

JULY 2018 TO JUNE 2019 TOURISM ANNUAL REPORT

FOR

KASUNGU NATIONAL PARK

COMPILED BY:

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1.0 Introduction

Kasungu National Park is situated in the West-central Malawi in Kasungu District and covers a total area of 2,316 sq km with its Western and Northern boundaries coincide with the Malawi-Zambia border (Clarke, 1983). The nearest City to the park is Lilongwe. Previously, majority of day visitors had originated from the City (Johnson, 1988). The main access to the park is through road. The park is a nature based tourist destination for both Malawians and foreigners. Tourism plays a great role in as far as country's economy is concerned. The more the number of animals and a variety of species, the more the tourists visiting the park and vice versa. Thus, there is a relationship between animal population, species variety and tourist flock to that particular area.

This tourism report covers a period of annual visitors turn up from July 2018 to June 2019. The data will help to interpret the tourism status and trend in Kasungu National Park for the past 12 months. To this effect, the paper will analyse various parameters of visitor characteristics for the year 2018-2019 and compare them to previous year's data. Visitors number as well as revenue collected will be analyzed and trends established.

2.0 Methodology

The data were extracted from gate visitor returns compiled monthly by gate Parks and Wildlife Assistants who record all different visitors entering the Park and entered in Excel Spreadsheet for summarizing and analyzing. The information is put into a variety of categories ranging from adult paying, officials, environmental education, day, overnight visitors and country of origin for the paying visitors and number of vehicles used by the visitors. Similarly, revenue realized was recorded both in foreign and local currency.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Visitors to the park and their origin

Kasungu National Park has for the past 5 years been known with influx of visitors from 12 countries excluding those of Malawian origin. However, in this report, international visitors were from 10 countries as illustrated in figure 4 with United States of America topping the list followed by Germany and India came third while Mauritius and Japan registered none.

3.2 Visitors in paying category to KNP.

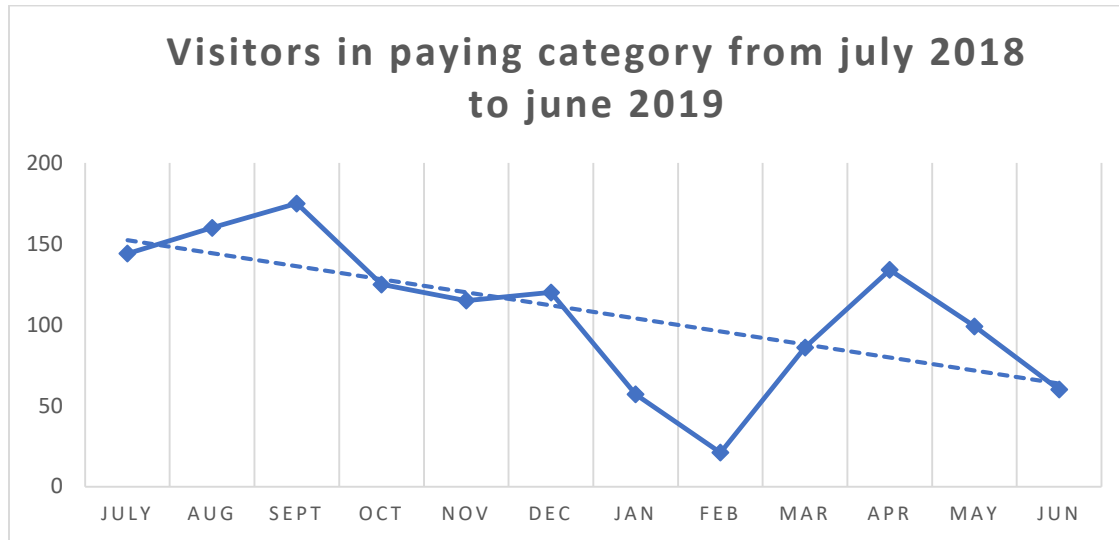


Figure 1: Showing visitors in paying category

It is not uncommon that visitors pattern drops in wet season and become concentrated in dry season. The drop in months of January and February could be attributed by more rains that resulted into poor conditions of the road to the park. Also, most of the internal roads become impassable during the rainy season. Other factor could be difficult for game viewing due to overgrowth of vegetation as reported by Johnson, (1988). However, the general average increase in number of visitors was observed towards the end of the year due to closing year celebrations and Christmas festivities. This calls for a need to have our road to the Park maintained all the time so as to have insignificant difference of tourist flock into the Park during all seasons.

3.3 Patronage through Environmental Education

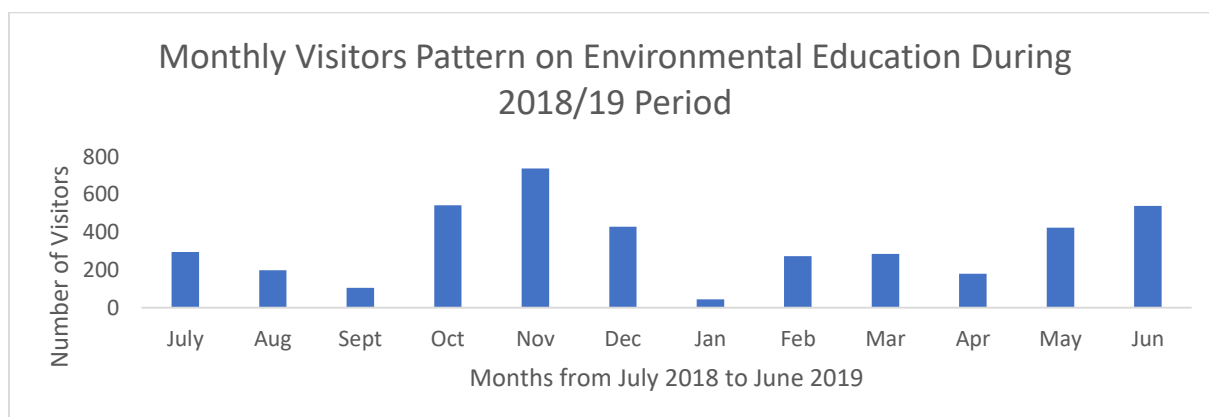


Figure 2: Environmental education visitors

The pattern exhibited is related to that of paying visitors displayed in figure 1. There was a low turn up on environmental education visits mainly from January to April. This drop could mainly be resulted from that many schools were on holiday from December and some early days of January and they usually planned for the trips to visit the Park the following months. It is common to receive many visitors on environmental education towards the end of the year as illustrated in the months of October, November and December. This is also one way of advertising various schools so as to attract them following school calendars. Another factor could be attributed by rainy season where most access roads both within the park and outside become poor.

3.4 Monthly Pattern of official visitors to the Park

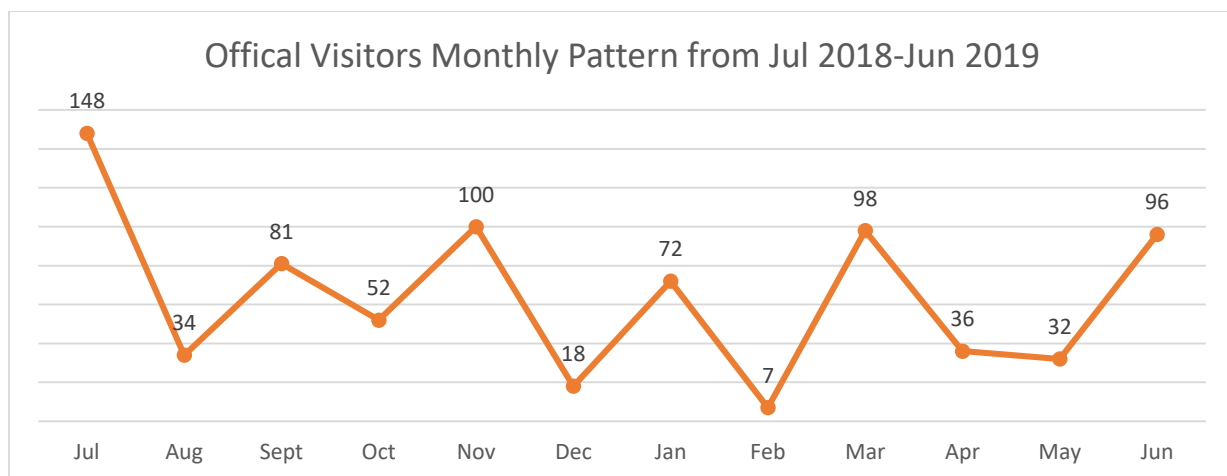


Figure 3: Official visitors pattern into the park

Kasungu National Park as any other Park receives visitors on official capacities. These visitors do not make for Park entry fees as they fall under non-paying category. The monthly mean turn up during 2018-2019 period under review was 65. Unlike in 2015-2016 where few official visitors were recorded (Sakala, 2018). The decline could be as a result of few stakeholders meeting held within the Park and that Partners such as GIZ and IFAW were getting settled in the implementation of various activities. Thus, 2018-2019 saw the trend picking up extremely high due to various meetings held within the Park and other influencing factors.

3.5 Visitation by country of origin in paying category

Kasungu National Park receives visitors from across the globe. Of recent, Malawians have learnt to visit protected areas during free time and even on official business. Their visitation pattern resembles that of general visitors in paying category as exhibited in *figure 1*. It declined during rainy season and normalizes once rains cease. They outdid all of the foreign countries in as far as visitation to the Park is concerned (*figure 4*). Previously, the number of Malawian citizen paying visitors to KNP was very low compared to international visitors and foreign residents (Kalima, 2008). And according to Johnson (1988) this could be attributed to cost entering the park, lack of transport and lack of interest because of lack of exposure to or education about parks and wildlife values. However, the opposite has been observed during this FY under review as illustrated in *figure 4* below. The reason behind could be an increase in number of individuals who have learnt and values satisfaction provided by nature.

Within the past five years, six foreign countries were all faring well in visitation to KNP. China topped the list in both 2016 and 2017, UK and USA used to lead for relatively a long time before 2015. Germans also scored highly in visitation in 2015 and resurface to second to USA in 2018-2019 as illustrated in *figure 4* below. In 2008, KNP received few tourists from North America which include USA (Kalima, 2008). This is unlike during 2018-2019 where USA registered highly on international visitors to the park.

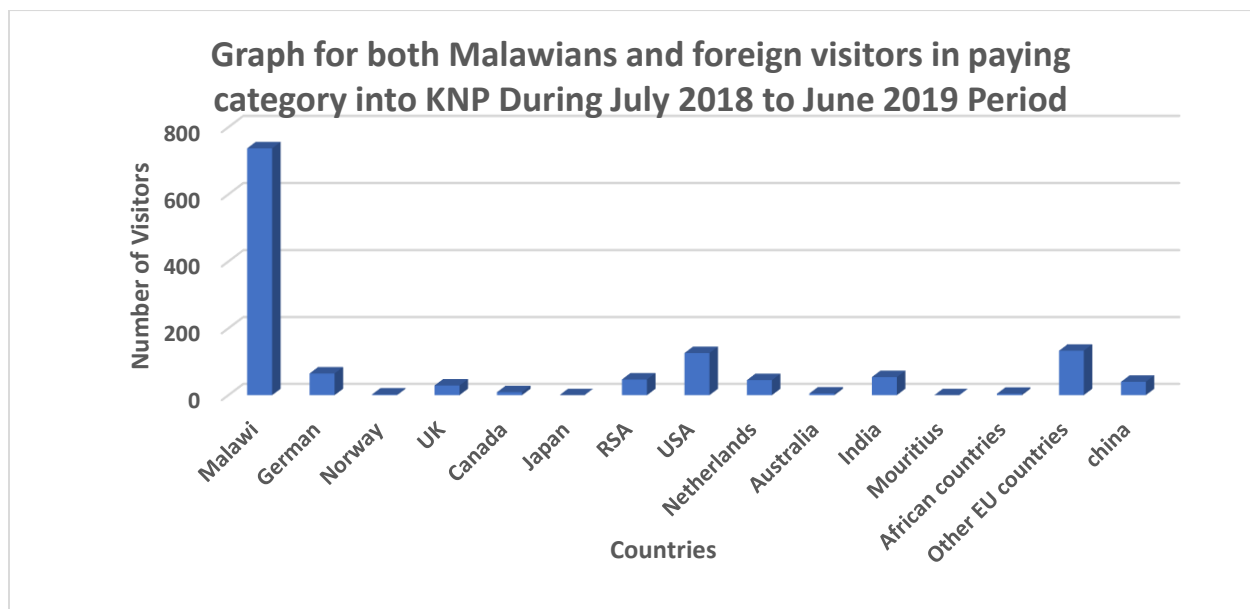


Figure 4: Showing international visitors into the park

3.6 Day versus night visitors in paying category

The pattern exhibited by both visitors except in one month was similar during 2018-2019 period. Majority of the visitors visited the park during the day time. This could be attributed by the lack of enough funds to pay for overnight and inadequate marketing of the lodge within the park. It is common that people coming to the park only considers game viewing as priority and return home on the same day.

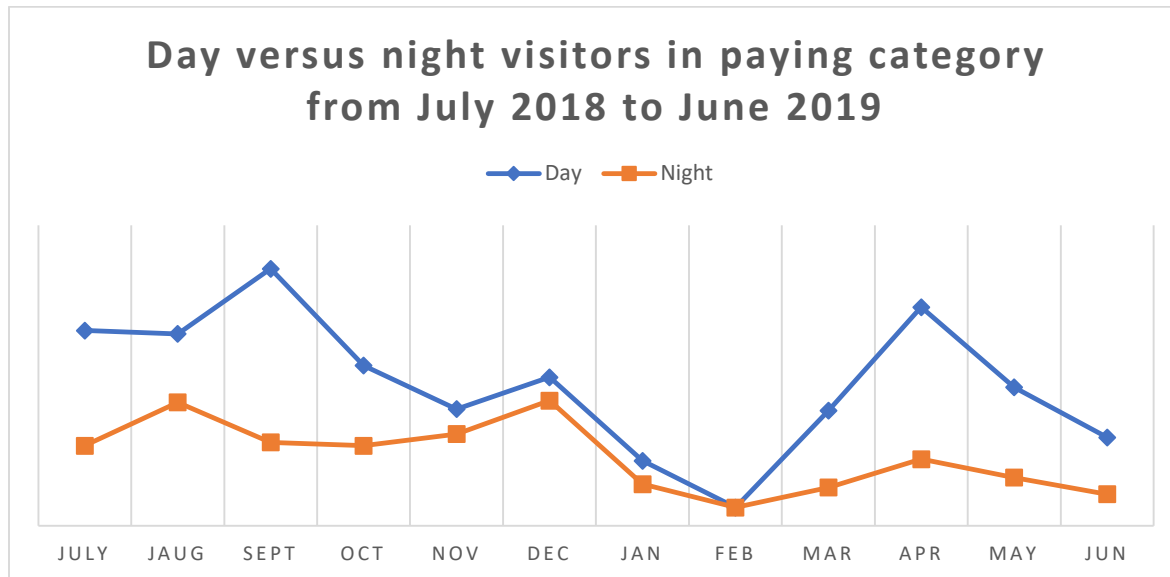
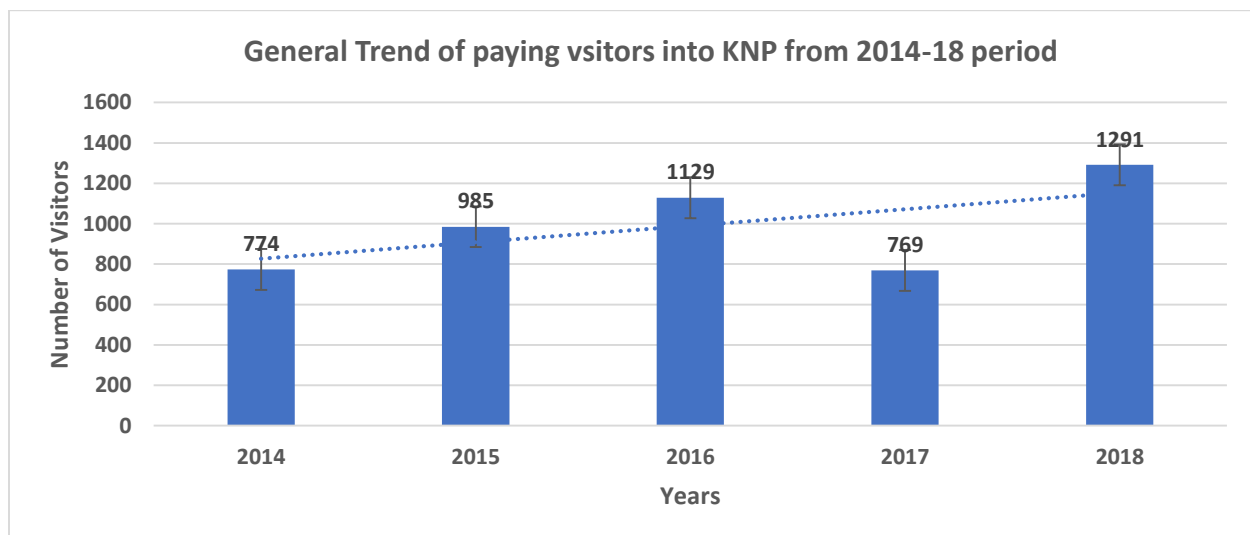


Figure 5: Day-night visitors into the park



For the past five years the trend of paying visitors to Kasungu National Park has generally been encouraging with a slight decrease in 2017 where a total of 769 were recorded (fig 1.) representing 15.5 %. This increase reflects well with the efforts from partners like IFAW and GIZ Projects which have contributed to make elephants being resident around Lifupa and beyond almost throughout the year in the past three years with increased security from poachers and community awareness. The influx of different meetings held within the Park by partners and other stakeholders contributed to the rise of paying visitors in 2018. The only decrease in 2017 could be resulted from other factors such as poor Lodge facilities as complained by various visitors. This calls for a need to improve lodge's operations then authorities need also to look into other facilities like roads and other infrastructures.

3.7 Vehicles to KNP

Vehicles to the Park have impacts on environment as such it is necessary to record their number that enter the protected areas. Likewise, the number of vehicles suggest the influx of visitors in that particular year. In this regard, KNP received less (9) in February but an average of 29 vehicles within the year's period under review. Therefore, a decrease in trend to number of vehicles has been recorded. This suggests that majority of the visitors were visiting the park in groups and that very few entered the park in private vehicles. On environmental point of view, the decrease in number of vehicles is encouraging considering that vehicles are associated with pollution, using one vehicle protects the environment from lots of emissions into the air and noise pollution.

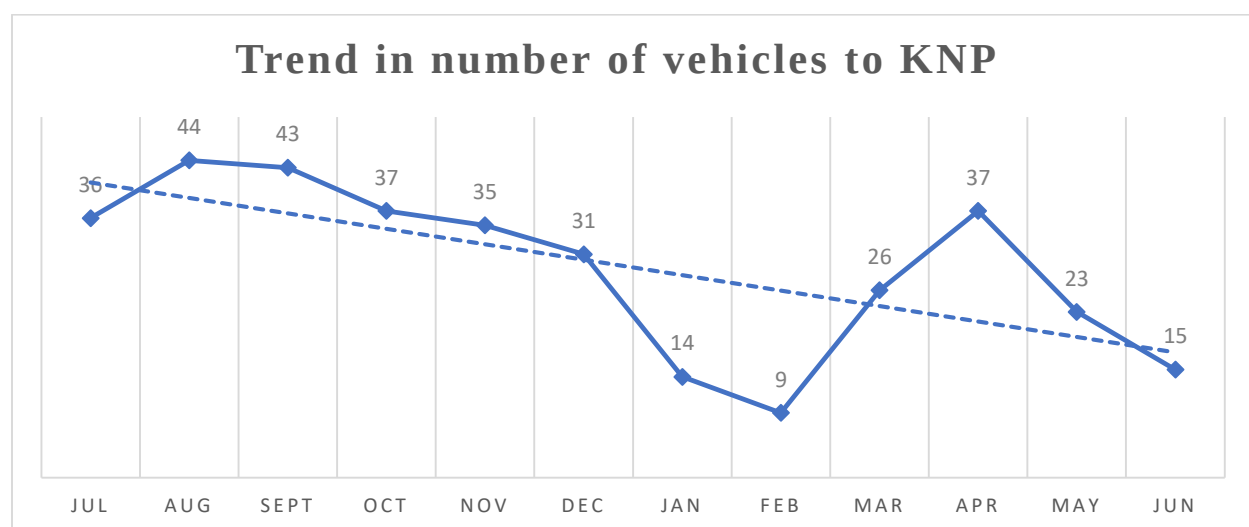


Figure 6: Number of vehicles into the park

3.8 Revenue realized through Gate Entry Fees

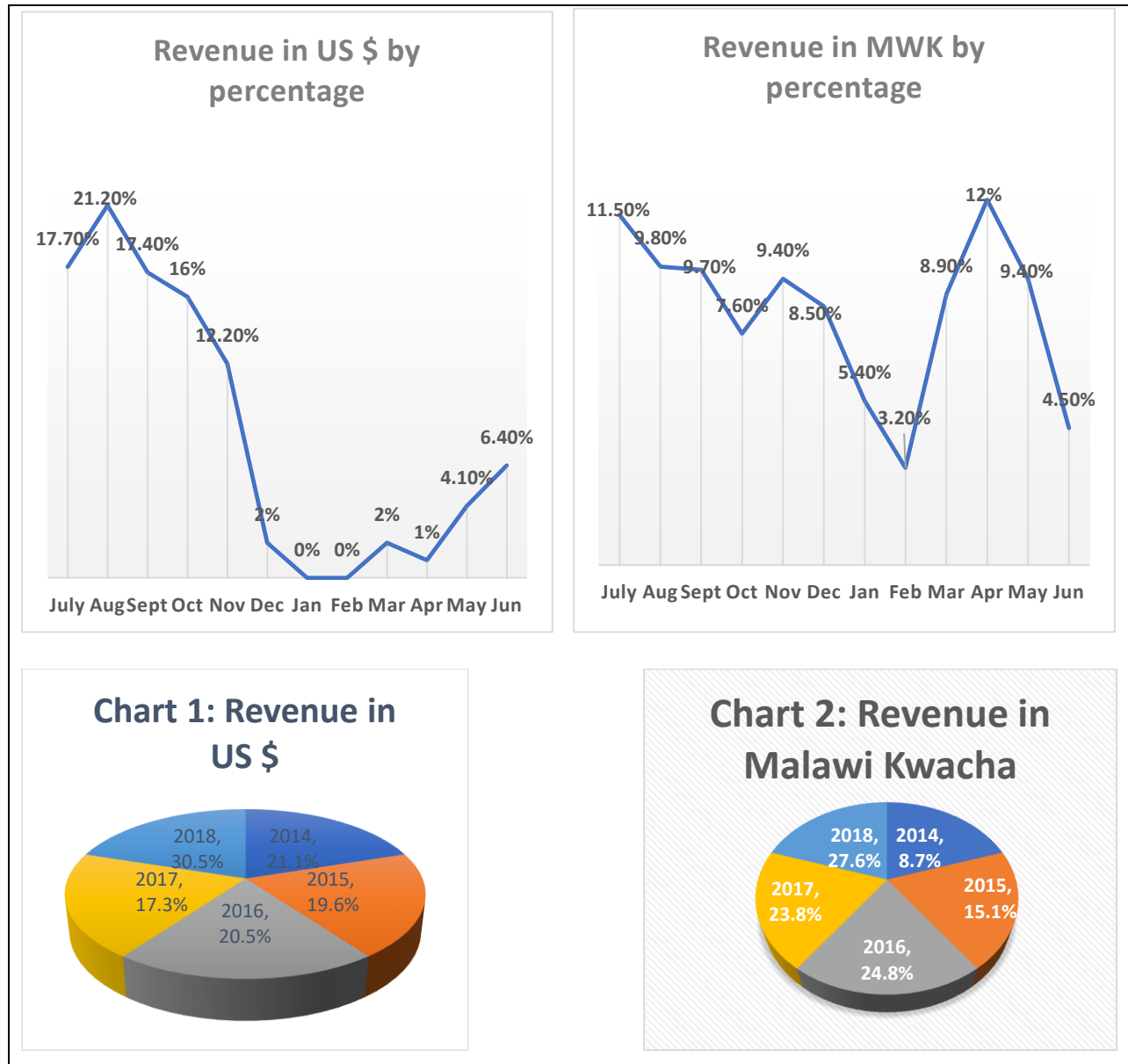


Figure 7: Revenue expressed in percentage, US\$ and Malawi Kwacha

The park collects revenue both in local as well as foreign currency. It is noted from *figure 7* above that revenue collected in local currency was more than foreign currency (represented in percentages for both currencies) during this period. In both currencies, 2018 recorded higher gate entry fees than the previous years. This could be attributed by depreciation of Kwacha with passage of time.

Illustrated below is a trend of Kwacha against Dollar. It is seen that many dollars were collected from July to November and dropped significantly during the rainy season. While Kwacha exhibited an almost leveling behaviour throughout the year though slightly higher from December to May.

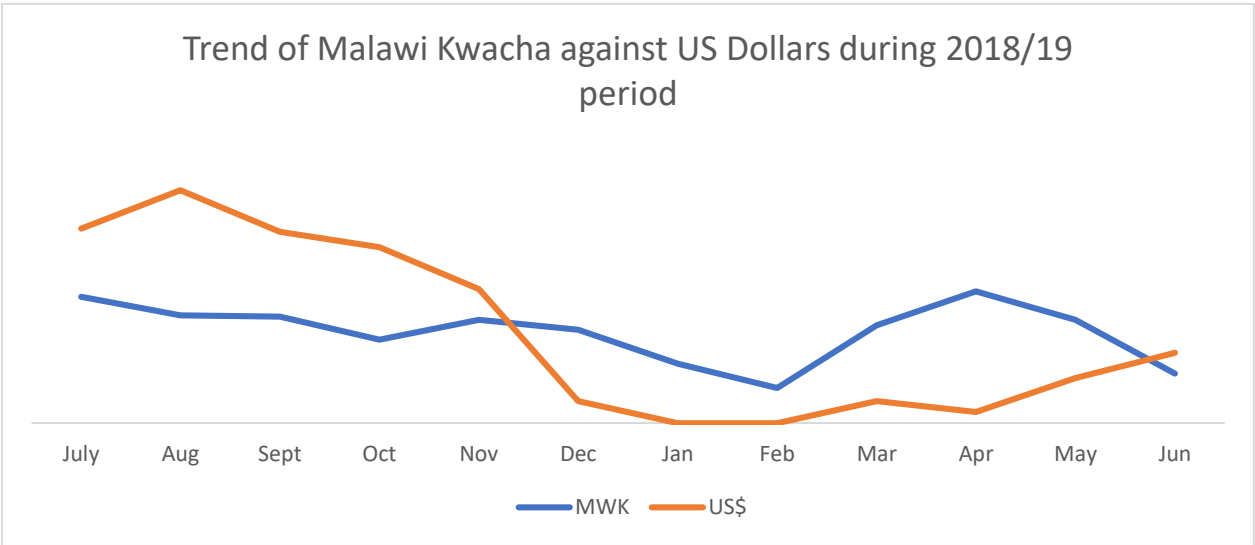


Figure 8: Malawi kwacha against US Dollars

3.9 Revenue collected from other sources

Apart from gate entry fees, the park also collects revenue from concession, hire of guides and sales from confiscated illegal firewood and charcoal possession (*appendix 3*).

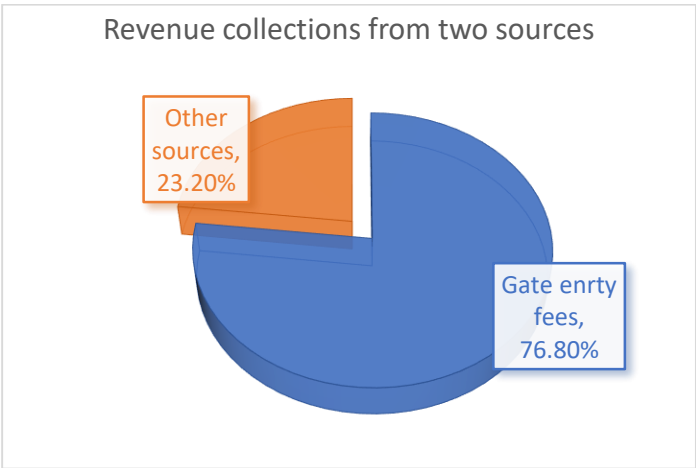


Figure 8: Revenue from two sources

4.0 Acknowledgements

The author would like to sincerely thank PWAs at the Lisitu gate for up-to-date recording and providing data to Research for analysis on monthly basis. Likewise, the PWA for research Mrs. Chikondi Sauchi is commended for her tireless support in making these visitors data timely available and entering them in excel for analysis.

5.0 Conclusion

This tourism report provides a baseline understanding on the influx of visitors into Kasungu National Park from July 2018 to June 2019. The outcome will help to weigh the effort being put by both staff members (DNPW) and partners such as IFAW, GIZ Project and African Development Bank against the returns. From the analysis, it is observed that the resources provided resulted into higher turnout of paying visitors than ever before. It is from this background that Kasungu has potential to make more revenue once the various development projects for the park are implemented in the near future while restoring its former glory of wildlife population abundance.

Reference

Johnston, S.A. (1988), Interpretation Plan for Malawi's protected Areas, DNPW, Lilongwe

Clarke, J.E. (1983), Protected Areas Master Plan for Central region, DNPW, Lilongwe

Kalima, D. F. G. (2008), Visitors' Statistics Assessment for 2017/08 F/Y, Kasungu National Park, Kasungu

Appendix 1. Country of origin and visitors between July, 2018 and June, 2019.

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Malawi	78	95	108	75	59	84	28	9	42	83	44	32	737
German	5	4	20	13	6	9	0	0	3	3	0	2	65
Norway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
UK	4	2	2	9	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	29
Canada	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	9
Japan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSA	3	9	4	0	8	0	0	3	10	7	3	0	47
USA	19	20	4	8	4	4	17	2	15	12	13	8	126
Netherlands	5	2	8	0	0	12	2	0	3	8	3	2	45
Australia	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
India	3	2	0	17	0	0	0	2	0	5	14	11	54
Mauritius	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
African countries	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Other EU countries	24	17	18	3	18	11	10	3	8	5	14	2	133
China	3	2	5	0	15	0	0	2	3	6	4	0	40
Total	144	160	175	125	115	120	57	21	86	134	99	60	1296

Appendix 2. Revenue collected (Gate entry fees) both in local and foreign currency during period July, 2018 to June, 2019.

Months	Revenue in US \$	Revenue in MWK
July	346	524, 095
August	415	446, 875
September	340	442, 585
October	312	344, 630
November	238	428, 740
December	40	387, 720
January	0	246, 760
February	0	145, 080
March	40	402, 480
April	20	547, 440
May	80	427, 100
June	126	202, 200
Total	1, 957	4, 545, 705

Appendix 3: Revenue collected from other sources from July, 2018 to June, 2019

Months	Source	Revenue in MWK
July	-	0
August	Hire of guide	240, 240
September	Sales from confiscated firewood	100, 000
	Hire of guide	250, 965
October	-	0
November	Sales from confiscated firewood	65, 000
December	-	0
January	Disposal of logs	150, 000
	Concession	450, 000
February	-	0
March	-	0
April	-	0
May	-	0
June	Sales from confiscated firewood and charcoal	120, 000
Total		1, 376, 205

Appendix 4: Total revenue collected both from gate entry fees and other sources July, 2018 to June, 2019

Source	Revenue in US \$	Revenue in MWK
Total gate entry fees	1,957	4, 545, 705
Total other sources	-	1, 376, 205
Grand Total	1, 957	5, 921, 910