



© Carl Bruessow, View from Thuchila to the highest peaks of Mt Mulanje, Malawi

## 8.11 Malawi

### Protected and conserved areas in Malawi<sup>64</sup>

Malawi has 133 protected areas covering 27,190 km<sup>2</sup> of the land (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019).

Malawi has a high population density with protected areas having hard boundaries, resulting in most of the ecosystems in protected areas being vulnerable. The Government of Malawi has entered into an agreement with the private sector, with African Parks Network increasing their management of protected areas from two to five, to include Nkhotakota Game Reserve, Liwonde National Park and Mangochi Forest Reserve, in order to restore and protect them for sustainability.

### Transboundary protected and conserved areas

Malawi has one protected area which is part of the Malawi Zambia transboundary conservation area.

### Policy context

A comprehensive report on legislation and policy related to protected area management, governance, and equity was undertaken by the BIOPAMA programme. It identified 25 relevant laws and policies in Malawi (Tessema, 2019).

### Key species<sup>65</sup>

Malawi has rich plant diversity, with over 6,000 flowering plant species of which 122 are endemic. Of Malawi's 192 mammal species, eight are listed as threatened on the IUCN Red List. 83 species of amphibians have been recorded in Malawi, six of which are endemic, while eight of the 145 species of reptiles are endemic. Malawi has over 630 recorded bird species with just one endemic. On the other hand, of the over 850 freshwater fish species, 99% are endemic to Malawi. Malawi is also home to a wide variety of invertebrates and microorganisms.

### Pressures and threats<sup>66</sup>

Threats to biodiversity in Malawi are mainly human-induced and include habitat loss and fragmentation, over-exploitation of biological resources, introduction of alien species and climate change. Increasing human population and economic development have led to major land use change in Malawi, creating demand for land for agriculture and settlements. High levels of poverty have increased the reliance on natural resources, and particularly forests, which provide fuel for cooking for the vast majority of Malawi's population.

64 The section draws on information contained in Malawi's Sixth National Report to the CBD (Government of Malawi, 2019).

65 The section draws on information contained in Malawi's Fifth National Report to the CBD (Government of Malawi, 2014).

66 Ibid.

**Figure 8.21 Malawi Summary**



Total Population (millions)  
**18.14**



Population growth (annual %)  
**2.60**



Surface area (km<sup>2</sup>) (thousands)  
**118.50**



GDP (current US\$) (billions)  
**7.06**



GDP growth (annual %)  
**3.50**

Source: The World Bank Group, 2018.

**Area Protected:**

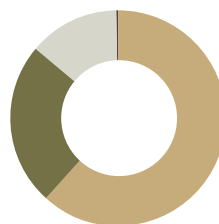
**133 protected areas**



covering **27 190 km<sup>2</sup>** of land

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2019!

**Protected and conserved areas in Malawi in IUCN Management Categories**



- Not Applicable (No. 3)
- Not Reported (No. 121)
- IV. Habitat/Species Management (No. 4)
- II. National Park (No. 5)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019).



**6 000 flowering plant species**

**122 are endemic**



**192 mammal species**



**83 amphibian species**



**145 reptile species**



**630 bird species**



**850 fish species**  
**99% are endemic**

**Coverage of protected areas in Malawi**

Type of protected area	Area protected or conserved*	Area protected or conserved**
Terrestrial and inland water	22.88%	15.12%

\* WDPA dataset

\*\* From National Report on Biodiversity

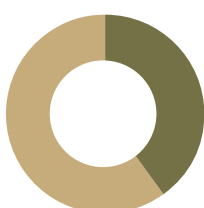
Source: Government of Malawi (2015); UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019).

**National designations of protected and conserved areas in Malawi**

National designation	Number	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Conservation Area	1	6 493
National Park	5	6 961
Wildlife Reserve	4	3 816
Forest Reserve	118	1 485

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019).

**Protected and conserved areas in Malawi in IUCN Governance Types**



- Not Reported (No. 123)
- A. Governance by Government (No. 10)

Source: UNEP-WCMC & IUCN (2019).

**Protected and conserved areas designated as global sites of importance in Malawi**

Global designation	No. of sites
UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserves	2
UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Natural or Mixed)	1
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites)	2

Source: Ramsar (2019); UNESCO (2019a, 2019b).

**Priority areas for conservation**



**3 sites**  
Alliance for Zero Extinction sites



**21 sites**  
Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas



**11 sites**  
Key Biodiversity Areas

Source: AZE Secretariat (2019); BirdLife International (2019b, 2019c).

Figure 8.22 Malawi protected areas

