

# Monthly Report



March 2018



The giant leaf-nosed bat  
(*Hipposideros gigas*)

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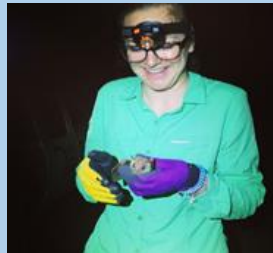
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# Vwaza Marsh News

## Growing Relationship with the Kazuni Community

Following previous successful surveys ABC has now established four BMP sites within the Kazuni community surrounding the south of Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. Since surveying in the schools of Kazuni, the team have been able to conduct outreach and education talks (Figure 1). These would not be possible without the teachers and the Community Officer translating to the children. The research team have since received feedback from the community expressing their surprise to find that bats are an important group of animals and provide vital ecosystem services. Community members from Kazuni have approached ABC, requesting for bat surveys to be



**Figure 1:** ABC Research Assistant, Abigail Robinson, delivering an educational talk during a survey in Kazuni.

carried out in other areas of the village. It is essential for ABC to nurture this relationship as without the support of the community we are not able to advocate for bats and conduct research to identify the impacts that humans have on bat populations.

Awareness of ABC is also essential as the community need to be able to approach us with any conflict situations they may be experiencing.

## Carnivores in Vwaza Marsh

The Vwaza team have had many interesting sightings of other wildlife this month. One of the most exciting records

was of what appears to be leopard (*Panthera pardus*) tracks close to camp (Figure 2). This is good news for Vwaza as, combined with recent records of lions (*Panthera leo*) in the area, the countries severely persecuted carnivores may be returning to their former range.



**Figure 2:** Leopard tracks found outside of camp in VMWR.

However positive this news is, Malawi's carnivores still have a way to go before they have fully recovered. Increased protection, research and education (as conducted by fellow branch of Conservation Research Africa, Carnivore Research Malawi) is essential to support this recovery.

In an attempt to try and confirm the presence of leopard, the team placed several camera traps in the area. Unfortunately, no leopard was caught on camera. However, several other exciting species were photographed including impala (*aepyceros melampus*), yellow baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*), hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), and a genet (*Genetta spp.*) (Figure 3). Although the leopard was not sighted, it is great to know that the team are sharing the area around camp with such a diverse range of species.



**Figure 3:** Genet (*Genetta spp*) captured on a camera trap set outside of the Vwaza research camp

# Urban Lilongwe Project News

## Dispelling Bat Myths

On Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of March the urban bat team (Andrew and Becky) along with the CRA Community Outreach Officer (Godwin) visited Wonder Private School, with the aim to inform the students about bats. Thirty students ranging from 13 to 19 years of age gathered in a class room to hear the presentation. After outlining the diversity of bats in Malawi and their benefits, the students were able to ask questions. This was a great opportunity to dispel myths and misinformation about bats which are prevalent in Malawi. Most questions related to being attacked by bats and the diseases they can carry. The students were reassured that bats do not attack unless provoked which is usually when they are picked up from the ground. Students also asked about bats and diseases, especially Ebola, and were informed that although bats, like all animals, can carry a range of diseases, the risk to human health is minimal if you do not handle the animals and practice basic hygiene. Such as washing hands after cleaning up guano.

## First Urban Bat Box Scheme Check

In December of 2017 ABC installed 30 bat boxes throughout the Lilongwe wildlife centre. These bat boxes will be used for research and allow for long term monitoring of the bat population in the area. The boxes are important as they may also increase available roosts for urban bats which are often limited to buildings. This month the boxes were checked for the first time (Figure 4), with a number of surprising results.

Unfortunately, no bats were present within the boxes when they were checked. However, it can take several months even a year before a bat may roost in a box. This



**Figure 4:** Hannah, an ABC volunteer, checking a bat box at the wildlife centre

depends on species. Some bats frequently switch roosts and are likely to make use of bat boxes earlier than some other species which remain loyal to a single roost. This is known as roost fidelity.

Although there were no bats, bush babies (*Galagidae* spp.) were inhabiting four boxes (Figure 5), including a family of three. Small rodents were recorded in six boxes three of which were dormice (*Gliridae* spp.), which is an exciting find. The ABC boxes will be checked every two weeks ongoing. Modifications will be made to the boxes as some of these animals, especially bush babies, will almost certainly opportunistically predate bats and deter them from using these roosts. All part of adapting a UK design of bat box to be used in the woodlands of Malawi!



**Figure 5:** A greater bush baby (*Galagidae* spp.) in one of the bat boxes.

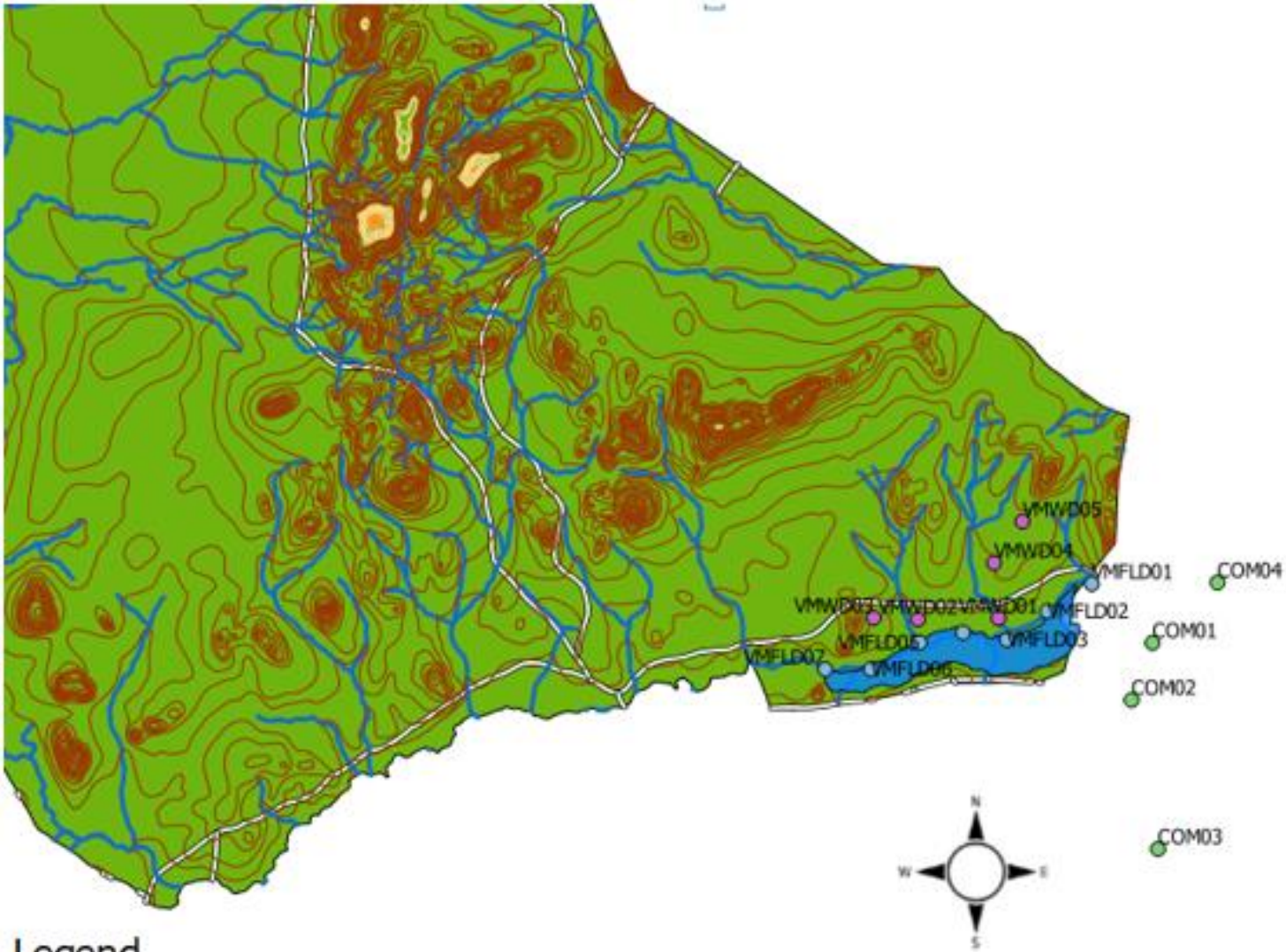
# ABC Bat Species List

No	Latin Name	Common Name	Locations Caught				
			Liwonde Park	Lilongwe	Nyika NP	Vwaza Marsh WR	Other
1	<i>Chaerephon sp.</i>	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>	Variiegated 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 sp.</i>	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 sp.*</i>	Pipistrelles	X	X		X	X
25	<i>Neoromicia nana</i>	Banana bat	X	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

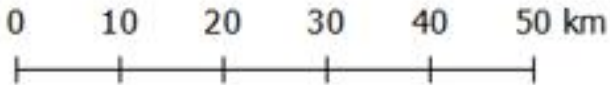
# BMP Sites in Vwaza Marsh



## Legend

### BMP Sites

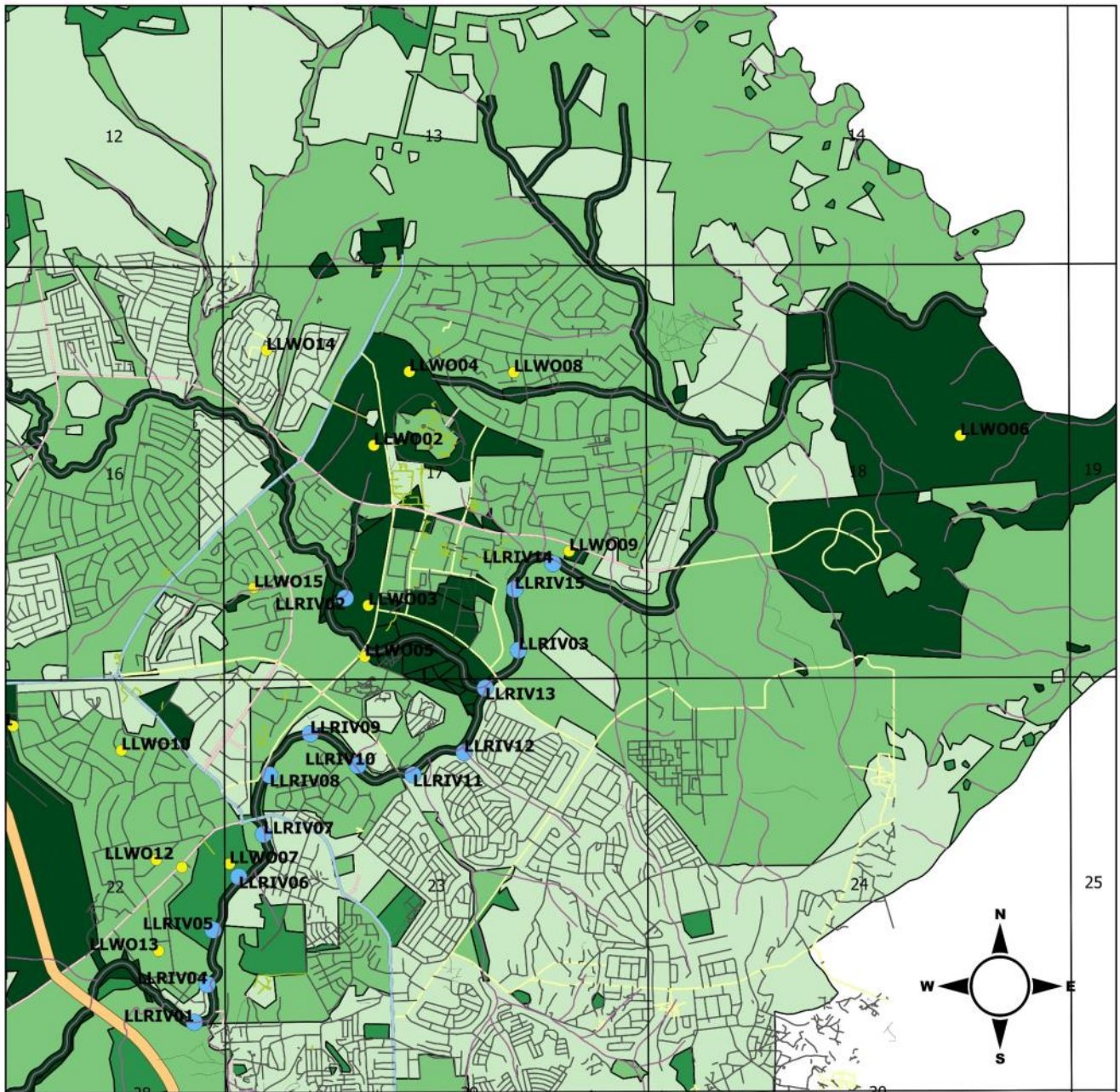
- Community
- Floodplain
- Woodland
- lake kazuni
- Vwaza marsh wildlife reserve





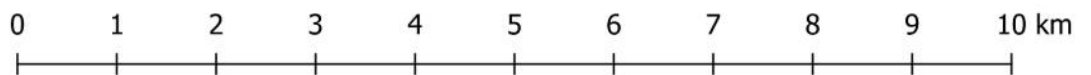
# BMP Sites in Lilongwe

## Urban Bat Project BMP sites



### Legend

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



# ABC Sponsors & Partners



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