

## STATE OF CONSERVATION OF LAKE MALAWI NATIONAL PARK

NAME: Lake Malawi National Park, STATE PARTY: Malawi, ID No: N289

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State of conservation report for Lake Malawi National Park World Heritage Site outlines the progress that has been undertaken by the Site since 2016 in response to the IUCN /UNESCO joint Mission report following to the visit undertaken in April, 2014 (**Decisions 38 COM 7B.92, 40 COM 7B.81 and Decision 42 COM 7B.93**) adopted at its 38<sup>th</sup> (Doha, 2014), 40<sup>th</sup> (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), and (Manama, 2018) and thereafter **Decision: 44 COM 7B.82** by the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou, China 2021). As it has been noted by the World Heritage Committee in its **Decision: 42 COM 7B.93** the effort which the State Party of Malawi has taken for the property's conservation and the implementation of the 2014 mission recommendations, the management has put much effort for the conservation, maintenance and monitoring of the Outstanding Universal Values of the property by engaging different stakeholders including the local communities.

Malawi in response to recommendation by the monitoring mission in 2014 received support from the World Heritage Fund which has been used for finalization of the drafting of the Management Plan and Monitoring Protocol. Equipment for monitoring of biodiversity in the property has been procured using these funds. Different stakeholders are being engaged in assisting with monitoring procedures. University of Malawi, the Chancellor College and other International Researchers have been assisting in monitoring of aquatic and terrestrial resources. The property has been included in areas of Key Biodiversity by IUCN following the workshop that was held in Malawi in 2018 by IUCN. The focal point on Key Biodiversity Areas is the Department of Fisheries which is being supported by World Bank. Monitoring of its activities includes areas of the property.

Africa Development Bank which has provided grant for Promoting Investment in Tourism Sector has extended its components to the conservation of two protected areas in the country which included Lake Malawi National Park World Heritage Property. This will enhance conservation and monitoring activities for the property as they have procured equipment for law enforcement and materials for the marking of the aquatic boundaries.

In 2020 Lake Malawi National Park through UNESCO Headquarters received funding from Netherlands Funds in Trust which was used to enhance conservation efforts by the State Party. In its **Decision 42 COM 7B.93<sup>1</sup>** (Manama, 2018), the World Heritage Committee welcomed the progress made by the State Party of Malawi to update the World Heritage property's management plan and to establish a fish monitoring protocol. The Committee also requested the State Party to take this opportunity to identify and reinforce

<sup>1</sup><https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7322>

the required management responses to the various threats and challenges facing the property, including growing population pressures inside the property, and ensuring continued close cooperation between the park management, communities, and the competent research and government institutions. Therefore this fund assisted in integrating the local communities from in and around Lake Malawi National Park World Heritage Site in the management and conservation of the property with reference to the World Heritage Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022 (Resolution 18GA 11.2011) and the World Heritage Capacity building strategy (Decision 35 COM 9B, 2011). This fund assisted in the development of community development plan where a 'Needs Assessment Survey' was conducted by University of Malawi in selected communities within and around the National Park. This assisted in the identifying priority activities that simultaneously support site conservation and people's wellbeing and assessing the remaining community natural resources committees and developing a vacation skills in women groups from the enclave villages.

Demarcation of the terrestrial Park boundaries of the property was done to enhance conservation issues of the property. While within water, marking of the boundary with floating buoys was done by African Development Bank support through Promoting Investment and Competitiveness in Tourism Sector Project. At the end of boundary marking an electronic topographic map of the site was produced.

The conservation effort for the property was promoted with support which RIPPLE Africa received in 2021 from UNESCO where it implemented a project in fish conservation by working with local communities within and around Lake Malawi National Park. RIPPLE Africa introduced effective community led fisheries management to protect cichlids fish species both in the protected National Parks area and in the buffer zone around it. This is a two years project to end August, 2023.

From what is being examined by the World Heritage Committee "Document WHC-21/44.COM/7B (Decision 44 COM 7B.82) there are number of activities that are being addressed for monitoring of management of the key Outstanding Universal Values of the property to maintain its status of World Heritage Site. As indicated above management activities undertaken as requested by the WHC are outlined below paragraph by paragraph.

The Outstanding Universal Values of the site are being maintained though there might be some challenges as pointed out in the Monitoring Mission and are indicated below as current issues observed by the State Party.

## WORLD HERITAGE VALUES OF LAKE MALAWI NATIONAL PARK

Values	Description	WH Criterion
Outstanding natural beauty of lake in Rift Valley	The lake is characterized by its crystal clear waters, and the diversity of habitats amongst its many rocky islands and shores. It is situated in the Great Rift Valley and set against the wooded hillsides of steep escarpments on either side. Much of the shoreline is composed of massive rounded granite boulders, partially submerged and washed by wave action. Between the steeper rocky sections are sun-drenched sandy bays, with inflowing rivers and streams creating the occasional reed-filled lagoon and lake-edge swamps. The position of these landscape elements creates scenes of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Statement of Outstanding Universal Values, 2010).	(vii)
Key example of evolutionary processes	The lake provides an extraordinary example of evolutionary processes, the phenomenal adaptive radiation of cichlid fishes (known locally as mbuna) along its rocky shores resulting in an array of species and varieties unmatched anywhere else in the world. The speciation of cichlid fishes in Lake Malawi is considered to be of equal or greater importance for the study of evolutionary processes as the Galapagos Island finches or honeycreepers of Hawaii (IUCN Evaluation, 1980, SoOUV, 2010)	(ix)
Extraordinary diversity of fish species	The lake is thought to have the largest number of fish species of any lake in the world, with estimates varying between about 1,000 (SoOUV, 2010) and 3,000 species (UNEP-WCMC, 2012), of which as many as 800 belong to the family Cichlidae. Lake Malawi is home to 15% of the world's freshwater fish species (Chafota et al., 2005)	(x)
Extremely high levels of species endemism	Endemism is extremely high, with more than 98% of cichlid fish known only from Lake Malawi (SoOUV, 2010).	(x)
Terrestrial biodiversity	The terrestrial part of property comprises wooded hillsides that protect part of the catchment of the lake, the biodiversity of these terrestrial habitats includes a few notable species. Mammals include hippo (particularly in the Monkey Bay area) duiker, baboon, vervet monkey, bush pig, warthog and occasional elephant (reported as	



reduced or extirpated from the area. The park is rich in birdlife including fish eagle along the shoreline. The islands, especially Mumbo and Boadzulu, are important nesting areas for white-throated cormorant which number several thousand. Reptiles include crocodiles and abundant monitor lizards on Boadzulu Island.(SoOUV, 2010)

Topics of the State of Conservation Report (as format)	Summaries of State Party's Report on the State of Conservation of Lake Malawi National Park World Heritage Property, MALAWI
<p>1) Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph</p> <p>Decision: 44 COM7B.82</p>	<p><b>The World Heritage committee decisions or recommendations, Decision: 44 COM 7B.82</b></p> <p><b>With reference to the extract of the Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 44<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee held on line (Fuzhou, China 2021)</b></p> <p><b>MALAWI'S ( STATE PARTY) RESPONSES TO WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISION</b></p> <p>(1) Response to paragraph 4 Law enforcement patrols are conducted on the terrestrial and waters of the Park. This is a key activity for the site to ensure the protection and conservation of the biodiversity and OUV values of the site. Additional law enforcement camps have been established at Makawa on the southern part of the lake where we have Boadzulu Island and in Salima to monitor and protect Maleri islands apart from Monkey Bay and Cape Maclear camps that conduct patrols on the main land of Nankumba Peninsula and the four islands around Cape Maclear. The terrestrial Park boundary was marked with beacon to demarcate the Property boundary. And Floating buoys was fixed around the 100m zone of the protected area of the property 12 islands. In areas where there are encroachment problem perpetrators were taken to court to face the law and eviction orders was issued. The property is also engaging other stakeholders like Department of Lands and Survey to align the mark boundary mainly at Chembe enclave village where local communities are claiming the area around Mwala wa Mphini (rock with scars) as they are using the old Forestry map of 1939 boundary. The property is also working with the offices of District Commissioner, Court and Police to ensure the Protection of the terrestrial Park boundary.</p> <p>Thereforein response to paragraph 4, marine and terrestrial patrols has been enhanced to ensure enforcement of fishing restrictions and destruction of other natural resource to protect the OUV.A new speed boat has been procured with the funds from AfDB to enhance patrols and other monitoring activities. There is close cooperation between the Park, local communities, academic institutions, other government departments and NGOs to ensure protection of natural resources in the park through community awareness on the threat over population like the</p>

Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) – IntNRMS Project which is working on conservation of natural resources and livelihood support activities.

- (2) On other Recurrent Budget from Central Government monthly allocation are flowing every month and Department of National Parks and Wildlife provides the property with additional funds from Treasury Fund where 50% of the revenue collected at the site from tourism activities that include park entry fees, concession fees and research fees are returned for operations at Site.
- (3) African Development Bank Project has been providing support in law enforcement operation by providing fuel for marine patrols amounting to MK 1,200,000.00 for three months during the period of its activities.
- (4) RIPPLE Africa is working closely with local communities through introduced effective community led fisheries management to protect cichlids fish species both in the protected National Parks area and in the buffer zone around it. The Village Natural Resources Committees, and the Beach Village Committees have been empowered to enforce fishing regulations by using By-laws. The BVCs and VNRCs have been empowered to take to task fishers who do not observe regulation and do illegal fishing. The two local institutions are working together in collaboration with Department of National Parks and Wildlife, and Department of Fisheries in conservation matters.
  - (i) A research for woodland monitoring is being carried out by SATREPS -Integrated Natural Resources Management System Project. This is a project supported by Japanese Government where two Public University (University of Malawi and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources) are working with Universities from Japan on different research activities in Lake Malawi National Park to promote conservation of LMNP and livelihood of local communities in the enclave villages. The research for woodland monitoring will assist LMNP to come up with Resource Use Guidelines for monitoring resource use in the park . Current Management activities ;
  - (a) *Law enforcement Patrols – These are routine activity where patrols are conducted on the mainland and on the water of Lake Malawi National Park. Marine and terrestrial patrols has been enhanced to ensure enforcement of fishing restrictions and destruction of other natural resources to protect the OUV though we have a challenge for the growing human populations in the enclave villages and around the National Park. All illegal resource users are arrested and taken to police where later are taken to court for court hearing in relation to the offence which one commits with reference to the*



*National Parks and Wildlife Act.*

- (b) Research and Monitoring Activities - Base line survey for periodic monitoring of fish biodiversity for long term data collection for the conservation and management of natural resources in the property. A survey of fish biodiversity in the littoral zone of Lake Malawi National Park done in April, 2022 and the next survey to be conducted in May 2023. This survey was conducted in collaboration with University of Malawi, Department of Fisheries Research Unit at Monkey Bay and Lake Malawi National Park.. The report for this activity is available.*
- (c) Research and Monitoring Activity - Dead wood monitoring survey being conducted in the IntNRMS Project in collaboration of Lake Malawi National Park, University of Malawi, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ryukoku University from Japan and Local Community from in and around Lake Malawi National Park. This research activity will assist the property to come up with Guidelines for resource use programme as local community are allowed to collect dead wood and thatch grass but there are no guidelines to be used. Therefore this assessment will assist the property to have information on the availability and sustainability of collection of resources in the National Park which will also help Policy makers to come up with the management decision for resource use in Lake Malawi National Park.*
- (d) Community extension and awareness programme – the property conduct public awareness programs for sensitization of the communities on conservation and management of LMNP World Heritage Site.*
- (e) Environmental Education Programme – where the property conduct in reach and outreach programme on environmental education programs in schools around the Park.*
- (f) Public awareness and support for conservation – Conservation radio and TV Programme to sensitize the general public about preservation and conservation of the site's OUVs.*
- (g) Stakeholders' engagement on the management of Lake Malawi National Park – collaboration meeting with District Council, local leaders, Government departments and NGOs on issues of concerns for the management of the site are organized for stakeholders to come up with management decisions.*
- (h) Monitoring of property activities - The property will be using a Protected Area Management Effectiveness assessment for monitoring its activities. The tool to be used is the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET). In this monitoring assessment the Department of National Parks and Wildlife through LMNP WHS will be working in collaboration with Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) where some officers will be trained by the University and implement the programme together. This activity will be implemented with support from BIOPAMA.*
- (i) Benefits sharing scheme- The Park is working closely with local communities where DNPW is allocating 25% of revenue collected from LMNP and local communities are participating in resource*

protection through monitoring of resource collection by communities in the enclave village through the developed local institutions known as Village Natural Resources Committees. Local community have been benefiting from revenue collected from the Park for their community benefits. Over 25,000 U\$ has been allocated to the local communities.

*Promotion of Livelihood of Local communities in and around LMNPWHS* - Through African Development Bank Project, there are initiatives for sustainable livelihood strategies where local communities have been trained in business management and given business opportunity diverting them from relying on the natural resources from the Park. The Bank allocated 26,923 USD to the local community where they have started business in tourism operations and beekeeping.

(2) Response to paragraph 5 Oil exploration: Currently it has been learnt that oil exploration will take place only in block 2 and 3 which is part of Karonga, Nkhata Bay and Dwambazi. The other blocks that are close to the property have been canceled. The only company conducting explorations Hamra Oil Holdings Limited have renewed their exploration license in the above-mentioned areas for the next three Years 2020 to 2022. Oil exploration activities are closely monitored by several environmental agencies

- (b) The feasibility of establishing a buffer zone and Extension of the property boundary: The Park boundary was established in 1980 through the National Park Establishment Order of 24th November 1980 published as Government Notice No. 205 of 1980 which contains the boundary description of the property for both terrestrial and aquatic areas. Concrete beacons were erected in some areas to mark the terrestrial boundary. For the aquatic zone, area of water extending outwards for a distance of 100 meters from the islands is the official aquatic perimeter of the property. The official establishment order for the property does not provide for a buffer zone. As a result, in some areas, there is human activity up to the edge of the park boundary. Expanding the boundaries proves to be a very difficult task considering the fact that Malawi despite its small size has a population of 17 million with over 90% being rural communities hence creating a large demand for farmland. Similarly, on the aquatic zone, the areas outside the property are community fishing grounds. It is pleasing to note that despite increased pressure



	<p>on the property's natural resources the communities largely work hand in hand with the park management to ensure the boundaries are respected and its natural resources are protected.</p> <p>( 4 ) Response to paragraph 6 (a) The State part will follow all necessary steps for any development Projects to be undertaken (including oil exploration outside the Property's boundary and any infrastructure and tourism developments that may impact on the property's OUV) by conducting Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIAs) in accordance with the 'Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Site</p> <p>( 5 ) Response to paragraph 7(a)Tourism measures for the development of Cape Maclear and an ESIA will be conducted with reference to the IUCN World Heritage Advise Note on Environmental Assessment and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN before any decision is taken for development</p> <p>(6) Response to paragraph 8 recent documented data to determine the state of conservation of key species and other scientifically verifiable monitoring data have been attached to this report that include recent research conducted at the site for establishing the baseline survey for monitoring of diversity of cichlids and law enforcement</p>
<b>2) Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party</b>	Sustainable management of the increasing human population in enclave villages in the property. Different Stakeholders are being involved in addressing this problem. However terrestrial patrols and boundary inspections are being enhanced to avoid encroachment in areas around enclave villages.
<b>3) In conformity with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines</b> below are descriptions of potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) within the protected area and its buffer zone and/or corridors that might be envisaged	
<b>A )Major restorations</b>	N/A



<b>B) Alterations and/or new construction(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Expansion of enclave settlements. In the 1970s the population in the enclave villages was at 4,615, in early 1990s it rose to 10,000. In 2002 it was estimated at 18, 000 (Ambali, <i>et al</i>; 2002. It is now have grown to over 25, 000 (National Statistics 2018).</li> <li>2) Inappropriate tourism development: Although all the existing tourism facilities in and around the park appear to be low-impact establishments, there is a real risk of inappropriate developments that could impact the natural beauty and other attributes of the area. Examples include the ecotourism facilities on Hotels, Lodges and cottages along the lakeshores outside the park.</li> <li>3) Aquarium trade in fish. Although most of the (considerable) worldwide demand for Lake Malawi's colourful rock-dwelling 'mbuna' cichlids is met through captive breeding programmes in other countries, there is still a significant trade in wild-caught fish from Malawi . The effects of this trade have not been investigated, but it is thought that it may lead to (1) local over-fishing of particular (high-value) species and (2) re-introduction of fish to parts of lake where they do not naturally occur (most of the mbuna have evolved in particular parts of the lake isolated from other areas of potentially-suitable habitat by habitat barriers such as lagoons or stretches of sand).</li> <li>4) Tourist and domestic waste. Tourist and domestic wastes, i</li> </ol>
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## OVERALL CONSERVATION OUTLOOK

Lake Malawi retains its outstanding attributes as one of the world's great freshwater lakes, and its natural beauty remains undiminished. The evolutionary processes that have resulted in the development of an extraordinary diversity of colorful rock-dwelling cichlid fish are likely to be intact since the rocky lakeshore habitats are stable and potential threats (e.g. introduced predators, or large-scale pollution) have not been realized. The limited available evidence (from fisheries surveys) suggests that species diversity and levels of endemism are being maintained, but more systematic monitoring of these key attributes is required.

The World Heritage property covers just 0.02% of the lake's area and is vulnerable to threats originating beyond its boundaries, including over-fishing and the degradation of aquatic habitats resulting from soil erosion in the lake's catchment areas.

Budgets are insufficient to provide the level of management input required. There are no buffer zones for communities to have a utility area for their needs of thatch grass and firewood instead they rely on the Park.

The Lake Malawi Management Plan has been finally finalized and the Fish Monitoring Protocol developed. This will assist in coming up with measures of addressing some of the challenges the property is to face.

The policy, legislative and planning framework for Lake Malawi National Park is strong, and the key values of the property – its scenic qualities and the evolutionary processes that have led to the development of its extraordinarily rich, endemic fish fauna - remain largely intact. These values are however threatened by a number of insidious factors related to the pressures of a rapidly growing human population causing deforestation and soil erosion in the lake's catchment areas, and ever-more intensive exploitation of fisheries. LMNP is very small (94km<sup>2</sup>, of which only 7 km<sup>2</sup> covers aquatic habitats), accounting for just 0.02% of the lake's surface area. This makes it especially vulnerable to potentially devastating threats from outside its borders, including the threat of commercial fishing.

Signature of the Authority

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Malawi National World Heritage Focal Point

