



29 July 2021

## African Wild Dogs return to Malawi

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**Blantyre, Malawi:** On 27 July 2021, 14 African Wild Dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) were translocated successfully from South Africa and Mozambique to Liwonde National Park and Majete Wildlife Reserve, in an historic project to reintroduce this Endangered species to Malawi. The translocation was undertaken through a collaboration between the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and African Parks, which manages Liwonde and Majete protected areas in partnership with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). While helping to repopulate both parks, the reintroduction represents a major international effort to conserve African Wild Dogs, with only 6,600 individuals, or just 700 breeding pairs estimated to be left on the continent.

"The Wild Dog is one of Africa's most Endangered mammals, so we're extremely proud to have been able to establish safe spaces in Malawi where their long-term survival can be assured", said the Director of Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Brighton Kumchedwa. "The conservation of our country's natural heritage is central to our national development strategy. Over the past two decades, our collaboration with African Parks and local communities has helped to restore multiple iconic species to our protected areas, contributing not only to meeting global biodiversity targets but to sustainable economic growth".

The African Wild Dogs were sourced from Gorongosa National Park and Karingani Game Reserve in Mozambique, and Somkhanda Community Game Reserve and Maremani Nature Reserve in South Africa. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, all 14 animals were flown in a single aircraft from Mozambique's Massingir Airport to Blantyre in Malawi. Eight were released into bomas in Liwonde National Park and six into bomas in Majete Wildlife Reserve, where they will remain for several weeks, allowing them to adjust to the new conditions before being fully released into the wider park areas. Each pack has been fitted with a mix of satellite and radio collars to facilitate the continual monitoring of their location and habitat use and ensure their long-term protection in the parks.

The DNPW and African Parks partnered in 2003 to manage Majete Wildlife Reserve and subsequently, in 2015, to manage Liwonde National Park, investing significantly in realising the ecological and economic potential of both parks. "Malawi has emerged as a leader in conservation through its progressive actions to revitalise its parks. Over the course of our 18-year partnership with the Malawian Government, we've translocated more than 4,000 animals of key species as part of our efforts to create secure, diverse wildlife sanctuaries that can provide a source of long-term socio-economic benefits for people. Wild Dogs are the latest apex carnivore to be reintroduced to Majete and Liwonde, where they will not only positively impact these ecosystems and their tourism potential, but also the survival of this critically threatened species in Africa" said African Parks' Country Representative Samuel Kamoto.

Since 1998, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's African Wild Dog Range Expansion Project, with guidance from the Wild Dog Advisory Group, has implemented reintroductions of African Wild Dogs across southern Africa. This project has dramatically increased Wild Dog safe space, pack numbers, population numbers, and genetic diversity. The EWT's Carnivore Conservation Programme Coordinator, Cole du Plessis, reflects on the complexity of conserving African Wild Dogs. "They are a highly social species that require extensive space and are subject to several human-induced threats. With so few individuals of this species remaining, active work is required to reverse the declining trend by addressing the common threats (snaring, deliberate persecution and disease), intensive monitoring, conducting research projects, strengthening policy, creating awareness, and continually developing best management practice guidelines".

Collective conservation efforts, including reintroductions into feasible, safe, protected areas, are crucial to enabling the African Wild Dog population to grow and thrive. This translocation was possible thanks to the core support of Remembering Wildlife's new book Remembering African Wild Dogs, with additional support from Painted Wolf Wines, Tania Ihlenfeldt and Rob Hibbert, and The OAK Foundation. It would also not have been possible without the support of operational partners:

Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação, the Bateleurs, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Gorongosa National Park, Green Dogs Conservation, the Karingani Game Reserve, the Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism (LEDET), Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Maremani Game Reserve, Mozambique Wildlife Alliance, Somkhanda Community Game Reserve (Wildlands), UmPhafa Private Nature Reserve, and Wildlife ACT.

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**About the Endangered Wildlife Trust:** Founded in 1973, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has consistently and effectively worked towards achieving our conservation objectives. At its core, the EWT's work is based on three strategic pillars: saving species, conserving habitats, and benefitting people. The EWT's team of specialists is based across East and southern Africa, ensuring the protection of threatened species and ecosystems. Our critical work includes conducting applied research, supporting community-led conservation, training and building capacity, addressing human-wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species, and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion. The EWT works alongside key partners, including communities, business, landowners, academia and governments, to create a sustainable future for wildlife and people. Find out more at [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)

**About African Parks:** African Parks is a non-profit conservation organisation that takes on the complete responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks and protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities. African Parks manages 19 national parks and protected areas covering over 14.7 million hectares in 11 countries: Angola, Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. For more information visit [www.africanparks.org](http://www.africanparks.org), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)

**About Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW):** The DNPW is the statutory organisation in charge of national parks, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries, as well as wildlife management on communal lands in Malawi, while the Department of Forestry is responsible for the management of all forest reserves in the country. African Parks began work with the DNPW in Majete Wildlife Reserve in 2003, in Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve and Liwonde National Park in 2015, and in Mangochi Forest Reserve in 2018. The Public-Private Partnership Commission (PPPC) has played an instrumental role, particularly in the conclusion of the more recent projects.

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