomophorus dobsonii*). Several birds were also caught before the sun set; including the colourful and elusive green-backed



**Figure 4:** Hildebrandt's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hildebrandtii*)

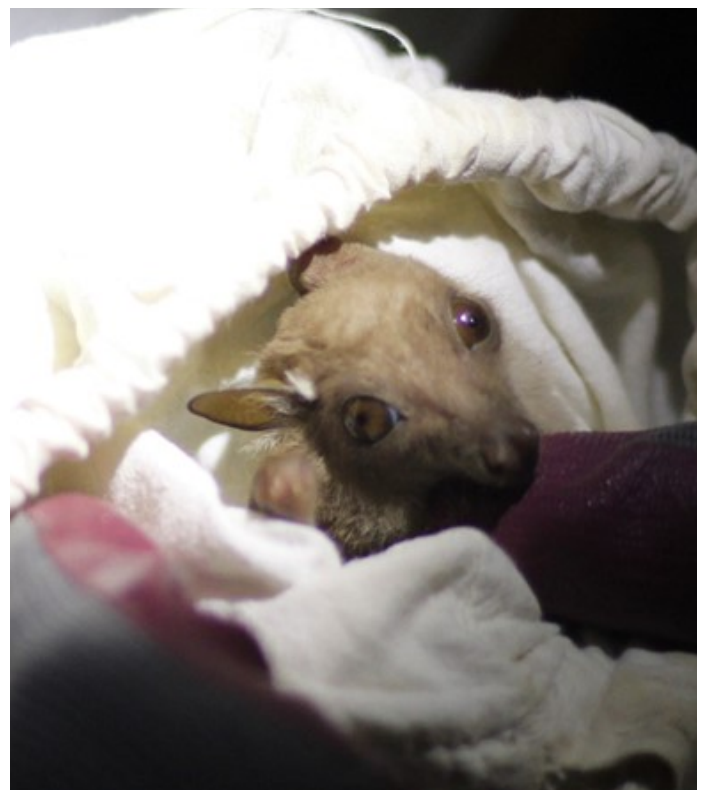
twin-spot, a green-winged pytilia and a Mozambique nightjar.

There's also been some exciting animals found around camp such as a Flap-necked chameleon plus three baby chameleons on one survey, a common tiger snake, a family of bush hyrax living in a strangler fig tree and a crocodile in the lake just in front of camp. The elephants have been in and around camp for a couple of weeks, splashing about in the water and swimming in a line across the lake with their trunks sticking out like snorkels, and occasionally hanging out between our survey and camp, keeping us on our toes during those night surveys.

## First Outreach Visit to Kazuni Village

**By N.Plumb (Research Intern)**

ABC's Vwaza Marsh research team visited Kazuni town located just outside Vwaza Marsh Nature Reserve. This was the first step for the team in setting up contacts with local communities, several members of the community met the team at Sophie's school to discuss how ABC can work with them to address any conflict issues they were having with bats. This proved to be very successful, allowing a number of surveys to be conducted around the town. These surveys showed the high abundance of bats living in Kazuni, with 44 bats from six species caught in a single evening. A number of roosts were identified from within houses including a *Nycteris* roost. These developments have greatly enthused the Vwaza team to further develop their relationship with Kazuni and create more outreach visits in other nearby towns.



**Figure 5:** A little epauleted fruit bat (*Epomophorus labiatus*)

# Urban Bat Project News

## Staff News

The urban project is excited to have Becky Hazlewood joining the team. Becky (Figure 6), arrived at the end of January 2018 from Norwich in the east of the UK. Becky comes to us with a vast amount of project management experience and will be working to help manage all our student projects and set up a new bat license training programme.



**Photo 6:** Becky Hazlewood

Becky has a MSc from the University of East Anglia with a background in Environmental Sciences and Ecology. She worked as a Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Manager in the social housing sector before coming to work for ABC. In the UK, Becky carries out bat surveys for development sites, helps to mitigate conflicts as a Voluntary Bat Roost Visitor for Natural England, rescues bats that are injured and helps with several bat research projects monitoring *Nathusius pipistrelles* and *Barbastelle* bat populations in Norfolk and Suffolk.

In her spare time Becky plays gigs as a singer-songwriter, sings with the Norwich Cathedral choir and enjoys running and cycling.

## Bat conflict at Ntchisi Forest Lodge

ABC has been contacted by Ntchisi forest lodge about bats roosting within their lodge. Ntchisi forest lodge sits next to Ntchisi forest reserve which covers an area of 75 km<sup>2</sup>. This is a rare Afro-montane rainforest (Figure 7) found nowhere else in Malawi. With elevations reaching 1700m above sea level it offers stunning views across lake Malawi, and on clear mornings it's possible to see Mozambique over 150km away (Figure 8).



**Figure 7:** Strangler fig within Ntchisi Forest Reserve

Guests had complained to management about noise coming from the roof and bats flying into the dining room. Andrew and Becky from the urban research team visited the lodge to conduct an emergence survey and to assess the situation.

# Urban Bat Project News

This survey identified bats roosting in two buildings, primarily in the main lodge building. This was a roost of approximately 50 bats most likely a species of *Molossidae* (free-tailed bats). The lodge has had past encounters with bats. A yellow-bellied house bat (*Scotophilus dinganii*) with two pups, had previously been observed roosting behind a picture frame in the dining room. A large fruit bat (unknown species) had also become grounded on the floor by the bar and needed a helping hand to be able to fly away.

The Urban bat team is in the process of developing a mitigation and management plan for the bats at Ntchisi forest lodge. This

will involve constructing exclusion devices to stop bats roosting in the roof and the installation of bat boxes in the gardens of the lodge to prevent a loss in available roosting space.



**Figure 8.** Sunrise from Ntchisi forest lodge overlooking Lake Malawi and Mozambique

# ABC Bat Species List

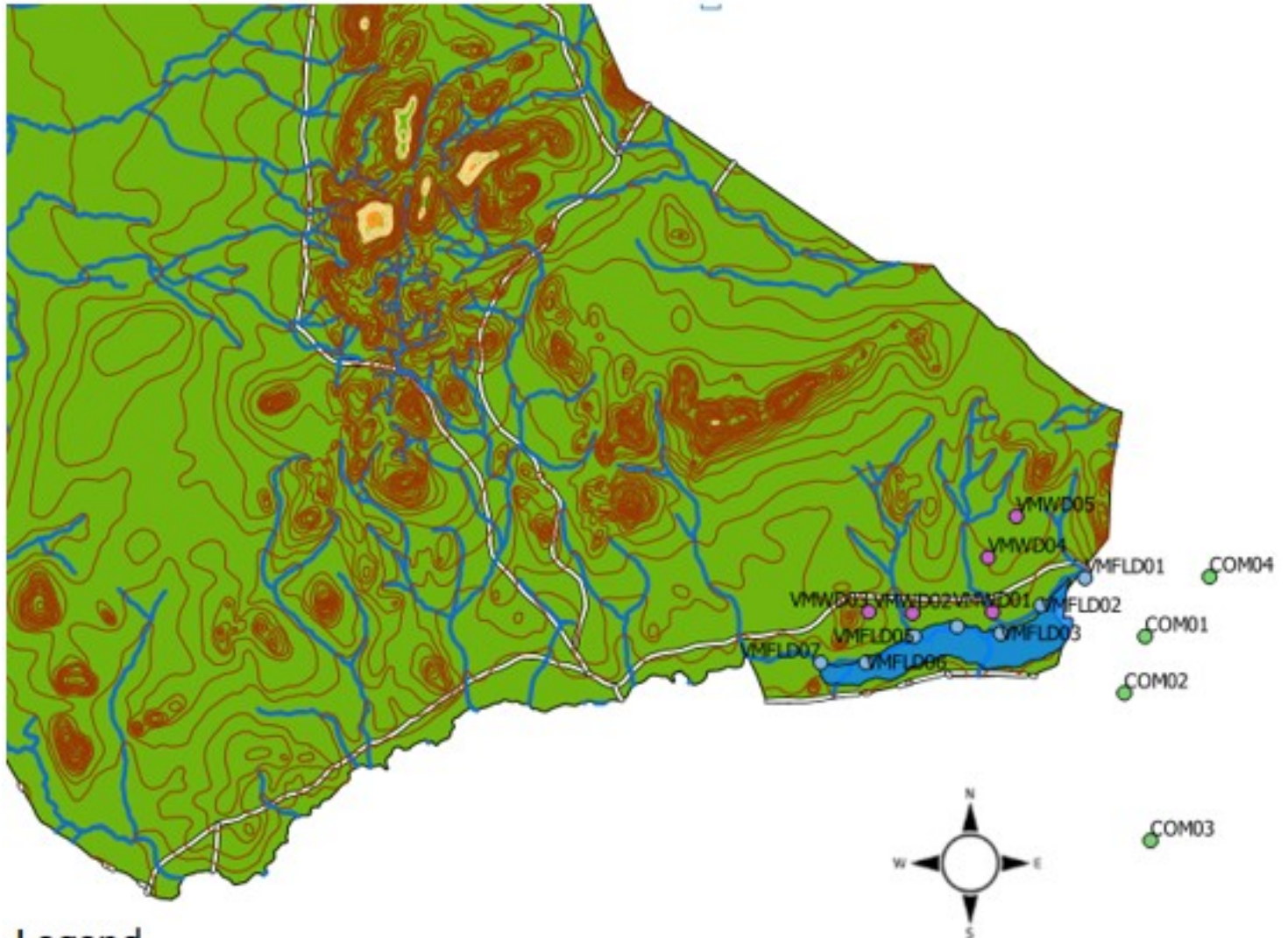
No	Latin Name	Common Name	Locations Caught				
			Liwonde Park	Lilongwe	Nyika NP	Vwaza Marsh WR	Other
1	<i>Chaerephon</i> sp.	Free-tailed bats		X			
2	<i>Chaerephon ansorgei</i>	Ansorge's free-tailed bat	X				
3	<i>Chaerephon pumilus</i>	Little free-tailed bat	X			X	
4	<i>Eidolon helvum</i>	Straw-coloured fruit bat		X			X
5	<i>Epomophorus crypturus</i>	Peters's epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X	X
6	<i>Epomophorus labiatus</i>	Little epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X	
7	<i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i>	Wahlberg's epauletted fruit bat	X	X		X	X
8	<i>Epomops dobsonii</i>	Dobson's epauletted fruit bat		X		X	
9	<i>Eptesicus hottentotus</i>	Long-tailed serotine	X				
10	<i>Glauconycteris variegata</i>	Variegated butterfly bat	X			X	
11	<i>Hipposideros caffer</i>	Sundevall's leaf-nosed bat	X	X		X	
12	<i>Hipposideros gigas</i>	Giant leaf-nosed bat	X				X
13	<i>Hipposideros ruber</i>	Noack's leaf-nosed bat	X				
14	<i>Kerivoula lanosa</i>	Lesser woolly bat				X	
15	<i>Laephotis botswanae</i>	Botswana long-eared bat	X				X
16	<i>Lissonycteris goliath</i>	Harrison's soft-furred fruit bat					X
17	<i>Mimetillus thomasi</i>	Thomas's flat headed bat	X				
18	<i>Miniopterus</i> sp.	long-fingered bats	X				
19	<i>Mops condylurus</i>	Angolan free-tailed bat	X			X	X
20	<i>Mops niveiventer</i>	White-bellied free-tailed bat		X			X
21	<i>Myotis bocagii</i>	Rufous myotis	X	X		X	X
22	<i>Myotis tricolor</i>	Temminck's myotis	X				X
23	<i>Myotis welwitschii</i>	Welwitsch's myotis	X				
24	<i>Neoromicia</i> sp.*	Pipistrelles	X	X		X	X
25	<i>Neoromicia nana</i>	Banana bat	X	X		X	



# ABC Bat Species List

No	Latin Name	Common Name	Locations Caught				
			Liwonde NP	Lilongwe	Nyika NP	Vwaza Marsh WR	Other
26	<i>Neoromicia rendalli</i>	Rendall's serotine	X			X	
27	<i>Nycteris grandis</i>	Large slit-faced bat	X				
28	<i>Nycteris hispida</i>	Hairy slit-faced bat				X	
29	<i>Nycteris macrotis</i>	Large-eared slit-faced bat	X				
30	<i>Nycteris thebaica</i>	Egyptian slit faced bat	X			X	
31	<i>Nycticeinops schlieffeni</i>	Schlieffen's twilight bat	X			X	
32	<i>Pipistrellus sp.*</i>	Pipistrelles	X	X	X	X	X
33	<i>Pipistrellus rueppellii</i>	Ruppell's pipistrelle	X			X	
34	<i>Rhinolophus clivosus</i>	Geoffroy's horseshoe bat		X			
35	<i>Rhinolophus fumigatus</i>	Ruppell's horseshoe bat	X			X	
36	<i>Rhinolophus hildebrandtii</i>	Hildebrandt's horseshoe bat	X			X	
37	<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i>	Egyptian rousette	X				
38	<i>Rousettus lanosus</i>	Hairy rousette			X		
39	<i>Scotoecus hindei/albigula</i>	Dark-winged lesser house bat	X	X		X	X
40	<i>Scotophilus dinganii</i>	Yellow-bellied house bat		X		X	X
41	<i>Scotophilus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied house bat	X				
42	<i>Scotophilus viridis</i>	Green house bat	X	X			
43	<i>Scotophilus nigrita</i>	Giant yellow house bat	X				
44	<i>Tadarida aegyptica</i>	Egyptian free-tailed bat					X
45	<i>Tadarida ventralis</i>	Giant free-tailed bat					X
46	<i>Taphozous mauritanus</i>	Mauritian tomb bat	X	X		X	
47	<i>Triaenops afer</i>	African trident bat	X				X

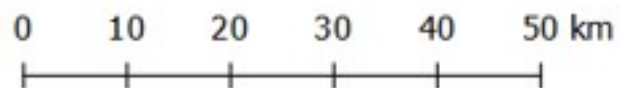
# BMP Sites Vwaza Marsh



## Legend

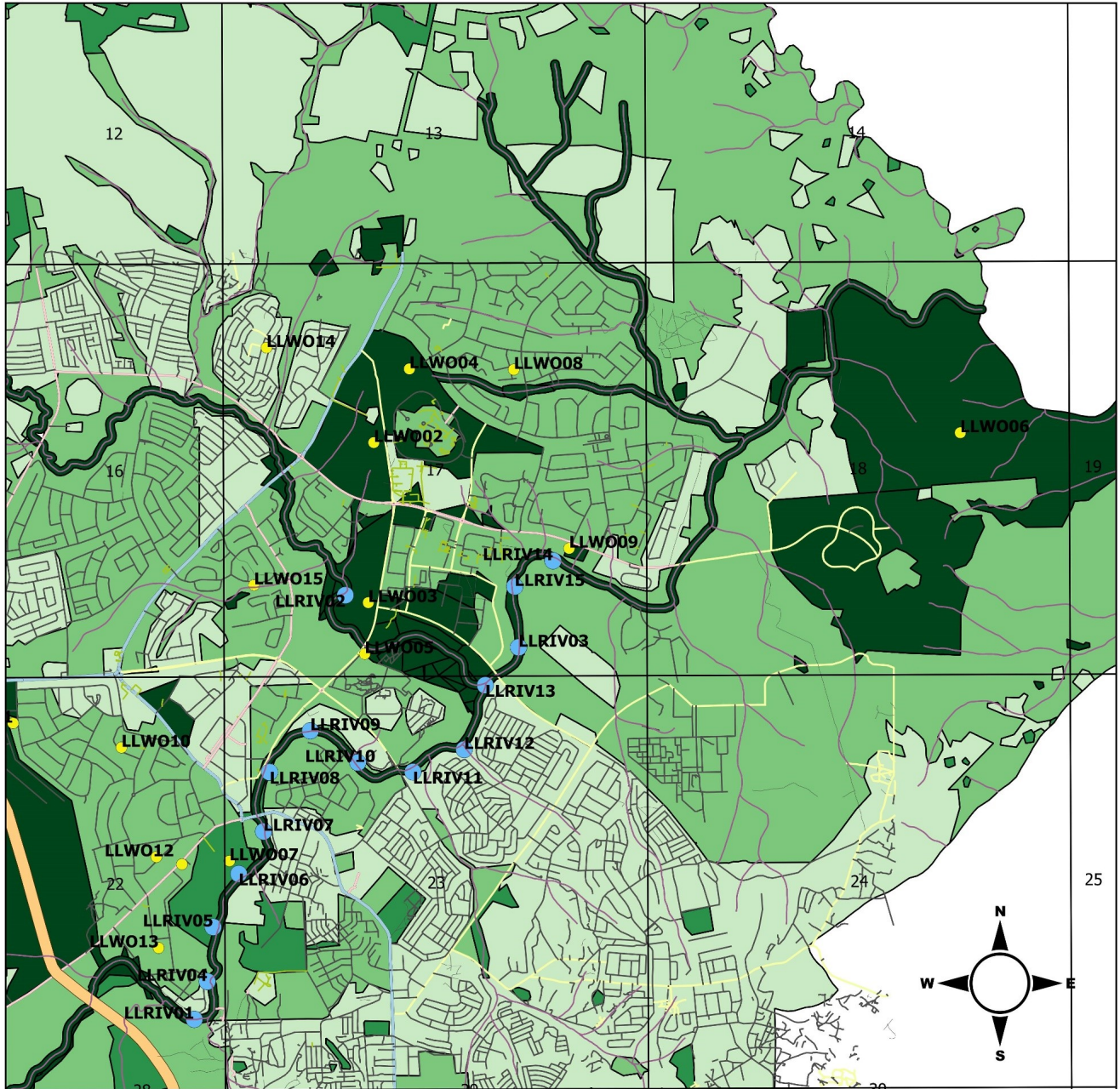
### BMP Sites

- Community
- Floodplain
- Woodland
- lake kazuni
- Vwaza marsh wildlife reserve



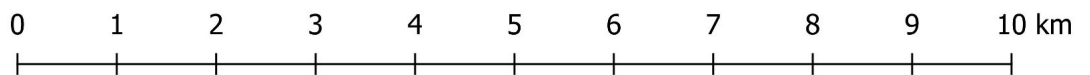
# BMP Sites in Lilongwe

## Urban Bat Project BMP sites

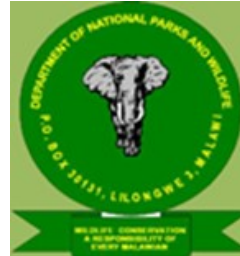


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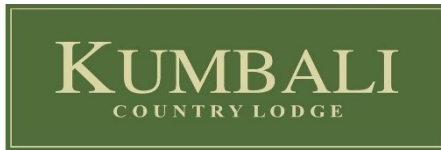
- River sites
- Garden sites
- Priority
- High
- Medium
- Low



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