**Malawi Wildlife Rescue**

**Ep101 - Chasing Freedom**

‘Malawi Wildlife Rescue’ is a 6 x 60 observational documentary series following the work of American veterinarian, Dr Amanda Salb, and her colleagues at the country’s only wildlife rescue centre. The team care for injured and abandoned animals until they are ready to be released back into the wild.

The series is shot in the rainy season when the Centre receives most of its orphans, so the staff have their hands full looking after baby vervet monkeys and baby baboons in particular. Head of Animal Care is Dutch-born, Alma Van Dorenmalen, who has years of experience and runs a tight ship. She prides herself in knowing every single one of the two hundred animals at the Centre.

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa and resources are hard to come by. So the team have to make do with what they can get, and often improvise. Power cuts are common and the rains can wreak havoc. Visiting British Vet, Dr Sophie Widdowson, holds the fort whenever Amanda is called away from base – which is fairly often.

Amanda is the only resident vet in Malawi authorised to dart and capture big game, so her services are always in demand. Throughout the series we see her being called out to help animals in the Bush. In Episode 1, while on patrol with the Wildlife Emergency Response Unit in Vwaza Marsh, she spots a young elephant with a crude wire snare embedded in its back leg. She darts the calf from a helicopter, then lands to treat the injured youngster. In Episode 4, Amanda is called out to help a waterbuck with a snare around its face. But it’s a tricky dart and its touch and go whether the animal will survive. The series also sees Amanda being asked to help collar both a cheetah and a massive bull elephant – both of which provide plenty of drama.

The aim of Lilongwe Wildlife Centre is to get animals back into the wild where they belong. Throughout the six episodes Amanda and her team manage to give sixty animals a chance at freedom – including a troop of thirteen vervet monkeys, a giant eagle owl, a serval cat, a duiker, a monitor lizard, two bulbuls and three hedgehogs. As Amanda says:

*“This is what my work is all about - seeing animals go back to the wild. Or in some of these cases, they’ve come in as orphans and then they grow up and then they get their shot at being wild. I love it. It’s awesome.”*