

Field Research Assistant

African Bat Conservation - 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 Bristol and Cardiff University, UK. ABC works in collaboration with Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT) 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 DNPW in long-term population monitoring and protected area management.



2. **Education and awareness** of bats and biodiversity and related issues through comprehensive community based education programmes, human-wildlife conflict surveys and teacher training workshops 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:

Primarily based at our new research camp in Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve (VMWR) Malawi, African Bat Conservation conducts field research on bats and biodiversity and conduct engagement and education in the surrounding communities. We are currently recruiting for a research assistant who to assist our Senior research assistant at our research base under the supervision of Dr Emma Stone.

Person Specification Summary:

We are looking for someone with:

Maturity: We are looking for someone with a mature mental attitude to be the representative of ABC in the field, and lead by example.

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.

Maturity 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 is field based and will require field work at night and in the day. Therefore you will need to be willing to be based in remote environments at rustic field camps. The post offers an excellent opportunity for career development for a researcher with research skills who is interested in applied conservation biology, bats and human-wildlife conflict.

The post-holder will:

- Work under the supervision of Dr Emma Stone and our Senior Research Assistant Matthew Town
- Conduct field work at night and in the day including:
 - I. bat harp trapping and mist netting
 - II. bat acoustic surveys (AnaBat and SM2 detectors)
 - III. tagging and radio tracking bats
 - IV. light trapping for insects
 - V. insect pinning and processing
 - VI. vegetation surveys
 - VII. and any other field work as required
- Conduct acoustic analysis of bat calls using AnalookW and song scope
- Maintain, summarise and store data in a specifically designed Microsoft Access database
- Create and edit maps in ArcGIS
- Manage the volunteers and volunteer schedules
- Take over and lead the team in the field during periods when the Senior RA is away
- Attend and contribute to project meetings if required
- Be flexible in the hours worked to fluctuating demand
- Work closely and co-operatively with other team members and partner organisations
- Fulfil all administrative requirements on time and accurately
- Maintain accurate records of work activities and data entry in a Microsoft Access database
- Contribute to project reports, newsletters, bulletins etc as required

Requirements:

Essential

- BSc in conservation biology, zoology, biology or related field
- Experience of working and living in remote environments, preferably in Africa
- Experience of field research

- A confident communicator who is able to relate well to people from diverse backgrounds
- 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 harp trapping and mist netting bats
- Experience of off road driving with 4x4
- Experience in dealing with dangerous wild animals, particularly in Africa
- FAGASA equivalent qualifications
- Qualifications in field research /statistics
- Experience of managing own workload and taking responsibility for projects
- Experience of ArcGIS mapping, digitising and home range analysis

Contract Conditions:

Timing: This is an 8 month position commencing asap extendable to 1 year.

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

Location: The new ABC research camp is located in Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve in Northern Malawi, on the banks of the Kazuni Dam. The park harbours an abundant wildlife population including elephant, reedbuck, waterbuck and sable, hippo, buffalo, zebra, and roan. Living in camp you will be on permanent safari, with regular visits to camp by elephants, hippos, warthogs and monkey.



The post holder will be based at the main field research camp in VMWR but conduct field research also at various sites around Northern Malawi including Nyika National Park, Kasungu National Park, Lake Malawi, on farms around northern and central Malawi.

Accommodation: The post holder will be based at the ABC our research camp which comprises safari tents (with beds)



with rustic toilets and showers.
Accommodation may be shared with other
staff at certain times of year.

Costs and contract conditions: ABC will cover all work related accommodation and 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 Matt Town on matt@africanbatconservation.org

Further project information: www.africanbatconservation.org