

### 3. Fencing

If properly designed, constructed and maintained, fences can be almost completely effective in keeping out wild animals.



### 4. Traditional barriers

Planting hedges of tree species such as euphorbia is low-cost and effective against carnivores. Although less permanent, fences made from of dead thorny branches can be used in kraals for cattle.

### 5. Waste management

Good waste handling systems – collection, transportation and disposal that restrict wildlife access to garbage are important to avoid attracting wild animals to settlements. Ensure that food waste is buried in a deep (minimum 1.5m) and steep-sided (90 degrees) pit. Throwing ashes on the waste each day minimises smell, reducing the attraction to hyaenas.

### 6. Good husbandry practices



Livestock raids can be minimised through good husbandry practices:

- Herding during the day
- Keeping livestock in a predator-proof enclosure at night (with good fencing, or raised off the ground e.g. chickens)
- Remove any thick cover from near animal holding areas

### 7. Non-lethal control

Use of deterrents that are effective at repelling animals from a site.

Acoustic deterrents. Acoustic deterrents shock wildlife away by emitting an unexpected loud noise or a sound known to scare wildlife.

Traditional methods may include beating drums, tins and trees; using whips in addition to shouting, yelling and whistling.

Visual deterrents: Brightly coloured cloths and plastic may be hung from a fence at the edge of fields to distract predators like hyaenas.

Fires lit on the boundaries of fields or burning sticks carried by farmers can deter wildlife if you see them coming.

### Who are we?

Carnivore Research Malawi (CRM) is a dedicated carnivore project of the charity Conservation Research Africa. Our team includes scientists and community outreach officers.

### What do we do?

CRM aims to conserve carnivores across Malawi for the health of the ecosystem, as well as minimize human-carnivore conflict.

Our teams research the behaviour and ecology of spotted hyaenas, African wild dogs and other carnivores. We also carry out educational programmes to improve the understanding of carnivores and we help to resolve carnivore related problems.

For more information about hyaenas and CRM visit:

[www.carnivoreresearchmalawi.org](http://www.carnivoreresearchmalawi.org)

Do you need assistance with hyaenas or other carnivores?

CALL US FOR HELP ON 5152

CRM are now running a **TOLL FREE** helpline. This is FREE of charge - call our experts to get advice or arrange a home visit.

Wildlife Assistance Helpline: **5152**



# LIVING WITH HYAENAS



Hyaenas are fascinating animals that perform essential functions in the ecosystem in which they live in.

As their natural habitat is destroyed and fragmented, it is becoming more and more common to find hyaena territories overlapping with human habitation.

Although there is much fear surrounding hyaenas it is possible to live in harmony with them if certain measures are taken.



## Why should we live with hyaenas?

Malawi is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa and so urban areas are important for wildlife like hyaenas that have lost their natural habitat.

As partial scavengers, hyaenas help in clearing up garbage and wastes from markets, slaughter house, streets, dumping sites and dead animals keeping our surroundings clean.

Spotted hyaenas help in recycling nutrients back into in the ecosystem. They eat a variety of food which, when excreted, restores nutrients back to the biotic and abiotic ecosystem. Hyaenas will eat 40% or more of a carcass, including the bones, which other carnivores would leave.

They also eat parasitic pests such as larger rodents and stray dogs that would otherwise be problematic to humans.

Traditional folklore teaches that hyaenas have magical powers or were originally people. No animals have magical powers nor can people turn into animals, this is merely superstition stemmed from a lack of understanding of this nocturnal animal.

Hyaenas can live in harmony with humans only if we address the conflicts that exist.



## Precautions when encountering hyaenas

Try to avoid coming across wild animals by keeping to well-lit, busy and noisy spaces and walking with companions after dark.

If you do meet a hyaena and it doesn't show interest in you, ignore it, carry on walking away slowly. Make a detour around it and **DO NOT RUN**. Running may trigger the hyaena to chase. Keep your eye out for other hyaenas nearby.

If the hyaena shows interests in you then;

- Keep yourself calm and try not to show fear
- Stop, don't run away. As a hunter, the hyaena will instinctively chase, even out of curiosity.
- Don't lie down - this will increase its curiosity
- If you are carrying food throw it away and if the hyaena shows interest in it, move away slowly.
- Hyaenas are good hunters but also scavenge so avoid carrying food at night as a precaution.
- See if you are standing near rubbish or a dead animal. The hyaena is likely to be more interested in it than you. Slowly move away, but keep facing the hyaena.
- If the hyaena shows interest in you and moves towards you, suddenly move a few steps towards it, to surprise it and make it think you are a predator. Wave your arms about, make yourself as big as possible. Make a loud noise - shout or scream and look aggressive and frightening. Most likely the hyaena will run away.
- If not, vary your tactics - be still for a moment then make a sudden threatening movement or noise. If it growls or giggles, this is a sign that it is

challenging your attack. In this case, stand your ground - **never run away** - but don't move any closer.

- If you are carrying a bag, swing it around your head or make a loud noise e.g. hitting a metal bin or fence. Carrying a torch and whistle is a good precaution - flash the torch in its eyes. If it moves closer, stamp your feet or throw something at it.
- Don't move away until after the hyaena does. When you do, move slowly, continuing to face the hyena.
- In the rare scenario that the hyena actually attacks you, stand your ground and fight back - use a stick or kick and hit its head. **Never run.**

## Protecting livestock from hyaenas

### **1. Intensifying Human Vigilance**

The presence of humans is normally very effective in discouraging hyaenas from attacking livestock. Having herdsman present reduces the rate of attack compared to free-ranging herds.

### **2. Using guard dogs**

Guard dogs, or Guardian dogs, provide alternatives to herdsman especially during the night when livestock is in kraals. Guard dogs are trained to alert people not to chase down hyaenas.

Guard dogs should be raised from puppyhood together with the livestock so that the dog and livestock can bond.

