

AFRICAN BAT CONSERVATION

Bat Field Assistant – Malawi



African Bat Conservation (ABC) is a non-profit conservation research project based in Malawi, operating under UK Charity Conservation Research Africa (CRA) and in partnership with the University of the West of England, UK. ABC works in collaboration with and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Malawi (DNPW) to conduct three core activities:

1. **Applied research for wildlife conservation management:** to determine and monitor bat population trends, assess species threats and provide conservation recommendations; as well as a number of smaller student projects to facilitate and inform long-term conservation management of bat populations and their habitats. Project results are used to update IUCN species status reports and assist Government in long-term population monitoring and management.
2. **Education and awareness** of bats and biodiversity and related issues through comprehensive community based education programmes, human-wildlife conflict outreach in collaboration with LWT and their Eco-schools programme.
3. **Capacity building** to increase project effectiveness and long-term success by building capacity in ecological research, biodiversity monitoring and management for DNPW through training courses, attachment programmes and postgraduate research projects at MSc and PhD level.

Summary:

African Bat Conservation conducts research on bats across Malawi both at field sites and in urban areas of Lilongwe as part of our long term applied conservation research project. We conduct bat monitoring and research (mist netting, roost surveys and bat box programmes, and at certain times of year radio tracking bats in the urban environment) in Lilongwe and community outreach visits to respond to calls for assistance with human-bat conflict, providing advice and practical human-bat conflict mitigation. We are currently recruiting for a research assistant to assist our programme across sites in Malawi.





Person Specification Summary:

We are looking for someone with:

Inspirational Leadership skills: You will need to be a great leader, able to inspire and motivate others.

Organisational skills: We are looking for someone who is highly organised and practical, with an eye for detail.

Management skills: you must have excellent interpersonal and management skills and experience of dealing with students and volunteers in a professional manner.

Maturity and **Professionalism** is a must, as well as the ability to work maintain the motivation and research output despite the many daily challenges of working in Malawi.

The position requires that you work at any of our sites as per project needs. This includes in Lilongwe and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. Work is on demand, with long hours, working a 6 day week. Being a conservation organisation we do not have regular office hours, so you will be required to conduct work as required by the project demand, including night work. Therefore you will need to be willing to work in the field at night, out of hours according to the programme need and have a positive can do attitude.



This post offers an excellent opportunity for career development for a researcher who is interested in applied conservation biology, bats and human-wildlife conflict.

The post-holder will:

- Work under the supervision of our Research Manager and alongside our ABC Community Outreach team
- Conduct field work at night and in the day including:
 - I. bat harp trapping and mist netting
 - II. bat acoustic surveys (SM3/4detectors)
 - III. roost surveys (internal, external and emergence counts)
 - IV. community site visits and outreach, to educate communities regarding bat conservation and management and install/advise regarding conflict mitigation
 - V. tagging and radio tracking bats (at certain times of year)
 - VI. bat box surveys
 - VII. vegetation surveys
 - VIII. and any other field work as required
 - IX. Conduct some acoustic analysis of bat calls
 - X. Maintain, summarise and store data in a specifically designed Microsoft Access database
 - XI. Create and edit habitat and roost maps in ArcGIS
 - XII. Manage volunteers and volunteer schedules
 - XIII. Attend and contribute to project meetings every week
 - XIV. Be flexible in the hours worked to fluctuating demand
 - XV. Work closely and co-operatively with other team members and partner organisations
 - XVI. Fulfil all administrative and budget requirements on time and accurately
 - XVII. Maintain accurate records of work activities and data entry
 - XVIII. Contribute to project reports, newsletters, bulletins etc as required



Requirements:

Essential

- Positive can do attitude with mature approach
- BSc in conservation biology, zoology, biology or related field

- Experience of working and living in field based environments, preferably in Africa
- Experience of field research, particularly with bats
- A confident communicator who is able to relate well to people from diverse backgrounds and cultures
- Experience of working with volunteers from diverse backgrounds and ages
- Proven experience of working co-operatively as part of a team
- Enthusiasm and self motivation for working on applied conservation research
- Maturity, and a positive mental attitude, resilient, ability to muck in and get on with it
- Ability to work independently under minimal supervision
- Experience of data collection under minimal supervision
- Hard work ethic, flexible and conscientious approach
- Driving licence

Desirable

- MSc or PhD in ecology, zoology, biology
- Experienced in radio tracking, tagging, harp trapping and mist netting bats
- Experience in dealing with human wildlife conflict
- Experience of off road driving with 4x4
- Experience of managing own workload and taking responsibility for projects
- Experience of ArcGIS mapping, digitising and home range analysis

Contract Conditions:

Timing: This is a 1 year position commencing asap.

Hours: Full time flexible working hours, 6 days per week, with night work.

Location: The role is flexible according to our needs so could include time in Lilongwe city, based at our urban research office and at our field site in Vwaza marsh Wildlife Reserve.

Accommodation: In Lilongwe the post holder will be based at the ABC research offices and staff house in a shared room. There is a living area, kitchen, showers and compost toilets. In the field you will be sharing a walk in safari tent with beds with another staff member. There are bucket showers and long drop toilets.



Costs and contract conditions: ABC will cover all work related accommodation and 3 meals per day, and work related travel costs including airport transfers. The post-holder will be required to cover flights, food, visas, insurance and vaccinations.

Application process

To apply please send a completed application form and covering letter (outlining why you think you would be suitable for the post) and a CV if you wish to Emma Stone on emma4.stone@uwe.ac.uk

Further project information: www.africanbatconservation.org