

Malawi Seasonal Highlights



Seasonal Calendar

These seasonal highlights may vary from month to month and this calendar provides a general overview of activity.



January

Flora & Fauna Tip: From January to March over 200 orchids bloom across the grasslands of Nyika National Park. Many migrant birds usually arrive during the start of the green season (from January to April) due to the climates north of the equator becoming less hospitable.

Weather Tip: January is the start of the rainy season in Malawi. Landscapes are lush and green and there is flurry of activity in all key wilderness areas.



February

Flora & Fauna Tip: In February, many terrestrial orchids come into bloom in Nyika and can be seen across the plateau in colourful patches. The ideal time for spotting migrant birds is also during February and March. Once water and vegetation are no longer scarce, the dynamics of elephant herds shift and they disperse into smaller units.

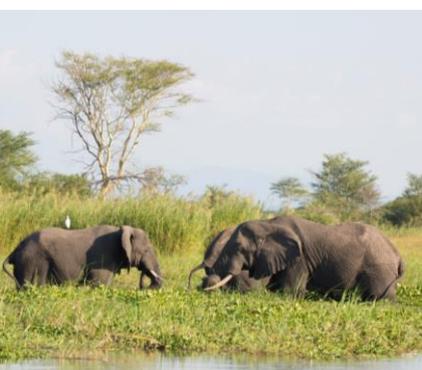
Weather Tip: The rains tend to increase in February, but the cooler weather is ideal for comfortable game viewing.



March

Flora & Fauna Tip: March is also an exceptional month for birding in Nyika National Park and many migrant birds that fly south of the equator during the northern winters, can now be spotted with ease throughout the park. Many herds of antelope can also be seen in closer proximity to Nyika's pine forests, as they try to get shelter from the rains.

Weather Tip: The rains continue throughout the month and the air is crisp and clear.



April

Flora & Fauna Tip: Lush landscapes and ample access to grasses and foliage following the abundant rains, often leads to herds of antelope, buffalo and elephant comfortably wondering away from water sources. Wildlife disperses throughout the park and can therefore be seen in different locations.

Weather Tip: By April, most of the rains start to slowly subside and the weather starts to warm up.

Other Information: The green season offers travellers a different experience, during the rains, key wilderness areas are teeming with life and activity, many herds of antelope give birth to their offspring and tend to their young. Landscapes are also more lush and salubrious.



May

Flora & Fauna Tip: May is a transitional month after the rains and in Liwonde National Park, many herds of elephant slowly start returning to the Shire River, which becomes the only major source of water in the park as waterholes dry up. Impala herds start to challenge each other over territory in preparation for their mating season in late May/early June.

Weather Tip: The weather starts to get considerably cooler in May and the clarity of the air reduces. The country starts to rapidly dry out. Temperatures on the Nyika start to reduce rapidly.

Other Information: There are more waves on the lake at this time and gentle breezes are common. Local fishermen reduce their activity.



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June – July

Flora & Fauna Tip: Lillian's Lovebirds congregate in large flocks of hundreds from June – August. This is a phenomenon that is caused by the Candelabra Euphorbia flowering which provides a feast for the birds. At this time, it's possible to spot larger herds of elephant, which reach into the hundreds. In June and July, crocodile mating also occurs. Mating takes approximately 10 minutes in the water and two months later, the female lays her eggs, which she buries underground and ferociously protects by lying on top of them.

Weather Tip: In June and July, the weather is warmer during the day and slightly chillier in the early mornings and evenings.



August – September

Flora & Fauna Tip: Flocks of Lillian's Lovebirds continue to congregate in Liwonde National Park. On the Northern Lakeshore, swarms of adult lake flies (which look like dense clouds of smoke) can be spotted hovering over the lake. The fly larvae live on the bottom of the lake where they feed, once they form pupae, they float to the surface and hatch in giant swarms. The swarms attract fish and many species of birds. Winds often blow them to the shore where women from the local communities will catch them and prepare a local delicacy (burger like, lake fly patty which is deep-fried).

Weather Tip: August and September remain relatively warm and are pleasant times of the year for game-viewing.



October – November

Flora & Fauna Tip: During the months of October and November, the majestic eland (the world's largest antelope) can be seen in herds that reach the hundreds. Usually eland can be seen in smaller herds across the plateau but their regrouping marks the start of their breeding season. Herds can reach up to 100 – 320 animals in a single group.

Weather Tip: October marks the peak of the dry season. Landscapes are drier during this time and foliage is no longer dense, this creates the optimal conditions for game-viewing as many animals are considerably easier to track and spot.



December

Flora & Fauna Tip: In December, crocodile hatchlings can be seen and heard. The high-pitched chirping sounds that they make alert their mother, that the incubation period is over. She then breaks open the sand-covered chamber and assists the hatchlings out of their shells by rolling the eggs between her tongue and palate. The mother crocodile then delicately transports the hatchlings in her mouth to the water's edge and continues guarding them for two weeks.

Weather Tip: The weather in December starts to cool down again and the occasional shower may occur in the run-up to the rainy season.



Year-Round Highlights:

Malawi is home to approximately 650 species of birds and 400 can be found in Liwonde National Park and Nyika National Park. Birding year-round is incredible in Malawi, with many migrant birds being spotted during the green season.

